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PRESIDENT

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# Inside

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UFT Teacher Center  
publishes  
**Inside Professional  
Development,**  
a quarterly newsletter  
of resources for  
designing effective  
school-based  
professional  
development

# Navigating Professional Development Evaluation

It makes no sense to face backward if you want to see where you are headed.

Tom Guskey—a professor and the author of *Evaluating Professional Development* (2000)—makes this point in person when he speaks, as he often does at conferences, about professional development. An equally important aspect of travel (and professional development) is making sure that the place where you arrive is actually your planned destination.

Professional development's destination is the improvement of students' achievement. In claiming students' increased achievement as a result of professional development, evaluation is crucial. This is as true for a teacher applying a method of approaching word problems in a mathematics class as it is for an entire district implementing a writing program. But what is the best way to design and conduct such evaluation?

Educational psychology courses taught some of us to think differently about the word *learning*. Learning could be said to have occurred, we were told, if there was a permanent change in behavior. Some learning took only a short time—you touched that hot stove only once—and your behavior changed forever. Other learning (such as reading) took many lessons over time. To measure the changes involved in such complex behavior was a multi-faceted project. Understanding the thinking underlying such measurement seemed a daunting odyssey to many of us.

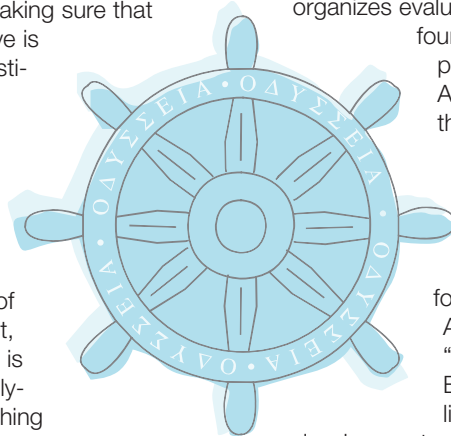
Today, evaluating professional development's effects need not be an odyssey—if you have the right charts. Happily for us, Guskey's book has been crafted most helpfully and can steer us through evaluation's complex waters. He organizes evaluation in five levels. The first

four assess the participants in professional development. Assessing student outcomes is the fifth level. Guskey points out that while assessing student outcomes is a relatively recent development (starting in the 1980s), it is increasingly a major focus, as in a 1994 General Accounting Office report that "chastised the Department [of Education] for the lack of data linking teacher professional

development programs to student achievement" (Guskey, p. 207).

To help us organize our thinking, Guskey matches types of student learning that we might assess—cognitive (knowledge and understanding), affective (attitudes) and psychomotor (skills, behaviors and practices)—and sample assessment instruments. As do all good teachers and guides, Guskey first creates a clear picture of the behaviors and assessment models and *only then* takes us by the Scylla and Charybdis of such issues as validity and reliability. By this time, we are ready for them.

Guskey is clear without oversimplifying. A good example is his well-paced discussion on



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# Two Models for Change

## Early Fall

This fall, the faculty of the High School for Health Professions and Human Services in Manhattan decided to organize self-directed study teams after hearing a presentation from the school's Professional Development Planning Team (PD Team). The PD Team, which had a very fast start this semester because of its August planning, is composed of teachers, the principal, other administrators, a guidance counselor and the UFT Teacher Center staff member.

At the first faculty meeting, the PD Team explained how the study teams would work, highlighting study-team roles and responsibilities. Each study team would:

- Choose facilitators (stable or rotating).
- Agree on an essential question that would drive its research.
- Agree on a product to demonstrate how its learning had a direct, measurable impact on student learning.

After discussion the PD Team elicited study-team focus topics. The topics were based on students' learning needs and educators' instructional needs. These included developing critical thinking, enhancing computer literacy, creating more effective science demonstrations, developing student

portfolios, teaching in the 9th-grade block, promoting health awareness, brain-based learning—theory to practice—and academic intervention strategies to support the at-risk student. Eight study teams were formed around these topics.

