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ABSTRACT

This guide describes a collaborative approach to high quality and relevant evaluation of a workplace basic skills program that can be carried out as part of normal program operations. It is designed for use by educators, union representatives, managers, supervisors, participating employees, and funders. The guide is organized into five phases. In each phase, the reader is presented with a series of steps and activities for an evaluation team to undertake. In phase I, the reader is provided with materials for the first two steps: to prepare for the role as facilitator of a collaborative evaluation process and to organize the team. Phase II covers planning a first round of evaluation activities through these four steps: identify who wants what information for what purpose, clarify program goals and indicators to examine in the summative evaluation, identify program components and quality standards to examine in the formative evaluation, and decide how to collect the information. Phase III provides materials for three steps in preparing to gather information: design information-gathering activities, field test instruments, and develop an action plan. Phase IV covers three steps in gathering, organizing, analyzing, and reporting information: gather and organize information, analyze the information and prepare a report, and report findings. Phase V focuses on two steps: take follow-up action and evaluate the evaluation. A bibliography lists 21 suggested readings. (YLB)

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Team Evaluation: A Guide for Workplace Education Programs

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CONTENTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The roots of this Guide have been nourished by a number of sources, and thanks and credit go to many people.

In a sense, the work of preparing this Guide was begun in the winter of 1986-87 under the auspices of the newly-formed Massachusetts Workplace Education Initiative (MWEI). The Initiative's original steering committee, a creative group of policy makers from three state government agencies who were committed to providing basic education support to workers in small businesses across the Commonwealth, decided to invest in a formative evaluation of its fledgling program.

Eight years ago, the literature on what we now know as "workplace education" was very thin. There were no national reports on the need to upgrade the skills of the American workforce, no guidelines on how to build a successful partnership between education and business and labor, few conferences where practitioners shared best practices. The Massachusetts policy innovators saw a value in carefully describing the different program models which were emerging across the state. This would be a way of building a useful body of knowledge for practitioners and policy makers alike. Although the membership of the Steering Committee has changed several times in the intervening years, the Initiative has maintained a strong commitment to evaluation in general and to developing a model of evaluation that suits the complexities of goals, practices, and players that comprise workplace education.

The MWEI piloted an early version of team-based evaluation in six programs in 1990-91, with support from the National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLP). In 1991-93, the Initiative -- again with assistance from the NWLP -- supported team-based evaluation in seventeen new sites.

In 1992-93, the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) further supported this work. A grant from the Institute, under whose auspices this Guide was written, gave us the opportunity to work more intensively with programs both in and outside of

Massachusetts than resources had previously allowed. It allowed us to refine and revise substantial portions of the team evaluation process and to critically assess what this process demands of on-site evaluation teams.

Under the NIFL grant, we also produced two companion documents. Team Evaluation: Case Studies from Seven Workplace Education Programs describes how our methodology played out in seven sites and summarizes the lessons we learned. The other document, Workplace Education: Stakeholders' Expectations, Practitioners' Responses, and the Role Evaluation Might Play, provides a larger context for our collaborative model. It presents an overview of the purposes for and approaches to workplace education, the current state of the art of evaluating workplace education programs, promising developments in the creation of new models of workplace education, and steps which stakeholders might take to strengthen the field.

MWEI, NWLP, and NIFL thus provided the context -- the soil -- in which the team evaluation process could take root, get nourished, and grow. Three important "roots" of this model were (1) those attempting to shift American workplaces to a team-based, high-performance model, (2) those ensuring that the new workplace is not only more efficient but more equitable, and (3) adult educators who have developed innovative, participatory approaches to literacy education. It is from those roots and within the above contexts that this new approach to evaluation and workplace education has grown.

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INTRODUCTION

Evaluating workplace education programs: The current state of the art

Evaluation is an organizational buzz word of the nineties. Schools, hospitals, businesses, private and publicly-funded social programs, even local, state, and federal governments are now talking about "quality standards," "continuous improvement," "indicators of success," and "cost-benefits." They do this in response to the call for quality management in all areas of national life, and, in a tight economy, to the need to justify to taxpayers and shareholders how their money is spent.

Workplace basic skills programs are developing a similar vocabulary. In a climate of anxiety about the capacity of American business to compete in the global marketplace, workplace basic skills programs are being rapidly organized and funded -- and then pressed by state, federal, and internal funders to determine if they are achieving desired results.

Historically, evaluation of these programs has been done in two ways: (1) internal, informal monitoring by instructors(perhaps with some input from program participants) and (2) by outside evaluators. Each scenario has its strengths and limitations.

Internal, informal evaluation has the advantage of providing in a timely way information which practitioners and learners can use to make sure the program is on track. One disadvantage of such internal evaluation has been that it often does not produce information deemed useful or reliable by other stakeholders like funders.

External evaluators potentially have the expertise and objectivity to conduct evaluations which provide useful, reliable information. The disadvantage, however, of putting responsibility for the evaluation function primarily in the hands of an outsider is that stakeholders who should be involved in monitoring the program are, at best, passive recipients of information developed by others rather than active "investigators." Stakeholders who potentially have much to gain from and contribute to the program instead have less

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understanding of the program's accomplishments and needs, and less "ownership" for the program.

In situations where evaluation is required by outside sources (like funders) and carried out by external evaluators, program staff sometimes view evaluation as irrelevant or an imposition. They do so because they feel the standards which outsiders use to evaluate programs have little relevance to how their programs actually operate, what they achieve, or how they can be improved.

Even if there is some general agreement that programs should focus primarily on improving worker job performance -- and often there is no such agreement -- the content of instruction and definitions of success vary dramatically from site to site. In a developing field like workplace education, evaluations which assume that the same standards will apply equally in different settings will be flawed. On one hand, such evaluations will not capture the richness and diversity of program operations; on the other, they will present an inaccurate picture of what is being achieved.

In situations where outside funding sources require program staff to generate information to report back to the funders, staff sometimes view evaluation as burdensome. Good evaluation takes time and requires skills and resources which staff either do not have or cannot spare. In most workplace basic skills programs, time and money are in short supply. Most educators, though skilled in assessing individual learners, are not trained in program evaluation, do not consider it part of their jobs, and are reluctant to take on evaluation without outside help.

Team evaluation as an alternative

The evaluation method presented in this Guide addresses these problems in existing approaches to evaluation. It attempts to combine the best aspects of current evaluation practice while avoiding its limitations. This Guide offers a way to produce high quality and relevant evaluations that can be carried out -- with reasonable cost -- as part of normal program operations.

In this approach, evaluations are conducted by "evaluation teams" composed of representatives of the stakeholder groups in your program. Stakeholders are all the people who have an interest or "stake" in making the program work, including participating

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workers, teachers, supervisors, union leaders, and managers. The evaluation team, with the guidance of a team leader or facilitator, decides the evaluation's purpose and the questions it wants the evaluation to answer, collects and analyzes the necessary information, reports the findings, and uses those findings to improve program services. The evaluation can be as broad or focused as interest and resources allow.

This collaborative approach is designed to build stakeholder understanding of the program and ownership and support for it. While strengthening the education program, this process also helps an organization make the transformation to the collaborative, continuous improvement approach to decision-making required by high-performance organizations. It does so by giving members an opportunity to develop a team identity and problem-solving skills which they can then apply to other tasks outside the education program. Over time, evaluation will become a natural activity within the education program, and collaborative decision-making will become a more natural part of day-to-day operations within the organization as a whole.

Purposes of the Guide

This Guide is designed to help the reader:

- **Understand** basic evaluation concepts and procedures, especially as they relate to workplace basic skills programs.

- **Make decisions** needed to plan and carry out all the steps of a team-based evaluation.

- **Cultivate** an appreciation for evaluation and collaborative decision-making, so that they become integrated into the day-to-day operations and larger planning processes of both the education program and the organization as a whole.

Audiences

The primary audiences for this Guide are educators, union representatives, managers, supervisors, participating employees, funders, and others involved in workplace basic skills programs. The Guide might also be of interest to others outside the workplace basic

ERIC

skills field who are looking for ways of getting stakeholders involved in planning and evaluating other kinds of activities carried out within workplaces, educational institutions, community organizations, and other contexts.

How the Guide is structured

The Guide is organized in five phases. Within each phase, the reader is presented with a series of steps and activities which an evaluation team may opt to undertake with greater or lesser intensity, depending on interests, resources, and experience. In this way, the Guide is more like a trail through a forest where you may step where you please, and linger or speed up at various points, as long as you don't lose sight of where you're going. In this way, the Guide is less like a recipe with exact proportions for all ingredients.

The Guide demonstrates the decisions which should be made to carry out a meaningful evaluation. These decisions range from clarifying what you want to know to reporting your findings to targeted audiences. Readers who need more guidance on particular steps in the evaluation process -- such as how to design questionnaires or analyze statistical information -- are encouraged to consult other resources (reference materials and others with special expertise) which can go into more depth in those particular areas.

In Phase I, you -- the team facilitator -- will do some preparation work on your own and then organize your team. You and the team will consider your own prior experiences with evaluation and think through what you might achieve with a team evaluation.

In Phase II, you and the team will identify audiences for the evaluation, decide what information you want to collect, and clarify how you might collect that information.

In Phase III, you will design specific activities for collecting information and then field-test those activities.

In Phase IV, the team will collect and analyze the information it wants, and then analyze and report its findings to the appropriate audiences.

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In Phase V, the team will figure out what actions need to be taken in response to feedback to the evaluation report. The team will also look back at the evaluation process itself, to decide whether and how it might continue evaluating the program in the future.

Special features of this evaluation model

Regardless of particular content or methodology, good evaluations meet several key criteria. They start with clear and relevant questions. They gather appropriate information efficiently. They interpret that information with insight. And they report their findings clearly in formats which are appropriate to their audiences.

This Guide helps you to create an evaluation which meets these criteria. However, this particular team approach has several additional unique features. We believe that these features can increase your likelihood of producing a solid evaluation. They include:

Active involvement of all stakeholders

Formal evaluations are traditionally conducted by (1) an "outside" evaluator contracted to complete an evaluation for the program, and/or (2) an "internal" evaluator on the organization's staff who is given the job of monitoring the education program on an ongoing basis.

In both cases, if they are good, the evaluators will work diligently to understand the program they are evaluating from the perspectives of the people who operate and participate in it. Too often, however, traditional evaluations do not adequately respond to the interests of stakeholders whose support is vital to make the program work.

In our model, a team of people involved in the workplace education enterprise takes on the task of evaluating their own program, with guidance from a team leader or facilitator. This team is composed of representatives of the stakeholders who have invested time and/or other resources in the program, including worker-participants.

Conducting an evaluation with such a group can ensure that the needs and perspectives of the people closest to the program will be represented in all phases of the evaluation. In particular, requiring that the group include program participants makes it less likely that their particular needs and perspectives will be overlooked.

A dual focus on "summative" and "formative" information

Those involved in evaluations typically want to know what is being achieved in the program (that is, the "results" or "outcomes"). They want to know whether the program is meeting the goals which stakeholders have set and whether the program is also producing other, unanticipated results. This focus on "what's being achieved" is commonly referred to as "summative" (or "outcome") evaluation.

Many stakeholders -- especially instructional staff but others responsible for program operations, as well -- also want to know whether various program components are working as they should. This focus on "what's working and what needs to be improved" goes by the name of "formative" evaluation.

The team evaluation model presented here allows stakeholders to take an integrated approach to evaluation and focus on both summative and formative questions.

In the "summative" side of its work, the team (1) clarifies program goals, (2) identifies "indicators" (or "evidence") which they would look for to determine whether those goals are being met, and (3) gathers and analyzes that evidence. In so doing, the team can determine whether the program is meeting stakeholders' expectations. The team can also capture any other outcomes which stakeholders hadn't originally anticipated.

In its "formative" activities, the team (1) identifies the various program components that should be in place if program goals are to be met, (2) decides on "quality standards" for those components (that is, what each component would look like to work most effectively, (3) gathers and analyzes information which shows whether the components are meeting their quality standards, and (4) decides what actions are needed to improve the various program components.

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By going through such an integrated process, stakeholders have a deeper understanding of what the program should be trying to accomplish, what is in fact being accomplished, and what is needed to make it work better. This integrated approach to evaluation is akin to the kinds of strategic planning models being proposed for the new, "high performance" workplace.

The special leadership role of the team facilitator

While this collaborative model encourages a sharing of responsibility for the evaluation process among a number of stakeholders, it does not mean that "no one is in charge." In fact, much of the work of conducting a team evaluation has to be done by one individual (or a small number of individuals). Such individuals -- whom we call "facilitators" but others might refer to as "coordinators" or "team leaders" -- are vital and require certain leadership qualities.

A facilitator must have (1) the time to devote to each step of the process, (2) the motivation (commitment or interest) to see that the evaluation process and the education program succeed, (3) a willingness to both share decision-making power and take responsibility for certain decisions and actions when needed, (4) some expertise in the "basics" of working with groups (for example, asking questions and listening carefully to what others say, organizing meetings, keeping track of information, etc.), and (5) the vision and courage to "stretch" oneself, try something new, and take some risks.

The facilitator role might be played by:

- One or more members of the evaluation team;
- Someone from inside the host organization who has some experience in conducting evaluations but is not necessarily associated with the workplace education program (like a union leader or human resource manager);
- Someone from outside the organization, like an evaluation consultant.

The "rank" the person brings to the role is not so important as a real interest in evaluation and a willingness and ability to facilitate the necessary activities. Whoever initiates interest in the evaluation will -- with other team members -- have to decide if it is necessary to have a facilitator with formal experience in evaluation, or if the team members are ready to rely on their own resources and willingness to learn. For either situation, the Guide provides direction for the facilitator in how to provide support to the team.

The Guide is written with the assumption that a team leader with little or no experience in evaluation is the primary reader of the Guide. However, all team members would benefit greatly from reading the Guide, to help them understand the process and the roles they can play.

Modest vs. in-depth evaluation, "case studies" vs. "numbers": The team decides.

When building a structure, a carpenter has a number of choices. Does she want "rough carpentry," as when building, say, a simple shed? Or is "fine cabinet-making" required, as when doing the finishing work on a house?

Those involved in evaluating a workplace education program likewise have to make some decisions about the relative "precision" of the evaluation process to be used. While some might assume that the evaluation has to follow a precise, experimental model complete with carefully-refined procedures for gathering and analyzing information, in many situations such "precision" might simply not be necessary or practical.

In this evaluation model, a sequence of evaluation activities is mapped out, but the scope and intensity of those activities are not prescribed. It is up to team members to decide what kinds of information they want, how much of it they need, and how it should be presented. These decisions will depend on (1) the audience for whom the evaluation is being prepared, (2) how much time team members can commit, and (3) how much prior experience team members have had with evaluation.

Teams should realize that they can do everything from relatively simple, one-time "feedback sessions" with a sampling of stakeholders to a longer-term study of the program which relies on interviews, questionnaires, "tests," and other ways of collecting

ERIC

information. Information can be presented in a narrative, "case study" format which paints a portrait of the program using participants' own words and other rich evidence; or the team might want to go after "numbers" -- statistics which succinctly describe program impact and operations.

Each of these ways of collecting and presenting information has strengths and limitations. Teams might decide to "get their feet wet" by trying out several different evaluation activities. They would view this initial foray not so much as a way of getting a precise measurement of the program but, rather, an opportunity to figure out where more-in-depth exploration might be useful and which ways of gathering and analyzing information are most feasible and meaningful. This Guide helps team members understand the options open to them and to decide which ones to use, given their particular situations.

Evaluation as part of an ongoing process of strategic planning and continuous improvement

Team-based evaluation assumes that evaluation is not a "one-shot deal." That is, as the program grows, the team will continue to generate relevant questions which are worthy of formal study. Therefore, the Guide encourages teams to start with questions which are manageable and whose answers will become building blocks for further evaluations.

