CHAPTER 4:

BALANCING SUMMATIVE AND FORMATIVE EVALUATION:
NEW PARTNERSHIPS, NEW EVALUATION MODELS

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Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge

EVALUATION CAN take many forms and be under-girded by a variety of philosophies. Stufflebeam (2001) identifies many forms of evaluation, each with its own purpose and set of underlying values: assessments based on the strict discrepancy model (assessing achievements against a set of predefined goals and objectives), goal-free assessments of the phenomena's consequences (looking at the value of what has emerged rather than concordance between goals and outcomes), empowerment evaluations (aimed at energizing a group or segment of the population), advocacy efforts designed to convince audiences of a point of view. Each form looks at evaluation in a slightly different way, with the evaluator assuming a somewhat different role and posture.

Until recently the form considered to be "mainstream" was the discrepancy model, with the evaluator taking the role of an external, objective scientist. Under this model, the evaluator was typically positioned outside of the project, deliberately maintaining a distance from the project as it evolved. Information from the evaluation was shared sparingly – frequently after a project was completed – to prevent what was considered a confounding of an "evaluation effect" with the "program effect."

Increasingly, however, rigid adherence to this model is lessening. And, while the evaluator is still required to be objective and unbiased, evaluators are assuming a more moderate, some would say "less adversarial," posture. The notion of "critical friend" has spread from the technical assistance world to the world of evaluation, creating a function and a challenge for the evaluator that is in many ways more complex than the role of the scientist.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a description of a particular evaluation in the area of arts education reform, charting its evolution from the traditional, mainstream "evaluator as outsider" model to what we believe is an increasingly valuable form of the craft.

In 1996 the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Annenberg Foundation launched a joint effort to explore the impact of joining arts education reform with overall school reform. The effort brought together two powerful forces in educational change: one aimed at promoting the arts in schools, the other at changing the culture and improving the effectiveness of public education. Together they sought to explore whether and in what ways arts education reform and other reform efforts could change how schools are structured, how stakeholders within and outside of the schools interact, the nature of teaching and learning, and the skills and knowledge that students take away from their educational experiences. This jointly supported, five-year effort came to be called the Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge, or TETAC.

A Framework for Arts Education

America's discontent with its schools began more than four decades ago, following the Soviet Union's launch of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik, in 1957. Two years later, the National Science Foundation gathered thirty-five scientists, scholars, and educators at Woods Hole for a ten-day discussion on how to improve science education in America's schools. The conference generated a model of curriculum

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reform grounded in the idea that the key educational task of schools was to give students an understanding of the fundamental structure of a *discipline,* defined as any subject with an organized body of knowledge, specific methods of inquiry, and a community of scholars who generally agreed on the fundamental ideas of this field (Bruner 1960, p. 1).

This model captured the interest of scholars in other fields, such as Manuel Barkan of the Ohio State University, who in the mid-1960s explored how the discipline approach to curriculum reform might be applied to visual arts education. He considered whether art was a discipline in its own right: Did it have a structure similar to that found in the physical sciences? And if it did, how would students engage in a disciplined inquiry in art? Barkan proposed that the structure of art did exist in three domains: art history, art criticism, and art production. He believed that the domains should be treated as equivalent candidates for curriculum attention in arts education, a radical departure from the studio, that is, art production, approach that existed at that time (see Wygant 1993, p. 156).

The movement that grew up around Barkan's approach to discipline-centered art education gained little ground through the late 1960s and had stalled by the mid-1970s, following Barkan's untimely death.

In the early 1980s, the J. Paul Getty Trust decided to establish a center for education in the arts. The Getty Center looked to the work of Barkan as a base for its approach to arts education. To Barkan's three domains, the Getty Center added a fourth, aesthetics, and called these domains the "four disciplines of art education" (Dobbs 1992). This modified approach was formally named Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE). Proponents of DBAE felt that it provided a rigorous and thorough understanding of an art form.

Initially the Getty Center's efforts focused on visual arts education; but as the effort advanced through the 1980s and 1990s, other arts forms eventually joined the DBAE approach. The Getty Center's goal was to appeal not only to those students traditionally identified as gifted but to a wide range of thinkers and learners. Due to the Getty's efforts, DBAE had a major impact on arts education in the 1980s and 1990s. It became the base from which the TETAC project grew.

