



**Product Satisfaction Surveys:
Determining LSS Client Satisfaction Levels**

by
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The purpose of the Product Satisfaction Survey of the Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) is to determine user satisfaction of LSS products and publications and to utilize this information to: (a) understand the quality and significance of LSS publications; (b) obtain other evaluative information relative to specific products and publications; and (c) provide guidance for the future directions of the Laboratory's work. These surveys are an integral part of the evaluation plan of the LSS Quality Assurance and Evaluation Unit, and focus on four criteria:

- *Management*: Did LSS implement and utilize a quality assurance system for its products and services? Did LSS conduct self-assessment and self-evaluation activities and use the results to improve performance?
- *Quality*: Were LSS products well-tested and based on sound research? Do clients perceive the work of the Laboratory as being of high quality?
- *Utility*: Did LSS customers perceive the products and services of the Laboratory as being useful?
- *Outcomes and Impact*: To what extent does the work of LSS contribute to the knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies and practices?

This *Spotlight* provides a summary of the findings from two Product Satisfaction Surveys. The first survey focused on the LSS publication series entitled *Partnerships*. The second focused on an

article entitled "Synthesis of Research: What Helps Students Learn?" which was published in *Educational Leadership*, the official publication of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

SURVEY DESIGN

Both surveys consisted of closed-ended questions with a 5-point Likert scale (where 1 = lowest and 5 = highest) and open-ended questions. The Likert scale items addressed issues related to utility and quality; the open-ended questions focused on dissemination activities, feedback on the specific products, and future directions for LSS publications. More specifically, the open-ended questions dealt with the aspects of the publications the respondents found most useful, how the information was utilized in the school, the number of copies of the publication shared with others, suggestions for improving the products, and suggestions for future LSS publications.

For the *Partnerships* study, 116 surveys were mailed to a stratified random sample of LSS clients and the response rate was approximately 31%. For the second study, 245 surveys were mailed to a stratified random sample of clients and the response rate was approximately 21%. Surveys for both studies were returned by a representative group of clients that included principals, administrators, teachers, staff development coordinators, and other school district officials.

**SURVEY OF PARTNERSHIPS
SERIES**

Respondents answered the question on what was most useful in the *Partnerships* guides by noting that the guides were informative, practical, clearly written, and easy to understand. Respondents stated that the *Partnerships* guides were used to improve family/school partnerships by sharing the information with parents and colleagues. Respondents tended to rate highly the usefulness, quality, and benefit of the *Partnerships* guides. The overall usefulness of information was rated at 4.57, the overall quality was rated at 4.55, and the potential for enhancing practice was rated at 4.26 on a 5-point Likert scale (see Figure 1).

In general, the results suggest that the *Partnerships* publications promote positive communication between parents and teachers, report card sharing, and building healthy homework habits, and were viewed as useful for both practitioners and parents.

A total of 61% of the respondents shared the *Partnerships* series with over 3,600 colleagues and parents. However, it should be noted that 75% of the sharing of information was done by two respondents (one superintendent and one staff development director shared the publications with 2,700 parents); the remaining respondents shared the publications with 77 others on average. These figures suggest that the dissemination of the *Partnerships* series was widespread.

Respondents to the *Partnerships* series study felt the format was excellent and that the content was very helpful. Suggestions offered for improvement were related to distribution, and respondents suggested that two copies should be sent to each school—one for the principal and one for the parents.

SURVEY OF LSS RESEARCH SYNTHESIS

Respondents answered the question regarding what was most useful about the “What Helps Students Learn?” publication by noting its practicality and relevancy, the usefulness of the synthesis of research, and the clarity of writing.

The respondents tended to rate highly the usefulness, quality, and potential to put ideas into practice of the article. The overall usefulness of information was rated at 4.45, the overall quality was rated at 4.38, and the potential for enhancing practice was rated at 4.13 (see Figure 2). The article was perceived as useful for practitioners to learn/confirm the effective strategies for school reform and successful student achievement. In terms of more widespread dissemination, 71% of the respondents shared the article with over 1,000 people; on average, each respondent shared the article with approximately 39 other colleagues.

