



COMPLETE *the* PICTURE

EVALUATION FILLS IN THE MISSING PIECES
THAT FEEDBACK CAN'T PROVIDE



By Chad Dumas and Lee Jenkins

The workshop is done. The presenter — whether consultant, principal, district office, or building staff member — is packing up his or her materials. The LCD projector is turned off. The computer is packed away. Lights are being turned off. It’s time to go home.

Staff in the session was fully engaged. Energy was high. Conversations were focused on the content. The temperature was comfortable. The food was good. The chairs were just right. All indications from the feedback point to one conclusion: The session was a success.

But how does anyone know?

How does anyone know that staff learned what they needed to learn? How does anyone know that the content of the day is now common knowledge among the attendees?

Two key indicators are feedback and evaluation. Feedback from participants is what the presenter uses to fine-tune his or her professional learning delivery. Evaluation provides organizers what they need to know in order to make decisions about future professional learning. “Do we want a long-term relationship with this consultant?” is the most important evaluation question and can only be answered sometime after the initial seminar is done. Both feedback and evaluation are necessary for measuring the impact of professional learning.

GATHER FEEDBACK

Feedback can take a number of forms. For example, the feedback form at right is not designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a seminar nor to give advice to those who organized it. The form’s sole purpose is to help the presenter do a better job at the next seminar.

Administrators also need feedback at the workshop. This immediate feedback — on aspects such as room temperature, snacks, boredom, breaks, restrooms, and so on — can help in preparing future professional learning. These issues should not

SAMPLE FEEDBACK FORM

At the conclusion of this seminar, I ask that you provide feedback to assist me in planning future professional learning. Often, seminar participants are asked to fill out an evaluation of the experience in order to assist administrators in decision making. Feedback, however, is different. It is to help me improve my seminars. Thanks.

1. What was the most helpful to you?
2. Did you notice any written or spoken factual errors? If so, what were they?
3. This seminar is designed to blend theory, practical advice, application, practice, and activity. Was the seminar balanced? Were there times when you were completely lost or bored? If so, when?
4. What one concept or idea was the most provocative?
5. What activity was the least helpful to you?
6. How committed are you to beginning the LtoJ process in your district, school, or classroom? If highly committed, where will you begin?
7. Where are you on this scale?
CONFUSION _____ CLARITY
8. How did I do in these four essential elements of successful seminars? (5 is highest, 1 is lowest score.) Place an X on each line.
 - Providing humor. 1 _____ 5
 - Speaking to your heart. 1 _____ 5
 - Giving you hope. 1 _____ 5
 - Providing enough help. 1 _____ 5

Source: Lee Jenkins.

Professional learning communities process and instructional framework HASTINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1. The foundation of learning team work is the pursuit of real answers to four critical questions:
 - What do we want students to know and be able to do? (Essentials)
 - How will we know when students know or can do it? (Common assessment)
 - What will we do when students *don't* know it? (Unit of study/ differentiation/intervention)
 - What will we do when students *already* know it? (Unit of study/ differentiation)
2. An essential is that which a student should know or be able to do at the end of each course or grade level.
3. Eight to 10 essentials are held in common and addressed by all teachers at that grade or content level.
4. Essentials should reflect, to the greatest degree appropriate, 21st-century learning, rigor/ relevance, Common Core, district curriculum expectations, state standards, and other curricular content or skills thought essential.
5. An assessment is a method of determining student learning. Examples include paper/pencil, performance-based, teacher observation, checklist, etc.
6. Formative assessments (informative), also known as assessments *for* learning, are ultimately given to direct future content and instruction.
7. Using data involves making instructional decisions to improve student learning and/or measure one's overall impact.