**The TETAC Approach
to Arts Education Reform**

As implemented by the TETAC project, DBAE evolved into an approach now frequently called Comprehensive Arts Education (CAE), which retains the focus on the four disciplines promoted by the Getty Center but attempts to link them with current trends in general curriculum reform in several ways.

First, CAE is seen as a way of supporting integrated instruction; that is, instruction that not only includes the four disciplines of DBAE but integrates teaching and learning across subject areas. To achieve this integration, a theme or enduring idea emerging from the arts or life is used as the core around which to focus, integrate, and deliver instruction, not only in the arts, but also in the other core subject areas.

Second, and closely related, arts instruction is viewed as something that is not limited to the arts specialist but can and should be done by all teachers. Under this model, an arts specialist, where one exists, may play the role of a coach or mentor to the regular classroom teacher and may provide students with certain specialized instruction, but the specialist is not solely responsible for arts instruction and arts literacy.

Third, a major facet of CAE is the use of inquiry-based instructional techniques. Like reform efforts in other subject matters, CAE calls for instruction that encourages students to solve problems, take risks, seek alternative solutions, relate learning to real-life experiences, and utilize collaborative as well as individual learning strategies.

Finally, CAE supports new ways of conducting the art and craft of teaching. Collaboration and reflection among teachers are emphasized. Teachers, like their students, are encouraged to try new things, to work and plan together, and to develop both within-grade and cross-grade approaches to instruction that draw on the mutual strengths and knowledge of the members of the educational team.

Comprehensive Arts Education is seen as a way of supporting integrated instruction; that is, instruction that not only includes the four disciplines of DBAE but integrates teaching and learning across subject areas.

TETAC was intended to address two agendas: one educational, one political. At the heart of the TETAC project was the educational agenda, designed to show not only that CAE provides a rich and valuable approach to arts instruction, but that it could be the catalyst for improving instruction in all subjects. From the political point of view, TETAC intended to show that the arts belong in the core curriculum of learning in public education, deserving parity with subjects like math and science, rather than being marginalized as an optional part of the education spectrum.

The TETAC Project Management Structure

The management structure for the TETAC project was not typical of reform efforts. To understand the evolution of the project and the role played by evaluation, it is important to understand how the project was managed and how the management structure functioned.

The TETAC project was led by a consortium of six independent regional organizations, each of which oversaw the work of a cluster of six schools in its geographic region. The six organizations were far from uniform. They differed widely in the background and experience of their directors and in the support structures on which they could call. For example, in Ohio the organization was based at the Ohio State University's Department of Art Education and was managed by its chairperson and one staff member, both university-based personnel. In California, the

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regional organization was directed by a former teacher and an art historian/museum educator and was based at a county office for education.

Decision making and oversight for the project at the national level was carried out by an eight-member national steering committee, composed of one director from each of the six regional organizations and a teacher and a principal representing the project schools. The National Steering Committee chairmanship rotated, with two directors sharing the chair over a staggered, two-year time period. An executive director (also an arts education expert) provided administrative support and other guidance to the project stakeholders and National Steering Committee members. The steering committee operated by consensus and each member had an equal vote.

Finally, the National Steering Committee appointed several national task forces to support implementation. Each task force had a separate charge and a system of mentors, appointed and monitored by each member organization. The mentors were a critical component of TETAC's approach to professional development. They provided direct support to the schools, serving in the roles of technical assistant and critical friend/coach. Who the mentors were, their backgrounds and qualifications, as well as the specific roles they played, varied from region to region.

The national task forces drew on the expertise of mentors from across the project to address cross-cutting issues related to the curriculum and professional development components of the project. This structure allowed for both integrated program oversight and region-specific service delivery; that is, while sharing national goals and operating procedures, there was room for considerable local tailoring of the project's implementation.

The TETAC Schools

The TETAC project began in 1998 with thirty-six schools affiliated with the six member organizations. One school was later forced to withdraw when its district closed the school down, leaving thirty-five: twenty-eight elementary schools, three middle or elementary-middle schools, and four high schools. The schools varied in size, in socio-economic status, and in achievement level.

