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ABSTRACT
        This document contains three papers on evaluation in human
resource development (HRD). "Utilization of Corporate University Training
Program Evaluation" (Christopher F. Bober) reports on a study that examined
how training program evaluation results are being utilized in corporate
universities and determined that the following seven factors affect how four
corporate universities are utilizing program evaluation data: communication
quality; timeliness; commitment and/or receptiveness to evaluation;
evaluation quality; credibility; relevance; and findings. "Organizational
Readiness for Learning and Evaluation" (Hallie Preskill, Brenda
Martinez-Papponi, Rosalie T. Torres) discusses the outcomes of implementation
of a diagnostic instrument designed to assess organizations' readiness for
learning and evaluation. The instrument was used with eight U.S.
organizations and found to be capable of identifying areas of strength on
which to build evaluation efforts and areas in need of development for
creating and sustaining learning from evaluation work. "Three Perspectives of
Training Evaluation Based on Organizational Needs" (Eul-Kyoo Bae, Ronald L.
Jacobs) argues that HRD professionals must place more emphasis on matching
the intents of evaluation, the intended users, and aspects of the evaluative
process and information. Three perspectives of stakeholders on evaluation of
training were developed as a means for ensuring the match between evaluation
intents and activities. All three papers include substantial bibliographies.
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Utilization of Corporate University Training Program Evaluation

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This study aimed to determine how training program evaluation results are being utilized in corporate universities. In addition, this study also attempted to identify influential factors that affect evaluation data utilization in these entities. The majority of the purposes identified in this study were instrumental in nature. In addition, several examples of both conceptual and symbolic use were also cited by participants. Seven major factors were found to impact the use of evaluation results in the four corporate universities.

Keywords: Evaluation Use, Corporate University, Training Program Evaluation

Throughout the United States, businesses are spending increasing amounts of money each year on the training and development of their employees. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that in 1997, businesses spent 58 billion dollars on training. Training Magazine's "Industry Report" states that, in 1997, employees in United States businesses received 751 million hours of training (Industry Report, 1997). It is clear that organizations are recognizing the importance of training their employees in order to help their businesses operate as productively and profitably as possible.

Many organizations are going one step further in the training and development of their human resources and are establishing what is known as a "corporate university." A corporate university is essentially a separate entity in a company that is responsible for the development and implementation of training programs for the members of the organization (Meister, 1994). It can be assumed that these organizations that have made an investment to develop a corporate university have made training a top priority.

With the increase of time, money, and other resources that are being invested in training by United States companies, the need for comprehensive evaluation techniques that measure the effectiveness of these training efforts is becoming more important than ever before. The training and development literature continually stresses the importance of evaluating training. However, among the companies that do use some form of evaluation technique, only a small percentage actually understand the importance and procedure of not only conducting the evaluation, but then utilizing the evaluation results correctly (Robinson & Robinson, 1989; Carnevale & Schulz, 1990; Dixon, 1990; Phillips, 1991).

The literature surrounding training evaluation examines the importance of conducting sound evaluations and suggests numerous reasons about why it is important to evaluate training programs. Moreover, within this literature, the issue of utilizing the evaluation results is regularly discussed. Evaluation can be used for a number of purposes. However, using evaluation for the improvement of training programs (formative evaluation) and for accountability, justification, and program continuation purposes (summative evaluation) are the most common reasons referred to throughout the training literature (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

For evaluation to actually serve either a formative or summative purpose, the results of the evaluation must be utilized. Although there are a number of components involved in the evaluation of training programs, the utilization of evaluation results is continually noted throughout the literature as being the most important evaluation component and the most often overlooked (Wentling, 1980; Piskurich, 1997; Robinson & Robinson, 1989).

Training departments most often utilize the results of evaluations to aid in meeting training program, employee, and management demands (Carnevale & Schulz, 1990). They use evaluation results in a variety of ways to assist in improving their training programs. Training departments use the results to demonstrate a program's worth or value to the organization. Training managers and employees use evaluation results to help establish whether the employees have learned the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to perform their specific jobs. Upper-level management want to know how the training department and its programs are affecting the company's bottom line. Training departments can use the results of evaluations to justify training expenditures with regard to return on investment, return on sales, and customer satisfaction (Carnevale & Schulz, 1990).

Since the mid 1970's, the majority of studies that examined the utilization of evaluation results looked primarily at the different factors that influenced the use. In addition, many of these studies also focused their attention on defining what was meant by "evaluation use."

From the research conducted throughout the 1970's, it was determined that evaluation use could be either

instrumental, conceptual, or symbolic (persuasive) in nature. Rich (1977) explained instrumental use occurred when evaluation results were used in a direct and immediate manner, most often for program improvement.

Conceptual use occurred when evaluation findings were utilized over time to influence thinking and future decision-making (as opposed to being used for an immediate and observable action). Symbolic or persuasive use referred to the utilization of evaluation results to help justify a program and serve as an accountability mechanism or to give individuals a political advantage against opponents (Leviton & Hughes, 1981).

In 1977, Patton, Grimes, Guthrie, Brennan, French, and Blyth conducted a study where they interviewed decision-makers and evaluators from twenty federal health projects. They focused their research on identifying factors that affected the use of evaluations in these projects and the extent to which the evaluation results were used.

In attempting to identify the key factors that influence evaluation results utilization, the researchers used a list of eleven common factors that had been determined by previous studies. They asked the participants to comment on the overall importance of each of the eleven factors. From the eleven factors, a total of two major factors emerged as being consistently relevant in helping to explain the utilization (or non-utilization) of evaluation results. These factors were identified as political factors and personal factors (Patton, et al., 1977).

From the twenty cases that were studied, the researchers found that in fifteen of them, the participants believed that politics played a major role in the utilization process. These political factors included: intra- and inter-agency rivalries (budgetary disputes with the Office of Management and Budget, the administration, and Congress); power struggles between Washington administrators and local program personnel; and internal debates about the purpose and/or accomplishments of programs (Patton, et al., 1977).

The personal factor(s) that emerged as being of significance in the utilization process were comprised of seven parts which included: leadership, interest, enthusiasm, determination, commitment, aggressiveness, and caring (Patton, et al., 1977). The researchers indicated that "evaluations have an impact when personal factors are present, and an absence of impact when not present" (Patton, et al., 1977).

Patton, et al. (1977) stressed throughout their study that the evaluator's dedication to the evaluation project had great influence over whether the results would be utilized. In addition, Patton also found that the more the evaluative information was directed at advocates of the program being evaluated, the greater the likelihood that they would use the results (Leviton & Hughes, 1981; Patton, et al., 1977).

In 1997, Preskill and Caracelli (1997) conducted survey research focused on evaluation use that analyzed perceptions and experiences about use. They used an informed sample population that consisted of members of the Evaluation Use Topical Interest Group. The researchers found that the strategies identified most by the participants as helping to promote use included working collaboratively with clients and stakeholders throughout the evaluation, effectively communicating the results of an evaluation to the proper audience(s), and establishing an effective method for drawing conclusions based on the results which would ultimately lead to making decisions for action based on this communicated information (Preskill & Caracelli, 1997).

Problem Statement

This study examined the utilization of training program evaluation results in corporate universities. Specifically, this study attempted to determine the factors that are related to the use of evaluation results in corporate universities.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following four research questions:
1. What individual(s) within the corporate university and/or organization use the results of the evaluations?
2. What are the main purposes for which the results of corporate university training program evaluations are used?
3. What components of the evaluation report are most utilized?
4. Based on Cousins and Leithwood's 1986 framework, what are the factors that influence the use of evaluation results in corporate university training programs?

A. What is the applicability of the Cousins and Leithwood 1986 meta-analytic conceptual framework to corporate university training programs?

B. Do the factors identified in this framework as influencing evaluation utilization in a number of contexts (i.e., education, mental health, social services) have any relationship with the factors that are found to influence use in a corporate university training setting?

C. Which of the higher order categories (and subsequent factors) identified in Cousins and Leithwood's 1986 framework have the most impact on decision-makers and the use of evaluation results?

Theoretical Framework

Throughout the evaluation utilization literature, it is evident that the majority of historical research has used frameworks such as the one developed by Alkin, et al. (1983) to help in identifying factors that influence the use of evaluation results. Most of these early frameworks simply described the factors that influenced the use of results. Until 1986, no comprehensive study succeeded in going beyond these existing frameworks to try and create, through a meta-analysis of frameworks, a model that built on (and synthesized) the most important components of each of these earlier studies.

In 1986, Cousins and Leithwood conducted an in-depth investigation into all of the empirical research on the utilization of evaluation results (65 total studies) that had taken place since 1971. Cousins and Leithwood (1986) were the first researchers to actually construct a meta-analytic model, or conceptual framework, that looked beyond just describing influencing factors. Their framework included the most important/significant factors from previous models and could be used as described by Shulha and Cousins in 1997, "to determine the weight of the factors in their ability to predict use" (Shulha & Cousins, 1997).

