

TITLE Evaluation of Adult Education Programs, California Adult Education.

INSTITUTION California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento.

PUB DATE 79

NOTE 12p.

AVAILABLE FROM Publication Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802 (\$1.50)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.

DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Adult Education Programs; *Evaluation Criteria; Learning Motivation; *Program Evaluation; *Student Evaluation

ABSTRACT

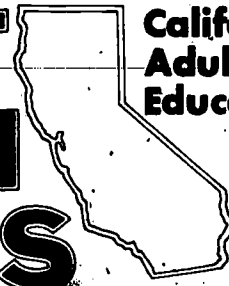
To assist adult educators in finding meaningful ways to measure the effectiveness of instruction, this monograph provides selected illustrations of specific methods used by adult education instructors to verify student learning. Obtained from teachers in the field, the examples are from programs in (1) dental assisting, (2) instrument pilot ground school, (3) legal secretary training, (4) introduction to psychology, (5) family food preparation, (6) nursing assistant, (7) homemaking: sewing for the handicapped, (8) creative writing, (9) licensed vocational nurse training, (10) career exploration, (11) ceramics, (12) retail baking, (13) English as a second language, (14) school advisory committee, (15) pediatrics for parents, (16) consumer nutrition, (17) sewing with knits, (18) physical fitness (handicapped), (19) reading, writing, and arithmetic (elementary grades one through five), (20) United States history, (21) piano and organ, (22) cultural heritage of California, (23) English grammar and composition (high school subjects laboratory), (24) United States history (individualized laboratory class), (25) fine arts, and (26) childbirth education. (CSS).

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EVALUATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

California
Adult
Education



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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Distributed under the provisions of the
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1979

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Preface

Program evaluation in education is a little bit like Mark Twain's quip about the weather. "Everybody talks about it, but no one does anything about it." This statement may be an overgeneralization, but it probably is not too far from the truth. Many educators have been reluctant to become involved with evaluation because we have been taught to believe that it consists of little more than cold, statistical procedures. However, in this publication we have attempted to make evaluation a much simpler process. The suggestions, information, and advice offered are designed for immediate use.

Adult educators who have a real desire to provide quality instruction and effective learning situations should find the examples presented herein of great value. However, those looking for statistical procedures or the classical evaluation designs may not profit directly from the materials. But many will be pleased with the practical nature of the materials and their value in motivating the student.

We are indebted to the teachers who contributed the examples of evaluation techniques and to Lee Clark, Director of the Metropolitan Adult Education School, San Jose, who collected the techniques and prepared other written materials for this publication.

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Contents

	Page
Preface	iii
Reasons for Evaluating Adult Education Programs	1
Confirmation of Student Learning	3
1. Dental Assisting	3
2. Instrument Pilot Ground School	3
3. Legal Secretary Training	3
4. Introduction to Psychology	3
5. Family Food Preparation	4
6. Nursing Assistant	4
7. Homemaking: Sewing for the Handicapped	4
8. Creative Writing	4
9. Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) Training	4
10. Career Exploration	4
11. Ceramics	4
12. Retail Baking	5
13. English as a Second Language	5
14. School Advisory Committee	5
15. Pediatrics for Parents	5
16. Consumer Nutrition	5
17. Sewing with Knits	5
18. Physical Fitness (Handicapped)	6
19. Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic (Elementary Grades One Through Five) ...	6
20. United States History	6
21. Piano and Organ	6
22. Cultural Heritage of California	6
23. English Grammar and Composition (High School Subjects, Laboratory)	6
24. United States History (Individualized Laboratory Class)	6
25. Fine Arts	7
26. Childbirth Education	7

Reasons for Evaluating Adult Education Programs

In admonishing educators to prepare sound instructional goals and objectives, author Robert Mager humorously noted in his book, *Preparing Instructional Objectives*, that "If you don't know where you're going, you may end up someplace else." Failure to prepare plans for systematic evaluation presents the possibility that "you may end up not knowing where you've been." Evaluation has to be a commonplace occurrence during the life of an adult education program if it is to be more than a fad or mere compliance with administrative dictum.