Evaluation is not seen as a one-time activity that answers all critical questions within a short time. While one round of evaluation activities may answer key questions of immediate importance, the Guide aims to make evaluation a tool of continuous improvement for the program. This means that evaluation is ongoing and that program staff use what they learn to improve program operations.

Team evaluation also offers the opportunity to integrate evaluation activities and a team decision-making process with all other program planning functions (for example: organizational and individual needs analyses, curriculum design and implementation, learner recruitment and retention, staff development, and others). By going through a collaborative evaluation process, stakeholders will recognize the value of working together to plan and carry out various program components. Members will practice using team

ERIC

decision-making skills which they can then apply elsewhere within both the education program and the larger organization.

Supporting change in individuals, organizations, and education programs

Many workplace educators are questioning some of the assumptions on which workplace education programs were built since the mid-1980s.[1] They note that new "high-performance" work organizations are supposed to emphasize shared decision-making, ongoing learning, and preparation for a range of jobs. This is a different kind of workplace than more traditional ones, in which workers were to follow orders, stay with the same job, and not spend too much time talking with co-workers.

Given the changes in the workplace that we are presumably preparing workers for, many workplace educators question the relevance of some models of workplace education promoted since the mid-1980s. A growing number now feel that those earlier programs essentially prepared workers for the "old" kind of workplace, with decisions about program content made primarily by "education experts" and content focusing heavily on preparing workers to respond to written and oral instructions given by others.

A new wave of workplace educators now argues for a different vision of workplace education which is more suitable for the new kind of workplace. In such a vision, decisions about education programs are made in the same collaborative way in which other workplace decisions are supposed to be made. Education is seen not only as a way of helping workers do their current jobs better, but to help them understand the larger workplace context, and figure out how they can improve that workplace and their own position in it. Education is thus seen not as a one-shot deal but as a tool for ongoing improvement of the organization and individuals.

Those calling for this alternative vision have developed new ways of analyzing where basic education fits into the larger

[1] See Paul Jurmo's "Workplace Education: Stakeholders' Expectations, Practitioners' Responses, and the Role Evaluation Might Play," a review of selected literature on workplace education evaluation.

ERIC

organization. Education is not seen as something done for a few workers in isolation from the rest of the organization. Rather, through a workplace needs assessment process, stakeholders first analyze the full range of obstacles preventing workers from participating fully in the improvement of the organization. A worker education program might be one of a number of initiatives the organization might take to eliminate those obstacles.

An evaluation of a workplace education program would look not only at whether the education initiative is working; it would also examine whether the organization is successfully implementing the other initiatives to which it is committing itself. Worker job performance is thereby put in perspective, seen as dependent not only on what the learner and the education program do, but on whether other stakeholders are also doing their part to create conditions for high performance.

Beyond standardized tests: Using diverse methods of collecting information

When workplace education program stakeholders hear the word "evaluation," they often think "which test do we use?" This is an understandable reaction, given most people's experience in school where "evaluation" as equated with "tests."

This Guide acknowledges that "tests" -- both the standardized tests used in adult education programs and more-customized tests created around workplace-specific vocabulary and tasks -- can be one way of measuring program impact. This Guide, however, challenges stakeholders to go beyond the knee-jerk response of "which test do we use" and instead think more deeply. To create a more-meaningful evaluation, stakeholders should first clarify what they expect the program to achieve, and then figure out how to determine whether those goals are in fact being met. A carefully-chosen or -customized "test" of some type (note that "tests" might include role-plays and other non-"paper-and-pencil" activities) might provide useful evidence for the team to consider. However, teams might also want to conduct interviews or focus groups with learners or supervisors or use other ways of documenting what participants are learning and how they are applying it.

ERIC

In addition to documenting changes in individual workers, an evaluation might want to document what the larger organization is doing to support learners as they try to apply what they are learning. As noted in the section directly above, if the larger organizational context does not help learners use what they are learning, the best efforts of the participants and instructors might have little impact on worker job performance.

And, in addition to documenting changes in individuals and the organization, a comprehensive evaluation might also examine the various components which make up the program. Such "formative" evaluation would, for example, determine whether the procedures used for recruiting learners, designing instruction, or preparing instructors needed improvement.

Evaluation as presented in this Guide is therefore much more than "assessing individual workers," whether through "tests" or other means.

Practical advice

Here are a few practical guidelines which can make your work easier and more enjoyable.

1. <u>Keep personal notes on all evaluation-related activities</u>. Keep a notebook -- an evaluation log -- where you can jot down ideas and document the proceedings of team meetings and related activities. Keeping a log may come more easily to some people than others, but we strongly encourage you to develop the habit of documenting your evaluation activities. This will not only get you into the "evaluation mode" -- a function which is largely observation, thinking, and documentation -- but it will provide you with invaluable resource material as your evaluation grows.

   Documenting what happens in each team meeting is critical. Even brilliant ideas may fade within a few busy days. The team needs accurate reporting of its work so that nothing important is lost. Team members may take turns taking and distributing notes, but you should decide on a reporting format early on. Ensure that all team members receive minutes or some form of communication about what happened at each team meetings. Start each meeting by reviewing what happened at the last meeting.

2. Maintain confidentiality. Good evaluation requires that all involved have the freedom to say what is really on their minds. If, in a team evaluation, confidentiality is not maintained, team members and those providing information are liable to keep potentially-constructive ideas to themselves, out of fear of being embarrassed or censured. An effective evaluation process will respect the privacy of team discussions and of participants' responses.

3. Respect stakeholders' time limitations. Meetings usually take place on work time, so you will have to be very organized to get the work done in the time available. One option: Hold one two-hour meeting every other week for a period of six months, with an additional two to three hours per week put in by the team coordinator or other team members. Another option: Hold a series of half- or full-day workshops in which the team moves through several evaluation tasks in one meeting.

   Sometimes it will be impossible to carry out all activities as a large group. To make best use of members' time, you might ask them to fill out questionnaires or do some other type of preparation before meetings. You might also break the team into smaller groups to distribute tasks efficiently.

4. Use visual aids. Use training tools (like flipcharts, blackboards, overheads you can write on) in meetings to help keep everyone focused and "see" where the work is going. This may also serve as a record of the meeting to be used to document the evaluation process afterward.

   Develop a timeline with the team and keep it visible, moving a marker from activity to activity as you complete your work.

5. Keep momentum going. Don't let your team's initial enthusiasm wither. Each team meeting should be organized to ensure that members feel they have accomplished something. To keep momentum going, make sure that everyone has an active role and can make a contribution.

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Avoid making tasks too complicated or drawing out the team's activities over too many sessions.

6. Enjoy yourselves. Make the work engaging and enjoyable. For example, meet in a comfortable room at a time that is convenient for team members, have refreshments, or open sessions with a fun "ice-breaker."

A final note

This Guide is far from being the final word on how to evaluate workplace education programs. Evaluating these programs is complex and much work remains to be done to develop meaningful, efficient evaluation procedures. However, the Guide does provide a framework for those invested in workplace education to think about what workplace education programs might accomplish and how to understand what is in fact being achieved and needs to be done to strengthen programs.

The authors will continue to work with others to refine this Guide and related materials. We hope to streamline the team evaluation process, record more-consistent examples of how a team might complete the many activities outlined in the Guide, and develop clearer procedures for gathering, analyzing, and reporting information.

We welcome your feedback and questions. We would like to maintain a dialogue with you about how team evaluation works -- or doesn't work -- in your program. We may even create a computer network or other mechanisms so that those creating new approaches to workplace education practice what we're preaching in this Guide: ongoing communication, critical thinking, continuous improvement, learning, and collaboration.

Please feel free to call or write.

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PHASE I

Prepare yourself and organize the team.

What happens in Phase I

In this first phase, you will prepare yourself for your role as facilitator of a collaborative evaluation process, and you will organize your team.

In Step 1, a series of questions introduces you to the fundamentals of team-based evaluation.

In Step 2, you will ensure that a team is in place, and ready, willing, and able to do the work of planning and carrying out a high-quality evaluation.

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Step 1: Do your homework.

As the evaluation facilitator, you play a key role in making the evaluation work. You will need to prepare for the many tasks that lie ahead.

ACTIVITY #1.a.

ON YOUR OWN: THINK ABOUT WHO MIGHT JOIN YOUR TEAM, AND ANTICIPATE THEIR RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS WHICH LIE AHEAD.

Read through this Guide, and note ideas and questions to return to later. Then take the time to answer the questions listed below. You might answer these questions in your "evaluation log," in conversation with one or two other people who support your efforts to initiate an evaluation, or in more-formal interviews with key program stakeholders. Take notes which will help you to plan subsequent parts of the evaluation.

1. Is there an already-established group responsible for planning and overseeing your program? This could be a planning or advisory committee or a few people scattered throughout the organization who support your program. If so, who are the key players and what have they done so far? Have they conducted a workplace needs assessment or collected any other information about what the program should achieve or is achieving? What have they learned from the resulting information and from the process of gathering it? Are members of this group likely to support or participate in a team-based evaluation?

2. Who are the stakeholder groups in your program? Who are the "stakeholders" who have invested time, money, or other resources in your program? Who in these groups might be interested in participating in a team-based evaluation?

3. What do these stakeholders -- including you -- expect the program to achieve? Do those involved see the program as a tool for enhancing workers' job performance, an education

benefit for workers' personal development, some combination of the two, or something else?

4. What questions do you think these stakeholders might want an evaluation to answer? What might they want to know about the program?

5. What are these stakeholders likely to do with the information gathered in an evaluation? Are there particular purposes that they might want the evaluation to serve -- for example, facilitate curriculum development or clarify whether the program should be expanded?

6. Given the "culture" your program and the context it operates in, what kinds of information and information-gathering activities are stakeholders most likely to consider valuable? Will stakeholders be most interested in "numbers" and "statistics"? Or will they prefer less-structured but more-descriptive feedback from those involved in the program? Are paper-and-pencil tests or questionnaires suitable in this situation? Or might interviews and focus groups be better ways of getting information from program participants and others with knowledge of the program?

7. What roles might stakeholders play in gathering, analyzing, and reporting information? For the various stakeholders:

- How much time are they likely to give to an evaluation?
- Besides their time, what other resources might they contribute to an evaluation (e.g., expertise in conducting interviews, contacts, knowledge of the workplace, funds, meeting facilities, computer equipment)?
- How interested will they likely be in using evaluation results to improve the program?
- How willing and able are they to maintain confidentiality and work in a team?

You have just thought through some key questions you will be discussing with your team during the first few steps of the

ERIC

evaluation. Now take some time to analyze your personal experiences with evaluation.

ACTIVITY #1.b.

ON YOUR OWN: REFLECT ON YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH EVALUATION.

Your prior experiences with evaluation will influence your expectations for this evaluation in both subtle and obvious ways. Jot down responses to the following questions to help you understand your experiences both "as an evaluator" and "being evaluated."

Your experience as an "evaluator"

1. In day-to-day situations

   On an average day, most of us evaluate -- make judgments and decisions about -- many different things, from what we eat to how others behave toward us. Think about how and in what situations you informally "evaluate" your own and others' behavior or performance -- at work, in your family, or with friends.

   - What do you typically evaluate? Do you evaluate what you eat, the clothes you put on each morning, how someone expresses an idea, or how someone gives you an instruction?

   - Whose standards are you "evaluating" against? Have you developed your own standards for good behavior or good taste? Or have you assumed standards set by someone else?

   - What do you do with the judgments you form from your informal evaluations? How do you use them to guide your future actions? For example, after listening to a boring presentation, you might decide never to make a presentation without using visual aids.

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2. <u>In professional situations</u>

What, if any, more-formal evaluation activities have you carried out before? For example, in this or another program or in another job:

- Who was responsible for conducting those evaluation activities? (One individual or a group?)
- What were the purposes of the evaluations?
- What kinds of information was collected?
- Who set the standards which guided the evaluation?
- How was the information used and by whom?
- What were the strengths of the experiences?
- What problems did you encounter?
- What would you do differently? Why?

Your experience "being evaluated"

1. In what situations have you "been evaluated"? (Consider the spectrum -- from getting a report card to a job-related performance appraisal.)

2. In those situations:

   - Who conducted the evaluation?
   - What information did they collect about you?
   - Did you help to set the standards you were evaluated by? If no: How might the experience have been different if you had helped to set the standards?
   - Who used the information collected about you? For what purpose?

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- How did you feel "being evaluated"?

- What were the strengths of that experience? What was accomplished? Did you gain anything?

- What problems did you encounter?

- What would you do differently? Why?

ACTIVITY #1.c.

<u>ON YOUR OWN</u>: CONSIDER OTHER WAYS OF PREPARING YOURSELF FOR THIS EVALUATION.

Here are some other things you might do to prepare yourself for the work ahead:

- Review the Guide's bibliography. Locate and read the items that are most relevant to you.

- Confer with others in or outside your organization who have conducted evaluations. Ask them to analyze their experience by responding to the kinds of questions presented under Activity #1.b.

- Read evaluation reports which other workplace education programs have produced, or which other types of programs (e.g., technical training programs, cultural sensitivity workshops, etc.) in your workplace have produced.

- Talk directly with others who have participated in team evaluations in particular, to ask them about their own experience and for guidance on questions you might have.

By going through Activities #1.a., #1.b., and #1.c., you will have thought through many of the issues you will face during the early stages of your evaluation. By talking in a preliminary way with other stakeholders, you will introduce them to the idea of participating in an evaluation team and get them to begin thinking about the questions they will face, as well.

Step 2: Organize the evaluation team.

ACTIVITY #2.a.

WITH KEY CONTACTS: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL TEAM MEMBERS.

The evaluation team should be composed of representatives of all stakeholder groups in your program, including participating workers. The team may be essentially the same as a planning or advisory committee which oversees the program, a subcommittee of that planning group, or an entirely new group convened expressly for the evaluation.

If you have a collaborative planning structure already in place in your program, you will have an informed, committed, and representative group to work with when you begin your evaluation. However, in programs where no such group has existed before, you will either have to recruit people you already know and think will make good team members; or work with a few key management, union, and/or worker contacts to decide who might serve on the evaluation team.

Regardless of how you choose your team members, they should generally meet the following guidelines. (Note that these standards are almost identical to the criteria for team facilitators described in the Introduction.)

Guidelines for Selecting Team Members

1. A mix of workplace roles: Members should come from all company departments being served by the education program. Stakeholder categories include program participants, higher and supervisory-level managers, union representatives, education staff, and perhaps funders. The team should also have a representative mix of men and women, races and cultures, and ages. There should be at least two worker participants to ensure adequate representation of their perspectives and to provide mutual support.

ERIC

2. A commitment to improving the education program: Team members should support the workplace education program and be open to using evaluation as a tool for improving it.

3. Time: Members need time to participate actively in the team process, although not every member needs to participate in every activity.

4. A willingness to work in a team: Members need to be willing to share decision making with other interest groups, some of whom they are not accustomed to sharing power with.

5. A willingness to try something new: Members should be willing to take some risks and develop new expertise in designing data-gathering activities, using them, analyzing data, and reporting findings.

Potential team members need to make informed decisions about whether to become active members or not. Discussion about the purposes of evaluation and practical information about tasks and timelines will enable them to do so. Meet individually with potential team members to discuss what you hope a collaborative evaluation might accomplish and what roles they might play. If you are working with an already-established group, all or part of a regularly-scheduled meeting can be set aside to address these issues. In both cases, you might cover the following:

ACTIVITY #2.b.

WITH "CANDIDATES" FOR THE TEAM: CLARIFY PURPOSES AND GROUNDRULES FOR THE EVALUATION.

In your meetings with potential team members:

Discuss the "why's" of the evaluation.

- Why would the program benefit from conducting an evaluation at this time? Brainstorm all possible benefits.

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- What advantages will conducting an evaluation as a team have in particular?

- What questions or problems that the program is currently dealing with might an evaluation address?

- What questions might other audiences -- for example, potential funders, union headquarters, or other departments in the organization -- have that an evaluation might address?

