**An Evaluation of Creative Learning Communities
in Classrooms: A Two-Year Study of
the Implementation of School Reform**

CSE Technical Report 592

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AN EVALUATION OF CREATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN CLASSROOMS: A TWO-YEAR STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL REFORM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Creative Learning Communities (CLC) grants program, as part of the Disney Learning Partnership, has initiated a philanthropic initiative to assist participating elementary schools involved in school reform to institute collaborative and creative learning environments. An evaluation of the grants program by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE) and its National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) presents data findings collected over a 2-year period from 32 CLC schools. This report highlights the overall implementation process of CLC grants, trends in school changes from one year to the next, and a case study component of 8 schools, which includes an analysis of teacher interviews and classroom observations.

A multiple-methods design, including quantitative and qualitative approaches, was used to understand the CLC implementation process and its impact on schools, teachers, and students. A theory of action was used to provide focal points for the evaluation and included the following domains:

- Leadership and Goals
- School Culture and Structure
- Professional Development and Accountability
- Creative Teaching Practices
- Engaged Student Learning

The theory of action defines the core variables and indicators that are of interest to the study and projects a sequence in which change in indicators can be expected. That is, one would expect to see changes in teaching strategies and student opportunities to learn prior to seeing improvement in measured student learning.

The evaluation design features a two-tiered approach. Tier 1 features data collected from all 32 Creative Learning Communities schools, including document data and survey data from teachers and students. Tier 2 focuses on data collected from the 8 CLC case study schools, detailing the qualitative case study through analysis of interviews with teachers and administrators, and observations of classroom practice. Grounded in the program's theory of action, the evaluation was designed to address four basic questions:

- How is the Creative Learning Communities grants program being implemented?

- What are its effects on schools, teachers and their practices, and student learning outcomes?

- What factors influence effectiveness of the grant implementations?

- How can the program be improved?

Specific School Trends

Analysis of the schools' grant proposals and annual reports revealed specific school trends with respect to how the grant's program is being implemented in individual schools and school consortia and what its effects are on teachers and their practice, as well as student learning. There were 18 Creative Learning Communities projects, consisting of 13 individual schools and 5 school consortia, for a total of 32 schools in Year 1 and Year 2. Approximately 90% of the CLC schools were composed of students from low-income families, with the remaining 10% of schools mainly composed of students from middle-income families. Furthermore, 70% of the schools were located in an urban area, with the remaining 30% of schools located in either a suburban or a rural area. An analysis of the proposals indicated that these CLC schools, regardless of their location, shared similar experiences as schools with limited access to resources located in communities experiencing the multiple stresses of poverty.

With respect to how the grants program is being implemented, CLC projects differed in their disciplinary focus, professional development activities and accountability mechanisms. More than 60% of CLC projects featured a cross-curricular, interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning, utilizing thematic place- and project-based learning. The other CLC projects focused on a single subject (e.g., math, science, or language arts) that fostered learning for understanding. In painting a bold picture of innovative teaching and learning, schools differed in their configuration of professional development. More than 60% of CLC projects provided professional development dispersed throughout the school year without a clear and continuous connection to the classroom. The remaining projects provided teachers with professional development through designated curricular content area experts in the classroom on a weekly basis and through structured time to meet with

other teachers before, during, or after school to discuss newly learned practices. Finally, projects differed in how they monitored the impact of professional development on teacher practice and student learning. Seventy-five percent of the projects relied on observed changes and state assessments as their indicators of progress, which provided neither timely information nor the type of information needed for improvement of school reform efforts. Twenty-five percent of the projects did invest time and energy in creating assessments that were sensitive to subtle changes in teaching practices that are important for continuous inquiry.

With respect to program effects, the level of implementation and impact on teacher practice and student learning was determined by analyzing annual reports. The results indicated that 7 out of 17 projects were in an early implementation stage, 3 of the projects were in mid-implementation, and 7 of the projects were rated to be fully implemented. The distinction between being fully or not fully implemented depended on teacher *and* student participation in project activities. Given that only 40% of projects were fully implemented at varying levels of teacher and student participation, it is not surprising that 15 of the 17 projects experienced little or some improvement in teacher practice and student learning. Overall, based on self-reported data, CLC projects were beginning to take root, with Year 1 emphasis being on teacher activities, especially in the area of professional development. Student activities were expected to start in Year 2, when there should then be an increased influence on teacher practice and student learning.

Overall School Results

Across schools, teacher survey findings from the Year 1/Year 2 comparison (consisting of 835 teachers from a total of 28 schools) indicated significant differences between years based on the Influence of the CLC Project on Teacher Activities scale and the Student Engagement scale. Teachers indicated an increased effect of the CLC project on their activities from Year 1, with a mean of 3.87, to Year 2, with a mean of 4.06. Teachers were increasing their use of information from professional development activities, exchange of ideas with colleagues, knowledge of subject matter, teaching effectiveness, and use of alternative forms of assessment. For example, during Year 1 of implementation, teachers' comments indicated their expectation that the project would provide the resources necessary for increased collaboration and professional development, introducing them to "cutting-edge" "best practices" based on "solid research." In Year 2, teachers reported that they were directly applying information learned from their peers and professional development to their classrooms, and observing immediate results in student learning and outcomes. They indicated an increased agreement with a positive effect of the CLC project on their students' engagement from Year 1 (mean = 3.10) to Year 2 (mean = 3.23). Teachers agreed that students were increasing their learning, content knowledge, and problem-solving skills, as measured by the CLC Project Influence on Student Engagement scale. Effect sizes were in the moderate range—.33

for Influence of the CLC Project on Teacher Activities and .201 for Influence of the CLC Project on Student Engagement—indicating that the differences are most likely non-negligible in terms of their substantive significance.

Teacher survey data indicated a statistically significant difference in the CLC Influence on Teacher Practice and CLC Influence on Student Engagement scales. However, the other eight scales (Professional Development, Quality of Professional Development, Creative Teaching Practices, School Organization, School Accountability, School Change, School Current Status, and Schoolwide Support for CLC) remained relatively unchanged. Although the trends indicated positive mean shifts, it may be too soon to expect statistically significant differences in scales whose domains are deeply rooted in school culture and structure (especially the five school scales) and thus invisible to the statistical standards required to document this change.

Between schools, teacher survey findings indicated significant differences in the Professional Development Activities ($p < .000$), School Organization ($p < .001$), School Accountability ($p = .001$), Current School Status ($p = .032$), and Schoolwide Support for CLC Project ($p = .006$) scales. The patterns of change across years in the Professional Development Activities, School Organization, School Accountability, School Current Status, and Schoolwide Support for CLC scales showed marked differences between schools. The amount of change varied widely from school to school—some schools even having negative change—whereas the mean levels seemed unchanged. Differences between schools suggested that these dimensions of the school reform process, particularly school leadership and goals, school culture and structure, and professional development and accountability, are influencing factors in project implementation. However, inside the classroom, teachers reported a positive influence on teacher activities and student engagement, indicating that the creative teaching practices promoted by these projects are beginning to take root.

Across schools, student survey findings from the Year 1/Year 2 comparison (consisting of 7,405 third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade student surveys) indicated that students had a positive attitude toward their school and classroom learning environment, learning in general, and their teacher. Based on the Engaged Learning Environment scale, students had a positive attitude toward their school and classroom learning environment (means = 3.85 in Year 1 and 3.80 in Year 2). Only fourth- and fifth-grade students responded to items in the Engaged Learning scale, which captures students' attitudes about learning in general. Results indicated that students described themselves as good students (means = 3.93 in Year 1 and 3.83 in Year 2). Based on the Student-Teacher Engagement scale, from the students' perspective, teachers were engaged in their learning process, demonstrating care and concern for their students (means = 3.72 in Year 1 and 3.67 in Year 2).

One category of survey items focused on different domains of classroom activities, specifically students' opportunity for cooperative work and choice.

Students reported that they did many group projects in class (means = 3.22 in Year 1 and 3.19 in Year 2). They increasingly helped one another with classroom assignments (means = 2.71 in Year 1 and 3.16 in Year 2). However, students were mixed in their opinion of whether or not they worked in groups (constant, with means of 2.86 in Year 1 and 2.88 in Year 2) or individually (with means of 2.98 in Year 1 and 3.61 in Year 2) most of the time. Student survey data also indicated that students were mixed in their opinion as to their opportunity for choice of classroom activities. While they had a chance to discuss what they were learning (means = 3.31 in Year 1 and 3.24 in Year 2), they were mixed in their opinion about having the opportunity to help plan what they do in class (means = 2.93 in Year 1 and 2.47 in Year 2). Students were again mixed in their opinion that they had no choice of classroom activities (as indicated by the low means of 2.24 in Year 1 and 2.34 in Year 2). Yet, during both years, they indicated that they did not get many choices when it came to assignments (means = 2.87 in Year 1 and 2.85 in Year 2).

Student survey results indicated positive student engagement with their learning environment and learning in general. However, the lack of improvement in student engagement suggests that, though teachers were providing students with opportunities for student cooperative work and choice in learning activities, there are emerging practices that were not yet used consistently throughout the school year. Consistent with the teacher survey data, teachers provided students with these types of opportunities one to two times per month. With respect to the evaluation question about the effect of the program on student outcomes, increases in levels of engagement should expand in Year 3, when practices are deeply rooted in classrooms throughout CLC schools.

Case Study School Trends

The case study school results are presented in two parts: (a) overall site case study trends and (b) individual case study trends. Overall site case study trends include a matrix of case study themes (derived from teacher interviews) related to the barriers and successes of the grant implementation, and the shifts in the teachers' perspectives from Year 1 to Year 2. Interestingly, the barriers significantly decreased in Year 2, and conversely, the implementation successes increased in Year 2.

Year 2 barriers contrasted with Year 1 in the reduction of eight barrier themes to only three barrier themes in Year 2:

- project documentation,
- designing accountability systems and assessments, and
- sustainability of the reform.

The successes for Year 2 of the CLC grant projects nearly doubled in respect to the themes that emerged:

- significant increases in teacher buy-in,

- a community of engaged learners,

- emerging assessments for the CLC projects,

- development of community partnerships,

- embedded professional development activities,

- less resistance to the project—the teachers can now "see the impact," and

- reform efforts no longer seen as "one more thing" but rather as "*the* thing."

With increased levels of implementation, shifts in teacher practice occurred at the classroom level as depicted by the Classroom Practice Observation Protocol (CPOP). To present a more precise picture of the influence of the CLC projects on teacher practice, a comparison of matched scores was conducted (that is, comparisons for teachers who had CPOP scores for Year 1 and Year 2 at the same grade level). When the overall matched CPOP scores were compared, schools experienced improvement in all six domains. Substantial gains were made in student engagement, with increases for both procedural engagement (means = 2.96 in Year 1 and 3.52 in Year 2) and substantive engagement (means = 2.13 in Year 1 and 2.91 in Year 2).

Eight individual site case study trends highlight the qualitative comparisons between Year 1 and Year 2 of the project implementation for each school, with teacher interviews, classroom observations, and documents as the primary data sources for the qualitative analysis. Across the 2 years, 174 interviews and 145 classroom observations were conducted. The results for the 8 case study schools were organized to highlight the theory of action in each learning community. The theory of action domains were (a) school leadership, goals, and culture; (b) professional development activities; and (c) creative teaching strategies and engaged student learning, and each of these domains included qualitative themes and exemplars depicted in each case study site. With respect to the domain of creative teaching strategies, the CPOP data were examined for each site. The 8 case study sites can be described as belonging to one of the following categories:

- place-based learning school site,

- communal learning school site,

- experiential learning school site,

- informal learning school site,

- cooperative learning consortium site, or

- thematic learning consortium site.

Qualitative themes and text exemplars were used to describe each case study site and to compare the theory of action at each site.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the results of the 2-year evaluation document shifts in school culture that ultimately impact student learning. While this is a "too early to tell" story about the outcomes of student learning, the story clearly indicates that school culture is changing, teaching practices are changing, and shifts are occurring all toward developing creative learning communities. Three domains of paradigm shifts have been observed in this evaluation study:

- shifts to dynamic school culture,
- shifts to engaged learning practices, and
- shifts to creative learning communities.

A dynamic model of school reform to highlight the trajectories of the engagement of learning was introduced. Four trajectories—school culture, student engagement, teacher engagement and creative learning communities—are conceptualized as bi-directional and co-constructional in creating an engaged learning environment.

Four recommendations to improve the CLC grant program are provided, based on teacher survey responses, teacher interviews, and documents (e.g., annual reports):

- Retrofitting expectations: School sites need to be clear about expectations for the implementation of the grant activity.

- Revisiting issues of accountability: There are no consistent indicators of project implementation and impact presented in the annual reports; schools may need assistance with data analysis and documentation, and more consistent documentation (e.g., quarterly) may be warranted.

- Reflective process for professional development: The survey and interview data highlight a clear trend indicating that teachers need, want, and would respond to professional development activities that promote reflective inquiry and an infrastructure that provides ongoing support and continuity, with all being embedded in curriculum and classroom instruction.

- Re-thinking reform efforts as systemic change: Schools should re-think what reform efforts are realistic and attainable for sustaining a systems change. A multifaceted approach to reform should be made explicit for each school site so that the reform efforts of the school sites are accountable, sustainable, and replicable for future reform efforts in other schools sites.

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Introduction

The Disney Learning Partnership, a philanthropic initiative of the Walt Disney Company, has launched Creative Learning Communities (CLC), an innovative national grants program, to support school reform. The Creative Learning Communities grants program provides multiyear support to help participating elementary schools promote creative teaching and learning practices that will enable all children to reach high standards and attain future success. Through a process of schoolwide collaborative problem solving, ongoing inquiry, and professional learning, Creative Learning Communities expects to enhance student learning and produce effective and replicable strategies, procedures, and materials that can be adopted by other schools.

The Creative Learning Communities grants program is grounded in a well-developed philosophy of the nature of school reform intended to foster positive change and the kinds of creative teaching strategies that are needed to enhance student learning. Each of these subjects represents important areas of inquiry for the evaluation. With regard to the nature of an effective reform process, Creative Learning Communities makes clear its commitment to schoolwide collaborative problem solving that focuses on priority learning issues as defined by individual schools or school consortia. As part of the collaborative problem-solving process, schools are expected to engage in ongoing inquiry and continuous improvement by articulating their priority goals, defining benchmarks, and regularly assessing their progress, using a variety of student assessments and other indicators of student learning.

The UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE), with the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), is conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation and impact of this important reform effort. This evaluation report presents data findings from CLC schools collected over a 2-year period, and examines in detail the implementation process, the program's effect on schools, teachers, and students, and factors that either promote or prohibit its effectiveness.

Literature, Background, and Evaluation Questions

Dimensions of Schoolwide Change

The growing consensus on the essential components of successfully planning, implementing, and sustaining schoolwide change includes the following dimensions: (a) leadership that facilitates the complex process of change, (b) goals that focus on what teachers do and how students learn, (c) an organizational environment that supports change in both the culture and structure of a school, (d) professional development that prepares teachers to provide students with enhanced educational experiences, and (e) accountability mechanisms that monitor progress continuously for the explicit purpose of improving teaching and learning (Klein, Medrich, & Perez-Ferreiro, 1996; O'Day, Goertz, & Floden, 1995; Quellmalz, Shields, & Knapp, 1995).

Leadership. Principals and teacher leaders can effectively initiate and implement schoolwide reform by articulating, mobilizing, and facilitating the process of change. They should create opportunities for teachers and other stakeholders to come together to discuss and determine the critical issues of change, recognizing that every person is a change agent (Fullan, 1997). Principals and teacher leaders should also attend to both the structural and cultural aspects of change. For example, instituting weekly whole-school meetings will not in itself create a collaborative culture among school staff. According to Fullan, "to re-structure is not to re-culture"; that is, there is an equal emphasis on the technical and normative aspects of change (see also Deal & Peterson, 1994).

Goals. A collective sense of purpose is critical to successfully improving teaching and learning. Principals, teachers, students, and their families must build a shared vision of school change that is anchored in curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Lieberman & Miller, 1999). Teacher participation in the problem-solving process is necessary if teachers are to have an understanding of and commitment to

the proposed changes in teacher practice, as this will profoundly affect their self-definition (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999; Fullan, 1993). Conflict is to be expected as stakeholders discuss and determine the goals of school change, often re-thinking their basic beliefs about the purpose of education, the content of the curriculum, and theories about teaching and learning (Lieberman & Miller, 1999). Finally, the goals of school change should be directly linked to student learning and outcomes, setting high expectations with an emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking (Quellmalz et al., 1995).

School environment. Changes in teaching and learning must be supported by changes in the culture and structure of the school in order to create the organizational capacity that provides the type of educational experience being called for by Creative Learning Communities. Structural changes should not be the primary goal of school change; rather, they should explicitly support the school's learning goals (O'Day et al., 1995). For example, formal mechanisms will be needed for communication of the change process to all stakeholders, encouraging participation and cooperation in order to create a shared vision of and outcomes for teaching and learning. Schools must attend to the cultural as well as the structural aspects of reform. That is, schools need to understand and respond to the changing attitudes, beliefs, and values about the core technology of teaching and learning (Fullan, 1993).

Professional development. Empirical research findings document the influence and impact of teacher expertise on effective implementation of school change and increases in student achievement (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999). If teachers are to provide students with enhanced and enriched learning opportunities, they must have the necessary knowledge, skills, and disposition (O'Day et al., 1995). Teachers are more likely to change the way they work if they are provided with continuous, school-based professional development that is linked to substantive goals and outcomes for student learning, promoting teacher interaction and involvement, as well as relying on a theoretical research base and teacher expertise (Little, 1992; Sykes, 1999). Professional development should also attend to teachers' professional identities and purposes for teaching and the cultural context in which they work (Hawley & Valli, 1999).

Accountability. Measures for monitoring progress should be consistent with the goals of school reform, focusing on the attainment of those goals and providing information on addressing weaknesses (O'Day et al., 1995). Change is a nonlinear

process that proceeds by trial and error, requiring constant review and adjustment in activities (Klein et al., 1996). In addition to standardized tests, schools should explore alternative assessments of student learning (e.g., portfolios, projects, and investigations) that are aligned with creative teaching practices and feature ongoing, integrated tasks that allow for multiple interpretations (Quellmalz et al., 1995). Process indicators are also critical for providing formative information for adjustments, assisting in the ongoing reflection by principals and teachers necessary in implementing changes in teaching and learning (Klein et al., 1996).

CLC envisions that schools will apply creative teaching strategies to address critical learning issues in their classroom practice. "The program is based on a belief that children learn more and are better able to use what they learn when they are engaged in the joyful work of generating, exploring, interpreting, and connecting ideas in order to solve challenging problems" (*Disney Learning Partnership Proposal,* 1999). Intertwined with this belief is a commitment to fostering both academic learning and "joy of learning." Such creative teaching and learning strategies are standards-based, promote basic skills in the context of complex thinking and problem solving, and stimulate students to create their own understanding. The overall goal for schools in the CLC grants program is to create engaged learning communities. That is, both teachers and students are engaged in classroom activities where creative practices mediate and influence student learning.

Engagement theory. If instructional methods, including creative teacher practices, influence student achievement, then student engagement in the learning activity is the mediating factor (Kumar, 1991). Theorists conceptualize the term "engagement" quite differently, without any agreement among the educational and psychological research community as to its core qualities. A body of research has accumulated around the definition of engagement as on-task behavior—procedural engagement—that includes, to varying degrees, a student's accommodation to classroom rules and regulations and concerted effort in carrying out and completing learning activities (Kumar, 1991; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Research studies indicate that procedural engagement is the main form of student engagement that exists in schools today, in which students conform to existing roles and routines without developing a deeper understanding of subject matter, and therefore this type of engagement may not be sufficient in influencing student learning and achievement (Newmann, 1992).

Another body of research defines engagement—substantive engagement—as the intensity *and* emotional quality of children's involvement in initiating and carrying out learning activities (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). The emphasis is on the student's enjoyment of learning while participating in learning activities, rather than exclusively on concentration and completion, because this experience of learning is self-motivating and self-reinforcing, exciting learners to seek new and more engaging experiences (Hektner & Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Whalen, 1998).

Learning activities and environments can be constructed to create opportunities for students to experience substantive engagement. Newman, Wehlage, and Lamborn (1992) identified three factors that affect engagement: (a) a student's need for competence, achieving cognitive understanding and skill mastery; (b) a school culture that is caring, fair, and supportive; and (c) authentic work, including intrinsic interests, sense of ownership, connection to the real world, and fun. Whalen (1998) identified three features of teaching that enable students to experience authentic engagement: (a) communicating to students high expectations in a learning environment of continuous support and care; (b) matching student skill level with challenging learning activities allowing for student choice and control; and (c) modeling enthusiasm for learning.

Researchers in the area of literacy have already begun to investigate the interactive nature of engagement. Nystrand and Gamoran (1991) focused on instructional discourse, noting that substantive engagement requires a high degree of reciprocity in a genuine dialogue between student and teacher. In developing a theory of literacy engagement that includes motivation, conceptual understanding, and cognitive strategies, Guthrie (1996) included social interaction as a dimension because learning is situated in a social context. Taking the interactive nature of engagement one step further, Louis and Smith (1992) asserted that teacher and student work are inextricably intertwined and therefore extend the concept of engagement to the teachers themselves. They identified teachers' engagement with the student as a unique individual, with the school as a social unit, with student- and school-level academic achievement, and with their own content and pedagogical knowledge. The majority of research studies focus exclusively on student engagement, never fully developing an interactive model of engagement that includes teachers in a meaningful way (Hektner & Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Kumar, 1991; McQuillan & Conde, 1996; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Skinner &

Belmont, 1993; Whalen, 1997). Yet, if teachers are to provide students with engaging learning experiences, then teacher engagement becomes a critical component in a model of engagement that is bi-directional for both teachers and students.

A Theory of Action

The underlying assumptions about effective teaching and learning provide touchstones for examining the effects of CLC, with improved student learning and student attitudes as the ultimate goal. CLC asserts the widespread adoption of creative teaching strategies, including such things as teaching practices that foster exploration and in-depth understanding, classroom environments that support student risk-taking, inquiry, and imagination, and assessment practices aligned with creative learning. To support the implementation of these creative teaching strategies, CLC recognizes the need for (a) leadership that attends to the structural and cultural aspects of change, (b) goals that a capture a shared vision of change anchored in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, (c) an environment that both structurally and culturally supports the types of change being called for by CLC, (d) professional development to provide teachers with the knowledge, skills and motivation to change their practice, and (e) accountability measures for monitoring progress, including attainment of goals, and provision of information to address weakness. This basic theory of action for establishing learning communities is summarized in Figure 1 with five major domains:

- Leadership and Goals

- School Culture and Structure [Environment]

- Professional Development and Accountability

- Creative Teaching Practices

- Engaged Student Learning

The theory of action provides focal points for the evaluation; furthermore, it suggests the sequence in which various effects may be expected. One would expect to see changes in teaching strategies and student opportunities to learn, prior to seeing improvement in measured student learning. The theory of action defines the core variables and indicators that are of interest to the study and projects a sequence in which change in indicators can be expected. Furthermore, the evaluation provides an opportunity to test and refine the Disney Learning Partnership's operating theory: Do creative teaching strategies enhance student learning?

Leadership & Goals

Attend to cultural and structural change

Anchor in curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Connect to student learning

Facilitate change

Mobilize change

Build a shared vision

School Culture & Structure

Attend to changing attitudes, beliefs, & values

Provide materials

Provide financial support

Build a community

Provide technical support

Embed in school culture

Professional Development & Accountability

Promote and provide time for ongoing professional inquiry

Align with project goals

Provide the type of and timely information for project adjustments

Provide opportunities for teacher collaboration

Develop measures aligned with creative teaching practices

Embed in classroom practice

Creative Teaching Practices

Shift teacher attitudes, beliefs, and expectations

Align with standards

Link to curriculum

Align with assessments (standardized and performance)

Identify innovative practices

Embed in school culture

Engaged Student Learning

Promote the "joy of learning" through exploration, collaboration, and interpretation
Promote basic skills in the context of complex thinking and problem solving
Improve student achievement on multiple measures
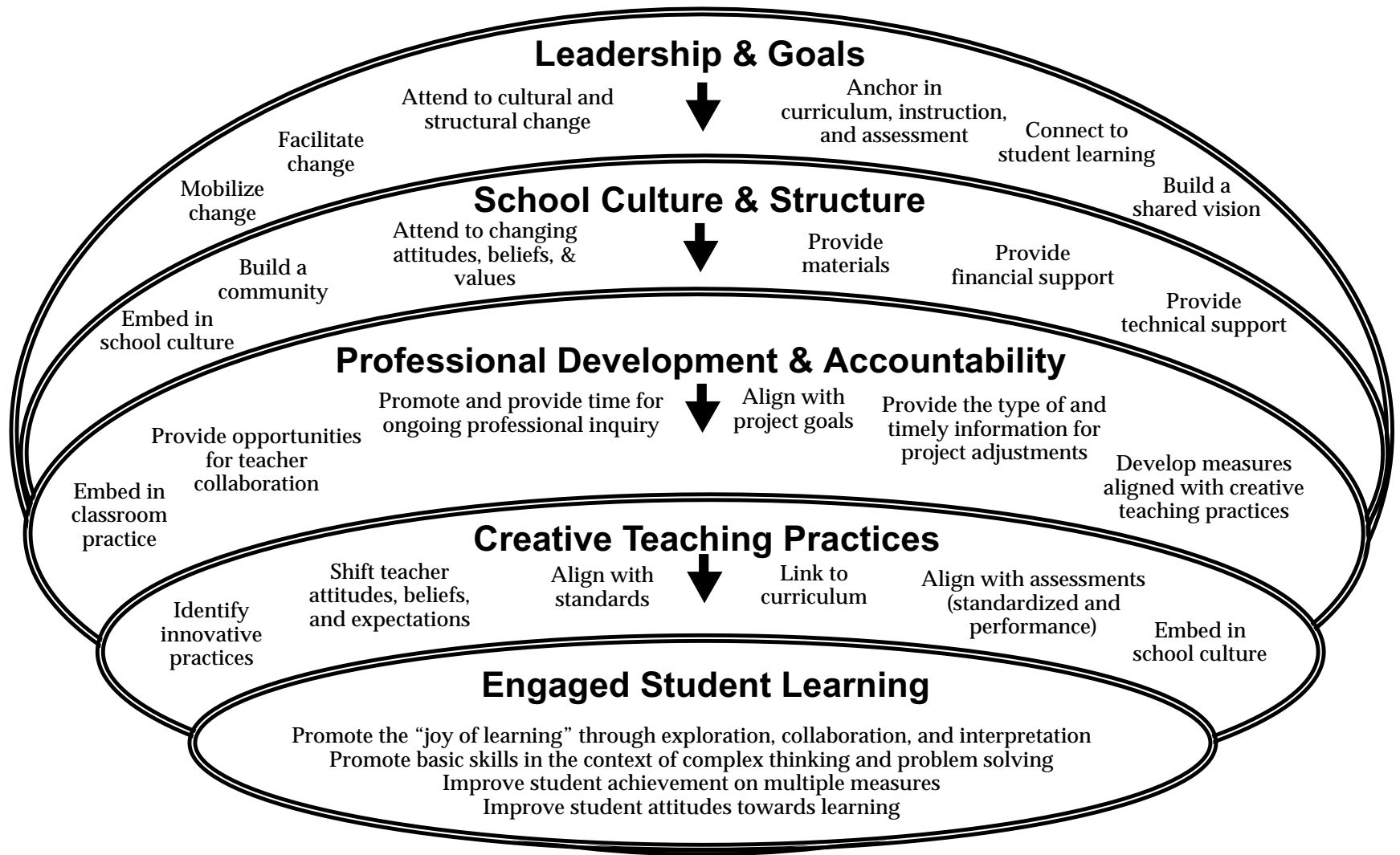Improve student attitudes towards learning

Figure 1. Establishing learning communities: A Theory of Action.

Evaluation Questions

Grounded in the program's theory of action, the evaluation is designed to address four basic questions:

- How is the Creative Learning Communities grants program being implemented?

- What are its effects on schools, teachers and their practices, and student outcomes?

- What factors influence effectiveness?

- How can the program be improved?

The remainder of the evaluation report provides (a) the evaluation methodology and framework, (b) evaluation results, (c) conclusions and (d) recommendations. The evaluation framework includes information on the materials and measures, procedures, respondents, and data analyses used for the measures. The evaluation results report the data analyses of specific school trends, overall school trends, and case study school trends for 2 years of data collection. The evaluation report concludes with a summary of the results and implications for the final year of the evaluation and recommendations based on the 2 years of data collection and data results.

Evaluation Methodology and Framework

A multiple-methods design, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, was used to understand the CLC implementation process and its impact on schools, teachers, and students. Table 1 highlights the evaluation questions and the data sources used to answer these questions, including surveys (e.g., teacher and student surveys), documents (e.g., school proposals and annual reports), interviews, and observations. The evaluation design features a two-tiered approach:

- Tier 1 features data collection across all CLC schools, including document data from project proposals and annual reports and survey data from both teachers and students.

- Tier 2 focuses on a smaller sample of schools, detailing the qualitative story of the schools through interviews with teachers and administrators and observations of classrooms.

Table 1

Evaluation Questions and Data Sources

| | Data sources | | | |
| | ——————————————————— | | | |
Evaluation questions	Surveys	Documents	Interviews	Observations
How is the CLC grants program being implemented?		X	X	
What are its effects on schools, teachers and their practices, and student outcomes?	X	X	X	X
What factors influence effectiveness?	X	X	X	
How can the program be improved?		X	X	

Sampling Scheme

There were 18 CLC projects implemented in 13 individual schools and 5 school consortia for a total of 32 schools in Year 1 and Year 2.[1] For Tier 1, all schools were invited to submit project documents and participate in the teacher and student surveys. Teacher surveys were distributed to all 895 K-6 teachers at all 32 schools in Year 1 and Year 2. Student surveys were distributed to all 7,065 students in Year 1 and all 7,081 students in Year 2, in third, fourth, and fifth grades at all 32 schools. The decision to survey third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students only was determined by their ability to reliably answer questions regarding their attitudes towards their teacher, classroom, learning activities, and learning in general.

For Tier 2, case study schools were selected based on the following criteria: (a) project format (e.g., individual school or school consortium), (b) project content area focus (e.g., core or interdisciplinary), and (c) school location (e.g., urban, suburban, or rural). Eight schools were selected as case study sites for Year 1 and continued their status as case study sites in Year 2 (see Table 2 for resulting breakdown).

All 194 K-6 classroom teachers in Year 1 and 196 K-6 classroom teachers in Year 2 at the 8 case study schools were invited to participate in interviews and observations. The decision to interview classroom teachers rather than all certified teachers, whether in or out of the classroom, was based on the fact that the Creative Learning Communities program asserts the widespread adoption of creative teaching strategies where it matters most—the classroom. In addition, all 19 people

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[1] A school consortium consists of 2 to 6 schools.

Table 2

Case Study Selection Criteria

Criterion	Subsection of criterion	Number
Project format	Individual school	4
	School consortium	4 (2 consortia)
Project content area focus	Core (e.g., math, science)	3
	Interdisciplinary	3
	Other	1
School location	Urban	6
	Suburban	1
	Rural	1

in project leadership positions, defined as administrators and coordinators, at all 8 case study schools in Year 1 and Year 2 were invited to participate in interviews

School Documents

Supporting documents included project proposals and project annual reports.

Materials. Researchers at the UCLA Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) specifically developed the Project Proposal Matrix for the CLC grants program (see Appendix A). The matrix categories (Table 3) include key components of project proposals such as (a) school and student demographics and (b) project plans of action (e.g., content area, professional development, and accountability).

CRESST researchers also specifically developed the Project Annual Report Rubric for the grants program (see Appendix A). The rubric covers several domains based on the questions given to schools to guide their annual reports, including (a) degree of implementation, (b) description of primary activities, (c) degree of participation, (d) evidence of and degree of impact on teacher practice, (e) evidence of and degree of impact on student learning, and (f) changes for Year 2 (see Table 4 for rubric sections and definitions).

Procedures. In the 1999-2000 data collection, researchers requested a copy of project proposals from all 18 projects in January 1999. In the 2000-2001 data collection year, researchers requested a copy of the Year 1 annual reports from all 18 projects in January 2000.