A few of the answers to the question "Why evaluate the adult education program?" are as follows:

1. To determine whether adults are gaining specific benefits from their investment of time, money, and energy in classes
2. To motivate students through the use of feedback information that keeps them apprised of their progress
3. To measure whether individual courses and total program services justify the present level of expenditures

4. To increase the effectiveness of the general planning and implementation of instructional programs
5. To differentiate between satisfactory and marginal results of classroom instruction
6. To derive factual information about the total program effort for use in conveying a positive view of adult education to boards of education, legislators, and taxpayers who provide funding
7. To instill confidence in adult educators so that their mission is truly worth the energy and enthusiasm they expend

Since evaluation and accountability are complementary activities, a programwide policy should be developed by adult education schools, followed by the preparation of specific evaluation procedures. Such policy should clearly explain the why as well as the how and the where of evaluation. Examples of evaluation techniques which may be copied or modified to suit the purpose of the user are provided in the following section.

Confirmation of Student Learning

Adult educators have at times speculated that the most meaningful way to measure the effectiveness of instruction is to ask the question, "Are the students still learning?" While no one can fault this method of determining the value of a class, it must be understood that attendance is only one indication of student interest and progress.

Confirmation of student learning is a demanding as well as a difficult task to complete on a program-wide basis. This effort requires the cooperation of all staff members, not just the teachers. Often, the method for determining student learning is confined to the use of a pencil-and-paper testing approach. But in most cases the task requires much more, including different devices, schemes, and methods with which to verify skills developed and to substantiate attitudinal changes. The task also involves finding out whether student learning gains have been put into practice.

The following examples are selected illustrations of the methods used by adult education instructors to confirm student learning. They were obtained from the field, with minor editing to insure the possibility of adaptation by others. They should review the many different types and methods and determine which may be applied in his or her particular situation.

Dental Assisting—Dental assisting on-the-job training is an individualized approach to both the teaching and evaluating of results. Emphasis is placed on accuracy in observing and recording so that the student achieves a job level competency as soon as possible.

The evaluation procedure consists of having the student perform various required skills such as exposing X-ray films in the patient's mouth, preparing the patient for local anesthetic, and handling X-rays and other medical instruments. The instructor will record the level of proficiency and discuss areas of need with the student trainee.

Instrument Pilot Ground School—Preparing for the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) written test requires the memorization of large amounts of factual information as well as the ability to recall

and think under pressure. An important goal of evaluation is practice in taking tests.

The evaluation procedure consists of frequent written quizzes to test the student's ability to memorize and recall Federal Air Regulations. The student is required to fill in from memory the numbers left off in airspace altitude blocks. All of the quizzes are corrected and given to the student for future reference. In addition, the quizzes are discussed in class.

3. **Legal Security Training**—The student's level of achievement must be known at the beginning of the course so that appropriate instruction and evaluation can be provided. Determination of progress on an individual basis helps the student complete the course at his or her own pace. The student's success on the job after placement is usually monitored.

The evaluation procedure consists of obtaining background information from each student at the beginning of the semester. The instructor provides individualized progress examinations on various subject matter. Students are given an optional final examination which they use to grade themselves, followed by classroom discussion. As the students are placed in various jobs, the employers are polled to ascertain the quality of the student's performance during the first three months of employment.

Introduction to Psychology—The introduction to psychology consists of a series of projects which are appraised in terms of practical application. The review and feedback to the student are the essential elements of evaluation.

The evaluation procedure consists of six hours of instruction on behaviorism and its application, after which the students are given four weekly projects with which to experiment with behavior modification techniques. The instructor evaluates the weekly progress reports and offers suggestions for improvement. At the end of four weeks, the students combine their weekly efforts into a final project report, which is reviewed and graded by the instructor.

5. *Family Food Preparation*—Family food preparation deals mainly with preparing food and demonstrating cooking skills. Both instructor observations and peer group consensus are valuable in measuring the student's success.

The evaluation procedure consists of the student preparing a nutritious and economical meal during the last session of a seven-week course while being observed by the instructor. Each student must create two or three original recipes which involve using his or her shopping skills, knowledge of nutrition, and so forth. The instructor notes how well the student uses the meat cleaver and other kitchen tools to cut meat and vegetables. Also, the instructor determines whether each student has the food arranged in the proper order for cooking. The ultimate test is whether the student is able to consume his or her own cooking.

6. *Nursing Assistant*—The nursing assistant's skills and growth on the job are evaluated. Helping the trainee to measure his or her personal commitment to nursing is as important as helping him or her pass the licensing test.

The evaluation procedure consists of having the students prepare their own set of goals in the first week of instruction. As the course progresses over a period of six weeks, the students are asked to modify their goals. At the final examination they are asked to answer the following questions.

1. What were your goals when you entered this program?
2. Have you changed your mind about any of the goals? If so, how?
3. Which of your goals have you achieved?
4. If you did not achieve some goals, what could have been done to help you accomplish them?
5. What do you intend to do with your knowledge, skills, and capabilities? That is, what are your goals for the future?