Cousins and Leithwood's investigation examined 65 studies that were focused on the use of evaluation results. From these studies, the researchers were able to construct a conceptual framework that is made up of 12 factors that influence use. They grouped six factors under a "higher order category" called *evaluation implementation* (relevance, timeliness), and the remaining six factors under a second "higher order category" called *decision/policy setting* (political climate, competing information) (Cousins & Leithwood, 1986). The dependent variable in their study, and framework, was evaluation utilization, while the independent variables were the factors that influenced the ways the results were used by key decision-makers (Cousins & Leithwood, 1986).

After reviewing the 65 empirical studies, Cousins and Leithwood determined that 12 major factors were common throughout the studies and could be grouped under the higher order categories listed above. The factors associated with the category of *evaluation implementation* included: evaluation quality, credibility, relevance, communication quality, findings, and timeliness. The remaining factors grouped under the category of *decision/policy setting* were: information needs, decision characteristics, political climate, competing information, personal characteristics, and commitment and/or receptiveness to evaluation (Cousins & Leithwood, 1986).

The framework for conceptualizing evaluation utilization that was designed by Cousins and Leithwood in 1986 served as the basis for this study. This framework was chosen for this study because of its overall comprehensiveness and applicability for examining factors and other aspects of evaluation utilization. This is due to Cousins and Leithwood's detailed, in-depth study of previous models to create, through a meta-analysis of frameworks, a model that built on (and synthesized) the most important components identified in earlier studies.

This investigation tested the Cousins and Leithwood (1986) framework in a corporate training setting. This framework was based on a meta-analysis of frameworks that were developed in a number of different settings, and not just a corporate training setting. By applying this model to the corporate setting, a comprehensive look into the use of evaluation results within corporate university training programs and departments resulted.

Research Design

This study was conducted primarily through the use of qualitative multi-site field research. Specifically, this research utilized a case study approach, consisting of on-site interviews with key personnel and in-depth document reviews of all applicable training program evaluation information at four major U.S. corporate universities. This method was chosen because it enables the investigator to examine the general context in which evaluation utilization occurs and provides the best access to corporate universities to study the factors that are affecting this use. The combination of on-site, semi-structured interviews with individuals at each location and document review of information relevant to each corporate university's training program evaluation, enabled the investigator to utilize multiple data collection methods and data sources which added to the overall reliability and validity of the research. In addition, by conducting case study research, the investigator was able to serve as the common "interpreter" of all participant responses and was able to assist each participant with any clarification he/she required in regard to the interview questions. The investigator had the opportunity to discuss, in detail, all responses with each participant, which resulted in a collection of the most in-depth and complete data about how evaluation results are used in corporate universities and the factors that affect this use. Qualitative field research enabled the investigator to gain a broad, complete, and comprehensive understanding of the different facets that affect the use of training program evaluations.

Limitations

The corporate universities used as the population for this study are not representative of all training departments in all companies. While the companies who have established corporate universities most likely view the training and development

of their employees as being highly important, the data collected from them may not be representative of other companies who have not put similar resources into developing a corporate university. Specifically, this study focused on four corporate universities identified with the assistance of a jury of experts on corporate universities.

Results and Findings

Cross-site Analysis. The cross-site analysis examines the parallels and dissimilarities in the data collected from the four corporate universities in this study: Tennessee Valley Authority University (TVAU), Illinova University (IU), Bell Atlantic Training, Education, and Development (BA), and Patent and Trademark Office University (PTOU). Specifically, this section discusses the relationships evident in the findings from each site with regard to the following: users of evaluation information; components of evaluation reports used; uses of evaluation data (purposes); and influential factors associated with evaluation utilization. The researcher conducted a total of twenty-nine interviews in this study with individuals who serve in a variety of capacities including evaluators, instructional designers, deans or directors of corporate universities, instructors/trainers, advisors, and managers from throughout the organizations. In addition to these in-depth interviews, the researcher spoke with a number of other corporate university staff members (ranging from administrative staff to statisticians to marketing personnel) from each site who were able to contribute information used to achieve this study's objectives.

Although each of the four sites represent different industries and therefore vary slightly in their training programs' content, their overall curriculums were similar. Each of the corporate universities' training curriculums were developed around the following four major areas: New Employee Orientation/Organization Orientation; New Employee Technical Skills Training/Job Skills Training; Incumbent Soft Skills Training (i.e., customer service, communication skills, problem solving, planning, project management); and, Incumbent Technical Skills Training/Job Skills Training. Every site had the overall goal to train new employees; and, to keep incumbent workers updated and current in the knowledge, skills, and various competencies needed to do their jobs. When asked about different methods of evaluation and types of utilization for specific training courses within each of their curriculums, all sites indicated that they do not differentiate between types of training in terms of certain courses being evaluated and others that are not. Moreover, every site explained that evaluation is undertaken and results used for the same purposes for all of their curriculums' training programs regardless of the type or category of training.

Users of Evaluation Results. Throughout each of the four corporate universities, the major users of training program evaluation results tended to be similar and fall into the following six categories: evaluation staff; instructional design and development staff; instructors/trainers; the dean or director of the corporate university; upper-level management, typically from the corporate universities' governing boards; and, student advisors/counselors. The purposes in which data were used by each of these groups was similar among the four sites; however, it was determined that the ways evaluation results were used differed by position of user. For example, instructional design staff tend to use evaluation information for internal training activity course and instructor modifications and rarely utilized the data for justification purposes as deans tended to do in presentations to boards of directors. Although data were used by different individuals for various purposes, a strong sense of camaraderie among the users within the corporate universities existed at all of the sites.

The one difference that existed among the sites with respect to the users of data, had to do with managers from departments throughout the organization receiving and utilizing evaluation information. Tennessee Valley Authority University (TVAU), Bell Atlantic Training, Education, and Development, and Illinova University were the only sites that distributed data to outside department managers. While TVAU and Bell Atlantic Training, Education, and Development indicated a considerable amount of use by external department managers, Illinova University noted that although all managers receive data about their employees' progress in training, only a small percentage actually use the information for specific purposes. Due to union pressure, the Patent and Trademark Office University has implemented policy that does not allow for trainee evaluation results to be distributed to company department managers.

None of the sites indicated trainees as major users of evaluation data. In fact, with the exception of TVAU, employees do not directly receive evaluation results from their training programs. PTOU relies on student advisors while the remaining three sites utilize department managers to convey evaluation information to trainees and to implement solutions to problems identified in the data. Each site felt that its method was a reliable way to communicate data to students for self-improvement and other related purposes.

Components of Evaluation Reports Utilized. All of the sites in this study consistently used similar reporting techniques to communicate evaluation data to users throughout their organizations. The components of the evaluation reports were dependent, however, on the type of information that was collected as well as the users'

learning or processing styles. For example, student reaction and test scores tended to be reported using descriptive statistics, charts, and graphs, while return on investment information was typically conveyed through qualitative, written formats. Furthermore, the evaluation staff at each site indicated that the reporting method(s) used was highly dependent on the end-user and his/her format preference for receiving data as indicated from past experience. When the evaluation teams were unaware of the users' preferred format, they incorporated multiple types of communication techniques in the evaluation reports to help increase understanding and utilization of the data.

Across all of the sites, a common trend was apparent in regard to certain groups utilizing specific parts of the evaluation reports. The evaluation staff, instructional designers, trainers, and advisors tended to use the statistical portions of reports that provided a detailed breakdown of each item on the assessments and used means, ranges, standard deviations, and other descriptive statistics to illustrate the findings from the evaluations. Because these groups of users are the "core" staff directly responsible for all aspects of the training programs including the implementation of appropriate solutions to remedy problems that occur, more in-depth data are needed to identify specific problems that exist within courses and among the student population.

The deans or directors of the corporate universities, governing board members, upper-level management, and department managers primarily used components of quarterly and/or semester evaluation reports that contained a wider range of reporting techniques (i.e., graphs, charts, executive summaries, etc.). The evaluation teams used multiple reporting methods because these reports were being distributed to a larger user group with varying types of learning and processing styles.

Uses of Evaluation Data. This study revealed a number of different ways training program evaluation results are utilized by corporate universities. Each of the four sites provided an average of ten examples regarding how data are being used at their organizations. The majority of the purposes of use identified in this study were instrumental in nature, however, both conceptual as well as symbolic types of utilization were present within each of the corporate universities. Table 1 contains a comprehensive summarization of the different ways training program evaluation data are being put to use at the four corporate universities, the nature of use (i.e., instrumental, conceptual, and/or symbolic), and the number and name of sites that indicated each purpose as being prevalent within their organization. The list is comprised of a total of nine different purposes of use that were indicated as occurring by at least two of the corporate universities.