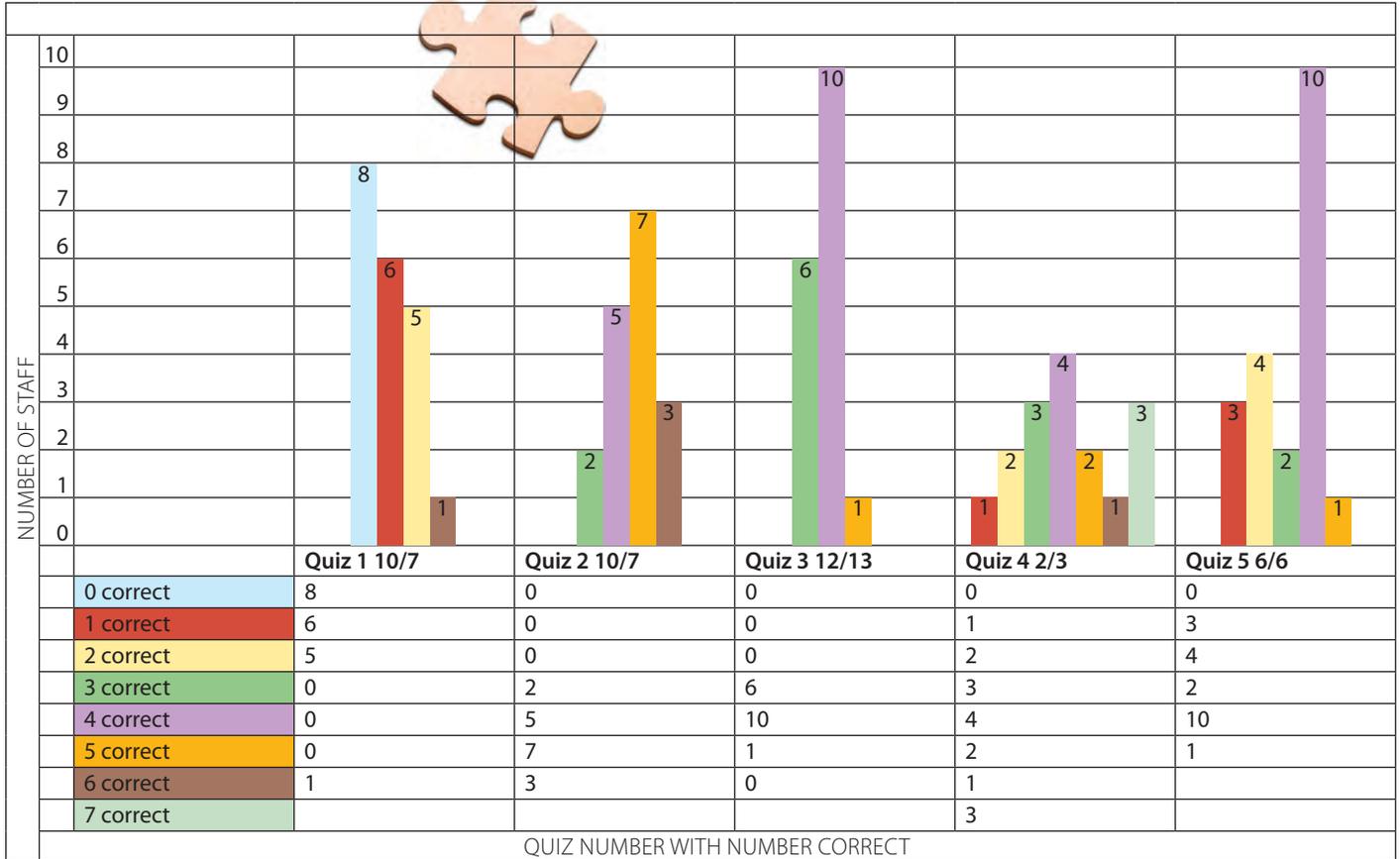


8. Formative assessments guide the development of units of study that should include differentiation or a system of interventions.
9. Summative assessments (summary), also known as assessments *of* learning, are given at the end of instruction to measure student learning. They are also used as program measures to determine what did and did not work.
10. There are five kinds of learning targets: knowledge, reasoning, skill, product, and disposition.
11. Knowledge targets tend to be factual and often include verbs such as know, list, name, identify, recall, etc.
12. Reasoning targets tend to involve the application of content to the real world and often include verbs such as predict, infer, classify, hypothesize, compare, conclude, summarize, analyze, evaluate, generalize, etc.
13. Skills targets are those performances that must be demonstrated and observed (heard or seen).
14. Product targets call for a student to create a product.
15. Types of evidence include teacher observation, selected response, extended written response, and performance assessment.

