



Success of a Delivery Method

Besides learning outcomes, what else is important to evaluate?

Educators consider other criteria besides learning outcomes when evaluating a learning experience. Also important is the degree to which learners find the delivery method of the instruction acceptable. If they don't accept it, both the likelihood of a successful educational experience and their return for a similar experience are diminished (Flagg, 1990).

How can you go about evaluating a delivery method in order to improve it? The initial step is to identify the current parts of the delivery process that contribute to learning (such as skill demonstrations by experts or role playing by participants) and then, ask participants to evaluate how well each part contributed to learning something specific. Consider the following evaluative question:

How well did the pruning demonstration by the tree surgeon prepare you to prune trees on your property damaged by the blizzard?

What this former question **does not** take into consideration however, is whether the participants think this live demonstration was the best way for them to learn this skill (Some participants might suggest, for instance, that it is hard to see exactly what is being shown because of the crowd of people at such a demonstration.). Thus, the second step for the evaluator is to verify that the demonstration *is* the best approach with this target audience and follow up with this question:

How effective was it for the instructor to use a demonstration by an expert to prepare you to prune trees?

You can round out the information you need for a decision with the third step. Include a question or two about other plausible approaches for teaching the skills and ask:

How effective would it be for the instructor to use videotapes to prepare you to prune trees?

OR

How effective would it be for the instructor to include hands-on experience to prepare you to prune trees?

For further reading, see: Flagg, B.N. (1990) *Formative evaluation for educational technologies*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Pub.

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