

Project Evaluation

Each Teacher Quality grant proposal must include an evaluation plan. The evaluation component of a Teacher Quality project must assess the project's impact on teacher learning and teacher practice and, if appropriate, their students' learning. Efforts to evaluate the project's impact should be related to the proposed activities and budget.

- A minimum of 3% of the project's total budget must target efforts to evaluate the project's impact on teacher learning and teacher practice and, if appropriate, their students' learning.
- Evaluation efforts should be led by a person or an organization not directly involved in the project's professional development activities.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1. What are the overall guiding evaluation questions across Teacher Quality projects?

Answer: The overall guiding evaluation questions are (1) what is the impact of Teacher Quality funded professional development experiences on teacher learning and teacher practice? and (2) what is the impact of Teacher Quality professional development experiences on the learning of students whose teachers participate in the experiences?

Teacher learning is interpreted broadly to include content knowledge, pedagogical understandings and skills, and dispositions related to the focus of the professional development experiences.

Question 2. What types of data and frequency of data collection are expected?

Answer: Data may be quantitative and/or qualitative, and generated by such means as test, questionnaire, interview, observation protocol, and artifacts of teaching and learning. To address the overall guiding evaluation questions, a project evaluation must collect data that reveal more than participant satisfaction with the project activities and/or instructor(s).

The frequency of data collection is highly dependent on the nature and duration of the project. For example, the evaluation of a summer workshop with follow-up during the school year might well involve data collection at the beginning of the workshop and at the conclusion of the school year. In addition, data might be collected at selected points during the project in order to inform the project leaders about needed program adjustments. [The evaluation plan examples presented below provide more detail about the types of data and frequency of data collection considered appropriate.]

Question 3. How frequently are evaluation reports expected?

Answer: A project's evaluation report must be submitted to the Teacher Quality Program office using the "Project Director's Report form" available at <http://www.coe.uga.edu/teacherquality> on or before the project's closing date. A project's closing date is identified in the project award letter.

For projects that may receive funding for two years, an evaluation report must be submitted to the Teacher Quality Program office at the conclusion of the project's Year 1 activities.

Failure to submit an evaluation report in a time manner will adversely affect future Teacher Quality funding.

Question 4. What is the expected format for a Teacher Quality project report?

Answer: The expected format for the Teacher Quality report is specified in the "Project Director's Report" form available at <http://www.coe.uga.edu/teacherquality>.

Evaluation Plan Examples

The three examples present ideas upon which to build a project evaluation plan. They are not intended to indicate the only ways that a project evaluation can be conducted.

Example 1

The project's staff agrees that it is critical to use valid and reliable measures to appropriately analyze the extent to which the professional development activities have achieved their intended outcomes, particularly concerning improving teachers' conceptual understanding and attitudes toward the subject they teach. Project MOSART (Misconception Oriented Standards-based Assessment Resource for Teachers) was funded by the National Science Foundation to "develop a set of comprehensive subject matter assessment tools that can function as diagnostic tools to identify teacher's strength and weaknesses across grade levels. The assessment items will measure the extent to which teachers and students have mastery of the K-12 National Research Council (NRC) Content Standards and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Benchmarks in Physical Science..." (<http://mosart.mspnet.org/>). These tools are well suited for this project's needs since they can be used both in formative and summative evaluation efforts. Since each MOSART item contains at least one known misconception as a distracter, the tests can be used as a pre-test to allow teachers to diagnose their own misconceptions about the content they teach. This will enable the professional development activities to be structured to confront these roadblocks to effective teaching and teacher's accurate analysis of student thinking. The project's instructional leaders will analyze the responses of teachers and identify particular gaps or trends in the content knowledge so that these weaknesses can be specifically addressed in trends in the content knowledge so that these weaknesses can be specifically addressed in sessions. At the conclusion of the year's activities, the MOSART tests will be used as a posttest to quantify gains in content knowledge over the course of the project activities. As a result of participating in the project activities, it is reasonable to expect an average gain of 20% over the pre-test score for each teacher participant. In addition, the extent to which the teacher participates change their practice toward a more inquiry-based approach will be captured through classroom observations during the school year. Classroom observations will be rated for congruency with an inquiry-based approach by using the Reform Teaching Observation Protocol (RTOP), developed by Sawada and colleagues (http://physiced.buffalostate.edu/AZTEC/RTOP/RTPO_full/).

[Presented with permission from the project proposal "Partnership of Reform in Chemistry Teaching." Project Directors: Greg Rushton and Tom Brown.]

Example 2

The goals of this project include to (1) increase teacher mathematics content knowledge, (2) increase teachers' use of mathematics teaching manipulatives, (3) increase teaching for student thinking, and (4) enhance parental involvement in their children's mathematical learning. For each goal, various assessments will provide evidence of teacher development and implementation, as well as areas of needed assistance or adjustment in project activities. Specifically, prior to the start of the summer workshop, all participants will complete a detailed questionnaire. This will be designed to provide initial self-report information about their educational background and teaching practices, knowledge of National Council of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards and Georgia Performance Standards for mathematics, self-assessment of mathematics and pedagogical knowledge and practices related to Goals 1, 2 and 3. At the end of the project, all teachers will complete a final questionnaire to determine what they have learned, indications of their beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and concerns, and an overall judgment of the project.

[Presented with permission from the project proposal "Building Up Mathematics"—Helping Grades K-5 Teachers in Oglethorpe County Elementary Schools to Develop Children's Mathematical Thinking within Georgia Performance Standards." Project Director: Larry Hatfield.]

Example 3

Pre-and post-tests will be administered to assess teachers' changing understandings. In addition to science content, the tests will include questions about ability to plan and implement fieldwork instruction, to collect, analyze and interpret data, and to practice safety. The tests were developed with the assistance of teacher who had previously participated in the project. In addition, each teacher will be required to develop a curriculum-based lesson unit based on specific information, scientific and pedagogical techniques, specimens, photos, and data acquired during the summer course. Each unit will include an assessment of student learning. The units are to be used with the teacher's classes during the following school year, and must include a description of how the unit will enhance the teacher's teaching of specific concepts and topics addressed in the Georgia Performance Standards. A project rubric will be used to assess the teacher-developed units across the following criteria: accurate content, classroom feasibility, relevance to students, innovation, grade-level appropriateness, presence of lessons that involve students in fieldwork, lab work, and their generation and analysis of scientific data. Data generated from the teacher-made assessments included in the units will be compiled and used to assess the impact of the project on the learning of students whose teachers participated in the project.

[Presented with permission from the project proposal "Interdisciplinary Marine Science Studies 2008." Project Directors: Kenneth Sajwan and Joe Richardson.]