The study teams will meet throughout the semester—with individuals reporting progress within groups. In January, all of the teams will gather to share their challenges, accomplishments and projects.

## Initial Impact Health Classes

There has already been a visible impact from the study teams' work even though it is still early in the process. Barbara Buonagura (Health Awareness Team) is using the study-team model in her health classes. "Students are bringing in articles on health from such publications as *The New York Times* and some students, who never showed real interest, are now sharing their discoveries in class," she says.

In their own study teams, Buonagura's students use their research articles as well as teacher-provided resources (including a graphic organizer for guidance and structure) to prepare both written and oral presentations. During presentations, the other teams listen and add to their graphic organizers. In this way the concepts (in one case, various psychological disorders) that are being studied can be compared and contrasted by categories (such as symptoms, treatment and community resources). As a culminating project, student teams create their own questions, which their teacher will incorporate into their unit exam.



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## Critical Thinking

Study teams have organized differently, each deciding how to best use the 50-minute meeting time. For example, during each of its sessions, the Critical Thinking Team asks a member to describe a lesson that integrates critical thinking strategies. Discussion and feedback follow this. "It has been great sharing teaching practices with colleagues and seeing the different ways we approach tasks," says social studies teacher Kris Erickson. "A colleague shared a useful strategy: students first break down a document into five or six focus areas. This fine-tunes their understanding. Then we can explore the broader issues using higher-order thinking," adds Erickson.

Team member Stella Sourelis notes that she has always used critical thinking with her French classes, but the study-team experience has provided a focus to pursue its use in depth. "I have discovered how to use portfolios to further promote and assess my students' critical-thinking skill. I have linked critical thinking to the Foreign Language Standards and I want students to demonstrate their learning through portfolios," she says.

## Science and Portfolio Study Teams

The Science Lab Team and the Portfolio Team work in subgroups by discipline, reporting back intermittently to their larger groups. Ben Friedman, a math teacher and UFT delegate, finds it "helpful when teams customize profes-

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Photo Copyright © UFT/TC

sional development. I've had an opportunity to add to my graphing-calculator skills. My coach is a fellow math teacher who has further gained my esteem during our work together—integrating new technologies into the classroom.”

Sadia Khan, whose team is updating the chemistry labs, is really enjoying the process. She says, “Each of us has a different view of how the lab should be. We are working collaboratively and I really like that. Our team’s project is to put the labs on compact discs (CDs) for every teacher and we hope to continue the process next year as we update the curriculum.”

Teachers have taken ownership and feel they have made a start. “It is a beginning,” says one, “a process which is just beginning to evolve. Together, with ongoing reflection and discussion, we will continue our professional development journey.”

### Further Reading

Guskey, T., and Huberman, M. (1995). *Professional Development in Education: New Paradigms and Practices*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Killion, J. (2002, Dec./Jan.) For Good Measure: How to Assess Staff Development’s Impact. *Results*. National Staff Development Council (NSDC). Online: [www.nsdcc.org](http://www.nsdcc.org).

## Late Fall

Town meetings were the next vehicle for school change. The study teams discovered and discussed key issues, many concerning the entire school. By December, a new collaboration of faculty and administration had evolved to address these issues.

That the town meeting model might now serve the school well was the decision of Lynette Ganim (UFT chapter leader), the principal’s cabinet (Jane Weiss, principal) and Anne Campbell (UFT Teacher Center staff member). They invited teacher Bill Doyle (also the Leadership Team facilitator) to facilitate the first meeting and Anne Campbell to co-facilitate and be the recorder. That meeting brought together teachers, the principal, the administration, and guidance counselors. The agenda was generated by the faculty at the beginning of the meeting in response to the question, “As a faculty member, what concerns do you have for the school?”

To ensure an effective meeting the facilitator asked faculty to generate and agree on meeting norms. These included:

- **NO:** Side talk or cross talk, personal attacks, gossip after the meeting, grading of papers or reading during the meeting.
- **YES:** Accurate recording of meeting notes, disagreeing without being disagreeable, being solution oriented, limiting comments to two minutes, being actively present, starting and ending the meeting on time.

