**Summative Evaluation**

Summative evaluations focus on outcomes, benefits or impacts of programs. It gathers information about what changes occurred in the participant’s awareness, attitudes, knowledge, skills, opinions, and behavior. It can also measure what social conditions might have changed. Summative evaluation answers the question about how a program is making a difference; to what extent the intended results were achieved.

* What have program participants learned, if anything?
* What have program participants done with what they have learned?
* What policies, if any, have changed in connection with the program?
* How has the community changed in connection with the program, if it has changed?

You may also want to consider other types of changes that may have occurred beyond learning something new (Steele, 1995).

* Increased insights into what was already known
* Clarified things that have been learned
* Challenged thinking
* Helped in understanding one’s own beliefs
* Stimulated interest to learn more
* Encouraged action

Summative evaluation can be gathered at different times and in a variety of methods. In designing your evaluation, ask yourself “What do I wish to know?”, “What do the stakeholders, those who fund the program want to know?” and “How will I know it – what indicators will be present?”. It’s important to keep your audience in mind when designing how and when the evaluation will be conducted.

Examples of data collection method(s):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Survey | Interview | Observation | Group Techniques |
| Case Study | Tests | Photos, Videos | Document Review |
| Testimonials | Simulated problems | Journal, log, diary | Unobtrusive measures |

**Six Steps for Easier Follow-up Evaluations – Before You Teach your Program:**

1. Design your program with specific learning objectives in mind
   * Create your teaching/program with specific learning objectives and intended results. It simplifies your teaching facilitation and outcome measurement. It also helps you be better able to explain the purpose of your program.
2. Decide how to measure knowledge, attitude and behavior outcomes before you present your program.
   * Know what your stakeholders consider credible evidence of effective programming. Use measures that help you gather that information.
     1. Formal vs Informal
     2. Qualitative (stories)
     3. Quantitative (numbers)
   * Narrowing your focus to one or two important outcomes helps you put your teaching and evaluation energy in the right places.
3. Design evaluation instruments that help you gather data about one or two important outcomes.
   * Measure these indicators before you teach your program – and after. Keep your questions and measurers consistent so you can make accurate comparisons.

**Actual Follow-up:**

1. Put the date you intend to contact your participants for the follow-up on your calendar.
   * Think about how much time should elapse before you contact your participants about potential changes they have made or ways that they have used what they learned in your program.
2. Ask your participants how they prefer to be contacted.
   * Also, ask them when they prefer contact. Keep track of how you can get in touch with them. Get their home address, phone, and e-mail.
3. Use a mixture of methods that help you increase your response rate.

**Wording the questions:**

When you write questions, consider three things:

1. The particular people for whom the questionnaire is being designed;
2. The particular purpose of the questionnaire, and
3. How questions will be placed in relation to each other in the questionnaire.

**Use simple wording**. Adapt wording to the vocabulary and reading skills of your respondents but don’t talk down to them. Are any words confusing? Do any words have double meaning?

**Avoid the use of abbreviations, jargon, or foreign phrases**. We use a lot of jargon in Extension. Will the respondents understand terms such as “CNP,” “experiential learning experiences,” “life skills”?

**Use language, wording or methods that are appropriate for the group of people from whom you are collecting information**

If you are surveying people whom you know to have vision problems, use a larger typeface. If you want to collect information from people with limited literacy skills, think of the best way to gather accurate, useful information that respects their human dignity.

**Be specific**. A question about older youth should specify what age or grade is considered “older.” Words such as “regularly” and occasionally” mean different things to different people. Some vague terms include: majority (more than half of what?); often (daily? twice weekly? weekly?); government (state? federal? local?); older people (how old?). Try to think about the many ways a respondent could interpret, or misinterpret, a question.

**Use complete sentences**. Trying to keep questions simple and concise may result in questions that are cryptic and easily misunderstood.