Some of the schools had previously focused on the arts, while others had no special content emphasis. At some schools, a portion of the teaching staff had been trained in Discipline-Based Art Education under the old Getty grant program (although the trained staff members may have left before the school joined the TETAC project); at other schools, the staff were new to arts instruction. Some schools were involved in multiple reform efforts or special projects, while, for others, TETAC was the only special effort. There were inner-city schools, with all the problems characteristic of urban environments, and suburban schools that were beginning to face new fiscal challenges.

The TETAC National Funders

While many local funders became project partners in their regions, at the national level TETAC joined the investments and goals of two powerful educational funders, the Annenberg Foundation and the J. Paul Getty Trust. At a macro level the funders' interests converged in a desire to improve education; at a micro level, however, many differences, sometimes conflicting, could be found. For example, the Getty Trust placed its highest priority on assessing the impact of CAE on the teaching and learning of the arts, and considered impacts on other areas to be secondary. The Annenberg Foundation was less interested in the arts by themselves and more concerned

about overall changes in schools, school cultures, and connections between schools and their surrounding communities. The Annenberg Foundation was also interested in the potential link between the arts and whole-school reform.

The Getty was interested in an outcome assessment of what a high-quality arts program could accomplish. Getty grants officers believed that they had a mature program, ready to be assessed in a summative evaluation after their many years of work promoting CAE. Annenberg was interested in outcomes, but also in evaluators' engaging in capacity building with the sites, especially helping participants improve their own evaluation skills. Initially, for the Annenberg Foundation the process of change was as important as the impacts of the program on students.

Each of the funders' interests changed quite dramatically over time. In the second year of TETAC's national evaluation, a new management structure was introduced at the Getty Trust, and its interest in TETAC waned. As more pressure was exerted nationally on the Annenberg Foundation to prove the worth of its investments in public education, pressure increased on their funded projects to show results, especially in traditional student achievement.

The TETAC National Evaluation

Although the evaluation was to be jointly funded and monitored by the Getty and the TETAC National Steering Committee through its Annenberg Challenge funds, the request for proposals for the evaluation was developed by the Getty Trust and emphasized all the values and objectives of the Getty's original work in Discipline-Based Arts Education. First and foremost, the evaluation was structured to be an outcome assessment, although interest was shown in assessing other areas, such as the role played by professional development in school change and the strengthening of the schools' staffs in conducting their own evaluation of their work.

Diverging from its previous investments in evaluation, the Getty Trust made a deliberate choice to seek evaluators from outside the arts world who were familiar with school reform and student assessment. Acknowledging that lack of arts expertise could be a problem, the Getty identified expert con-

sultants to support the evaluation team in this area. After a series of competitions (there were several false starts before the Getty figured out what it wanted in an evaluation design and an evaluator), the evaluation contract was awarded in the second year of the project to Westat, a social science research firm in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. The Westat evaluators were expected to be objective and unbiased, looking at whether or not the project had attained its stated goals and objectives. While oversight for the evaluation was to be carried out by both the Getty Trust and the TETAC National Steering Committee, the Getty Trust was the dominant partner from the outset.

The four-year TETAC national evaluation effort, implemented in project years two to five, was designed to address the following areas and questions:

Student learning: What impact did TETAC have on student learning in the arts and in non-arts areas?

School climate and culture: How did TETAC affect the school as a place of learning? To what extent was arts education recognized as a critical part of the instructional program? Was there an integration of instruction across subject areas? Was there an environment of inquiry and active engagement?

Implementing the CAE approach: What progress did the thirty-five schools make in implementing the CAE approach? What factors facilitated or hindered the success of this approach in the project schools?

Collaborations: What kinds of collaborations were established? How did these affect the view of arts education? The instructional climate? The instructional program?

Professional development: What types of professional development were delivered to prepare teachers and others in the CAE approach? Who received the support? What areas or skills were covered? What was the impact of such professional development on classroom instruction?

General school reform: What other school reform initiatives were simultaneously under way in the TETAC schools during the project years? What was the interaction between CAE and the other school reform initiatives? What impact did existing school reform initiatives have on the implementation of arts education reform efforts (and vice versa)? To what extent did CAE serve as an agent for broader school reform?