- Are there any disadvantages to conducting an evaluation at this time?

Discuss the "how's and what's" of the evaluation.

- What are the steps an evaluation team would go through? (You might display a flipchart or handout outlining the steps described in this Guide. Or give copies of the Guide to potential team members. Or copy relevant sections for them to review.)

- What is the time commitment that team members need to make to conduct an initial round of evaluation activities? (Present a possible timeline.)

- What questions do potential team members have about their roles and responsibilities in the evaluation?

- What problems, if any, do potential team members foresee in conducting an evaluation and how might those problems be addressed?

- Having considered all the above, do potential team members want to become part of the team?

- Are there other people who might be good candidates for membership on the team?

By discussing these questions and any others which they may have, potential members will get to know each other better (especially important if they haven't worked together before),

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better understand what might be accomplished, and come to a decision about who will participate on the team.

Ideally, you will "hit the jackpot" at this early stage and smoothly pull together a group ready, willing, and able to get going with the evaluation. Or you might have to do a fair amount of explaining, "massaging," and negotiating with various members to clarify expectations, generate interest, and identify who is willing and able to participate. In some cases, you might not be able to pull together the broad group you want. You might have to work with only a few key people.

Be aware that, if your organization does not typically conduct its work in teams, you will be asking evaluation team members to take on collaborative decision-making roles they might have little or no experience with. Some people might feel confused or intimidated at the prospect of working closely with others, especially if those others are supervisors or managers who oversee their work on the floor. Get these concerns out in the open and -- as much as possible -- resolved at this early stage, with humor and tact. These issues may continue to be worked on throughout the evaluation, but early emphasis on the need for mutual respect and trust will ensure a better evaluation and a better education program.

You might also conclude that you cannot find a group which can develop and carry out a team evaluation. In such a case, rather than push people to do something they aren't ready to do, you should postpone the team evaluation project, at least until a time when a group can be formed with the right elements in place.

ACTIVITY #2.c.

WITH YOUR NEW MEMBERS: BUILD YOUR TEAM.

In programs where a planning group has been in place for some time, it might not be necessary to carry out special team-building activities. However, for those sites where no planning group has been in place before -- or where some new members are being added to an existing team -- your new team members might not have formed a true team identity yet and probably still have questions about what they will be doing.

Consider whether, in the particular culture of your program, it would help to take some extra time at this early stage to create a foundation of common will and knowledge so that the group can get off to a good start. Do not assume that a team really exists and expect them to function as a cohesive unit if they haven't worked together before.

To foster a group identity and a deeper understanding of team members' roles, you can lead some team-building activities. These range from fairly simple exercises to activities which require more preparation and resources. Options include:

Possible Team-Building Activities

Social activities: Team members get to know each other outside the normal work environment. Possibilities include a lunch or dinner, a picnic, a reception.

On-site workshops: Members meet on-site for a workshop to cover in more detail the purposes of the evaluation and the ground rules they will set for themselves as a team. In so doing, they will better get to know each other, air expectations, and demonstrate particular skills which the team might use.

Questionnaires: Members complete a questionnaire prepared by the facilitator which nudges them to think about issues they will deal with in the evaluation process. (See Activity #2.b.) Answers to these questionnaires are summarized by the facilitator at the next team meeting. Note, however, that not all team members might feel comfortable communicating in writing.

Review of resource materials: Members review a packet of basic information about evaluation and discuss it in a meeting, workshop, or informally at lunch. Note, however, that not all team members might feel comfortable reading materials and then discussing them.

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Discussions with resource persons: Members prepare a set of questions they have about team evaluation. As a group, they invite others who have had experience in team evaluation or in related roles to address their questions.

Support activities for program participants serving on the team: Although the spirit of an evaluation team is democratic, in practice the roles and hierarchies which govern relationships on the floor influence the way team members relate to one another in meetings. Education program participants are most vulnerable to these potentially harsh dynamics and often need to be given special assistance so they can participate actively in evaluation teams. Here are four options:

1. In team meetings, the facilitator encourages worker participation by requiring all team members to answer certain questions, rather than allowing only a few members to dominate the discussion.

2. If workers are ESOL students, all team members agree to encourage those workers to ask what a word or phrase means whenever necessary.

3. Worker members meet on their own (perhaps with another trusted team member) in addition to participating in regular team meetings. Independent meetings give workers a chance to clarify their roles and plan out their agendas.

4. Instructors use class time to help students prepare for the roles they are asked to play on the evaluation team.

ACTIVITY #2.d:

WITH YOUR NEW MEMBERS: REFLECT ON MEMBERS' EXPERIENCE WITH EVALUATION.

In Step 1, you got yourself into an evaluation mode by reflecting on your prior experience with evaluation and thinking through the roles you would play in the evaluation process lying ahead. Your new team now needs to go through a similar process to orient itself to the notion of collaborative evaluation. Refer to your notes from Activity #1.b. as you help your new team reflect on their prior experience.

In a meeting, pose the following questions to the team.

The program's experience with evaluation so far

1. What, if any, "evaluation-type" activities have program staff carried out so far?

2. What were the purposes of those activities?

3. Who set the standards which guided the evaluation?

4. What did program staff learn from those activities? Who used the information? For what purpose?

5. Based on that experience, what might the team do differently in the future when carrying out evaluation activities?

Team members' personal experiences with evaluation

<u>Experience as an "evaluator"</u>

1. As individuals, in what situations have you "evaluated" someone or something?

2. In those situations, who set the standards which guided your evaluation? Yourself? A group you were part of? Or someone or something "outside"?

3. In those situations, what information did you collect? For what purpose?

4. How was the information used and by whom?

<u>Experience "being evaluated"</u>

1. In what situations have you been "evaluated"? (Consider the spectrum from getting a report card to a job-related performance appraisal.)

2. What information was collected about you and for what purpose?

3. Did you help to set the standards you were evaluated by? If no: Would the experience have been more meaningful if you had helped to set the standards?

4. Did someone use the information collected about you? For what purpose?

5. How did you feel "being evaluated"? What was accomplished? Did you gain anything? What could have been done differently?

Note that time might not permit gathering all team members together for a meeting. If so, you might ask those who cannot attend to respond to the above questions in a questionnaire or in an interview. A meeting, however, is preferred because it helps team members to better understand their own and each other's perspectives on evaluation, clarify what they have in common, and identify who might have particular strengths in the area of evaluation.

In these activities, team members have begun looking forward to the evaluation process, laying out possible purposes for conducting a team evaluation and members' roles and responsibilities. They also looked back at the experiences they and the program have had with evaluation. They should now be prepared to work with you to begin planning the specifics of their evaluation.

ACTIVITY #2 e.

<u>WITH THE TEAM</u>: AGREE ON WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO PLAN AN INITIAL ROUND OF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES.

Team members have now gotten to know each other and have familiarized themselves in a general way with the team evaluation process. They are about to embark on their first team

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evaluation and should clarify what they will be doing in the next few months.

Explain that, to help them "get their feet wet" as evaluators, they should consider the work they do in the next few months as an initial round of evaluation activities. With your guidance, they will work as a team to figure out what information they want, gather that information, analyze it, and present their findings to others.

In Activity #2.b., you discussed the "why's," "how's," and "what's" of the evaluation with potential members. You now have agreed on who will be on the team. If you feel that members still need to talk some more about the purposes and responsibilities of this first round of evaluation activities, ask each team members to respond to the following two questions:

1. What do you want a team-based evaluation to accomplish?

2. What would you like your role to be in this evaluation?

After listening to members' responses, give your own perspective on the purposes and responsibilities associated with team evaluation. You might explain:

1. The team will go through a five-phase process to:

   - Identify program goals;
   - Map out the program components needed to achieve those goals;
   - Design an evaluation strategy;
   - Gather information from various sources so members can decide what is being achieved and what needs to be improved;
   - Use the information gathered through the evaluation to improve program operations.

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2. These activities will require time, a willingness to "stretch" oneself to try new roles, confidentiality, and a commitment to improving the education program. The facilitator is available to help all members participate as fully as possible, to make this a truly collaborative process.

3. By working in a team, members can not only help the education program but learn how to collaborate around other workplace and community issues.

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PHASE II

Plan a first round of evaluation activities.

What happens in Phase II

In Phase II, the team will make the nitty-gritty decisions required to plan an initial round of meaningful evaluation activities.

In Step 3, the team will answer the basic question: "Who wants what information for what purpose?" That is, they will map out the kinds of questions which team members and other audiences want the evaluation to answer, as well as the purposes the stakeholders and other audiences will use the information for.

In Step 4, the team will lay the groundwork for the "summative" part of the evaluation which examines to what degree program goals have been achieved. Members will clarify the goals which stakeholders want the program to achieve, identify "indicators" or evidence they might look for to determine if those goals are being achieved, and decide which goals they want to focus on in the upcoming evaluation.

In Step 5, the team will prepare for the "formative" part of the evaluation in which they examine the effectiveness and needed improvements of various program components. Members will think through the program components which should be in place to achieve program goals. The team will then establish "quality standards" for those components and prepare to evaluate the program against those standards.

In Step 6, the team will clarify where they will find the information they need, and determine the most effective ways of getting that information.

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Step 3: Identify who wants what information for what purpose.

You now have a team in place, and the team has agreed in a general way what will happen in the evaluation. Now it's time to get specific, to plan the details of the evaluation.

In this Step, the team will respond to the question: "Who wants what information for what purpose?" By answering this basic question, the team will map out: (1) which audiences, including stakeholders on the team, the evaluation should prepare information for; (2) the types of information each audience wants; and (3) the purposes each audience will use the information for.

ACTIVITY #3.a.

ON YOUR OWN AND THEN WITH THE TEAM: CLARIFY WHO WANTS WHAT INFORMATION FOR WHAT PURPOSE.

Before guiding the team through the following exercise, take the time to go through each section and think through the questions you will be posing to the group. In your evaluation log or on flipcharts, draw three columns, label them as indicated below, and record your own responses. Clarifying your own thinking and anticipating team members' responses will help you move the team efficiently through this important step.

This is especially true in programs where stakeholders have distinctly different or conflicting notions about what their program should achieve and, therefore, what kinds of information an evaluation should collect. Anticipating areas of overlapping interests and differences will help you to discuss them with the team and prepare a "map" for the evaluation which avoids unwanted surprises or conflicts.

The team's responses to the question "Who wants what information for what purpose?" can provide a solid foundation for the evaluation. Answering it gives all the team members the opportunity to clarify what they feel is important to learn about their program, and why. The team members probably represent the major audiences the evaluation needs to address. However,

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you will also have an opportunity to identify other important audiences not represented on the team.

In a meeting, explain that you now want to lay a foundation for the evaluation by clarifying (1) which audiences, including team members, the evaluation should collect information for; (2) the types of information each audience wants; and (3) the purposes each audience will use the information for.

- Title three separate flipcharts "Who," "What Information," and "What Purpose." Tape them from left to right across a wall where everyone can see them clearly, and where you can write on them easily.

- Ask the team to identify the stakeholders and other audiences members might want to prepare this evaluation for. List the responses in the "Who" column.

- Ask the team to select one of the audiences which they want to be sure to collect information for. Then ask them to identify the questions which that audience would likely want answered about the program. Urge team members to be as specific as possible. Record the resulting questions in the "What Information" column.

- For that same selected audience, ask team members to identify the purpose(s) that audience would likely use the identified information for. Record the answers on the third sheet titled "For What Purpose."

As the team identifies the kinds of information various audiences want and the purposes the audiences might use the information for, members should also consider the format which the information would be presented in. For example, if a busy funder wants concise measures of program progress, perhaps the team will want to present information in numerical, statistical formats. On the other hand, some audiences might want "richer" information about the program's impact on learners, work teams, or the organization as a whole; in such a case, the team might prepare in-depth case studies or briefer anecdotes which -- using the participants' and supervisors' words -- describe program impact. Some audiences might want a mix of statistical and narrative information. (Refer to "Key Issues in Design of

Information-Gathering Activities" -- Activity #6.b. -- for further discussion of the formats you might use depending on your audiences' purposes.)

Once the "What Information" column is filled in, go through the responses and, for each type of information noted, jot in parentheses whether the information should be presented in statistical or narrative format, or some combination of the two.

- The team has so far identified the questions one audience wants answered (along with the formats that information might be conveyed in), and the purposes that information might be used for. Now ask members to go through the same process for each of the other audiences. They may do this together as a single group, in smaller groups, or in pairs.

- If it is helpful, show the team the responses you brainstormed on your own at the beginning of this Activity.

You have now identified a number of possible audiences and the kinds of information they might want an evaluation to provide them with. You will probably find a pattern among the responses. Although they may be phrased in many different ways, stakeholders typically want to answer the following key questions:

What stakeholders typically want to know in a workplace education evaluation

<u>"Summative" questions</u>:

1. What do stakeholders expect the program to achieve?
2. What, in fact, is being achieved -- both in terms of stakeholders' expectations and any unanticipated outcomes?

<u>"Formative" questions</u>:

3. What are the program's strengths and limitations? What is "working" in the program and what is not working so well?
4. What actions are needed to strengthen the program?

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ACTIVITY #3.b.

<u>WITH THE TEAM:</u> SORT YOUR QUESTIONS INTO "SUMMATIVE" AND "FORMATIVE" QUESTIONS.

As shown above, evaluations commonly look for two types of information: (1) "summative" (or "outcome"-related) information documenting what impact the program is having and (2) "formative" (or "process"-related) information focusing on the program's strengths and needed improvements.

Conclude your meeting by asking team members to review the list they developed in Activity #3.a. showing the various kinds of information they might collect in the evaluation. As they go through that list, team members should indicate which information is "summative" in nature (i.e., concerned with documenting program goals and outcomes) and which is "formative" in nature (i.e., identifying program strengths and needed improvements). In a different color felt pen, designate each type of information with either a letter "S" (for "summative") or "F" (for "formative").

Sorting questions in this way will prepare the team for subsequent activities where the distinctions between formative and summative evaluation are important.

Step 4: Clarify program goals and indicators to examine in your "summative" evaluation.

Virtually all evaluations want to know to what degree program goals were achieved. Most evaluations also would like to know whether other, "unanticipated" or "unplanned" results were achieved. Put another way, evaluations commonly want the kind of "summative" or "outcome" information cited above. Information about what is being achieved will also give stakeholders a basis for understanding what's working in the program -- and what's not.

Before an evaluation team can determine whether stakeholders' goals have been achieved, members need to be as clear as possible about what those goals are. Clarifying goals is a first step toward identifying the criteria against which program impact can be measured.

Ideally, the team should already be clear about what the program's goals are. Preferably, members should have been part of the program goal-setting process from the start.

However, the team might now take some time to revisit the program's goals for these reasons:

1. Not all team members might have had opportunities earlier in the program to give input into the goal-setting process. They might thus not be clear what stakeholders want the program to achieve or fully support the goals as they now stand.

2. New education-related needs and interests might have recently emerged in responses to changes in the workforce or workplace. Goals should now be revised to reflect those changes.

3. Team members who haven't actively participated in the team before will get to know each other better and get practice in communicating and making decisions as a unit.

4. Goal-clarification will help program planners identify clearer focal points for instructional activities.

ACTIVITY #4.a.

<u>WITH THE TEAM</u>: MEMBERS CLARIFY PROGRAM GOALS.

The work which the team has done so far has probably indicated that certain stakeholders favor some goals and program strategies over others or, at least, that different stakeholders have different ways of articulating their goals. In a team meeting, ask members to respond to the following questions, to clarify what various stakeholder groups want the program to achieve:

1. What do you think this education program should achieve?

2. More specifically, what should it accomplish for the:
   * Participating workers?
   * The company?
   * The union (where applicable)?
   * Instructors and other education staff?

