

**CREATE**

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# CREATE newsletter

CONSORTIUM FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TEACHER EVALUATION

## NCLB, SBR, EBE and Us

*Doris Redfield  
Appalachian Educational  
Laboratory (AEL)*

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires that researchers making claims about effectiveness attend to two aspects of scientifically based research (SBR):

1. Interventions must be based upon findings from the best available scientific research, and
2. Evidence of the effectiveness of educational interventions must be demonstrated by using scientific research methods.

NCLB defines SBR as research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs. Rigor is described as favoring random-assignment experiments that involve complete and accurate data analyses. Systematic, empirical methods also are favored, and results should be submitted to review by independent experts. Further, SBR relies on measurements that provide reliable and valid data and that offers documentation sufficient for replication. Finally, NCLB requires that SBR in education (that is supported with federal funds) pose questions that are based on identified needs and that produce results of practical importance to educators. These characteristics align well with the hallmarks of SBR outlined by the National Research Council's report, *Scientific Research in*

*Education* (2002), which says that SBR:

- poses significant questions.
- links to relevant theory.
- uses tools valid for addressing the research questions.
- produces replicable findings.
- survives the scrutiny of colleagues and publics.

Evidence-Based Education (EBE) is the integration of professional wisdom with the best available empirical evidence in making decisions about how to deliver instruction. Professional wisdom is the judgment that individuals acquire through experience. Empirical evidence consists of findings from SBR. The U.S. Department of Education emphasizes EBE as well as the role of SBR in EBE.

Product developers tend to be product oriented. They are gaining intelligence on SBR, and they are at varying stages in their experience with SBR—ranging from the awareness stage to the stage of engaging in productive effectiveness research. They are asking hard questions about the ethics of conducting research in schools, access to students, sampling, and the iden-

tification and/or development of valid measurement instruments. Key challenges for developers include time, money, access to information/expertise, and defining their interventions.

Educators tend to be more problem-solution-oriented than developers (who tend to have a product focus). They are gaining intelligence on NCLB, and they are feeling pressured to identify products/interventions that are grounded in SBR and supported by effectiveness data. Key challenges for educators are time, money, and access to trustworthy information.

What does all of this mean for evaluators? It means that we need to be smart about our clients' needs, we need to be smart about NCLB, and we need to emphasize the role of expert review in and to our work. We can help clients (developers and educators) by providing them with suggestions for how to demonstrate short-term gains within a long-range plan. And, we will need to assume roles of consultants and professional developers relative to the issues that our clients are facing in meeting the SBR requirements of NCLB.

## Seeking Sponsors for Colorado Springs and Beyond

Putting on a conference such as the National Evaluation Institute is a monumental task, both in terms of effort and resources. CREATE seeks to ensure that participants and presenters at the NEI have the optimal experience in terms of the quality of presentations, keynote speakers, accommodations, services, equipment, meeting rooms, and occasions for networking and relaxation. Sponsors are key players in providing these opportunities.

If you or your organization would like to participate as a sponsor for the 2004 National Evaluation Institute, please contact Anne Kraetzer, Program Chair, at [AVKraetzer@aol.com](mailto:AVKraetzer@aol.com) at your earliest convenience. If you are interested in sponsoring a future NEI, contact Robert Rodosky at [rrodosk1@jefferson.k12.ky.us](mailto:rrodosk1@jefferson.k12.ky.us). Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

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*CREATE is an international group committed to improving the evaluation of educators and educational programs.*



Dr. Robert Rodosky  
CREATE President

## Message from the President

I find myself in a position of good fortune. I work for a large urban/suburban school district in the area of evaluation and research at a time during which, due to the No Child Left Behind Act, the focus on valid, reliable, and timely data in regard to meeting standards has never been greater. Also, I'm fortunate because I have many resources available to me to meet the expectations of my job, including belonging to the Consortium for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation (CREATE).

It's been 13 years since this organization was founded. In looking at our history, our roots are in the quality standard-setting work performed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. This work focused on Program Evaluation Standards (how to assess evaluations of educational programs); Personnel Evaluation Standards (how to assess systems for evaluating educational personnel); and Student Evaluation Standards (how to improve evaluations of students).

