

Designing with the End in Mind – Evaluation Considerations

By Jill Pattee, with input from the Evaluation Training Cohort (Stowe, Vermont in October 2019)

Below is a list of questions to consider as you design with evaluation in mind. You may ask them as self-reflection, or you may ask the learners and stakeholders to guide your designing and decision-making.

1. The People

A deep understanding of who will participate in the learning program and who will lead it; who are they as individuals and who are they as a group; what are they bringing into the room that may impact the design or the facilitation.

Evaluation Considerations:

- *Who will evaluate?*
- *Who will be evaluated?*
- *Are you evaluating learning, transfer, and/or impact?*
- *How will the people involved in this event or work determine the evaluation, such as power dynamics, previous experiences with evaluation, etc.?*
- *What will we need to consider when evaluating this unique group of individuals?*
- *Who needs to see the collected evaluation data to inform decision-making?*

2. The Situation

A description of the situation that is calling for this learning event or meeting; the complex rationale or need; a description of the here and now.

Evaluation Considerations:

- *What problem or challenge needs to change?*
- *What is happening at this time, that you hope will be different in the future?*

3. The Anticipated Change

A realistic vision of what will be different as a result of this joint learning experience, the desired impact.

Evaluation Considerations

- *What specific changes are hoped for as a result of the program¹?*
- *What tools will you use to evaluate impact? For the individual? For the work environment?*
- *When will you use these tools, and with whom?*
- *Who will you share this evidence/data with? Why?*

4. The Time and Timing

A detailed description of the time available for the learning, noting how this influences the possible amount and depth of content to be taught; what is important to note in the larger picture i.e. fiscal year, program implementation, learning cycle, holidays, etc.

Evaluation Considerations

- *What needs to be considered in the timing (events happening before or after the program) that will affect the evaluation?*
- *How is the evaluation timeline factored into the program timeline?*

5. The Place and Space

A decision on the best location to support the learning and a description of the limitation that the place might offer.

Evaluation Considerations (for learning):

- *What needs to be considered in how the place or space may affect a learning evaluation?*
- *How might the size of space or other factors affect the evaluation?*
- *What do you need to change about arrangement of furniture, seating, or other objects within the space to better-allow dialogue and evaluation?*

6. The Content

A carefully constructed set of skills, information, and perspectives to focus on in the learning; the knowledge, skills, or attitudes to be learned in the time available; the priority learning at this time for this group.

Evaluation Considerations:

- *What content to be learned is critical to evaluate?*
- *What would the learners, the facilitators and the organization most benefit from evaluating?*

7. Achievement Based Objectives (ABOs)

What the learning will do during the learning event to learn the needed content; how they will engage with the content to ensure learning and personalization of that learning.

Evaluation Considerations:

- *What do you need to see the learners do or say, so they know they know and you also know they know?*
- *What can the learners do to offer evidence of their learning or transfer?*
- *How will you collect/harvest this evidence?*

8. The Plan

All the learning tasks with the material for learners to engage successfully with them; all the instructions for learner with spaces and ways to personalize the learning.

Evaluation Considerations

- *What instructions are needed in the learning tasks to ensure the work is recorded and can be collected as evidence of learning or transfer?*
- *What learning task do you have that indicate to learning transfer? What evidence do you have for this? How will you document this?*
- *How will you communicate your plans to evaluate impact as a result of this work?*

Evaluating Transfer and Impact – Questions to Ask

By Evaluations Class Oct 2019; Stowe, VT

Evidence of Transfer

Who to ask: Learner

- *What first step will you take to change your learning? When will you do this? With whom will you do this with or to whom will you be accountable?*
- *Who will benefit the most when you start applying this knowledge or skill?*
- *What do you anticipate will make the greatest impact on your practice?*
- *Name one person you will ask to support your learning transfer? Take out your phone and text them right now to arrange a conversation about this.*
- *Name one co-worker you want to share 1-2 aspects of this event? Write them their name down and when you will talk to them about this*
- *What support do you need to try this new skill at home? Write 1 support you will seek out and when.*
- *What aspects of our work together can you apply starting tomorrow? Write 2 of these on the card given to you and slip it in your wallet as a reminder.*

Evidence of Impact

Who to ask: Learner, supervisor, coworkers, stakeholders

- *What changes have you seen as a result of applying the learning?*
- *How did this impact come to be? What did you do to encourage it?*
- *What did you do differently as a result of the course? How does this change feel?*
- *What difference did this change make on other aspects of your work/life?*
- *What from the workshop do you use most often in your role? What else?*
- *What did you try in your community? How did it go? Did anything change?*
- *What aspect of your learning XX months ago has had the biggest impact on your work/community/life? What evidence do you see of this?*

¹Vella, Jane, Paula Berardinelli, Jim Burrow; *How do they know they know: Evaluating Adult Learning*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 1998.