3. Are there other stakeholders whose goals should be considered? If so, who and what are they?

Record the goals for each group of stakeholders on a separate flipchart. After all members have responded, ask them whether they would like to change the list in any way, by adding, expanding on, or deleting any particular goals. Then ask the team:

4. Which goals do you want to focus on most in this evaluation? (Which goals do you want to be sure to collect information on, so you can know to what degree they have been achieved?)

After you have identified stakeholders' goals, cluster similar goals together in meaningful categories. (For example, one set of goals might be "job-related," another "personal development.") This will help the team to understand the different ways that goals might be described by various stakeholders.

Then prioritize the goals. Decide which goals are relatively more important to stakeholders. You might divide the goals into "higher-priority" and "lower-priority" groupings. Ranking or prioritizing the goals helps the team to distinguish those it wants to focus the evaluation on most heavily.

In such an activity, teams typically generate too many goals to examine all at once, especially the first time it undertakes an evaluation. Teams should thus try to investigate the goals they consider most important. Especially in a first attempt at evaluation, some teams choose to evaluate goals which are relatively easy to evaluate. Here is an example of a completed, prioritized list of goals by stakeholder group:

Sample goals which stakeholders have for a workplace education program

Stakeholders	Goals
Higher-level management	• Employees will improve their oral and written communication skills on the job. • Employees will meet personal goals outside the job, including with their families. • Program will demonstrate how basic education might be integrated into the company's HRD system.
Union	• Employees will bid for better jobs. • Employees will benefit in terms of personal growth. • Employees will participate more actively in the union.
Supervisors	• Employees will communicate better with supervisors.
Participants	• Employees will qualify for promotions, improve their job security, do their current jobs better, advance in their education, and be able to help their children with schoolwork. • Employees will improve oral and written communication skills.
Education staff	• Other stakeholders will meet their goals. • Educators will develop their expertise in workplace education.
Outside funder	• A minimum of 20 employees will show improvement in skills and knowledge identified as important by a multi-sector program planning team.

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ACTIVITY #4.b.

WITH THE TEAM: IDENTIFY INDICATORS FOR THE GOALS YOU WANT TO EVALUATE.

Let's say that the team has now identified "improving participants' oral and written communication skills" as a high-priority goal which it wants to focus the evaluation on. Such a goal, while perhaps worthy, is too broad for program planners to build specific learning activities around and too vague for the evaluation team to measure. The team needs to be much more specific and consciously think through what "improved oral and written communication skills" means in this case. Put another way, the team needs to identify specific "indicators" for each of the goals to be examined.

An indicator is essentially the evidence, clues, or proof which can tell you whether a goal is being achieved. An indicator is usually a behavior, attitude, or event that signals the goal is being achieved. An indicator "operationalizes" a goal, makes it more tangible and measurable.

To help the team identify indicators, ask them to consider the following questions for each high-priority goal they want to focus on in the evaluation:

- How will we know whether this goal is being achieved?
- What specifically should we look for as evidence or clues?
- What behaviors, attitudes, and events will "indicate" or signal that the goals are being achieved?

Sometimes this question can be difficult for team members to understand. To help clarify, you might give the following examples:

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If the goal is "Program participants will meet personal development objectives outside work," some indicators might be:

- Participant successfully enrolls in further education or training programs.
- Participant helps child with school-related tasks:
  - -- Understands contents of child's report card.
  - -- Discusses report card with child's teacher.
- Participant handles medical-related tasks:
  - -- Explains medical problems to medical personnel.
  - -- Understands oral directions from medical personnel.

If the goal is "Nurses' aides will improve their oral communication skills," some indicators might be:

- Participant can explain daily grooming procedures to patient.
- Participant can participate in staff meetings.
- Participant can talk with co-workers during break.

If the goal is "Workers in a manufacturing plant will improve their oral and written communication skills," some indicators might be:

- Participant shares ideas about product improvement in group meetings.
- Supervisors understand the participant when the participant speaks.
- Participant uses technical words appropriately in memos.

If the goal is "Program participants participate actively in union affairs," some indicators might be:

- Participant better understands rights under collective bargaining agreement.
- Participant writes articles for union newsletter.
- Participant fills out grievance report, if needed.
- Participant participates actively in union meetings.
- Participant votes -- or becomes a candidate -- in elections for shop steward.

To speed the process, the team might break into smaller groups to develop indicators for different goals. The small groups could then reconvene, share what they came up with, and reach a

ERIC

consensus on possible indicators for each priority goal. Goal by goal, record the team's suggested indicators on newsprint.

This is an exercise which requires concentration and creativity. Instructors might already have developed a similar list to use as objectives for learning activities. If so, instructors might explain their list of learning objectives and incorporate that list into this new list of "indicators."

It is unlikely that team members will generate a full list of indicators for all goals in one single team meeting. If the team has the time, once they have had the chance to practice developing indicators for one or two goals, they might agree to "do some homework," working as individuals or in pairs to come up with additional indicators. They can then re-assemble as an entire team to share what they've come up with. Whatever the process used, the goal here is to come up with a list of specific indicators which the team will look for to know whether stakeholders' various goals are being achieved. You will refer to these indicators when you develop your data-gathering activities in Steps 6 and 7.

When trying evaluation for the first time, the team might find it difficult to generate a detailed list of goals and indicators. Rather than be discouraged, the team should instead start with those goals and indicators it feels comfortable with. The team will thereby "get its feet wet," gaining evaluation expertise which it can use to refine the evaluation process in the future.

Step 5: Identify program components and quality standards to examine in your "formative" evaluation.

Until now, the team has been talking mostly about program goals and what evidence is needed to determine whether those goals are being achieved. In so doing, the team has been laying the groundwork for a "summative" evaluation.

But before moving on to plan details of the summative part of its evaluation, it is important for the team to also consider what information it might collect for "formative" purposes. That is, the team should step back and look in more detail at the other half of the "evaluation equation": program "processes" or "components." These are all the things that you do in your program that presumably enable the program to achieve its goals. These components might also be called "strategies" or "operations."

There are two important reasons for pausing to look at program components in more detail at this time:

1. To ensure that your goals are realistic: In Step 4, you clarified your program goals. In order to be sure that those goals are achieved, you will need to organize your program components (e.g., curriculum, learner recruitment, staff training) in appropriate ways. If at this point you realize that you will not be able to put in place all the components needed to meet the goals you set for yourself, you might have to revise your goals to make them more feasible, given the resources at your disposal.

2. To establish a process for monitoring program operations: By thinking through at this point what components your program needs, you will establish a framework for ongoing monitoring -- and continuous improvement -- of those components.

The question which the team addresses in this Step is: "What do we need to have in place for the program to achieve its goals?" In this Step, the team will establish "quality standards" for each program component. When the team conducts the "formative" part

ERIC

of its evaluation, it will use these standards to judge the program's strengths, limitations, and needed improvements.

There are two Activities in this Step. It may take one or more meetings to complete these activities, depending on the thoroughness with which the team defines its program components and quality standards.

ACTIVITY #5.a.

WITH THE TEAM: IDENTIFY YOUR PROGRAM'S COMPONENTS.

To get started, in a team meeting explain that a workplace education program is composed of a number of components. These include obvious ones like "instructors," "learners," "materials," and "classrooms." They also include less-obvious ones like "recruitment process," "staff training," "partnership development," and so on.

- Ask team members to brainstorm the various components -- or "parts" -- which form their particular education program. Ask them to think about the various activities which staff and other stakeholders have undertaken to plan and implement the program to date. These will probably include various needs assessment activities, development of the curriculum, recruitment of learners, staff development, and so forth.

- Record their responses on a flipchart titled "Components of the education program: What the team thinks."

- Explain that researchers have examined workplace education programs in the U.S. and Canada and identified an extensive list of components which need to be present to ensure that programs achieve the kinds of goals discussed in Step 4.

    - Present the following to team members:

ERIC

Vital components of quality workplace education programs: What research tells us

1. Goal-clarification: A systematic process for continually clarifying all stakeholders' interests, needs, and resources.

2. Curriculum: A system for designing and implementing a learning activities responsive to stakeholders' interests, needs, and resources.

3. Scheduling: A system of scheduling activities appropriate to stakeholders' interests and resources.

4. Staff development: A system of selecting, training, and supporting high-quality staff.

5. Partnership development and maintenance: A system of clarifying the responsibilities and roles of all partners (including business, labor, education) and facilitating their active participation.

6. Ongoing assessment and evaluation: A systematic way of assessing what is being achieved and making needed improvements in the program.

7. Learner recruitment, orientation, placement, and retention: A system for recruiting, orienting, placing, and retaining learners appropriate to stakeholders' interests and resources.

8. Facilities: Providing facilities which support (rather than present an obstacle to) learning.

9. Fiscal management: A fiscal management system to ensure that all program components are adequately supported.

- Ask the team to compare their own list of possible program components (on the flipchart) with the above list of components suggested by research.

ERIC

- Ask the team to now decide which of the components on the two lists they consider to be key components of their own education program. Agree on a list of components necessary for your program.

The resulting list will be general in nature, outlining a list of things which need to be in place to ensure an effective program. The team now needs to be more specific and decide what high-quality components will look like, given the program's particular goals and circumstances.

ACTIVITY #5.b.

<u>WITH THE TEAM</u>: AGREE ON QUALITY STANDARDS FOR EACH COMPONENT.

Once they have identified necessary program components, the team is ready to map out "quality standards" for each component. Quality standards are the standards which each component of the program should maintain in order to ensure that the program meet its various goals. Think of quality standards as the "parts" needed to make a component work properly.

For example, take component #6: "Learner recruitment, orientation, placement, and retention." In an ESOL program, recruitment is generally conducted in the native languages of the potential employees. In such a case, team members may specify that having multi-lingual recruitment strategies is a "quality standard."

In a workplace basic reading and writing program, where employees may feel embarrassed that they don't know how to read very well, confidentiality of recruitment will likely be very important. Team members might thus specify that confidential recruitment is a "quality standard."

It is up to each team to specify the quality standards for each of their program components. Before asking the team to do this, you might model how you would establish quality standards for one of the program components. For example, what are quality standards for the component, "staff development"? That is, what

ERIC

must be in place in the "staff development" component of the program to ensure that the program meets its various goals?

To do this, lead the team through the following process:

1. Prepare a grid with the program goals across the top and your program components down the left side, as shown in the following model:

<u>Goals and components</u>:
A grid for identifying quality standards

	Learners improve job-related oral and written skills.	Learners are able to use basic communi-cation skills for tasks outside the job.	Program shows how basic ed. can fit into company human resource dev. system	Learners qualify for job promo-tions.	Learners participate more actively in the union.
Goal clarifi-cation					
Curriculum design & imple-mentation					
Scheduling					
Staff dev'ment.					
Partner-ship dev. & main-tenance					
Ongoing assess-ment & evaluation					
Learner recruitment, placement, orientation, & retention					
Facilities					
Fiscal mgt.					

2. To develop a set of quality standards for the staff development component, proceed one-by-one through each of the boxes on the grid to the right of "staff development." In each box, consider what staff-development activities you need to have in place to ensure that the corresponding goal (at the top of the column) is achieved.

For example, to help ensure that the first goal of "Learners improve job-related oral and written skills" is achieved, staff development should include the following:

What needs to be in place in the staff development component to ensure that "Learners improve job-related oral and written skills"?

- Instructors are trained in how to assess learner job-related communication skill needs and interests.
- Instructors are paid and given adequate time to assess needs and develop appropriate curricula.
- Staff meet once every two weeks for an hour and a half to discuss their work.
- Staff are well-represented on the evaluation team.
- Staff participate in hiring of new staff.
- Staff are encouraged and helped to attend local, regional and national conferences on workplace education.

3. When you have completed all the boxes for "staff development," present your ideas for possible quality standards for staff development to the team. Ask them to refine and expand on your list.

4. Now ask the team -- as a large group or in smaller groups -- to do the same for all the other program components. That is, they should map out a set of "quality standards" -- things which need to be in place -- which will enable each program component to contribute to the successful achievement of each of the program goals.

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This linking of program components to program goals might be a familiar concept for those already familiar with the fundamentals of quality control, in which "operations" are linked to "goals." Linking the "what" in what you want to achieve back to the question of "how" you achieve it is a basic building block of quality management. However, if team members are not familiar with this approach, it may seem a little awkward. Take as long as you need to show the value of linking program components to program goals.

ERIC

Step 6: Decide how you will collect the information you need.

The team has now established a foundation for the formative and summative parts of their evaluation. To carry out a "summative" evaluation (that is, to document program impact or outcomes), the team will examine the "indicators" it generated in Step 4. To conduct a "formative" evaluation, the team will examine whether the various program components are meeting the "quality standards" it identified in Step 5.

Keep in mind that the boundaries between "summative" and "formative" evaluations should not be seen as rigid. In fact, a "formative" evaluation depends on what is found in the "summative" side of the evaluation. For example, for a formative evaluation to determine whether the content of the curriculum is relevant, it will be useful to know what the summative evaluation has found participants to be achieving using that curriculum. As noted earlier, a comprehensive evaluation normally examines both "summative" and "formative" questions.

In this Step 6, the team will decide where and how it will collect the information it needs for "summative" and "formative" purposes.

Where will the team get the information it needs to know whether goals are being reached? And where will members get information to clarify the strengths, limitations, and needed improvements of various program components? To what degree can the team rely on itself as a source of information, and to what degree will they look to sources outside the team?

How will the team get information from those sources? Will members use team meetings to brainstorm what they already know about the program? Will they use "tests," questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups to get information from sources outside the team? Will members examine production or classroom records? These are the kinds of questions you and the team will now answer.

ACTIVITY #6.a.

<u>ON YOUR OWN</u>: THINK ABOUT WHERE AND HOW YOU MIGHT COLLECT THE INFORMATION YOU NEED.

To answer the question of how you will collect the information you want, you might first work on your own. As with other Steps, preparation on your own will facilitate work with the team.

As you turn to the questions of "where" and "how" you will collect the summative and formative information you want, keep in mind that there is a wide range of possible information sources and information-gathering activities you might choose from. Take some time now to consider which sources and activities might produce the kinds of information you want for summative and formative purposes.

"Summative" activities

In Activity#4.b., you identified "indicators" or "evidence" which can tell you to what degree and in what ways the program is making progress toward its various goals. Now you need to figure out where and how you might collect that evidence.

Start by reviewing the lists of indicators which the team developed in Activity#4.b. As you review that list, ask yourself <u>what sources</u> you might go to to find those indicators. Remember that those indicators are evidence which can inform you to what degree program goals are being met. Jot down your list of possible information sources.

You are likely to identify a number of possible sources. These include human sources like team members themselves, as well as other learners, managers, union representatives, and instructors. You might also have identified material sources like class records or company or union documents. For example, material sources may include: in-class materials; attendance logs and sign-in sheets; personnel records; safety records; union meeting attendance records; and records of bids for better jobs.

Then ask yourself <u>how</u> -- by what means -- you might get the information you want from each of those sources. Ways of collecting information might include:

<u>Interviews</u>: The team might conduct individual interviews with learners, instructors, supervisors, union representatives, or others. These informants might be asked whether they have noted any impact from the education program. The informants might, in particular, be asked whether they have observed the particular "indicators" of program impact you developed in Step 4.

<u>Focus groups</u>: The team might conduct focus groups (group interviews) with learners, instructors, supervisors, union representatives, or others. You might ask essentially the same questions referred to under "Interviews" above.

<u>Questionnaires and checklists</u>: The team might ask learners and others to respond in writing to questionnaires and checklists prepared by the team. You might ask essentially the same questions referred to under "Interviews" above.

<u>Tests and simulations</u>: Workplace educators often question the relevance of standardized tests. Nonetheless, such tests are often used in workplace basic skills programs to provide some kind of evidence of "learner ability." Note that many practitioners also develop their own "tests," focusing on the learning objectives which they develop with input from learners and other stakeholders. In some cases, these customized "tests" take the form of "simulations" in which learners demonstrate in role plays (mock situations) what they can do. Instructors or learners themselves then rate the learners' "performance" as a way of documenting learner progress and needs. These various kinds of tests can produce evidence of program impact of possible use to the team.