16. The type of evidence selected must match the kind of target desired.
17. The tool for gathering evidence must match the type of evidence and kind of target.
18. There are three stages to instructional (backward) design: Identify desired results, determine evidence, and plan learning experiences and instruction.
19. Robert J. Marzano's *The Art and Science of Teaching* (ASCD, 2007) is our instructional framework.
20. Our instructional framework is organized around nine plus one Design Questions from Marzano's *The Art and Science of Teaching* (ASCD, 2007).
21. Hastings Public Schools is focused on Design Questions One (Expectations) and Five (Engagement) for 2012-13 from Marzano's *The Art and Science of Teaching* (ASCD, 2007).
22. Specific actions that teachers can take for Design Question One (Expectations) include: Distinguish between learning goals and activities; write a rubric or scale for each learning goal; have students identify their own learning goals; assess students using formative assessment; have students chart their progress on each learning goal; and recognize and celebrate growth.
23. Specific actions that teachers can take for Design Question Five (Engagement) include: Games, goal setting, think time, physical activity, exit cards, authentic engagement, pacing, and relationship building.

Source: Hastings Public Schools.

SAMPLE LtoJ CHART



In 2010-11, school improvement leaders from Hastings Public Schools attended four workshops. The knowledge map consisted of 53 items on accreditation and data analysis. Seven items were randomly selected and quizzed at each session (twice on the first day, in the morning and afternoon). The data show attendees’

increasing knowledge over time. At the beginning of the workshop in October, almost all participants got two or fewer correct. By the end of that day, scores ranged from three to six correct. Over the course of the year, staff retained and grew their knowledge on the key concepts related to accreditation and data analysis.

be discounted — people who are cold are thinking about how stupid they were to not wear layers instead of absorbing the content of the workshop.

One option for gathering feedback is online, using sites such as TodaysMeet (www.todaysmeet.com). Once the administrator logs in, he or she lets participants know that they can post questions or comments throughout the day. The posts are available for all to see. Some questions or comments will be for the presenter, some for the organizers.

At a seminar in Marshall, Minn., co-author Lee Jenkins found that about 75% of the posts were questions he could answer immediately. Break and activity times provided the perfect opportunity to view the posts on a smartphone. The remaining comments, which concerned topics such as the projector, room temperature, and so on, were directed to administrators. All of

the comments and questions were addressed during the day and did not need to be placed on the feedback form — when it would have been too late to resolve any questions or concerns anyway.

SPELL OUT LEARNING GOALS

The ultimate outcome of professional learning is improved student outcomes. However, before that can happen, staff must learn new practices and behaviors.

All high-quality learning experiences begin with this basic question: What should participants learn? Whether the participants are students or staff, the question is the same.

Spelling out specific key concepts — what staff is expected to know and/or do by the end of a professional learning experience, whether over the course of a month, a semester, a year, or more — forms the foundation. When these key concepts are

shared with participants at the beginning, revisited throughout the learning experience, and emphasized at every opportunity, they become a map for the learning in which staff is engaged.

One example of this is the knowledge map (see p. 36) used by Hastings (Neb.) Public Schools. The map clearly identifies what staff should know as a result of all professional learning during the course of the year.

MEASURE LEARNING

Once the key concepts have been clearly identified, the next task is to measure learning and chart progress. One tool that does this is known as LtoJ.

