Chapter 97
Evaluating and Funding the Professional Development Program

Christine L. Mark
Lander University, USA

ABSTRACT

Professional development programs must have an organized process of evaluation, either formally or informally. The evaluation needs to be delivered in both micro and macro settings. In the micro setting, the evaluator monitors the overall atmosphere of the learning environment and the performance of the participants while training is taking place. In the macro setting, which consists of the teacher's classroom, the evaluation needs to determine whether the teacher is actually using the knowledge gained during professional development to improve/impact student learning outcomes. In order for professional development to be effective, professional development programs should never be delivered and then forgotten. Further, locating funding and support are important due to the state of economic crisis and budget cuts. School districts have to look for creative ways to fund and support successful professional development programs. Some of these include developing technology resource centers, looking for federal and state funds, and looking toward individuals and corporations to help support and fund programs.

INTRODUCTION

To this point, the book has covered considerable ground in discussing professional development as it relates to practitioners in the schools, namely in K-20 in general, and technology educators in specific. In the past, professional development, in its wide variety of iterations and forms, has been mainly a matter of attendance and participation, without any assessment or verification involved according to Wayne, Yoon, Cronen, and Garet (2008). Indeed, as Desimone (2011) pointed out, "For decades, studies of professional development focused mainly on teacher satisfaction, attitude change, or commitment to innovation, rather than professional development's results or the processes

that make it work" (p.68). Clearly, the time may have come for a change in ideology concerning the way professional development is constructed and delivered.

In the first section of this chapter, the evolving issues concerning the assessment and evaluation of professional development are investigated. Issues such as the historical experience with professional development evaluation, the question of whether professional development should be evaluated, methods of evaluation, and benefits of evaluation are discussed. These issues are addressed along with opinions, research-based findings, and expert knowledge in light of the fact that little is known about the evaluation process (Hensley, Smith, & Thompson, 2003).

Researchers such as Lawless and Pellegrino (2007), Koster, Dengerink, Korthagen, and Lunenberg (2008), and MacDonald (2008) have written about issues related to new models of professional development for technology integration and a variety of emerging concepts, questions, and answers. For example, Koster (2008) and his co-authors highlighted that "teacher educators, participating in this procedure, prefer the development of their knowledge and skills over the development of their attitudes and beliefs" (p. 567), which then requires a systematic evaluation to determine efficacy. Lawless and Pellegrino (2007) point out the importance of a unified professional development evaluation plan coupled with direct observation. MacDonald (2008) further emphasizes the need for design-based research as a foundation of professional development evaluation. In other words, these researchers agree that emerging models of technology-based professional development will require structured qualitative or quantitative evaluative plans targeted to specific skill and knowledge acquisition.

In difficult economic times, professional development finds itself squeezed between the real necessity to train educators and administrators in emerging technology, and the financial realities of dwindling taxpayer dollars and increasing demands for resources. This dichotomy seemingly creates a no-win situation in that administrators may want, and even demand, clear evaluation of professional development provided to teachers and staff, but concurrently lack the funds to do so. Even if funds are available, many schools lack minimum levels of technology (and staff) for instructional use, let alone testing of what has been considered an ancillary activity (Guskey, 2000).

The second section of this chapter investigates another dichotomy, which is funding and locating resources for professional development. How can administrators fund both quality professional development and its concomitant evaluation and review? How can administrators work to secure both the equipment and staff necessary for professional development delivery and evaluation? What issues are arising concerning the decline of resources in the face of more demand for accountability? These questions will be discussed along with opinions, research-based findings, and expert knowledge.

To emphasize the importance of allocating appropriate funds and resources, Harvard Family Research Project published a winter 2011 edition of *The Evaluation Exchange* solely centered on the issue of professional development. Indeed, several of the nationally known researchers' and writers' contributions have been used in this chapter to bolster the importance of professional development to the educational Framework of the 21st century. As Heather Weiss, Project Director, says in her introduction to the winter 2011 issue,

Although innovations like these are important, the bottom line for educators and other human service professionals is a positive impact on children and youth outcomes. Yet evidence of impact from professional development often goes unmeasured (Harvard Family Research Project, 2005/2006, p. 1).

19 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/evaluating-and-funding-the-professional-development-program/105335

Related Content

Future-Focused ePortfolios at Montana State University-Northern
Jonathon J. Richter (2006). *Handbook of Research on ePortfolios (pp. 551-557).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/future-focused-eportfolios-montana-state/20343

Designing an Adult Entrepreneurial Competency Learning Strategy: An Autoethnography
Nirupama Akellaand Nirupama Akella (2023). *Motivation and Momentum in Adult Online Education (pp. 159-178).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/designing-an-adult-entrepreneurial-competency-learning-strategy/322690

Introducing Information and Communication Technology Training for Rural Women in South Africa: Innovative Strategies for the Advancement of Livelihoods
Sampson Tawiahand Itumeleng I. Setlhodi (2020). *International Journal of Adult Education and Technology (pp. 45-59).*
www.irma-international.org/article/introducing-information-and-communication-technology-training-for-rural-women-in-south-africa/245817

Characteristics of Career and Technical Education Faculty across Institutions of Higher Education in the United States
Edward C. Fletcher Jr. (2018). *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology (pp. 42-58).*
www.irma-international.org/article/characteristics-of-career-and-technical-education-faculty-across-institutions-of-higher-education-in-the-united-states/198367

The Use of Web 2.0 Technologies in the ESL Classroom
Melissa Wrightand Lilian H. Hill (2011). *Encyclopedia of Information Communication Technologies and Adult Education Integration (pp. 102-117).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/use-web-technologies-esl-classroom/43420