Evaluating The Impact of Training Programs: Simple Surveys Are Not Enough!

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AEA 2011 – Anaheim, CA
November 4, 2011

Why Evaluate?

- Training is a universally necessary activity, but is time-consuming and costly
- Valid, reliable data
- Increase effectiveness of existing training programs
- Reduce costs and increase performance

Business as usual…

- What do we typically assess?
- BUT → What do we really want to know?
- Method "mismatch"

Kirkpatrick's Levels

Level	Corresponding Measurement
Reaction	•What does the learner feel about the training?
Learning	•What facts, knowledge, etc., did the learner gain?
Behavior	•What skills did the learner develop, that is, what new information is the learner using on the job?
Results	•What results occurred, that is, did the learner apply the new skills to the necessary tasks in the organization and, if so, what results were achieved?

Limitations of “reaction” measures

- Assessment of participant enjoyment versus substantive learning
- Passive versus active learning
- Short-term effects only
- No valid, reliable data

Effective Training Evaluation is Multifaceted

- **Components of an Effective Evaluation Program** (* modified from Kirkpatrick, 1979)
  - Needs Assessment*
  - **Reaction** (Most training evaluation starts and stops here)
  - Learning
  - Behavior
  - Results
- **Short and long-term impact assessment at both individual and org/systems-level**

Examples and Lessons Learned

NIMH Adult Cross-Training (AXT) Curriculum Project

- A cross-training for mental health, substance abuse, and criminal justice professionals and consumers in 9 counties across the U.S.
- **Purpose**: to develop integrated strategies (*Action Plan*) to better identify and respond to the needs of adults with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders in contact with the criminal justice system

AXT Evaluation Design

- **Pre-Training Site Visit**
- **Post-Training Evaluation Form**
- **Post-Training Focus Group**
- **Knowledge Questionnaire**
  (Pre- and Post-Training)
- **Follow-up Site Progress Reports (Systems-level)**
  (6 and 10 months)
- **Follow-up Phone Interviews (Person-level)**
  (2 and 12 months)

Going Beyond "Reaction"

Level	Corresponding Measurement
Needs Assessment	•Pre-training Site Visit with Key Stakeholders
Reaction	•Post-training Evaluation Form •Post-training Focus Group
Learning	•Pre/Post Knowledge Questionnaire
Behavior	•Person-level Follow-up Phone Interviews (2 and 12 months)
Results	•Systems-level Follow-up Site Progress Reports (6 and 10 months)

Pre-Training Site Visit

- **Purpose:** **Needs Assessment**
  - Identify system gaps in advance
  - Interact with site Planning Committee members (agency directors, administrators) from core cross-system agencies
  - Identify key site-specific issues in advance
  - Visit one or more facilities (e.g., jail, treatment center)

Post-Training Evaluation Form

- **Purpose**: **Short-Term Reaction**
  - Evaluate the overall strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, as well as assess the curriculum content and process
- **Administered to all training participants**
- **Used to inform the Post-Training Focus Group**

Post-Training Focus Group

- Purpose: Short-Term Reaction
  - Evaluate the ***content*** and ***delivery*** of the training curriculum sessions on site; within **1-2 weeks** following training
  - Perceptions of training content and process
  - Preliminary impressions of training helpfulness
  - Suggested changes to training program
- **8 participants; cross-section from training**

Knowledge Questionnaire

- **Purpose:** **Short-Term Learning**
  - Pre- and post-training to assess participants level of knowledge in key content areas of the curriculum both ***prior to*** and ***following*** the training.
- **Administered to Focus Group Participants only (due to OMB restrictions)**

Follow-up Phone Interviews (2 and 12 months)

- **Purpose**: **Short- and Long-term Behavior**
  - Evaluate the **person-level impact** of the training and the **implementation** of the *Action Plan*
- **Key informants from each system identified**
- **2 Month Phone Interview *exploratory***
- **12 Month Phone Interview *tailored* based on Follow-up Site Progress Reports**

Follow-up Site Progress Reports (6 and 10 months)

- **Purpose**: **Short- and Long-Term Results**
  - Evaluate the **systems-level** **impact** of the training and the **implementation** of the *Action Plan*
- **Key informants from each system identified**

NIMH Suicide Prevention Training Curriculum Project

- A training for "justice system professionals"
- Delivered in 14 communities across the U.S.