The evaluation used a mixed-method approach, employing both broad-based and targeted data collection. A special feature of the design was an elementary grades arts assessment, developed by the evaluation team members and their arts consultant, which provided a more through examination of achievement in the arts. The design for the four-year evaluation study is shown in Table 1.

Data-Collection Activity	Project Year 2 April 1, 1998 to June 30, 1998	Project Year 3 July 1, 1998 to June 30, 1999	Project Year 4 July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000	Project Year 5 July 1, 2000 to July 2001
Documents and materials	X	X	X	X
Curriculum units		X	X	X
Teacher survey	X			X
Mentor survey		X		
Student survey	X			X
Site visits	X		X	
Case studies		X		X
Arts assessments		X	X	X
Individual student-achievement data from non-arts assessments		X	X	X

Table 1. Schedule of data-collection activities

Within six months after the evaluation began, the evaluation and the relationships between the evaluators, the project leadership, and the funders began to change dramatically. This section describes these changes and the critical events that led to a far different relationship between the evaluators and the project leadership than either had envisioned.

Event 1
The First Evaluation Report:
"There's no 'there' there."

A pivotal event in the evaluation and one that set the stage for future interactions was the first evaluation report. In the second year of the TETAC project, shortly after the initiation of the contract in April 1998, the evaluation team began collecting data on where the schools stood with regard to program implementation. In addition to surveying a sample of teachers and students, the team spent one day in each participating school. Each visitation team included an evaluation team member and a staff member of the regional organization working with the particular school. This team approach was deliberately created to draw on the different strengths and knowledge of the arts and evaluation communities. On reflection, this was an initial step in developing a new kind of evaluation partnership.

The daylong site visits were guided by a project-implementation scale, describing features expected to be found in a fully developed TETAC school. The evaluation team built the scale, drawing on information from the original project proposal, from previous examinations of DBAE, and from limited discussions with the Getty grants officer and arts consultant for the national evaluation. The project leadership was also consulted, but they had difficulty translating their vision for the project into measurable terms.

Not being arts experts or from the arts world, the evaluators had to work hard to develop their own understanding of what the project's goals meant, translating such phrases used by the consortium and funders as "art at the core of the curriculum" and "a policy for the arts" into things that could be observed, measured, or asked about. The resulting scale included twenty-two project features that could

be divided roughly into several categories: infrastructure (a leadership team, a strategic plan, a policy for the arts, principal leadership, etc.); instructional practices (planning time, curriculum units, pedagogy, assessment, etc.); supports for instructional practices (personal, material, and physical); and connections to the community (funding, parental support, networking, etc.).

The site visits revealed that, in contrast to what had been billed as a mature program, many schools in TETAC were just beginning to develop their approaches, while only a relatively low number could be considered to have a well-implemented program. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being a mature program, a few of the thirty-five programs could be classified as being at the 6 to 7 range. Most, however, were rated 3 to 4, and some were still in the planning stage in the second year of the project.

The first year's evaluation report to the project's National Steering Committee members and the funders provided a detailed discussion of the status of the project implementation, data on each of the components of project's design, and descriptions of the status of each school site. In the tradition of the external, objective evaluator, the report stated that

> the schools have taken some important initial steps in developing a comprehensive arts education program, but there is a large distance to cover in the next three years if they are to become demonstration schools. Pieces of the program – a policy, a critical mass of trained staff, written units, and assessments – are being put into place slowly and unevenly.… [S]chools' understanding of how to integrate [CAE] with overall school reform needs to be enhanced and refined;…only in some cases do strategic plans provide the necessary scaffolding. …Planning is fragmented….Integrated instructional planning has not yet become part of the culture of most schools. Few schools have a firm vision of how their environments might look if TETAC is successful. (Frechtling 1998, p. 39)

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Event 2
The Project Leadership's Response:
Reflection and reinvention

With a relationship barely established, the findings from this first report could easily have resulted in a battle between the project leadership and evaluators, setting the scene for four years of antagonism. However, the project leadership realized the findings were credible, especially since the data were gathered during the site visits with a staff member of the regional organization and the reports on each school had been reviewed with the organization before going into the evaluation report. Indeed, while the project leadership and funders reacted to the evaluation report in a variety of ways, exhibiting differing degrees of surprise, no one called for the killing of the messenger. In fact, they used the data from the first evaluation as an impetus to reflect on the project and clarify its goals, and they sought the input of the evaluation team during their self-examination and problem solving.

