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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/   yes   no
   material for trial use?
            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 ex-
    pertise 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 _____

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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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