When a vote revealed that the vast majority of the faculty preferred to have whole-group discussions, the facilitators concurred. Concerns were then elicited and charted. At this and subsequent meetings, there was one significant refrain: the need for all factions in the school to respect one another. “We have a need to actually learn how to communicate with one another,” stated one colleague, “and to learn how to manage our anger, our conflicts.” Many expressed the desire to have both student and faculty training in conflict resolution and anger and stress management.

Both town meetings and study teams have provided opportunities for the faculty of the High School for Health Professions and Human Services to engage in collaborative reflection and planning. Proponents of the town meeting share the view of math teacher Ben Ho: “I think town meetings are a good way of figuring out how to improve our school’s atmosphere and environment of behalf of our students.” Many faculty members have commented that as the school year progresses, they are excited to continue participation in these collaborative faculty efforts to strengthen the school for students’ learning.

## Navigating Professional Development Evaluation

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his model relating student achievement to professional development. It maps for us the paths of professional development (its content, process and context) and the teachers’ (and school’s and parents’) effects on students’ learning (pp. 73, 77).

As evaluation is such a crucial process, it is best, says Guskey, if schools and districts create and con-

duct their own, but what if, for whatever reason, the school or district cannot? Here too Guskey guides us through a thoughtful discussion (pp. 255-257). Internalizing Guskey’s book will improve the thinking of anyone involved in evaluation, and as teachers we all are. This book is an essential one for improving our own professional development and our students’ learning outcomes.



Guskey, T. (2000). *Evaluating Professional Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

# Teachers Team for Students' Success



## CES 28 Study Group: The Art of Teaching Writing

At CES 28 in District 9 in the Bronx, art extends beyond the beautiful drawings and pictures in classrooms and hallways to include the writing in language arts classes that is currently absorbing teachers and students. Twelve teachers and the Teacher Center staff member and facilitator, Rosario Martir, meet in after-school study group sessions to reflect on routines and mini-lessons from the writing process in *The Art of Teaching Writing* by Lucy Caulkins (1994). Later they apply what they have learned with students in their classrooms.

This is the first year of the school's comprehensive school reform grant. The school is using the America's Choice School Design (National Center on Education and the Economy, [www.ncee.org](http://www.ncee.org)). The study group is coordinating its work on the writing process with the protocols from America's Choice.

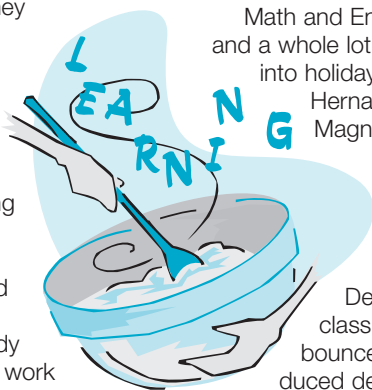
Teacher Anna Sackey comments, "This study group has really helped me to learn to implement writing in my classroom, but it is my students who have benefited the most. Now our writing period is fun—the most productive period of the day!" Working with a group is helpful, agrees teacher Roger Pichardo. "It's refreshing to be able to communicate with other teachers in a supportive environment," he notes. Teacher Nicole Mills, recognizing the positive impact that the study group has had, says, "I have implemented the writing process and had success with ideas from my colleagues as well as from the text."

"It's really been a great experience for all of us," says Teacher Center staff member Martir. "Many teachers have left behind

apprehension and moved to confidence because they have discovered that they were, in fact, correctly approaching the teaching of writing. Their conversations have helped them to further define the writing process for themselves. The opportunity to read and discuss the America's Choice materials in conjunction with the Caulkins text seems to have brought us all together in learning and bolstered our courage to try out and then share our successes *and* our concerns."

