

Effective Program Evaluation



Research Foundation for SUNY/Buffalo State College
Center for Development of Human Services Research and Evaluation Group



The Research and Evaluation Group evaluates social services training conducted by the Center and other training providers across New York State, regularly evaluating over 5,000 trainings each year. Evaluators also conduct research studies related to training, social services, and education.

Evaluation Services

Participant Reaction Surveys

Participants use a rating scale to indicate their satisfaction with components of an event. Evaluations can be used to measure trainings, conferences, workshops, or webinars.

Test Development

Evaluators collaborate with trainers and subject matter experts to develop test items related to specific objectives in the curriculum. Item analysis is conducted on pilot and regular deliveries.

Follow-up Surveys

Ninety days after a training, a survey is sent to participants and their supervisors to gauge how well participants have been able to transfer the knowledge and skills gained from training into their work. Barriers to learning transfer can be uncovered.

Needs Assessments

Prospective trainees rate their need for training in topics relevant for their work.

Ad Hoc Surveys

Survey questions are tailored to examine a topic of interest. A targeted sample of a population can be drawn to focus responses.

Text Analysis

Text analysis software is used to cull themes and patterns from written source materials such as open-ended comments.

Proposal Evaluations

Evaluators develop logic models and identify evaluation methodology to support grant proposals.

Training Evaluation Model

Four Levels of Evaluation*

Level	Description	Question	Measure
1	Trainee Reaction	What did participants think of the training?	Reaction Survey
2	Learning Gain	Did participants learn the course material?	Pre/Post Test
3	Transfer of Learning	Did participants apply the skills on the job?	Self assessment, supervisor ratings
4	Impact	Did training improve the organization's effectiveness?	Quality/outcome measures, cost benefit/ROI studies

* Adapted from D.L. Kirkpatrick. (1994). *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Data-Driven Analysis of Training Programs

Data collection is automated using the following methods:

Web-based Data Entry

Surveys and tests can be conducted online. Links can be embedded in webinars or multi-media learning environments.

Remote Clickers

PADs (Personal Assessment Devices) are wireless data entry devices similar to a television remote control.

Paper Scansheets

Evaluators use TELEform software to produce customized, scannable answer sheets. Completed sheets can be emailed to CDHS and read as a pdf by TELEform.

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