Table 1. How Evaluation Results are Utilized Among the Four Sites

Purpose of use-results used to:	Nature of use	Occurrence/ Total sites*
Modify aspects of course/curriculum	Instrumental	4/TVAU,IU,BA,PTOU
Instructor development/replacement	Instrumental	4/TVAU,IU,BA,PTOU
Justification of training programs	Symbolic	4/TVAU,IU,BA,PTOU
Influence course continuation decisions	Instml./Conceptual	4/TVAU,IU,BA,PTOU
Identify when advanced course is needed	Instml./Conceptual	3/TVAU,IU,BA
Determine employee job placement	Instrumental	2/PTOU,BA
Market programs	Instrumental	2/IU,BA
Identify barriers w/in the org. that impact the transfer of training	Instrumental	2/IU,BA
Continue/discontinue contracts with external vendors	Instrumental	2/BA,PTOU

*TVAU – Tennessee Valley Authority University
IU – Illinova University
BA – Bell Atlantic Training, Education, & Development
PTOU – Patent & Trademark Office University

Influential Factors Associated with Evaluation Utilization. The meta-analytic conceptual framework developed by Cousins and Leithwood in 1986 was used to determine influential factors that affect the utilization of training program evaluation data at corporate universities. Through the meta-analysis, Cousins and Leithwood determined the importance (or influence) of each factor and ranked them accordingly one through twelve.

A comprehensive list of factors identified at all of the sites is summarized according to rank of importance in Table 2. Seven of the factors from the Cousins and Leithwood framework were noted as influencing evaluation utilization throughout all four of the corporate universities. Their overall rank of importance was determined by taking each factor's

rank from all of the sites and computing an overall average for that factor. For example, *communication quality* ranked as the most important factor at three sites and as second most important at the fourth corporate university. Based on these rankings, this factor's overall average was 1.25, which categorized it across the four sites as being the number one factor affecting use.

Table 2. Factors Identified as Being Influential to Evaluation Data Utilization

Factor	Overall rank of importance
Communication Quality	1
Timeliness	2
Commitment and/or Receptiveness to Evaluation	3
Evaluation Quality	4
Credibility	5
Relevance	6
Findings	7

Through the analysis of each site's findings in terms of the following: users of evaluation information; components of evaluation reports used; uses of evaluation data; and influential factors associated with evaluation utilization, it has been determined that many similarities and common trends exist. The main users of evaluation data at each of the sites typically consisted of evaluation staff, instructional design and development staff, instructors/trainers, the dean or director of the corporate university, individuals from upper-level management, and, student advisors/counselors.

The components or parts of the evaluation reports that were utilized was dependent upon the user's personal learning style and format preference. Evaluation results were used across all four sites in this study, for nine major purposes summarized in Table 1. The majority of use occurred in an instrumental sense, however, some cases of conceptual and symbolic utilization were also noted by study participants. Moreover, evaluation data tended to be most often utilized in the following situations: when "red-flags" occur alerting staff of potential and/or existing problems in training courses; during curriculum revision and/or design phases; during presentations to upper-level management; immediately following a course's conclusion in order to provide necessary feedback about that course; and, during corporate university budget revisions and modifications, as well as organization-wide budget cuts in order to illustrate the corporate university's impact on the organization.

The factors that were found to influence the utilization of evaluation data listed in Table 2 were very consistent throughout all of the sites. While the majority of the factors affected use in a positive sense, some were noted as having a negative impact on utilization. In order to increase evaluation use in a corporate university as well as an entire organization, these factors need to be taken into account throughout the entire evaluation process to ensure that those that are positively influential are promoted, while those that inhibit use are avoided.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Users of Evaluation Information. This investigator concludes that within the organizations and corporate universities examined in this study, a wide range of users exists. The assortment of users, in terms of their varied capacities and understanding and devotion toward evaluation use, has helped to communicate the importance of evaluation utilization to a large percentage of employees within these four organizations. As a result, in all of the sites, not only are training programs being evaluated using systematic techniques and methods, but the overall utilization of evaluation data for a variety of purposes has increased.

Components of Evaluation Report Utilized. Throughout all four sites, because in many instances users' preferred reporting formats were unknown, evaluation staff integrated multiple reporting techniques into their reports to ensure that all users were able to understand and utilize the assessment information. This investigator has concluded that in order to increase utilization of evaluation information in corporate universities and throughout their organizations, both quantitative and qualitative assessment data should be reported in a variety of formats including: executive summaries; a section of the report that uses descriptive statistics, charts, and graphs; and qualitative written descriptions of the findings that supplement the quantitative statistical breakdown of the data, in order to appeal to the different processing styles and preferred formats of all users.

Uses of Evaluation Data. Given this study's findings, it can be concluded that evaluation results are being used at the four sites for a variety of purposes ranging from internal corporate university training program improvements to the use of

data as a justification and accountability mechanism for the corporate university. While the nine purposes found in this study represent those that were most prevalent, a number of other less predominant purposes were also found at individual sites and tended to be unique to the specific corporate university and organization.

    Influential Factors Associated with Evaluation Utilization. In regard to the applicability of Cousins and Leithwood's 1986 meta-analytic framework to the four sites, seven of the twelve factors from their framework were found to impact evaluation utilization in the corporate universities. Based on these findings, this investigator concludes that among the twelve factors identified by Cousins and Leithwood (1986), seven of them do not differentiate between the different contexts where program evaluation is occurring, in terms of affecting the use of assessment results.

    Six of the seven factors identified in this study that were found to influence training program evaluation use, are categorized under Cousins and Leithwood's (1986) higher-order heading, *evaluation implementation.* The seventh factor, commitment and/or receptiveness to evaluation, falls under the second higher-order category in their model called *decision/policy setting.* Based on these results, this investigator has concluded that factors related to aspects of the actual evaluation, evaluator, and overall assessment process, as opposed to factors associated with policy setting characteristics, are more applicable and have greater influence on evaluation utilization in a corporate university training program setting. This may be due to the fact that more decisions regarding policy occur in the federal, public, and private contexts (social services, education, and healthcare) analyzed by Cousins and Leithwood (1986), than in the organizations containing corporate universities that were examined in this study. While factors that are related to aspects of the evaluation process are clearly most influential in this study, because setting policy did not appear as a top priority and purpose of the users of data in the four sites, it is not surprising that factors associated with Cousins and Leithwood's (1986) higher-order category of *decision/policy setting,* were not found to be major factors affecting utilization.

Evaluators

    Evaluators in corporate universities need to consider new potential users of evaluation information from both within the corporate university, as well as from the entire organization. These individuals may include other evaluators, trainers, instructional designers, student advisors, deans, and members of upper-level management. It is recommended that evaluators gain an understanding of the purposes for which the user intends to utilize the evaluation results and design processes and assessment tools/instruments to collect information that meets the user's needs.

    In order to increase evaluation utilization in their organizations, evaluators should implement a procedure that facilitates communication with users throughout the entire evaluation process (i.e., design, implementation, analysis, and reporting) in order to understand their needs, timeline, and preferred method of reporting. The evaluator should take proper action to match the reporting timeline to the needs of the user. By building a relationship with the various users of evaluation information and nurturing ongoing communication with them throughout the evaluation process, the evaluator's credibility may increase, the users' commitment and/or receptiveness may rise, and the data that emerges from the evaluations may be more relevant to the users' needs.

    When reporting evaluation results to internal corporate university staff, evaluators should include in-depth and detailed statistical breakdowns of the data according to evaluation item, and also supplemental, written explanations that describe the information. When reporting to the dean of a corporate university and to upper-level management, it is recommended that evaluators include statistical breakdowns by course, summary charts, graphs, and executive summaries.

Managers in Corporate Universities

    Managers from within corporate universities should use this study's findings to identify potential ways that they can utilize evaluation data in their roles. Specifically, managers should use evaluation data to demonstrate to upper-level management the corporate university's status/progress. Moreover, it is recommended that managers use evaluation information to assist in decisions regarding employee job placement. Managers should also use assessment data to market training courses and to increase visibility of the corporate university.

    Managers should request in-depth and detailed statistical breakdowns of the data according to evaluation item from evaluators. In addition, it is recommended that they ask evaluators for supplemental, written explanations that describe the evaluation findings. Deans of corporate universities should establish systems that encourage use among corporate university staff.

    Upper-Level Management. During the initiation, development, and refinement of an evaluation department within a corporate university, the findings from this study should be taken into account to ensure that training

program evaluation data are utilized to their fullest capacity. Specifically, it is recommended that managers who are interested in developing a corporate university establish an internal evaluation department. This may help to boost evaluator credibility throughout the organization, increase user commitment and understanding of evaluation, and promote ongoing communication between the evaluator and the user(s) through the entire evaluation process. Management should employ a knowledgeable and credible evaluation staff that is well-versed in psychometrics and is able to communicate evaluation results through a variety of formats including statistical control charts, graphs, and executive summaries. The evaluation staff should have both quantitative and qualitative analysis and reporting skills. Furthermore, it is recommended that the corporate university staff be trained in how to interpret and use the evaluative information.

Researchers

With the growing number of corporate universities in organizations throughout the United States (Meister, 1999), additional research that focuses on evaluation use in these entities should be conducted. As new corporate universities emerge in a variety of industries, additional users of data, purposes of use, and factors that impact utilization may arise. These need to be explored in future studies.