Table 3

Proposal Matrix Categories and Definitions

Category	Definition
Project format	Organization by individual school or school consortium
Project location	Urban, suburban, or rural location of school or consortium
Project region	Regional location of school or consortium
Project content area focus	Content area emphasis
Project grade-level focus	Grade-level(s) emphasis
Predominant student ethnicity	Majority of student population's ethnicity
Predominant student socio-economic status	Majority of student population's socio-economic status
Predominant student English language proficiency	Majority of student population's English language proficiency
Professional development component	Content and pedagogical training
Classroom assessment component	Use of assessment results for instructional planning and delivery
Student assessment data	Type of assessment results used to monitor student performance and project progress
Reasonable benchmarks	Measurable benchmarks
Implementation rate	Planning or non-planning phase
External evaluator	Outside consultant assisted in project proposal

Table 4

Annual Report Rubric Sections and Definitions

Section	Definition
Activities: Teacher and student	Teacher activities include development of curriculum, development/refinement of assessment and instructional strategies, and professional development
	Student activities include learning activities during, before, and after school
Participation: Teacher and student	Teacher involvement in project activities
	Student involvement in project activities
Student learning: Impact and evidence	Degree of influence on student achievement, attitudes, knowledge, and skills as demonstrated by quantitative and qualitative indicators
Teacher practice: Impact and evidence	Degree of influence on teacher attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and skills as demonstrated by quantitative and qualitative indicators
Changes	Adjustments to the project plan of action
Project phase	Degree of implementation as determined by activities and participation

Sample. In the 1999-2000 data collection year, all 18 project proposals were collected (13 individual school projects and 5 school consortium projects) with a response rate of 100%. In the 2000-2001 data collection year, 17 project annual reports were collected (12 individual school projects and 5 school consortium projects) with a response rate of 94%. The final sample for the Year 1/Year 2 comparison consisted of 33 school documents.

Data analysis. CRESST researchers categorized key components of project proposals (a) to achieve an overall understanding of the project, participants, and plan of action, and (b) to determine the project implementation phase. Category assignment was based on the explicit description of school and student demographics and plan of action.

CRESST researchers analyzed the annual reports to determine (a) the degree of teacher and student participation in project activities, (b) the degree of project implementation and (c) the degree of impact on teachers and students. Researchers through consensus rated all three areas on a scale of 1 to 3. The degree of participation was determined by the percentage of total teachers and students participating in project activities (1 = 25% to 49%, 2 = 50% to 74%, and 3 = 75% to 100%). The degree of project implementation was determined by the combination of degree of participation in activities (1 = *no teacher activities enacted or teacher activities with only 25% to 49% participation*, 2 = *teacher activities with 50% or more participation*, and 3 = *teacher activities at 50% or more and student activities at 25% or more*). The degree of impact on teachers and students was determined by the combination of project description of impact and supporting evidence (1 = *no or little impact as supported by no or only observed changes*, 2 = *some impact as supported by 2-3 indicators*, and 3 = *significant impact as supported by 4 or more indicators*).

Teacher Survey

The teacher survey was developed by researchers at CRESST (see Appendix A).

Materials. The survey consisted of 131 questions designed to obtain information about the teachers' schools and their perceptions of the impact of the Creative Learning Communities program. To capture pertinent information across domains, the survey was divided into the following sections: background information, school organization, school change and its current status, professional development activities and their quality, parent involvement, student activities (in general and involving the community), assessment methods and practices, school

accountability, perceptions about CLC's influence on students and teachers, and finally, four open-ended questions (see Table 5).

Procedures. All 32 schools were selected to participate in the survey, with teacher participation being voluntary. In the winter of 2000 and fall of 2001, principals and coordinators received a letter explaining the purpose of the CLC evaluation and necessary information for the scheduling of surveys in the spring (see Appendix B). In the spring of 2000 and 2001, principals and coordinators received another letter explaining the teacher survey procedures along with the actual surveys and business reply envelopes to be distributed among the teachers (see Appendix B). The teacher survey was distributed to schools in May 2000 and

Table 5

Teacher Survey Sections and Definitions

Survey section	Definition
Demographic information	Respondent's background information and work experience
School organization	Organizational structure and culture of the school
School's current status and how it changed in the past year	Shifts in and status of curriculum and instruction, teacher practice, student performance, and community relationships
Professional development activities	Training teachers received
Quality of professional development activities	Teacher's perception of the quality of training received related to his or her CLC project
Parent involvement	Parents' participation in school and classroom activities
Student activities involving the community	Activities that utilize individuals and resources from the community
Student activities in general	Classroom activities
Assessment methods	Types of assessments used to evaluate student work
Teacher practices	Types of instructional practices utilized by teachers in the classroom
School accountability	Availability and use of data to monitor school progress
Assessment practices	Use of assessment results for instructional planning and delivery
Attitude toward CLC	Feelings toward CLC project
Influence of CLC on students	Changes in student performance due to CLC project
Influence of CLC on teachers	Changes in teacher activities due to CLC project

Note. CLC = Creative Learning Communities.

April 2001. Teachers received the survey with a letter attached explaining the purpose of and procedures for the survey (see Appendix B). The survey took approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete and was mailed directly to CRESST in the business reply envelope.

Respondents. In the 1999-2000 data collection year, a total of 430 teacher surveys were received from 30 schools with a return rate of 48%. The final Year 1 sample consisted of 417 surveys.[2] In the 2000-2001 data collection year, a total of 422 teacher surveys were received from 30 schools with a return rate of 47%. The final Year 2 sample consisted of 418 surveys. Twenty-eight out of 32 schools returned surveys for both Year 1 and Year 2. The final sample for the Year 1/Year 2 comparison consisted of 835 teachers from a total of 28 schools. Though no longitudinal matching of respondents was possible across the 2 years, the samples in 2000 and 2001 were very similar in terms of their demographics (see Table 6), constituting representative snapshots of the same population across the 2 years.

Data analysis. Various quantitative analyses were conducted, including descriptive analyses (calculations, frequencies, and means for items and scales), *t* tests, and multilevel modeling. Subsets of items were grouped into 11 scales by averaging items related to the same content. The high reliability (alpha) coefficients for the 11 scales for both Year 1 and Year 2 suggest their tenability (see Table 7).

Table 6

Comparison of 2000 and 2001 Teacher Survey Samples

Demographic indicator	2000	2001
Average years of experience	11.82	12.20
Female	88.4%	89.0%
Single grade	80.0%	85.9%
Professional clear credential	78.6%	80.0%
White (African American)	72.4% (9.5%)	73.7% (12.6%)
Master's degree (Bachelor's plus credit)	53.0% (34.2%)	52.6% (32.4%)
75%+ enrolled LEP (25%+ enrolled LEP)[a]	44.7% (31.4%)	50.9% (30.6%)

[a]Seventy-five percent or more of the students enrolled in a teacher's classroom are designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP) in comparison to classrooms in which only 25% or more of the students enrolled are designated as LEP.

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[2]Twenty-three teacher surveys in Year 1 and 4 surveys in Year 2 were excluded from the data analyses because they were incomplete or filled out incorrectly.

Table 7

Teacher Survey Scales

Scale	Definition	Item #	Reliability
School organization	Level of collaborative school culture and structures	1-4, 6, 7	Y1α = .8331 Y2α = .7639
School accountability	Availability and use of data to monitor school progress	86-88, 90	Y1α = .7758 Y2α = .9065
Parent involvement	Level of parent participation	45-53	Y1α = .8558 Y2α = .8309
School's current status	Current status in school structure and culture, teacher practice, and student performance	13-17, 19-24	Y1α = .8826 Y2α = .8838
School change	Changes in school structure and culture, teacher practice, and student performance	13-17, 19-24	Y1α = .8774 Y2α = .7282
Professional development activities	Level of teacher participation in training	25-36	Y1α = .8233 Y2α = .7386
Quality of professional development	Usefulness of training	37-43, 109	Y1α = .8742 Y2α = .8890
Creative teaching practices	Frequency of creative teaching practices	54-58, 60, 62, 64-66, 70, 71, 81, 85	Y1α = .7920 Y2α = .7802
Schoolwide support for CLC project	Feelings about CLC project	10, 11, 100-102, 104, 108, 110	Y1α = .8898 Y2α = .8934
CLC's influence on teacher activities	Changes in teacher activities	111-116	Y1α = .9313 Y2α = .9065
CLC's influence on student engagement	Changes in student performance	9, 103, 106-107	Y1α = .8413 Y2α = .8801

Note. Y1 = Year 1; Y2 = Year 2; CLC = Creative Learning Communities.

The sample size for these analyses is the sum of cases with complete data in the 2 years with 417 teacher surveys in Year 1 and 418 teacher surveys in Year 2, totaling 835 teachers for the Year 1/Year 2 comparison from 28 schools. Drawing from the assumption of equivalent samples in Year 1 and Year 2, a test of the significance of the differences across years was performed. A multilevel model was used for this purpose that included the data from both years in Level 1 (identified by a dichotomous variable for years 0 and 1), nested within schools at Level 2. A multilevel model is preferable to a raw mean comparison across years because it acknowledges the nested structure of the data (in this case, teachers nested within

schools) and therefore provides more realistic standard errors for the parameters, and therefore more accurate tests for the differences.

The Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) V.5 software was used to estimate the multilevel models in this study. The basic model used included the intercept and the dichotomous year predictor at Level 1 and allowed for random variation of these at Level 2. A different model was attempted for each of the 11 scales. The mathematical model in multilevel form is as follows:

<div style="text-align:center">

Level-1 Model
$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1{}^*(\text{YEAR}) + \varepsilon$$

Level-2 Model
$$\beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + U_0$$
$$\beta 1 = \gamma_{10} + U_1$$

</div>

where β_0 is the scale mean in year 2000, β_1 is the change from year 2000 to year 2001, γ_{00} and γ_{10} are the grand average and average change across schools respectively, and U_0 and U_1 represent the variability across schools of mean levels and change rates.

The model described above was utilized in across-schools comparisons. The effect sizes for differences across schools were obtained by dividing the *overall change* parameter (γ_{10}) by the pooled within-group standard deviation estimate ($\sqrt{\sigma^2}$) also reported by HLM. The model used in this study included random terms capturing the variability across schools in both initial mean levels (U_0), and change from 2000 to 2001 (U_1). Significant U_0 or U_1 coefficients would indicate that differences exist between schools in terms of their initial 2000 status (β_0), or their change from 2000 to 2001 (β_1).

Student Survey

The student survey was developed using subscales from the Student Questionnaire for Elementary School Students developed by the Developmental Studies Center (see Appendix A).

Materials. The survey consisted of 28 questions for the third-grade students and 33 questions for the fourth- and fifth-grade students. These questions were designed to assess students' attitudes about learning in general, school, teachers, and classroom activities.

The survey was divided into three sections (see Table 8). Questions in Section 1 asked about students' feelings towards school and their classroom, including "I like my school," "My classroom is a fun place to be," and "I enjoy what I do in class." The survey for fourth- and fifth-grade students contained an additional five questions about learning in general, such as "I think I am a good student" and "I am doing a good job in school." Section 2 of the survey included questions about students' feelings toward their teacher and classroom activities, such as "My teacher listens to me," "I have a chance to discuss what we are learning," and "I work in groups most of the time." Section 3 consisted of two open-ended questions requiring a written response: "Describe a favorite project you have worked on this year; what made it your favorite?" and "Describe your favorite subject in school this year; write about what you do in class that makes it your favorite subject."

Procedures.   All 32 schools were selected to participate in the survey with third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade student participation being voluntary. In the winter of 2000 and fall of 2001, principals and coordinators received a letter explaining the purpose of the CLC evaluation and providing information necessary for the scheduling of surveys in the spring (see Appendix B). In the spring of 2000 and 2001, principals and coordinators received another letter explaining the student survey procedures, along with the following materials to be distributed among the teachers: (a) teacher survey letter, (b) parent consent forms, (c) student surveys with attached student assent forms, and (d) individual envelopes for each survey and Federal Express envelopes with labels (see Appendix B). The student survey was distributed to schools in May 2000 and April 2001.

Teachers received all materials, including a letter explaining classroom survey procedures (see Appendix B). Prior to the administration of the student survey, parent consent forms were sent home with potential student participants (see Appendix C). Parents signed and returned the form only if they refused to consent

Table 8

Student Survey Sections and Definitions

Survey section	Definition
School and classroom	Attitude toward their school and classroom
Learning	Attitude toward their performance in school
Teacher	Attitude toward their teacher
Classroom activities	Attitude toward classroom activities

to their child's participation. Teachers administered the student survey during class time. Prior to completing the survey, all students with parental consent signed the student assent form (see Appendix C) attached to the survey. Teachers read the directions and survey aloud to the students, item by item. Each student placed the completed survey in an individual envelope, sealing it before returning the envelope to the classroom teacher, in order to ensure confidentiality. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The classroom teacher collected all sealed envelopes, placing them in a Federal Express envelope, along with returned parent [refusal-of-]consent forms. The classroom teacher then returned the filled Federal Express envelope to the project coordinator to be mailed back to CRESST.

Respondents. In the 1999-2000 data collection year, a total of 3,096 student surveys were received, for a response rate of 44%. The final Year 1 sample consisted of 3,096 student surveys. In the 2000-2001 data collection year, a total of 4,308 student surveys were received, for a response rate of 61%. The final Year 2 sample consisted of 4,308 surveys. The increase in response rate from 44% in Year 1 to 61% in Year 2 is attributed to the following: (a) increased follow up from CRESST (e.g., phone calls, faxes, and letters) and (b) increased familiarity with the study and survey procedures on the part of schools. The total sample for the Year 1/Year 2 comparison was 7,405 third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade student surveys. No longitudinal matching of subjects was possible across the two years; however, the samples in 2000 and 2001 were very similar in terms of their demographics, constituting representative snapshots of the same population across the two years.

Data analysis. Various quantitative analyses were conducted, including descriptive analyses (calculations, frequencies, and means for items and scales) and *t* tests. The student survey consisted of a total of 28 questions for the third-grade students and 33 questions for the fourth- and fifth-grade students. Two questions were open-ended and required written responses. A total of 33 questions were used in the quantitative analyses. Of the 33 questions, 32 were reviewed for specific areas of inquiry.[3] Twenty-four items out of the 32 were grouped into three scales by averaging items related to the same content (see Table 9). The high reliability (alpha) coefficients in the scales suggest their tenability.

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[3] One question was removed from the groups of 33 items as it did not relate to any of the other questions.

Table 9

Student Survey Scales

Scale	Definition	Item #	Reliability
Engaging learning environments	Enjoyment of school and classroom in general	1-6, 8-11	$Y1\alpha = .7912$
			$Y2\alpha = .8330$
Engaged learning	Attitude toward learning	12-16	$Y1\alpha = .7569$
			$Y2\alpha = .7909$
Student-teacher engagement	Attitude toward teacher	3-5, 7, 9, 12-14	$Y1\alpha = .7579$
			$Y2\alpha = .7301$

Note. Y1 = Year 1; Y2 = Year 2.

Observations

Observations were made in both years at the 8 case study sites using a protocol developed from existing measures and empirical research.

Materials. The Classroom Practice Observation Protocol (CPOP; see Appendix A) was adapted from measures used in other CRESST projects looking at key dimensions of instructional practices (see Table 10). Based on additional empirical research (e.g., Hektner & Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Newman, 1992; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Whalen, 1997, 1998), the domains of procedural engagement and substantive engagement were added to the CPOP and pilot-tested at the Corrine A. Seeds University Elementary School located at the University of California, Los Angeles, for further refinement before being used in the field.

Table 10

Classroom Practice Observation Protocol Domains and Definitions

Domain	Definition
Challenge of lesson activity	Degree of complex thinking with substantive content material required by lesson activity
Level of implementation	Teacher's organization, management, and pacing of lesson activity
Procedural engagement	Students' on-task behavior, concentration, and completion of learning activity
Substantive engagement	Students' enjoyment of learning activity
Quality of instructional discussion	Dialogue between student and teacher
Quality of instructional feedback	Immediacy and usefulness of teacher comments that support instructional goals

Once all six domains of the CPOP were determined, researchers attended one week of training at CRESST in both Year 1 and Year 2. In training, researchers conducted an observation using a CPOP, rated actual lesson activities observed at Corrine A. Seeds University Elementary School, and discussed agreements and disagreements in ratings. Interrater reliability was established during the week of training, using the following formula: number of agreements divided by the sum of the number of agreements and disagreements. Year 1 interrater reliability was 83%. Year 2 interrater reliability was 85%.

Procedures. Eight case study sites were selected to participate in the classroom observations, with teacher participation being voluntary. In the winter of 2000 and fall of 2001, principals and coordinators received an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the CLC evaluation and providing information necessary for the scheduling of observations in the spring. In the spring of 2000 and 2001, principals and coordinators received a follow-up letter explaining the site visit procedure, with a site visit schedule. Classroom observations were conducted between February and May of 2000 and 2001. Researchers observed lesson activities that demonstrated creative teaching strategies as outlined in project proposals for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, taking field notes using laptop computers and completing a classroom protocol for observation practices at the end of the observation activity.

Sample. In the 1999-2000 data collection year, a total of 42 classroom observations were conducted in the eight schools, constituting 22% of all case study classrooms.[4] The final sample for Year 1 consisted of 41 classroom observations. In the 2000-2001 data collection year, a total of 82 classroom observations were conducted in the same 8 schools, constituting 42% of all case study classrooms. The final sample for Year 2 consisted of 71 classroom observations.[5] The total number of observations for the Year 1/Year 2 comparison was 112 classroom observations, with a total of 97 teachers participating in either year, of which 23 teachers participated in both years.

Data analysis. Various quantitative analyses were conducted, including descriptive analyses (calculations, frequencies, and means for items and scales) and *t* tests. In addition, a qualitative analysis was made on the field notes. Several

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[4]Three observations were excluded due to one site's area of emphasis that could not be captured by the Classroom Practice Observation Protocol (CPOP).

[5]Twenty-one observations were excluded—14 due to one site's area of emphasis that could not be captured by the CPOP, and 7 due to short length of observation or student-to-teacher ratio.

domains and themes were developed based on the CPOP. The field notes were then coded for those domains and themes concerning the first 2 years of implementation. The purpose of collecting information using field notes was to gain an understanding of the classroom culture and context (e.g., teacher-student and student-student dialogue).

Interviews

The interview protocol consisted of 10 questions and various probes for each of the questions (see Appendix A).

Materials. The interview questions were designed to obtain detailed information about the teachers' understanding of and attitude toward their Creative Learning Communities project, professional development activities associated with the project and their influence on teacher practice, the impact of the project on student learning, and the implementation process including partnerships and barriers to success (see Table 11).

Once the interview protocol was finalized, researchers attended a 1-day interview training session at CRESST in both Year 1 and Year 2, which included conducting an interview and reviewing the interview protocol.

Table 11

Interview Components and Definitions

Interview components	Definition
Project description	Project Description includes queries about influence on the school and classroom learning environment.
Student: Activities and outcomes	Student Activities includes queries about lesson plans, assignments, and activities.
	Student Outcomes includes queries about motivation, engagement, quality of work, and critical thinking skills.
Teacher: Attitude, practice, and professional development	Teacher Attitude includes queries about positive and negative attitudes toward CLC project.
	Teacher Practice includes queries about strategies, assessments and expectations.
	Professional Development includes queries about activities and attitudes.
Implementation: Partnerships, barriers, and success	Partnerships include queries about universities, community members and parents.
	Barriers include queries about barriers, possible solutions, and change in plans.
	Success includes queries about success participants experienced or hoped to experience.

Procedures. Eight case study sites were selected to participate in the interviews, with administrator and teacher participation being voluntary. In the winter of 2000 and fall of 2001, principals and coordinators received an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the CLC evaluation and providing information necessary for the scheduling of interviews in the spring (see Appendix B). In the spring of 2000 and 2001, principals and coordinators received a follow-up letter explaining the site visit procedures and a site visit schedule (see Appendix B). Interviews were conducted in May 2000 and April 2001.

Researchers conducted interviews before, during, and after school in an office or a classroom that was secluded and secure, in order to ensure confidentiality. Prior to conducting the interview, participants were given two copies of the consent form; they returned a signed copy to the researcher for project records and kept one for themselves (see Appendix C). The average interview lasted approximately 45 minutes; however, there was no time limit set for the teacher responses, nor were there any restrictions on the length of the responses. The same protocol was used for each interview and the teachers were encouraged to answer each question (see Appendix D for a sample completed interview). Sample queries included the following:

- Describe how the project has influenced the learning environment at the school compared to last year.

- Describe the general attitudes of teachers towards this project as compared to last year.

- Describe some of the major successes you see (or hope to see) in the implementation of this project.

Sample. In the 1999-2000 data collection year, a total of 46 teacher interviews were conducted in 8 schools, constituting 24% of all case study classroom teachers. In the 1999-2000 data collection year, a total of 74 teacher interviews were conducted, constituting 38% of all case study classroom teachers. The final sample for the Year 1/Year 2 comparison consisted of 110 teacher interviews. In addition, 17 interviews with project leadership, defined as principals and coordinators, were conducted in Year 1 and Year 2, constituting 90% of all project leadership. The final sample for the Year 1/Year 2 comparison consisted of 34 project leader interviews.

Data analysis. Several domains and themes were developed based on the interview protocol. The interview transcriptions were then coded for those domains and themes concerning the first 2 years of implementation.

Evaluation Results

The evaluation results are organized around two tiers with Tier 1 featuring data collected from all 32 Creative Learning Communities (CLC) schools and Tier 2 focusing on data collected from 8 case study schools. Tier 1 results detail the specific school trends from project proposals and annual reports. In addition, Tier 1 results describe the overall school trends based on teacher and student surveys. Tier 2 results depict trends for the case study schools. Tier 2 results describe the 8 case study schools based on teacher and administrator interviews and on classroom observations compiled as a qualitative analysis. Each site is described in terms of three theory-of-action themes: (a) school environment (both culture and structure), goals, and leadership; (b) professional development and accountability; and (c) creative teaching strategies and engaged student learning.

By comparing Year 1 and Year 2 data, for each tier, answers are found for the three evaluation questions grounded in the program's theory of action, which are:

- How is the Creative Learning Communities grants program being implemented?

- What are its effects on schools, teachers, teacher practices, and student learning?

- What factors influence the effectiveness of the school reforms?

The question "How can the program be improved?" is discussed in the Recommendations section of this report.

Specific School Trends

Analysis of proposals and annual reports revealed specific school trends with respect to how the grants program is being implemented in individual schools. Overall, Creative Learning Communities schools serve similar student populations. Approximately 90% of CLC student populations are primarily students from low-income families, with the remaining 10% mainly composed of students from middle-income families.[6] Furthermore, 70% of schools are located in an urban area, with the

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[6] Low-income families were defined as families eligible to receive free or reduced lunch.

remaining 30% of schools located in either a suburban or a rural area. Whether located in an urban, suburban, or rural area, CLC schools share similar experiences as schools with limited access to resources located in communities experiencing the multiple stresses of poverty.

The level of implementation and impact on teacher practice and student learning was determined using annual reports (see Table 12). Seven out of 17 projects are in an early implementation stage, and 3 out of 17 projects are in a mid-implementation stage; that is, projects are either still planning activities or have implemented teacher activities with low to high levels of teacher participation. Seven projects are in full implementation, meaning that these projects have implemented both teacher and student activities with mid to high levels of teacher participation and low to high levels of student participation. In other words, the distinction between being fully or not fully implemented is based on teacher and

Table 12

CLC Project Level of Implementation and Impact

School	Implementation level	Teacher practice		Student learning	
		Impact	Indicator	Impact	Indicator
School 1	2	2	3	2	1,2
School 2	3	3	1,3	3	2
School 3	3	2	2,3,4	2	1,3,4
School 4	1	1	3	1	1,3,4
School 13	2	1	1,2	1	1
School 14	1	2	3	2	2,4
School 15	1	1	3	1	3
School 17	2	1	1,3	1	3
School 18	1	1	3,4	1	3
School 19	3	2	3	3	1,2,3,4
School 20	1	2	3,4	2	2,3,4
School 21	3	2	3,4	1	2,3,4
Consortium 1 (3 schools)	3	2	2,4	2	1,3,4
Consortium 2 (6 schools)	1	1	4	1	1,4
Consortium 3 (2 schools)	1	2	3	1	2,3
Consortium 4 (4 schools)	3	1	3	1	1,2,3
Consortium 5 (4 schools)	3	3	1,2,3,4	2	1,2,3,4

Note. Implementation: 1 = Early implementation, 2 = Mid-implementation, 3 = Full implementation; Impact: 1 = Little improvement, 2 = Some improvement, 3 = Significant improvement; Teacher practice indicator: 1 = Surveys, 2 = Interviews, 3 = Observed changes, 4 = Other; Student learning indicator: 1 = Standardized assessments, 2 = Performance assessments, 3 = Observed changes, 4 = Other.

student participation in project activities. Furthermore, based on evidence provided, 15 out of 17 projects experienced little or some improvement in teacher practice, and 2 projects experienced significant improvement in teacher practice. In addition, 15 out of 17 projects experienced little or some improvement in student learning, with only 2 projects experiencing significant improvement. Overall, based on self-reported data, CLC projects are starting to take root across schools, with Year 1 emphasis being on teacher activities. Student activities are expected to start in Year 2, when there should be increased CLC project influence on teacher practice and student learning.

Though in different phases of implementation, all Creative Learning Communities schools proposed to enhance students' learning opportunities and environments through creative teaching practices, having found traditional teaching techniques unable to attend to the educational and emotional needs of their students. "These external factors have made it difficult to create a sense of learning community that encourages and engages all students to reach their full potential. Thus, the traditional methods of 'teacher' and 'learner' are not meeting our students' complex needs" (School Proposal 14, p. 1). As schools articulated innovative approaches to teaching in an attempt to increase student engagement and achievement, a trend emerged in their choice of content area between a cross-curricular, interdisciplinary focus and a single-subject focus.

Over two thirds of the Creative Learning Communities projects featured a cross-curricular, interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning, utilizing thematic place- and project-based learning. For example, one consortium project provided students with "a content-rich interdisciplinary history and social studies curriculum that integrates the visual, literary, performing and media arts, as well as math and science" (Consortium Proposal 2, p. 2). While these schools articulated increased student achievement as a primary project goal, they placed an additional emphasis on creating educational experiences that are meaningfully connected to students' lives. "Changes need to take place if we are to create a reading/writing culture that is sensitive to and reflects the cultural traditions, histories, narratives and present-day realities of our student population . . . We need to make connections between students' lives and these materials" (School Proposal 20, p. 3). Acutely aware of the socio-economic realities of their students, these schools made a commitment through integrated, thematic instruction to empowering those who have been historically disenfranchised. "Integration of content and literacy skills

includes concern for children's interests and individual differences . . . Thematic instruction focuses on real-life experiences and is purposeful and functional" (School Proposal 15, p. 3). These schools attempted to provide students with culturally relevant and academically challenging educational experiences.

The remaining third of CLC schools featured projects with a single-subject focus (e.g., math or science or language arts) and fostered learning for understanding. This approach to creative teaching emphasizes alignment of project goals with standards-based accountability systems. Below-average scores in core content areas serve as a catalyst for schools' exploration of innovative configurations of teaching techniques. "There is no lack of evidence that the . . . children do not perform well on standardized tests—as our larger initiative began, the state department of education labeled three of the four . . . elementary schools on 'Academic Caution' or 'Academic Alert' based on their dismal state-mandated Stanford Achievement Test (SAT9) results" (Consortium Proposal 4, p. 1). Though both multiple- and single-subject projects call for a more student-centered curriculum, single-subject projects emphasize educational experiences that provide opportunities for active involvement in learning, with the explicit goal of improving student achievement without the added component of a cultural connection.

In painting a bold picture of innovative teaching and learning, schools differed in their configuration of professional development activities. Schools recognized the importance of equipping teachers with the knowledge necessary to enable them to effectively implement innovative teaching practices where it matters most—the classroom. "Staff development is the key to our success in this project. All teachers will be given exciting new tools through workshops and in-services, as well as team teaching and modeling to help them meet the children's learning needs" (School Proposal 14, p. 3). A trend that emerged from the analysis of professional development activities revealed projects that provide professional development embedded in classroom practice, with opportunities for teacher collaboration, and projects that provide professional development concentrated in certain time periods, without a clear and continuous connection to the classroom.

For two thirds of Creative Learning Community schools, professional development activities were dispersed throughout the school year without a clear and continuous connection to the classroom. For example, teachers participated in concentrated professional development activities, such as summer conferences, institutes, and retreats lasting 2 to 10 days, but were not provided with weekly

classroom-embedded follow-up on introduced teaching practices. In addition, these projects relied on formal whole-school and grade-level meetings, which were not especially or exclusively designed for discussions about newly learned practices. Such projects tend to provide teachers with the opportunity for more individualized professional development, promoting district, college, and university workshops, though they are not tied together in a coherent fashion.

A third of the projects provided teachers with professional development that was continuously connected to classroom practice. Experts in the designated curricular content area (e.g., writing coordinator, math consultant, artist-in-residence) provided support on a weekly basis for an extended period of time, typically a school year. They modeled innovative practices and observed teachers implementing those practices. Furthermore, teachers were provided with structured time to meet with other teachers before, after, or during school to discuss newly learned practices. In one consortium, teachers requested additional collaborative time with coaches and teachers. "Teachers want more pre-demonstration planning information, they request feedback forms for their use during demonstration, and they envision discussion with team teachers around the feedback forms" (Consortium Annual Report 1, p. 9). Such complex configurations of professional development provide ample opportunity for teachers to comprehend the changes requested of them and of their practice, in concrete ways.

Schools differed in monitoring the impact of professional development on teacher practice and student learning. Schools ranged from relying exclusively on anecdotal evidence to using statewide achievement tests as a mechanism of monitoring progress. The trend that emerged from an analysis of annual reports showed projects that monitor project implementation and impact on teacher practice and student learning and include developing accountability mechanisms sensitive to subtle changes, and projects that monitor the implementation process through observed changes and/or state-level assessments sporadically.

Three fourths of the schools relied on observed changes and state assessments as their indicators of progress. Annual reports provided ample evidence of schools that report progress in terms of anecdotal evidence, while they wait on results of state standardized and performance-based assessments. Such data collection methods provide neither timely information nor the type of information needed to improve school reform efforts. Achievement tests are especially insensitive to

emerging changes in teacher practice and do not provide information that is meaningful in a classroom context.

A fourth of the schools invested time and energy in creating assessments that are sensitive to subtle changes in teaching practices. These types of assessments (e.g., writing rubrics, shared student work portfolios, and Third International Mathematics Science Study [TIMSS]-like assessments) provide the kind of formative evaluative information necessary for continuous inquiry into teacher practice and school progress. Furthermore, they provide teachers with information meaningful to their classroom context, showing clear and concrete evidence of changes in teacher practice and student learning. These schools recognized that state achievement tests do not provide the type of data needed to make informed decisions about teacher practice and student learning. "The ability to problem solve, to communicate one's thinking processes or understanding of mathematics is not emphasized in . . . the Stanford Achievement Test" (Consortium Annual Report 4, p. 5).

School proposals and annual reports provided answers to several evaluation questions. Two thirds of CLC schools were implementing their projects by focusing on cross-curricular teaching practices, with only one third focusing on a single subject. Approximately two thirds of projects were either in early or mid-implementation, with one third in full implementation. Given that the majority of projects were still in the early phases of implementation, the effects of CLC projects on teacher practice and student learning were small, with most experiencing little or some improvement. Schools differed in their professional development activities and accountability mechanisms, suggesting that these are factors influencing project implementation and therefore effectiveness.

Overall School Trends

Results from analyses of the teacher survey and student survey were examined for trends across schools, for both groups, and between schools for teachers.

Teacher survey results across schools. The results of the Year 1/Year 2 comparison showed significant differences for the Influence of the CLC Project on Teacher Activities and the Student Engagement scales. Teachers indicated an increased positive effect of the CLC project on their activities, from a Year 1 mean of 3.87 to a Year 2 mean of 4.06. They indicated increased agreement with a positive effect of the CLC project on their students' engagement, from a Year 1 mean of 3.12

to a Year 2 mean of 3.23. In other words, looking at the school as the unit of analysis, the CLC project has had a moderate effect on teacher activities (with an effect size of .33) and on student engagement (with an effect size of .201) *when a school participates* in the CLC grants program. Differences reported in teacher activities and student engagement are most likely non-negligible in terms of their substantive significance.