When the first evaluation report was presented, the TETAC project had a national project advisory group of experts in the fields of educational reform and school change. The project leadership brought together the advisory group and national evaluators for a two-day meeting to examine the report and reflect on its implications. The meeting yielded several important insights.

First, the process of reform was far more complex than the TETAC project leadership ever dreamed. And while high expectations were important, a grounding in the realities of the change process was also important. The leadership realized that the initial notion

they had shared with the funders and conveyed to the evaluators – that the project had a fully implemented set of programs ready for summative evaluation – simply was not true.

Second, and more important, the leadership realized that, while they shared an understanding of what they were trying to do and how they were trying to do it on the most general level, they had widely varying perceptions of what implementation meant and what a fully formed program would look like.

In reviewing the first evaluation report, the leadership looked carefully at the TETAC implementation rating scale used during the site visits and realized they had never shared ideas about what they were trying to do at this level of specificity. They also realized that in the year and a half since the project was first funded, they had moved away from some of their original ideas about what they were trying to

accomplish and what a fully implemented program would look like, but where this movement had taken them was less clear. Further, just as the funders were of two minds about where arts reform and overall school reform stood on the project's agenda, the leadership realized that they, too, had some conflicting priorities and might have taken somewhat different paths in trying to resolve them.

Inadvertently, then, the evaluation and its first report became a catalyst for intensive reflection about the project on the part of the leadership. Instead of becoming defensive or antagonistic, they used the results and the analysis that lay behind it to stimulate their own thinking and to examine the process under way. At this point the leadership took a giant step from being part of a loose configuration of arts education advocates to becoming a real learning community. And, almost without thinking about the alternatives, the evaluation team was brought along as a community member.

Excerpts from the
TETAC Final Project Report

From the Findings Section

Analysis of the data collected during the last four years of the project led the evaluators to conclude that the project showed success for the TETAC strategy as it evolved. The findings indicated that the approach holds many benefits for schools able to overcome challenges inherent in any program designed for nationwide implementation. Evaluators measured success on many levels.

Enriching Student Learning

While not for the timid, the TETAC strategy for school reform and the arts clearly provides a means of enriching student learning and for changing the culture of a school. Overall, school reform and TETAC were not only compatible, in many ways they shared the same properties, practices, and goals. Most important, the evaluation showed that the TETAC strategy could be effective in all types of environments, including the inner city.

Providing Flexibility

CAE provided a model for integrated arts instruction that could be adapted to a wide range of teaching and learning environments. It could be integrated effectively with overall school reform, especially at the elementary and middle school levels. The approach was not easy to implement, being guided by general goals and objectives, rather than detailed and closely prescribed practices. However, this gave the approach the flexibility needed to accommodate the variety of mandates schools face.

Experiencing Many Benefits

Schools that embraced the strategy of TETAC, adopting and adapting practices consistent with their local mandates and requirements, experienced many benefits. The improvements included increased collaboration among teachers; more opportunity for thematic, integrated instruction; new ways of teaching and collaborating with students in the learning process; higher expectations for students; and new attitudes about the arts and their value to the curriculum. The CAE approach is effective in promoting deeper learning in the arts. Further, while the evaluation fails to provide evidence of positive effects on learning in other subjects, the findings strongly suggest that adding the arts and broadening students' learning opportunities does not hurt performance in other areas.

Event 3
Joining Skills to Solve Problems:
A lesson in synergy

Starting from the dialogue launched by the first eval-
uation report, the relationship between the project
leadership and the evaluation team changed markedly
to become more collaborative. While the project
leadership remained advocates for the project and
steadfastly partisan with regard to its goals, they knew
that they had problems to solve and appreciated the
insights provided by the evaluation perspective. The
evaluators, in turn, became facilitators of the leader-
ship's reflections, assisting, when invited, in their
discussions and reacting to new documents being
developed. As the leaders reflected on what they
meant by project implementation, the evaluators were
part of the conversation, both prompting discussion
and probing what was meant when discussions were
unclear or participants appeared to talk past each
other. As the leadership struggled to put to together
a renewed mission statement and to clarify the pro-
ject's goals and expectations, the evaluators acted
as second readers of the documents they developed,
raising questions and pushing for clarification.