LtoJ uses statistical sampling procedures to measure learning and chart progress over time. The number of questions is charted along the x-axis of a bar graph, and the number of participants along the y-axis. At the beginning of the learning experience, the graph resembles an L — lots of people know very little. As the learning progresses, the graphic progresses through the shape of a bell to become a J — a lot of people know a lot. See the sample LtoJ chart on p. 37.

The sampling procedure involves randomly selecting the square root of the number of key concepts for short quizzes. For example, there are 23 key concepts in the sample Hastings Public Schools knowledge map on p. 36. The square root of 23 is roughly five. Therefore, throughout the course of the learning experiences, participants are quizzed on five randomly chosen key concepts.

Data are collected at both an individual and group level and charted to show progress. Participants always know how they are doing as individuals and how the whole group's learning is progressing.

For a one-day seminar, data might be collected three times — at the beginning, before lunch, and at the end of the day. Over the course of a year, data might be collected at each meeting. Whatever the length of the professional learning experience, quizzes are given, data are collected, progress is charted, and, most importantly, instruction is tailored based on the results. The sample LtoJ chart on p. 37 is an example from Hastings Public Schools based on the results of professional learning over the course of a year on a knowledge map with 53 items.

EVALUATE IMPLEMENTATION

The more important duty of professional learning organizers is to evaluate implementation of the learning, which is the key to improving student learning. This information can only be gathered after a period of time. The feedback at the end of the seminar cannot inform leaders if enough learning for implementation has occurred. This sort of evaluation is what school systems often lack.

Sending out a questionnaire electronically to all teachers three months after the seminar will not help much. The results are the same as parent surveys: Only the most happy and the most angry answer.

To gather accurate evaluation data, randomly select teachers to interview. The number to interview, just as in selecting key concepts on which to quiz, is the square root of the total participants in the seminar. For example, if 60 teachers attended a workshop, interview eight randomly selected teachers.

At the beginning of the interview, ask each teacher to list the names of five colleagues. This list is for the teacher's use only and won't be collected or even seen by the interviewer. Then ask the following questions:

1. Did you make any classroom changes as the result of the seminar? How many of your five colleagues would answer the same way?
2. Did the changes you made (if any) bring about any positive results for at least one student? How many of your five colleagues would answer the same way?
3. Would you recommend that the presenter return to the school district? How many of your five colleagues would answer the same way?
4. If the answer to question 3 is yes: Would you like to have the presenter assist in your classroom for a small portion of a day? Would you like the presenter to be in your school for a whole day, spending some time in each classroom? How many of your five colleagues would answer the same way?
5. If the presenter recommended books: Would you read any of them if the district provided them for you? How many of your five colleagues would answer the same way?
6. There are many factors involved in improving student learning, and it's difficult to isolate one input. However, do you believe that the information you gained from this professional learning will assist student learning in your classroom? How many of your five colleagues would answer the same way?

To get an accurate picture, gather the information from at least 90% of those randomly selected.

Because this process involves only a small percentage of people, it is not as time-consuming as many evaluations — and many times more effective. Thus, it can be repeated two to three more times in various intervals even a year or more later. If the same name is randomly drawn again, interview that person again. This is the process of random selection.

FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION RESOURCES

Blanchard, K., Meyer, P. J., & Ruhe, D. (2007). *Know can do! Put your know-how into action.* San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Deming, W.E. (2000). *Out of the crisis.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Jenkins, L. (2005). *Permission to forget: And nine other root causes of America's frustration with education.* Milwaukee, WI: ASQ Quality Press.

Learning Forward. (2011). *Standards for Professional Learning.* Oxford, OH: Author.