I find myself constantly being guided by this body of work. I also find myself asking fellow CREATE members for input on issues of school and teacher quality. The advice I receive is usually very helpful. This is because the background

and experience of our members is diverse. Our individual members work in a variety of roles within education, including the following: teacher and administrator preparation and hiring; staff development; district and statewide testing and accountability; closing achievement gaps; research-based program development and effectiveness; and policy development at the district, state, and national levels. The other strength of our membership is the variety of settings they represent, including universities, public school districts, non-profit organizations and foundations; private schools; for-profit companies, independent consultants, and state and federal agency and government groups. And asking for help is easy! Unlike larger evaluation organizations, our size allows us to be more of an evaluation community with a common purpose.

I want to strongly urge you to renew your membership (if you haven't already done so). I also urge you to recruit a colleague to CREATE. Membership benefits include newsletters, a subscription to the *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education* (JPEE), and

a discounted rate to attend our annual meeting (the National Evaluation Institute). Our next institute will be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on July 8-10, 2004. Past institutes have provided me opportunities to share my work and at the same time learn new ideas and approaches to evaluating data and standards while making new friends and contacts to make me a better professional.

We are definitely in an era of high-stakes accountability. Because of this emphasis, we need to remember that we have standards by which to conduct our work. We also need to know that we are not alone. CREATE provides an opportunity to interact within a network of professionals and to view educational evaluation from a variety of perspectives. In the coming year, we will continue to present opportunities to share our ideas and our work. Together we can meet the ambitious goals that have been set for all of us.

Dr. Robert Rodosky  
President, CREATE

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# Colorado Springs

Ideal Conference—  
and Vacation!—Location

When it comes to magnificent scenery and natural beauty, Colorado Springs, Colorado, has it all. It's the home of America's fabulous mountain, Pikes Peak, one of Colorado's highest mountains at 14,110 feet. This "purple mountain majesty" inspired Katharine Lee Bates to write *America the Beautiful* a century ago, and it still excites the six million travelers who visit Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak region each year.

The Pikes Peak region is home to many must-see attractions, such as the amazing Garden of the Gods Park with its massive red sandstone formations and sophisticated Garden of the Gods Visitor Center, a unique natural history museum. You don't want to miss the Cave of the Winds, Seven Falls, or the Manitou Cliff Dwellings. The Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, at an altitude of 6,800 feet, houses not only familiar zoo animals such as elephants, lions, and bears, but is also home to more than 30 representatives of endangered species, including Siberian tigers, Mexican wolves, and black-footed ferrets. The Royal Gorge is home to the world's highest suspension bridge. If that isn't enough, come to the ProRodeo Hall of Fame and Museum of the American Cowboy, the World Arena, and the Olympic Training Complex. Venture off to the Flying W Ranch for an authentic chuckwagon supper and original Western music show performed by the nationally-famous Flying W Wranglers.

Now in its fourth year, the Pikes Peak International Raceway, located in Fountain, is just minutes south of Colorado Springs. Some of the world's top drivers and fastest cars will be regular participants in competitions at this exceptional venue. The races are scheduled from June

## Site Chosen for 2004 National Evaluation Institute

July 8-10, 2004

The 2004 National Evaluation Institute (NEI) will be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. CREATE's Program Committee, consisting of Anne Kreitzer, Robert Rodosky, Carol Geiger, Chuck Geiger, and Barbara Howard, met in Louisville, Kentucky following the 2003 NEI and via telephone conference to finalize the site. An



initial contract has been negotiated with the Antlers Adam's Mark Hotel in Colorado Springs to house the conference and conference goers. The room rate is to be \$119 per night.

The Antlers Adam's Mark is a city landmark, built in 1969 and renovated in 2002. With a backdrop of the spectacular Rock Mountains in the heart of downtown, it offers stunning views of the city and Pikes Peak. Guests are within a short walking distance of museums, shopping, galleries, and the city's major business corridor, and only 25 minutes from the airport.

Colorado Springs is such a beautiful location that you may want to extend your trip and bring the family. The scenery is breathtaking,

and there are attractions for every taste and age group. Please see the description of some of these in the associated article, "Colorado Springs: Ideal Conference—  
and Vacation!—Location."

Make plans now to join us next summer in this exciting city at the 2004 NEI.

through September. The Pikes Peak region boasts more than 50 attractions, so there is sure to be something for everyone!