## Holiday Cookies' Key Ingredient: Learning

Math and English language learning and a whole lot of feeling were baked into holiday cookies at the Rafael Hernandez Dual Language Magnet School in District 9 in the Bronx. "Put on a Happy Face" was flowing from the radio and throughout the cooking room one December morning as a class of busy children bounced to the music and produced delicious holiday cookie treats. In the middle of the mix were Grace Cantarella (Teacher Center site staff member), Nan Persaud (English-



as-a-second-language teacher) and teacher Rachel Gowtham, who is using the Accelerated Academic English Language Model (AAELM) with her 6th-grade class. Her students started the year with few English skills but through the AAELM are making significant progress.

On this day, the students, away from their home classroom in the cooking room, were studying fractions (math) and sequencing skills (English language arts—speaking and writing). Ms. Persaud and Ms. Gowtham guided them as they converted fractions, followed recipe directions and logged their activities. These students certainly demonstrated the art of Accountable Talk (The Institute for Learning, 1999). They chatted to each other while they measured and mixed and poured and formed and baked—and oh yes, ate—their delicious cookies.

As they took turns working on the cookie batter, students asked, "How long do I have to mix? Can I have some chocolate chips now?" And posed two perennial cook's questions, "Are they ready yet? How long until they are done?" Noticing a visitor, one student bounded over and stretched out his hand, saying, "What's your name? I'm Edwin! Nice to meet you!" The energy in the room was free and enthusiastic, with talk—accountable to the learning, to the community and to the work—making a natural environment for accelerated learning.

Finally, all of the cookies were baked and students selected and packed them into large cups. Teachers helped them to wrap the holiday treasures in brightly colored tissue for safe home transport. While everyone wished each other "Merry Christmas" and "Feliz Navidad" the teachers were resolving to continue their cooking curriculum in the new year!



Caulkins, L. (1994). *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

## Accountable Talk

### Fundamentals of Accountable Talk:

- Talk is essential to learning.
- Talk must be accountable to:
  - The learning community.
  - Knowledge.
  - Standards of evidence.
  - Standards of reasoning.

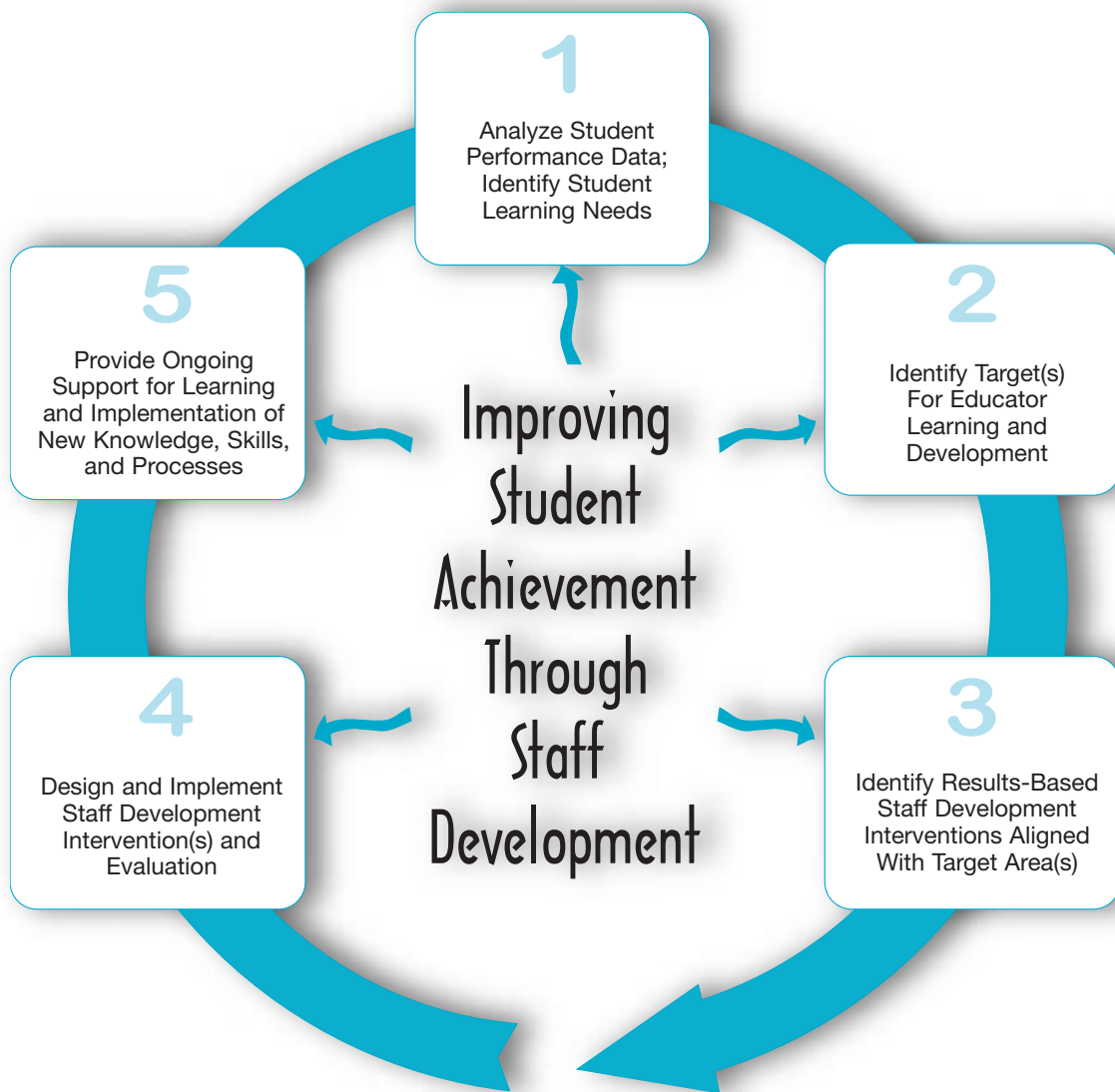
### Indicators of Accountable Talk:

- Press for clarification and explanation.
- Require justification of proposals and challenges.
- Recognize and challenge misconception.
- Demand evidence for claims and arguments.
- Interpret and use each other's statements.

The Institute for Learning. (1999). *Principles of Learning*. Online: [www.instituteforlearning.org](http://www.instituteforlearning.org). Printed with permission in *Special Edition*, 11, centerfold. New York: UFT Teacher Center.

## Powerful Planning for Student Achievement

How are the planning of professional development and increased student achievement linked and why and how are these links important? Joellen Killion addresses this question in her new book, *Assessing Impact: Evaluating Professional Development* (2002), which informs and guides readers in learning about staff development program evaluation. In chapter 3, Killion asserts, “Beginning with the end in mind is the first step to ensuring that students will benefit from staff development” (p. 31). Naming the planning process that she writes about “backmapping,” Killion graphically illustrates the relationship between the goal of improving student achievement and designing professional development that is accurately targeted to meet it. From the first step (analysis of student data) through the fifth (providing ongoing support for learning), “backmapping” is focused on planning professional development, but not just any kind. It must ensure that educators have the knowledge they need and the understanding of what they need to do so that their teaching will enable their students to know and do.



Source:

Killion, J. (2002). *Assessing Impact: Evaluating Professional Development*.  
Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council (NSDC). Online: [www.nsd.org](http://www.nsd.org).