The factors found to impact use in a corporate university setting should be tested for their applicability in corporate training programs that exist outside of the corporate university context. The similarities in terms of curriculums that may exist between corporate training programs and those found in corporate universities would provide a basis upon which to study factors affecting evaluation use. By determining influential factors that impact data utilization in corporate training programs, it may encourage evaluation use to increase within this context.

Further research focused on comparing evaluation use in a variety of contexts should be conducted in order to determine common purposes of utilization and factors influencing use that are consistent across settings where program evaluation is occurring. The results of such a comparative analysis would add to the literature on evaluation use.

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10

Organizational Readiness for Learning and Evaluation

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Organizations that wish to engage in evaluation as part of their approach to organizational learning should consider determining how ready the organization is for learning from evaluation processes and findings. This paper reports the outcomes of implementing a diagnostic instrument with eight U.S. organizations. The findings indicate that the instrument is able to identify areas of strength on which to build evaluation efforts, and areas in need of development for creating and sustaining learning from evaluation work.

Keywords: Evaluation, Organizational Learning, Survey Research

Within the last few years, organizations have struggled to find ways to adapt, survive, and even thrive in today's dynamic, unpredictable, and constantly changing marketplace and society. One popular approach to addressing organizational change and development has been to implement systems and processes that support organizational learning (see for example, Argyris & Schon, 1978, 1996; DiBella & Nevis, 1997; Dixon, 1994; Marquardt, 1996; Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). The goal of implementing such systems and processes has been to become a "learning organization." While many definitions of organizational learning abound in the literature, Torres, Preskill and Piontek (1996) define it as, "a continuous process of organizational growth and improvement that: (a) is integrated with work activities, (b) invokes the alignment of values, attitudes, and perceptions among organizational members, and (c) uses information or feedback about both processes and outcomes to make changes" (p. 2). In this sense, organizational learning represents the organization's commitment to using all of its members' capabilities. Ultimately, organizational learning is about creating continuous processes and mechanisms for learning about how to do things better.

Another effort that is gaining attention within the learning and performance arena is evaluation (Bassi, Benson & Cheney, 1996; Brown & Seidner, 1998; Industry Report, 1996; Raelin, 2000; Sadler-Smith, Down & Field, 1999). As organizations seek to provide timely, relevant, cost efficient and effective programs, services, and products, they are asking for evaluative information to guide their decision-making practices. In spite of a desire to conduct more evaluations, however, employees are often uncertain about how to conduct rigorous, useful evaluations or how to find the resources and time to do them well. Few employees have any academic background in evaluation, or much practical experience conducting systematic evaluations. Further complicating the situation is the fact that even those who understand the value of evaluation worry that their organizations are not "ready" or really willing to evaluate; that the organization's culture and leadership don't appear to support evaluation, and that there are few processes, systems or mechanisms for conducting evaluation. Nevertheless, there remains a growing need and concern in how to effectively evaluate learning and performance efforts.

Given this increasing interest in conducting evaluations and becoming a learning organization, some means of diagnosing an organization's readiness to learn from evaluative inquiry is needed. It would clearly be a waste of time and resources to engage in evaluation work if an organization is not ready or interested in using the evaluation's results or learning from evaluation practice. Therefore, the use of a diagnostic instrument can yield information helpful for preparing and guiding the organization in their efforts to evaluate various learning and performance programs, processes, products, systems, and services.

Evaluation and Learning

Preskill and Torres (1999) envision evaluative inquiry as:

An ongoing process for investigating and understanding critical organizational issues. It is an

approach that is fully integrated with an organization's work practices, and as such engenders (a)organization members' interest and ability in exploring critical issues using evaluation logic, (b) organization members' involvement in evaluative processes, and (c) the personal and professional growth of individuals within the organization. (p. 1-2).

They propose that evaluative inquiry is most successful when four learning processes are used throughout an evaluation. These include: (1) Dialogue, (2) Reflection, (3) Asking Questions, and (4) Identifying and Clarifying Values, Beliefs, Assumptions, and Knowledge. When an evaluation is facilitated using these processes, greater insights and understandings about the evaluand (that which is being evaluated) are developed. These learning processes also support a collaborative and participatory approach to evaluation throughout the (1) focusing the evaluation, (2) carrying out the evaluation, and (3) applying learning phases.

According to Preskill and Torres (1999), the organization's infrastructure also directly affects the effectiveness of any evaluative inquiry effort. They identify four elements of this infrastructure: (1) Culture, (2) Leadership, (3) Communication, and (4) Systems and Structures. These elements form the foundation on which evaluative inquiry efforts can be undertaken and sustained. That is, these elements will facilitate or inhibit individual, team, and/or organizational learning from evaluative inquiry to varying degrees, depending on how they function within the organization.

Administering a diagnostic instrument such as the one discussed in this paper, prior to conducting an evaluation, can help organization members understand the degree to which the evaluation will be successful by considering the extent to which different organizational elements support or inhibit learning from evaluation. For example, an organization may learn that support for evaluation will be limited, or that certain elements of its infrastructure do not support inquiry and learning in general. This organization would then know that attention to a wider array of its practices and systems would be needed for evaluative inquiry to be maximally successful. And when an external evaluator is involved, sharing this information will enable her to know beforehand, what challenges to expect with regard to the organization's ability to learn from the evaluation, or use its results. Being aware of this enables the evaluator to address these obstacles to use so that the evaluation can be as effective as possible.

Research Purpose and Guiding Questions

The purpose of the research was to further establish the validity of the Readiness for Organizational Learning and Evaluation (ROLE) instrument and to understand the status of evaluation and learning readiness in eight pilot organizations. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:
1. What are the strongest and weakest dimensions across the eight pilot organizations (Culture, Leadership, Communication of Information, Systems and Structures, Teams, and Evaluation)?
2. Do respondents' perceptions differ based on their position in, and longevity with, the organization?
3. How do the dimensions' mean scores vary across the eight organizations?
4. What challenges might these organizations face when engaging in evaluation work?

Methods

Data were collected using the newly designed Readiness for Organizational Learning and Evaluation (ROLE) instrument. The instrument was developed based on a) a review of the organizational learning and program evaluation literatures, b) a review of existing organizational learning and readiness for evaluation instruments, and c) interviews conducted with several organizations that are attempting to become "learning organizations." The items were classified into dimensions based on the framework described in Evaluative Inquiry for Learning in Organizations (Preskill & Torres, 1999). These dimensions include: (a) Culture - 26 items, (b) Leadership - 12 items, (c) Communication of Information - 8 items, (d) Systems and Structures - 18 items, (e) Teams - 11 items, and (f) Evaluation - 9 items. With three additional demographic items, the total number of items on the instrument is 87.

Sample

To establish the instrument's construct validity, eight organizations were invited to administer the instrument with their employees. Each of the organizations had already begun making efforts to become a learning organization and saw the instrument as a means to understand how well they were doing, and their members' interest in integrating evaluation into their work practices.

Because we hope the instrument will be useful in a wide range of organizations, we sought to involve a diverse group of organizations in the study. The participating organizations included a: hospital, non-profit community organization, elementary school, car dealership, Fortune 50 technology company, newly established community college, department within a university's medical school, and county administrative office. These organizations were located in the Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, and Rocky Mountain regions of the U.S. Each organization was invited to participate at the organization or department/unit level. In five of the organizations, respondents rated the items thinking about their organization overall, while three responded in terms of their department or unit. A total of 232 useable instruments were returned from the eight organizations. For their participation, each organization received a 1) summary report that included descriptive statistics for each item, 2) aggregate scores for each dimension, 3) a narrative summary of the results, and 4) an offer for two hours of free consultation regarding their organization's results.

While details on establishing the instrument's construct validity can be found elsewhere (Preskill, Torres, & Martinez-Papponi, 1999), the instrument was found to be internally consistent (Cronbach's alpha .97 across the 78 Likert scale items, and a range of .83 to .94 across the six dimensions). Exploratory factor analyses suggested the following modifications to the original instrument: (1) elimination of four items with low communality, (2) creation of three subscales within the culture dimension; (3) creation of three subscales within the systems and structures dimension; and (4) creation of two subscales within the communication dimension.

The findings reported in this paper reflect the 232 responses to the original instrument before final changes were made based on the factor analyses. In spite of reorganizing some of the items and the elimination of four items, none of the items were reworded; thus, we are confident the results reported here are valid and worthy of discussion.

Data Analysis

For each question, participants were asked to indicate on 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) the extent to which they agreed with each statement. Data were analyzed using the SPSS (version 9.0) statistical package. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for each instrument item, as well as for each of the six dimensions (e.g., Culture, Leadership). When a design consists of more than two dependent variables, it is necessary to determine which ones differ significantly from each other. Therefore, a MANOVA using the mean scores for each dimension as the dependent variable was conducted. Since missing data constituted less than 1% of the responses, the series means for each dimension were used for the missing data in that dimension.