Review of classroom records: The team might review evidence which instructors and learners are already collecting as part of the instructional process. For example:

- Instructors and learners might be rating learners' abilities to perform certain tasks (i.e., "competencies") based on learners' performance of those tasks in classroom simulations or in "real" situations outside the classroom.

- As noted under "Tests and simulations" above, instructors might have been using a particular standardized test or might have developed one specifically for this program. The team might review any existing records from such "tests."

- Learners might be collecting sample writing, lists of materials read, or other work in "portfolios." Such materials serve as tangible, "authentic" evidence of what learners are doing.

- Classes might be videotaping or audiotaping classroom activities. The team might review such tapes as evidence of learner progress.

Review of program "logs": Team members and others might record observations, suggestions, and other relevant information about the program in various kinds of "logs." One version of this is "individual" logs which individual team members keep handy to record observations, hallway conversations, questions, and ideas related to the program. This would allow them to capture anecdotes or other telling evidence of program impact, program strengths, and needed improvements. Members can then share the content of these journals in regular team meetings and in periodic program evaluations. Alternatively, team members and anyone else with knowledge of the program might be encouraged to record such information in a "collective" log kept in the program office or other convenient location.

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Review of documents from meetings and other events: The team might previously have met and kept records of those meetings. What information might be contained in those records which can be used for evaluation purposes?

Review of company or union records: Company and union records may provide information which will supplement information gathered from other sources. (As with all records, these should be assessed critically for inaccuracies.) In addition to formal "records," the company or union might supply (with learners' permission) samples of writing which learners have done (e.g., memos, work orders, newsletter articles) for the evaluation team to review.

Observation of classroom activities: Members might observe classroom activities, to identify learner progress and see how such components as the curriculum, facilities, etc. are working.

Observation of learners using skills outside the classroom: Members might observe participants at work, in union activities, and/or in extracurricular activities (like recognition ceremonies) applying the knowledge and skills they developed in the classroom.

As you think through possible information sources and information-gathering activities, you might record your responses on a matrix or grid. Down the left side, list possible sources of information. Across the top, record the possible ways of collecting the information you want. Each box in the grid, then, will represent a possible way of collecting information from a particular source.

Here is a sample grid:

ERIC

Possible information sources and information-gathering activities

	Inter-views	Focus groups	Questi-onnaires/ check-lists	Tests/ simula-tions	Review of docu-ments	Obser-vation
Evalua-tion team						
Partici-pants						
Instruc-tors						
Super-visors						
Union reps.						
Produc-tion mgrs.						
Human resource mgrs.						
Training mgrs.						
Class-room materials						
Job-related materials						
Union materials						
Evalua-tion team records						
Individual or collective "program logs"						

Once you have brainstormed possible sources and activities for collecting information, go back to the grid and mark with an "S" those source/activity pairs which you feel might be most appropriate to help you answer the "summative" questions.

ERIC

You have now mapped out possible ways of getting "summative" information, information which will help you document ("summarize") (1) to what degree and in what ways the program has met its goals and (2) other evidence of program impact.

"Formative" activities

The sources and activities you use to collect information for the "formative" side of your evaluation might differ somewhat from those you use for your "summative" evaluation. In many cases, team members might be the best source of specific information about various program components, because they have been intimately involved in planning and running those operations. That knowledge might be tapped relatively quickly in a team meeting or in individual interviews with one or two key team members.

In Activity #5.a., the team identified the components necessary for successful implementation of your program. Then, in Activity #5.b., you identified the "quality standards" for each of those components. The "formative" part of your evaluation should answer these two questions:

Questions to answer in the "formative" part of your evaluation

1. To what degree are your various program components meeting the quality standards you have set?
2. What actions are needed to ensure that program components meet your quality standards?

With this in mind, look at the grid of possible information sources and information-gathering activities you developed earlier in this Activity for the "summative" part of your evaluation. Ask yourself which of those sources and activities you might use to answer the above two "formative" questions. Mark the corresponding boxes on the grid with the letter "F."

You have now developed a grid of possible information sources and information-gathering activities, and then designated which sources and activities you might use to answer your "summative"

ERIC

and "formative" questions. By so doing, you should now have a good understanding of the various information-gathering activities the team might use in its first round of evaluation activities.

ACTIVITY #6.b.

ON YOUR OWN: CONSIDER KEY ISSUES IN DESIGNING OF INFORMATION-GATHERING ACTIVITIES.

Before going further in discussing possible information-gathering activities with team members, it is important for you to be prepared to deal with some key issues in the collecting of information. Consider the following:

Key Issues in Design of Information-Gathering Activities

Confidentiality and anonymity

All team members should understand the need to respect the confidentiality of what is said within the team and in communications with others outside the team. The challenge is to ensure trust and open dialogue among all involved in the evaluation process, in the spirit of collaboration and continuous improvement. Any sense that the evaluation process is a threat should be avoided.

If potential sources of information feel threatened by telling the truth about their experiences, they will probably not reply frankly. There are two ways of reducing threat and encouraging open dialogue:

- In all team activities, establish clear groundrules that the sources of anything said will not be repeated to anyone else. When talking about what was said, don't cite sources by name.

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• If necessary, collect information anonymously, so that no one ever knows the source of a particular piece of information. For example, sources might complete questionnaires and submit them to the team without signing them. Or you might provide a suggestion box in which learners or others can drop comments about the program.

Where a spirit of trust and dialogue has been established, information sources might be eager to express their opinions and happy to sign their names to questionnaires or interviews. The team will have to judge the relative merits of anonymity versus disclosure.

Unobtrusiveness

While a team might want to collect as much information as possible, it must be careful in its data-gathering not to be unreasonably obtrusive. For example, some data-gathering activities might require too much time of either the information source or those gathering the information. Some activities might be overwhelming in terms of the number of questions being asked. If you ask for too much, your respondents may refuse to give you anything at all.

A related issue is the cultural appropriateness of your data-gathering activities. If people are accustomed to working in groups and discussing their work openly, then focus groups might be a "culturally acceptable" way to collect information. If employees are accustomed to filling out check-lists and questionnaires, these methods of data collection might offer a comfortable way to start data collection.

Subtleties of how communication is normally carried out should also be paid attention to. For example, some employees might not like being interviewed by someone of a different gender. Some might feel it is taboo to say anything critical about a respected figure like a teacher. Or some might see a workplace education program as a rare opportunity and not want to jeopardize it by criticizing it in any way.

Validity

To be valid, an information-gathering activity must actually measure what we want it to measure. For example, a test of students' learning in a particular course must cover a balanced representation of the content and skill level actually dealt with in the course. Otherwise, any resulting scores may present a misleading story about whether the students have mastered the course material.

Similarly, imagine that an employee is asked -- as part of an evaluation -- to read a company sign that says: "Caution! Wear safety glasses." The sign is illustrated with a large picture of safety glasses. The employee reports that the sign says: "Wear safety glasses." But is the employee reading the words or the picture?. The validity of the item is questionable. (See below, "Field testing your instruments.")

Reliability

To be reliable, an information-gathering activity must be accurate and consistent in what it measures. For example, if the same informant responds in significantly different ways when asked the same question twice in a short time period, you might have to reconsider the question's reliability. Also, if two different interviewers ask the same question of the same program participant, they should get similar information. (See below, "Field testing your instruments.")

Triangulation

Triangulation means that, rather than rely on only one source of information or one method of gathering information, you gather information from several sources and perhaps use several different methods of gathering it. For example, you might ask essentially the same questions of learners, supervisors, and instructors, rather than rely only on what instructors say. Triangulation gives you a more rounded set of information to base your judgments on. It gives you the opportunity to "check and balance" the perceptions of one group against another.

Imagine that you ask supervisors and program participants to rate the participants' improvement in communication skills on a questionnaire. If supervisors rate the amount of improvement significantly lower than the employees themselves, the evaluation team can ask: why does the information differ so much from source to source? This kind of question helps the evaluation come closer to determining the actual status of participants' communication skills.

Experimental design

Often, when people think of research and evaluation, they think of a design that compares two groups of people. One group (termed the "experimental" group) receives the "intervention" -- the special service -- that the research is analyzing. The other group does not receive the service and is considered the "control" group. The control group is usually matched as closely as possible to the "experimental" group. If receiving the special service is the main difference between the two groups, then differences that become apparent in the experimental group are understood to be the result of receiving the special service.

There is value in evaluating your program with a control group. Ideally, it tells you more clearly what your program -- and only your program -- is achieving. If you are interested in conducting your evaluation with a control group, refer to the resource materials in the Guide's bibliography to learn more about experimental design.

Keep in mind, however, that producing such a design is difficult and perhaps beyond the means of a typical workplace education program. For example, you might have to develop specific technical skills or hire a consultant who already has them. Note, too, that identifying two groups with similar characteristics within the context of a changing workplace might be very difficult or impossible.

Most internal evaluations of workplace basic skills programs do not employ control groups. The information which these evaluations produce can nonetheless be highly valuable. An evaluation which provides richly descriptive

ERIC

information about program goals and processes, especially information collected over time, can enable you to improve your program as readily as results from an experimental design.

Other options which are more-readily available to internal workplace education program evaluations include: comparing the achievements of different groups of participants (e.g., this year's learners vs. last year's participants) over time and following the achievements of individual participants over time.

Monitoring outcomes over time

Whether or not you use a control group or compare different groups of participants, there is a value in documenting the progress of your program participants over time. By so doing, you will in effect be "comparing them to themselves." You can compare their knowledge, interests, and behaviors prior to starting the program with those same factors later in the program and perhaps after the program is over.

To do so, you will have to collect information from participants either prior to or in the early stages of their participation in the program -- at "baseline." Good baseline information is vital if you are to be able to monitor progress. It is worth the extra effort that might be needed to collect it.

Recognizing that many potential participants might be scared off by "tests" -- especially those conducted by instructors they don't even know -- some practitioners have developed less-threatening and possibly more-accurate ways of assessing learner abilities and interests at baseline and later. These include interviews and other exercises in which potential participants identify and demonstrate what they are interested in learning and how they already use literacy. The resulting evidence is compiled in a learner portfolio. It is used by the instructor to plan activities relevant to learner needs and interests and it also serves as baseline information.

Qualitative vs. quantitative information

Generally speaking, qualitative information is characterized by narrative description and interpretation, and quantitative information is compiled and analyzed numerically.

Although many tend to think of these kinds of information as mutually exclusive and having different value (even their slang variations -- "soft" and "hard" -- indicate value), neither premise is accurate. Each type of information can be useful, depending on the functions it performs and the audiences it serves. It is also possible -- and often desirable -- to render qualitative information in quantitative terms in order to clarify its meaning. In this way, two ways of documenting the program enrich rather than compete with one another.

For example, assume that you have conducted interviews with ten supervisors. You asked the supervisors a general question about what they think the results of the education program are. The answers the supervisors gave you are in sentences and the content varies, although there is some overlap in what supervisors describe as important results: improvements in self-esteem and communication skills. You value the richly descriptive information that your interviews have given you, but you are also interested in knowing how many supervisors observe improvements in self esteem and communication skills. So you count how many responses you have for each category.

Seven out of ten supervisors say that improved self-esteem of employees is a result of participation in the workplace basic skills program. Six out of ten supervisors cite improved communication skills as a result. By presenting both a narrative description of what the supervisors said <u>and</u> some simple numbers about the frequency of key responses, you can maintain the rich descriptions resulting from open-ended interviews while providing a useful numerical summary of major themes.

Although quantitative information is not intrinsically more valuable than information presented in qualitative form, nor vice versa, some team members and other audiences may have expectations that a "real" evaluation will provide quantitative evidence that the program is working. Each team must assess the kinds of information that its audiences will consider valuable. The team may either provide that information or challenge its audiences' thinking about how evaluation results are best presented.

It is important to note that "soft" information-gathering methods borrowed from anthropology, sociology, and marketing are becoming increasingly popular in workplace education evaluation because of the depth and detail of information they provide. These "soft" methods include careful documentation of meetings, unobtrusive observations of work, focus groups, and program logs or portfolios which are kept collectively by program stakeholders. As workplace education programs focus more on supporting quality management and helping to bring about organizational change, these "soft" methods become more appropriate. They fit with a more-thoughtful, participatory management approach that is interested in involving all employees in continuous feedback and improvement.

Statistical precision of information

An issue related to the merits of qualitative vs. quantitative information is the need for statistically-precise analyses of information. If you decide that your evaluation will present its findings primarily in quantitative or numerical terms, you will be faced with the question of how sophisticated you want or need those numbers to be. Even if you keep your numbers simple -- reporting of frequencies of responses and "cross-tabulations" matching types of responses to particular information sources-- you may find it very helpful to use a computer database to organize your information. There are many database programs which can help you with simple statistical analyses. Most personnel and training offices use one. It might be possible to "borrow" it for the evaluation.

If numerically-rendered information is important to your evaluation, developing a database which contains the "numbers" generated by your evaluation over time will be very valuable. If no one on the team has the skills needed to oversee the development of the database, you should find someone else inside -- or outside -- your program to help you.

You will have to be the judge of whether all your team members will want to discuss these issues. For some, many of these issues might seem like technicalities which only the facilitator needs to be concerned about. When these issues come up in your discussions with team members, you might briefly go over these issues, perhaps providing a handout based on the information presented above. Explain that some of the issues -- especially confidentiality, obtrusiveness, and the type of information that your audiences consider valuable -- are things which all team members need to be concerned about. Clarify your own position on these issues and get the team's feedback.

ACTIVITY #6.c.

<u>WITH THE TEAM</u>: DECIDE WHICH ACTIVITIES TO USE TO COLLECT YOUR INFORMATION.

When you meet with the team next, explain that -- in Steps 4 and 5 -- they identified two kinds of information they might collect: "summative" information to determine whether goals are being met and "formative" information about the strengths and needed improvements of various program components. Explain that they now should take the next step of deciding <u>where</u> (the they will collect that needed information and <u>how</u> they will get the information from those sources.

To do so, lead them through a process similar to the one you personally went through in Activity #6.a., as follows:

"Summative" activities

Show the team the list of "indicators" they developed in Activity #4.b. Explain that these indicators are essentially the "evidence" which can tell you to what degree and in what ways the program is making progress toward its various goals. Explain

ERIC

that you now need to figure out where and how you might collect that evidence.

As members review the list of indicators, ask them what sources the team might go to to find those indicators. Jot down their responses on a flipchart titled "Possible information sources." Members are likely to identify a number of possible human and material sources, similar to the sources you personally developed in Activity #6.a.

Then ask members how -- by what means -- the team might get the evidence (indicators) of progress they want from each of those sources. Record their responses on a flipchart titled "Possible ways of collecting information."

Give members time to think and don't be alarmed if they don't come up with as extensive a list as you did in Activity #6.a. (But don't be too surprised if they develop an even more complete list or think of ways of getting information you hadn't imagined!)

When the team has developed its lists of possible information sources and information-gathering activities, explain that you have already developed similar lists (in Activity #6.a.) and laid them out in a "grid" format. Show them your grid of "Possible information sources and information-gathering activities."

Compare your grid with the team's two lists of sources and activities. On a new flipchart, you might develop a revised grid which all agree are possible sources and activities you might rely on to gather evidence (indicators) of progress toward program goals. As you did personally in Activity #6.a., you might mark the appropriate boxes on this new grid with the letter "S" to designate that this is a source/activity pair you might rely on for the "summative" part of your evaluation.

"Formative" activities

Explain to the team that they have now identified possible ways of collecting the information ("evidence," "indicators") they need for the "summative" part of their evaluation. Explain that they can now go through a similar process to identify where and

ERIC

how they might get information for their "formative" evaluation activities.