The instructor reviews the final statement and has an interview with each student before graduation. The extent of growth in commitment and confidence is calculated, recorded, and discussed with the student.

7. *Homemaking: Sewing for the Handicapped*—The instructor must give close attention to each step in this method if he or she is to be successful in teaching the handicapped student.

The evaluation procedure consists of teaching handicapped persons practical sewing skills in a step-by-step fashion. Each student is required to bring to class a garment which needs mending. The instructor demonstrates the required skills, including sewing on buttons, and then reviews each stu-

dent's progress. The students must demonstrate fundamental skills such as threading needles, tying a knot, and so forth. The progress of each student is noted and charted to verify his or her gains.

8. *Creative Writing*—Creative writing involves group appraisal of student performance by means of a critique. This kind of approach helps individuals in working towards getting into print something he or she has written.

The evaluation procedure consists of having students prepare papers for presentation in class. Certain students are selected to make a presentation for analysis and evaluation by the instructor and other members of the class. Any suggested revisions are made homework assignments. Specific problems of each student are recorded by the instructor for future reference.

9. *General Vocational Nurse (LVN) Training*—The purpose of LVN training is to minimize potential mistakes in patient care. Preassessment is as vital a final evaluation of student competency.

The evaluation procedure consists of having the students sit in a circle each morning during the first half hour of class and individually state how they will care for an assigned patient. The care proposed by the student is criticized by the instructor and other class members. After the student has completed the assigned clinical experience, the instructor assesses the competency of the care given by him or her.

10. *Career Exploration*—Career exploration causes students to compare their learning status with the norms established by the instructor. Progress, as determined by self-evaluation, moves the students toward a valuable and worthwhile career.

The evaluation procedure consists of having the instructor illustrate six phases of the process for making a career choice at least three or more times during the course. These phases include: (1) utter chaos; (2) no satisfactory alternatives; (3) several satisfactory alternatives; (4) alternatives narrowed to two or three possibilities; (5) direction to try; and (6) concrete decision. The instructor records the progress of the students as they demonstrate that they have achieved each phase. Students who lag behind are given special assistance.

11. *Ceramics*—Ceramics, as a skill, is useful only if it enables the student to create interesting and desired articles. The final product requires the joint approval of the student and the instructor.

The evaluation procedure consists of having each student submit one finished ceramics work for a critique by the instructor. Students are encouraged to ask for a progress appraisal during the preliminary steps in learning ceramics.

12. *Retail Baking*—Employers such as bakeries, restaurants, institutions, and so forth require that prospective employees be proficient in retail baking. Therefore, clear evidence of the student's imagination and mechanical ability must be verified by the instructor.

The evaluation procedure consists of giving each student a course outline with objectives and outcomes at the beginning of each class. Each student is required to demonstrate safe and sanitary methods for using equipment and hand tools. Every fourth week the students must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the instructor the manipulative skills they have learned in class. Students who do not meet the objectives are assigned to students who are proficient in these skills. Both a final written test and a practical exercise are given by the instructor before he or she issues a certificate of proficiency to the student.

13. *English as a Second Language*—English as a second language provides an open door to American life and an invitation to hundreds of other specific opportunities. Together, the students and the instructors search for distinct gains in learning. Two evaluation procedures are suggested.

The first evaluation procedure consists of giving each student a picture for use in writing an essay. In the beginning the student will only name the recognizable things in the picture. Later, the student will use complete sentences to tell about the action. Finally, the student will inject personal feelings about what is happening in the picture into his or her writing. These exercises become a record of the student's progress and are kept in a special journal maintained by the teacher. Each entry is updated and errors are corrected by the instructor or an aide.

In the second evaluation procedure, the instructor tapes a brief conversation with new students at the beginning of each class. The taped conversations are reviewed every two or three months and compared with new tapes so that the students' progress can be evaluated by the instructor. The instructor should keep a written record of the number of students who achieve satisfactory progress on the basis of individual expectations and course objectives.

14. *School Advisory Committee*—Making school advisory committees work helps individuals become aware of their potential for serving the community without soliciting direct personal benefits. Since knowledge and ideas are reflected in attitudes, the instructor must guide the evaluation process with skill and understanding.