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# Writing Change

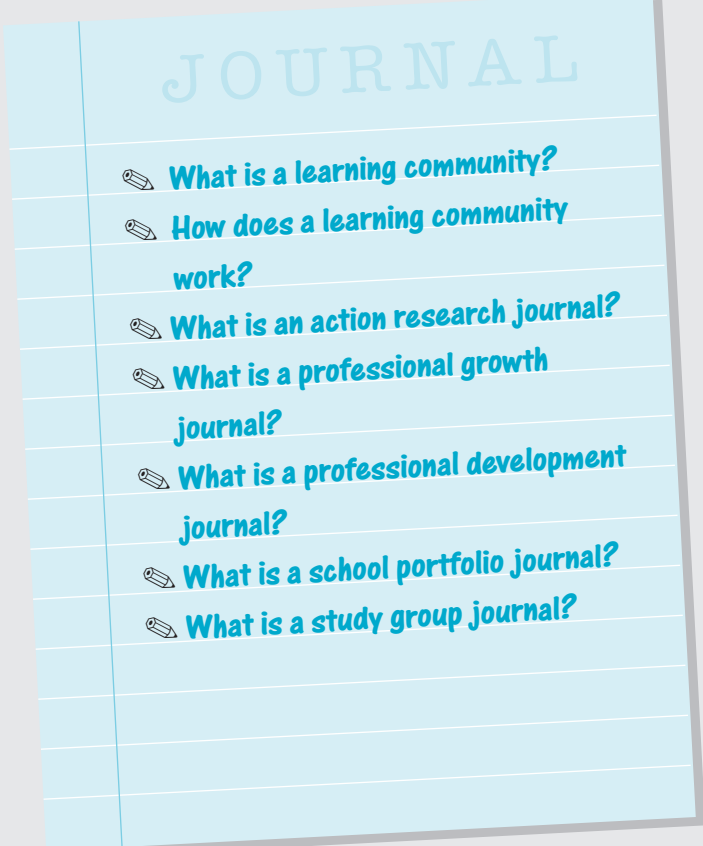
Teaching is by nature variable; each student new to us asks something different of us, which requires us to adjust our teaching practice. No matter how many students we have taught or how much we know (or think we do), this is so. Teaching is also subject to variations in the disciplines—content and method knowledge and skill—over time. Here again, to succeed we are required to change. Yet another area of change is our move from the industrial-age model of schooling to schools right for the twenty-first century electronic age.

If we decide there is only one way to best transform any aspect of our work, we fall into a “black and white, no gray” trap. Determining how best to change and what to change requires that we use all the helpful tools we can find.

Such a tool (actually an entire shop full of them) is *Journals as Frameworks for Change* (1998) by Mary Dietz. With many possible applications, it is useful for individuals or groups, beginners or veterans. Student teachers, professional developers and even whole schools can use Dietz’s book. Through discussions of different kinds of journals, it offers scaffoldings for considering change for ourselves or suggesting changes for others to consider. It can help us track and plan change and also think about that planning and tracking.

Clearly written and graphically illustrated, this book has guides, resources and sample schedules, plus a clearly written glossary and a comprehensive bibliography that points us to further study. It can be read in short sections or continuously. This book makes reflection practical while inspiring us to develop professionally. After reading the book you *want* to write.

Among the many questions *Journals as Frameworks for Change* by Mary Dietz addresses are:

- 
- ✎ What is a learning community?
  - ✎ How does a learning community work?
  - ✎ What is an action research journal?
  - ✎ What is a professional growth journal?
  - ✎ What is a professional development journal?
  - ✎ What is a school portfolio journal?
  - ✎ What is a study group journal?

Dietz, M. (1998). *Journals as Frameworks for Change*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight.

# Web Site Watch

Internet searches and reading enrich our thinking and that of our students. Below are sites that can prove helpful for project-based-learning research, updates and background reading and for lesson or unit plans.



## **ERIC: [www.eric.ed.gov/](http://www.eric.ed.gov/)**

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a federally funded national information system that provides, through its 16 subject-specific clearinghouses, associated adjunct clearinghouses, and support components, a variety of services and products on a broad range of education-related issues. There are also related sites such as [www.ericit.org/](http://www.ericit.org/), for information technology. (ERIC text reprinted with permission from the site.) Get help from an ERIC librarian during specified hours of the week.