Tell the team that the sources and activities they use to collect information for the "formative" side of your evaluation might differ somewhat from those they use for their "summative" evaluation. In many cases, team members might be the best source of specific information about various program components, because they have been intimately involved in planning and running those operations. That knowledge might be tapped relatively quickly in a team meeting or in individual interviews with one or two key team members.

Point out that, in Activity #5.a., the team identified the components necessary for successful implementation of your program. Then, in Activity #5.b., members identified the "quality standards" for each of those components.

Ask them to now go through the list of quality standards they developed for each program component in Activity #5.b. As they consider each set of quality standards, ask members to identify where and how they might get the information they need to answer the following questions:

Questions to answer
in the "formative" part of your evaluation

1. To what degree are your various program components meeting the quality standards you have set?
2. What actions are needed to ensure that program components meet your quality standards?

Because the team probably includes several people who have an intimate knowledge of the various program components, take some time to pose the above two questions to the team. For each component, record members' responses on a flipchart titled "Team members' assessment of various program components."

By going through such an exercise, team members will generate useful insights about the program components, based on their own involvement with those components. Members will also better understand the mechanics of asking "formative" evaluation questions.

ERIC

When members have themselves analyzed to what degree various components are meeting quality standards, ask them whether they still need to go to other sources to confirm or expand on their own analysis. If so, agree on what information sources and information-gathering activities to use to collect that additional formative information. As they identify those sources and activities, mark the corresponding boxes on the grid with an "F."

Note that, as members review their earlier lists of "quality standards," they might find that they need to revise the lists. Encourage them to do so, so that their lists of quality standards are as up-to-date and complete as possible.

By the end of this Activity, the team should have a grid which indicates <u>where</u> and <u>how</u> they can get the "summative" information they need to assess program impact to date and "formative" information to clarify whether program components are meeting the team's "quality standards."

The team is now ready to begin the next Phase. In Step 7, members will construct a customized information-gathering "instrument" or procedure to collect the information it wants. Then, in Step 8, members will field-test that instrument and apply what they learned to developing additional instruments.

PHASE III

Prepare to gather your information.

What happens in Phase III

In Phase III, the team will prepare to collect the information it wants.

In Step 7, the team will design the activities it needs to collect that information.

In Step 8, the team will field-test their activities for gathering information.

In Step 9, the team will map out a strategy -- an action plan -- for collecting and analyzing the information it wants.

Step 7: Design your information-gathering activities.

The process of designing customized activities for gathering information is labor-intensive but need not be overwhelming. It requires one or more individuals with time, creativity, and interest. The team can decide how far it wants to go.

- How many information-gathering activities will it design?
- What types of questions ("summative" and/or "formative") will each activity focus on?
- How many questions will each activity include?
- Will questions be structured to produce "quantitative" information ("statistics," "numbers") or more-"qualitative" information (in narrative form)?

Your answers to these questions will depend on the kinds of information you want your evaluation to produce to satisfy your audiences.

In some cases, the team facilitator might be the only one available to do much of the design work. If this is true, formal or informal collaboration with one or more colleagues from the local network of adult educators might make the work more manageable.

In other cases, team members will be available to design and field-test their information-gathering activities. Some team members may even have experience with this kind of work. The team might form a subcommittee for the design of its information-gathering activities.

The team will have to decide who will be responsible for putting together drafts of "instruments" (i.e., the plan for each information-gathering activity) to present to the other team members. As you develop your activities, remember that few people have had experience developing information-gathering instruments specifically for a workplace education context. The team should

ERIC

acknowledge that and see this stage as an opportunity to "get their feet wet" to develop both draft instruments and their own expertise.

See this as an experimental phase in which the team can develop their instruments, field-test them, and refine them again. Refer to the bibliography at the end of the Guide for additional resources on design and field-testing of evaluation instruments.

ACTIVITY #7.a.

ON YOUR OWN AND/OR WITH THE TEAM: PREPARE A DRAFT OF ONE INSTRUMENT.

An "instrument" (or "tool," "procedure," "schedule," or "protocol") is, in effect, a script which an evaluation team can use to collect the information it wants. In Steps 4 and 5, the team agreed on the summative and formative information it needs. In Step 6, members identified sources for that information and activities members might use to get that information from those sources.

As shown in Step 6, there are many options for collecting information. In this Step, we will now focus on developing a questionnaire which will be completed by participants, union stewards, and supervisors in slightly different formats. We choose a questionnaire because it is a standard evaluation tool, and the issues which you confront in constructing one are virtually the same that you will confront if you conduct interviews or focus groups -- two other common means of collecting information. Working through these issues in the questionnaire, interview, and focus group formats will also help you to clarify what to consider in other information-gathering procedures.

Here are some guidelines for developing a questionnaire or any other instrument.

ERIC

Adapt your core questions for use with different sources and in various information-gathering activities.

In Step 4, the team identified <u>indicators</u> with which to measure progress toward goals in the "summative" part of the evaluation. In Step 5, members identified <u>quality standards</u> to measure the effectiveness of various program components in the "formative" part of the evaluation. In Step 6, the team thought through what kinds of information-gathering activities it might use to collect information related to those indicators and quality measures.

The team should now transform its lists of indicators and quality standards into an interrogative ("question") format. For example, if one indicator is "Participants speak up with useful suggestions in committee meetings," it might be converted to "Do participants speak up with useful suggestions in committee meetings?"

By converting the indicators and quality standards established in Steps 4 and 5 into a question format, the team will have a set of "core questions" which members can now use in a questionnaire and -- with modification -- again in other information-collection activities.

Use plain language.

Do not confuse the person completing the questionnaire by using fancy or technical language. If the language you are using is English, use simple, direct, common English. Keep the tone friendly. This is especially relevant if the intended respondent is a new speaker of English. Similarly, make sure that the directions you give about how to answer questions are clear. (The team will have to decide whether to use languages other than English when communicating with speakers of other languages.)

Ask for all necessary demographic information.

Demographic information enables you to describe those who answered your questionnaire. It generally includes age, gender, race/ethnicity, length of time spent in the organization, job title, and the course enrolled in. Such information enables you to link your results back to the types of people who give you information.

For example, if roughly half of those responding to your questionnaire say that they always speak up in meetings and roughly half say that they do not speak up in meetings, it might be important to see who does/does not speak up. If it is mostly women who do not speak up, then you may have learned something important. In response, you might recommend that the company determine whether particular conditions in the company culture make it difficult for women to speak up in meetings. You might decide to set up special activities to enable women to participate more actively.

To maintain confidentiality, code each questionnaire.

If necessary, use a number or other identifying mark on the questionnaire to enable you to keep track of who is responding while keeping their identities confidential.

Limit the number of questions you ask.

Carefully consider the number of questions you ask. Consider how much time your respondents will have to give. Think through how much time it will take you to analyze answers. A handful of well-chosen and well-worded questions is worth more than pages of questions which will wear out both the respondent and the evaluator. Remember that for every extra question you ask, you will have to analyze responses to that question multiplied by the total number of respondents. If you are going to conduct a survey with 50 participants, for example, you will have fifty answers to analyze for every question you ask.

State only one question at a time.

It is easy to make the mistake of combining two questions in one. If, for example, you want to know whether participants are improving in their oral and written communication skills, you might be tempted to ask a question like: "When your supervisor speaks to you, do you listen carefully and understand her?"

In this question, you are asking the respondent whether (1) s/he listens carefully and (2) s/he understands. These are two separate questions. If you join them in one question, you will not know whether your respondent is referring to the "listening" question or "understanding" question. The responses thus won't be of much help.

For a numbered scale, use only an even number of responses.

Questionnaires often use scales to pre-code answers numerically. For example, many of us have received marketing surveys in the mail which ask us to rate our satisfaction with a product on a scale of one to five, with "one" designating "not at all satisfied" and "five" being "very satisfied."

If you want to use a scale to quantify some or all of the possible responses in your survey, make sure that you use an even-numbered scale -- not an odd-numbered scale like the one in the marketing survey. This is because odd-numbered scales give the respondent the option of taking the easy road "down the middle." On a five-point scale, s/he can always choose number 3, and never have to make sometimes uncomfortable, discriminating decisions about what s/he really thinks. An even-numbered scale forces a decision that is closer to one end of the scale or the other.

Provide an adequate number of possible responses.

When using a numbered scale, there are times when you need to provide more than just a few possible answers. Do this to allow your respondents to change their answers if you ask them to respond to the same scale two or more times over a period of time. For example, rather than giving respondents only four choices ("poor," "fair," "good," and "excellent"), you might give them six ("totally unacceptable," "not good," "mediocre," "fair," "good," "excellent"). This would allow them to change their responses over time, to demonstrate a change in their thinking on the question

ERIC

asked. With too few choices, you are unlikely to be able to see any change, even if the respondents do change their perspective on a particular question.

Note, however, that you shouldn't go too far and provide too many possible responses, because (1) it can be confusing to the respondent to have to "split hairs" among very-similar categories, and (2) the differences among categories become so slight that you will end up combining categories in your analysis, anyway.

Decide whether you will use open-ended or closed-ended questions -- or a combination of the two.

Generally speaking, questionnaires ask either "open-ended" or "close-ended" questions. As the name indicates, open-ended questions do not specify possible answers. They allow respondents to answer in their own words without too much prompting. For example, an open-ended question might ask: "What has been the impact of the class for you in terms of improving your communication skills on the job?"

There are some advantages to using open-ended questions, especially when you are not sure what you are looking for and need to explore the full range of possible participant answers. Open-ended questions tend to make people "think" about rather than merely "respond" to the questions being asked. The disadvantage is that the responses you get might be "all over the lot" and not easy to summarize. You will likely have to sift through the range of responses to identify significant themes or patterns as they emerge from the responses. Other disadvantages include: (1) some respondents might not have the time, interest, or writing or oral language skills to respond meaningfully; and (2) narrative responses will be more difficult for the team to organize and analyze.

As the name indicates, closed-ended questions narrow down the range of answers your respondents can give. Such questions allow you to specify ahead of time the answers which you are looking for or which you think are the most likely to emerge, making your analysis easier. For example, a close-ended question might ask:

ERIC

We would like to know if you have improved your communication skills on the job as a result of participating in your class. Please circle all that apply:

Since I started my class, I:

(1) talk to my supervisor
(2) read information on the bulletin boards
(3) read safety materials
(4) Other, please specify

(If you pre-code your answers, always insert an "other" category where the respondent can supplement or personalize the pre-coded choices.)

There are advantages to using close-ended questions, especially if you are surveying more than thirty people. You will be able to analyze your data more quickly if you have thought through possible answers ahead of time.

Feel free to mix open- and close-ended questions in your survey, along with a few numbered scale items. Especially if this is the team's first evaluation, a mix of items will give team members the opportunity to experience the different types of answers which the various kinds of questions yield.

Consider both "quantitative" and "qualitative" designs.

As noted directly above and under Activity #6.b., you can design your information-gathering activities to produce "quantitative" information (presented in "numbers" or "statistics") or "qualitative" information (presented in "narrative" or "word" form). Close-ended questions tend to produce "quantitative" (readily "quantifiable" or "measurable") information, while open-ended questions tend to produce "qualitative" information. As noted above, each format for capturing information has advantages and disadvantages.

Shown below are examples of two kinds of instruments designed to get feedback from a program participant about his or her uses of communication skills at work. The first is a questionnaire which will produce information in a "quantitative" format; the second is an interview guide which will generate information which is more "qualitative" in nature.

A "quantitative" questionnaire

The following questionnaire is a pre-program ("baseline") version, to be used to collect information before the participants begin their class. The post-program version would include all the same questions, and any others which the team thinks are important to add after looking at the baseline responses.

A "Quantitative" Questionnaire for Program Participants:

Self-Assessment of Communication Skills at Work

Please circle one answer for each question.

- I say what's really on my mind in meetings

  very often   often   sometimes   never

- I make suggestions about how to improve the way we work

  very often   often   sometimes   never

- I ask my supervisors questions when I need to

  very often   often   sometimes   never

- I use the correct technical terms when I talk to my supervisors

  very often   often   sometimes   never

- I use the correct technical terms when I write memos

  very often   often   sometimes   never

A "qualitative" interview

The following is an "interview guide" which an interviewer might use to elicit participants' feedback on the same general questions covered in the above more-structured questionnaire. However, this interview contains

ERIC

open-ended questions which can allow participants to speak more spontaneously and freely about their experience.

<u>A "Qualitative" Interview for Program Participants</u>: Self-Assessment of Communication Skills at Work
1. In what situations at work are you called upon to communicate with your supervisors and co-workers? 2. In those situations, please describe what you typically talk or write about -- and with whom. 3. Tell me about any time you have had difficulty making yourself understood either in writing or when speaking. What was the problem? 4. In meetings, what do you do when you have something you want to say? Are you generally able to say what's on your mind? Why or why not? 5. At work, what do you do when you want to make a suggestion about how to improve how work is done? Do you generally make suggestions? Why or why not? 6. Please describe what you do when you need to ask your supervisor a question. 7. What do you do when you need to use correct technical terms when you talk with your supervisors? Is this a problem for you? Why or why not? 8. When you write memos, how comfortable do you feel using technical terms? Please explain what terms you need to use and what you do.

With the above considerations in mind, you -- alone or with other team members -- should now prepare a draft questionnaire. Different versions of this questionnaire would be completed by participants, union stewards, and supervisors.

The questionnaire should ask the various information sources for feedback on the most important summative and formative questions you developed earlier in this Activity (See "Adapt your core questions for use with different sources and in various information-gathering activities." above.) While each version of the questionnaire should focus on essentially the same questions, the wording will differ slightly for each information source, to reflect their perspective relative to the program. Decide at this

ERIC

point whether you want to produce information in a "quantitative" form, in a "qualitative" form, or some combination of the two.

If you do this as a group, you might divide into two or more smaller groups. Each group can draft its own set of questionnaires, and then all the groups can share what they came up with and agree on a version they are most comfortable with.

As you design these instruments, you might refer to sources cited in this Guide's bibliography for further guidance.

ACTIVITY #7.b.

<u>ON YOUR OWN OR WITH THE TEAM</u>: PREPARE ADDITIONAL DRAFT INSTRUMENTS.

The discussion of the concept of "triangulation" in "Key Issues in Design of Information-Gathering Activities" (Activity #6.b.) noted that there is an advantage to asking similar questions of different groups of people in different information-gathering activities. The advantage is that, by asking similar questions of different sources, you will get a number of perspectives on that question. You can see where there is agreement -- or disagreement -- among different sources regarding any given question.

In Activities #6.a. and #6.c., you mapped out a wide range of possible information sources and information-gathering activities. Review these options once again, and with the team decide which activities -- in addition to those you just developed in Activity #7.a -- would also be most appropriate for your evaluation. Remember that the purpose of using additional information-gathering activities is to collect any important summative and formative information not already captured in the activities you designed in Activity #7.a.

Work with the team to develop drafts of plans ("instruments") for those activities. You might do this in several ways:

• As facilitator, work on your own or with one or two other team members or colleagues from outside the team. Prepare drafts of instruments, get feedback from the team, and revise them.

• In one or more meetings with all or part of the team, divide members into smaller groups. Each group can develop one or more draft instruments, and then the entire group can review those drafts and revise them.

It is up to you and the group how many additional instruments to design and how members will work together to design them. The goal here is to (1) produce drafts of a reasonable number of information-gathering activities which they can field-test, (2) further develop team members' interest and expertise in the evaluation process.

Again, if you or members feel you need additional guidance in the technicalities of designing information-gathering activities, you might refer to the bibliography and/or talk with others with experience designing such activities.

ACTIVITY #7.c.

WITH THE TEAM: AGREE ON A SET OF INFORMATION-GATHERING ACTIVITIES TO FIELD-TEST.

After the team has developed drafts of several data-gathering instruments, it will have to agree on which options they will field-test. They should start out small, with one or two ways of collecting information -- as a kind of test of their evaluation capacity.

