

Quick Tip 5.0

Basic Evaluation and Assessment Planning

Description: Instructional assessment and evaluation involves the systematic collection of data using accepted methods of analysis as a basis for drawing conclusions and making recommendations about instructional activities, innovations, or programs.

Suggested Uses of Instructional Assessment and Evaluation:

- **Instructional assessment** is the systematic examination of a particular aspect of instruction (e.g., content delivery method, testing approach, technological innovation) to determine its effect and how that aspect of instruction can be improved.
- **Instructional evaluation** is the more holistic examination of an instructional program including the program's environment, client needs, procedures, and instructional outcomes. Instructional program evaluations may be formative or summative.
 - **Formative evaluations** are conducted during the operation of an instructional program to provide information useful in improving implementation with a focus on instruction.
 - **Summative evaluations** are conducted at the end of an instructional program or program cycle to provide decision makers with judgments about the program's merit with a focus on making decisions about program continuation, termination, expansion, or adoption. Information gathered during a formative evaluation may be used to shape the summative evaluation.

Resource Requirements: The resources required for conducting instructional assessments or evaluations vary depending on the methods employed and how results are used. Generally, doing an assessment to improve instruction requires less time and fewer resources than do instructional program evaluations or research for publication. You will need to establish what resources are available to conduct your study such a length of time, staff availability, technology, data, and money prior to beginning.

How to Plan Instructional Assessments and Evaluations:

1. **Describe instructional context or program:** Descriptions convey the mission and objectives of the instructional activity, innovation or program and include information about its purpose, expected effects, available resources, program stage of development, and instructional context.
2. **Determine stakeholder needs:** Stakeholders are the individuals and organizations involved in program operations, those served or affected by the program, and the

intended users of the assessment or evaluation. Stakeholder needs generally reflect the central questions the stakeholders have about the instructional activity, innovation, or program. In an instructional setting, students are always important stakeholders.

3. **Determine evaluation purpose:** Identifying a clear purpose helps determine how the evaluation or assessment should be conducted. Three general purposes for instructional evaluations and assessments are to gain insight, change practices, and/or measure effects.
4. **Identify intended uses:** Intended uses are the specific ways assessment or evaluation results will be applied. They are the underlying goals of the assessment or evaluation and are linked to the central questions of the study that identify the specific aspects of the instructional activity, innovation or program to be examined. Additionally, whether results are used to improve instruction, evaluate an instructional project or program, or intended for publication influences both scope of the study and how data is gathered and analyzed.
5. **Create an evaluation plan:** The evaluation plan is a detailed description of how the assessment or evaluation will be implemented that includes identification of the resources available for implementing the plan, what information is to be gathered, the research method(s) to be used, how data is analyzed, a description of the roles and responsibilities of sponsors and evaluators, and a timeline for accomplishing tasks.

Additional Information:

Center for Disease Control Evaluation Working Group. *Steps in Program Evaluation*. <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/steps.htm> Retrieved March 15, 2004.

Joint Committee on Educational Evaluation, James R. Sanders (chair). 1994. *The Program Evaluation Standards: How to assess evaluation of educational programs*, 2nd ed. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA

Popham, James W. 1993. *Educational Evaluation*, 3rd ed. Allyn & Bacon: Boston.

Taylor-Powell E., Rossing B., Geran J. 1998. *Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the potential*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension.

University of Washington, Office of Educational Assessment. *Evaluation Planning Guide*. <http://www.washington.edu/oea/evaluatn.htm> Retrieved March 26, 2004.