The benefits from this interaction went both ways.
While the project leadership benefited from the eval-
uators' process of inquiry, as well as their knowledge
of whole-school reform (a new area for many involved
in arts education reform), the evaluators benefited
from the project leadership's deliberations on arts
education reform and the somewhat diverse slants
taken on exactly what TETAC was expected to accom-
plish. A clear by-product of these interactions was a
shared vocabulary and increased understanding of
the parlance and jargon of the two worlds.

As plans were made to provide new supports for
the schools to carry out the change process, the eval-
uators became secondary players, commenting on

**From the Lessons
Learned Section**

The five-year evolution of the
TETAC strategy encompasses
a story of experimentation,
lessons, and work begun
but not finished as time and
money ran out. By sharing
the TETAC story and findings,
the National Arts Education
Consortium hopes to trigger
additional experimentation
and research that continues
to build on this work.

**Success Was Achieved
on Many Levels**

• The Comprehensive Arts
Education approach showed
great promise for improving
learning in the arts and inte-
grating the arts into the core
curriculum.

• The TETAC strategy for
school reform and the
arts provided effective
approaches for changing
the culture of a school and
improving overall instruction
while advancing the status
of the arts in the regular cur-
riculum. These approaches
– including curriculum, pro-
fessional development and
assessment – are not only
compatible with general
trends in school reform, but
they are flexible and adapt-
able to all types of school
mandates and environments,
including the inner city.

• The TETAC Visual Arts
Assessment Instrument
provides a prototype for
developing tests to measure
learning in the other art
forms. Additionally, the quan-
titative data bank document-
ing student learning in the
arts gathered from the
TETAC Visual Arts Assess-
ment Instrument offers a
base for other studies.

The full report is available
via the Arts Education
Partnership Web site at
<*www.aep-arts.org*>.

Starting from the dialogue launched by the first evaluation report, the relationship between the project leadership and the evaluation team became markedly more collaborative.

structure, attending critical events such as professional development sessions, and helping to examine their efficacy. To a large extent, the balance between formative and summative evaluation changed, with formative considerations playing a much more dominant role as new strategies for project development were explored.

Interestingly, the leadership drew heavily upon some of the tools and processes initially developed for formative evaluation; for example, the project implementation rating scale that was used to guide the site visits and formulate benchmarks for measuring progress. In addition to promoting discussion among the consortium's leadership about what they expected to see in a fully developed TETAC school, it was adopted and adapted by some of the project leadership for their own visits to the schools and used to make their own, interim evaluations of status and change. Their feedback helped the evaluators refine their own approach and validated the scale's usefulness.

Event 4
Figuring Out What It All Means:
Determining the legacy

The final report to the nation on the TETAC project was planned as a joint effort of the project's National Steering Committee and the evaluation team. Just as the work over the last three years of project implementation was based on a collaborative relationship, sharing the findings and implications was approached as a joint venture. Some initial ground rules were established and primary responsibilities laid out; for example, the evaluators wrote the findings section of the report, and their voice led in discussion of the summative outcomes. Program voices predominated in the discussion of the program's history and context and took the lead in suggesting next steps in promoting Comprehensive Arts Education.

REFLECTIONS
AND LESSONS LEARNED

While the TETAC project's national evaluation was originally designed to be more traditional in nature (i.e., summative), both the project and the national evaluation benefited from the more balanced summative-formative approach that evolved over the four-year evaluation effort. Based on these benefits, several lessons have been gleaned from the TETAC national evaluation effort that might assist others planning a more balanced approach to evaluation.

Lesson 1:
The Importance of an Outside Voice

An unexpected benefit came by hiring a national evaluation firm from outside the main realm of the project (in this case, arts education). Westat surfaced as the firm able to handle the scale of the project's national evaluation. Westat had a good deal of expertise in general school reform evaluation but little expertise specific to the arts education arena. At first, some of the project leadership questioned the logic of hiring a firm new to arts education and debated whether it would be better to use a firm already familiar with TETAC's philosophical foundation. Ultimately,

the leadership decided to hire Westat, since one of their goals was to better link education in the arts with general school reform. They felt that Westat's expertise in this arena would benefit the project, as the findings from the evaluation could be better groomed to reach a wider audience than the arts education community.