The evaluation procedure consists of having the class members, at the first class session, rate their knowledge and ability on a scale of 1 to 7 in ten information and skill categories listed in the course objectives as most critical to becoming an effective school advisory committee member. Those with no experience will have to estimate their skills. During the course, the instructor questions individuals and groups about their progress and keeps a record of their responses. At the final session, the students again rate themselves on the ten items. These ratings are then compared with the first ratings. Where there are changes in the ratings, it should be indicated whether they resulted from course activities, other experiences, or both. The goal is progress in the ten information and skill areas that is consistent with the stated objectives.

15. *Pediatrics for Parents*—Pediatrics for parents encourages solutions by and for parents through practical problems. Continual scouting of the proceedings by the instructor is essential to evaluating outcomes.

In the evaluation procedure, the instructor checks regularly to make sure that there is general understanding of the subject matter, which often includes many new and somewhat confusing ideas. Situation cards are given to small groups at the beginning of a class. These groups discuss the problem entitled "What If It Happens To You?" Group reports with answers to the problem are fed back to the larger group for peer appraisal and discussion. This review often pinpoints erroneous assumptions and weak solutions. It also keeps the people tuned to reality rather than to textbook theory.

16. *Consumer Nutrition*—Consumer nutrition begins with knowing how to purchase food products. Finding suitable places for successful shopping requires a special assessment approach.

The evaluation procedure consists of having the students complete a survey in a real supermarket. The students evaluate the store's layout, products, pricing methods, and sanitation. When the visitation reports are given in class by the students, the instructor is able to compare the instructional unit with the actual and practical knowledge obtained from the visitation.

17. *Sewing with Knits*—Sewing with knits offers a kind of on-the-job upgrading of sewing skills. Since these skills often vary from student to student, evaluation must involve identifying individual gains.

The first step in the evaluation procedure is to assess the students' sewing skills. The instructor has each student bring a show-and-tell item that

was completed prior to the class for use as a criterion. The students analyze their own garments and determine their level of skill. At the end of each instructional unit, another garment is displayed on a show-and-tell basis and compared with the first garment. Being able to actually share their talents, as well as note their progress, is highly motivating to the students. It also provides the teacher with a continuing evaluation of the class.

18. Physical Fitness (Handicapped)—The physical fitness of the handicapped is difficult to appraise because progress is manifested in minute, tedious increments. Successful outcomes become apparent only through the painstaking efforts of the instructor.

The evaluation procedure consists of having the instructor take an 8 mm color movie film of each student during the initial sessions. The film is used as a record of individual abilities for given exercises. After a period of three to six months has elapsed, the individuals are refilmed. Both the film record and information about personal skills and performance are kept on file. The observations of the students and the instructor confirm how much the individuals have profited from the instruction. Another record of significance is the improved production within the workshop setting where actual jobs are completed. Characteristics such as coordination, stamina, strength, and improvement in output are noted.

19. Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic (Elementary Grades One Through Five)—In teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic in grades one through five, the instructor must deal with the real world if relevant competencies are to be attained in these subjects. Practical take-home-and-use exercises must be used to produce verifiable student skills.

The evaluation procedure consists of various projects such as filling out facsimiles of bank checks to evaluate student progress. The instructor looks for legible signatures as well as correctly formed letters and numbers. Original samples are kept and compared periodically with later samples for progress on the part of each student.

20. United States History—This effort consists of more than memorization of factual historical data. The student must have the opportunity to learn from this nation's successes and failures of the past. The question is "How do we know when our thinking involves gains in logic and insight?"

In the evaluation procedure, the students are challenged with an inquiry learning problem at the beginning of each class. At the end of each learning exercise, the students are required to write a short summary in which they outline the steps they selected

to use in solving the particular problem. The instructor keeps a written record for use in determining which students achieve satisfactory progress.

21. Piano and Organ—These musical instruments require a great deal of skill and practice. Progress with the instruments is appraised by an instructor-teacher team.

The evaluation procedure consists of having each student play a preassigned musical selection on the piano or organ every class period. The instructor and class members, acting as a peer group evaluation team, analyze the musical offering, giving both praise and constructive criticism. The members of the evaluation group should use correct terminology. After the performances have been appraised, the total group discusses a plan for corrective treatment.

22. Cultural Heritage of California—The cultural heritage of California is not only interesting and entertaining, but it also keeps us in touch with the past. Evaluating the student's knowledge and understanding of the past often requires a creative approach by the instructor.

The evaluation procedure consists of having the class review the promotional literature of an early California era to determine whether the students retain basic concepts or misconceptions about history. The literature used in the evaluation is designed to attract immigrants to the state. The students are then asked to develop their own one-page promotional flyer, which emphasizes in the appropriate language the unique qualities of a geographical area. The instructor scrutinizes each flyer to verify its authenticity and to compliment the students on their imagination and creativity.