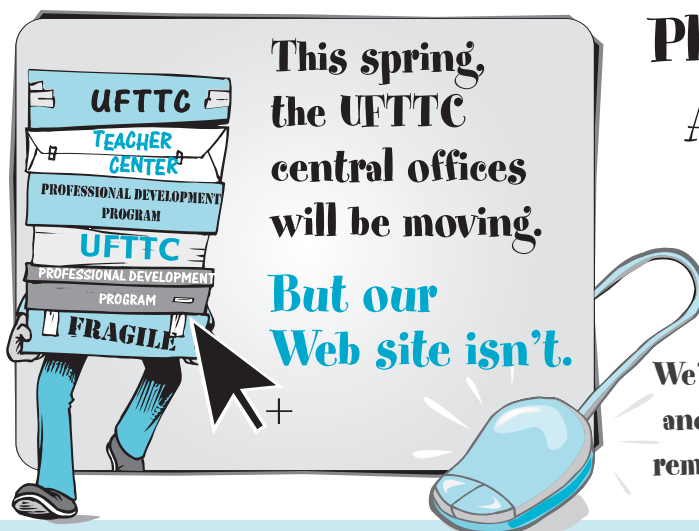
## **The Math Forum at Drexel University: [www.mathforum.com/](http://www.mathforum.com/)**

Everything math—from elementary mathematics for young children to papers on the history of constructivism—can be found here. No matter what we teach, there is something for us. Find all of these and more: the “Problems of the Week” library, *Mathematics Teacher* bibliographies, geometry newsgroups, “Teacher2Teacher,” “Math Resources by Subject,” “Pre-Algebra Problem of the Week” and online software.



## **WWF-The Conservation Organization: [www.wwf.org/](http://www.wwf.org/)**

Information on the environment, geography and more can be accessed at this site. There are links to WWF Web sites in other countries. For example, at Colombia’s site we learn that the presence of the Colombian butterfly *Citharias pirate*—whose wing colors vary but which are always partially transparent—is also one indicator of a healthy forest. (Be prepared to read in Spanish or with a friend who is fluent in Spanish.) This site and its links contain many informative and interesting photographs.



**This spring,  
the UFTTC  
central offices  
will be moving.**

**But our  
Web site isn't.**

**Please, visit.**

**Any time.**

**Really.**

**[www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org)**

**We'll help you keep track of our move  
and make sure services and information  
remain easily accessible.**

# TEACHER CENTER CONFERENCES

K-3

## “Watch Me Grow:” Assessing Learning in the Early Years

**Sunday, March 23, 2003**

(Register by March 15)

### Learn how to:

- Maintain running records to understand student behavior.
- Attend to students' language to plan meaningful learning experiences.
- Use protocols to look at students' drawings and writing.
- Use portfolios to strengthen home-school partnerships.

K-12

## Connecting Social Studies, Standards and New York City Cultural Institutions

**Saturday, March 1, 2003**

(Register by February 25)

### Meet representatives of New York City cultural institutions, including:

- Constitution Works.
- The Children's Museum of Manhattan.
- The Henry Street Settlement.
- The New York Transit Museum.
- The National Museum of the American Indian.
- The Museum as a Classroom Program.
- The Museum of Natural History.
- The Museum of Television and Radio.
- The South Street Seaport Museum.
- Queens Historical Society.

### And:

- Learn how to access original resources at New York City cultural institutions.
- Use original resources for standards-based social studies.

K-12

## Find the Magic: Writing to Learn

### Guest Speaker:

**Teacher/Author Evelyn Rothstein**

**Saturday, April 12, 2003**

(Register by April 2)

### Learn:

- 12 systematic approaches to teaching writing.
- Strategies to help students write to learn.

**Note:** Participants will receive professional materials for classroom use.

K-12

## Problems, Problems, It's the Way You Solve Them: A Mathematics Conference

**Sunday, April 13, 2003**

(Register by April 4)

### Learn to:

- Develop daily activities that increase problem-solving skills.
- Present problems in a variety of ways and increase students' understanding.
- Guide students in designing problems that involve significant mathematics.
- Create communities of learners that reflect on problem solving.

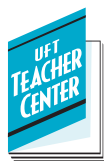
Unless otherwise noted, participants receive classroom resource ideas and new teacher professional development hours for conferences.

### PLACE & TIME:

**United Federation of Teachers  
260 Park Avenue South, 2nd floor  
8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

Continental breakfast will be served.

To register, obtain forms at your Teacher Center or online at [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org).



**PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM**

Aminda Gentile, Director

**Inside**  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A UFT Teacher Center publication