The landscape serves as a stage for many outdoor recreational opportunities, including river rafting, hiking, golf, horseback riding, mountain biking, fishing, and even hot-air ballooning. The sun shines 300 days of the year, and the climate is mild and dry, so one can enjoy these activities year-round. Summer daytime temperatures hover in the 80's in the daytime and in the 60's at night.

The Colorado Springs Airport, a state-of-the-art facility, serves eight airlines with approximately 120 flights daily, offering nonstop service to 17 U.S. cities and easy connections to almost any city in the world. The Colorado Springs region has a population of more than 500,000.

### Would You Like the NEI to Come to Your Town?

If you've ever thought about hosting a national conference, now's your chance. At a time when educational accountability is front and center in everyone's mind, the National Evaluation Institute (NEI) offers a colloquium for exploring the ends, means, and outcomes of program, personnel, and student assessment. It has never been more important to examine the content and intent of national, state, and local initiatives for accountability and how they affect students.

Bring the NEI to your constituency. CREATE is looking for host institutions for the 2005 and 2006 conferences. If you think you might be interested, contact Robert Rodosky, CREATE President, at rrodosk1@jefferson.k12.ky.us for more information.

## Simple Questions and Straightforward Data to Enhance Student Success

John Fischetti and Marilyn Hohmann

In secondary school reform, we have often made the key research in the field inaccessible and appear to be too complicated so that it remains detached from the day-to-day reality of students, parents, and teachers. This NEI 2003 presentation described a simple way for students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members to ask reform-based questions and to begin to think about ways to use straightforward data to assist in creating the preconditions for success in school.

### What the Research on Reform Says

The literature cites at least 25 major whole-school reform models (American Association of School Administrators, 2003, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 2003). These models have different emphases, but all state their primary goal around the issue of raising student achievement. The research on school reform indicates the following as essential for school success: a safe, orderly, positive culture and environment; a curriculum aligned to meet a clear vision and state standards; high expectations of student performance, regularly assessed; strong principal instructional leadership; active parent involvement; personalized approaches to schooling (thinking smaller even in large schools); consistent discipline approaches and well-accepted classroom management strategies; outstanding teacher quality; and successful school/business/university partner-

ships (Lezotte, 1992; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2003, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 2003).

### The Framework

From the literature on reform and the research on effective schools, there is a missing component—establishing baseline prerequisites for a school and its community in order to fathom the whole-school approach. In order to be successful, schools must focus on the day-to-day realities that influence the larger context in which reform theory takes place. A student with a toothache and no dental care can influence his own and his school's academic achievement in profound ways. A parent who exposes his child to violence can create a student prone to academic and disciplinary problems. A school with a large group of students who participate in no school-related activities can suffer from a lack of positive spirit. And so on.

Our goal as educators is to design or to enable the design of curriculum so that students engage in meaningful work that leads them to learn what is intended so that they are successful academically, personally, socially, and vocationally and so that they choose to be active citizens in a diverse democracy (Schlechty, 2001). To succeed, our belief is that we should use the knowledge of research and the experience

of practice to guide a framework of straightforward, serious questions that stem from a focus on "students first." Too often researchers and reformers have "jumped" ahead to strategies (i.e., new tests, year-round schools, curriculum approaches) that are well intended, but that may have bypassed the needed discourse concerning the prerequisites to real reform. (Eisner, 2003). Any one of these questions is a possible STOP sign on the road to success for all. With the achievement pressure of the No Child Left Behind Act, many high schools labeled "successful" in the past will now be "unsuccessful" because they will not be meeting the goals for all subpopulations in their community. The pressure from policymakers and non-educators will be to come up with "one-size-fits-all" solutions and quick fixes rather than to approach the issues one student at a time.

### Conclusion

A student who attends school regularly, exhibits a positive attitude, is healthy, submits his or her classwork, completes his or her homework, has someone at school and at home who knows and cares about him or her, is involved in school-related activities, and has teachers who design engaging work performs well academically. This seems so simple, yet we believe that

this straightforward set of issues has been lost in the massive tomes of literature on reform. To help schools use simple data on these issues would be a step in the right direction for all of us interested in obtaining real results, really soon.

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### Contributors

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