The general linear repeated-measures model provides analysis of variance when the same measurement is made several times on each case. In this situation, we treated the dimension as the repeated measure (within subjects). We also specified a between-subjects factor (organization) and therefore, the population was divided into groups. Using the repeated measures model, we were able to study the effects of both the between-subjects factors and the within-subjects factors. Further, we were able to investigate interactions between factors as well as the effects of individual factors. Series means for each dimension were again used for the analysis for missing data in that dimension.

Findings

The findings from this study are reported for each research question. Before discussing the results, however, it is important to remind the reader that the participating pilot organizations agreed to become involved because they were interested in enhancing their organization's evaluation and learning capabilities. In some cases, they had already implemented several organizational learning processes and activities. Therefore, most of these organizations were predisposed to the basic concepts of team and organizational learning, which might have skewed the overall results in a more positive direction. We do not intend to generalize these results to other organizations. Rather, we believe the results provide additional insights into the instrument's reliability and validity, and some trends in these particular organizations.

1. What are the strongest/weakest dimensions across the eight pilot organizations?

As can be seen in Table 1, the highest rated dimension across the eight organizations (N=232) is *Teams*, while the lowest rated is *Systems and Structures*. Only those respondents who said they work in teams (n=193/84%) completed the questions in the *Teams* dimension. These items focused on how well team members: (a) deal with conflict, (b) are open and honest with one another, (c) facilitate meetings, (d) accomplish their work, and (e) are encouraged to share their learning with others. Interestingly, of these 193 individuals, only 101 or 44% said they
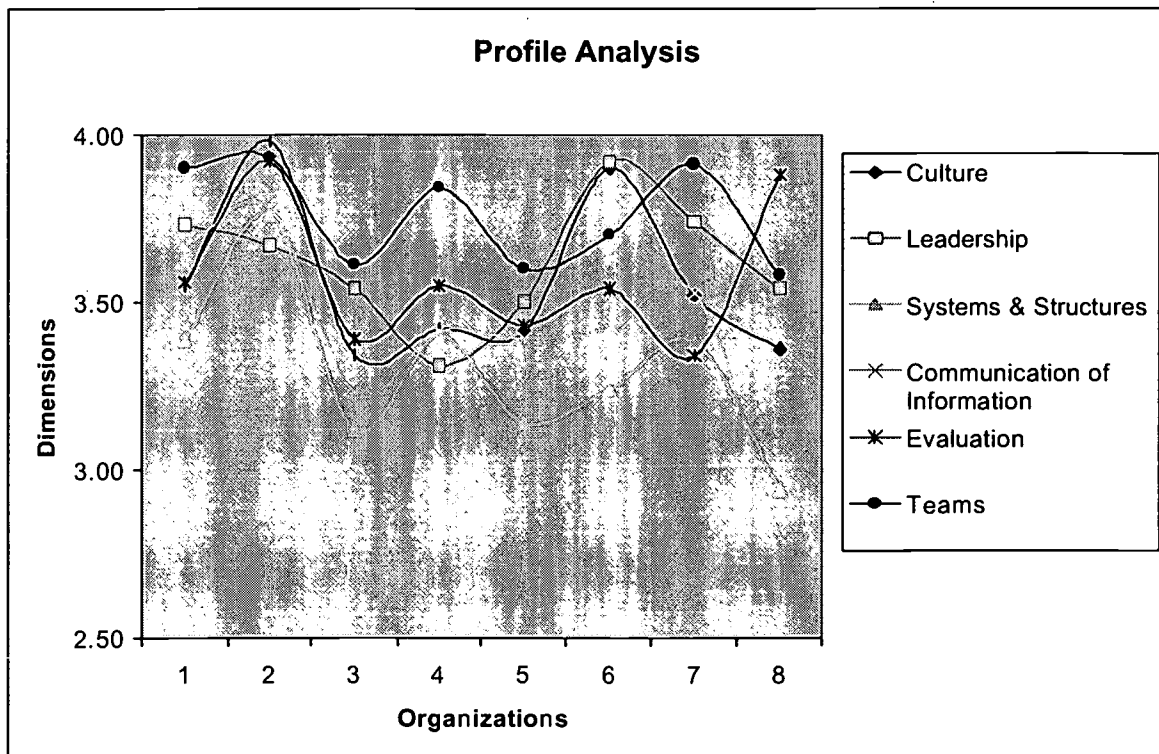
have received training on how to work as a team member. Nevertheless, it appears that overall, respondents believe that their teams are working and are an effective means for completing various work-related tasks.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Each of the Six Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Teams (n = 185)	3.7561	.7222
Leadership (n = 232)	3.6219	.7474
Culture (n = 232)	3.5326	.6269
Evaluation (n = 232)	3.5268	.5673
Communication of Information (n = 232)	3.4339	.6490
Systems & Structures (n = 232)	3.2780	.5683

The *Systems and Structures* dimension, rated lowest by respondents across the eight organizations included items that focused on (a) the accessibility and openness of the work environment, (b) the organizations' rewards and recognition systems and practices, and (c) the relationship of employees' work to the organizations' goals. A profile analysis for the eight organizations as shown in Figure 1 is another way to view the highest and lowest dimensions for each of the organizations. As can be seen in this figure, the *Teams* dimension was consistently higher across organizations, just as the *Systems and Structures* dimension was consistently lower across the organizations.

Figure 1. Profile Analysis of Eight Participating Organizations

2. Do respondents' perceptions differ based on their position in, and longevity with, the organization?
These analyses were conducted using the MANOVA tests and did not include responses to items in the *Teams* dimension. Since this was the only dimension that did not require responses from all participants, it was not included as a variable in the remaining analyses.

We used a repeated measures multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) to examine whether being in a supervisory or management position affected how respondents rated each item. Using a 5 (dimension) x 2 (position) design, we combined "First-line Supervisor, Middle Manager, and Senior Manager" into one group (n=44), and the

rest of the respondents' into another group (n=164). We questioned whether those in supervisory roles would have a more positive view of how ready the organization was for learning and evaluation. The results of the MANOVA revealed a multivariate effect, Wilks' Lambda = .95, F (5, 202) = 2.18, p < .057. This finding shows that managers did rate the dimensions differently than those in non-managerial positions. When we examine the individual means and standard deviations (See Table 2), we see that the managers rated the dimensions higher (more positively) as we thought they might. In other words, they were more likely to agree that their organizations reflect a learning and evaluation environment.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Each Dimension Based on Position Within the Organization

Dimension	Manager (1) or Non-Manager (2)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Culture	1	3.5323	.5122
	2	3.5055	.6504
Leadership	1	3.7875	.5756
	2	3.5770	.7795
Systems & Structures	1	3.2521	.5059
	2	3.2455	.5772
Communication of Information	1	3.3636	.5686
	2	3.4350	.6821
Evaluation	1	3.6204	.5558
	2	3.4755	.5537

To determine if the length of one's time with the organization affects the overall dimension ratings, a 5 (dimension, excluding Teams) x 3 (longevity) MANOVA was performed. Participants were divided into three groups based on their time with the organization; less than a one-year (n=49), one to three years (n=76); and four years or more (n=87). Results of the MANOVA were not significant (p = .23), indicating that the dimension variables did not differ significantly between the three groups. Individual means and standard deviations for the dimensions are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Each Dimension Based on Longevity with the Organization

Dimension	Longevity 1= less than one year; 2= 1-3 years; 3 = 4 or more years.	Mean	Standard Deviation
Culture	1	3.6950	.5808
	2	3.4954	.6770
	3	3.4356	.5876
Leadership	1	3.8348	.7377
	2	3.6010	.7650
	3	3.5387	.7200
Systems & Structures	1	3.4142	.5653
	2	3.2066	.6088
	3	3.2014	.5188
Communication of Information	1	3.4808	.6680
	2	3.4462	.6873
	3	3.3649	.6395
Evaluation	1	3.5581	.6675
	2	3.5829	.5543
	3	3.4160	.4919

3. How do the dimensions' mean scores vary across the eight organizations?

A repeated-measures ANOVA (using deviation contrasts, which compares the mean of each level to the grand mean) test was preformed in order to examine if the dimensions (excluding *Teams*), differed between each other, and if the differences in dimensions differed across the organizations. The repeated-measures ANOVA

confirmed that participants do vary across dimensions, Wilks' Lambda = .70, F (4, 221)= 23.61, p < .000. The analyses also showed that there were significant differences across the eight organizations as they rated the five dimensions, Wilks' Lambda = .63, F (28, 798) = 3.96, p < .000. These results further validate our earlier findings that the dimensions differ among themselves -- that the items are discreet from one another across the dimensions.

4.   What challenges might these organizations face when engaging in evaluation work?

To better understand specific issues for the organizations within each dimension, the instrument items were ordered by the size of their means (in ascending and descending order). As can be seen in Table 4, of the top ten item means across all of the organizations, four are in the *Teams* dimension, three are in the *Culture* dimension, two are in *Leadership*, and one is in the *Systems and Structures* dimension. These findings imply that respondents believe their teams are accomplishing work in ways that support individual and team learning. In addition, there is some reason to think that in most of the participating organizations, the organization's culture supports the sharing of knowledge, asking questions, and using each other as resources.