According to the theory of action, indicators of change in practice provide an early indicator of program progress and impact. That is, one would expect to see changes in teaching strategies and student opportunities to learn prior to seeing improvement in measured student learning. Five out of five teacher survey scales measure change at the level of teacher practice and student learning:

- Professional Development Activities,

- Quality of Professional Development,

- Creative Teaching Practices,

- CLC Project Influence on Teacher Activities, and

- CLC Project Influence on Student Engagement.

The Year 1/Year 2 comparison of teacher survey data indicated that there were moderate changes, and thus early indicators of progress, in teacher activities and student learning across Creative Learning Communities schools. Table 13 shows the teacher survey scales with the means for these scales across schools in the 1999-2000 school calendar year (Year 1 of the CLC projects) and the 2000-2001 school calendar year (Year 2 of the CLC projects). The mean change column indicates the shift in mean from Year 1 to Year 2, with the *N* column showing the number of schools included in the analyses for that particular scale.

Creative Learning Communities projects influenced teacher activities as captured by the Influence of CLC Project on Teacher Activities scale, increasing from a mean score of 3.87 in Year 1 to 4.06 in Year 2. Survey items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *a large decrease,* 2 = *some decrease,* 3 = *no change,* 4 = *some increase,* 5 = *a large increase*). Teachers increased their use of information from professional development activities, exchange of ideas with colleagues, knowledge of subject matter, teaching effectiveness, use of alternative forms of assessment, and motivation to implement reform. For example, during Year 1 of implementation, teachers' comments indicated their expectation that the project will provide the resources necessary

Table 13

Comparison of Year 1 and Year 2 Teacher Survey Scale Means

Scale	2000	2001	Mean change	N (schools)
Professional development activities	2.84	2.98	.14	28
(Scale: 1 = *none*, 2 = *3-4 hrs*, 3 = *5-9 hrs*, 4 = *10-20 hrs*, 5 = *21-35 hrs*, 6 = *>35 hrs*)				
Quality of professional development	3.19	3.25	.06	28
(Scale: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, 4 = *strongly agree*, 5 = *don't know*)				
Creative teaching practices	3.36	3.44	.08	28
(Scale: 1 = *never*, 2 = *few times per year*, 3 = *1-2 times per month*, 4 = *1-2 times per week*, 5 = *almost daily*)				
CLC project influence on teacher activities	3.87	4.06	.19	28
(Scale: 1 = *large decrease*, 2 = *some decrease*, 3 = *no change*, 4 = *some increase*, 5 = *large increase*)				
CLC project influence on student engagement	3.10	3.23	.13	28
(Scale: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, 4 = *strongly agree*, 5 = *don't know*)				

for increased collaboration and professional development, introducing them to "cutting-edge, best practices" based on "solid research." Within a year, teachers reported that they were directly applying information learned from their peers and professional development to their classrooms, observing immediate results in student learning and outcomes. Table 14 provides examples of teacher comments, describing in teachers' own words the change in their teaching activities.

In addition to influencing teacher activities, Creative Learning Communities projects have influenced student engagement, with a mean of 3.10 in Year 1 and 3.23 in Year 2. Survey items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, 4 = *strongly agree*, 5 = *don't know*). Teachers agreed that students were increasing their learning, content knowledge, problem-solving skills, and computer skills, as measured by the CLC Project Influence on Student Engagement scale. Teacher comments provide illustrative examples of increasingly "eager," "enthusiastic," and "excited" learners (see Table 15).

While teacher survey data indicated a statistically significant difference in CLC Project Influence on Teacher Activities and CLC Project Influence on Student Engagement, the Professional Development, Quality of Professional Development, and Teacher Practice scales remained relatively unchanged. Although the trends in Table 13 indicate positive mean shifts, it may be too soon to expect statistically

Table 14

Teacher Survey Comment Examples for CLC Project Influence on Teacher Activities Scale

Scale subsection	Teacher comment exemplar
Use of ideas from professional development	"The [CLC] Project has enhanced my teaching practice by affording me to attend professional development in-service through which I have gained new and motivating activities, and a variety of strategies that require higher order thinking." (Teacher Survey 315, Year 1)
Exchange of ideas with peers	"What has changed the most is my collaborative planning time with my colleagues. We not only plan together, but we coach and push and support each other to find ways to reach all of our students. This work has been invaluable." (Teacher Survey 143, Year 2)
Knowledge of subject matter	"The project has allowed me to teach math for meaning and mastery. The project has given me the knowledge to teach math more effectively." (Teacher Survey 351, Year 2)
Teacher effectiveness	"I feel that I will have (and have already) more opportunities to learn more effective teaching techniques. I think that the project brings "learning energy" which increases motivation." (Teacher Survey 153, Year 1)
Use of alternative forms of assessments	"We also assess in different ways using projects, drawings, writing and whatever the grade level might come up with for a certain book." (Teacher Survey 414, Year 2)
Motivation to implement reform	"The [CLC] Project has motivated me to do more with the creative arts mixing it with technology. The project has brought out a lot of hidden talents in the student and teachers." (Teacher Survey 98, Year 1)

Table 15

Teacher Survey Comment Examples for CLC Project Influence on Student Engagement Scale

Scale subsection	Teacher comment exemplar
Learning	"Students are more engaged and actively involved in their learning. Rather than the teacher as the focus for dispensing knowledge, students research, relate and draw their own conclusions." (Teacher Survey 10, Year 2)
Content knowledge	"Student are very enthusiastic about doing math and they are excited about learning. They want to answer questions and are able to explain their answers. I can see an incredible increase in their content knowledge and problem-solving skills." (Teacher Survey 106, Year 1)
Problem-solving skills	"My students have a clearer understanding of thought processes, which lead to problem solving. My students are gaining a rich vocabulary based on exploration. Students have greater confidence when faced with an unknown to solve." (Teacher Survey 360, Year 1)
Computer skills	"Students are putting in technology. We're making PowerPoint presentations, scanning pictures from newsletters, books, etc. We use the digital camera to document much our work. We even make movies." (Teacher Survey 442, Year 2)

significant differences in scale domains that are deeply rooted in a school's culture and structure. In addition, some of these changes may be visible to individual teachers as emerging, yet remain invisible to the statistical standards required to document this change. In order to demonstrate the trends of progress, each of these scales will be discussed in terms of descriptive changes that occurred over the 2 years of the CLC project.

In terms of professional development activities, teachers across CLC schools on average participated in 5 to 9 hours of professional development activities (e.g., observations, study groups, professional networks, university courses, summer institutes, lectures and workshops), with a mean of 2.84 in Year 1 and 2.98 in Year 2. Survey items were rated on a 6-point scale (1 = *none,* 2 = *3-4 hours,* 3 = *5-9 hours,* 4 = *10-20 hours,* 5 = *21-35 hours,* and 6 = *more than 35 hours* of professional development in a school year). Teachers agreed that CLC-supported professional development has been very effective. Professional development activities were relevant to and support school and project goals. Trainers were well prepared and knowledgeable, connecting activities to teachers' prior knowledge and experiences with adequate follow-up. Teachers also agreed that the professional development activities contributed to changes in classroom practice. Survey items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree,* 2 = *disagree,* 3 = *agree,* 4 = *strongly agree,* and 5 = *don't know*).

As captured by their responses on the Creative Teaching Practice scale, teachers reported using creative teaching strategies between a range of 1 to 2 times per month and 1 to 2 times per week, with a mean of 3.36 in Year 1 and 3.44 in Year 2. Survey items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *never,* 2 = *few times per year,* 3 = *1-2 times per month,* 4 = *1-2 times per week,* 5 = *almost daily*). Teachers indicated that they had students using hands-on, project-based activities, requiring students to organize, interpret and evaluate information. Students worked in cooperative groups and shared their ideas with others in pairs or small groups, and also had time for discussion to explain their reasoning. Teachers did provide opportunities for student input and cooperative work; however, they reported using these types of creative teaching techniques closer to 1 to 2 times per month.

Though teachers' survey data indicated increases in teacher activities and in student learning across schools, the mean differences do not indicate statistically significant changes across schools in their culture and structures. Five out of 10 teacher survey scales measure school change:

- School Organization,

- School Accountability,

- School Change,

- School Current Status, and

- Schoolwide Support for CLC.

Table 16 highlights the means for these scales across schools in the 1999-2000 school calendar year (Year 1 of the CLC projects) and the 2000-2001 school calendar year (Year 2 of the CLC projects). The mean change column indicates the shift in mean from Year 1 to Year 2, with the *N* column showing the number of schools included in the analyses for that particular scale.

The trends in Table 16 indicate mostly positive mean shifts in school change scales. Each scale will be discussed in terms of descriptive changes that occurred over the 2 years of the CLC project. Survey items for the School Organization and School Accountability scales were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree,* 2 = *disagree,* 3 = *agree,* 4 = *strongly agree,* and 5 = *don't know*). Teachers continued to agree with positive statements regarding school goals, leadership, culture, and structure as captured by the School Organization scale, with a mean of 3.25 in Year 1 and 3.23 in

Table 16

Comparison of Year 1 and Year 2 Teacher Survey School Scale Means

Scale	2000	2001	Mean change	*N* (schools)
School organization	3.25	3.23	-.02	27
(Scale: 1 = *strongly disagree,* 2 = *disagree,* 3 = *agree,* 4 = *strongly agree,* 5 = *don't know*)				
School accountability	3.16	3.16	.00	27
(Scale: 1 = *strongly disagree,* 2 = *disagree,* 3 = *agree,* 4 = *strongly agree,* 5 = *don't know*)				
School change	2.52	2.57	.02	27
(Scale: 1 = *worse,* 2 = *no change,* 3 = *better*)				
School current status	2.20	2.26	.06	27
(Scale: 1 = *needs improvement,* 2 = *okay,* 3 = *excellent*)				
Schoolwide support for CLC project	3.36	3.38	.02	27
(Scale: 1 = *strongly disagree,* 2 = *disagree,* 3 = *agree,* 4 = *strongly agree,* 5 = *don't know*)				

Year 2. Teachers across schools agreed that the specific goals for accomplishing the school's vision were apparent to all school community members. Furthermore, they agreed that school leadership (specifically their principals) communicated priorities to all school community members, promoting widespread involvement in decision-making regarding school reform. Teachers agreed that they were in fact involved in making decisions. Finally, they agreed that there was consistency in curriculum, materials, and instructional and assessment strategies within and across grade levels. Specifically looking at accountability structures as captured by the School Accountability scale, teachers continued to agree that student data were readily available for planning and making informed decisions. New projects introduced to the schools are monitored to ensure that they are working and that changes introduced to the school have promoted school goals for student learning. The mean for the School Accountability scale was 3.16 in both Year 1 and Year 2.

The School Change and School Current Status scales combine components of the previously described school scales. These two scales capture school relationships among students, teachers, parents, and community, as well as sense of community. In addition, these scales capture teacher commitment, collaboration, professional growth, and teaching efficacy, as well as coordination, focus, and quality of school instructional program and curriculum. Teachers indicated that schools were slightly "better" in these areas, with a mean of 2.52 in Year 1 and 2.57 in Year 2. Survey items were rated on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 = *worse*, 2 = *no change*, 3 = *better*). Teachers indicated that the current status of schools in these same areas was "okay," with a mean of 2.20 in Year 1 and 2.26 in Year 2. Survey items were rated on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 = *needs improvement*, 2 = *okay*, 3 = *excellent*).

Overall, teachers agreed that there was schoolwide support for CLC projects, with a mean of 3.36 in Year 1 and a mean of 3.38 in Year 2. Survey items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, 4 = s*trongly agree*, 5 = *don't know*). They indicated student, teacher, and administrator enthusiasm for their CLC project and that projects promoted school goals and provided more opportunities for student learning, such as available curriculum materials.

Teacher survey results between schools. Statistically significant differences exist between schools in terms of their initial means, that is their mean for Year 1 for all 11 scales (U_0, $p < .000$). In terms of change (U_1)—that is, negative change, no change, or positive change in means—the results indicate statistically significant differences between schools only for Professional Development Activities ($p < .000$),

School Organization ($p < .001$), School Accountability ($p = .001$), School Current Status ($p = .032$), and Schoolwide Support for CLC Project ($p = .006$). For these five scales, schools differ significantly from each other in the way they changed from Year 1 to Year 2.

The patterns of change across years in the Professional Development Activities, School Organization, School Accountability, School Current Status, and Schoolwide Support for CLC Project scales show marked differences between schools. The amount of change varies widely from school to school—some schools even having negative change—while the mean levels seem unchanged.

With respect to the five scales that capture change in teacher practice and student learning, a statistically significant difference exists between schools in the number of hours teachers participated in professional development activities. Eight out of 28 schools with teacher survey data reported a decrease in the number of hours of professional development, whereas 19 out of 28 schools reported an increase in the number of hours of professional development. Professional development activities included coaches, observations, individual research, teacher study groups, and professional networks, to name a few. Differences in the number of hours of professional development are important given that change in teacher practice requires that teachers be given the necessary knowledge, skills, and support in order to change.

Similar to the differences between schools in the Professional Development scale, statistically significant differences also exist between schools on the school change scales for School Organization, School Accountability, School Current Status, and Schoolwide Support for CLC Project. Specifically, schools experienced positive and negative changes in organization, accountability, and support across the 2 years. The distinct differences between schools on these four scales suggest that schools are grappling with serious issues rooted in their organizational structures and culture.

The School Organization scale results indicate the existence of and change in collaborative decision-making structures and communication among the school's different constituents. Fourteen out of 28 schools reported an increase in collaboration and communication, whereas 5 schools indicated maintained levels of collaboration and communication. Eight out of 28 schools reported a decrease, meaning that the schools' goals were not as apparent to teachers and communities with consistency in curriculum, learning materials, instruction, and student

assessment within and across grade levels. Furthermore, their principals were not promoting widespread involvement in decisions regarding school reform, with teachers involved in making important decisions at the schools. Variations in organizational change suggest that schools will differ in their capacity to implement whole-school change given that supportive structural and cultural components are necessary to the implementation process.

The School Accountability scale results indicate the availability of information for monitoring progress and making informed decisions. Thirteen schools out of 28 indicated an increase in school accountability, whereas 3 schools reported maintaining the same level of accountability. Eleven out of 28 schools reported a decrease in school accountability, meaning that data were not as available for teachers and administrators to use in making informed decisions about student performance. The decrease in the level of school accountability in over a third of CLC schools is significant, especially when accountability mechanisms are essential in order to monitor progress and make timely modifications in a plan of action.

The School Current Status scale results indicate differences in school dynamics. Ten out of 28 schools reported that their school's status has declined in relationships among students, teachers, parents and community; in coordination, focus, and quality of curriculum and instruction, and academic performance; and in teacher collaboration, professional growth, and effectiveness. Seventeen out of 28 schools reported that their school's status has improved. This particular scale incorporates the same concepts found in the School Organization, School Accountability and Schoolwide Support for CLC Project scales. Overall, schools differed in their organizational structure and culture.

The Schoolwide Support for CLC Project scale results indicate level of student, teacher, administrator, parent, and community support for their CLC Project. Fourteen out of 28 schools reported decreased levels of support for their CLC project. Thirteen out of 28 schools reported increased support, including teacher enthusiasm, administrative support, student excitement about project participation, and perception of CLC support. Level of schoolwide support suggests that some schools are experiencing difficulties in the implementation process of their project.

The teacher survey data indicate that CLC projects have influenced teacher activities and student engagement across schools, answering the evaluation question about project effects on teachers and students. Teachers are increasing their use of

information from professional development activities, exchange of ideas with colleagues, knowledge of subject matter, teaching effectiveness, use of alternative forms of assessment, and motivation to implement reform. From the teachers' perspective, students are increasing their learning, content knowledge, problem-solving skills, and computer skills. However, differences between schools in the Professional Development Activities, School Organization, School Accountability, and Schoolwide Support for CLC Project scales suggest that these dimensions of the school reform process are influencing factors in project implementation. These concepts are combined in the School Current Status scale, where more than one third of schools (10 out of 28 schools) reported their school as declining in status. Overall, the differences between schools signal that they are dealing with substantive issues, such as school organization, professional development, school accountability, and school support. This suggests the answer to the evaluation question about what factors influence effectiveness. Inside the classroom, teachers do report a positive influence on teacher activities and student engagement, indicating that the creative teaching practices promoted by these projects are beginning to take root.

Student survey results across all schools. For the three grades surveyed (Grades 3, 4, and 5) across 2 years, survey data across Creative Learning Communities schools indicate that students have a positive attitude toward their school and classroom learning environment, learning in general, and their teacher. Table 17 displays the student survey scales with means for the 1999-2000 school year (Year 1) and for the 2000-2001 school year (Year 2), as well as the mean differences across the two years.

Table 17

Comparison of Year 1 and Year 2 Student Survey Scale Means

Scale	2000	2001	Mean change
Engaging learning environment	3.85	3.80	-.05
(Scale: 1 = *strongly disagree,* 2 = *disagree,* 3 = *unsure,* 4 = *agree,* and 5 = *strongly agree*)			
Engaged learning	3.93	3.83	-.10
(Scale: 1 = *strongly disagree,* 2 = *disagree,* 3 = *unsure,* 4 = *agree,* and 5 = *strongly agree*)			
Student-teacher engagement	3.72	3.67	-.05
(Scale: 1 = *not true at all,* 2 = *not very true,* 3 = *sort of true,* 4 = *true*)			

Although the trends in Table 17 indicate negative mean shifts in student attitudes, these are not statistically significant changes.[7] Therefore, these scales will be discussed in terms of maintained student attitude over the 2 years. The Engaging Learning Environment scale captures students' enjoyment of school and classroom. Survey items were rated on a 5-point scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Students reported that they liked school and would be very sad to go to a different school. They disagreed with negative statements such as "I am bored in school," "I hate being in school," "I wish I didn't have to go to school," and "I wish I could go to a different school." With respect to the classroom learning environment, students agreed that their classroom is a fun place to be, preferred to be in their class than in any other class, and disagreed that class is a waste of time.

Only fourth- and fifth-grade students responded to items in the Engaged Learning scale, which captures their attitudes about learning in general. Survey items were rated on a 5-point scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Most students felt that they were good students, doing a good job in school. Students disagreed with the statements "I am not a very good student" and "I don't do very well in school." Overall, students reported being engaged with their school and classroom learning environments and with learning in general.

From the students' perspective, teachers were engaged in their learning process, demonstrating care and concern for their students, as indicated by the Student-Teacher Engagement scale. Survey items were rated on a 4-point scale (1 = *not true at all,* 2 = *not very true,* 3 = *sort of true,* 4 = *true*). Teachers communicated expectations and explained assignments clearly, showing students how to solve problems, utilizing a variety of strategies. Students felt that their teachers cared for them, talked with and listened to them. Students disagreed that teachers didn't help them when they needed it. Table 18 highlights student comments about student and teacher engagement with learning.

One category of survey items focused on different domains of classroom activities, specifically students' opportunity for cooperative work and choice.[8] Individual survey item means for the 1999-2000 school year (Year 1) and for the 2000-2001 school year (Year 2) for the domain of Opportunity for Student

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[7] Negative mean shifts are defined as an absolute decrease in mean from Year 1 to Year 2.

[8] The Opportunity for Student Choice and Opportunity for Student Cooperative Work categories are a group of survey items for which individual means are reported. They are not scales for which one mean is reported for a group of survey items.

Table 18

Student Comment Examples for Student Survey Scales

Scale	Student comment exemplar
Engaged learning environment	"Science because we made lots of projects and all of them were cool and exciting to do and they always made my family closer." (Student Survey 246, Year 2)
Engaged learning	"My favorite subject is math because I'm very good cause I raise my hand and go up to the front and get most of them right." (Student Survey 112, Year 2)
Student-teacher engagement	"[Teacher] helps us a lot every year on every project she takes her time and she loves me." (Student Survey 56, Year 2)

Cooperative Work (Cooperation) are displayed in Figure 2. Survey items were rated on a 4-point scale (1 = *not true at all,* 2 = *not very true,* 3 = *sort of true,* 4 = *very true*). Students reported that they did many group projects in class, with a mean of 3.22 in Year 1 and 3.19 in Year 2. They increasingly helped one another with classroom
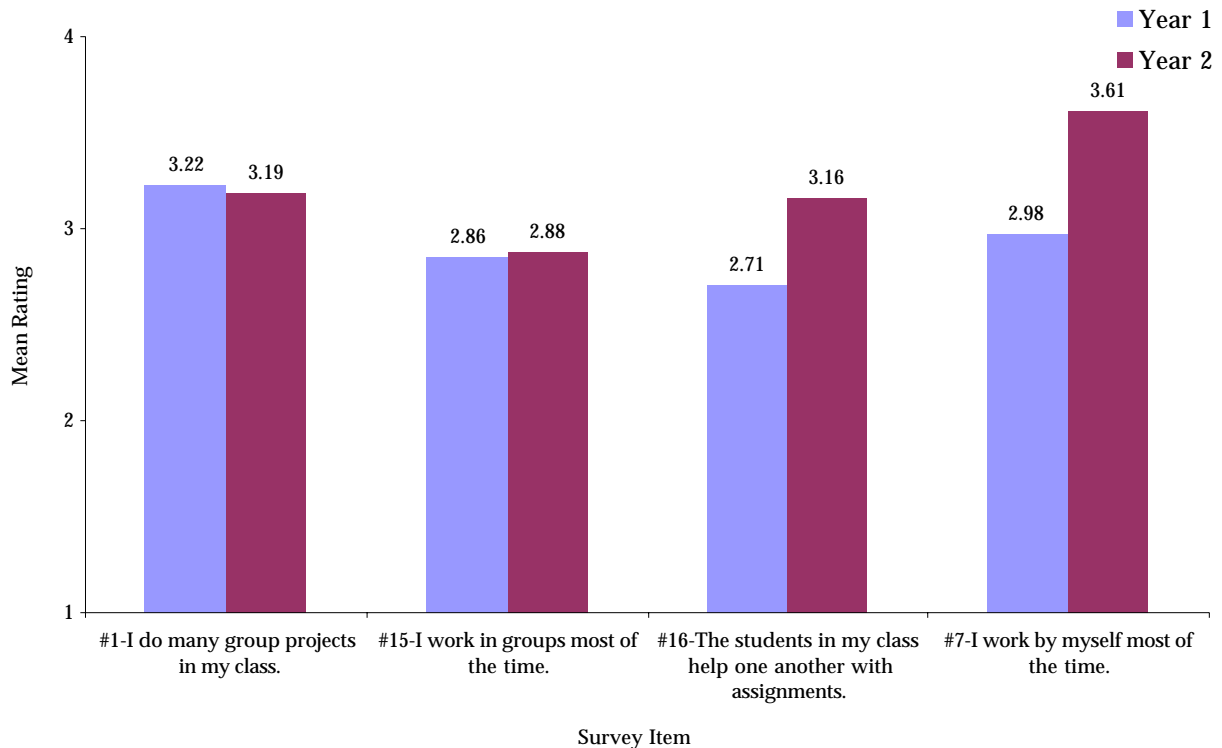
Figure 2. Comparison of Year 1 and Year 2 mean ratings by survey item in Opportunity for Student Cooperative Work (Cooperation) category. Responses were based on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all true,* 2 = *not very true,* 3 = *sort of true,* 4 = *very true*).

assignments, with a mean of 2.71 in Year 1 and 3.16 the following year. However, students were mixed in their opinion of whether they worked in groups—remaining constant with a mean of 2.86 in Year 1 and 2.88 in Year 2—or worked individually—increasing from a mean of 2.98 in Year 1 to 3.61 in Year 2—most of the time.

Student survey data also indicated that students were mixed in their opinion as to their opportunity for choice of classroom activities. Figure 3 displays individual survey item means for the 1999-2000 school year (Year 1) and for the 2000-2001 school year (Year 2) in the domain of Opportunity for Student Choice. Survey items were rated on a 4-point scale (1 = *not true at all,* 2 = *not very true,* 3 = *sort of true,* 4 = *very true*). Though students indicated that they had a chance to discuss what they are learning, with a mean of 3.31 in Year 1 and 3.24 in Year 2, they were mixed in their opinion about whether they had the opportunity to help plan what they do in class, with a mean of 2.93 in Year 1 and 2.47 in Year 2. Students were again mixed in their opinion that they had no choice of classroom activities, as indicated by the low means of 2.24 in Year 1 and 2.34 in Year 2. Yet, students also reported, with means of 2.87 and 2.85 for the 2 years, that they didn't get many choices when it comes to assignments.

Overall, students tended not to think that there is opportunity for cooperative work and choice in classroom activities provided. Student survey comments, such as those in Table 19, indicated that students across schools did appreciate such opportunities, which enhance their educational experience.

Student survey results indicated that students' positive engagement with their learning environment, their learning in general, and their teacher was maintained from Year 1 to Year 2. However, the lack of improvement in student engagement suggests that, while teachers are providing students with opportunities for student cooperative work and choice in learning activities, these are emerging practices that are not yet used consistently throughout the school year. Consistent with the teacher survey data, students indicated that teachers provided students with these types of opportunities 1 to 2 times per month. With respect to the evaluation question on the effect of projects on student outcomes, increases in levels of engagement should expand in Year 3, when practices are deeply rooted in classrooms throughout CLC schools.
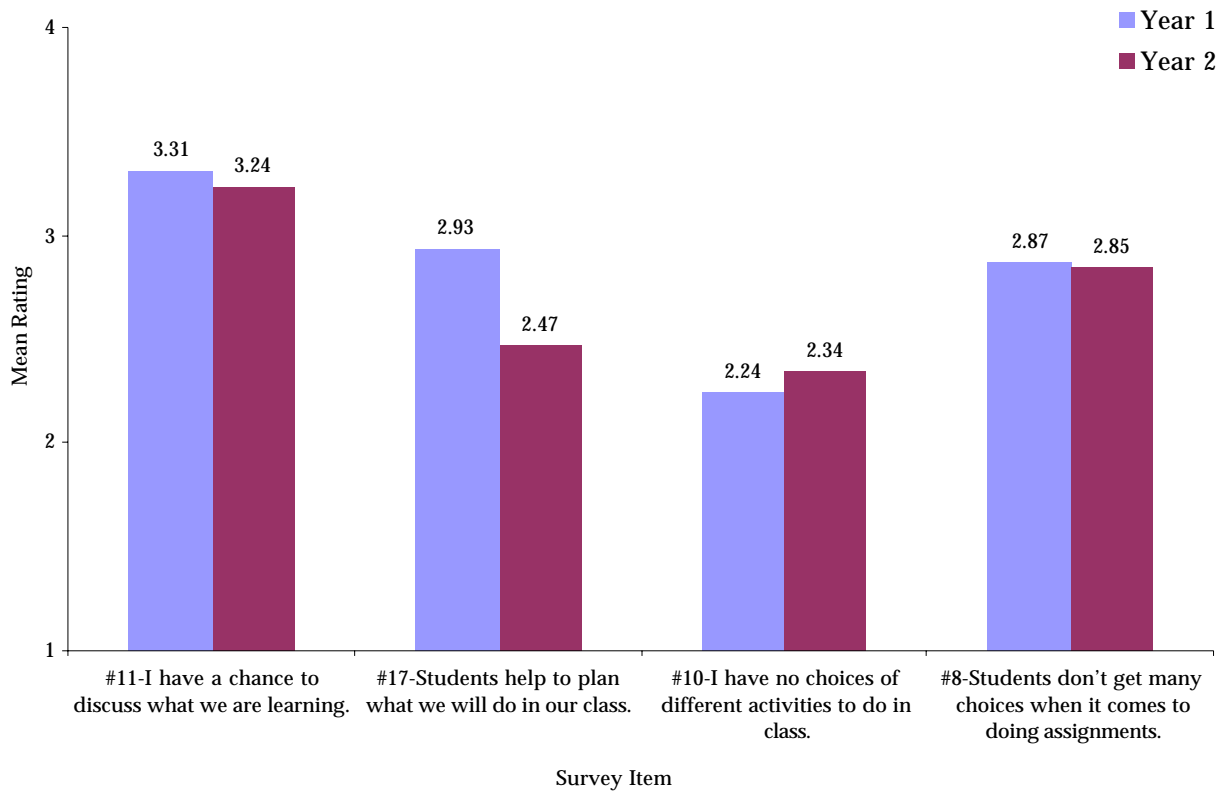
Figure 3. Comparison of Year 1 and Year 2 mean ratings by survey item for Opportunity for Student Choice category. Responses were based on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all true,* 2 = *not very true,* 3 = *sort of true,* 4 = *very true*).

Table 19

Student Survey Comment Examples for Classroom Activities Categories

Category	Student comment exemplar
Opportunity for student cooperative work	"My favorite project I have worked on this year is doing terrariums in science class. It's my favorite because it is fun, you get to work in groups, and it teaches you about planting and modifying." (Student Survey 89, Year 2)
Opportunity for student choice	"My favorite project is doing a book report I like doing a book report because she gives us a lot of time and she lets us pick out the book we want to do for a book report we got to work on the computers." (Student Survey 13, Year 1)

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Case Study School Trends

The case study schools are discussed in two sections: (a) overall site case study trends, and (b) individual case study trends. The first section describes the overall progress, strengths, and barriers across the 8 case study schools. The second section focuses on specific aspects of each school in three domains, from a theory of action perspective: (a) school culture, goals, and leadership; (b) professional development; and (c) creative teaching strategies and engaged student learning.

Overall site case study trends. A thematic matrix of case study themes related to barriers and successes of grant implementation was compiled from the teacher interview data. Table 20 highlights implementation barriers and successes for Year 1 and Year 2 of the evaluation. Interestingly, the barriers significantly decreased in Year 2, and conversely, the implementation successes increased in Year 2, when compared to Year 1. In Year 1, the implementation barriers were the following:

Table 20

Comparison of Year 1 and Year 2 Barriers and Successes of CLC Project Implementation

Year 1	Year 2
Barriers	
Time to prepare	Resources
Teacher buy-in	Project documentation
No shared vision: "Top-down reform"	Accountability
Professional development	Sustainability
Assessments	
Ambivalence	
Confusion	
Resistance: question the impact	
Reform is add-on: "One more thing"	
Successes	
Time to collaborate	Teacher buy-in
Shift in teacher attitudes	Engaged learners
Shared vision: "Bottom-up reform"	Emerging assessments
Emerging professional development	Development of partnerships
	Embedded professional development
	Less resistance: see the impact
	Clarity
	Reform *is* "the thing"

- time to prepare for classroom activities and practices;

- teacher "buy in" to the reform, which was impacted by the idea that many teachers described not being convinced that this reform effort would be different from any of the other reform efforts that had come and gone;

- top-down reform, about which the teachers felt that this was something they had to do, rather than something they wanted to do;

- not enough time devoted to professional development;

- no assessments to match the reform process;

- ambivalence about participating in a project that would be perceived as taking up large amounts of time;

- confusion about the implementation and impact of the grant;

- resistance to the implementation, and questioning the impact of the reform;

- seeing the reform as an "add on" and "one more thing" to do.

Year 2 barriers contrasted with Year 1, in that there were few barriers and the challenges described included issues that most projects at this juncture might be concerned about: (a) project documentation, (b) accountability systems and assessments, and (c) sustainability of the reform. The successes for Year 1 implementation were the following:

- some time for teachers to collaborate with their colleagues and share ideas;

- a shift in teacher attitudes, including positive attitudes about the grant process;

- a shared vision of the grant process, which included teachers sharing the vision of the grant implementation with administrators; and

- emerging professional development activities.

The successes of the grant implementation nearly doubled for Year 2 and included the following:

- significant increases in teacher buy-in;

- a community of engaged learners;

- emerging assessments for the CLC projects;

- the development of community partnerships;

- embedded professional development activities;

- less resistance to the project, whereby teachers reported that they now "see the impact" in their classroom of learners and in their classroom practice;

- rather than seeing reform as "one more thing," teachers were beginning to describe that the reform activity is "the thing." That is, the reform effort at schools is described as part of the culture of the classroom activities.