BALANCE FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

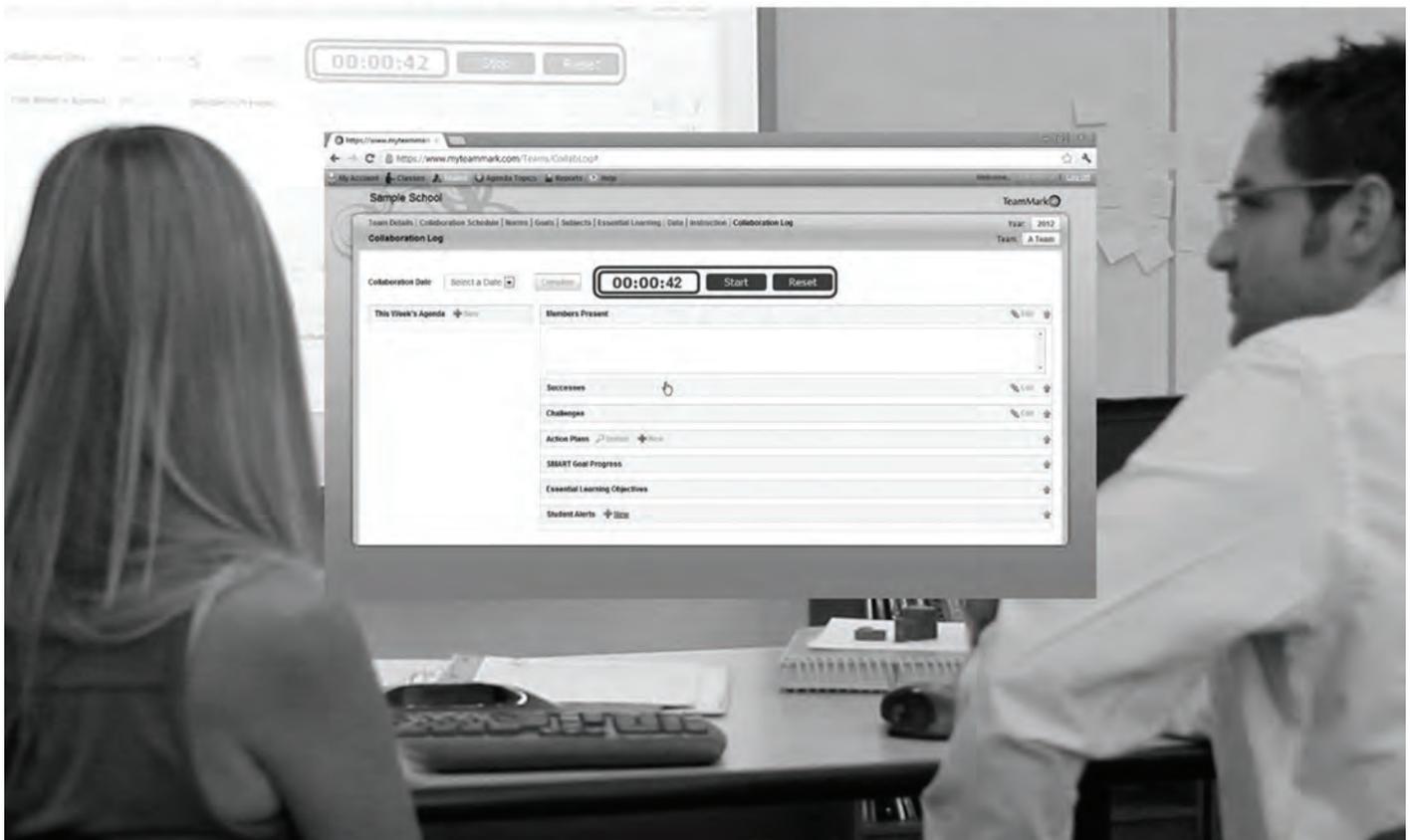
Both feedback and evaluation are important to measure professional learning. While professional developers have traditionally used feedback, evaluation is also a necessary component.

Evaluation must include measures of both knowledge and implementation. The LtoJ process is a simple way to measure knowledge throughout learning experiences. Interviewing a random sample of the square root of the population is an efficient way to measure implementation. Using both in combination pro-

vides a complete picture of any professional learning experience.

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