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UPGRADING EVALUATION OF INSERVICE DELIVERY

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Evaluation is a bit like listening. As listening is commonly labeled the most neglected language art, evaluation is the most neglected component of inservice education. If it is included, the evaluation that's done tends to be one-dimensional. That is, it is usually summative (at the conclusion) and product-oriented (tangible results) instead of formative and process-oriented. Evaluation—if it is to be a worthwhile part of inservice or staff development—needs upgrading.

It is both desirable and feasible to design and implement procedures for multi-dimensional evaluation. First, we need to update our evaluation perspective. What are some current developments in educational evaluation that we can use to improve our inservice program evaluation in reading? Second, we need to think through some actual procedures for drafting evaluation measures. What will give us the most useful information? Third, we need to examine sample evaluation formats. What are their purposes in conjunction with inservice in reading?

Evaluation Update

Over the last ten years, there has been a resurgence of interest in qualitative methods of collecting information for decision-making. Interviewing, observing, note-taking, keeping anecdotal records and uncovering personal documents are among the techniques being employed. At the same time, there are growing reports of dissatisfaction with strictly quantitative evaluation methods (Cook and Reichardt, 1979). The results of these trends may be a positive effect on evaluation design. "Program evaluation can be strengthened when both approaches are integrated into an evaluation design (Cook and Reichardt, p. 45)."

Effective evaluation, according to Guba and Lincoln (1981), depends upon the usefulness of the results. They claim that this can be achieved through the combination of two elements: responsive evaluation and naturalistic methods. Simply put, evaluation must be based on the responses of those directly involved and it must use methods within the context of the natural, educational environment. Above all, evaluation must begin with real concerns.

Drafting Procedures

If, indeed, inservice delivery is to include evaluations that are useful, effective, and built on real concerns, careful

planning is essential. From the outset, from the conceptualization of goals for staff development, the evaluation process can be initiated. The sooner inservice leaders deal with evaluation procedures, the better, for timing is an important factor. Begin to incorporate evaluation into inservice programs before they are in final form. That's one logistic to take into account when drafting evaluation measures; here are some others:

- Pilot questions (in interview or questionnaire) before the inservice begins;
- Use the objectives of the program in composing items;
- Pay attention to the activities for implementation;
- Add, modify or delete sections after the inception of the program;
- Adapt ideas from other evaluation measures;
- Ask participants about the methods of evaluation as well as the inservice itself;
- Develop more than one type of measure.

Prototypes

Typically, inservice programs in reading limit evaluations to one major outcome, such as students' reading achievement scores. This is a product-orientation, one type of evaluation. Less frequently, are measures given to assess the participants' reactions to the ideas presented during the inservice. This is a process-orientation, a second type of evaluation. And almost no attention is paid to the way inservice leaders/speakers deliver those ideas. This is a personnel-orientation, a third type of evaluation.

Most reading professionals would agree that "multiple indicators of student performance can lead to effective decision making for instruction (Vacca, 1981, p. 279)." Why not expect multiple assessment of multiple outcomes in our inservice programs? Three types of evaluation formats follow. They were designed in conjunction with a two week summer institute on material development for vocabulary and concept training and growth.

Thirty elementary and middle grade teachers than piloted their own materials with small groups of children at the university campus school.

I. PRODUCT

Name _____ School _____

VOCABULARY AND CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation
of

Sample Materials Developed During Summer Institute

I. MATERIAL:

II. DATE IMPLEMENTED:

(I. PRODUCT evaluation continued)

III. CLASSROOM:

IV. STRENGTHS:

V. WEAKNESSES:

VI. MODIFICATIONS:

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

II. PROCESS

VOCABULARY AND CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Participant Evaluation of Institute Objectives and Activities

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1) Do you feel you were introduced to a step-by-step process for designing instructional materials? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 2) Do you feel that you were provided with the expertise and time to develop each technique/material for trial use? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 3) Do you feel that the techniques/materials you were provided with will be usable? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 4) Do you feel that these techniques/materials will help your students recognize relationships among concepts? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 5) Do you feel that these techniques/materials will help you establish an environment for vocabulary reinforcement in your classroom? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 6) Do you feel that these techniques/materials will help your students build vocabulary inquiry skills? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 7) Do you feel that these techniques/materials will create an interest and awareness in words? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 8) Are you committed to implementing some of these techniques/materials in your regular classroom? | yes no |
| Comments: | |

(II. PROCESS evaluation continued)

- 9) Do you feel the daily evaluations of materials helped you reflect on their usefulness? yes no
 Comments:

- 10) Do you feel the trial implementations at the University School helped you develop your expertise in implementing vocabulary and concept development exercises? yes no
 Comments:

III. PERSONNEL

Rating Scale for Staff Development Personnel

Directions: Appraise the staff developer's performance in the present assignment on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (you strongly disagree). Use the Remarks section for comments.

- A 1. Involves the participants actively in the topic.

1—2—3—4—5—6

- A 2. Relates the topic directly (through examples) to the classroom.

1—2—3—4—5—6

- A 3. Provides materials or ideas for materials useful in a classroom.

1—2—3—4—5—6

Remarks _____

- B 1. Displays a positive attitude and pleasant disposition.

1—2—3—4—5—6

- B 2. Is sensitive to the environment or dynamics within the group.

1—2—3—4—5—6

- B 3. Answers questions directly and patiently.

1—2—3—4—5—6

Remarks _____

- C 1. Is well-informed and well-organized.

1—2—3—4—5—6

- C 2. Has a purpose in mind and adheres to the task at hand.

1—2—3—4—5—6

- C 3. Conveys explanations clearly.

1—2—3—4—5—6

(III. PERSONNEL evaluation continued)

Remarks _____

D 1. Assessed the needs of the group in advance

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

D 2. Is cognizant of local organizational procedures and alternatives.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

Remarks _____

The delivery of inservice necessitates a great deal of preparation and attention to detail on the part of its leaders. One of those details is evaluation. If we learn from, rather than repeat, past mistakes, we'll build a multi-dimensional evaluation component into every inservice program.

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