With increased levels of implementation, shifts in teacher practice occur at the classroom level. The Classroom Practice Observation Protocol (CPOP) was designed to capture changes in teaching practices by focusing on classroom interactions. In order to present a more precise picture of the influence of the CLC projects on teacher practice, a comparison of matched scores—that is, for teachers with Year 1 and Year 2 CPOP scores at the same grade level—was conducted (see Figure 4). When the overall matched CPOP scores were compared, schools showed improvement in all six domains. Figure 4 presents the results of the Year 1 and Year 2 comparison of matched mean ratings.

Procedural Engagement levels indicate the extent to which students are actively participating in the lessons. In an ideal model of Procedural Engagement, students are completely on-task, cognitively engaged in the assignment, and would ignore potential distractions. The mean rating for Procedural Engagement domain increased from 2.96 in Year 1 to 3.52 in Year 2.

One teacher demonstrated excellent control of her classroom, facilitating a model level of student procedural engagement. The class was creating a book that taught students how to measure. The students were busy working on the assignment; some students were studying examples on the board, leading one boy to independently correct his mistakes by himself. Another student was consulting the "Word Wall" for correct spelling, while others were speaking to each other about their assignment, sharing materials and explaining directions to one another. Some students critiqued each other's work, and others were sharing materials and talking about cooperation. The class had an active, humming sound, but all the students were attentively working on the assigned task. Even the class pet, a rabbit, scampered underfoot without notice as the students worked on their book pages.

Substantive Engagement was included in the CPOP to measure how emotionally engaged students are in the class. Substantive Engagement takes student engagement beyond Procedural Engagement. Whereas Procedural
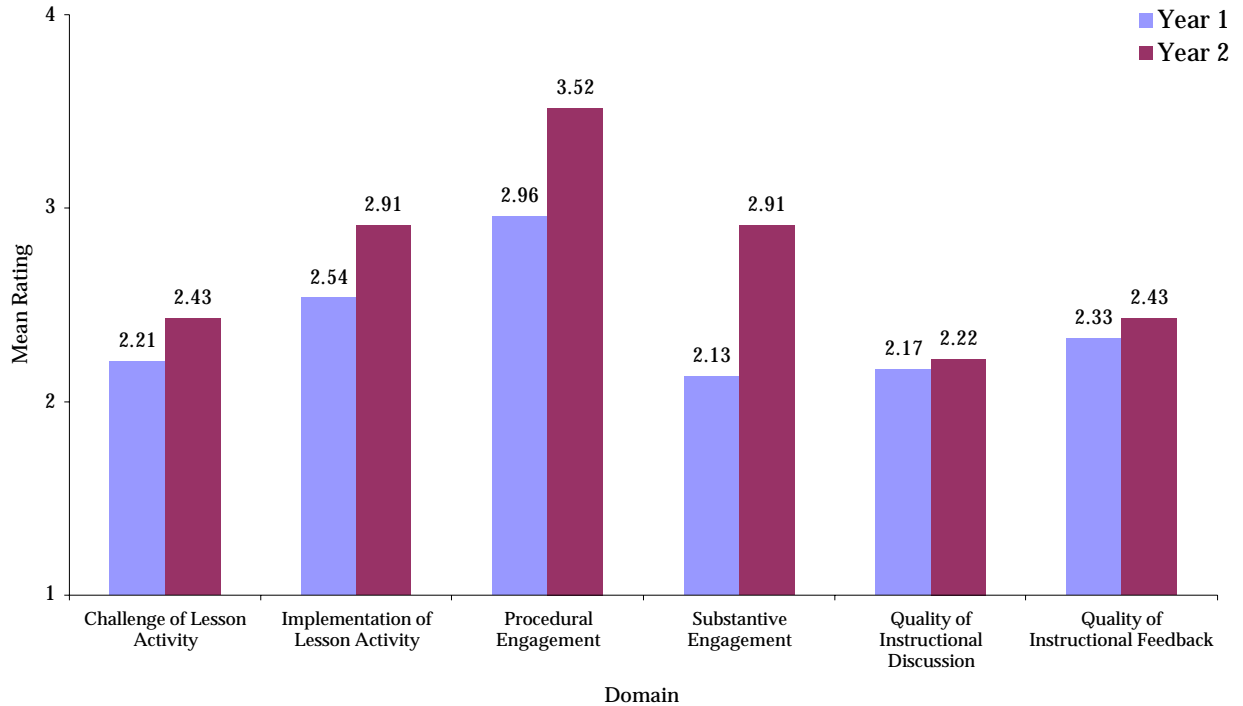
Figure 4. Comparison of Year 1 and Year 2 matched mean ratings by domain across schools.

Engagement assesses how students are actively working on the task, Substantive Engagement measures how emotionally invested students are in classroom activities. This engagement is manifested through enjoyment, excitement, pride, and high motivation, which lead to a deeper level of understanding and critical analysis of concepts and subject material. The Substantive Engagement scores showed the greatest increase, from 2.13 in Year 1 to 2.91 in Year 2.

A math teacher exemplified model substantive student engagement in a class that covered long division. First the teacher explained how to play a game called "Keep the Remainder." Each group of students had 25 beans and dice. Each student rolled the dice and divided the 25 beans by the number rolled. All the beans were placed into groups according to the denominator, and students kept the leftover beans, or the "remainder." Students were actively participating in the math game, to the extent that they became worried when they thought they lost track of the game. Students smiled and clapped with pride and a sense of accomplishment when they answered correctly. Furthermore, this game surpassed mere play, because the structure of the lesson facilitated enjoyment, helping the students to connect deeply

with the mathematical concepts. They verbalized the process of their actions and used vocabulary and concepts they had learned from the school math program, language that was consistently being used in other classes. One boy was so excited by this game (and subsequently mastering the math problem) that he jumped out of his seat and danced when he discovered an answer. Substantive engagement facilitated student learning in this example:

Student: It was funner because you got to touch all of the stuff.

Teacher: What did you learn about the game?

Student: I learned that sometimes you get remainders.

Teacher: What are remainders?

Student: When you divide, you do it in equal groups, and when you can't put them in equal groups then you get remainders. (Observation 5, School 6, Year 2)

One of the goals of the Creative Learning Communities program is that innovative lesson planning will foster substantive student discussion in the classroom, enabling further significant student connection with subject material. The Quality of Instructional Discussion domain measures the complexity of teacher questions and the teacher's effort to stimulate meaningful dialogue among the students. Ideally there would be few simple question-and-answer style probes, where answers are clean-cut "yes or no" responses or known answers. Rather, a discussion that features high-quality questions, with perhaps ambiguous answers, and that fosters dialogue would merit a high score in this domain. The teacher would cultivate student interaction and participation by building on student comments and challenge students to think further and elaborate. Students would also initiate discussion and make unsolicited, on-topic contributions, happy when actively participating in the discussion. Quality of Instructional Discussion scores improved over the two years moving from an average score of 2.17 in Year 1 to 2.22 in Year 2.

For example, one science teacher was able to facilitate high-quality instructional discussion in a science lesson. The students were comparing the qualities of two different balls and making observations about weight, size, texture, and how the balls bounced. The follow-up discussion to the exercise was excellent. The teacher had the students defend and develop their answers with open-ended questions. The teacher also continued to draw more students into the discussion, and each student was able to take the discussion further by sharing his or her

experiences and observations about the experiment. The teacher frequently asked students whether they observed something different or came to different conclusions about the experiment.

Teacher: I want to know how you and your partner decide which ball was bouncier.

Student: A couple times they were bouncing the same.

Teacher: What do you mean bouncing the same?

Student: We dropped them and then they would stop at the same time.

Teacher: How did you figure which one was bouncing?

Student: One of them bounced longer than the other.

Teacher: How did you figure bounciness?

Students: We counted the number of bounces.

Teacher: So is any one doing something different? [Student]?

Student: Well, we kind of argued a bit about which one was bouncier and then we dropped the ball. (Observation 9, School 10, Year 2)

The teacher fostered diversity of ideas in the discussion, enabling the lesson concepts to expand with the students' input. Furthermore, her discussion illustrated to students that there are a variety of ways to solve problems. When the student commented that he and his partner argued about their observation, the teacher praised this, explaining that many scientists also debate about conclusions to their experiments.

Challenge of Lesson Activity establishes the complexity and rigor of the learning activities. Lessons designed for students to use primarily complex thinking skills such as analyzing for cause and effect, identifying problems, and posing reasonable solutions bolstered by justification would merit a perfect score of 4. Schools did demonstrate increases in Challenge of Lesson Activity over the initial two years, starting with a baseline score of 2.21 in Year 1 and rising to 2.43 in Year 2.

One class epitomized the ideal level of challenge of activities. The lesson was to write a formal letter to a museum curator at the museum the class recently visited on a field trip. Though real-life situations were equated to the classroom learning environment, the students were nonetheless challenged by the exercise. The lesson began by reviewing the parts of a letter. The teacher then presented three sample letters to the students, which they commented on and rated using a writing rubric that they were already familiar with. The students were challenged to critique each

letter and note problems with the tone and content. This lesson facilitated a rigorous discussion led by students. Not only did the students have to identify flaws in the sample letter, but they also had to defend their answers.

In the following dialogue extracted from the letter-writing lesson, the students are critiquing a letter, which was extremely informal and almost impolite considering the context was a formal situation.

Teacher:	What are good things you see?
Student:	All five parts.
Teacher:	Yes all five parts, that's cool.
Student:	It's missing the introduction.
Teacher:	What is it missing? I really love the bell. I thought the water wheel was cool.
Student:	You don't say why.
Teacher:	All right, so this letter. A 5 about is the highest on the rubric. What do you think, based on that, where would you put them if you were teacher.
Student:	3.
Teacher:	Anybody agree or disagree?
Student:	2, thought do an introduction.
Student:	2, it doesn't give them a sense and supposed to be in paragraphs.
Teacher:	Anybody agree or disagree and why?
Student:	It looks like a letter but it doesn't sound like a letter.
Teacher:	So a 1. (Observation 2, School 1, Year 2)

Implementation of the Lesson Activity gauges how effectively the lesson was realized. Ideal implementation of a lesson would feature seamless transitions from directions to activities and from one activity to another. No class time would be wasted, and the teacher would always maintain control of the classroom. Excellent implementation is typically characterized by clear directions that the students understand and by a teacher who is attentively monitoring the pace of activities ensuring that the students are on-task because they understand instructions. The Implementation of Lesson Activity domain score increased, with schools scoring 2.54 in Year 1 and 2.91 in Year 2.

An exemplary score for Implementation of Lesson Activity was earned by a math class studying fractions and decimal points. The teacher gave excellent procedural directions by modeling the activity for the students at the board. She

walked the students through the activity verbally, using cars as concrete examples while the students used unifix cubes as manipulatives to follow along from their seats. The teacher challenged the students to complete an equation with appropriate guidance, and then she wrote the equation on a board and prompted the students for answers. She repeated this process several times with different examples to reinforce the concepts for the students, so that when they were to continue the activity in pairs, they would be familiar with the exercise.

> Teacher: I have 25 matchbox cars, and I want to put my matchbox cars into groups of 3 . . . and I want to start separating my cars into groups of 3 so I can sell them. (Observation 8, School 5, Year 2)

As the teacher modeled the activity and verbalized the steps she was taking to solve the equation, she slid groups of three cars from the left-hand side to the right-hand side, identifying each group of three cars. The students proceeded to parcel out groups of three, mirroring their teacher. The teacher intensified the challenge of the activity and asked the students to write the equation. Since the teacher had demonstrated the concept concisely, the group was able to equate the demonstration to mathematical concepts.

> Teacher: Let's see if we can write an equation for that. How many are there?
> Students: 24
> Teacher: We broke them into groups of . . .
> Students: 3
> Teacher: 24 broken up into groups of 3 equals 8. (Observation 8, School 5, Year 2)

The teacher continued to explain the lesson in follow-up activities by verbalizing the equation she was writing on the board. The teacher then roved around the classroom, clarifying the exercise for students who still needed help. The teacher maintained control of the classroom, and the lesson was extremely well implemented.

The final component of the CPOP was Quality of Instructional Feedback. This domain measures the amount of teacher feedback for student work and behavior to support the attainment of the instructional goals. Ideally the teacher will provide appropriate comments to all students, not only the students who demonstrate a need because they are unclear of the assignment. The teacher will have positive and

constructive comments, perhaps by praising a student to model excellent work. If necessary, the teacher will request that students behave appropriately or re-engage with the assignment if they are off-task. Instructional feedback should be consistently integrated into classroom activities to enable students to use the constructive criticism to strengthen their work. Quality of Instructional Feedback scores had a small shift, increasing from 2.33 in Year 1 to 2.43 in Year 2.

One teacher particularly provided excellent instructional feedback for her students. The students looked at storybooks about color, discussed what they saw in the books, and were then read to from another book about color. The exercise was to complete a worksheet on the different colors of the rainbow by thinking of what the colors of the rainbow reminded them of and listing the items on a picture of a rainbow. This multi-disciplinary lesson combined reading, art, and grammar. The teacher already had modeled the lesson excellently by demonstrating an example on the board and calling on students to help her think of colors and how they made the students feel. The class critiqued the suggestions, and the teacher also made suggestions and comments about what the students could do in their exercise. When the students were working on their own handouts individually, the teacher moved around the room looking at student work and giving feedback, sometimes for the whole class, to model good work. Her questions helped students to explain their work; thus, they were actively participating in learning with the students who were listening to the explanations.

Teacher:	Good! What did you do with these two?
Student:	I capitalized them.
Teacher:	Why?
Student:	Because they're names. (Observation 11, School 2, Year 2)

In another example, rather than pointing out mistakes herself, the teacher asked questions to help the students detect their own mistakes.

Teacher:	What did I say you needed to include?
Student:	Commas.
Teacher:	Why?
Student:	Because it's a list.
Teacher:	Then don't forget to list your commas. (Observation 11, School 2, Year 2)

She reminded her students to use correct punctuation by asking them what they need to include: commas, periods, and apostrophes. Her feedback offered praise but also enabled the students to self-evaluate, which was more productive and engaging than having the teacher find mistakes for them. Furthermore, her feedback reminded them to self-evaluate while they were composing their work; thus, the final product becomes stronger. She also did a good job of calling on a variety of students, even those who needed more guidance and reminding to be on task.

Overall, when comparing the matched mean rating for teachers with scores in Year 1 and Year 2 at the same grade level, there is improvement across all six domains (Table 21). Substantial gains were made in student engagement, with an increase from 2.96 to 3.52 in mean rating for Procedural Engagement, and from 2.13 to 2.91 in mean rating for Substantive Engagement, signaling an increasing percentage of students that are concentrating on and enjoying learning activities at the same time. Challenge of Lesson Activity and Implementation of Lesson Activity also improved, with mean ratings of 2.21 to 2.43 and 2.54 to 2.91 respectively, indicating that teachers were providing students with more cognitively challenging lessons and implementing them well. The two domains with the least improvement were Quality of Instructional Discussion and Quality of Instructional Feedback. Quality of Instructional Discussion improved slightly, with a mean rating of 2.17 in Year 1 to 2.22 in Year 2, and Quality of Instructional Feedback improved from 2.33 in Year 1 to 2.43 in Year 2.

Individual case study school trends. Eight Creative Learning Communities schools were selected for an intensive case study based on content areas, geographic

Table 21

Comparison of Year 1 and Year 2 Matched Mean Ratings

Domain	2000 Matched scores	2001 Matched scores	Matched mean change
Substantive Engagement	2.13	2.91	.78
Procedural Engagement	2.96	3.52	.56
Implementation of Lesson Activity	2.54	2.91	.37
Challenge of Lesson Activity	2.21	2.43	.22
Quality of Instructional Discussion	2.17	2.22	.05
Quality of Instructional Feedback	2.33	2.43	.10

areas, and other demographic variables.[9] These sites are part of a 3-year longitudinal study. This section highlights the comparisons between Year 1 and Year 2 of the project implementation for each school using interviews, observations, and documents (e.g., proposals and annual reports) as the primary data sources for the analysis.[10] The total numbers of interviews and observations conducted at each school site are listed in Table 22.[11]

The following results have been organized to highlight the theory of action in each learning community.[12] A brief project description is provided, and each of the 8 case study sites is described in three domains, based on overall thematic content of the interview analyses, as well as major components of the theory of action presented in Figure 1. These domains are (a) school culture, goals, and leadership, (b) professional development, and (c) creative teaching strategies and engaged student learning. With respect to the domains of creative teaching strategies and engaged student learning, the CPOP domains were examined for each site. These domains are considered to be indicators of emerging creative teaching strategies as rated on a rubric (see Appendix A). Given the small sample of teachers and students observed at individual schools, changes in domains will be discussed descriptively.

Table 22

Number of Interviews and Observations by School

School	Interviews	Observations
School 1	25	21
School 2	25	19
School 3	29	22
School 4	19	15
School 5	21	22
School 6	16	17
School 9	13	13
School 10	26	16
TOTAL	174	145

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[9] In order to protect the identity of the school sites, information regarding demographics and content areas has been excluded in this report.

[10] The total number of interviews and observations may be related to the size of the school and/or the schedule and opportunities provided to the researchers at each school site.

[11] Totals include those excluded from statistical analysis.

[12] Any references to particular projects or individuals have been designated as Project X or Individual X in order to protect the identity of the school and the participants. Excerpts with information that might be identified have been excluded from this report.

Case Study School 1

School community-based learning. "[Project X] is conceived as an innovative, open-ended, guided exploration of the rich history of the site of an elementary school by its own students that will serve as the focal point of the school's curriculum" (School Proposal 1, p. 2). Located in an ethnically diverse, urban community, this project provides students with place-based educational experiences, emphasizing cross-curricular, interdisciplinary teaching. This project attempts to transform the curriculum into something meaningfully coherent for students—that is, to connect their learning to the local community and the larger context of city, state, and nation.

School culture, goals, and leadership. The culture of this school can be characterized as "top down." School leadership is of a more administrative style with site-based management, effectively giving the administration the power to hire and fire at will. Given this culture, teachers perceive CLC as being an "outsider" project being done *to them,* as opposed to *with them,* and without choice.

> So we've been told we're having a [Project X] at our school. I'll bet you there are 30 different opinions of what that [X Project] will look like or what the goal of having this would be. That was never discussed. But on the basic level, we haven't even done anything like "Why are we doing this?" "Is there a point to this?" "How is this helping children?" "How does this make us better teachers or better kids?" So we seem to jump over the more pedagogical and philosophical things, and jump into the mechanics of it. (Teacher Interview 7, School 1, Year 2)

Project implementation began without buy-in from a majority of the teaching faculty. And because teachers were not part of a process in *building a shared vision*, the vision of the administrators has been depicted as *tunnel vision.*

> It was basically people that had an idea and a vision of what they wanted to do. That's how it developed in that way. And in order for me to get on board I had to find something that interested me and that interested the kids that I could make a contribution to. A lot of the teachers are like, "Well what do we do with this?" We're supposed to be making an [Project X]. What do we do? I would like to be considered more of an expert. I don't feel as if that happened. It's kind of done. (Teacher Interview 13, School 1, Year 1)

Bypassing the building-a-shared-vision process, teachers were unable to fully understand the purpose of the CLC project and the changes in teaching practice being proposed. As a result, few teachers began integrating place-based learning

during Year 1. By Year 2 of the CLC grant, about two thirds of the teachers were actively involved in the project, but the range of activity varied from teacher to teacher, from using integrated activities to using isolated activities. The interview data clearly define two groups of teachers: those willingly taking the plunge into unknown waters; and those not yet willing to jump in or ambivalent about jumping in without knowing clearly what is being asked of them, why, and for what purpose. Both metaphorical perspectives are provided here.

Jumping in the water:

It's made me move away from the traditional research paper where you research it, write it and type it out. I'm trying to do things that are more fun, like the [writing] the brochure, instead of doing it in the traditional way . . . So it's got the kids talking more about their lives. (Teacher Interview 6, School 1, Year 2)

I really try to let the children be more active participants, bringing it down to their level, and letting them kind of try where it's going. It's not merely the teacher saying, "Okay, we're going to do this, that, and the other." They decide what the [Project X] would look like, and what the culture will be, so they do a lot of thinking, a lot of developing themselves. They feel the ownership of it, which is really important. (Teacher Interview 1, School 1, Year 2)

Well it's more of a hands-on. It's the kids having something that is right in front of them to learn from. You're not learning from a textbook anymore. You are learning from what is around you. You are learning from your environment. So, it's a very different sense of what you are learning and how you are learning. (Teacher Interview 2, School 1, Year 2)

Waiting at the edge of the water:

I think the initial barrier was basically, you know, more stuff to do. And the resistance comes from more stuff to do, and I don't know how to do it. Basically it is asking teachers to start teaching without a textbook . . . without a solid knowledge base, without a sense of knowing A to B to C to D . . . so it's asking to teach without knowing. And I think that's a very hard thing. (Teacher Interview 3, School 1, Year 2)

For those of us who have been teaching a long time . . . the methodology that was used then as opposed to what we're doing now is very different. So it's like having to learn a new process all over again. And that has been a little challenging. It can be a little overwhelming. But it's exciting too, because you see the kids coming up with things that you wouldn't have expected they would be able to do. (Teacher Interview 5, School 1, Year 2)

Last year it started off very slowly, probably about 30% of the teachers were involved, and had ideas. Another 30% were kind of like thinking what to do, and then you have the other 30% of the staff that didn't want anything to do with it. It was just like, "Don't come into the classroom and do this." (Teacher Interview 10, School 1, Year 2)

Teachers' attitudes about integrating the CLC project shifted from Year 1 to Year 2, mainly as the result of professional development directly tied to the classroom. Some administrators and teachers described a paradigm shift, with teachers opening themselves up to new challenges and experiences.

It's the teachers' ability in their own lives and selves to open themselves up to something new which says something—it is a lot about them as human beings committed to doing the best possible education. And it's also the project itself, which inherently has in it the seeds of possibility . . . It's not necessarily a pedagogical shift, it's a real consciousness change. (Teacher Interview 1, School 1, Year 2)

A recurrent theme was the shift in teachers' thinking from this is "one more thing to do" to "this *is* the thing to do ," as depicted in the following exemplar:

Last year I don't think anybody was really convinced that it was going to be a good thing. This year, I am really enthusiastic about it, and I know there are other teachers who are coming on board. We're all at different stages. You know, there are still some teachers who are . . . whether it's because the idea hasn't caught fire with them yet, or because they're just totally overloaded with their regular work. But I think you'll find the full range of teacher enthusiasm with the project. I think it's gaining momentum. I think that as those teachers who haven't started to see what's being done with the other teachers and seeing people getting excited, and seeing what it's doing for the kids, I think gradually, most teachers will jump on board and get into it. (Teacher Interview 12, School 1, Year 2)

Professional development activities. Teachers received a concentrated dosage of professional development, particularly in the form of summer retreats. Yet, classroom-embedded professional development was lacking, which could have made meaningful connections with and smoother transitions from the more traditional teaching techniques teachers utilize.

People like me. No, I'm kidding. Resistance. It took me a little time. I think people have to feel directly connected and that it actually will make an impact. And sometimes when you're asking teachers to shift their teaching, they might shift in places where they're comfortable shifting, but there are certain pieces that they want to hold on to. So that's a difficult thing. Letting go of something and making room for the new things. We can't do it all. (Teacher Interview 2, School 1, Year 1)

The only barriers that I can see is that education itself is in such a state of flux, and people are trying to get a handle on the standards, and they're trying to get our scores up. So again, if the teacher can figure out a way to work the [X Project] into it, then that's fine. Then it won't be any more work for them. I just think that there's a level of stress because of having to focus on standards and changing the way that we teach and all of the other things that are involved in that. That's the only thing that could stand in the way. The teachers could just be so overwhelmed that they treat it like it's an extra. (Teacher Interview 5, School 1, Year 1)

Not until Year 2, with another retreat focused on modeling the type of teaching being promoted and then linking these practices to state standards, did a majority of teachers begin to truly understand place-based learning. For many teachers, having lessons for Project X modeled at the retreat contributed to significantly increased buy-in from the teachers.

I think the retreat turned a lot of us around. I think that some honestly felt it's an imposition when they're trying to teach children how to read and write and do math. Going on that retreat and spending that weekend with us, and taking us seriously, and our administrators taking us seriously, and seeing how the professional X do it, a lot more people have a much better attitude about integrating it into their classrooms. (Teacher Interview 11, School 1, Year 2)

Creative teaching strategies and engaged student learning. Given the dramatic increase in the number of teachers participating in the CLC project, School 1 improved in all of the domains of the Classroom Practice Observation Protocol. In the domain Challenge of Lesson Activity, there was an increase in the complexity and rigorousness of lesson activities that were well implemented. In the area of Procedural and Substantive Engagement, the site demonstrated significant improvement, with students concentrating and completing lesson activities, as well as enjoying lesson activities. In regard to Quality of Instructional Discussions, teachers asked more open-ended questions, rather than having basic question-and-answer sessions. The following field note example from a classroom observation highlights the improvements.

March 20, 2001

Dear Curator,

Last week, I visited your museum. I wanted to let you know about some idea I had.

First, the guide talked too much. I was getting bored with all the talking.

Secondly, the movie was too long. You need to cut some stuff.

Finally, the manager's room needs more explanation. I couldn't follow it all.

Bye,
Ms. X

Student: You are insulting the writer.

Teacher: Very good, I'm insulting. The goal of this is not to insult a person.

Teacher: Any other comments?

Student: You can't say bye.

Teacher: Why not?

Student: Say sincerely.

Student: You can't say bye you never say hi.

Student: You might see them in fifth grade.

Teacher: Bye is too flippant, too nice . . . know what I mean . . . too familiar. This one shows some effort . . . what do you think?

Student: 1, you had bad attitude.

Student: 2, because you specifically said you don't want to be rude.

Teacher: Good point.

Student: 3, because its kind of good . . . the signature . . .

Student: I give it a 3. It has all the parts . . . because it's not formal.

Teacher: So you are going to say the formalness brings it down.

Student: I give it a 1 because of the attitude.

Student: I think it's a 2 because of the paragraph.

Teacher: I give it a 2. That's being nice. It shows some effort but negative effort.

(Observation 2, School 1, Year 2)

This teacher represents the innovative teaching practices emerging in classrooms across the school—practices that permit students to become agents of their own learning and let their thinking in the interaction unfold.

That is our hope. We do see it. I think it's hard for teachers to let go. It's hard for them to let kids ask the questions, because as a teacher, you feel like you should have the answers. The hardest thing to say is, "I don't know. Let's go find out." But slowly, with this project . . . I think it's helping teachers to let go and helping teachers to see that it's okay to have the kids ask the questions. They're afraid to let go, but they're trying and they're working on it slowly. (Coordinator Interview 1, School 1, Year 1)

Case Study School 2

Communal learning. "Developing a community of [learners] . . . creates [and] fosters a schoolwide environment whereby EVERY student and staff member would be encouraged to write everyday for a variety of purposes" (School Annual Report 2, p. 7). Situated in a suburban area school, this project focuses on the learning experiences of all school community members, emphasizing the social nature of learning. Students are provided with developmentally appropriate, challenging lessons in a core content area of language arts where they read and write for a purpose.

School culture, goals, and leadership. In contrast to School 1, this school is characterized by a collaborative culture in which each teacher is involved in the discussion of and reflection on the grant idea. This school is a community in which the [Project X] occurs throughout the entire school. Students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members are inextricably tied to the learning community. The instructional leadership style of the principal is central to grant implementation and success. Almost every teacher interviewed mentioned the positive school culture created by the principal.

> I think that [Principal X] just does such a nice job with encouraging us to use different things in our classroom, and [encouraging] us to try different ideas. And she's very supportive of that, with having us do some different things within our classrooms and giving us the space and the time and the financial support that we need to do those things. And I think that openness that we have with [Principal X] as a staff makes us feel so comfortable in trying different things, or trying others if this isn't working. I think [Principal X] values us as staff and she wants to encourage as many people to be involved as possible. I had a chance to sit on the committee that helped write the annual report . . . it was just so neat for me to sit down and be a part of it, and to think of myself as "I'm a valuable contributor to this." And I think that's not a feeling that I just have. I think that's pretty consistent throughout the staff that [Principal X] does a nice job of encouraging different people to be involved in different things. (Teacher Interview 2, School 2, Year 2)

In Year 2 of the CLC grant project, every teacher in the school was involved in the project, with the majority integrating innovative teaching practices in their language arts curriculum. Nearly every teacher interviewed was positive about the project, and even the few who were ambivalent were attempting to shift to a buy-in attitude.

Last year I think we all came into it with fear and trepidation. I personally was overwhelmed in the beginning by all of the changes we were going to have to do, and how much work there was going to be, and all of those kinds of things. But, as we got into it, and began to see much of it I was already doing, that all I needed to do was call it something different, or expand a little bit on it, incorporate this into that, so I wasn't doing two different things. And I think many of the teachers found that to be the case. There wasn't an overwhelming addition of work. We were already doing it. We just needed to find out how to do it better and how to incorporate it into what we were already doing, so that it enhanced [it]. This year I think people are much more comfortable. I think that we are doing much more writing . . . I am sure we did it with gritted teeth in the beginning because it was a whole new thing. But now people are finding out many new ways and we're learning from each other. The teachers are much more excited about what we are doing, because we are seeing progress. We are seeing the children become more excited about it. (Teacher Interview 3, School 2, Year 2)

Descriptions of the shifts teachers made in their thinking about the project implementation are highlighted in the next excerpt.

And so everybody was real excited at first when we got it. But then it became like, "Well, I have to do this and I have to do this." And you have to change yourself a little bit. You have to change your techniques. You have to change your attitude. And it's the same with anybody. Change always brings hesitation on people's parts—and they don't want to do it. So I think that in the very beginning everyone was real excited, but then once we got into this and they realized, "Gee, I'm going to have to change and do it a little bit different. I'm going to have to read this book and I'm going to have to do a little extra work here." Then it started to be like "this is just another thing we have to do." And then when we started seeing the impact on the classroom and how it's easy—it's not an extra thing to do. It's just a different approach. And it's just tying in that writing with your other subjects. It's not an added job. You're just expanding that right into your other subjects . . . and I think that then people got more comfortable with it. And I think on the whole, most of the teachers are on board. I think they have a positive attitude toward it. They do see the benefits . . . and you see what the other kids at different age levels are capable of, I think then they [teachers] get more inspired and more motivated. (Teacher Interview 2, School 2, Year 2)

Professional development activities. The professional development activities for School 2 include continuous, classroom-embedded professional development:

- weekly in-service meetings to discuss the implementation of Project X in their classrooms targeting best practices;

- ongoing assistance in the classrooms with a language arts coach;

- external partnerships with local universities and colleges that provide specific workshops targeted to aspects of Project X; and

- bi-monthly meetings for standard setting of Project X with products of student work to create a sense of accountability and continuity throughout the school.

In general, professional development targeted each teacher's needs directly and with immediate applicability to their classrooms. The broad nature of the professional development activities and the important caveat that they be teacher driven and teacher oriented have been a force in the teacher buy-in for Project X, and this is highlighted in the following exemplar.

> I've been teaching for five years and the first four years seemed to be "Well, you're going to learn this because I think it's important to me." So, because the superintendent thinks it's important to him, everybody had to learn it. And this professional development has been more like it's our end goal. We decided that this is important and this is what we need to do to achieve it, rather than somebody from the district saying "This is what I feel is important. This is what you have to do in order to achieve my goal." So we are working toward a [goal] that we have all decided we want to achieve. (Teacher Interview 10, School 2, Year 2)

Overall, teachers reported that implementing project activities in their classroom was easier with the *support of a mentor.* The following excerpt highlights a common theme of increasing comfort levels as a conduit for initiating and implementing project activities in the classroom.

> I was never very comfortable with writing myself, and so I didn't do a lot of teaching of the writing, just the basics, whatever was required in the reading book and whatever we did with each theme, and that kind of stuff. But since we have had [Mentor X] here, she's really a big influence and an inspiration. She has a lot of ideas and she comes in and helps. And so it's made me more comfortable with writing. I'm still not comfortable with sharing . . . my writing, but I'm more comfortable in the classroom with teaching the kids [writing]. (Teacher Interview 4, School 2, Year 2)

The next example highlights the professional development provided by external partnerships.