Table 4. Ten Highest Ranked Item Variables According to Means

Instrument Item	N	Mean
#75 "Teams are an effective way to meet an organization's goals." (Teams)	190	4.15
#2 "Employees ask each other for information about work issues and activities." (Culture)	232	4.13
#36 "Managers and supervisors support the sharing of knowledge and skills among employees." (Leadership)	230	3.95
#1 "Employees respect each other's perspectives and opinions." (Culture)	230	3.91
#8 "Asking questions and raising issues about work is encouraged." (Culture)	232	3.90
#79 "Evaluation would help us provide better programs, processes, programs and services." (Evaluation)	228	3.89
#72 "Team meetings strive to include everyone's opinion." (Teams)	191	3.87
#76 "Integrating evaluation activities into our work would enhance the quality of decision-making." (Evaluation)	228	3.86
#74 "Teams accomplish work they are charged to do." (Teams)	192	3.86
#73 "Teams are encouraged to learn from another and to share their learning with others" (Teams)	190	3.81
#35 " Managers and supervisors believe that our success depends upon learning from daily practices." (Leadership)	229	3.81
#53 "Employees meet work deadlines." (Systems & Structures)	231	3.81

Table 5 presents the items with the lowest mean ratings across the eight organizations. As can be seen, six of the ten lowest rated items are in the *Systems and Structures* dimension, with two in the *Culture*, one in the *Evaluation*, and one in the *Communication of Information* dimension.

The overall picture for these pilot organizations suggest that (a) employees have more work than they can accomplish in timely ways, (b) find little support for trying something new, and (c) don't believe the reward and recognition system sufficiently supports their learning or experimenting with new ideas. In addition, there appears to be few mechanisms for evaluation or for documenting the success of past change efforts. While the aggregated data do show some interesting trends across the eight organizations, it is important to note that each individual organization had their own highest and lowest rated items within each dimensions and thus have different strengths and challenges as they attempt to learn from evaluation and their practice.

Discussion

The results of this research further confirm that the ROLE instrument effectively measures the constructs of organizational learning and evaluation. Not only did respondents vary in how they answered each item, but they also varied in how they rated each dimension overall across the eight dimensions. In other words, respondents were able to determine the discreet nature of each instrument item. These findings suggest that the instrument may indeed be useful to organizations that are interested in understanding where their strengths and weaknesses are relative to integrating evaluation into their organizational learning practices.

Table 5. Lowest Ranked Item Variables According to Means

Instrument Item	N	Mean
#55 "Employees are able to get their work done in a timely way." (Systems & Structures)	230	2.81
#49 "Work commitments do not exceed employees' capacity to fulfill them." (Systems & Structures)	231	2.87
#84 "There are evaluation processes in place that enable employees to review how well changes we make are working." (Evaluation)	224	2.94
#61 "There are adequate records of past change efforts and what happened as a result." (Communication of Information)	227	2.97
#40 "There is little bureaucratic red tape when trying to do something new or different." (Systems & Structures)	229	3.02
#20 "Employees generally view problems or issues as opportunities to learn." (Culture)	232	3.04
#50 "Employees are recognized or rewarded for helping each other learn." (Systems & Structures)	230	3.05
#51 "Employees are recognized or rewarded for experimenting with new ideas." (Systems & Structures)	230	3.06
#46 "The current reward or appraisal system recognizes, in some way, team learning and performance." (Systems & Structures)	230	3.08
#6 "Employees are more concerned about how their work contributes to the success of the organization than they are about their individual success." (Culture)	229	3.18

The finding that there were significant differences between those in a supervisory or management role was not particularly surprising, since we initially thought that managers might be more positive about how well their organizations or departments embody organizational learning principles. It often seems that those most closely tied to the daily operations of the organization -- those that are on the front line, have different perceptions about how the organization supports their work. At the same time, we need to be cautious in interpreting these results. In categorizing the two groups, we combined respondents who checked that they were a "First-line supervisor," "Middle manager," or "Senior manager." The second group comprised those who checked "Administrative, Production, Sales, Non-Managerial Professional, Technical, Customer Service, or Other." We debated whether those in the "Administrative" category might also have supervisory responsibilities, and finally decided to place them in the non-managerial group. Thus, we cannot be certain that those in "Production," for example, might not be supervisors or managers in that specific area. In addition, the sample size for each group was uneven (n=44 for managers, and n=164 for non-mangers). To further understand whether real differences exist for these two groups, additional research using a more discreet classification scheme is warranted.

The length of time one has worked for the organization, however, does not appear to affect how respondents answered each item. We were somewhat surprised at this finding since we thought that newer employees would perceive the organization's support for organizational learning and evaluation practices differently than more veteran employees. In some ways, this is good news, since it may be one less variable that needs to be considered if implementing the instrument within an organization. However, once again, further research should determine if this finding holds up for a larger sample.

Of particular interest is the result of the highest and lowest rated dimensions. The fact that the lowest rated items clustered in the *Systems and Structures* dimension, suggests some serious obstacles to employee learning and evaluation within organizations. The lack of time to do their job, being faced with a bureaucracy that impedes experimentation, the lack of a reward and recognition system that supports learning, and the lack of any means to track progress on various initiatives, are all areas that will inhibit organizational learning and evaluation work. While these results present some concern, we suspect that these findings are not unique to the eight organizations included in this study. Future research might explore how organizations have overcome some of these obstacles or test various organizational change efforts that seek to create more learning oriented systems and structures. At the same time, given the seeming impossibility of changing an organization's systems and structures or culture, research might instead focus on how organizations can capitalize on their strengths to overcome deficiencies found in the other dimensions.

Conclusions

We believe evaluation is a useful approach to helping organization members answer pressing questions that challenge their success and future. In so doing, it can provide critical information for making decisions that result in

increased individual, team, and organizational learning. Yet, it is often difficult to know where to start within an organization that is trying to integrate evaluative inquiry into its daily work practices. The Readiness for Organizational Learning and Evaluation (ROLE) instrument is one tool we believe can help organization members and learning and performance practitioners in particular, understand an organization's readiness to engage in, and learn, from evaluative forms of inquiry.

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Three Perspectives of Training Evaluation Based on Organizational Needs

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This article suggests that matching the intents of evaluation stakeholders and the evaluation emphasis has not been addressed in HRD. It is important for HRD professionals to better match the intents of evaluation, the intended users, and the aspects of evaluative process and information. Three perspectives of stakeholders on evaluation of training were developed as a means for ensuring the match between the intents and activities of evaluation.

Key words: Evaluation, Needs Assessment, Organizational Research

As the business environment becomes more competitive due to global influences, technological advancement, and other factors, organizations are more interested in developing high-performance workplace (Faerman & Ban, 1993). Thus organizations place more emphasis on developing workforce's skills, and knowledge through continuous learning to remain competitive. In return for this employer-supported training, organizations anticipate increased job effectiveness and performance. Higher tangible and intangible impacts are expected from organizations that spent over 58 billion dollars on employee training and education in both 1995 and 1996 (Bassi, Benson, & Cheney, 1996).

Organizations are demanding more accountability from providers of HRD programs for their employees (Robinson & Robinson, 1995; Swanson & Holton, 1999). Thus HRD professionals in organizations are increasingly being asked to show how their efforts add value to their organizations. In many organizations, training evaluation is thought to be the most appropriate method of demonstrating this value (Preskill, 1997). While the importance of training evaluation has been emphasized by both scholars and practitioners (Brinkerhoff, 1987; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Kirkpatrick, 1994), there have been few systematic evaluations to demonstrate the effectiveness of training programs by either organizational managers or trainers (Dionne, 1996; Faerman & Ban, 1993).

With the advent of Kirkpatrick's four level evaluation model, many models have been suggested to help managers and trainers measure and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of training programs (Baldwin & Ford, 1989; Brinkerhoff, 1987; Holton, 1996; Kaufman & Keller, 1994; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Swanson & Holton, 1999). Unfortunately, evaluation models are seldom used wisely or used to answer the most vital questions that face every organization. Preskill (1997) argues that most of these models were not grounded in a philosophy or theory of evaluation and position evaluation as a periodic event that is the sum of a set of technical skills and activities focuses on a narrow set of variables using limited numbers of designs and methods. Holton (1996) suggests that at best most models are simple taxonomies or classification schemes because they do not fully address all constructs underlying the phenomena of interest. As a result evaluation of training has focused on a narrow set of questions using tools and methods and then has failed to show HRD's contribution to organizations.

HRD scholars and practitioners agree that training programs influence and are influenced by elements of a larger organizational system (Brinkerhoff, 1997; Rummler & Brache, 1995; Swanson, 1994). They advocate that training program be thought of in terms of improving performance in its broader systemic context. After all, the evaluation of training must be treated as the study of a part of an organizational subsystem that must be understood within an organization context (Dionne, 1996; Tannenbaum & Woods, 1992) where the roles, responsibilities, and tasks of evaluation vary with both time and circumstances.