23. English Grammar and Composition (High School Subjects Laboratory)—The student is able to challenge the various English grammar and composition grade levels by taking unit tests. The student's competencies and grade level accomplishments must be verified by the instructor.

The evaluation procedure consists of giving the student a test to determine the level of his or her course. The student is then given an appropriate course outline, which indicates that tests will be given at the end of each unit. These written tests are evaluated orally by the teacher, who may suggest necessary remedial work, if needed. If no additional help is needed, the student proceeds through the work and tests up to the final test. The student must pass the final test before he or she can receive a grade and credit. All of the student's work and grades are recorded on his or her work sheet.

24. United States History (Individualized Laboratory Class)—The individualized laboratory class

helps the students to realize success through personal/individual efforts and frequent consultations with the instructor. Through careful organization and guided application, the students can obtain immediate feedback of their learning outcomes.

The evaluation procedure consists of presenting each student with an outline of the course goals and objective upon his or her arrival at the class. The course is divided into nine consecutive units, each of which must be mastered before the student can progress to the next unit. After the student completes study of the first unit, he or she can take a practice test. Together, the student and the instructor correct and review the practice test. During these student/instructor discussion meetings, the student's progress in conceptual analysis is evaluated and recorded. (If necessary, the student takes remedial prescriptive work, using aids such as filmstrips and cassette tapes.) After additional study, if necessary, the final unit test, which contains both objective and essay-type questions, is administered, and the student's progress is recorded.

25. *Fine Arts*—Students who fearfully explain that they can't even draw a straight line often enroll in fine arts classes of various types and categories. Helping these people to become creative requires not only a well-organized instructional program but also a system for measuring and communicating student gains.

The evaluation procedure consists of giving the students a statement of goals at the first session.

The students then plan out an evaluation schedule, dividing the semester into achievement blocks for the purpose of assessing their own growth and improvement. At these sessions a critique is held during which the instructor guides the students in an evaluation process, making constructive criticism and helpful suggestions. Photographs could be taken at the sessions for future study. At the conclusion of the course, the students make a presentation in which they discuss technique, composition, theme, and achievement of their own personal goals as well as their future expectations.

26. *Childbirth Education*—Childbirth education must provide some kind of results if it is to receive the support of doctors and other health care professionals. Effective evaluation techniques help to keep such an instructional program current.

The evaluation procedure consists of evaluating the student's ability to perform learned tasks. The instructor is continually checking the student's performances of exercises or infant care techniques. The overall evaluation of the course is done in writing by the students the last night of each series. The students evaluate what they learned in class in relation to their ability to perform in labor by filling out and mailing a Labor and Delivery Evaluation Form to the teacher. Students also return to a "graduate's night" (with their new babies) to discuss with the current class how the behavioral objectives established in class were of practical use to them during labor.

Other Publications Available from the Department of Education

Evaluation of Adult Education Programs is one of approximately 400 publications that are available from the California State Department of Education. Some of the more recent publications or those most widely used are the following:

Administration of the School District Risk Management Program (1977)	\$ 2.50
An Assessment of the Writing Performance of California High School Seniors (1977)	2.75
Attendance and Enrollment Accounting and Reporting (1977)	2.80
Bibliography of Instructional Materials for the Teaching of French (1977)	1.50
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Bicycle Rules of the Road in California (1977)	1.50
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† California Master Plan for Special Education (1974)	1.00
California Private School Directory, 1978	5.00
California Public School Directory, 1979	11.00
California Public Schools Selected Statistics, 1976-77 (1978)	1.00
California School Accounting Manual (1978)	1.65
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California School Lighting Design and Evaluation (1978)	.85
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Computers for Learning (1977)	1.25
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Genetic Conditions: A Resource Book and Instructional Guide (1977)	1.30
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* Handbook for Assessing an Elementary School Program (1978)	1.50
• Handbook for Reporting and Using Test Results (1976)	8.50
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*† Planning Handbook (1978)	1.50
Publicizing Adult Education Programs (1978)	2.00
Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Integrated Educational Programs (1978)	2.60
Science Framework for California Public Schools (1978)	1.65
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Social Sciences Education Framework for California Public Schools (1975)	1.10
State Guidelines for School Athletic Programs (1978)	2.20
* Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (1978)	1.50

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† Also available in Spanish, at the price indicated.

* Developed for implementation of AB 65.