> Some of the things with [University X] helped us as teachers because now we're getting some of the skills that we didn't have or that we weren't sure about. So how do we do this? How do we get them to write these kinds of things? How do we fit it all in? I don't have time to do that. And we've been fortunate in learning now where to find the time. And for me personally, I'm a little more comfortable. And it's lowered my stress level in

terms of worrying about how to fit it all in because I'm seeing [it] from people who do this, and they'll say "Well, here's the research. This is how you can do it. And this works." I don't have to spend time trying this one and trying that one because I've got the advantage of their expertise in knowing what works and what doesn't work. (Teacher Interview 8, School 2, Year 2)

The weekly meetings of the faculty before school also provided the teachers with continuity and links from an activity to the classroom, as well as a place to dialogue and collaborate with each other and the coordinator/mentor. Each meeting had specific activities and content directly related to the goals of the teachers in the classroom.

She [teacher mentor] will give us what she calls grabbers and will pull something like the [the word] "Friday," and so everyone writes for five minutes about your thoughts on Friday, and then share them. And it makes me more aware of "It's okay. Everybody is different, everybody has different ideas, everybody looks at it differently." And then after you do it for a while and everybody shares and it's like "Oh, okay, well, I can do that." And so then I think that if my kids feel that way, if I do it enough with them and I model for them, and I write and I share with them, then they will get more comfortable with it. And a lot of times the [teacher mentor] will come in and she'll have the teacher write with the kids on the assignment, and then have us share. So it becomes like a modeling thing, but I'm learning from them too. And if we come away with one new idea or just even a good feeling about "what I wrote today was okay" or feeling that someone else felt the same way, or you learned something—then it was worth it. (Teacher Interview 4, School 2, Year 2)

In addition, at these weekly meetings, teachers described the importance of having scheduled time to reflect on their practice as part of the professional development activities, as indicated in this exemplar:

We've done something . . . that I really like. It really helps me see what the . . . staff is doing. We review student work together. So one teacher will come to the group with a writing activity that they have done with the kids, and we all critique it. It's a great place for ideas, and you see what everybody else is doing. (Teacher Interview 8, School 2, Year 2)

As another teacher stated:

There is a lot of conferencing and sharing . . . and that [the weekly meetings] is the perfect time to share that something is working. A lot of things, through the book or just through presenters or in-service, we realize that it's hidden somewhere in some of these

classrooms and it just needs to come out [in the discussion]. (Teacher Interview 13, School 2, Year 2)

Concerning the level of professional development and peer support, teachers in Year 1 interviews across the school expressed concrete changes in their teaching practices, attributing changes to in-services and workshops.

And when I first started [x] grade, it was, the writing activities I did were very structured. Um, you know, it's simply plugging in words, or adding one or two things. And part of that was just from my perspective that these are younger children, and they're not going to be able to do as much. But in reading some of the literature and being able to think about some of the ideas, and to think about some of the workshops, I kind of gave the children more and more freedom, until they're at the point now where I can pretty much give them a topic and have them write on it . . . And I think that the different in-service that we had, had taught me to give more ownership to the students and to kind of take less ownership of their writing from me. (Teacher Interview 6, School 2, Year 1)

Creative teaching strategies and engaged student learning. The domain in which School 2 showed significant improvement was in the area of Substantive Engagement with the majority of the students displaying an interest and enjoyment in concentrating on and completing given classroom assignments. The following observation field note excerpt exemplifies the high level of student procedural and substantive engagement found in School 2.

She waves hand down to stop questions. She holds the book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and really engages them in a discussion.

Teacher: What woke him up?

Student: The sun.

Teacher: X, what wakes you up?

Student: My mom.

Student: Sometimes my dog comes in and licks me.

Student: Sometimes my brother.

Student: My mom's boyfriend hits me with a pillow.

Student: My dad gets me up.

Teacher: So our caterpillar comes out of the egg and how did he feel? He was what?

Students: HUNGRY!!!

Teacher: How do you feel when you wake up?

Students: HUNGRY!!!

Teacher: What was the first thing the caterpillar ate?

Student: An apple.

Teacher: And everyday he ate more things and he got?

Students: FATTER!!!

Teacher: Until what happened?

Student: Keep on getting hungry.

Student: He had a stomachache.

(Observation 3, School 2, Year 2)

The researcher's observation notes stated, "The students are all listening. They are all riveted, looking at her and the book intently. Students' hands shoot up in the air waving back and forth frantically with wiggling fingers and 'Oh, oh's'."

The observed decrease in the domains of Quality of Instructional Discussion and Quality of Instructional Feedback reflects the shift in time devoted to writing in Year 2 as compared to Year 1, which is congruent with the goals of this project.

Innovative teaching practices in the area of language arts are evident everywhere; and furthermore, changes in students' engagement with language arts learning are evident. Teachers are encouraged and motivated to experiment more as a result of observed changes and a supportive culture that cuts across classrooms.

> They did something called Reader for Rent. And the reading specialist came into all the fourth grades and the kids made an ad, and there was a Polaroid picture that was posted on the side, and they had written persuasive ads, like you would read in the newspaper on why another teacher should rent them, ok. And what would happen is the kindergarten teacher would maybe rent one of their former students. And this child from my room would go, we'd schedule a time, and we'd go and read aloud to the kids. So it encouraged the tie with reading but they really had to be selective in their choice of words, and they couldn't be too wordy, and they had to tighten, and you know, we talked about ads, and how writing's different for different reasons, and why in a newspaper wouldn't they write a paragraph when they're trying to sell something, and why did they use this? So, that from the beginning gave a huge message, and ok, this is a form of writing. It was all posted right along this thing, I mean there wasn't a day you couldn't walk past it and teachers came up and put a sticker if they were renting you, and that kind of thing. So, from the beginning of the year, they were exposed to the writing. OK, this is the type of writing we're going to do now. (Teacher Interview 7, School 2, Year 1)

Case Study School 3

Experiential learning. "Experiential learning helps integrate and enhance the areas of reading and writing through research, problem-solving, decision-making and public presentation of the [Project X] knowledge gained" (School Proposal 3, p. 2). Located in a rural community, this project provides students with enriched educational experiences, based on the school's surrounding environment, promoting the inquiry process for both teacher and student.

School culture, goals, and leadership. A culture of collaboration already existed in this school prior to the CLC grants. So, in contrast to both School 1 (still trying to create a culture of community) and School 2 (establishing a culture of community), School 3 is maintaining and refining their community culture that is, overall, inspiring to teachers, students, families, and visitors.

> You have a group of 30 teachers who have different personalities, and some are young and enthusiastic, some are middle-aged and enthusiastic, and some are about to retire and enthusiastic . . . I think it says a lot for the teachers in this school that even the people who are going to retire next year are doing this project—and doing it enthusiastically. Now I'm not going to sit here and lie, and tell you there have not been complaints about the time involved in dealing with this project, but there is no backbiting. Our faculty has been very supportive of this whole project. And there are some people who do more than others, as far as diving into this headfirst. But I don't know of a teacher in this school who has not embraced this project, and said, "Okay, we have this opportunity." And we look at it as an opportunity for the children and for ourselves. (Teacher Interview 3, School 3, Year 2)

Considering themselves like family, these teachers share a common vision of the CLC grant project, with the dual goal of empowering teachers and students through experiential learning. It is noteworthy that teachers and administrators do not meet on a regular basis to discuss CLC implementation. Instead, they meet and discuss informally, sharing ideas and materials, providing the necessary subtle peer pressure that supports the continued growth of these types of practice. This collaborative culture becomes critical to the success of the project given that there is no direct administrative leadership. Instead, a few teachers have taken on the role of teacher leader and mentor, facilitating the implementation process.

> Miss X had worked with the environment so much, and her students are doing so well. We thought we could sort of do kind of like the same thing she's doing with her class, and just basically work on research skills and writing to help them and to motivate them. (Teacher Interview 5, School 3, Year 1)

Initially, teachers were overwhelmed by the CLC grant, but in the second year they have come to see that the reform is a matter of adapting and shifting existing teacher beliefs about pedagogy. As one teacher stated:

> It has empowered so many of our teachers to look beyond the four walls in the classroom. That there is a whole world out there and it can be so powerful in getting kids turned on. I think that we've just thrown open the doors. (Teacher Interview 1, School 3, Year 2)

Professional development activities. The focus of the professional development activities at this site has been described in the following ways: (a) experiential in nature, (b) comprised of a variety of teacher-focused field experiences, and (c) involving informal discussions about their [teachers'] experiences with other teachers. Overall, teachers stated that they wanted to have more formal professional development activities to document the impact of their professional development experiences. The experiential professional development activities have been considered by most to be "life altering." That is, teachers are involved in environmental field trips to experience the world that their students would be entering to learn a science curriculum.

> I knew that if we as teachers could get out and actually experience things as a child would, and actually experience with nature—that they [teachers] would be empowered. It has worked. The teachers have worked miracles, and it has bonded the school—and that's great. (Administrator Interview 1, School 3, Year 2)

Some of the professional development activities have been described as teacher focused and interest based.

> Well, we've had a lot of variety. Teachers have gone to a lot of different places based on their interest. And we've been nonjudgmental about where they're going and what they're doing, as long as they come back and share it in some way. This whole idea of learning is for a lifetime—this may sound judgmental, but sometimes teachers get so regimented in what they teach every year, that they forget. Do something different, do something new. Get excited about something. And I think that's what the [professional developments] have done. It's inspired them to learn new things and to bring back into their classroom just one new area. A new focus. (Teacher Interview 1, School 3, Year 2)

The outdoor experiences that teachers describe are ones that inspire them to reflect on their own lives as individuals, mentors, and teachers. These inspirations are highlighted in the following example:

It [professional development] made me feel closer to a lot of the people I worked with because we had a great time. It inspires you. I guess, when you go and do things like that as a faculty especially, it inspires you to go back. It gives you new inspiration to go back and you're like, "I want to try this in my classroom." Teachers need it . . . we're stuck here all day inside. There's a lot out there, and there's a lot of research being done, and a lot of things being done that we don't ever hear about. (Teacher Interview 1, School 3, Year 2)

Through a combination of formal professional development activities, providing teachers with new experiences that dramatically alter their attitudes and informal collaborative culture, and providing them with the support needed to sustain that exploration in their practice, teachers have been able to provide students with learning-based experiences.

Creative teaching strategies and engaged student learning. Students are increasingly using higher cognitive functions to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize given information. This is indicative of a higher degree of interest on the part of the students in the subject matter and an enthusiasm for completing the work they have been assigned. An example of the students being cognitively challenged and substantively engaged follows in this field note excerpt:

Students right now are using their senses, with the exception of taste. She passes stethoscopes around for the children to use. Kids put their ears to the tree, listening for bugs and different critters that may be in their tree. They're looking at the tree with the magnifying glass. There is a lot of student discussion going on right now. They are really into this. They're really into their tree right now. One student just found a caterpillar, exclaiming, "I'm going to keep it. It's mine." They have the caterpillar on a stick, and they're trying to get it onto a leaf. They're really involved with their environment.

There are two students over here, using a stethoscope.

Student 1:   You can hear something clicking.

Student 2:   Probably a bug.

Student 1:   (to the teacher) I hear something clicking.

Teacher: What do you think it might be?

Student 1:   I think it might be a bug.

Teacher: It might be a bug.

Student 1:   (continues to listen, all smiles) I can hear something here. Probably a bug.

Teacher: Is that what it sounds like?

Student 2:   It could be sap. (Observation 11, School 3, Year 2)

There is an observed decrease in the Quality of Instructional Discussion and Quality of Instructional Feedback, but observation data suggest that teachers are providing students with more time for exploration during their experiential learning process, free from teacher interference or interruption.

> Oh, yes. I like to be more of a facilitator in learning and not be the giver of all good and evil knowledge. Facilitate their learning and just be a part, where they're making the discoveries and the learning, and bringing the book and saying, "Look what I found. I've learned this." Instead of me just teaching it to them. By doing that, then that makes them want to learn more and to read more books. And it frees me up. It's sort of scary because the teacher's supposed to know all things and you have to be able to admit to the children, if it's some subject that you're not an expert on, "I'll have to get back to you on it, but I will help you research it and we will learn it together." That's what is exciting about this, I think, is because it's branching out more into the sciences. (Teacher Interview 2, School 3, Year 1)

Case Study School 4

Informal learning. "In order to address student achievement in a manner that will foster a firm foundation of life-long learning and problem-solving . . . this innovative learning community will focus on the engagement of families in authentic literacy learning which builds on efforts currently being made by teachers and families" (School Proposal 4, p. 1). Extending learning beyond the classroom and the school, this project focuses on the important contribution made by family and community members in the learning process of a child. Located in an urban community, the project provides extended and connected learning opportunities for students.

School culture, goals, and leadership. Beleaguered by multiple demands from the district and the state, district and school site leaderships take a "top-down approach" to this CLC grant school. The major barriers are described given their direct impact on project implementation:

- district demands on the structure and restructuring of the curriculum;

- principal focus on increasing test scores;

- limited ability to create buy-in;

- limited communication and collaboration regarding the process of the CLC grant with the superintendent, principal, and teachers; and

- a re-focus of the grant objectives for Year 2.

While many of the other case study sites instituted a collaborative process (e.g., leadership teams and teacher teams) for the conception and writing of the grant, the grant at this site was written by *only* one teacher. Furthermore, this school has experienced an influx of new teachers, with approximately 20 new teachers during Year 1 and 30 new teachers during Year 2. Therefore, it has been difficult to demonstrate the impact of the grant within and across teachers and their practice.

> I think part of it [the problems with implementation] has to do with the politics of our district right now because our superintendent will say, "Okay, everybody do this," then he tells the people this is what to do, and then our staff developers are supposed to come in and say, "Okay, let's do it." And so people have sort of . . . some people will get angry about things like that because they feel that they are being told what to do. They're shifting everywhere and they're always being told, "No, now do this. Now do this." (Teacher Interview 2, School 4, Year 2)

> One of my concerns is that you overload people. We're talking 30 first-year teachers, not to mention the other 20 second-year teachers . . . and you're going to hear at our school about the turnover rate. I don't think the [Project X] right now should be one more thing on their plate . . . I think creating culture is important. This is something that we're all going to be involved in—and without the burden of additional training. (Teacher Interview 3, School 4, Year 2)

Other teachers who wanted to be part of the project dropped out because of district demands for a standards-based curriculum and new measures of accountability.

> Most of the barriers [to being involved] are mandates from the district. There's a lot of time involved and there are a lot of new sort of things that are going on with the district. For me, for example, I had to drop it this year because there were a lot more new things—the new math programs and things like that. I need time with all these new things coming down from the district. (Teacher Interview 7, School 4, Year 2)

Still others discussed the confusion regarding the goals and objectives of the CLC grant at the school site.

> I guess [we need] accessibility of the information. Why did we apply for the grant? What is our purpose in even searching for that support? (Teacher Interview 4, School 4, Year 2)

> We need to understand the benefits of having these [grants], understanding why even Disney is here . . . the benefits of that—the benefits for our students, and the benefits for us. (Teacher Interview 4, School 4, Year 2)

With its below-average achievement levels within a high-stakes accountability system, School 4 is feeling the brunt of political pressure. There are so many demands placed on teachers that continue to change, and so many curricular programs that have been restructured, that it is difficult for teachers—and relatively new teachers—to reflect coherently on the grant implementation, or to shift in thinking about creating a collaborative learning community culture. Given that this site's CLC grant was targeted to "increasing and changing teacher paradigms," the culture of this school community does not appear to have the infrastructure to support it for full implementation.

> We're jumping through a lot of hoops. Whether that is accurate or not . . . that's the perception. Now the focus is more on jumping through hoops and doing things to please other people. (Teacher Interview 2, School 4, Year 2)

Positive teacher attitudes about the CLC project are mitigated by the negative educational landscape of the district. That is, teachers are feeling tremendous pressure to perform for district administrators, and they feel accountable for implementing new school reforms that are restructured and changing continuously. Another common theme regarding the pressure that teachers are feeling in the school was described in the following interview excerpt:

> In general, I think the teacher attitude is positive—the attitude. The action, again, is different, because however much people believe in it, they still have their own limitations. They have limitations in how much pressure they can take, how much extra they can take on. (Teacher Interview 10, School 4, Year 2)

Professional development activities. Teachers are provided with few professional development opportunities that directly support their CLC project. Most teachers mentioned a couple of workshops and a summer institute. However, most teachers were not clear about which professional developments were district-related (and mandated) and which activities were constructed for the CLC grant implementation.

> It's confusing to know where all these things are coming from because most of it comes from out of the district and they are saying, "Do this." And it wasn't really tied [back to CLC project], so we need to start doing that. (Teacher Interview 2, School 4, Year 2)

Overall, it appears that the professional development activities are generated by the coordinator or the district administrators, who decide what teachers need to

know, and how they need to know it, so the activities are didactic and outcome-focused rather than facilitative and process-focused. Most significant is the limited vision in planning ongoing and embedded professional development activities that are focused on a theory of action related to their grant implementation. The current activities are segmented, isolated pieces and are not connected to exemplary classroom pedagogy or practice.

> Well, let me be honest, because I'm trying to be careful . . . I don't want to come across as too negative, but I have been extremely frustrated. And I'm not seeing [in the practice] what I think we should be seeing. And I don't know how much to attribute to the pressures from the district. (Teacher Interview 10, School 4, Year 2)

Many of the teachers discussed what did not happen this year, and what could happen in the next year. Many of their statements were guarded around the notion of realistic goals and a realistic time frame. Similar to School 1, given the complex set of demands, teachers in School 4 must believe that the project is integral to achieving their goals of improved learning, and further, they must be part of the process of defining both the goals and the process for achieving them. Yet, given the current climate in their city, fear and anxiety around job security preclude the possibility of starting a dialogue, even though teachers express the need.

> How do you change someone's thinking? That's like "Wow." That isn't like "let me give you knowledge." It comes out from a lot of dialogue and discussion . . . so it's a lot of dialoguing about those feelings and fears. As part of the staff development there should be an X study or X study, because that's really where you start to dialogue and start to change your thinking. So I think we still need to work on [that] to bring those teachers in to observe other teachers. (Teacher Interview 5, School 4, Year 2)

Creative teaching practices and engaged student learning. The Classroom Practice Observation Protocol is not designed to capture the before-school and after-school activities that occur to increase informal learning opportunities involving family and community members. However, observation data were collected to better understand the current state of teacher practice at this school. Given the current state and district demands placed upon School 4, the majority of lesson activities utilized question-and-answer formats around acquisition of basic skills in language arts, with little high-quality feedback from teachers. In an effort to accelerate learning, concepts were being introduced 1 to 2 years early, contributing to the increased level of challenge, but the format of most lesson activities did not

fall in line with creative teaching techniques, which was reflected in the lack of substantive student engagement.

Case Study Schools 5 and 6

Thematic learning. "[Project X] looks at the teacher's role as guide or facilitator of a classroom learning process and at a conversation—a student-centered conversation—and discourse that supports children in the active construction of their understanding of . . . concepts" (Consortium Proposal 1, p. 5). Located in an urban community, these schools provide students with hands-on learning experiences that allow students to actively construct meaning of presented concepts through a combination of cooperative work and discussion.

School culture, goals, and leadership. Schools 5 and 6 are part of a consortium (two of three schools collaborating on a grant effort). All three schools utilize the same coordinators, teacher mentors, and plans for demonstrations. The infrastructure and organization of this consortium provides strength to the CLC grant in that the implementation efforts are coordinated and clearly articulated by the administration. This theme is articulated in the following exemplar, in which a teacher talks about the school-level support that allows teachers to ask for varying levels of assistance, and then receive that assistance in a timely manner.

> When we don't understand something, or we aren't sure how to go about it, we have the kind of structure that gives us that support, so we can go back and say, "This looks like a great lesson, but I'm not sure how to do it. Would you role model this? Have you seen this in another classroom? How did you do it or how did the other classroom take it? Could you give me a sample lesson? Could you show the kids how to do this so I can learn from your demonstration?" So the whole structure has worked quite well. (Teacher Interview 6, School 5, Year 2)

The expectations for teacher practice are clear and consistent across both schools, with assessments that are meaningful to teachers, schools, and project. Several teachers across both sites noted the consistency and the focus for the implementation of the grant, as highlighted in the following exemplars:

> It's [CLC grant] provided a real focus for our school . . . we know exactly what to focus on. And it really has given us good direction. The flexibility of [X Project] is in the personnel—if something doesn't work, they change it, or fit it, or we collaborate on it, or add something so that it makes more sense for the kids. (Teacher Interview 3, School 5, Year 2)

I think the largest difference . . . is the consistency and the calmness that people have experienced this year in teaching [Project X], is that all of the language and understanding of [X Project] is done in the same way. You know that the children are going to have a comfort level when they move from classroom to classroom because of the [consistency] of the approach. (Administrator Interview 1, School 6, Year 2, p. 1)

This consortium is very similar to School 3 in that a few teachers, with the goal of bringing a particular reform to a school from a grass-roots perspective, generated the leadership for the grant. Every teacher in both schools participates in this reform effort, and all teachers participate in demonstrations of lessons by the teacher mentors, one-to-one meetings with teacher mentors, grade-level meetings across schools, and regular after-school in-services related to classroom practice and assessment. In addition to leadership provided by a team of expert teachers across both schools, the administration at both schools is actively involved with teachers, teacher experts, and the coordinator in and outside of the classroom.

Similar to School 4, the consortium has a lot of district pressure and other reforms that are required for implementation. However this site has an infrastructure in place and support systems in place to implement the CLC grant program. The relationship between schools and district is not as antagonistic as it is for School 4, with the district providing additional support for the CLC project, especially in the area of assessment. The schools have a culture of accountability: They set clear goals by grade level, meet weekly to discuss teachers' implementation of newly learned practices in a non-threatening manner, and systematically review results of assessment that are connected to teachers' classrooms. Teachers in both schools are clear about the goals (and their roles) in the CLC grant, and their buy-in to the implementation of the project is high.

[Teachers] are using assessments as a plan for instruction. And that's really important. But the second thing that is very evident is our staff is working together weekly, and they meet at least every other week to plan instruction. So they're not just going into their classroom and shutting the door, taking out a textbook, opening to page 42, and getting the materials that they may need for that lesson. They're working together to develop a cohesive plan for their grade level, and building on the information across grade levels, so that there is a continuous plan. Until this [CLC] project, each teacher did pretty much his or her own thing. As an administrator, I know when I walk into a class what I'm going to find before I even get there. I know what the instruction's going to look like, how the kids will be engaged, and I know that there will be an activity that will be appropriate and with a lot of hands on. So I just feel that the [Project X] program is a lot better than it ever has been because it's not left up to one individual, but rather, it's a

product of the collective thinking of all the staff that are working with the kids. (Administrator Interview 1, School 6, Year 2)

In this consortium, teachers across both sites have shifted their belief systems about the [Project X] program, sustaining them through "rough times" when things are not going as smoothly.

The children are my barometer . . . and it's saying to me that they are enjoying learning . . . and it was overwhelming [in the beginning] . . . I always thought that's how I was taught—you had a textbook and you just go through. Well, we *never* use a textbook, and this was all new for me. (Teacher Interview 2, School 6, Year 2)

It makes us very frustrated when we're not sure where to pull everything. And you know, when you get frustrated and you have to sometimes sort of shake yourself and say "Okay, take a deep breath and we'll go on with it then." But because we're seeing so many kids succeeding, the teachers are really buying into it, and saying, "This really works." And it makes us feel good to know that our students are really learning. That part has really improved our attitude on teaching. It's not "get the textbook and open to a certain page"—paper-and-pencil stuff. So it's a lot more fun to teach, too. You have to have the attitude of "I can't just open the book. I do have to put more planning time into it." And so that's something that sometimes is hard. But the overall attitude of our team is that we're seeing amazing results. (Teacher Interview 4, School 6, Year 2)

Whereas it might be easier to use the familiar phrase "Please take out your X book and open to page Y," these teachers are creating new collaborative phrases to describe their practice in the classroom such as "whole group participation," "partner games," "parent partnerships," "peer team coaching," "teamship," and "collaborative planning." The paradigm shift that emerges in the themes of these data is that of moving from teaching in isolation (e.g., going in the classroom and shutting the door to plan alone) to teaching in collaboration (e.g., assessment team meetings, peer coaching, and grade-level planning groups).

Professional development activities. The embedded professional development activities at these sites are exemplary. Nearly 100% of the teachers interviewed described the professional development activities as pivotal to the grant implementation because they were relevant, directly related to the curriculum, and embedded and demonstrated in the classroom. The professional development activities are described by teachers in several themes highlighted here: (a) The activities are directly related to practice and assessment; (b) the activities are developed to facilitate peer and teacher collaboration in team meetings; (c) the

activities include a cogent and coherent assessment plan discussed in problem-solving, brainstorming meetings; and (d) activities provide the necessary demonstrations of lessons and additional follow-up meetings with coaches to facilitate true teacher understanding. A few of these themes are highlighted below.

Peer coaches. The peer coaches are important not only in terms of providing lesson demonstrations, but also in providing the continuity of support teachers need to embed new practice in the classroom.

> It's [professional development] the reason with a capital R. Otherwise, it would die. It would never have worked. Because first of all, it really isn't something you can hand someone in a book. It's a lot of elements and methods, but it's not necessarily written down. (Teacher Interview 12, School 5, Year 2)

> I don't know how this could be successful without [Coach X]. You need someone to be your cheerleader and constantly get excited about the why of what we're doing. And I think sometimes a lot of things go flat because you don't have that component. Because we're so consistent in our meetings [with peer coaches] there's a constant zeal for what we're doing and why. (Teacher Interview 11, School 5, Year 2)

Lesson demonstrations. These demonstrations were reported by teachers to be key to the implementation of the grant. Teachers over and over discussed the "isolation factor" they often feel in their classrooms. Being able to watch someone demonstrate a lesson and then reflecting on the lesson assisted teachers in developing a deep understanding of what practices look like and how they work in the classroom, which is necessary in order to significantly change classroom practice.

> She'll come in and do a demo and we're frantically taking notes so that when we do it, we can copy what she's doing and I have learned so much from her and the language. I think it is so much easier than [reading] something in a book. You can read something 150 times, but if you think sometimes when you see it, it's just oh well, that's how it works and that makes so much sense. (Teacher Interview 7, School 6, Year 2)

> Talking about how a lesson will go is one thing, but actually going to model a lesson with my kids, which is to me the most valuable, because I want to see actually how it works. (Teacher Interview 9, School 5, Year 2)

Grade-level team meetings. The infrastructure and culture of these schools promotes and provides teachers with time to discuss concerns about new practices, learning from both teacher experts and their peers. Furthermore, teachers are able to

hear other teachers' problems with implementing practices, diminishing the isolation and insecurity that teachers experience in exploring new teaching techniques.

> We're isolated in our classrooms all day, and we work very hard. I personally am here until 7:00 every night, and we don't see each other [other teachers] and we're unable to collaborate because of that. So it's really important that we have collaboration time, so we can get together and talk about what works and what doesn't work. And this is where the grant has provided us with some opportunity to do that. We really need that to be progressive and to learn new techniques, because we do learn a lot from each other. (Teacher Interview 6, School 5, Year 2)

Given the improvement in teacher attitude, beliefs, and practice, district and school administrators support this complex configuration of professional development because these activities provide the necessary technical and emotional support for teachers to try new practices.

> Theoretically this type of professional development is really the only kind of professional development that really works. That's when it is in the building, everybody's doing it, it's consistent. It goes on for an extensive period of time. It supports classroom instruction. It supports teacher change, and the change in what teachers are doing. If you go to a workshop or a conference for two days, or maybe one day, you might be there taking copious notes, and be very enthusiastic about new ideas to come back and try in your room. . . . It is very, very difficult to actually see that in action. Research supports about 5% to 10% of teacher change actually occurring under that type of professional development. So when you put it in the building, and everybody's doing it, and you have a lot of support there, it raises to 95% to 100% teacher change . . . in this professional development model. (Administrator Interview 1, School 6, Year 2)

Creative teaching practices and engaged student learning. Schools 5 and 6 have demonstrated consistently high levels of challenge, implementation, engagement, discussion, and feedback. The following field note excerpt captures students' procedural and substantive engagement while highlighting the balance between teacher-student and student-student discussion.

> Student 1: Are mine parallel?
> She nods at him, smiling, and he says a quiet "Yes!"
> Teacher: How do I know that my lines are parallel? Are these parallel?
> Students: No.
> Teacher: How do you know? What's your proof?
> Student: If we keep going with this one, it's going to crash.

Student 2:   They will intersect.

Students: Intersect

She smiles at Student 2's use of the word intersect, saying, "Good, that's the word I was looking for."

At one table, there are three rather lively boys [the same students 1 and 2 and another student] who all through the lesson have made little on-task comments, such as "Oh, those are parallel lines" or "That's a line segment." They are obviously into this lesson. As each of them works on drawing two parallel lines, the following discussion ensues:

Student 2:   That's parallel. [referring to the littlest one's two parallel lines]

Student 3:   Can I make it parallel?

Student 2:   That is parallel. It doesn't matter the size of the other line, if they don't intersect, then they're parallel.

Student 1:   If they don't intersect, they're parallel.

The little one is still unconvinced by the two boys, looking at his board with a confused expression and perplexed that two lines different in length can be parallel. [Student 2] continues to teach the other student the concept of parallel lines, emphasizing the word intersect, and then upon seeing the continued state of confusion, lets out a loud sigh and starts again. He explains that the length of the line segment or how close they are doesn't matter as long as they don't intersect. (Observation 3, School 5, Year 2)

School 5 demonstrated improvement in five out of six domains with significant growth in the Quality of Instructional Discussion, which is of special importance because the project emphasizes students' active-meaning-making processes. The preceding field note excerpt truly represents the type of high-quality discussions taking placing between teacher and student, and even more significantly, between students.

School 6 also demonstrated improvement in the Quality of Instructional Discussion, shifting to the use of high-quality open-ended questions from basic question-and-answer sessions. In addition, teachers provided high-quality feedback consistent with and supportive of instructional goals.

Game 5—Measurement

Teacher: Did you measure first? If you're going to do me, put my name in, and then you'll have to do an estimate.

Both students, a girl and a boy, quickly go to their papers to write down their estimates on the small piece of paper with the word "Measurement" written at the very top, numbered lines from 1 to 3 to the left, a column with "Guess" written on top, and another column with "Check."

Seeing the boy write down 5, the teacher speaks.

Teacher: Now this is in meters.

The boy nods knowingly but continues to write down the number five.

Teacher: Do you think I'm 5 meters high?

He looks at her questioningly, not understanding. So she takes the yardstick and starts to raise it slowly, saying "One meter." Raises it a meter. "Two meters." Raises it again. "Three meters."

The boy: Oh, two!

He vigorously erases the number five and writes down the number two.

(Observation 1, School 6, Year 2)

Overall, observation data indicate that both schools have a high level of implementation of CLC-project teacher practices and an emerging impact on student engagement. Through a culture of collaboration, instructional leadership that respects teachers' time and knowledge, and professional development that connects creative practices to the classroom, teachers are able to experiment and implement hands-on learning.

Case Study Schools 9 and 10

Thematic learning. "Working partnerships, the [Project X] school, the [X School] and [Project X] propose to develop exciting 'whole school' learning environments that engage teachers, children, and families in intellectually stimulating investigations" (Consortium Proposal #3, p. 1). This project provides students with interdisciplinary core explorations over significant periods of time, guided by student inquiry and taking learning beyond the classroom and school.

School culture, goals, and leadership. The infrastructure and organization of this consortium is the inverse of the consortium described for Schools 5 and 6. That is, this consortium of two schools did not communicate or coordinate or organize their CLC implementation efforts, and functioned overall as two independent schools—each focusing on distinct reforms. The teacher interviews for both of these sites clearly documented that there were no joint team meetings (although there were one or two cross-school meetings), no collaborative assessment plans, and in general, very little joint communication. The limited organization in joint participatory activities may be due in part to both schools being start-up schools.

> In these kinds of schools you are so enmeshed in the building and developing and figuring it out. I think that leadership has a lot to do with it, so some of the systems and "how tos" are here because of [Project X] experience. But I still think it's really difficult

to step outside that process of creating a new school. So I think the idea of a partnership is great . . . It's easy to say "We don't have time." There are a lot of ways that people are able to do internal [organization], that's part of the culture in some ways, [but] you don't get a good school without really continuing to develop . . . what's really possible for two schools working collaboratively, and what some of the outcomes [might be] in sharing that. (Administrator Interview 1, School 10, Year 2)

Clear from the administrator, coordinator, and teacher interviews is that there was a lack not of vision, but of a plan of action to obtain that vision. Similar to School 4, in many interviews with both teachers and administrators, there were discussions and musings about what they hoped to get started for Year 3—primarily lists of things (re-visiting curriculum, re-thinking assessment). The key difference is that Schools 9 and 10 had a vision but never put in place the formal mechanisms necessary for project implementation, including accountability structures to monitor progress or lack of progress from more immediate adjustments in project plans.