The objectives of training programs reflect numerous goals ranging from trainee progress or training program improvement to organizational goals. Every stakeholder of training program in organizations intends to judge training activities against his or her own criteria, and the information they seek is not used for the same purposes. There is a whole set of values and attitudes that belong to the trainees, the trainers, and the HRD managers, the evaluators, and the decision-makers in the organization. It would be naïve to suggest that these values and attitudes do not affect many of the decisions involving both the evaluation and the resulting data interpretations. Thus it is necessary to shift attention from the methods or object of evaluation to the intended users of evaluative processes and information, and their intended uses (Patton, 1997). Accordingly, organizations should evaluate its

training programs in terms of achieving the goals of evaluation while the goals should derive from the needs of the intended stakeholders of evaluative processes and information.

The failure of past evaluations has to do with the fact that most of organizations has selected the questions and methods of training evaluation or adhered to a particular perspective of training evaluation without having clear goals of evaluation. A useful evaluation should be responsive to the questions and needs that organizations and their stakeholders must face. In this regard, it will be important that evaluators help stakeholders of training programs identify their evaluation needs, determine what information and processes would best address those needs, and generate findings what would yield the type of information needed by the intended stakeholders.

The purpose of this study is not to present another evaluation model, but to suggest a training evaluation framework that organizations can consult when evaluating their training programs. The framework proposed here is flexible enough to accommodate most any evaluation model and may add components favorable to structural integration with the system of training activities to be evaluated. First, this study describes three perspectives of training evaluation, including their definition, the issues or questions of evaluation to be addressed, and representative evaluation models. Second, the study concludes with ideas on how the proposed framework may contribute to HRD practice and research.

Theoretical and Research Questions

The framework of evaluation proposed here intends to address the following questions:
1. What are major perspectives of training evaluation on which HRD practitioners and researchers are based on?
2. What evaluation issues do each perspective of training evaluation address?
3. What are the implications of three perspectives of training evaluation on HRD practice and research?

Three Perspectives of Training Evaluation

Despite the fact that the approaches and models of evaluation adopted by HRD practitioners and researchers are almost as varied as their proponents, HRD practitioners and researchers have only explored the issues of the models or methods of training evaluation. They have not paid full attention to the intents of evaluation, particularly on the part of HRD professionals or their organizations. Patton (1997) argues that evaluation without an intention to use the findings should be meaningless at all. For an evaluation to be effective and efficient, there should be a plan for the intentional use of findings. Otherwise, investing the resources in an evaluation may be questionable. There seems quite a high degree of consistency about what is considered to be the primary intents of evaluation underlying evaluation activities. In Table 1, those intents of evaluation are described in terms of three perspectives of stakeholders in organizations on training evaluation. They are called as judgment-oriented, improvement-oriented, and learning-oriented evaluation.

Judgment Perspective of Training Evaluation

Known as a kind of instrumental use (Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1991), the judgment perspective of evaluation refers to the assessment of merit and worth of training program, thus making direct decision about changing training program based on evaluation results. Judgment perspective of training evaluation aims to determine the overall worth of training through developing a warranted judgment of the important characteristics and the value of the training. The judgment perspective of training evaluation helps HRD professionals to: 1) judge the overall effectiveness of the training program; 2) make decisions about continuing or terminating the training program; 3) make sure that the training program be implemented and effective as planned; 4) allocate new budget outlays for the training program; and 5) accomplish fundamental change efforts in how organizations achieve their goals. In short, this perspective of evaluation demonstrates conclusively that something has happened as a result of training activities. This will be linked to judgments about the value of the training program.

The evaluation models or approaches based on judgmental perspective are labeled the outcomes approach because the emphasis is on demonstrating that the appropriate outcomes occur (Holton & Hannigan, 2000). Since Kirkpatrick's four-level model of reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Kirkpatrick, 1994), a variety of HRD scholars have offered elaborations, updates, and variations in an attempt to improve the taxonomy. Kaufman and Keller (1994) have proposed the addition of societal impact as a fifth level and Brinkerhoff (1987) offered a six-stage model that added two more level of formative evaluative process to Kirkpatrick's model. Through the results

Table 1. Three Perspectives of the Evaluation of a Training Program

Perspectives	Definition	Examples of Use	Typical Questions	Representative Models	Reference Examples
Judgment	To determine the overall worth of a training program through judgment of the value of its outcomes and success	☐ Judge the overall effectiveness of the program. ☐ Determine how effective the program is in meeting the needs of those it is intended to help. ☐ Decide if the program is sufficiently effective to be continued or replicated. ☐ Judge whether the program has been implemented as planned. ☐ Select more effective alternative to the program.	☐ Did the program meet the needs of those who intend to implement? ☐ Did the program resolve a meaningful problem in the organization? ☐ Did the program achieve desired outcomes? ☐ Should the program be continued or ended? ☐ Were the budgets of the program used appropriately for the intended purposes? ☐ Does the program work better than training alternatives?	☐ Kirkpatrick's four-level model ☐ Swanson & Holton's model ☐ Brinkerhoff's six-stage model ☐ Phillips' five-level model ☐ Kaufman's OEM ☐ Forecasting financial benefits	☐ Kirkpatrick (1994) ☐ Swanson & Holton (1999) ☐ Brinkerhoff (1987) ☐ Phillips (1997) ☐ Kaufman & Keller (1994) ☐ Jacobs (1992)
Improvement	To modify and enhance a training program through a causal and timely assessment, diagnosis of observed, and decision of which change to pursue	☐ Improve the implementation of the program. ☐ Provide feedback for fine-tuning an established program. ☐ Solve unanticipated problems from the program. ☐ Make sure that the program participants are progressing toward desired outcomes. ☐ Monitor and tailor the processes of program.	☐ What are the program's strengths and weaknesses? ☐ What kinds of implementation problems have emerged and how are they being addressed? ☐ To what extent are participants progressing toward the desired outcomes? ☐ Which types of participants are making good progress and which types aren't doing so well? ☐ What are participant perceptions of organizational climate to the program? ☐ What are staff and participant perceptions of the program?	☐ Holton's model ☐ Stufflebeam's CIPP model ☐ Baldwin & Ford's training effectiveness model ☐ Brinkerhoff's six-stage model ☐ Kaufman's OEM	☐ Holton (1996) ☐ Stufflebeam (1971) ☐ Brinkerhoff (1987) ☐ Baldwin & Ford (1988) ☐ Kaufman & Keller (1994)
Learning	To foster organizational learning through involving managers and training staff in evaluation	☐ Improve organizational capacity to set training policies, design and administer training programs, and evaluate. ☐ Generate knowledge about the training program model, theory, outcome measurement and lessons learned. ☐ Support and reinforce the training program. ☐ Increase engagement, self-determination, and ownership of training staff and managers. ☐ Enhance shared understanding among stakeholders. ☐ Establish communication within an organization.	☐ What are the expected or unexpected impacts of the program on the organization? ☐ What can be learned from the program's experiences and results to inform future efforts? ☐ What were the factors that were important in the success or failure of this program? ☐ On what theoretical assumptions and model is the program based?	☐ Preskill & Torres' Evaluation Inquiry ☐ Patton's Developmental Evaluation	☐ Preskill & Torres (1999) ☐ Patton (1997)

assessment system, Swanson and Holton (1999) have tried to provide HRD practitioners with the systematic evaluation process for assessing learning, performance, and perceptions. With an addition of return on investment to the taxonomy, Phillips (1997) and Jacobs, Jones, Neil (1992) suggest that the financial benefits of training programs be forecast because organizational results are more likely to be achieved if the benefits are calculated and known to stakeholders involved in the training.

Sometimes even if it is possible to overcome the technical difficulties in measuring outcomes and changes resulting from training activities, it has still to be decided against whose criteria of value such changes might be assessed. Patton (1997) argues that specifying the criteria for judgment is central and critical in judgmental evaluations. Scriven (1991) also emphasizes the importance of establishing the evaluation criteria when he presents *the logic of valuing* rules, which are 1) selecting criteria of merit; 2) setting standards of performance; 3) measuring performance; and 4) synthesize results into a judgment of value. Alliger, Tannenbaum, Bennett, Traver, and Shortland (1997) also insist that for any training evaluation to be valuable, training criteria must be meaningful to decision makers as well as psychometrically sound, and must be able to be collected within typical organizational constraints.

Notions of what are good and desirable outcomes for trainees are not universal. They may be presented as if they are self-evident and objectively determined, but in fact they are articulated primarily to serve the interests and expectations of stakeholders within organizations. Stakeholders are defined as those who have an interest in a training event, and thus may include trainees, trainers, HRD managers, and upper-level managers. In terms of judgmental evaluation, evaluators should identify all stakeholders involved with the training and attempt to identify what criteria they would use in assessing the value of the training. Any evaluation information can then be collected with these multiple criteria in mind.

