

History of the Evaluation Design

In March 2001, the Rochester Diversity Council commissioned Data Matters to develop an evaluation design and implementation plan for the Prejudice Reduction Workshop program (PRW) offered to students in the Rochester area school districts, grades Kindergarten through Twelve. Emphasis is on “outcome evaluation”—measurement of the program’s impact on student knowledge, skills and behavior.

During April through September 2001, Data Matters worked in partnership with Diversity Council staff, Education Committee members and School District staff to accomplish the following:

1. Review and summarize current research theory and practices for reducing prejudice. Analyze strengths and weaknesses of PRW current curriculum as it relates to best practice.
2. Convene stakeholders from multiple perspectives to gather information on the PRW program and its purpose.
3. Use the information obtained in steps one and two to develop a “program logic model” that is the foundation for the PRW evaluation design.
4. Focus on developing measures of initial outcomes described in the logic model that are directly linked to the curriculum and monitor conditions related to the intermediate outcomes that center on improving inter group relations.
5. Identify key data indicators for selected outcomes. Rely on student data already collected within the district and use teacher and facilitator evaluations to determine if outcomes are being met.
6. Create a data collection system and process to track key data indicators for the PRW program. Use these data for program improvement and to demonstrate impact (ongoing).

Summary of Literature Review and Program Logic Model¹

Dynamics for Success:

- All students are involved.
- Strategies are in-depth, long-term and infused into the overall curriculum.
- Students are introduced to multicultural activities at a young age.
- Teachers have the attitudes, training, materials and support needed to deliver the activities and lessons.

¹ Taken in part from the Anti-Defamation League Research Summary Paper; many findings were excerpted from the *Fostering Intercultural Harmony in Schools: Research Findings Report*, Northwest Regional Educational Educational Laboratory, Portland Oregon, 1993

Strategies for Success:

- *Empathy Development:* Practices aimed at developing understanding, and positive regard, including use of media that demonstrates the unfairness of prejudice and the harm it causes and which focuses on cultural similarities and differences. Role-plays which require students to take the perspective of those different from themselves are helpful.
- *Teaching Critical Thinking Skills:* Activities assist students to identify and challenge faulty thinking or common fallacies often associated with prejudice and stereotyping.
- *Building Self-Esteem:* Research supports the link between developing a positive self-regard and having a positive regard for those culturally different from oneself. Individuals who feel good about themselves are less likely to be biased towards others.

Current Measures

Teacher Post-Session Evaluation Form

A post session form is distributed to teachers at the end of every PRW session. The first section in the survey concentrates on “process” and the teacher is asked to rate the quality of:

- Communication from the Diversity Council about the PRW program
- Facilitator skill
- General session components (length, activities, ability to improve inter group relations)

The next section is tailored specifically to the grade level curriculum objectives and teachers are asked to rate how well each session component (video, activity, discussion) meets the specific grade objective (which are tied to the initial outcomes in the PRW logic model). Data is collected and entered into the Diversity Council PRW database by Diversity Council staff and analyzed by Data Matters.

School District Student Satisfaction Surveys

The School District administers student satisfaction surveys annually in grades three through twelve. This tool was reviewed during the evaluation design phase and the team selected current questions and added new questions that directly related to outcomes of improving inter-group relations by improving a student’s ability to:

1. Establish relationships with those perceived as different
2. Respond appropriately to disrespectful behavior
3. Confront bias issues
4. Feel connected with school
5. Feel safe in school

Data is scanned and compiled by the Rochester School District.

Student Assessment Design by Sample

The School District asks students to participate in a writing exercise on subjects covered in the PRW. Students complete multiple choice or true/false questions that demonstrate information gained in the workshops. Each child is asked to write a paragraph in response to a hypothetical scenario or question from the PRW lesson. Writing components are scored independently on a 3-point scale by a school assessment projection and a Diversity Council facilitator or staff person. Data is scanned and compiled by the Rochester School District.

Evaluation Results

Diversity Council's Prejudice Reduction Workshops (PRWs) continue to offer high-impact, developmentally appropriate, participatory workshops that are effectively delivered by diverse community facilitators. 2006-2007 outcome data indicates that:

- 1) **The curriculum is meeting objectives linked to reduction of prejudice.** In general, teachers report that there is a good match between curriculum objectives and workshop components, but continuous quality improvement is the goal. During the five years of evaluation data has been used to pinpoint areas for improvement and to measure whether changes have resulted in increased teacher satisfaction. The 2006-07 teacher feedback data indicates work to be done at the third grade, seventh grade and high school levels.
- 2) **Across the board, curriculum uses participatory activities.** Significant improvement in this area has been made, especially in the elementary and middle school grades (94% of elementary teachers and 86% of middle school teachers report a high level of participation in 2006-07 versus 78% elementary and 67% middle school teachers in 2001-02). High school teacher satisfaction remains high at 90%.
- 3) **Facilitators effectively deliver curriculum.** Data indicates 97% of teachers rank facilitators high on ability to engage students, build rapport, and answer student questions and challenges.

Student Satisfaction Survey data points to an on-going need to support middle school students and to address teasing and bullying as forms of exclusion. Data indicates that older students could benefit from specific skills programming to combat in a positive way, hurtful behavior such as bullying and discrimination. 2003-2004 data shows that less than half (35%) of middle and high school students say that they "often or very often" take active steps to help a person who is being bullied or teased meanly.

Next Steps for PRW Evaluation

In 2007-08 the Diversity Council has contracted with Data Matters to work on an update of the PRW evaluation design and processes. Specifically, Data Matters will:

- Update the existing literature review on prejudice reduction theory and best practices to incorporate work on early childhood and that concentrates on resources published 2000 or later.

- Facilitate a series of stakeholder focus groups to discuss what we can be doing better and what we should do to supplement and grow existing prejudice reduction strategies within the school community.
- Discuss with the Diversity Council (and other stakeholders) how we can develop a richer blend of information sources to use for evaluation. What behavioral indicators we most want/need to measure? How can we improve our current evaluation and measurement processes?