One of the goals of the grant is for us to be able to develop a cohesive X curriculum and share that with them [other schools in the consortium]. They in turn will do the same thing with X curriculum. So I feel like we're beginning that process at each of our schools, then the sharing process will begin to happen in Year 2 [note: presently in Year 2] and Year 3 of the grant. (Teacher Interview 2, School 9, Year 2)

Administrators and teachers at both schools lacked any clear indication that project plans were being implemented and having an impact, relying on observed changes. For example, when asked to discuss how this CLC grant was influencing the learning environment, administrators reported, "We feel students are learning. We hope they are learning. When we're in classes with them, they're answering questions, and they're doing activities" (Administrator Interview 1, School 9, Year 2). "I don't know if you can actually talk tangibly about it [accountability], but you should see the influences . . . embedded in teacher's practice" (Administrator Interview 2, School 9, Year 2). These kinds of vague responses were common in the administrator and teacher interviews regarding internal evaluation and accountability of the CLC grant process. In general, the culture of these schools allows ideas to unfold and supports the exchange of ideas among and between faculty informally within a loosely structured organization. The faculty and administrators have enormous respect for each other's ideas and issues. The following quote captures the informal approach to school reform.

> We have other things . . . we get better, we see what works. It's almost like improvisational jazz. Somebody gets a good idea, and somebody else thinks "Hey that's a good idea," and then they do their own riff on that. And somebody else does it too. So the ideas ignite each other in this theme. (Teacher Interview 1, School 9, Year 2)

Though other schools clearly need to revisit the building-a-shared-vision phase of schoolwide reform, it is clear in these two schools that the existence of a shared vision and collaborative culture is necessary but not sufficient for successful implementation.

Professional development activities. This consortium also has a unique structure for professional development when compared with other sites, and in particular when compared with the consortium Schools 5 and 6. Schools 9 and 10 included no descriptions of any embedded professional development activities in any of the interviews, nor was there a discussion of any consistent, ongoing professional development activity in the two schools. Many of their professional development activities appeared in the classroom, in the halls, in the lunchroom, and in the schoolyard. The discussions teachers described are around rich, philosophical issues; however, they don't appear connected in a structure parallel to the grant implementation activities. Both schools have coordinators and content specialists who engage in dialogue and discussions about curriculum with teachers and share resources. However there is no systematic link to the grant implementation. Each site described weekly meetings, bi-weekly meetings and/or meetings with designated coordinators. The three most significant issues in the area of professional development for these sites are listed here, defined by what was *not* said in the interviews: (a) limited overall thematic connection to grant curricular content; (b) no discussion of procedural components to professional development activities; and (c) no discussion of focused issues related to grant implementation. For example, one teacher described professional development activities as "coaching each other. . . . Each teacher has a different style, but they meet once a week [in Project X]. They know what's going on in each other's classrooms, and they're very supportive . . . and reinforce [what is going on]" (Teacher Interview 1, School 9, Year 2). Another teacher was asked to describe professional development activities and stated, "Some of it is just a matter of access to materials . . . It is people with different experiences, people with different skills, and people with different viewpoints" (Teacher Interview 2, School 9, Year 2).

There were a few discussions regarding faculty meeting in content area teams at School 10 with consultants and beginning to develop written content areas and skills that are needed in those areas. Again, the disconnect between the sites as a grant unit is highlighted in the following excerpt.

> We've had consultants come . . . so you put all of those guys together, and you've got both X experience in depth, and you've got pure content X. None of us had that expertise. And they've been in the real nuts and bolts of it . . . We've got these documents that we're madly producing . . . and it would give you a sense of how we're thinking about both the content and the skills that go into the content. That's very different from the way [School 9] works. [School 9] just doesn't work that way. That's what I think is so interesting about the two of us together. I really do think that our goal is the same. The schools and the population are different temperamentally. It'll be interesting to see what happens . . . It's challenging because we come at it from slightly different perspectives. (Administrator Interview 1, School 10, Year 2)

School 10 did describe more regular meetings with consultants, but the content was not usually addressed or described. In addition, many of the teachers mentioned the term "peer coaching"; however, few used the term to describe pairing up with a colleague on a regular basis as depicted in the following example:

> Well last year each person sort of picked somebody else in the building that they felt could strengthen their areas of weakness. So for me literacy was the thing I wanted, and the teacher next door was pretty good with literacy. So the two of us paired up together and she would come in and out at various times. So it wasn't always just literacy time because I was also her peer coach, and she was interested in X. So we would come and see stuff, and this year—we haven't, as a school, for whatever reason, we haven't had that. So we really haven't had any sort of peer mentorships going on at all . . . the only time that we have gotten together as peers is when we are having conversations around X [content area]. (Teacher Interview 6, School 10, Year 2)

Lacking any formal structure, teachers do not receive continuous and connected professional development tied to the grant. Most teachers talk about the grant in terms of their special content strength, yet clearly, they are still trying to gain expertise in their designated area. The project proposal assumed prior expertise or at least a level of teacher confidence in these curricular content areas in order to begin cross-curricular collaboration. Yet, teachers at both sites are still trying to learn innovative practices in their designated curricular areas.

> And for students who have difficulty in other subject areas, science is a way to feel competent and successful. I'm not teaching it enough. I mean, I taught science last year

three or four times a week, where that was the case earlier in the school year. But that has not been the case—I'm just being really honest with you—that has not been the case for this quarter. So that is also a concern. That is why I am really appreciative to have [Teacher]. So at least I know they receive an hour or 45 minutes. (Teacher Interview 8, School 10, Year 2)

Creative teaching practices and engaged student learning. School 9 demonstrated little improvement from Year 1 to Year 2. Students increasingly concentrated on and enjoyed lesson activities but at levels well below all other case study schools.

All of the students in my group were 100% engaged in the [place]. As I looked around the rooms I saw that actually none of the other students around me were bored. They were running around with such excitement and zeal. All of the students were working at a certain station, asking a question, and running up and down the musical stairs, looking at all aspects of the huge model train, etc. The students are just eating it up! They are absorbing as much as they can and they are having fun playing all of the games that go with the displays. (Observation 9, School 9, Year 2)

While student engagement has improved, the level of challenge did not improve, retaining its emphasis on recall and reproduction. Quality of Instructional Discussion and Quality of Instructional Feedback also remained at low levels.

In contrast to its consortium partner, School 10 demonstrated improvement in four domains. In the domain of Challenge of Lesson Activity, students were observed using higher order cognitive functions.

The students are challenged to make comparisons between balls of different size and weight. They are getting the concepts, describing them using scientific terminology. The critical thinking questions came from the teacher during the debriefing part of the lesson where the teacher had all the students sit in a circle on the floor of the hallway and asked each group to say what they found for each question, what they noticed happening, why they thought it was happening that way and what their conclusions were. The students had to provide some kind of evidence for what they were saying. (Observation 9, School 10, Year 2)

School 10 also demonstrated improvement in student procedural and substantive engagement. The other area in which this school improved was Quality of Instructional Discussion with constant use of high-quality questions that foster a true discussion between students and teacher. The distinct difference in scores between Schools 9 and 10 shows that School 10 has focused energy on gaining a

level of comfort and confidence with their specialized content area as indicated in the grant. Researchers did not observe lessons in their cross-curricular area, but rather in their area of strength as indicated on their proposal.

Summary

Information from case study interview data and observation data answers several of the evaluation questions. First, implementation varied from school to school across several dimensions (see Table 23). All schools had either an administrative or an instructional style of leadership provided by principals and/or teacher leaders. Those schools with an administrative leader (i.e., a "top-down" approach to leadership) did not partake in the building-a-shared-vision phase of the project and project goals and did not have a structure or culture that supports collaboration. Even for those schools with an instructional style of leadership, shared goals, and collaborative culture, the lack of (a) formal professional development activities that were linked to teaching practices and (b) accountability to monitor progress for both teachers and students impeded effective implementation and limited impact on teacher practice and student learning.

Those schools that attended to all five dimensions were in full implementation and tended to see improvements in teacher practice as measured by the Classroom Practice Observation Protocol. Furthermore, for matched scores (i.e., teachers with scores in both Year 1 and Year 2), there was an effect for teacher practice in all six domains: Challenge and Implementation of Lesson Activities, Procedural and Substantive Engagement, and Quality of Instructional Discussion and Feedback.

Table 23

CLC Project Dimensions of Schoolwide Change

Case study school	Leadership dimension	Goals dimension	School environment dimension	Professional development dimension	Accountability dimension
School 1	X			X	
School 2	X	X	X	X	X
School 3	X	X	X	X	X
School 4	X			X	
School 5	X	X	X	X	X
School 6	X	X	X	X	X
School 9	X	X	X		
School 10	X	X	X		

Therefore, these dimensions become factors in the implementation and effectiveness of CLC projects, with Leadership, Goals, and School Environments being second-order factors (that is, necessary but not sufficient) and Professional Development and Accountability being first-order factors for the realization of project implementation and impact.

Conclusions

Creating a learning community is an arduous journey for any school. The Creative Learning Communities (CLC) grants program made a commitment to the philosophy that the nature of effective school reform is embedded in a schoolwide, collaborative problem-solving arena, in which schools are expected to engage in ongoing inquiry and continuous improvement. The reflective nature of this inquiry allows schools to articulate their priority goals, define benchmarks, and regularly assess their progress. The focus of this evaluation has been to monitor the process of these reforms. This was achieved using a multiple-methods approach to understanding the genesis and progress of reform implementation, accomplished by employing a theory of action. Authentic educational experiences have been constructed in a number of schools, and measures of their progress are documented primarily as paradigm shifts and trends in organizational systems, belief systems, and teaching practices. Understanding the parameters and the nature of change, as well as situating the voices and experiences of administrators, teachers, and students within a school culture, is a complex endeavor. The results of this 2-year evaluation document the shifts in school culture that ultimately impact student learning. Though this is a "too early to tell" story about the outcomes of student learning, the story clearly indicates that school culture is changing, teaching practices are changing, and shifts are occurring, all toward developing creative learning communities. These three domains will be discussed as pivotal points for paradigm shifts in school reform, with the caveat that change is measured, sequential, and incremental.

Shifts to Dynamic School Culture

The surveys teachers completed show positive mean shifts in school change scales across schools. Statistically significant differences exist between schools on four school change scales, including School Organization, School Accountability, and Schoolwide Support for CLC Project. More substantive indicators of the importance of school culture shifts were noted in the case study results. Clearly a

model of "shared vision" for reform that is organic, grass roots, and bottom-up has inextricable links to teacher "buy-in," teaching practice, and engagement in the process of reform. For example, in Schools 2, 3, 5, and 6, the teachers were involved in the school reform process and progress. There is a systematic and systemic vision for implementing change, and in these schools, the leadership has been critical to keeping the reform on course. Not surprisingly, these schools also demonstrated significant differences in their teaching practice and in the learning communities they are creating and sustaining.

Shifts to Engaged Teacher Practices

The co-construction of teacher influence on student learning and engagement is clearly delineated in the Influence on Student Engagement scale. On the teacher surveys, teachers reported positive shifts in student learning, content knowledge, and problem-solving skills. In addition, thematic shifts were depicted in teacher interviews regarding their practice. That is, the more engaged the students became in an activity, the more likely the teacher would embed collaborative lessons. Most teachers indicated that the continued "buy-in" and "pay off" for participation in and acculturation to the reform efforts was dependent on the following:

- school principal leadership;

- embedded professional development;

- embedded assessment systems;

- teacher mentors and coordinators; and

- time for developing reflective practices.

That is, in order for teachers to create processes and patterns of inquiry, they need resources, modeling of practices, opportunities for practice, and time for reflection.

Shifts to Creative Learning Communities

Shifts to creative learning are sustained when teachers have a focus and goal that are embedded in teaching practices. That is, shifts in creative process were more integrated in sites where the content areas (e.g., math, literacy, writing) were connected to district and state standards and had measurable indicators (both process and outcome), and where the professional development activities provided resources for recurrent collaborative teaching practices in the classroom. When

teachers believe that the reform is "adding one more thing" rather than being "*the* thing," it is unlikely that the reform will be integrated and sustained in classroom practice. A paradigmatic shift to implementing creative and collaborative learning environments is multifaceted and multidimensional. A model for the engagement of learning is presented as a way to understand the ebb and flow of school reform implementation, which is consistent with a theory of action.

A Dynamic Model of School Reform: The Engagement of Learning

A dynamic model of the culture of school reform (Figure 5) was developed to explicate the complex nature of embedding school reform in the process of creating engaged learning communities. In addition, this model embeds a theory of action to describe the domains necessary to create, re-create, and sustain school reform efforts. Though there have been some recent efforts to describe the cultivation of teacher engagement (e.g., Metz, 1990) and student engagement (e.g., Nystrand &
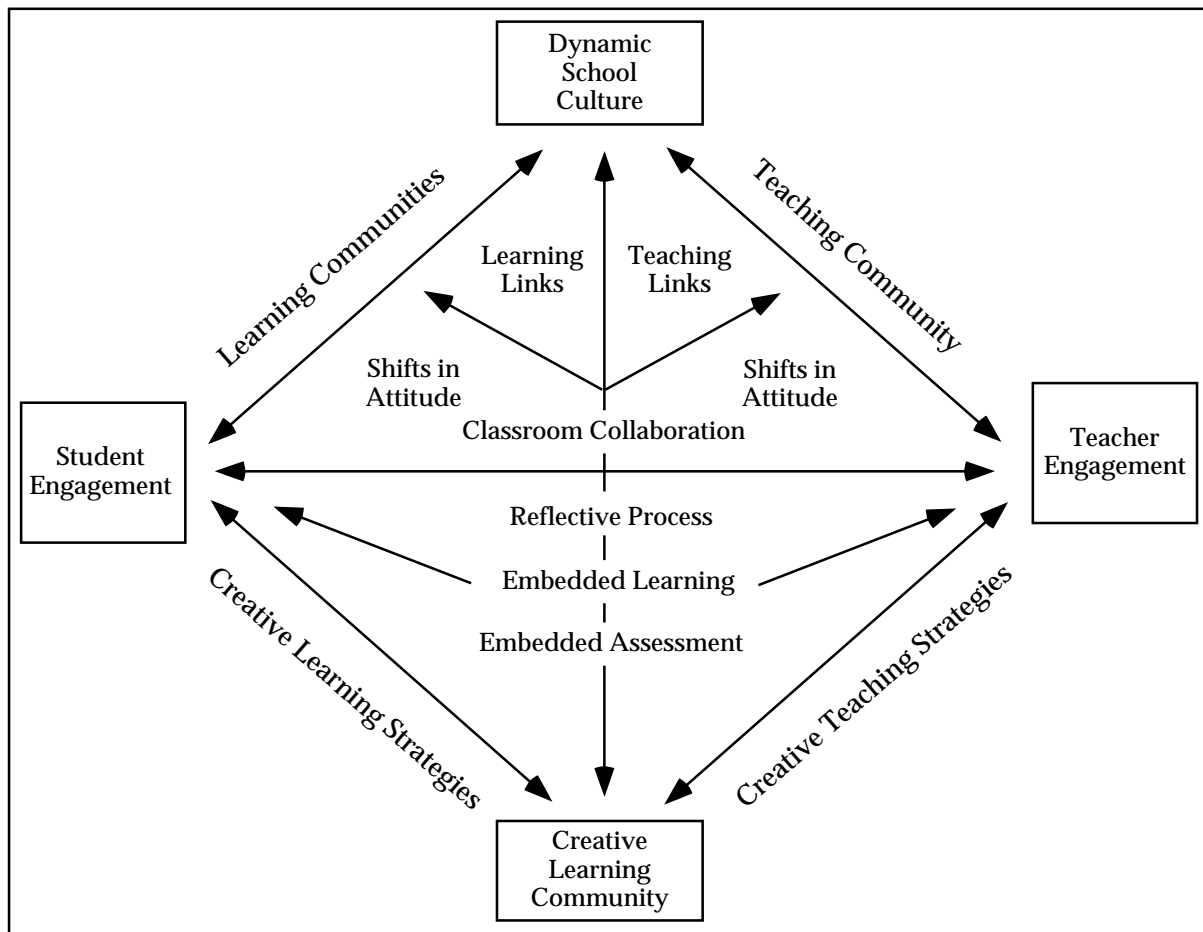
Figure 5. A dynamic model of school reform: The Engagement of Learning.

Gamoran, 1991), there is no current dynamic model of the specific domains that are necessary to create the culture of engagement of learning. Nystrand and Gamoran developed a framework for analyzing the influences on teacher engagement, which include the following four factors: (a) the community and district environment of the school, (b) school culture and teacher culture, (c) the leadership of the principal and others in the school, and (d) the alternative or unusual structures and activities in the school. These four factors were discussed in the context of schools in high-, middle- and low-SES communities, using qualitative methods to describe the schools and the relative strengths in the areas of teacher engagement. In addition, Nystrand and Gamoran described four distinct types of teacher engagement that included engagement with the school as a social unit, engagement with students as unique individuals, engagement with academic achievement, and engagement with one's subject and the knowledge needed to carry out effective teaching. These types of engagement are distinct and describe the implicit connection between teacher engagement and student learning; the authors made no coherent effort to connect these types of engagement with factors that influence engagement.

The purpose of our model is threefold: (a) to highlight four major domains necessary to create an engaged learning environment; (b) to depict the connections and complexities in maintaining an engaged learning environment; and (c) to describe the dynamic nature of the components in school cultures. This model also provides a context in which to examine components that are limited in school cultures, and it might be used to guide school communities in their assessments of their learning communities, as well as to provide indicators of success and challenge in sustaining an engaged learning environment.

Components of Engaged Learning Environments

Four domains are described in this model as instrumental in creating and sustaining an engaged learning environment: (a) a dynamic school culture, (b) teacher engagement in the classroom, (c) student engagement, and (d) a creative learning community. These are not mutually exclusive domains, and in this model the four major domains are nested and embedded in other subdomains to depict the reciprocity and webbed influence that each domain has on the others (Figure 5). For example, in order to describe a classroom with engaged teachers, it would also be necessary to describe the creative learning community the teacher had created in the classroom, the ways in which the students were engaged in activities, and how this creative classroom community was contributing to a dynamic school culture.

Schools 5 and 6 exemplify a dynamic model of school reform in engagement. The school culture and organization were designed at the district level (e.g., allocating time and funds) to develop and sustain the school-building-level support for the reforms (e.g., schoolwide time for grade-level meetings, allocating funds for mentor teachers). Because of the support created by the administration, the teachers were able to sustain a shared vision of the reform efforts in such a way that the culture created a haven for teacher "buy-in." The collaboration between the school culture and the teaching culture provided a landscape in which teachers could create a learning community.

In the domain of teacher engagement, Schools 5 and 6 developed embedded professional development activities that include regular grade-level meetings, teacher mentors, lesson demonstrations, and embedded assessments. Teachers were given time to reflect on the teaching and learning process, and to refine and re-define practices and assessments. In effect, the creative teaching strategies that teachers are using in their practice are directly linked to the creative learning strategies that students are using. The engagement of learning, then, is not only student engagement, but rather a system that includes students and teachers nested within a dynamic school culture. Teachers' pedagogy and belief systems shift as they see the effect their practice has on student learners, and student learners shift in the requested activities and opportunities in the classroom as their learning community and learning "links" become dynamic.

Connections and Complexities in Maintaining an Engaged Learning Environment

The links between teacher engagement and student engagement are bi-directional and have a reciprocal effect on one another. In addition, both teacher and student engagement contribute to the creation and maintenance of a dynamic school culture, as well as to sustaining a creative learning community. For example, a teacher utilizing collaborative learning environments and enlisting students in high levels of instructional feedback and instructional discussions is also creating an environment that fosters substantive student engagement. The challenge of classroom activities and the implementation of these activities create teaching "links," and the students create and sustain learning "links." These links might be described as the strategies that both teachers and students use to stay engaged in classroom activities (e.g., types of discussions, types of questions, and activity types). When activities that promote engagement become part of the classroom culture, there are shifts in attitudes of both teachers and students regarding the ways

that learning is constructed in the classroom. These approaches to learning are inextricably linked to classroom collaboration, reflective processes, and embedded assessment and learning. Teachers consistently use creative *teaching* strategies, which then become recursive in the classroom environment as students develop and sustain creative *learning* strategies.

Dynamic Nature of the Components in School Cultures

This model depicts specific components that can be described as distinct domains, but which are linked so that the dynamic nature of the model can be understood. That is, each of the four domains can be described in terms of outcomes that include process measures of teaching and learning communities, and a classroom environment where both creative teaching strategies and creative learning strategies are instantiated in the classroom culture. For example, in Schools 5 and 6 the culture of the schools was to include teachers in a grass roots, bottom-up reform to facilitate teacher buy-in. This culture created an environment where teachers were recruited into building the culture of reform. The collaboration between the shifts in the school culture and the teaching culture provided a landscape in which teachers could create an environment to develop a collaborative community of teachers. Teachers' pedagogy and belief systems shift as they see the effect their practices (and changing practices) have on the students as learners in their classrooms. Students' attitudes shift in the types of activities they co-construct with the teachers as the opportunities to learn become more collaborative and embedded in their interests, and in the quality of the discussions they have in the classrooms. Overall, these domains create school, classroom, and teacher-student collaborations and facilitate and sustain a creative learning community.

Recommendations

Some recommendations to improve the CLC grant program are made in this section. These recommendations are based on teacher survey responses, teacher interviews, documentation (e.g., annual reports), and informal information gathered from school site visits, classroom and professional development observations, and regional meetings.

Retrofit Expectations

It is apparent that many schools are unclear or unrealistic, or both, about the expectations for the 3-year implementation of the grant activity. It might be helpful

to communicate with schools regularly for updates on specific components including district/building support, professional development, data sources, and action plans for implementation. Regular communication with all of the CLC grant coordinators might also facilitate alignment between the grant objectives and implementation at the school level. For example, many teachers interviewed were unclear about how the CLC grant was distinct from other grant and or reform initiative activities. In addition, it appears at many school sites that the grant coordinator, principal, and teachers need to create time to facilitate and collaborate on issues such as professional development, barriers, benchmarks, and effective practices. Elaborated guidelines might facilitate this process.

Re-Visit Issues of Accountability

Review of the annual reports indicated diverse sources of accountability measures. In addition, many schools reported only anecdotal data; others reported only test scores at particular grade levels; and some effectively used their school-level data to highlight benchmarks. Very specific guidelines should be provided to each school site regarding the across-school data that are required. Schools without capacity to report these data need clear guidelines regarding ways to obtain this information (e.g., consultants or other school-level personnel). Quarterly updates from schools regarding their accountability for meeting benchmarks should be provided to the Disney Learning Partnerships so that intervention measures can be implemented before the end of the grant year. It is not coincidental that the schools that reported multiple-measures data, benchmarks, and SmartGoals, were those schools that also had high agreement ratings on the teacher survey, representing effective change in collaborative learning environments.

Include a Reflective Process for Professional Development

This is a pivotal issue that is central to the theory of learning and implicit in the model for the engagement of learning. Without reflective processes and practices in place in professional development activities, systemic reform and sustainability of that reform is difficult, if not impossible. Explicit and embedded plans for professional development activities should be included for all CLC grantees. Most significant for professional development activities is the utility of the activities. For example, using professional development for inspirational retreats at the beginning of the year or meeting irregularly after school to encourage "buy-in" does not sustain teachers, because they are concerned about assessments, curriculum and

instruction (Little, 2001). The survey and interview data highlight a clear trend: Teachers need, want, and would respond to professional development that (a) provides them with time to be reflective about their process, (b) is embedded in curriculum and classroom instruction, and (c) has an infrastructure that provides ongoing support and continuity.

Re-Think Reform Efforts as Systemic Change

Clear in the 2-year evaluation comparison are change trends in the survey responses, classroom observations, and interview analyses, due to the implementation of the CLC project. What is less clear, however, is the CLC grantees' understanding that the reforms need to be systemic in order to create a sustainable learning community. Schools should re-think realistically what reform efforts are doable and sustainable for a systemic change. For example, implementing reform efforts that focus on student engagement should not be mutually exclusive of those efforts focusing on school culture or teacher engagement. A multifaceted approach to reform, as indicated in the theory of action and in the engagement-of-learning model, is imperative for reforms that are accountable, sustainable, and replicable.

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APPENDIX A: INSTRUMENTS

Project Proposal Matrix

Project Annual Report Rubric

Teacher Survey

Student Survey

Classroom Practice Observation Protocol (CPOP)

Teacher Interview Protocol

PROJECT PROPOSAL MATRIX

Site Name _____   Site Number _____

Demographics

School	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Consortium (# of schools) _____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____

Predominant Population

African American	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Latino	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Asian	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
White	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Native American	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Mixed, minority majority	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Mixed, white majority	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Other	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____

Predominant SES

Low Income	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Middle Class	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Other	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____

High Proportion of ELL Students

50% and above	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
25% - 50%	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____

Location of School

Urban	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Suburban	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Rural	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____

Region

West	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Northwest	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Southwest	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Midwest	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
South	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Northeast	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Southeast	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Parent Involvement	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Content Area Focus

Language Arts	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Math	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Arts	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Science	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Cross disciplinary/thematic	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Multiple subject areas	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____

Classroom Assessment Component

Performance assessment	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Rubric development	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Standards-based	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Other	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____

Type of Professional Development

Teacher-researcher	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
On site collaborative settings	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Peer observations	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Inservice workshops	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Institutes	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Mentor/coaches	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Other _____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____

Implementation rate

1 year for planning required	☐ Yes ☐ No	
1 year for planning not required	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Student Performance Data

Standardized test scores	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
minimally credible	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Performance assessment	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
minimally credible	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Embedded curricular assessments	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____
Student attitudes	☐ Yes ☐ No	

PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT RUBRIC

SCHOOL _____

Project Annual Report

PROJECT PHASE:

☐ Early implementation
☐ Mid implementation
☐ Full implementation

1. ACTIVITIES

☐ Describes and determines success of primary activities
☐ Professional development
☐ Teacher collaboration
☐ Development and implementation of strategies and tools
☐ Other key project activities.

Comments:

2. PARTICIPATION

☐ Number of teachers _____ and students _____ involved in the project
☐ Total number of teachers _____ and students _____ in the school

Comments:

3. STUDENT LEARNING

☐ Describes impact project had on student learning
☐ Little or no improvement
☐ Some improvement
☐ Significant improvement
☐ Provides evidence of impact
☐ Standardized assessments
☐ Performance-based assessments
☐ SMART goals
☐ Observed changes
☐ Other key indicators: _____

Comments:

4. TEACHER PRACTICE

☐ Describes impact project had on teacher practice
☐ Little or no improvement
☐ Some improvement
☐ Significant improvement
☐ Provides evidence of impact
☐ Surveys
☐ Interviews
☐ Observed changes
☐ Other key indicators: _____

Comments:

5. CHANGES

☐ Describes changes to project's plan of action and reasons for change

Comments:

TEACHER SURVEY

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Demographic Information

Your responses will be read by an optical scanner. Please use a black or blue medium point or felt tip pen for your responses. You may mark the response boxes with a large **X.**

(1) School Name [   ]

(2) Grade currently teaching
- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ First Grade
- ☐ Second Grade
- ☐ Third Grade
- ☐ Fourth Grade
- ☐ Fifth Grade
- ☐ Sixth Grade

(3) Gender
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

(4) Which of the following best describes you?
(choose one or more response)
- ☐ African-American
- ☐ Asian-American/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino/Chicano
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Other _____

(5) Write in total number of years teaching

[ ][ ]

Fill in corresponding boxes

0 0
1 1
2 2
3 3
4 4
5 5
6
7
8
9

(6) Number of students currently enrolled in your class
- ☐ 10-15
- ☐ 16-20
- ☐ 21-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 30+

(7) Highest education level
- ☐ Bachelors Degree
- ☐ Bachelors plus credits
- ☐ Masters degree
- ☐ Doctorate

(8) Credential(s) currently held
(choose one or more response)
- ☐ Professional Clear
- ☐ Preliminary
- ☐ Emergency

(9) Percentage of students in your class who are English language learners
- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-25%
- ☐ 26-50%
- ☐ 51-75%
- ☐ 76-100%

(10) Your level of involvement in the Disney Project
- ☐ Almost daily
- ☐ 1-2 times per week
- ☐ 1-2 times per month
- ☐ Few times per year
- ☐ Never

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Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. Specific goals for accomplishing the school's vision are apparent to teachers and community.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Teachers are involved in making important decisions in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My principal takes an active role in communicating with the community and building community relations.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My principal promotes widespread involvement in decisions regarding school reform.	1	2	3	4	5
5. We have so many different programs in this school that I can't keep track of them all.	1	2	3	4	5
6. There is consistency in curriculum, learning materials, instruction and student assessment strategies among teachers at the same grade level in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
7. There is consistency in curriculum, learning materials, instruction and student assessment strategies across the grade levels in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Assessment of student performance leads to changes in our school's curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The Disney project has led to improved student learning this year.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Most changes introduced in this school over the past year related to the Disney Project help promote the school's goals for student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The Disney Project has led to more opportunities for student engagement.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Reform efforts other than the Disney Learning Partnership project (e.g., Title I, reduced class size, district programs, etc.) have improved studentlearning in our school.	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the following in two ways: (1) how they have changed in the past year in your school, and (2) their current status.

	How Changed			Current Status		
	Worse	No Change	Better	Needs Improvement	Okay	Excellent
13. The school's relations with parents	1	2	3	1	2	3
14. The school's relations with the community	1	2	3	1	2	3
15. How students get along with other students	1	2	3	1	2	3
16. Sense of community in the school	1	2	3	1	2	3
17. Quality of curriculum and instruction	1	2	3	1	2	3
18. Student academic performance	1	2	3	1	2	3
19. How parents get along with teachers	1	2	3	1	2	3
20. My commitment to the school	1	2	3	1	2	3
21. Teachers learning from one another	1	2	3	1	2	3
22. Professional growth opportunities	1	2	3	1	2	3
23. My teaching effectiveness	1	2	3	1	2	3
24. Coordination and focus of the school's instructional program	1	2	3	1	2	3

Disney LP: Creative Learning Communities Year 2

Approximately how many hours in the past 12 months have you spent in the following types of professional development activities?

	None	1-4 hours	5-9 hours	10-20 hours	21-35 hours	>35 hours
25. Being coached on my classroom practices	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Observing other classrooms	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Getting constructive feedback on my teaching or lesson plans from administrators or other teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Individual research	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Teacher study groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Professional networks	1	2	3	4	5	6
31 University courses	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. Summer institutes	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. Whole-school in-service	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. Lectures/presentations	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. Having other teachers observe you in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. Individual participation in workshops you choose	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
37. Participation in professional development activities contributed to changes in my classroom practices	1	2	3	4	5
38. The professional development activities addressed the needs of my students	1	2	3	4	5
39. The professional development activities were relevant to our school and Disney project goals.	1	2	3	4	5
40. The activities were connected to my prior knowledge and experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
41. When changes were initiated in our school (e.g., organizational, curriculum), they were supported by professional development activities	1	2	3	4	5
42. There was adequate follow-up for the professional development activities in which I participated	1	2	3	4	5
43. The people who led professional development activities were well prepared and knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5

For what portion of parents in your school is the following statement true?

	None	Few	Some	Half	Most
44. Parents inquire about students' homework assignments	1	2	3	4	5

Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
45. Most teachers respond to parental concerns in this school	1	2	3	4	5
46. Most parents and teachers interact often concerning students' learning	1	2	3	4	5
47. Parents and teachers often discuss school governance issues	1	2	3	4	5
48. The majority of parents and teachers agree on current teachingstrategies	1	2	3	4	5
49. Parents help raise funds for the school	1	2	3	4	5
50. Parents regularly attend school-wide special events	1	2	3	4	5
51. Parents attend PTA meetings	1	2	3	4	5
52. Parents voice their opinions and concerns about school matters	1	2	3	4	5
53. Most parents and teachers communicate often concerning current teaching strategies	1	2	3	4	5

This school year, how often have you planned the following activities for your students?