Purpose:

- Increase awareness of suicide risk factors
- Address issues related to referring to mental health professionals for further assessment
- Provide a practical model for taking action to prevent suicide

Suicide Training Evaluation Design

- **Pre-Training Conference Call**
- **Post-Training Evaluation Form**
- **Post-Training Focus Group**
- **Modified "Knowledge" Questionnaire**
  (Pre- and Post-Training)
- **Follow-up Phone Interviews (Person-level; some Agency-level)**

Going Beyond "Reaction"

Level	Corresponding Measurement
Needs Assessment	•Pre-training conference call with Key Stakeholders
Reaction	•Post-training Evaluation Form •Post-training Focus Group
Learning	•Modified Pre/Post Knowledge Questionnaire
Behavior	•Modified Pre/Post Knowledge Questionnaire •Person-level Follow-up Phone Interviews (3 months)
Results	•Person-level Follow-up Phone Interviews (3 months)

Pre-Training Conference Call

- **Purpose**: **Needs Assessment**
  - Identify key systems issues in advance
  - Interact with site contacts and key stakeholders (agency directors, administrators) from core agencies
  - Identify key local site-specific issues in advance

Post-Training Evaluation Form

- **Purpose:** **Short-Term Reaction**
  - Evaluate the overall strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, as well as assess the curriculum content and process
- **Administered to all training participants**
- **Used to inform the Post-Training Focus/Discussion Group**

Post-Training Focus Group

- **<u>Purpose</u>: Short-Term Reaction**
  - Evaluate the ***content*** and ***delivery*** of the training curriculum sessions on site, directly following training session
  - Perceptions of training content and process
  - Preliminary impressions of training helpfulness
  - Suggested changes to training program
- **Variety of participants; cross-section from training; some self-selected**

Knowledge/Behavior/Attitude Change Questionnaire

- **Purpose:** **Short-Term Learning; Behavior**
  - Assess participants' level of knowledge in key content areas of the curriculum
  - Assess participants' ability to apply skills (behavior change)
  - Attitudes regarding key concepts – correlated with behavior change?
- **Administered to all participants** ***prior to*** and ***following*** the training.

Follow-up Phone Interviews (3 months)

- **Purpose**: **Longer-term Behavior; Results & Agency-level Results**
  - Evaluate the **person-level** **impact** of the training
  - **Implementation** of the *Personal Action Plan*
  - *Explore use of skills learned (as applicable)*
  - *Examine agency-level impact*
- **Key informants from each agency identified**

Evaluating Train-the-Trainer (TTT) Models

Train-the-Trainer Models

- Utilize some participant measures (Reaction/Learning)
  - Participant feedback form
  - Post-TTT focus/discussion group
  - Pre/post knowledge/attitudes questionnaire
- Add relevant evaluation questions

Train-the-Trainer Models

- Assess trainers' feelings of preparedness, confidence in abilities, comfort level with material, etc.
- Assess fidelity to training model – "gold" standard – during TTT and on-site (Behavior)
- Link/correlate on-site participant data with these trainer measures (Results)

Train-the-Trainer Models

- Follow-up with TTT participants post-local delivery (Results)
  - Did it work?
  - Was is adaptable?
  - Feedback/comments/suggestions

- Use results to inform ongoing QI loop

Conclusion

- Be creative and think outside the box
- Have hypothesis regarding expected results and use to guide evaluation (logic model)
- Assess <u>every</u> aspect of the training
- Use results to improve training program
- Examine goals and go beyond reaction measures!!!!

For more information…

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