Evaluating Professional Development Training in Early Literacy:

National Head Start
Family Literacy Center

Alternatives for Measuring Participant Use of New Skills Post Training - -

Use of Action Plans & Levels of Use Indicators

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Today's Presentation

- Overview Program Context
- Evaluation Approach
- Challenges of Measuring Level 3 – Use of Skills
- Methods- Action Plans & Level of Use
- Advantages & Disadvantages of Approach
- Conclusions

Program Context:
National HS Family Literacy Center

- 5 Year Grant - Office of Head Start

- Provided training and technical assistance to all HS grantees -85,895

- Goal of training was to engage families and children in learning events and everyday interactions that improve the language, literacy, math and life skills of parents and children

Training Activities

- Local trainings- 1 session

- Multiple Day Sessions – 2 -4 sessions

- Educ. Manager Intensive Institutes – 5 days

- SPARC Team Based Intensive Training – 5 days

- Material and Resource Distribution including on-line training and college curricula

Evaluation Approach

Based on work of Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2006), Guskey (2000), & Phillips & Stone (2002) measured:

Level 1 Participant Reach & Satisfaction

Level 2 Participant Learning

Level 3 Participant Use New Knowledge & Skills

Level 4 Systems & Organizational Change

The Challenge

Levels of Evaluation (Parry & Berdie, 2004)

- Training can have varying levels of impact on participants ranging from satisfaction to impacting client outcomes.

- Figure 1 depicts the degree to which changes in levels of outcome can be attributed to a training event and the ease to which the outcome can be measured.

- The challenge for evaluators is to capture participant change that extends beyond the training event itself within budget constraints.

Level 3 – Use of New Skills

- Research shows that adoption of new skills not likely to be universal or complete.

- Levels of use vary (non-use, mechanical use, routine)

- Participants need time to reflect and adapt new concepts to their own context.

- Analyzing data about whether new practices are applied & how well are essential evaluation activities for formative and summative use.

- Measurement methods limited and costly.

- What are meaningful alternatives?

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Action Plans

- Worked with project team to identify best ways to incorporate action plans into training activities in meaningful way.

- Intent give participants opportunity to:
  - reflect on what they learned
  - identify strategies they wanted to try out
  - make a plan
  - report back & rate progress at subsequent trainings

- Form needed to be short, easy to complete

- Needed trainer to be able keep copy of plans

Levels of Use

- Worked with project team to identify meaningful levels of use indicators

How would I rate my progress? (check one)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am planning to use this strategy.	I have tried this strategy 1 -2 times.	I have successfully used this strategy more than a few times.	I have tried out this strategy and have begun to modify or change it to use in new situations.	I am using this strategy on a regular basis but not as often as I might.	I automatically use this strategy in certain situations.	I automatically use this strategy in multiple situations.	I automatically use this strategy in multiple situations AND I am teaching it to others.

What did I accomplish?
Update on My Action Plan

Instructions: Complete at the **start of Day 2** of series training. Keep top copy for your records, turn in bottom copy to trainer.

Your Name: _____   Program: _____

Date: _____   Role at HS/EHS: ❑Administrator   ❑Manager   ❑Teacher   ❑Family Service Staff   ❑Family

What did I do?
I identified a few strategies to implement **on Day 1** of the training, one of them was:

What did I do?
I implemented this strategy by … (Be specific and concrete)

How would I rate my progress? (check one)

❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I am planning to use this strategy.	I have tried this strategy 1-2 times.	I have successfully used this strategy more than a few times	I have tried out this strategy and have begun to modify or change it to use in new situations.	I am using this strategy on a regular basis but not as often as I might.	I automatically use this strategy in certain situations	I automatically use this strategy in multiple situations	I automatically use this strategy in multiple situations AND I am teaching it to others.

What will I do next?
I will keep using this strategy or take it to the next level by… (Be specific and concrete)

Method of Use

- Piloted in math training
- Training intensity = 4 full days of training delivered over approximately 4 months of time
- At end of training 1 participant completed Action Plan 1.
- At beginning of subsequent trainings 2, 3, 4 asked participants to reflect on implementation to date.
- At end of trainings 2, 3, 4 filled in new action plan.