	Never	Few times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Almost Daily
54. Brought in a guest speaker from the school's community	1	2	3	4	5
55. Included individuals and/or events from the school's community to illustrate ideas to students.	1	2	3	4	5
56. Taken students on a field trip to someplace in the school's community	1	2	3	4	5
57. Obtained resources to use in my classroom from businesses or other organizations in the school's community.	1	2	3	4	5
58. Utilized individuals and or professionals to increase opportunities for student collaborative learning activities.	1	2	3	4	5

On average, how often do students in your class engage in activities related to the following?

	Never	Few times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Almost Daily
59. Use technology to communicate with each other, with students around school, around world, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Work in cooperative groups	1	2	3	4	5
61. Worksheet exercises	1	2	3	4	5
62. Explain their reasoning	1	2	3	4	5
63. Critique other's work	1	2	3	4	5
64. Share ideas with others in pairs or small groups	1	2	3	4	5
65. Produce products such as maps, charts, models, posters, or drawings	1	2	3	4	5
66. Make connections between various curricular subjects	1	2	3	4	5
67. Help establish criteria on which their work will be assessed	1	2	3	4	5
68. Revise their work	1	2	3	4	5
69. Reflect on their work and set future learning goals	1	2	3	4	5
70. Projects that require students to organize, interpret, and evaluate information to produce an original pierce of work	1	2	3	4	5
71. Discuss features of good student work with the class	1	2	3	4	5

How often do you use the following methods of evaluating student work in your class?

	Never	Few times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Almost Daily
72. Tests composed of selected responses (multiple choice, matching, true false) or short answer items	1	2	3	4	5
73. Extended writing assignments or essay exams	1	2	3	4	5
74. Projects, demonstrations of activities	1	2	3	4	5
75. Class work	1	2	3	4	5
76. Homework	1	2	3	4	5
77. Portfolios	1	2	3	4	5
78. Use a rubric	1	2	3	4	5

On average, how often do you have your students do the following?

	Never	Few times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Almost Daily
79. Assign projects or investigations that require students to organize, interpret and evaluate information to produce a piece of original work.	1	2	3	4	5
80. Lecture to the class for more than half the period.	1	2	3	4	5
81. Mix brief talks with questions, answers and discussion segments.	1	2	3	4	5
82. Reflect on their work and set future learning goals	1	2	3	4	5
83. Provide individualized instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
84. Develop expository writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
85. Use hands-on activities, manipulatives, labs.	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
86. Data regarding student achievement, absenteeism, etc. are available for planning.	1	2	3	4	5
87. Useful information to make informed decisions (e.g., about student performance, resources, community satisfaction) is readily available to teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
88. Once we start a program at this school, we follow up to make sure that it is working.	1	2	3	4	5
89. Assessment of student performance leads to changes in our school's curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5
90. Most changes introduced in this school over the past year help promote the school's goals for student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
91. Students learn best when they are actively involved in exploring things, inventing and trying out their own ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5
92. Students learn and perform better when they help establish the criteria on which their work will be evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
93. Students learn more when they work together.	1	2	3	4	5
94. Teachers in this school are encouraged to experiment with their teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
95. Our school learning plan has led to changes in my teaching practices.	1	2	3	4	5

How often do the following occur?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
96. I use a variety of assessment methods to evaluate my students.	1	2	3	4
97. I give students specific feedback on their performance.	1	2	3	4
98. I tell students my grading criteria when I give assignments.	1	2	3	4
99. I change my instructional plans based on how students perform in class or on tests.	1	2	3	4

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Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
100. I am enthusiastic about participation in the Disney project.	1	2	3	4	5
101. Administrators at my school are generally supportive of the Disney project.	1	2	3	4	5
102. My students are excited about being involved with the Disney Project.	1	2	3	4	5
103. My students learn a lot from the Disney-supported project.	1	2	3	4	5
104. I get support and help from Disney and its affiliates if I ask for it.	1	2	3	4	5
105. My students are increasing their content knowledge as a result of participating in the Disney-supported program.	1	2	3	4	5
106. My students are increasing their problem solving skills as a result of participating in the Disney-supported program.	1	2	3	4	5
107. My students are increasing their computer skills as a result of participating in the Disney-supported program.	1	2	3	4	5
108. I am enthusiastic about Disney-supported projects in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
109. Disney supported professional development has been very effective.	1	2	3	4	5
110. The Disney Project is improving the curriculum materials available to the school.	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the degree to which the Disney Project has influenced your activities in the following domains.

	Large decrease	Some decrease	No change	Some increase	Large increase
111. Exchange of ideas with colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
112. Use of alternative forms of assessment	1	2	3	4	5
113. Knowledge of subject matter	1	2	3	4	5
114. Teaching effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
115. Motivation to implement reform	1	2	3	4	5
116. Use of information from professional development activities	1	2	3	4	5

117. Other (please describe) _____

118. How do you expect the Disney project to affect your <u>students</u>? Please describe the three most important expectations? *(Please print your response.)*

(b)

(c)

119. How do you expect the Disney project to affect you as a <u>teacher and your school</u>? Please describe your three most important expectations? *(Please print your response.)*

(a)

(b)

(c)

120. Describe your teaching practices. What has changed (or what do you hope will change) since the introduction of the Disney project at your school? *(Please print your response.)*

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121. Describe any changes (or any changes you hope to see) in student engagement and/or student learning since the introduction of Disney-project-related activities. *(Please print your response.)*

Comments *(please print)*:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date

☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐

5th Grade Student Survey

Directions: Please answer the following statements that ask about how you feel about school, and things that you do at school. Your teacher will read the questions out loud. Your job is to select the circle next to the number that describes how you feel about the sentence your teacher reads. If you have questions about what something means, you can raise your hand and ask your teacher to help you. You will put your answers in an envelope. Your classmates and teachers will not see your answers, so answer exactly the way that best describes how you feel.

Section I

Directions for Section I: Read the following statements and the five choices below each statement. The five choices are: **strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree** and **strongly agree**. There is a circle to the left of each of these choices. Please completely darken (fill in) the circle that best describes the way you feel about the statement.

> Shade Circles Like This--> ●
>
> Not Like This--> ⊗ ☑

1. I like my school.
○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Unsure ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

2. I'm glad to get back to school after summer vacation.
○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Unsure ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

3. My classroom is a fun place to be.
○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Unsure ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

4. What we do in class is a waste of time.
○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Unsure ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

5. I wish I didn't have to go to school.
○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Unsure ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

6. I would be very sad if I had to go to a different school.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

7. I enjoy what I do in class.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

8. I would rather be in my class than any other one.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

9. I'm bored in school.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

10. I wish I could go to a different school.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

11. I hate being in school.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

12. I think I am a good student.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

13. I am doing a good job in school.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

14. I am not a very good student.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

15. I have trouble figuring things out in school.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

16. I don't do very well in school.
○ Strongly Disagree   ○ Disagree   ○ Unsure   ○ Agree   ○ Strongly Agree

Directions for Section II: Read the following statements and the four choices below each statement.   Please completely darken (fill in) the circle that best describes the way you feel about the statement.

Shade Circles Like This--> ●
Not Like This--> ⊗ ☑
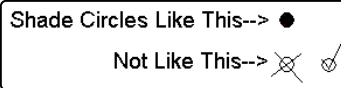
1. I do many group projects in my class.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

2. The class activities we do are so interesting that I do not want class to end.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

3. If I can't solve a problem, my teacher shows me different ways to do it.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

4. I know what my teacher expects of me in class.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

5. My teacher talks with me.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

6. I work by myself most of the time.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

7. My teacher really cares about me.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

8. Students don't get many choices when it comes to doing assignments.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

9. My teacher shows me how to solve problems.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

10. I have no choices of different activities to do in class.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

11. I have a chance to discuss what we are learning.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

12. My teacher explains assignments clearly.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

13. My teacher doesn't help me even when I really need it.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

14. My teacher listens to me.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

15. I work in groups most of the time.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

16. The students in my class help one another with assignments.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

17. Students help to plan what we will do in our class.
○ Not True at All   ○ Not Very True   ○ Sort of True   ○ Very True

Section III

Directions for Section III: Please use sentences to answer the following questions. You can say whatever you want to about these questions. *(Please print clearly).*

1. Describe a favorite project you have worked on this year. What made it your favorite?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Describe your favorite subject in school this year. Write about what you do in class that makes it your favorite subject.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for answering all of the questions!

CLASSROOM PRACTICE OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Demographic Information

Teacher Information

_____   _____
Date   Researcher

_____   _____
School   Grade

_____   _____
Teacher First Name   Teacher Last Name

Classroom Information

Total number of minutes observed _____   Number of students observed _____

Please indicate the number of students who belong to the following groups. If there is no way to tell, please write "missing data" for this section.

Number of Boys   _____

Number of Girls   _____

CLASSROOM PRACTICE OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Lesson Activities

In the following six sections, rate the degree to which the following are present in the classroom:
1) challenge of the lesson according to grade level, 2) implementation of the learning activities, 3)student engagement, procedural and substantive, 5) quality of instructional discussion, 5) quality of instructional feedback.

Challenge of the Lesson Activities

○ NA	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
Not appli-cable to this activity	Learning activities involve students in tasks that do not require any degree of complex thinking and do not engage students with substantive content material. **(Little or no complex thinking)**	Learning activities involve students in tasks that require some moderately complex thinking. Student's engagement with the material does not promote learning in a rigorous way. **(Some complex thinking)**	At least some of the learning activities require strongly complex thinking as a major focus of the lesson. This level requires the use of higher order cognitive functions, taking students beyond recall, recognition, and reproduction of information to evaluation; analysis; synthesis; and production of arguments, ideas, and performances. Students may be asked to synthesize ideas; analyze cause and effect; identify a problem and pose reasonable solutions; hypothesize, speculate giving details or justification; defend opinions or argue a position with evidence; evaluate; analyze; or determine bias, values, intent. **(Mostly high order thinking)**	Much or all of the learning activities require strongly complex thinking as a major focus of the lesson. Students also engage in substantive content material. Students may be asked to analyze cause and effect, identify a problem and pose reasonable solutions, speculate giving details or justification, defend opinions or argue a position with evidence to a great extent. **(Almost all complex thinking)**
	Example: Using encyclopedias, students record the name of medicinal plants, its scientific name, where it is most commonly grown, how tall it can grow, and how it can be used medicinally onto a worksheet.	Example: Students record information from encyclopedias to a worksheet and at the end, answer the following question, "What was the most surprising thing you learned about medicinal plants?"	Example: Students research a medicinal plant, choosing on their own what they think is important information about the plant. They then create an informational pamphlet about the plant using that information.	Example: Students research several medicinal plants and write a report selecting a few plants that may be useful to their families, using specific details about the plant to support thier choices. The report is used to make a presentation to the class about why the plants they chose are useful.

CLASSROOM PRACTICE OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Implementation of the Learning Activities

○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
○ NA Not appli-cable to this activity	The learning activity is not effectively implemented (e.g., the class may be disorganized, the teacher may lack control).	The learning activity is somewhat effectively implemented.	The learning activity is effectively implemented (e.g., transitions are smooth, teacher has control of class).	The learning activity is exceptionally well implemented (e.g., transitions are seamless, almost no class time is wasted).
	(disorganized)	**(somewhat organized)**	**(smooth and effective)**	**(seamless and no time wasted)**
	Example: Upon finishing a book on traveling, the teacher says, "Okay, class take out a piece of paper and write a post card to your family pretending that you are in another country. You have 20 minutes to finish." Ten minutes later, most students have not started. Some are wandering the room asking others, "What are we supposed to do?:	Example: The teacher tells the students to take out a piece of paper, having just finished a book on traveling. He says, "Remember the parts of a post card that we just discussed." Many students are raising their hands with question. Ten minutes later, some student are writing, looking at books, while others wander around the classroom, still searching for books on the country they want.	Example "We are going to write a post card to our family pretending that we are visiting another country. We can see that writing a post card involves several steps. " He walks students through the steps and defines his expectations verbally. He has a handout with a postcard to cut out for the finished product. He has different resources available at a table such as encyclopedias and other books on different countries. Ten minutes later, students are writing their postcard. Some student keep going to the teacher for further clarification.	Example: After finishing a book on traveling, the teacher says, "Today, we are going to write a postcard to our families pretending that we are in another country. Let me show you an example of a postcard." The teacher shows a sample of a postcard, reviewing the parts of postcard and the steps he has taken to write it. The steps are also written on the board and the sample postcard is posted on the board for students to refer to afterwards. Books on different countries are available on a centrally located table. Before dismisisng students back to their desks, he asks, "If you have any questions, stay here, otherwise go back to your desks and start." Ten minutes later, most student are writing their postcard clear on the assignment.

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CLASSROOM PRACTICE OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Procedural Engagement

	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
○ NA Not appli-cable to this activity	10-30% of the students appear to be procedurally engaged. Example: Few students conduct their light bulb experiments while the rest of the students wander around the room, chatting with other students about unrelated topics or play with each other.	31-60% of the students appear to be procedurally engaged. Example: Some students conduct their science experiment but about half of the class wanders around the room or sits at their desks chatting with other students about unrelated topics or stares out into space day dreaming,	61-80% of the students appear to be procedurally engaged. Example: Most students are on-task, conducting their experiment. They write their science notes, detailing their steps and results. Most students complete the experiment and most complete or nearly complete their science notes.	81-100%of the students appear to be procedurally engaged. Example: Almost all students are on-task, trying to get the light bulb to work, using different metal wires. They note their observations in their science journal. Most students complete both the experiment and their writing-up of the science experiment in their journal.

Approximately what percent of students are procedurally engaged? [_____]

Substantive Engagement

	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
○ NA Not appli-cable to this activity	10-30% of the students appear to be substantively engaged. Example: Most students are either not doing the experiment, playing or talking with other students or if conducting the experiment, they are rushing through it, being careless, paying more attention to unrelated talk.	31-60% of the students appear to be substantively engaged. Example: About half of the student are not actively engaged, even if they are conducting the experiment, their attention is focused elsewhere, listening or talking to other students, playing with their pencils, looking outside the window.	61-80% of the students appear to be substantively engaged. Example: Most student are actively engaged. Some students talk excitedly with their neighbors saying, "Did you see that?, That is pretty neat; Did yours do that?" Other students, smile to themselves as their light bulbs lights up, while others still trying scrunch up their faces in deep concentration.	81-100% of the students appear to be substantively engaged. Example: Almost all student are actively engaged. Many students shout, "It works!, I did it! or Its alive!" when their light bulb works. Some students smile, their eyes widening, as their light bulb goes on. Other students still trying review their notes or ask another student, "Hey, can you help me?" Near the end, students can be heard talking with each other about which metal worked better as a conducter.

Approximately what percent of students are substantively engaged? [_____]

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CLASSROOM PRACTICE OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Quality of Instructional Discussion

⚪ **1**	⚪ **2**	⚪ **3**	⚪ **4**
⚪ **NA** Not appli-cable to this activity A discussion does not take place at all or interaction between teacher and students is predominantly recitation style, with teacher mediating all questions and answers. The teacher's questions are close-ended, known-answer questions.	Teacher makes some attempt to engage students in true discussion with uneven results. Some of the teacher's questions are open-ended. There may be some attempt to have students respond to other students or invitations to comment about a book. Teacher's attempt at engaging students may fail.	Most of teacher's questions are of high quality. Adequate time is available for students to respond and teacher activity solicits student input (e.g., "Tell me why you think that." "Can you say a little more about that?"). Teacher builds on student contributions. There is some student to student discussion regarding the subject/classroom activity.	Classroom interaction represents true discussion. Students initiate topics and make unsolicited, on-topic contributions. Students formulate many questions. Teacher's questions are uniformly high quality with adequate time for students to respond. Teacher builds on students' contributions, and students build on each other's contributions. Student to student discussion about the subject/classroom activity is significant.
(Teacher guided, close-ended questions, and/or limited Q&A.) Example: Teacher asks, "16 divided by 4 is?" "4," answers students collectively.	**(Teacher guided Q&A with few open-ended questions.)** Example: Teacher asks, " I have 16 apples I want to share with my four friends. Do I have enough?" "Yes", the students respond collectively.	**(High quality open-ended questions with few Q & As.)** Example: Teacher says, "I have 16 apples that I want to share with four friends, how many would each friend get?" Teacher waits a few minutes and then says, "Who can tell me the answer and how you figured it out? Student responds, "I	**(Discussion between students and teachers and/or among students.)** Example: The student called upon responds, "I drew four circles and then passed out an apple to each circle until they were all passed out." Another student calls out, "I did it another way". Teacher builds on this comment by saying, "Let's discuss different strategies used." Another student says, "I knew 4 plus 4 is 8 and 8

Approximately what percent of students participate?

CLASSROOM PRACTICE OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Quality of Instructional Feedback

○ NA Not appli-cable to this activity	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
	Feedback is either not provided or is of uniformly poor quality. Feedback may be inappropriate. Feedback does not support instructional goals. Feedback is provided only for a **few** students demonstrating need.	Feedback is inconsistent in quality. Elements of high quality may be present during a small portion of the observation or minimally informative feedback that only somewhat supports the instructional goals may be given throughout the observation. Feedback is provided for **some** students demonstrating need.	Feedback is mostly high quality. Feedback mostly supports the instructional goals. It is provided either consistently throughout the observation period or in a focused way during a portion of the period. Feedback is provided for **most** students demonstrating need.	Feedback is uniformly high quality. Provision is made for students to use feedback in their learning. Feedback fully supports the attainment of the instructional goals. Feedback is provided for **almost all** students demonstrating need.
	(Not provided or uniformly poor quality)	**(Inconsistent in quality)**	**(Mostly high quality)**	**(Uniformly high quality)**
	Example: First grade students are working on a writing assignment with the sentence starter "A pill bug is…" Teacher sits at his desk while students attempt to do the assignment.	Exemple: Teacher roves around the room saying to some students "good job, nice work, or you need to start writing, this is not an adjetive".	Example: Teacher says, "I like your sentence. Bumpy is a good describing word." Helping most student with their writing, he occasionally says, "good job or needs more work."	Example: While the teacher roves around the room helping almost all students, she says, "John, you used a great adjective because you described how a pill bug looks. Now can you use an adjective that describes how it feels?"

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CLASSROOM PRACTICE OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Description of Lesson Activities

Please code each activity observed, and record the number of minutes for each activity. For classrooms in which simultaneous activities are occurring, code the group with the teacher, and the group which has the largest number of students. The remaining activities should be coded together in a third activity box. Label these activities 1a, 1b, 1c; 2a, 2b, 2c, etc.

Activity Number [_____] **Time (min.)** [_____] **No. of Students** [_____]

Social Organization	**Teacher Activity**	**Student Activity**
☐ Teacher-led whole class	☐ Lectures/Gives lesson	☐ Pre-writing
☐ Teacher-led small group	☐ Leads a discussion	☐ Revising/Editing
☐ Small groups working independently	☐ Provides procedural info	☐ Writing a draft
☐ Teacher and students 1-on-1	☐ Conferences	☐ Publishing
☐ Students work in pairs	☐ Reads aloud	☐ Presenting
☐ Students working individually	☐ Gives a test	☐ Reading out loud
☐ Other (fill in)	☐ Not present	☐ Reading silently
_____	☐ Monitors student behavior	☐ Answering questions (short response)
	☐ Provides help individually	☐ Participating in discussion (extended response)
	☐ Other (fill in)	☐ Completing worksheets
	_____	☐ Listening
		☐ Other (fill in) _____

Type of Activity

☐ Language Arts ☐ Arts

☐ Science ☐ Social Studies

☐ Math ☐ Other (fill in)

Specific Activity

☐ Reading stategies	☐ Spelling	☐ Q & A worksheet	☐ Write up findings	☐ Use of calculator
☐ Reading comprehension	☐ Vocabulary	☐ Reports	☐ Classroom discussions	☐ Manipulation of color
☐ Independent reading	☐ Computer Use	☐ Develop hypothesis	☐ Word problems	☐ Trace images
☐ Grammar	☐ Poetry	☐ Lab experiments	☐ Use of math manipulation	☐ Cooperative learning

Adapted from LAAMP

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TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

1. Describe how the project has influenced the learning environment in the school as compared to last year. In the classroom as compared to last year.

   ☐ *success stories and/or challenges*

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

2. Describe some of the activities in which your students have participated in as a result of this project.

   ☐ *specific examples of lesson plans, assignments, and/or activities*

3. Describe how the project has affected student work and student outcomes as compared to last year.

   ☐ *student motivation*

   ☐ *student engagement*

   ☐ *quality of student work*

   ☐ *critical thinking skills*

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT TEACHERS AND TEACHING PRACTICES:

4. As a teacher, describe how the project has impacted your teaching practices.

   ☐ *examples of different strategies used, new teaching techniques, and/or assessments*

   ☐ *changes in teacher expectations of student work*

5. Describe some of the professional development activities connected with the project.

   ☐ *types of professional development activities that have occurred/planned*

   ☐ *teacher attitudes toward the professional development activities*

6. Has participation in these professional development activities influenced your teaching or what you do in your classroom?

   ☐ *If so, how?*

   ☐ *If not, why not?*

7. As a teacher, describe the general attitudes of teachers toward this project as compared to last year.

   ☐ *examples of what teachers have said*

   ☐ *responses to project related changes*

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION:

8. Describe any partnerships the school and/or teachers have developed in helping to implement this project.

   ☐ *universities and/or colleges*

   ☐ *community members such as consultants from museums or local historians*

   ☐ *parents*

9. Describe some major barriers (or possible barriers) to project implementation and success.

   ☐ *examples of barriers*

   ☐ *possible solutions to overcome some of these barriers*

   ☐ *plans to implement changes*

10. Describe some of the major successes you see (or hope to see) in the implementation of this project.

APPENDIX B: CONTACT LETTERS

Coordinator/Principal Letters, Fall 2001

Coordinator/Principal Letter, Spring 2001

Teacher Survey Letter, Spring 2001

Coordinator Letter, Student and Teacher Surveys, Spring 2001

Teacher Letter, Student Survey Procedures

[School]
[Address1]
[City], [State] [Postal Code]

August 31, 2001

Dear [Main Contact],

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in the UCLA
Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE) evaluation of the Disney Learning Partnership's
Creative Learning Communities (CLC) grant program. Your participation helps to provide
an in-depth picture of CLC school efforts to improve student learning.

As you remember, CSE has been contracted by the Disney Learning Partnership to evaluate
the CLC grant program. Information for the evaluation is being collected from all CLC
schools through annual surveys of teachers and students and through case studies of other
school sites that include classroom observations as well as teacher and administrator
interviews over a three-year period. Information collected by CSE is strictly confidential.

As we begin this year, **we request the following information be returned to us by September
15th** so we may begin to schedule the administration of teacher and student surveys:

1. 2001-2002 School Calendar,
2. 2001-2002 Testing Calendar,
3. Daily School Schedule,
4. School Faculty Roster, and
5. Updated Contact Information (including best time and way to reach you).
    Address
    Phone Number
    Fax Number
    Email Address

There is a return envelope with postage pre-paid enclosed for your convenience.

The CLC case study team consists of Project Director Ingrid Roberson and Project
Researchers Bridgid Fennell and Lance Evans.

We look forward to working with you this 2001-2002 school year and please do not hesitate
to contact us either by phone at (310) 794-4404 or by email at roberson@cse.ucla.edu if you
have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Roberson
UCLA/CRESST

[Principal Name]
[School Name]
[School Address]
[City], [State] [Zip Code]

August 31, 2001

Dear [Principal's Name],

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE) evaluation of the Disney Learning Partnership's *Creative Learning Communities* (CLC) grant program. Your participation helps to provide an in-depth picture of CLC school efforts to improve student learning.

As you remember, CSE has been contracted by the Disney Learning Partnership to evaluate the CLC grant program. Information for the evaluation is being collected from all CLC schools through annual surveys of teachers and students and through case studies of your school and other school sites that include classroom observations as well as teacher and administrator interviews over a three-year period. Information collected by CSE is strictly confidential.

As we start this year, **we request that you return the following to our office by September 28, 2001** so that we might begin to schedule site visits in October:

1. 2001-2002 School Calendar,
2. 2001-2002 Testing Calendar,
3. Daily School Schedule,
4. School Faculty Roster,
5. School Map
6. Updated Contact Information (including best time and way to reach you) and
   Address
   Phone Number
   Fax Number
   Email Address
7. Preliminary Schedule for interviews and observations (see enclosed grid).

During March of next year, we will be visiting your school, spending approximately two days conducting observations as well as interviews. We would especially welcome the opportunity to interview and/or observe the following teachers and administrators who participated in last year's interviews and/or observations:

1. list of interviewees
2. –
3. –
4. –

We would of course welcome any additional teachers and administrators who would like to be observed and/or interviewed.

We have attached a sample schedule so that you can create a preliminary schedule for observations of and interviews with potential participants based on your daily school schedule. **Please return this preliminary schedule along with the above requested information by September 28, 2001**. We have provided a return envelope with postage pre-paid for your convenience.

In March, we will be sending you the teacher and student surveys to be administered and returned by the end of the month.

The CLC case study team consists of Project Director Ingrid Roberson and Project Researchers Bridgid Fennell and Lance Evans.

If you have any questions or if the above requested information should change during the school year, please contact us either by phone at (310) 794-4404 or by email at roberson@cse.ucla.edu.

We look forward to working with you this 2001-2002 school year.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Roberson
UCLA/CRESST

March 12, 2001

Dear Project Coordinator:

The box of materials you have received includes the surveys for the CRESST data collection on behalf of the Disney Project: Creative Learning Communities. Each packet includes a copy of the letter to the teachers as well as a copy of the teacher survey. These materials are for your records.

Enclosed you will find teacher surveys for your school. Teachers are responsible for mailing their surveys directly to CRESST. **All surveys should be returned to CRESST by April 12, 2001.**

Teachers may complete the teacher surveys at their earliest convenience, and again, these are confidential, and voluntary. Each teacher should return the completed survey in the enclosed business reply envelope directly to CRESST.

As the Project Coordinator, we appreciate you taking on the responsibility to disseminate the materials to the teachers and discuss the process with them in a timely way that works with their schedules and allows them to meet the **April 12, 2001 deadline**. The communication between you and your teachers is critical for this data collection.

Please refer to the following checklist to help make sure that you have all of the necessary materials to complete and return the surveys.

☐   Teacher surveys
☐   Individual envelopes for each teacher survey

Thank you very much for your assistance with this and if you have any questions, please call me at (310) 794-4404.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Roberson
UCLA/CRESST

March 12, 2001

Dear Principal,

The box of materials you have received includes the surveys for the CRESST data collection on behalf of the Disney Project: Creative Learning Communities. Each packet includes a copy of the letters to the project coordinator and teachers as well as a copy of the teacher survey. These materials are for your records.

Enclosed you will find teacher surveys for your school. Teachers are responsible for mailing their surveys directly to CRESST. **All surveys should be returned to CRESST by April 12, 2001.**

Teachers may complete the teacher surveys at their earliest convenience, and again, these are confidential, and voluntary. Each teacher should return the completed survey in the enclosed business reply envelope directly to CRESST.

As the Principal, we appreciate you taking on the responsibility to disseminate the materials to the teachers and discuss the process with them in a timely way that works with their schedules and allows them to meet the **April 12, 2001 deadline**. The communication between you and your teachers is critical for this data collection.

Please refer to the following checklist to help make sure that you have all of the necessary materials to complete and return the surveys.

☐   Teacher surveys
☐   Individual envelopes for each teacher survey

Thank you very much for your assistance with this and if you have any questions, please call me at (310) 794-4404.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Roberson
UCLA/CRESST

March 12, 2001

Dear [Teacher]:

This teacher survey is being conducted by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation as part of the Disney Learning Partnership: Creative Learning Communities grant program. The purpose of this survey is to understand the ways in which the Disney Learning Partnership is affecting your school, classroom, and classroom practice.

Your response to this survey will help us identify the changes that are taking place at your school since the reform effort was implemented, and how you feel about these changes. The survey contains a variety of questions covering such topics as decision-making processes, professional development, linkages with other schools, teaching practices, curriculum content and other important educational issues. It is not an evaluation of teachers, students, or the administration. This marks the second year in which this survey has been distributed, meaning our goal of having a survey for each year of the duration of the project has almost been achieved. This will allow us to look back and see what changes and progress have occurred from year to year.

The information collected from these surveys is confidential and each survey will only be identified by a number. Some sections of this survey require you to check information in a box and some sections will ask you to answer questions regarding the goals, challenges, and strengths of the Disney project at your school. It is important that you answer all the questions. At the end of this survey, there is additional space for your comments and anything else you would like us to know about the Disney project at your school.

To assure confidentiality, your completed survey is to be turned in to your project coordinator and sent directly to UCLA. Your participation is voluntary, and you may decline to answer any question. Thank you for your cooperation.

The deadline for return of surveys to UCLA/CRESST is April 12, 2001.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact your project coordinator or myself at (310) 794-4404.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Roberson
UCLA/CRESST

[Date]

Dear [Coordinator],

The box of materials you have received includes the surveys for the CRESST data collection on behalf of the Creative Learning Communities. Each coordinator packet includes a copy of a letter for principals and teachers, and sample teacher and student questionnaires. These materials are for your records.

Enclosed you will find surveys for your school (or each school if you are part of a consortium): Teacher surveys (across all grade levels), and student surveys for grades 3, 4, and 5, Parent Consent and Student Assent forms. You are ONLY responsible for collecting student surveys with Student Assent forms and returned Parent Consent forms. Teachers are responsible for mailing their surveys directly to CRESST. All surveys should be returned to CRESST by [Date].

Prior to administering the student surveys, a Parent Consent form must be sent home for participating students. Parents will sign and return the form ONLY IF THEY REFUSE TO CONSENT TO THEIR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION. Teachers should include the returned Parent Consent forms in the Federal Express package with the returned surveys.

The student surveys with student assent form should be completed during class time (approximately 15 minutes to complete) and should be read out loud to third- and fourth-grade students. Prior to completing the actual survey, all students with parental consent to participate will sign the Student Assent form attached to the front of the survey. All completed student surveys will be sealed in individual envelopes (to insure the confidentiality of their responses) and returned to the teacher to be placed in the Federal Express package. Teachers should return the Federal Express package with completed student surveys and returned parent consent forms to the project coordinator, principal or designated person to mail directly to CRESST.

Teachers may complete the teacher surveys at their earliest convenience, and again, these are confidential and voluntary. Each teacher should return the completed survey in the enclosed business reply envelope directly to CRESST.

As the Coordinator, we appreciate you taking on the responsibility to disseminate the materials to the school(s) and discuss the process of explanation with them in a timely way that works with their schedules and allows them to meet the [Date] deadline. The communication between the project coordinators, principals and teachers is critical for this data collection.

Please refer to the following checklist to help make sure that you have all of the necessary materials to complete and return the surveys.

☐ Teacher Surveys for each school site

☐ Individual envelopes for each Teacher Survey

☐ Parent Consent forms for each student in grades 3, 4, 5 in both English and Spanish

☐ Teacher instructions (and teacher copy of the survey) for student surveys

☐ Student surveys with Student Assent form attached

☐ Individual Student Survey envelopes (one envelope for each student)

☐ Federal Express packages for Student Surveys (one per class)

☐ School envelope to return surveys to CRESST

If you have any questions please call Monica de Gyarfas, Project Coordinator at CRESST. She can be reached at (310) 794-9151. Thank you very much for your assistance with this.

Sincerely,

Ann Mastergeorge, Ph.D.
UCLA/CRESST Senior Research Associate
Project Director

[Date]

Dear [Teacher],

Attached is a copy of a student survey for your class. The purpose of this survey is to understand students' perceptions of learning in the classroom, and how these perceptions change over the course of the Creative Learning Communities project at your school.

Prior to administering the student surveys, a Parent Consent form must be sent home for participating students. Parents will sign and return the form ONLY IF THEY REFUSE TO CONSENT TO THEIR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION. You will include the returned Parent Consent forms in the Federal Express package with the completed student surveys.

Prior to completing the actual survey, all students with parental consent to participate will sign the Student Assent form attached to the front of the survey. Once the Student Assent forms are signed, if the students in your class are in 3rd or 4th grade, please read the directions and the survey out loud to the students item by item. If students have a question about a particular item, you may explain it to them. For students in 5th grade, remind them that they should raise their hands and ask for clarification if necessary. Please ask students to **PRINT** their responses for the questions that ask students to describe and write about activities at school.

