Evaluating Professional Development: Beyond the Satisfaction Survey

JAMES S. SASS
RIO HONDO COLLEGE
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Notes

This document is a summary of the oral presentation rather than a print version of the slides. Also, pair-share and case study activities were removed.

The book *Evaluating Professional Development* by Thomas Guskey provided the framework and many details for this presentation. The presentation was generally faithful to the content of the book, but includes some adaptations to fit the format of an RP Conference session.

*Evaluating Professional Development* is available in libraries or at the following link https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/evaluating-professional-development/book9582?id=104223. 
The Day I Realized . . .
Background: LAUSD Teacher Training Academy

I was a new research analyst at Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), assigned to evaluate a Teacher Training Academy (TTA). Due to a statewide class-size reduction initiative, LAUSD needed to staff many classrooms quickly. The final requirement for prospective teachers was to complete a 40-hour (1-week) academy. Many academy graduates, who had not previously worked in education, then gained their own classrooms as long-term substitutes.

After completing the TTA as a participant and pilot testing some instruments, I began implementing the evaluation project. The first steps were observing a 40-hour academy and administering a post-session survey to the graduates. After 6 weeks, I called the graduates and asked them about how well the TTA prepared them to teach in LAUSD.
Results of Self-Report Data

POST-SESSION SURVEY

Overall, responses about usefulness and quality varied.

Two memorable themes in responses:

1) Minor Theme: TTA was too long; 40 hours not necessary.

2) Major Theme: Too much time on classroom management; not enough time on being an educator (e.g., curriculum, lesson planning, instruction).

INTERVIEW AT 6 WEEKS

Overall, responses about usefulness and quality varied.

Two memorable themes in responses:

1) Minor Theme: TTA was too short; 40 hours not enough.

2) Major Theme: Not enough time on classroom management, which was a very important part of daily classroom work.
The Day I Realized . . .

We don’t know how valuable a professional development activity is until we try to use what we learned.

The post-session survey can be a useful tool, but it is at best a partial assessment of a professional development activity’s value.

In addition to measuring satisfaction with the activity, a more complete evaluation addresses participants’ learning and use of learning.
Models for Evaluating Professional Development
Opposing Models of Evaluation

POT OF COFFEE MODEL

Everyday standard

Satisfaction survey after the session.

Set of questions about how well participants liked the experience. More questions on process than outcomes.

In practice, flavor of the coffee might be just as important as participant learning.

Rarely insightful.

POT OF GOLD MODEL

“Gold standard”

Full experimental design.

Educators and students randomly assigned to conditions; each group completes battery of validated instruments many times.

In practice, evaluation activities can constrain professional development experience.

Rarely happens.
A Third Approach

This presentation subscribes to neither the pot of coffee model nor the pot of gold.

There are many paths to effective evaluation of professional development activities. Each path has many destinations.

Rather than providing one way to evaluate professional development, this presentation provides something of a map with multiple paths and destinations.
Session Learning Outcomes
After completing this session, you should be able to . . . .

Produce useful post-session surveys,

Apply Guskey's multi-phase model for evaluating professional development, and

Explain foundational concepts in program evaluation.

_Assumption: You already know the basics of survey construction._
Introduction to Program Evaluation
Evaluation

A term used with many different meanings in colleges and the CCC system.


Something we do everyday.
Professional Evaluation

THREE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Systematic inquiry

Judging merit or worth

Informing decisions
Professional Evaluation

THREE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Systematic inquiry

Judging merit or worth

Informing decisions
Relevant Program Evaluation Terms

Formative Evaluation: Conducted during development or implementation of a program to provide feedback for improvement.

Summative Evaluation: Conducted at the end of a program to determine worth or merit of a program.

Process Evaluation: Focuses on inputs and activities, evaluating implementation and operations.

Outcomes Evaluation: Focuses on enduring benefits experienced by participants after the program (e.g., knowledge, skills, attitudes, status).