When making this decision for the field-test, the team should consider that one or more members will have to be responsible for collecting and analyzing information and reporting the results. Think through the tasks required and the resources available to the team. When you develop your evaluation action plan in Step #9, team members should be ready to commit themselves to whatever tasks they agree to be responsible for.

ERIC

<u>Step 8</u>: Field-test your instruments.

ACTIVITY #8.a.

<u>WITH THE TEAM</u>: PLAN YOUR FIELD-TESTS.

With team members, go over the following points to be sure that all members understand the purposes and options for field-testing the drafts of information-gathering instruments they developed in Step 7:

Purposes for conducting field-tests

The team now has a set of draft instruments (that is, plans for possible information-gathering activities). But -- as drafts -- those instruments should be given a "field-test" before you use them fully. The team can do a trial run with fellow team members and/or with others outside the team, including a sample of those they eventually hope to gather information from.

By so doing, the team will (1) clarify whether the wording or format of the instruments needs to be changed; (2) give those who will use the instrument a chance to better understand what they need to do to use them effectively; and (3) improve or establish the reliability and validity of the instrument -- as discussed in Activity #6.b.

What to look for in field-tests

There are several ways of field-testing your instruments. In your field-tests, you should be looking for any problems or trouble spots in the instruments. As discussed in Activity #7.a, field testers should be sure that:

-- Your instructions and overall presentation are clear;

-- The language used is appropriate for those being asked to respond;

-- Only one concept is dealt with in each question;

-- Possible responses are simple and clear.

When field-testing instruments, members should ask themselves:

-- Do I feel "positive" about using these instruments? (Am I learning something useful? Am I showing respect to those I'm asking questions of?)

-- Am I getting the information I want from the appropriate source?

-- Am I recording information in an accurate, non-judgmental way?

-- What is this experience telling me about being an information-gatherer?

-- What else do I need to do to use this instrument well?

Possible ways of conducting field-tests

Possible ways of field-testing your draft information-gathering instruments include:

A "panel" reviews the instrument. This panel can be just two or three colleagues who know enough about the evaluation, the employees and supervisors, or what your program is trying to achieve to render a critical opinion about the instrument. Ask the panel members for feedback.

Sample respondents do a "trial run." A few representatives of the various groups from whom the team will eventually get information, or others like them, participate in your activity and give your feedback on it. Because this group will match the group you actually evaluate as closely as possible, ask them:

-- to explain any items they did not understand or had difficulty responding to;

-- what they were thinking while they answered each item. Did the question trigger the information that the team was looking for? If it's a long activity, just ask them what they were thinking on selected items with which you anticipate possible problems.

Team members try the instrument out on each other. Make these trials as realistic as possible, asking those involved to answer each question with an open, critical mind. Switch roles and give all team members an opportunity to practice using the instruments, either in the role of the information-gatherer or of the person whom information is being collected from. The disadvantage to this method of field testing is that, if team members are already familiar with the instrument, they might not bring the critical perspective needed for a proper field test.

ACTIVITY #8.b.

WITH THE TEAM: CARRY OUT YOUR FIELD-TESTS AND LEARN FROM THEM.

The team should now carry out the field-tests they decided on in Activity #8.a. As they get experience collecting information, members should collectively talk about the information they gathered and the process they went through using the various instruments.

From these trials, you can decide:

1. What if any revisions need to be made in the instruments.

2. Whether any instruments should be discarded.

3. Which team members should use which instruments.

4. What additional preparations team members might need if they are to use the instruments effectively.

If necessary, make changes in the instruments and give team members who will use them additional practice in using them.

Step 9: Develop an action plan for an initial round of gathering, analyzing, and reporting information.

You now have developed and tested several information-gathering activities. Now it's time to prepare an action plan to clarify how and when you will use those instruments in a coordinated effort over several months.

You might limit your action plan to, say, a period of between three and six months. In that time, you can use your new instruments to collect information, analyze it, and then report your findings to selected audiences. See these initial evaluation activities as an opportunity to develop both information and expertise which you might in turn use as building blocks for a future, ongoing evaluation system.

ACTIVITY #9.a.

ON YOUR OWN: DRAFT AN ACTION PLAN FOR AN INITIAL ROUND OF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES.

To prepare a draft of an action plan to show to the team, first re-examine each of the information-gathering activities the team decided on in Activity #7.c. For each activity, write down:

- The name of the information-gathering activity.
- The types of information it will collect.
- The source(s) of that information.
- Who will carry out the activity.
- When the instrument will be used.

Once you have outlined this information for each activity, step back and lay out a timeline for coordinating all the information-gathering. In that timeline, consider how often each activity will be conducted. (For example, will you conduct focus groups with learners only one time, or will you do so at the beginning, mid-point, and end of the program cycle?)

For each information-gathering activity, your plan should also specify how the resulting information will be used. Study the Steps outlined in Phase IV of this Guide. For each information-gathering activity, note who will be responsible for organizing the resulting information, and how it will be analyzed and reported. Shown below is a sample timeline for a six-month period:

Sample timeline for an initial round of evaluation activities

	Jan.-Feb.	March-April	May-June
Focus group with supervisors	• Robert A. leads 1st group 2nd week of Jan. • Maria H. analyzes data 3rd wk. of Jan. • Maria H. reports findings in monthly eval. team meetings.	• Robert A. leads 2nd group 3rd week of April. • Maria H. analyzes data last wk. of April. • Maria H. reports findings in monthly eval. team meetings.	• Robert A. leads last group 1st week of June. • Maria H. analyzes data 2nd wk. of June. • Maria H. uses findings from 3 groups in draft of final report.
Focus group with learners	• Jonathan A. leads 1st group 2nd week of Jan. • Maria H. analyzes data 3rd wk. of Jan. • Maria H. reports findings in monthly eval. team meetings.	• Jonathan A. leads 2nd group 3rd week of April. • Maria H. analyzes data last wk. of April. • Maria H. reports findings in monthly eval. team meetings.	• Jonathan A. leads last group 1st week of June. • Maria H. analyzes data 2nd wk. of June. • Maria H. uses findings from 3 groups in draft of final report.
Feedback sessions with instructors	• Walter D. leads feedback sessions in weekly staff meetings. He compiles minutes of those sessions. • Walter D. reports findings in monthly eval. team meetings.	• Walter D. leads feedback sessions in weekly staff meetings. He compiles minutes of those sessions. • Walter D. reports findings in monthly eval. team meetings.	• Walter D. leads feedback sessions in weekly staff meetings. He compiles minutes of those sessions. • Walter D. reports findings in monthly eval. team meetings. • Maria H. uses those minutes in draft final report.

You now have a draft action plan to show to the team. Because the implementation of the plan will require active participation by team members, their input is vital to ensure that the plan is on target and that the team feels "ownership" for it.

ACTIVITY #9.b.

WITH THE TEAM: AGREE ON AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE COMING MONTHS.

In a team meeting, explain that you now need to decide the details of using the instruments you've developed, who will use them to gather information, when, how the resulting information will be organized, and so forth.

Explain that, based on your prior discussions with the team, you have drafted a strategy, or "action plan," for them to consider today. Explain how you prepared the plan and then show them your timeline.

Go through each activity point-by-point, to clarify timing, responsibilities, and so forth. Explain that the team so far has not gotten into details of how to organize, analyze, and report the information to be collected, but that you will be meeting with them to facilitate those steps as you get to them.

Be sure that no one feels coerced or confused by the plan. See that everyone feels comfortable with the roles they agree to play. Agree that, as the plan unfolds, the team will meet periodically to monitor progress and revise the plan as needed.

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PHASE IV

Gather, organize, analyze, and report the information.

What happens in Phase IV

In Step 10, the team will carry out its action plan and collect information from various sources. As this information is collected, they will organize it in ways which will make analysis of it easy.

In Step 11, the team studies the information collected and interprets it, with a special emphasis on mapping out "next steps" -- actions which now need to be taken regarding issues which have emerged. The information and the team's interpretations are summarized in a report.

In Step 12, the team decides how it will convey key findings to its various intended audiences, carrying out any special preparations needed to ensure clear communication with those audiences. Team members then present their report -- in written, oral, and/or taped formats. These presentations are carefully organized to ensure that the audiences consider the issues and actions which the team feels are important.

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Step 10: Gather and organize the information.

In Phase III, the team prepared an action plan for an initial round of evaluation activities, along with specific information-gathering instruments to use. Now it's time to get on with implementing that plan. In this Step, the team will gather information and organize it so it can then be analyzed in Step 11.

Here are some suggestions for doing so:

ACTIVITY #10.a.

WITH THE TEAM: GATHER INFORMATION.

Those who have agreed to gather information should do so, as indicated in the action plan developed in Step 9. As they do so, they need to respect the groundrules the team has set for itself in terms of maintaining confidentiality, not being unnecessarily obtrusive, and so forth.

Given the constantly-changing schedules of many workplaces, you will have to be flexible in terms of scheduling particular information-gathering activities. As necessary, revise your original timeline to respond to the realities of your information sources. Also be willing to revise the wording, the number of questions, and other aspects of your information-gathering activities as experience dictates. Team members might meet periodically once information-gathering gets underway, to iron out any additional issues which weren't dealt with in the field testing.

ACTIVITY #10.b.

<u>ON YOUR OWN OR WITH THE TEAM</u>: ORGANIZE THE INFORMATION.

As the team collects information, someone needs to keep it organized. If it isn't organized as it comes in, you might wind up with a pile of information which is difficult -- if not impossible -- to analyze.

Organizing information is a "detail" task which some team members may not have time or interest to do. The facilitator or one or more other team members with time, interest, and creativity should organize the incoming information. Organizing information means gathering it in manageable, meaningful strands or themes. There are several approaches you can take:

<u>According to the major questions you want to answer</u>: Those responding to your questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups will be giving you feedback on one or more of the core questions you wanted answered. If you asked for both "summative" feedback and "formative" feedback, you might mark all of the "summative" responses with a particular color or number and the "formative" information with another color or number. In this way, each set of core questions and their answers are easily identified. When you then analyze your data in the next Step, you can easily find all information pertaining to your major questions by looking for the corresponding color or number code.

<u>According to the source of the information</u>: Prepare a number of folders marked with the names or titles of the various sources of the information coming in to you (for example: program participants, supervisors, union stewards, or instructors.) If you keep track of the sources of your information in this way, you will -- when you get around to analyzing all of the data gathered -- be able to compare what supervisors say about a particular question with what other information sources say.

Once you have sorted out the information, sit down and read through it. You might read it once, to get a sense for the themes that emerge within and across your respondent groups. Then go back, read it more carefully a second time and take notes. Whoever takes responsibility for this part of the work -- the facilitator or the facilitator and other team members -- will prepare a written summary of information for presentation to the whole team. To write the summary, do the following:

• Identify themes. As you read through the information, certain themes are bound to emerge. Note them. Your first impressions of what your respondents are telling you are usually accurate. These themes provide a framework around which you can analyze the data in Step 11.

For example, you might have asked participants if their communication skills on the job have improved. They answer "yes" and then further specify how the skills have improved, telling you:

-- I ask more questions.
-- I share what I know with others.
-- I speak up in meetings.
-- I write better memos.

Consider these commonly-cited themes as "coding categories."

• Quantify the number of times particular responses were given. Go back and calculate how many responses were given in each category. Simple "frequencies" of responses supply you with important information. They tell you how strong or weak a particular theme is, and signal whether you should pay close attention to the theme.

• Maintain objectivity. Avoid inserting your interpretations at this point. (Or, if you do, be explicit that you are doing so by recording your interpretations -- with your initials -- in parentheses.) Try to keep your interpretations clearly separated from what your information sources said.

ERIC

Step 11: Analyze the information and prepare a report.

Once the information has been laid out in the above ways, the team can take the next step of "analyzing" or "interpreting" it. The facilitator or a few team members might make some initial interpretations. They can then present the information -- and their interpretations -- to the rest of the team for their input.

ACTIVITY #11.a.

ON THEIR OWN: KEY MEMBERS INTERPRET THE INFORMATION.

The facilitator or the facilitator and other team members who organized the data should take the lead in doing a preliminary analysis of the information. They should now carefully read through the summary of information which was prepared in Activity #10.b. For each section of information, each "reviewer" should note any comments, recommendations, or questions she or he might have in response. These notes should be titled something like "Facilitator's/Subcommittee's Preliminary Interpretation."

This is the point where the team begins to "evaluate" ("determine the value of," "judge," "examine," "make decisions about") the information they have spent all this time collecting. All persons involved need to recognize that they come to this Step with certain biases ("inclinations," "values," "perspectives," "outlooks"). Rather than hiding them or pretending they don't exist, everyone should make his or her perspectives explicit here.

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ACTIVITY #11.b.

WITH THE REST OF THE TEAM: INTERPRET THE INFORMATION.

Circulate to the rest of the team the written summary of information prepared in Activity #10.b. (Don't show them the "Facilitator's/Subcommittee's Preliminary Interpretation" just yet.) At the end of each section of the summary, leave a space titled "Team Members' Interpretations." Ask the team members to now read through the summary carefully and jot down any interpretations (i.e., comments, ideas, or questions) they might have. (You might have to meet individually with team members who have difficulty with written documents, to explain to them orally what information was collected.)

In a team meeting, go through each section of the information and ask team members to share the comments, recommendations, or questions they came up with. Record their responses on flipcharts titled "Team Members' Interpretations."

Then share the "Facilitator's/Sub-Committee's Preliminary Interpretations" you came up in with in Activity #11.a. Compare them with the team members' interpretations on the flipcharts.

Come to a consensus about how the team wants to interpret each section of the information. If no clear consensus can be reached about particular issues, note the range of interpretations represented in the team, including any significant differences of interpretation. See those differences not as conflicts but as honest, legitimate differences of opinion.

As you record your team's interpretations, be sure to make it clear what, if any, actions the team would like to see happen in response to the information they've gathered. The team might want to make specific statements about whether the program should be continued and, if so, what actions are needed to improve various program components.

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ACTIVITY #11.c.

ON YOUR OWN AND/OR WITH THE TEAM: PREPARE A DRAFT OF A FINAL REPORT.

The facilitator or subcommittee now has in hand a detailed summary of the information gathered, the team's interpretations of each section of the interpretation, and the facilitator's or subcommittee's own interpretations of each section. This summary is, by necessity, detailed, as you want to include all of the key findings and team members' thinking.

However, many if not most of your audiences might not have the time to study every detail. They will pay attention only to a concise version of what you want to say to them. Now is the time to prepare an "executive summary" of your findings.

To do so, first write up -- as concisely as possible -- the detailed summary of information and the interpretations which you and team members have noted for each section of the information. You might organize this summary into the following sections:

Sample outline
for a summary of
information gathered and team members' interpretations

I. Program goals: What stakeholders want the program to accomplish
- What the information sources indicated
- Team members' interpretations

II. Anticipated and unanticipated outcomes to date:
- What the information sources indicated
- Team members' interpretations

III. Strengths and needed improvements for each program component:
- What the information sources indicated
- Team members' interpretations

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Once you have organized your findings and interpretations, go back through each section and pull out those which you feel your audiences should pay most attention to. Edit this into a 2-5 page summary and position it as the first few pages of your final written report.

Your final report should thus begin with an executive summary, which is followed by a more-detailed summary of the information and team members' interpretations. You might also prepare a brief introduction which describes the purposes and methodology (the process you went through) for the report. For future reference, you might prepare appendices containing detailed summaries of information, sample information-gathering instruments, schedules of information-gathering activities, written statements from program participants, or other information of interest to your audiences. (Most audiences won't want to see all the detailed information you could put in appendices. However, it is nonetheless important to keep at least one detailed version "for the record" -- especially in case your team or anyone else would like to borrow your tools or findings for other evaluation work in the future.) When all of this assembled, prepare a table of contents, a cover page, and a page titled "Acknowledgements" ("thank you's" to the various people who helped with the evaluation).

As you assemble the report, pay attention to graphics. A good word processing program can help you prepare an attractive, professional-looking report. Avoid a "dense," cluttered look by including plenty of "white space" around your text.