Improvement Perspective of Training Evaluation

The second perspective of training evaluation is improvement-oriented evaluation. This training evaluation refers to the efforts to provide timely feedback designed to modify and enhance training program operations. That is, a more casual and timely assessment of merit and worth is conducted, and the results are reported to training program managers and staff who can then use the feedback to establish the need for training program modifications. It also focuses on diagnosing the parts of he training program that are causing observed problems, considering alternative approaches to these parts of the training program, and deciding which change to pursue. The improvement perspective of training evaluation helps HRD professionals to: 1) improve the implementation of training program; 2) solve unanticipated problems; and 3) make sure that trainees are progressing toward desired outcomes. In effect, the improvement-oriented evaluation is to provide information about the training methods that are most effective, offer guidance for improving the training operations, and identify difficulties and weaknesses within the processes. Along with the judgment-oriented evaluation, the improvement-oriented evaluation is very important because the evaluation is linked to cost-effectiveness that can lead to positive business results (Rohrer-Murphy, Moller, & Benscoter, 1997). In general, the followings can be considered as major parts of improvement-oriented evaluation.

First, the improvement-oriented evaluation will concentrate on the performance of any critical training functions; on those aspects of the training with high visibility and importance, and on any areas where there may be indication of trainee dissent, conflict, or uncertainty, including trainer's ones. This evaluation reviews the training operations in two different but interconnected ways. On the one hand, it focuses on the efficiency of training operations (Kaufman & Keller, 1994). It should be reviewed regarding how well resources (financial, materials, personnel, and so forth) are being used in the training program. It was common and necessary to report on whether the training program has met budgetary parameter and delivery schedules. On the other hand, it also examines how well trainees are reacting to the training activity and how well trainees progress toward expected outcomes. Trainee discontent or dissatisfaction or misleading can be a serious problem. Beyond judging trainees' satisfaction to training program, the sources of the problems should be identified and corrections applied through evaluating training activity.

Second, while training quality can be assessed and improved on the basis of the quality of training methods and materials or direct learning results, it is ultimately judged on its contribution to organizational goals. As Brinkerhoff and Montesino (1995) put it, a training that yields some effects but that was not needed is not efficient for the organization. For sure, identifying organizational needs and deriving the training goals from them must be an activity that needs to take place in the beginning stage of the design process (Goldstein, 1993). However, organizational needs may change in the course of time, so evaluators should constantly be aware of the organizational needs during training delivery. Those who emphasize the improvement-oriented evaluations will continue to examine if training delivery meets organizational needs over time.

Third, according to extensive research on transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Holton, 1996; Noe & Schmitt, 1986), training characteristics influence the transfer of training into the job, such as motivation, job-involvement, self-efficacy in successful completion of the training program, and ability to learn. The individual characteristics of trainees should be identified in the evaluation process because they determine the degree of successful learning and transfer. Furthermore, as the training should have impact on an organizational level, it is regarded as important to yield information about work related problems and needs as about personal ones. Trainees are less likely to apply the new skills if managers do not show that they value training. As a result, the training effect will be minimal. HRD practitioners are responsible for undertaking activities during the total training process to keep management and supervisors involved and should ask their help in implementing a successful training program (Holton, Bates, Seyler, & Carvalho, 1997). Evaluators should assess the degree of the management and supervisors' involvement and commitment through the total training process. In terms of the training design, HRD researchers (Baldwin, Magjuka, & Loher, 1991) assert that trainees who had a choice of training content had greater motivation to learn. Noe and Schmitt (1986) also indicate that the degree to which a trainee is involved in the needs assessment process and given choices about training will influence to learn. Goldstein (1993) argues that trainees who are taught the manner in which to apply their knowledge on the job are likely to successfully transfer the learning to the job. Evaluators should assess the degree to which the trainees are involved in the training design or selection and the training content reflect the job context.

In effect, the improvement-oriented evaluation extends its scope from traditionally focusing on training material, methods, and delivery schedule to continuous examination of organizational needs, assessment of training characteristics and work environment, and effective training design. If training will not yield to its desired outcomes, improvement-oriented evaluators should search for its causes in order to provide concerned stakeholders with the information used for enhancing training program. The information from improvement evaluation will serve the needs of organizational stakeholders who require developing training efficiency and effectiveness.

Learning Perspective of Training Evaluation

The third perspective of training evaluation is learning-oriented evaluation. Learning-oriented evaluation reflects two aspects of evaluation utilization. One involves the conceptual use. Conceptual use occurs when an evaluation influences decision makers' and stakeholders' cognitive processing (thinking) about a present or future program. In terms of conceptual use, learning-oriented evaluation seeks to become aware of evaluation results, become aware of features of a program from an evaluation, forming attitudes about a particular training program because of an evaluation and knowledge about evaluation in general (Johnson, 1998; Patton, 1997). The other involves, what is so called, the process use. Process use occurs when behavioral and cognitive changes occur in persons involved in evaluations as a result of their participation (Patton, 1997; Preskill & Caracelli, 1997; Schulha & Cousins, 1997). It results from experiential learning and reflection.

In terms of both conceptual and process use, learning-oriented evaluation represents a view that evaluation can be a catalyst for learning that has the potential to improve and transform individuals and organizations. Supporting the role of evaluation in this aspect, Preskill and Torres (1999) suggested new definition of evaluation as follows. "Evaluative inquiry is an ongoing process for investigating and understanding critical organizational issues. It is an approach to learning that is fully integrated with an organization's work practices, and as such, it engenders (a) organization members' interest and ability in exploring critical issues using evaluation logic, (b) organization members' involvement in evaluative processes, and (c) the personal and professional growth of individuals within the organization (p.1-2)". Thus training evaluation may have long term payoffs through improved skills, improved communication, improvement of decision making, increased use of evaluation procedures, changes in the organization and increased confidence in and sense of ownership of evaluation products.

In effect, learning-oriented evaluation refers to efforts to understand the training program better, enlighten top management, staff, and other stakeholders, enhance communications among them, and facilitate sharing of perceptions through engaging in training evaluation. In this regard, learning-oriented evaluation will help HRD professionals to improve organizational capacity to set training policies, design and administer training program, to support and reinforce the training program, to increase engagement, self-determination, and ownership of all stakeholders, and to rethink the ways to design and connect various programs for improving employee performance.

Therefore, learning-oriented evaluation must be viewed as a strategic organizational activity. Evaluation has traditionally been treated as an after-thought or as a post-course reaction survey at the end of a training session. There is little interest on the role evaluation can play in helping organizations achieve their goals, or how evaluation can facilitate the organization's growth and development. Learning-oriented evaluation provides HRD practitioners

and their organizations with the insights on how evaluative information and activities may induce cognitive and behavioral changes within an organization context.

Contribution to HRD Practice and Research

Organizations around the world are doing more training and spending more money than ever before. Unless organizational leaders in training engage in far greater use of evaluation and other quality improvement efforts than they now pursue, they face serious threats to its survival. The challenge is to do more of a different order of evaluation, that is, proactive and directive evaluation that will lead HRD profession and practice to a new level of operation and impact.

Evaluation of training should be considered as a study of organizational subsystem that is only understood within an organizational context where the roles, responsibilities, and tasks of evaluation vary with time and circumstances. In this regard, different stakeholders for training evaluation may desire different evaluation information and processes. To provide meaningful training evaluation, it is important for HRD professionals to be able to match the intents of evaluation, the intended users, and the aspects of evaluative process and information.

The primary justification for evaluation of training is its usefulness to concerned stakeholders. For the evaluation to be utilized, HRD professionals should do top quality evaluations that are responsive to the concerns of those whose training programs they evaluate, and they should do their best to communicate results in multiple ways to ensure that stakeholders know the results and see their relevance for program action. So HRD professionals should spend a substantial amount of time and efforts in learning about the informational needs of those for whom the evaluation is being done.

For the HRD practitioners, the proposed three perspectives of training evaluation offer a means for identifying the intents of organizational stakeholders whose training program is evaluated and so preparing what questions must be answered by the evaluation and what methods must be employed to evaluate. With the proposed framework of training evaluation, HRD professionals will prove that the evaluation findings and processes are more valid and can be used for important decision-making concerning HRD practices and policies in the organization.

For the HRD researchers, there must be a challenge to construct and validate the instrument of examining the perspectives of stakeholder in the organization on evaluation of training. The proposed framework of training evaluation can be used as potential template of the instrument. Furthermore, if the emphasis of evaluation is to meet the intents of the stakeholders who will use the information and processes, there must be more needs of understanding about match between the intents of the stakeholders and the emphasis of evaluation. In addition, the researchers will need to examine the possible conflicting views of stakeholders in the organization because there are different outcomes desired by different stakeholders.

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26

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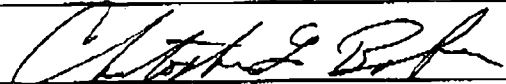ONLY ONE AUTHOR IS REQUIRED TO SIGN THE FORM.**

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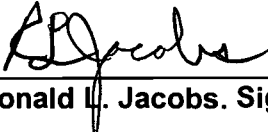
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