Each student should receive one survey and one envelope in which they will place their completed survey. The surveys should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Students should be reminded that the completion of this survey is confidential (that is, no one will see the students' responses, and the envelopes they have should be sealed with the completed surveys inside the envelope) and that their participation is voluntary. When you collect the sealed envelopes, please place them in the Federal Express envelope along with returned Parent Consent forms, and return them to your project coordinator, principal or designated person so they can be mailed back to UCLA/CRESST by [Date].

Our evaluation team thanks you for your cooperation and participation in this important activity. We appreciate you taking time out of your busy class schedule for the survey completion. Should you have any questions regarding the nature of this survey, please feel free to contact your school's Project Coordinator, or the Project Director, Ann Mastergeorge at UCLA at (310) 794-9156. We will be most happy to answer your questions.

Thank you very much for your assistance with this.

Sincerely,

Ann Mastergeorge, Ph.D.
UCLA/CRESST Senior Research Associate
Project Director

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORMS

Disney Learning Partnership: Creative Learning Communities

      Survey Explanation–Parental Consent Form

      Student Assent Form

      Consent to Participate in Research

Disney Learning Partnership: Creative Learning Communities

Survey Explanation - Parental Consent Form

Your school has been chosen as a recipient of a Disney Learning Partnership Grant. As a parent, you are requested to permit your child to fill out a survey that will be given to them by their teacher during the week of _____. The survey was created by the UCLA Center for Evaluation, who is working closely with the Disney Learning Partnership to understand teacher and student attitudes toward the specific Creative Learning Communities(CLC) project at your child's school.   Every student at every school that is receiving support from the Disney Learning Partnership will be given this survey.

Your child's teacher will hand out the survey in class and for the students to fill out during class time. No student names will be written on the surveys and they will only take about 10 or 15 minutes to fill out. Surveys will be turned in to the teacher. Students will be able to ask their teacher for clarification if any of the questions do not seem clear. The content of the questions will be based on the CLC project and how students feel about their classes and about the project.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey or the content of the questions, please feel free to contact Ann Mastergeorge, the Project Director, who can be reached at (310) 794-9156.

Please sign and send this back ONLY IF YOU <u>DO NOT WANT</u> your child to participate.

Thank you!

I do not want my child to fill out the Disney survey

Name of Student X _____

Signature of Parent X _____

Disney Learning Partnership: Creative Learning Communities

Student Assent Form

Hi Student!

At UCLA, we are working with Creative Learning Communities (CLC) to try to understand the kinds of things you do at school that are fun, and the activities you enjoy. Every student from every school that is working with CLC will get this survey, and the information you give will be very helpful to us as we work with CLC to help provide you with fun and interesting ways to learn.

We created this survey to try to find out that information and would appreciate it very much if you could fill out the survey and answer all of the answers honestly. We are giving each student an envelope to put their survey to seal: NO teacher, friend, or principal will read your answers.

If any of the questions are unclear, you may ask your teacher to explain to you what they mean. There are no right or wrong answers. You should know that you do not have to fill out the survey if you don't want to.

Please print your name below if you are willing to fill out this survey.

Your school's name X_____

Your name X_____

Thank you for your participation!!

Disney Learning Partnership: Creative Learning Communities
Consent to Participate in Research

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by the Center for the Study of Evaluation at the University of California, Los Angeles. You were selected as a participant in this study because of your school s involvement with the Disney Learning Partnership.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This project intends to examine the ways that the Creative Learning Communities (CLC) project at your school is impacting the school environment. The purpose of our interview with you is to learn about the ways that the CLC project is impacting teaching and student learning at your school.

PROCEDURES
If you agree to participate in this study, you would be asked to participate in face-to-face interview(s), once a year over three years. These interviews will take approximately one hour. We would also ask if we could observe some professional development meetings related to the CLC project.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
It will take time to participate in this study, but we will make every effort to schedule interviews at your convenience during the time periods in which we will be in your area.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY
You will have the opportunity to provide information to help improve the efforts of the Disney Learning Partnership that will facilitate you in creating the best learning opportunities possible for your students. In addition, your participation will contribute to the development and establishment of the most effective guides and training for teachers involved in Disney Learning Partnership projects.

CONFIDENTIALITY
 Your participation in this research is completely confidential. You will not be required to provide your name or any other identifying information as part of this study. The audio-tape made of your research interview will be held in the strictest confidence and will be labeled with an ID code that will prohibit identification of the interviewee and the school. If you prefer not to be taped, or if you want us to turn off the recorder at any time during our interview, please let us know and we will comply with your wishes. Your perspective is essential to our understanding of the impact of reform efforts on schools, and your honest opinions will contribute to helping strengthen projects such as these.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
If you agree to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still

remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATOR
If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Ann Mastergeorge, Project Director, who can be reached at (310) 206-1532.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office of Protection of Research Subjects, 2107 Ueberroth Building, UCLA, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694, (310) 825-8714.

SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in the study and to be audio taped if applicable.

_____
Name of Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

APPENDIX D: COMPLETED TEACHER INTERVIEW

COMPLETED TEACHER INTERVIEW

(CAPS TEXT = interview question; Q = Interviewer; R: = Teacher)

1.   DESCRIBE HOW THE ——— PROJECT HAS INFLUENCED THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT THE SCHOOL AS COMPARED TO LAST YEAR, AND IN THE CLASSROOM AS COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

R: It's been wonderful. It has been wonderful. Last year, I think we were all tentative. It was overwhelming because we had so much ahead of us. When we first heard we'd gotten the grant, we were excited. We were thrilled, and we thought, "Oh boy, a grant." Then we realized what we were going to have to do. And I think it really overwhelmed us at first. It was not negative, was just a lot to take in. And getting on our feet was tough, because we had to get focused. We all had to read the grant, and become more familiar with it. We had been told about the grant as it was being developed, but certainly reading the fine print and getting involved in our parts of it was a big thing. So once we got on our feet, the first year, we really just kind of felt our way along. Did wonderful things, and got incredible resources. Just having all those things come into your classroom is terrific.

Q: What kind of resources?

R: Books. Tons of environmental books. On grade level. So as a third-grade teacher, I got third-grade books. I was permitted to choose some of those books within some guidelines, because they needed to be environmental, having to do with the grant. As a classroom teacher, books are your best resource. At least as far as having something for your children to touch. It was thrilling to be able to pick out books and say, "I'd like eight of these, so I can do a small group study, and 12 of these, or I'd like a whole class set of this book so we could do a literature study." So I did a lot, and other teachers also did a lot of research and picked out things that we like and things that fit the standard course of study. It was like being a kid in a candy shop, to get started. Then, once we got it all, we just had to sit back and say, "Where do we go from here? What do we do?" It took a good year to get on our feet and feel like we could get started in the right direction. This past summer, I did some Disney stuff. I went on a teacher trip, which was wonderful. But I also spent some time this summer at home, writing my own guides for my books. And then I share those with the other third-grade teachers. We all share books in grade level, so when they come and get a set of my books, I send my lesson plans with them. I do the same with other teachers, they have written plans. We didn't have that at the beginning of the project, and now we do. Which has been wonderful. Besides the resources, we're such a family here. We're very fortunate in this school. Teachers get along beautifully, and we all have one goal in mind. That's to make our children happy, and to help them learn creatively, and to help them be comfortable in whatever

abilities and talents they have. We want to bring those out. And kids have different talents, so we search for that. But for the past year, this grant has certainly helped us jell a little more. Because we have such a common goal now, through Disney, that has been a lot of fun for us and for the kids.

Q: How has it influenced the classroom compared to last year?

R: Oh, it definitely has influenced my classroom. Once again, having the resources to work on has opened a whole new field for me. My children have much more access to hands-on things that they can do through Disney. We have gotten pieces of shell, and starfish, and we got rocks. Tons of rocks. Third grade studies soil and rocks in science. So things that we haven't had in our specific classroom, we've gotten through Disney. Plus, I really was a good science teacher before, but I'm a much better science teacher now. Disney has made me integrate more than I used to. It's difficult, especially with testing the way it is in . . . to find time to teach a lot of science and social studies. But the Disney project has helped me integrate science into literature and into math. Almost everything we do, we can get science in. And certainly, with the new literature books we have through Disney, I'm teaching a lot more science. Because of what I'm reading to the children, what they're reading to each other. So that's definitely changed the atmosphere in my classroom. We do more science, we have in the past year.

2.   DESCRIBE SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOUR STUDENTS HAVE PARTICIPATED AS A RESULT OF THIS PROJECT.

R: We've done a lot of things. My expert topic is hummingbirds here in the school. So my children have done some research with me. It also has been really good for them to see me do research. Children sometimes think of their teachers as people who know it all, and it has made it very clear to them that I don't know it all. In fact, the only thing I really knew about hummingbirds before I started was that my grandmother used to always put her feeders up at a certain time of year, and little birds would always come back. And I used to love to watch them. She was so into hummingbirds, that's why I chose that topic. And I knew nothing about them. So my kids have seen me get out my books that Disney gave us, and research. And I practiced with them, giving my presentation that I'm doing to other classes. You have to start with them. And I was nervous. They do a lot of presentations to other classes also, so they got to see Miss ——— be nervous, too. Which was good for them. And I messed up, and I would have to say, "I just messed up, and I have to start again," and they laughed. It's been a great experience for them. We have done a lot of projects that involve dealing with other classes through the Disney thing. For example, we have a book—one of my Disney book sets is called *When I Go Camping With Grandma.* One of my favorite books. I had never heard of it before we got this money. We did some writing, we wrote our own stories. We read that book four times, and did different activities with that.

Q: What kind of activities?

R: We did an art activity, because the book—the pictures in the book are beautiful. We studied the pictures and the type of art, so it directly tied into art and studying different types of art. And then, they did pictures like the book, except from experience in their own lives. We began with stories, but we developed them into individual books, called "When I Did Something With Someone." Like, "When I Went to the Mall With Mom." And they wrote the stories, and then they went to read them to the younger kids. So they got an opportunity to be public speakers. We did some partner reading. We tried to do things, because you have kids with some many different learning styles and abilities. We do a lot of partner reading and partner work. I was trying to think of another book . . .

Q: But that was all around that one book.

R: Oh, yes. There's another book that we got through Disney, called *Night Letters.* It's about a little girl who goes out in the morning, and she looks for things that nature has done overnight. In other words, she would look and see an anthill. And she took a little journal with her, and she would imagine that the anthill had written her a letter. And she would put, "Dear Lily, thanks for the sesame seeds that you dropped from your lunch yesterday. We enjoyed them for dinner last night. Love, the ants." So she travels through her yard, there's a moth, and as she bends down to read what's written on its wings, she makes up what the moth might be saying to her. So I took my kids outside, early, first thing in the morning when it was still dewy. And had them do what we called Morning Letters. They had to choose three things in our butterfly garden, and write a letter to themselves from those things. So one child chose a bird, and it was so funny. She chose the bird's nest. And she wrote, "Dear Nikky, you will never believe what happened yesterday. My bird left me. Love, the bird's nest." So they did some great creative writing out of those books, and we mounted all the Morning Letters into a book that mirrored *Night Letters.* So now we have *Night Letters,* the real book, [and] *Morning Letters,* and which is our book. And next year, I'll read both of those to my class. It will be a different class, but they'll hear last year's activities.

3.   DESCRIBE HOW THE PROJECT HAS AFFECTED STUDENT WORK AND STUDENT OUTCOMES AS COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

R: We've already seen, schoolwide, a real student investment in science learning that we didn't have before. A part of that is because we are excited. The teachers are excited about science. And I will tell you, five years ago when I started teaching, we were not as excited. We did not have time for science. That's the best thing about this grant, in my opinion. It has given us time and opportunity and resources to do science that we didn't have before. So students now, because teachers are more excited, the students are more excited too, about science. I've seen specific student outcomes [of] it in my classroom. I have a child named ——— who came into my class as a non-reader. Into third grade. He is really making gains left and right. Not

to specifically because of Disney, but certainly that has helped him, because he now has opportunities to investigate and do things. ——— is the kind of kid that can't sit still, not for five minutes. And having the opportunity to go out into the butterfly garden, he wrote beautiful stuff. And he had to dictate some of his things, because he wanted to use words that were much bigger than he could write. We let him dictate, and his vocabulary has expanded this year, grown by leaps and bounds. So in ——— I'm already seeing a difference. Through the literature that's been available to him this year. In his reading and his writing, for sure.

Q: Let's talk specifically about student motivation. How does that look compared to last year?

R: We're definitely seeing more motivated students. They are so excited, particularly about the television studio.

Q: (project)?

R: Yes. Our class has been on . . . probably three times. Three lessons. We did Morning Letters, the studio crew came and filmed us out in the butterfly garden. And they filmed the children writing, and it was so quiet, because the rule was they couldn't speak. If they were listening to the birds talk, they couldn't be speaking themselves. So it was completely quiet, and they were all writing. And then, they cut the film—when we actually saw the finished product—so we could see them working in the room. They had their little heads down, just writing away. Then, at the end of this segment, they showed some of the kids reading their work. You would have thought they were on national television. Even though it was just schoolwide. That is the biggest motivator, because they think if they get to be on the television studio, it is the end-all. I have actually had my children come to me when we start a new project—sometimes it isn't even Disney—but they'll say, "Can this be on TV?" That's a huge motivator. That's caused an awful lot of excitement, because of that. I will tell you that my class also does a newspaper, our school newspaper, that was not part of this grant. But because of all the environmental work that's going on in their school, we saw an opportunity, and we certainly cover a lot of Disney's things in the newspaper. We started the newspaper up this school year, and that I know is in part because—I'm the one who came up with the idea of doing that—because we're stretching at the school. And that's a great way to stretch. And my children do all the writing, and all the photography. They are wonderful.

Q: Those digital cameras.

R: Digital cameras are wonderful. They're the best.

Q: I've heard you just got them in.

R: Yes.

Q: Did you have any before?

R: No. We just got them in, within the last month. They're something else.

Q: How many did you get?

R: We got one per teacher. We started out last year at one per grade level, and those were available. People were kind of antsy about knowing how to use them, and certainly how to download anything on the computers. But now, we're more comfortable with that. Everybody has their own. It's wonderful. This has just opened up things we could never—you know how it is in public schools. Money, we don't have a lot of that. It's tough to even keep up with basic necessities and needs for kids. But to have this extra resource, the money that's available for our children is just incredible. Are we going to talk about field trips later?

Q: Yes, we'll definitely talk about field trips.

R: Because I just thought of one to tell you about, but we'll get to it.

Q: Quality of student work, how does that look compared to last year?

R: Terrific. For example, being exposed to the literature that they're being exposed to, the artwork that they're being exposed to through the Disney grant, we are seeing differences. I don't have any doubt that we're seeing differences in our children's work. Because they're more thoughtful in what they do. Of course, and every single child in every room, this isn't going to apply to. But in my classroom, I would say that from the time we started Disney to now, I've probably seen a good 60 or 70% more enthusiasm. Children being enthusiastic, and being more thoughtful about nature. I now see kids extending what we're doing in the classroom to their home lives. They come back in and say, "We've never recycled at my house," because we do a unit on trash in our classroom. "We've never recycled, but we're going to start now." So we're definitely seeing specific differences in children in their learning and in what we see in the classroom.

Q: What about higher thinking skills, critical thinking skills?

R: Most definitely. We have guidebooks full of lesson plans, just suggested ideas through Disney. It lists all books by grade level, and it has a lesson plan ideas that we got before we even had to write anything. And all of those lesson plans are based on critical thinking skills. Certainly, with the end-of-grade tests, that's something we have to think about. Because a huge percentage of the questions on that test are based on higher level. Not comprehension and knowledge, beyond that. What we're doing through Disney, and what we're doing with having the children go out and experience nature, that just lends itself—honestly, it makes teachers—it becomes second nature to ask questions that are deeper. Simply because you don't want to stand up in there and say, "What color are leaves on a tree?" Obviously, your children are sitting there just immersed in nature. That's a silly question. What you do want to say is "What might you hear when you listen to that tree?" That's way beyond "What does your bark feel like? Is it rough or smooth?" Which is so simple. But, "How might at a tree reproduce? How might those acorns get from one tree to

another place? How does an oak tree grow away from other oak trees?" So the kids think way beyond just simple—the tree's bark is rough. They're way beyond that.

4.   AS A TEACHER, DESCRIBE HOW THE PROJECT HAS IMPACTED YOUR TEACHING PRACTICES.

R: It has definitely influenced me. It has made me stretch. There are things, because of the opportunities that we have, that I would never have done.

Q: Such as?

R: Such as gone to that outdoor classroom. That's a little hike up that hill. And it would be much easier to stay in a classroom and handout some worksheets, and open a textbook, and say, "Let's read about how a tree reproduces." That would be so easy. But instead, we put on our tennis shoes, and we go hiking up that hill. But my children don't think they're working. They never think they're working. When we get back to the classroom, they go, "Are we going to do any real work today?" I'll say, "We worked all morning." "But that was fun," they say. And that's wonderful. Normally—I love the outdoors. But hiking my class uphill three days a week is not something I would have normally done. But now that we are thinking in this vein, it has changed the thinking of this school, and given us opportunities to do things we couldn't have done before. We go to that classroom a lot. Sometimes we go up there to write. It has nothing to do with science, we go up and lean our backs against trees and write stories. And their writing is so much better when they're in a place like that.

Q: What is it that made you do that? Why do you do that now?

R: First of all, our school is so environmentally oriented that we just don't sit around in our classrooms. And if you are a teacher who sits around in your classroom, you're probably not going to real happy here. Because everybody gets out and does stuff. So for one thing, you don't want to be the black sheep, and the one person who does not ever step out the door. I'll tell you something else. If you don't like getting outside and digging around, and holding a praying mantis, then you're in trouble at this school. I hate bugs. I still hate spiders. The other teachers give me a hard time, because I still squash spiders. They'll pick them up and take them outside on a sheet of paper. No, I squash the spiders. But I have become a little more tolerant of those types who could take that bug outside and let it be free. I've become more tolerant of that. And my children, to me, I have to be a good example for them. And they will say, "Miss ——— does not squish spiders." So I'll say, "If you want to take the spider outside, be my guest. But Miss ——— not going to." This school, you're not going to sit around in this school. You'd better get up and work. Because there's a great level of competitiveness in this school. Not nasty competitiveness, but you hear what somebody did. We share everything. I have copied 15 teachers' lessons. They say, "Copy them." They copy my lessons. It's wonderful. We share an awful lot in this school. And when we see one teacher doing something, we'll open the window

and say, "What are you doing out there?" She tells us, and next week we're doing it. That's wonderful. We have a real learning community, and it makes a big difference for us and for our kids. I've done things I would never have done, had I not been teaching at the school.

Q: Was that before the Disney grant, though?

R: Somewhat. We've always been environmentally focused. We did a program called ——— a few years ago, which was through the ——— Museum of Natural Sciences. They came and did a lot of outdoor stuff with us. I think that probably led to the Disney grant, because we were so enthused, and not afraid to get out and do things outside. But Disney has certainly broaden our horizons. The teacher treks, the opportunities for teachers to go be learners, that's all through Disney. That has helped us so much.

Q: What about your expectations of student work? Has that changed?

R: It has. I expect more of my students. I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that I have invested myself into this process as a learner. And there's something about challenging myself that makes me expect more of my kids. Because I can say to them, if they don't want to get up and talk in front of another class, I can say to them, "But I have to do it. I'm comfortable with you, you're comfortable with your classmates. But when I go over to Miss ———'s room, I'm nervous. And if I can do it, you can do it too." I let them watch me present, and that is great for them. To see me be nervous and to see me make mistakes. But yes, I definitely expect more of them. Part of that, because we're doing more higher level thinking, and more critical thinking. That's something that you don't get out of textbooks. So by the very nature of the things we're doing in science, we are expecting more of our students.

5.   DESCRIBE SOME OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH THE PROJECT.

R: The teacher treks are wonderful. We have teacher treks as groups, and then we have individual teacher treks. I have taken an individual teacher trek. The two teacher treks we took last year, both times I was out of town and didn't get to go on either one of those. I took my own teacher trek last July, and went to spend a week in ——— on the Indian reservation. And I learned to use Native American culture to teach in my classroom. We did a lot of science, and a lot of outdoor things, and Disney paid for the whole thing. When I got back, I could not wait for school to start. Because we did a huge Native American unit in the fall, based specifically on what I learned in July in ———. So to me—that workshop cost about $450. That's something that I couldn't put out of my pocket, to go spend a week in ———.

Q: Plus expenses.

R: Oh, yes. You have to pay for a hotel, and all your meals, and mileage. They paid everything. And it was incredible to have the opportunity—a lot of the teachers in that workshop couldn't believe that my school had paid for this. That we had money

to pay for this. And I talk Disney up when I go to other places, and people are going, "How do I find out about this Disney?" And I say, "Oh, it's not that easy." Everybody can't just do this. It is very elite, I know, to get into this program. So it's been a lot of fun to go do things that I normally couldn't have done. And the next teacher trek, I'm definitely going with the group.

Q: Where's the next one?

R: I don't know yet. Hopefully, they're trying to get together a trip to Yellowstone next year. We're going to have to wait and see how that works out. I believe that might come through.

Q: So having gone to ———, what were you doing in your classroom specifically with that?

R: Well, we did Indian sand painting, we talked about mounds. And we're actually establishing a mound here. An Indian mound. Some Indian cultures—and I found this out in ——— I never knew it—some Indian cultures would use mounds to bury their dead. They would bring dead people and put them there, and then cover them. And the longer the civilization lasted, the bigger the mound got. But some Indian cultures, including the ———, did a different kind of mounding. And when I was in ———, we visited three different mounds. There may be some people buried, they said, but not very many. What they would do is, the ——— Nation was so big, that when people would come in from ———, or from ———, they would bring a pouch full of dirt or earth from where they lived. And the ancestral home was over in the mountains of ———. So they would put that on the ceremonial grounds, pour their soil out there, symbolizing part of their culture and civilization and their area there at the homeland. So over a period of time, hundreds of years, these mounds would get higher and higher. Just from dirt from different parts of the ———. So what we're doing is, asking children to bring in dirt from home. And we're going to have a little ceremony, and start a mound out somewhere near the walking trek area. The nature trail area. And we're going to have a little marker made that says, "If you've been a part of ——— you're going to leave part of yourself here. Part of your home at our school." And hopefully children come back 15 years from now, and the mound will be much bigger, but they'll know their dirt was on the bottom of that mound.

Q: So when are you planning to do that?

R: Well, we had hoped to do it this spring, and we have just been—with the newspaper, we just had to put off. We're going to try it this fall. We have our plates full here. We're going to try to do it this fall, but that was one specific thing I brought back from ———. And my kids are whipped into a frenzy about it. They are so excited. And certainly, even though they won't be in my classroom this fall, they'll be bringing their dirt. We'll have everybody in the school bring dirt. There'll be a little over 600 cups of dirt to go on our mound. So it's going to get started.

Q: You're going to get a pretty big mound in a couple of years.

R: We are.

Q: How has the teacher attitude been toward the professional development, taking teacher treks?

R: Oh, it's been wonderful. We've had people on [project]. Mrs. ——— was a great example, who said, "I'm not an outdoor person." They did a little story about Mrs. ——— before she went on a teacher trek, and they talk to her about her attitudes toward being outdoors, and doing things with nature.

Q: And this is on [project]?

R: Yes. And then, they did a follow-up on [project] with her after she came back. And she talked about how her attitude specifically had changed about being outdoors and roughing it. She said—she's so funny, because when she started at the beginning she said, "I don't do outdoors. I don't do cabins in the woods." And when she came back, she had done so many of the things she said she never did. And it was wonderful. The kids were doing the interviewing, and they said, "Well, now would you consider yourself an outdoor person?" She said, "I still don't know as I would go that far, but I have learned to appreciate it." I think that pretty much sums up our whole attitude here. I would never have held bugs. I'm sort of a squiggly person when it comes to creepy-crawlies. But just this morning, one of my kids found a caterpillar, and it crawled all over my hand. Because it's important for the kids to know that I don't stand back and say, "You can do that, but I'm not going to." So I've definitely learned to be a little more open, and a little more experimental. A little braver with some of the things the kids are doing, too.

Q: And you see that happening with other teachers?

R: Oh, absolutely. I really don't know of a teacher in this school who is negative about this project.

Q: Why do you think that is?

R: That's a good question.

Q: To actually say that there's no negative attitude, that's pretty powerful.

R: When you have a group of 30 certified teachers, who have different personalities, and some are young and enthusiastic, some are middle-aged and enthusiastic, some are about to retire and enthusiastic. You have also a spectrum, normally, of people who are just starting, people who are in mid-career, and people who are about to retire who are not enthusiastic. Particularly the teachers who have been working for a lot of years. A lot of times, in schools, you'll see teachers who are just marking time and getting ready for retirement. I think it says a lot for the teachers in this school that even the people who are going to retire next year are doing this project, and doing it enthusiastically. Now, I'm not going to sit here and lie. I'm not going to tell

you there have not been complaints about the time involved in dealing with this project. But when the complaints are aired, they are generally aired fairly publicly. There is no backbiting, and there's very little rumbling underneath of people being unhappy. Our faculty has been very supportive of this whole project. And there are some people who do more than others, as far as diving into this headfirst. But I don't know of a teacher in this school who has not embraced this project, and said, "OK, we have this opportunity." And we look at it as an opportunity for the children and for ourselves.

6. AS A TEACHER, DESCRIBE THE GENERAL ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARD THIS PROJECT AS COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

R: I think that has definitely improved. When the project was first announced, there was some grumbling. And I remember when I did the interview last year, I think one of the questions was, "Give me the down side." And definitely, people were worried about the time investment. But I think we have all learned, to a large degree, at least the people I spend a lot of time talking to, that it does not take time outside your classroom, it just takes a different type of planning. For example, we did this morning, going up to the outdoor classroom and working, that took some time. That's an hour out of my day to go up there and work. But still, we're accomplishing science, and we're accomplishing literature, doing some reading. And we're also going to be accomplishing writing. So I'm really getting in three good subjects in that hour. So it just takes some creative planning and timing. There really has not been a lot of required work outside of my school time. So it has not taken a lot of my time [at] home or anything like that. I think that's where you really get in some trouble with people who are reluctant to give up, and rightfully so, a lot of weekends. But for those of us who are willing to give up some weekends, I come in sometimes and work—I live a half-mile from school—sometimes I'll come in and work on Sunday afternoon on some things. But it's purely voluntary. We are under no pressure to put any extra—to coming in on our own time to work on this.

7. DESCRIBE ANY PARTNERSHIPS THE SCHOOL AND/OR TEACHERS HAVE DEVELOPED IN HELPING TO IMPLEMENT THIS PROJECT.

8. DESCRIBE SOME MAJOR BARRIERS (OR POSSIBLE BARRIERS) TO PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND SUCCESS.

R: Time has been the big thing. Money has been good, because it's something we haven't had before. The opportunity to have that much money at our disposal. The team leaders of the project, Miss ——— and Miss ———, have been very generous. If you go to them and say, "I'd like to put a bird feeder outside my window," they'll say, "Go get it and we'll reimburse you." So they are very open to any input from teachers. Barriers? Last year, my answer was "time." But that pretty much is not a barrier anymore.

Q:	How do you think that was effectively addressed, since it's not so much of an issue now?

R:	I can speak only from personal experience here. For me, it took getting focused. I think last year, when the project started, and we were first interviewed, I didn't know what I was going to have to do. Somehow, I had this idea in my head that I was going to have to spend my weekends and my evenings preparing for my expert topic. That's not true. I involved my students, and got them to help me research for my expert topic. They feel like they have part ownership in it. I think it just took learning more about the project, and getting focused on the way to divide up your time and to do things creatively. And there are still of few things that I still have to do before the end of the year, so May 15th, when it's time to turn in my portfolio, I may be going, "I don't have enough time." That probably will happen. But still, it's not a huge thing. It takes a little more time, but to me, the time I've invested for the resources that have been made available to me, this is just the best deal I've ever had. As I have boxes, literally tubs of things in my room, that I never had before. And that I didn't have to pay for, and I didn't have to go to my central office and beg for. To me, if I have to put in a few hours doing some research—plus, I get fringe benefits from that, because my children are doing it with me. It's wonderful. That's how it's been addressed. I think we all learned what was expected of us, and we learn the details of the program. I think we're all standing on two feet now. I think last year we were being washed over a little, standing in the ocean getting knocked off your feet. Because it's overwhelming. Now, I think we're little more focused. I just wish it would go on for 10 years instead of three, because we've been given so many opportunities.

9.	DESCRIBE SOME OF THE MAJOR SUCCESSES YOU SEE (OR HOPE TO SEE) IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT.

R:	Certainly, we hope things keep going the way they've been going. We see successes for our children. They're excited, they're enthusiastic, they are getting science almost every day now. Which—in many cases, every day. Where they didn't get that before. To me, that's one of the biggest successes. And you know, it's honestly true that other people coming to the school, I don't know how many people have said to me, "I wish I could have gone to this school. And I wish I could teach at this school"—other teachers—and say, "I can't believe that you all have this stuff." I have a friend who teaches in ———, and she's going to be coming down. We're going to exchange field trips next year, we're going to go see them and they're going to come see us. We've already told her about the things we have going on here, and she e-mails me and said, "I've heard other people talk about your school." We really have a very unique school here.

Q:	What about the field trips you're going to talk about? I definitely want to hear about this.

R: The Disney money for field trips has been one of the most—you can look at literature, and you can look at resources and the classroom. But to take the children out—we have a lot of socio-economically deprived children here. Many who have trouble coming up with money for field trips. The Disney field trips fund has been a godsend for those kids. This past fall, we went to the ——— Nature Center in ———. We were able to pay for the bus, the driver, the admission, and lunch for all the kids through Disney. So parents, all they had to do was sign that permissions, and we were off. And it was wonderful. Children who never got to shop at gift shops, because their parents were paying for lunch, got to bring $5 and go to the gift shop. That is heartwarming, because I had three or four kids who just don't get—I generally literally slip these kids a dollar or two when we go to a gift shop, because they never have any money. They actually could bring a little spending money, because they didn't have to pay for anything else. That, to me, is monumental for those kids. Talk about a self-esteem booster, to be able to go in with all your friends and buy something. That's wonderful. This past March, I took my children to ———, which I would never have been able to do. To ——— Planetarium. That tied in with our science, Disney helped with that. We chartered a bus, because ——— was about four hours good driving. So we knew if we had to take an activity bus, it was going to be impossible. Because [8-] year olds [———] after the bathroom a lot. And I knew if we took activity bus—this trip was already a 12-hour trip. Activity bus, we would have been talking 15, 16 hours, and we just couldn't have done it. So Disney helped us with the charter, the bus charter, and the planetarium, getting in the planetarium. We cut the cost of what we had to charge the kids more than half. It was an incredible field trip.

Q: How was the turnout, were all your students able to go?

R: We had one who could not go. We had planned this since January, and he had some kind of oral surgery, and that was the day they had planned to do it. But yes, everybody went except for this kid. We brought things back for him. We felt so bad. The day of the trip, I do have to tell you, the day before the trip [one kid] got strep throat and did not get to go. She was contagious. Her mom called me the afternoon before, and she said, "She is crying, but she had started on her antibiotic at 3 this afternoon, and the doctor said she would be contagious until 3 tomorrow afternoon." But we brought her things, too. But we got some extra bonus points out of this trip. We went to the ——— Planetarium, and saw the program designed for third grade. Which was excellent. That was a great lead-in activity for study on the solar system and the stars. But while we're there, we went over to the University of ——— campus. Now I'm a big ——— fan, all our kids know that. So I used it as an opportunity—and they thought we were all going because I love to go to the ——— campus, which is true. But we went to the ——— Center, which is where the team plays basketball. But they got to tour the campus, and we got back on that bus, and my children were saying, "I cannot wait to go to college." To have an 8-year-old say, "I'm going to college, I'm going to college, this is the greatest place," that, to me

—my husband went with us, and my husband looked at me, and he said, "If you did nothing else on this trip, if you get some of these kids interested in college, then that's what you want to do." It was wonderful.

Q: Great note to end on, and that kind of addresses the partnership question, about using outside partners like museums, universities to help you do this.

(END OF SESSION)   *Transcribed by Lightning Bugg*