Respondents to the research synthesis study offered several specific suggestions for improvement. These included making a stronger link to practice—e.g., What can I do differently Monday morning? It was also suggested that more explanation about the research methods and data analysis procedures would be helpful. Other respondents asked for more concrete examples and references to direct strategies that could be replicated in the classroom as well as examples from various grade levels and subject areas.

IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE NEEDS BY RESPONDENTS

The surveys contribute to the LSS needs assessment function by providing information from our clients relative to future directions for our work. In response

to queries about topics they would like to see in future LSS publications, the survey respondents identified the following topics:

- *Classroom Management*: Effective classroom management techniques, including how to teach metacognition, using cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, inclusive strategies, and raising expectations.
- *Curriculum and Instructional Strategies*: Implementation of integrating curriculum with small learning communities, curriculum alignment, developmentally appropriate practices, and brain-based theory and learning.
- *Special Education*: Collaboration between general education and special education, in-class support, effective parenting strategies, dealing with difficult children, helping children with ADHD, and developing an appreciation for the arts and music.
- *Parent Education*: Parents sharing the responsibility of children’s schooling, alternative approaches to disciplining, health agency connections with the school community, and alternative approaches to retention.

- *Educational Issues*: The impact of national testing on school reform, educational standards for school construction, and critical reviews of comprehensive school reform strategies.

CONCLUSION

Results from the product satisfaction surveys for the LSS *Partnerships* series and the article on “What Helps Students Learn?” suggest that the work of LSS is perceived as being of high quality, is useful for practitioners and parents, and is likely to benefit educators by translating research into practice. These findings support the notion that the dissemination of these publications is widespread, and that many educators and parents beyond the initial recipients of the publications have been provided with copies of the materials. They also provide suggestions for making product improvements relative to the specific publications, and provide input on client satisfaction and needs.

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To order these LSS publications, contact the LSS Information Services Coordinator at (800) 892-5550 or visit the LSS Website at <www.temple.edu/LSS>.

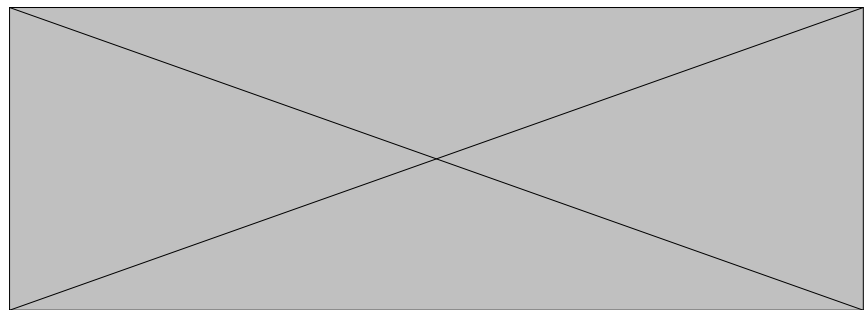


Figure 1: Participant Responses to Survey of LSS *Partnerships* Series

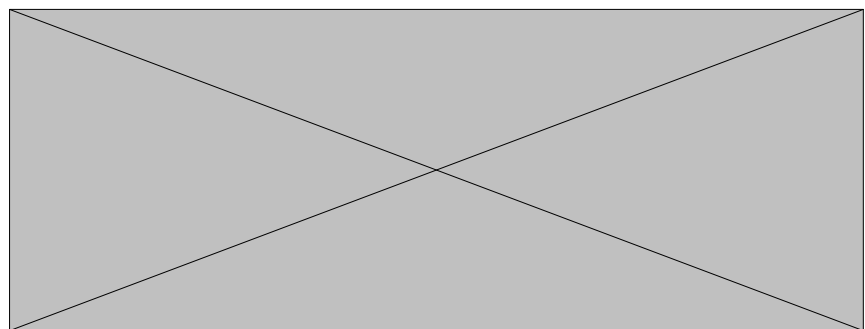


Figure 2: Participant Responses to Survey of LSS Research Synthesis