Since the evaluators were new to arts education, they needed to probe more deeply than usual into the philosophical underpinnings of the project and its goals and expectations. This information-gathering process soon uncovered a major problem for the project: the national project leadership, drawn from the six regional partner organizations, did not have a common understanding of the key concepts, terminology, and goals outlined in the original project prospectus to the funders. While the leaders all thought that they were in complete agreement, the evaluators' probing showed this not to be the case. This situation meant that as each organization in the consortium designed its initial implementation strategies for realizing the project's goals in its service regions, it was not necessarily in sync with all the other regional organizations and their efforts, making a common evaluation effort difficult at best.

The outside perspective provided by the evaluators' initial information gathering and report gave the project leadership an invaluable reality check early in the life of the project. Since the leadership had thought that they were talking the same language by using the same terminology, it was highly unlikely that they – or for that matter a firm from inside the arts education world – would have uncovered this major problem until far too late in the project's lifecycle. Having the reflections from an outside voice gave the leadership information early enough to allow them to revisit and clearly define a common understanding for the project and to better synchronize their implementation strategies.

For the evaluators, a positive outgrowth from this situation was that very early on they were seen by the leadership as providing important information and guidance that could assist the project in being more successful. Since the evaluators were in the initial stage of clarifying for themselves the project's key concepts, terminology, and goals, they were better able to reflect them back to the project leadership,

using a questioning and reflection format for what they were seeing or not seeing based on the original project prospectus. Ultimately, this nonthreatening approach opened up a dialogue between the evaluators and the project leadership that established a productive, nonadversarial working relationship that lasted for the duration of the four-year evaluation effort. This open dialogue gave the evaluators opportunities to build the capacity of the project leadership in relation to various issues of designing and implementing an effective evaluation strategy. It also gave the project leadership opportunities to broaden the lenses used by the evaluators to assist them in analyzing and interpreting the evaluative data that they had gathered.

Lesson 2:
The Importance of Being Specific

When it was evident that the project's evaluation was shifting from a more traditional method to one attempting to balance two sometimes-conflicting approaches – summative and formative – the next challenge facing the project leadership and the evaluators was where the evaluation effort could (or could not) be shifted without damaging the objective quality of the traditional approach. This was a significant issue for the project, since it was essential that the integrity of the eventual findings be accepted in the research and policy communities. This challenge meant that the design and implementation of the plan that would guide the evaluation effort during the four years, as well as the understandings and working relationship between the project leadership

Both the project and the national evaluation benefited from the more balanced summative-formative approach that evolved over the four-year evaluation effort.

and evaluators, had to be spelled out in detail and negotiated up front.

While the leadership and evaluators left the negotiation process open and flexible enough to allow for continual review of the plan and agreements as the evaluation progressed, having a clear blueprint to guide the evaluation effort was essential. Since the project leadership and evaluators had developed a productive process of communication, as discussed in Lesson 1, the head of the evaluation team was included in the leadership's semiannual meetings and monthly conference calls concerning the progress and issues being faced by the project and its evaluation. Together, they worked out a blueprint for the national evaluation effort that paid special attention to several key matters.

To begin with, they decided the goals and needs of the evaluation and potential strategies for realizing them. Next, the evaluators guided the leadership in understanding where formative evaluation approaches might be used effectively, where it was more logical to use summative approaches, and, most important, where it was essential to use a summative approach to assure the integrity of the project's findings. In addition, the evaluators specified the areas of the evaluation that would allow the leadership to collaborate in the data gathering and analysis, and those areas which needed to be left to the evaluators to ensure that bias did not enter into the process. Finally, the leadership asked that the evaluators add an expert in arts education to the team to guide them in the area of arts education reform and to help construct the evaluation instruments for gathering data.

With an outside voice in evaluation and with specific plans, relationships, and understandings, TETAC moved in the direction of a new model for program evaluation. This model combined aspects of traditional research and evaluation design with the value orientation and design modifications that emerged from the culture of systemic reform.

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