Indicators

At Trainings 2, 3, 4, participants:

- Wrote down the strategy they identified in previous training to try out

- Reported on progress by describing what they did – Qualitative

- Rated progress on 8 Part Scale - Quantitative

- Kept one copy for themselves and turned in one copy to the trainer

Data Analysis

- Forms mailed to Sonoma State University

- Research Assistant matched 4 forms and entered data into Excel

- Used content analysis techniques to analyze plans over 3 time points

- Sample n=90 cases where
  - individuals completed 4 action plans for trainings completed during January – March 2010

1. "Building Capacity"
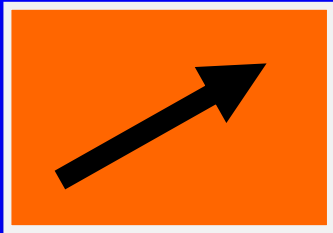
- Approximately 40%

- Adopted **strategy** –tried it out and improved skill over time.

- Ratings show steady increase over 4 days

Strategy: Teach proper names & attributes of shapes

| Day	How did I do it?	Rating	What do next?
2	Made copies of play-doh recipe and the 2D and 3D shapes, attributes and properties sheet. Parents and children experimented with the bag and took them home	2 Use strategy on a regular basis but not as often as I might	Add more in classroom
3	Made copies of attributes for the parents. Posted attributes in block center. Had students make shapes with stir straws and play-doh	4 Automatically use strategy in certain situations	Have students tell me why this is a square
4	Use handout sheets of 2D and 3D sheets with students and at Family Fun night. Had parents build shapes	5 Successfully used strategy more than a few times	Use sheets in block center Send home with other suggestions

2. "Add More"

- Approximately 25%
- Teachers selected a strategy at day 1 and increase the complexity at days 2 & 3
- Ratings start high then dropped to a lower level and then increased.
- Examples adding more
  - Started at individual child level took to group level
  - Started use in classroom expanded to include parents

Strategy: Build vocabulary around numbers

Day	How did I do it?	Rating	What will I do next?
2	I started asking how many children are here today- if some are absent how many are absent- So how many brush kits need to be set up	5 Successfully using strategy on regular basis but not as often as I might	I'd like to use it during transition times- how many have the same color shoes today etc.
3	I listened to more prompts from the kids and responded and built upon the situation to add more math talk- measurement etc.	3 Successfully used strategy more than a few times	I will keep listening for prompts but start communication on my own too
4	Use vocabulary around numbers in activities and transition times	7 I automatically use this strategy in multiple situations	I find myself looking at the situation to find more ways of putting more vocabulary and building on it

3. "Taking on the challenge"

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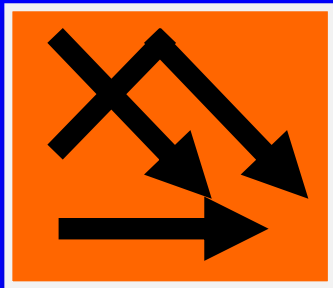
- Approximately 35%

- Teachers selected strategy at day 1 and then and reported on a strategy.

- Ratings were lower, the same, or a higher rating followed by a lower rating.

- Variations due to altering activity between training activities , made activity more complex or tangential.

- Or came to understand the concept better but realized they were not as skilled as originally thought

Strategy: Working on patterns

Day	What did I do?	Rating	What will I do next?
2	Gave parents pattern ideas to do at home. Sorting patterns. Things they can use that are available.	8 Automatically use strategy in multiple situations and teach others	Take to my classroom
3	Children made patterns suing stickers of two different colors	4 Automatically use strategy in certain situations	Incorporate new patterns
4	I had children make patterns using animals. First children sorted out by animal characteristics, and then made a pattern using sea animals	3 Use strategy but not as often as I would like	Keep doing this

Feasibility of Approach

Advantages

- Participants report on progress at 3 pts in time
- Quantitative/Qualitative component
- Incorporates reflection and levels of use

Disadvantages

- Data management
- Analysis time
- Complete/Incomplete data

Challenges: Use

- How can the process be useful to training participants, trainers and the program?

- What are alternatives?

- Is this approach meaningful/valid to the funders?

Challenges: Quality

- What levels of use are meaningful to all?

- How can stages of concern be addressed?

- Are practices described truly different from what teachers were doing before?

- Are differences in practice due to the training or due to other experiences?