Logic Model: Visual representation of how a program is intended to work.
Post-Session Survey
Typical Post-Session Questions

- The topic was relevant to my work.
- The room temperature was comfortable.
- The material was based on research.
- The group activities were engaging.
- Time was used efficiently.
- There was a good balance between theory and practice.
- I enjoyed the session.
- The refreshments were fresh and tasty.
- The presenter was able to answer the participants’ questions.
- The room was the right size for the session.
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Topics in a Post-Session Survey

GOOD
Content
Process
Context

BETTER
Content
Process
Context
Learning
Potential for Use
# Uses of Typical Post-Session Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRO</th>
<th>CON</th>
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</table>
| Good for making improvements for next time.  
--Formative Evaluation | Inadequate for making decisions about value.  
--Summative Evaluation |
| Informative about the activity itself.  
--Process Evaluation | Limited ability to address learning and use.  
--Outcomes Evaluation |
Levels for Evaluating Professional Development
Four Levels for Evaluating Professional Development (based on Kirkpatrick’s model)

1. Reactions to the Experience
2. Learning
3. Use of New Knowledge & Skills
4. Student/Job Outcomes
Five Levels for Evaluating Professional Development

A logic model applicable to most professional development activities
Organizational Support

Guskey’s Level 3: “Organization Support and Change”

Even the best professional development experiences, with significant amounts of learning, might not lead to changes in practice or student outcomes. Lack of support from the college or department/office can be a barrier to implementation.

At Level 3, Guskey also addresses professional development’s influence on school change (e.g., climate, procedures).

This presentation focuses on support (more than change) and places organizational support outside the chain of outcomes leading from learning to participant use to student/job outcomes.
Participant Experience (Satisfaction)

Provides feedback on content, process, and context.

Data from post-session survey or interviews.
Participant Learning (Initial Outcomes)

Provides initial assessment of effectiveness in changing knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes.

Data from post-session survey, paper-and-pencil instruments, demonstrations, reflections.

- Be conscious of limitations and appropriate uses of the pretest-posttest design.
- Consider questions about intentions or potential for using the learning.
Participant Use (Intermediate Outcomes)

Provides information on degree and quality of implementation.

Data from written & oral questionnaires, observations, work products, college records, reflections.
Student/Job Outcomes (Longer-Term Outcomes)

Provides information on outcomes for students and/or the college.

Student Outcomes data from student work products, SLO/SSO/SAOs, testing, portfolios.

Job Outcomes data from participants’ work products, observation, college/office records, surveys of internal customers.
Organizational Support

Provides information on barriers and supports to implementation.
- Time to implement
- Necessary tools/resources
- Space for learning and mistakes
- Coaching from supervisor
- Encouragement from peers

Data from participant and supervisor surveys, college document, budgets, meeting minutes.
Outcomes Approach to Evaluating Professional Development

Contribution (not Attribution)

Evidence (not Proof)
Needs Assessment
What is Needs Assessment?

A systematic procedure to support setting priorities and allocating resources.

Analyzing *gaps* between what is and what should be.

For professional development: Identifying individual, departmental, and institutional needs.
Needs Assessment at Rio Hondo College

Online survey conducted every two years.

Includes faculty, classified staff, and management/confidential.

Some questions common to all groups; many questions tailored to each group.

A few open-ended questions in addition to ratings, rankings, forced-choice, etc.
Approaches to Needs Assessment: Basic

Topics for professional development events

Formats (e.g., workshop, video series, book group, collaborative inquiry)
Approaches to Needs Assessment: Enhanced

Topics
Formats
Sessions (Number & Length)
Days/Times (availability for participating in activities)
Recent attendance/participation in professional development activities
Reasons for not attending professional development activities
Incentives for attending professional development
Approaches to Needs Assessment: Creative

Use focus groups to develop ideas for survey items.

Ask supervisors about their teams’ professional development needs.

Ask faculty and classified about their supervisors’ professional development needs.

Summarize needs from program review documents.

Summarize needs from other documents (e.g., SLO/SSO/SAO reports, accreditation).

HR and/or deans summarize needs identified in performance reviews.

Use results from previous professional development evaluations.
Some Practical Guidelines for Needs Assessment

Work with others when developing plans for data collection and analysis.
Have some common questions and some questions unique to each group.
Include items for disaggregation (including years employed at college).
Remember: Workshops are only one format for professional development.
Have others participate in interpreting the data.
Warning: Professional development cannot solve all problems.
Final Thoughts on Evaluating Professional Development

Evaluation activities apply before, during, and after professional development activities.

There are many options in the space between the Pot-of-Coffee and Pot-of-Gold models.

To be valuable, professional development needs to be useful.

The college/department/office has a major role in the ultimate effectiveness of professional development activities.
Resources