Another important point: Use clear language. Keep sentences short. Avoid unnecessary long words and jargon.

If you have the resources, ask a professional editor -- perhaps someone in the communications department of your participating company, union, or education institution -- to help with layout, graphics, and clear language.

ACTIVITY #11.d.

WITH THE TEAM: PREPARE A FINAL VERSION OF THE REPORT.

Before meeting with the team again, submit your draft report to members and ask for their feedback on both the content and format ("the look") of the report. Explain that now is the time to fine-tune the report before dissemination to your audiences.

Remember that the final written report -- especially the executive summary -- is all that many of your audiences will know about your team's efforts. Ask team members to submit their editing suggestions to the facilitator or subcommittee. Then revise the draft to create a polished, clearly written, high-quality document which effectively conveys the team's message.

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Step 12: Report your findings.

You have now taken pains to prepare a high-quality report, but you need to take an extra step of figuring out how best to present that report before actually making your presentations.

Some audiences will have time only to review a brief written executive summary. Others might want to read a detailed report and meet with you to discuss it. Others might prefer you to convey your key findings in a face-to-face oral presentation rather than in written form. In some situations, more than one person -- perhaps including program participants -- can make the oral presentation. Take time now to figure out how best to convey the findings you've worked so hard to prepare.

ACTIVITY #12.a.

WITH THE TEAM: DECIDE HOW BEST TO CONVEY YOUR FINDINGS TO YOUR INTENDED AUDIENCES.

Meet with the team to show them the final version of the report. Remind them that the purpose of all the work done by the team to this point was to produce information for use by various audiences. Display a flipchart titled "Possible Audiences," showing who the team identified as audiences back in Step 4. Ask the team to now revise that list as necessary, adding new audiences, deleting others.

Ask them to identify which of those audiences they consider most important at this stage. Mark those audiences as "Primary" and the remaining audiences as "Secondary."

Explain that there are a number of ways of presenting the information contained in the report prepared in Step 11. These "formats" include:

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POSSIBLE FORMATS FOR PRESENTING YOUR FINDINGS

Written versions

- Full, detailed report
- Executive summary of the full report
- Charts containing key information
- Transparencies containing key information (for use with overhead projector)

Oral presentations

- Oral, face-to-face presentations to small or larger audiences

Taped presentations

- Videotaped presentations
- Audio taped presentations
- Slide-tape presentations

Explain that, when conveying its findings to a particular audience, the team can take one of two strategies. In the first strategy, you can merely "send in the report" without any expectation that you will hear back from your audience or discuss it with them any further. (We might call this the "send only" strategy.) In the second strategy, you might use the report as a way of opening further dialogue with your audiences, presumably with the hope that they will consider taking some action you recommend in the report. (This second option might be termed the "send and discuss" strategy.)

For some audiences, you might not have the time or interest to do much more than send in a report. In those cases, choose the "send only"strategy. For other audiences, you might want to actively build dialogue and further collaboration. In those cases, choose the "send and discuss" strategy.

Explain that, to ensure that your findings are used most effectively by your various audiences, now is the time to do some strategizing for reporting your findings and any necessary follow-up action. Here is one way of doing so:

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DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR REPORTING YOUR FINDINGS TO YOUR AUDIENCES

1. For each of the "primary" audiences identified by the team, prepare a separate flipchart with the name of the audience at the top. Divide each into three columns titled "strategy," "format," and "timeline."

2. For one of those primary audiences, decide:

   a. Strategy: Will you use the "send only" strategy or the "send and discuss" strategy?

   b. Format: Which of the above format(s) (written, oral, taped) will you use to convey your findings?

   c. Timeline: Who will take responsibility for putting the findings into the appropriate format, presenting the findings, and any further follow-up discussions or other actions?

3. Repeat Step 2 for each of your other audiences, using separate flipcharts.

4. When flipcharts have been prepared for each audience, tape them next to each other on the wall. Review all the charts to clarify:

   a. How frequently is the same reporting format used? (This will, for example, let you know how many copies to make of the executive summary.)

   b. Are the various timelines "in sync" with each other? (For example, is one person trying to make too many presentations to too many different audiences in the same time period? Should all the audiences receive the report at the same time, to avoid having any audience feeling "slighted"?)

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ACTIVITY #12.b.

WITH THE TEAM: PREPARE YOUR PRESENTATIONS.

The team now agrees who will prepare and make presentations for your various audiences. The facilitator might work with those individuals to do the necessary preparations. This is an opportunity for team members to demonstrate their ownership for the team process and for the education program. They can also "stretch" themselves to develop new communication skills.

Each team member who has agreed to give a presentation should be supported to ensure that she or he has all documents, visual aides, and other resources (e.g., refreshments, meeting rooms) necessary. The facilitator and other experienced team members can help them develop a plan for the sessions in which they will present the findings. That plan should allow time for presenting key findings and for follow-up discussion. Here are some questions for team members to consider when preparing their presentations:

PREPARING YOURSELF FOR MEETING YOUR AUDIENCES

1. Where will the meeting take place? On the team's own "turf" or somewhere else?
2. What will be the agenda for the meeting? What are the objectives for the meeting itself? What do you hope will happen as a result of the meeting?
3. Who will facilitate the meeting?
4. Who will be spokesperson for your team?
5. Should someone serve as "secretary" for the meeting, recording minutes either on paper or with a tape-recorder?
6. Should someone help with taping up flipcharts, running the overhead projector, or distributing handouts?
7. Should one or more people play the role of "greeter"?
8. Should someone be in charge of refreshments?
9. Where should you sit?
10. What clothes should you wear?

11. What supplies (e.g., handouts, charts, refreshments) do you need to have ready?

If necessary, team members might do a "dress rehearsal" of their presentations. (If program participants are to be part of these presentations, they might practice their roles as a classroom exercise.) Members might also enlist the help of colleagues who are specialists in communications (e.g., public speaking, preparation of visual aides) to give guidance to those who will be making presentations.

The exact steps you take to convey your findings to each of your audiences will vary, depending on the specifics of the strategies you developed in Activities #12.a and #12.b. Here are some general guidelines for you to adapt to each of your audiences:

ACTIVITY #12.c.

<u>WITH THE TEAM</u>: CIRCULATE THE WRITTEN REPORT TO YOUR AUDIENCES.

Individual team members can now take responsibility for circulating a written version of their report to those audiences identified in Activity #12.a. For most audiences, the team will likely submit some form of written report. To those audiences, send either just the executive summary or a complete, detailed report.

For those audiences for whom you decided in Activity #12.a. to take a "send only" approach, merely tell them -- in a cover letter, in person, or by phone -- that "here is our report for your information, as promised." You may or may not want to add a general comment welcoming feedback or questions.

For those audiences for whom you decided to use a "send and discuss" strategy, you might tell them "Here is our report. We would like to discuss it further with you." Ask them to read it carefully, jot down any comments or questions they have, and be prepared to meet you at a particular date to discuss the report. (You might even send a brief questionnaire containing specific questions you'd like them to consider when reading the report.

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By filling out this questionnaire prior to meeting you, the audiences will be more likely to study the report carefully and pay attention to issues you think are important.)

ACTIVITY #12.d.

<u>WITH THE TEAM</u>: SET UP MEETINGS WITH YOUR AUDIENCES.

For those audiences for whom you decided to use a "send and discuss" strategy, contact them and arrange to meet them in person. Explain that you'd like to get their feedback on the report which you sent them, and to discuss specific recommendations contained in the report.

Agree on a suitable time and place for that meeting. Make sure that the "ingredients" you anticipated in Activity #12.b. are in place. (For example, pick a time and place convenient to the audience -- so that they will actually show up. The location should have adequate seating, wall space for displaying flipcharts, an overhead projector, and other needed facilities. You might arrange to have refreshments served, as well.)

In addition to making logistical arrangements, you and the other team members should go over the other plans you made in Activity #12.b. for making effective presentations.

ACTIVITY #12.e.

<u>WITH THE TEAM</u>: MEET WITH YOUR AUDIENCES.

Carry out the plans you've now developed for discussing your findings with your audiences. In most cases, a meeting is held to:

1. Help the audience to understand the key findings of the report.
2. Build communication between your team and the audience.
3. Get the audience to take one or more specific actions detailed in the report.

To ensure that such objectives are met, you should at the beginning of the meeting explain what you hope to accomplish. Emphasize your interest in deciding specific actions which might be taken in response to the report. Whoever takes the role of facilitating the meeting should keep the discussion focused on the meeting's objectives.

To do so, you might organize the discussion around these questions:

QUESTIONS AROUND WHICH A
DISCUSSION OF YOUR REPORT MIGHT BE ORGANIZED

1. **What does the report say?** If the audience has not already studied the report, you or another team member can summarize what is said in the report.

2. **What questions or comments does the audience have in response?** For each section of the report, ask your audience to respond with any questions, comments, ideas, or recommendations they might have.

3. **What actions should be taken next?** Ask the audience what actions should be taken next in response to the report. Time permitting, identify both long-term and short term actions. Clarify who will take those actions -- and when. (If there is not enough time to get into details of planning specific actions in this meeting, agree to have another meeting to do so in the near future, while interest is still high.)

Someone on the team should play the role of "recorder" or "secretary," recording what is said either on flipcharts or a notepad. These notes are important, as they serve as a record which can be used to plan follow-up actions in the next Step.

The facilitator of the meeting should make sure that the meeting follows basic groundrules of respect (i.e., allowing everyone to have a say) and "continuous improvement" (i.e., team decision-making to strengthen the program).

As necessary, repeat this process for any other audiences you would like to communicate your findings to.

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PHASE V

Decide what happens next.

What happens in Phase V

The team has now submitted its evaluation report to its audiences and presumably identified an agenda for follow-up actions.

In Step 13, team members are pro-active in (1) clarifying who has agreed to do what, (2) implementing those actions which they've agreed to take responsibility for, and (3) monitoring how well the agreed-upon actions are being carried out.

In Step 14, the team turns its evaluation expertise on itself. Members take a few minutes to look at the evaluation process they have just gone through, to decide whether they want to continue working as a team and, if so, how to continuously improve their work together.

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Step 13: Take follow-up action.

The team has now met with its audiences and likely decided to take some further actions. Now it's time to review the notes from the meetings held with their audiences, and be sure that the agreed-upon actions are actually carried out.

ACTIVITY #13.a.

WITH THE TEAM: PLAN FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS.

On your own or with other team members, assemble the notes from the meetings you held with your various audiences. Prepare minutes for each of those meetings. You might organize the minutes within the structure of the three discussion questions suggested in Activity #12.d.:

1. What did your report say?
2. What questions or comments did the audience(s) have in response?
3. What actions did the audience(s) decide should be taken next?

The minutes should be as clear as possible about who agreed to take what actions. Present the minutes to the rest of the team, and agree on what actions team members now need to take themselves. Clarify who is responsible for what actions, when, and what help and resources they might need. Agree when the team will meet again to monitor progress.

The team should also clarify how the team will follow up with the various audience representatives who agreed to take action. The team needs to decide who will monitor whether the audiences are doing what they agreed to do, and how the team might provide assistance to the audiences.

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ACTIVITY #13.b.

WITH THE TEAM: IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS.

Team members now need to take the follow-up actions they agreed upon in Activity #14.a. The team should meet periodically to monitor progress toward those actions. This monitoring of progress on follow-up actions might, in fact, be a key focal point for the next round of the team's evaluation activities.

Step 14: Evaluate the evaluation.

In the spirit of continuous improvement and self-reflection, the team should practice what it preaches and evaluate its own activities. Team members might be a bit tired of "evaluation" at this point, but they can nonetheless examine their own activities as follows:

1. **Ask team members to give feedback via a questionnaire or individual interview.** In informal interviews and/or via questionnaires, ask members to respond to the following kinds of questions:

   - What was the team trying to achieve in the evaluation?
   - What in fact was achieved?
   - What did you personally get out of participating in the team?
   - What did you like about the team?
   - What didn't you like?
   - Should the team continue operating in the future?
   - How might the team be improved?

   If questionnaires are used, the team can decide whether members should sign them.

2. **Have another team member summarize the responses.** A team member should prepare a brief summary of members' responses to the above questions to discuss at a future meeting.

3. **Discuss the responses.** In a team meeting, discuss the summary of members' responses. Encourage team members to add further comments to build on what other members said.

4. **Decide on future evaluation work.** Decide whether to continue operating as an evaluation team. If members agree to do so, map out a timeline in which members can go through a similar process to plan and carry out meaningful evaluation activities. Decide how those evaluation activities fit into the larger cycle of program activities. Also identify what actions members might take to enable themselves to participate actively on the team. (Members might, for example, do some additional reading about workplace education, get some training in conducting group discussions, or write regular attendance at team meetings into their normal work schedule.)

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Evaluation in workplace education programs

Workplace Education: Stakeholders' Expectations, Practitioners' Responses, and the Role Evaluation Might Play is a companion piece to this Guide. Written by Paul Jurmo, it draws on a literature review and interviews, to present an overview of various perspectives on workplace basic skills education and -- in particular -- how workplace education programs are evaluated.

Among the many evaluation-related works cited in this report are:

Mikulecky, L. and Lloyd, P. (1993). The Impact of Workplace Literacy Programs: A New Model for Evaluating the Impact of Workplace Literacy Programs. Philadelphia: National Center on Adult Literacy.

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Sarmiento, A.R. (1993). "Alternative Designs for Evaluating Workplace Literacy Programs." Proceedings of U.S. Department of Education Work Group conference on "Design Guidance for Evaluating Workplace Literacy Programs." Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute.

Sarmiento, T. (July 1991). Do Workplace Literacy Programs Promote High Sckills or Low Wages? Suggestions for Future Evaluations of Workplace Literacy Programs. Labor Notes, a monthly newsletter of the Center for Policy Research of the National Governors Association, Washington, D.C.

Schultz, K. (December 1992). Training for Basic Skills or Educating Workers? Changing Conceptions of Workplace Education Programs. Berkeley, CA.: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

Stein.S.G. and Sperazi, L. (October15, 1991). "Workplace Education in Context: A Chart Comparing Traditional and High Performance Work Organizations. Part of Tradition and Change: The Role of Workplace Education in the Transformation of the Workplace, a paper presented by Sondra G. Stein at the annual meeting of the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education, in Montreal.

Sticht, T. (April 20, 1991). Evaluating National Workplace Literacy Programs. El Cajon, CA: Applied Behavioral & Cognitive Sciences, Inc.

Note that the third of the three documents produced by this project is titled Team Evaluation: Case Studies from Seven Workplace Education Programs. Written by Laura Sperazi and Paul Jurmo, it describes and analyzes the processes which seven workplace education evaluation teams went through to adapt the team evaluation model (presented in this Guide) in their respective programs.

Evaluation and assessment in adult literacy education

The following two publications present arguments for -- and examples of -- new approaches to evaluation and assessment.

Fingeret, H.A. (1993). It Belongs to Me: A Guide to Portfolio Assessment in Adult Education Programs. Durham, NC: Literacy South.

Lytle, S.L. and Wolfe, M. (1989). Adult Literacy Education: Program Evaluation and Learner Assessment. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.

General evaluation

Sage Publications is a literal storehouse of information about evaluation. The following selections from Sage's catalogue will provide the interested -- or puzzled -- reader with basic resource information about evaluation theory and practice, and will help answer questions about methodology which this Guide touches on only briefly. Two of the publications warrant special explanation:

The Evaluator's Handbook provides an overview of how to evaluate a program of any type. Its companion books focus on special evaluation issues like measuring attitudes, measuring performance, using focus groups, and communicating evaluation findings.

The Evaluation Thesaurus is a handy reference which explains evaluation-related terminology, in an up-to-date, readable style.

Key texts in the series include:

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Morris, L. L., Fitz-Gibbon, C.T., and Freeman, M. (1987). How to Communicate Evaluation Findings. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

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