**Mistakes to avoid in program evaluation:**

**Forget to determine if it’s necessary to complete IRB – Institutional Review Board**

Without IRB you may not be able to use or report the results of your evaluation for audiences outside of Extension. If you hope to share your results with local elected officials, funder and others you should clear your project with IRB.

**Lead people to tell you what they think you want to hear**

This can happen in many different situations – conversation, the way you word your questions or the setting in which you collect the information. No data can be perfectly free of bias; however, there are ways to guard against asking a leading question. For example, asking someone what he or she learned in a program will yield more useful information than the question, “How much did you like my teaching?”. Asking “How much did you like my teaching?” assumes they liked it, and that the question is only to what degree.

**Ask more than one question in only one question; ask “double-barreled” questions**

An example of asking more than one question within a question is, “Did the poultry production seminar help you to identify ways to improve the sanitation and increase the nutrition of your cage bird operation?” If they respondent answered “yes”, you couldn’t be sure if they were saying that “yes, they could identify ways to improve the sanitation”, “yes, they could increase the nutrition “, or “yes” to both. The biggest consequence of asking a question that has more than one question within it is that it does not yield useful, easy-to-interpret information. It’s better to ask each question separately.

**Collect more information than is useful to you**

If you do not have plans for using the data, do not collect the data. It wastes your time and the time of your respondents. Remind yourself why you are doing this evaluation in the first place and make sure you have a legitimate use for each of the questions you ask your respondents to answer.

**Keep information that identifies your participants with the data you have collected from them**

You do not want to be able to connect people’s names with their data, unless you have human subjects protections clearance as well as the consent of the participants to do so. Keep signed consent forms separate from the data itself. Respect all confidentiality and anonymity agreements.

**Measuring Outcomes**

Outcomes are the results of the educational event and the benefits people gain from participating. As you write your questions, consider what type of outcomes you would expect participants to be able to reflect on at the end of the event. As self-reports, end-of-session evaluation questionnaires reflect people’s perceptions of outcomes. Individual perceptions are real and valuable, but they may or may not reflect actual learning or change.

A variety of sample questions that describe these potential outcomes are included:

* Overall benefits
* Commitment to action
* Perceived changes in motivation, confidence or abilities
* Perceived changes in knowledge and skills
* Intended change
* Perceptions of before and after (retrospective or post-then-pre design)

**Overall Benefits**

What did you gain from this workshop? (check all that apply)

1. \_\_\_\_\_Answers to my questions
2. \_\_\_\_\_Resource materials I can use
3. \_\_\_\_\_Ideas I can try immediately
4. \_\_\_\_\_Names of other people to contact
5. \_\_\_\_\_Nothing new
6. Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

To what extent did the conference make you think?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  |  | A great deal |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How do you think this workshop will help you in your \_\_\_\_\_\_ [volunteer role / 4-H project work / business meetings / manage your resources / etc.]

Indicate one or two main things you learned or gained today.

The most important thing I learned today was:

What did you gain from this training that was unexpected?

The conference was designed to build skills in [……]. To what extent did the conference help you: (circle one number for each item.)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list specific skills] | Not at all | Very little | Somewhat | Very much |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**Commitment to Action**

People who make a public commitment to action are more apt to follow through than those who do not make such a commitment. One technique is to ask participants to express what they intend to do based on the learning experience before they leave the session. They may simply list one thing they intend to do on a paper or note card. If a copy is kept, follow-up is possible.

What one or two ideas from this workshop will you try?

OR

Do you intend to try any of the techniques discussed today?

1. Yes
2. No
3. If yes, what do you plan to try?

How do you plan to use the information from the conference?

What materials or information do you intend to use?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list materials and information] | Yes | No | N/A |
| a. | Yes | No | N/A |
| b. | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. | Yes | No | N/A |

Which of the following will you consider doing as a result of this workshop:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list actions] | Yes | No | N/A |
| a. | Yes | No | N/A |
| b. | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. | Yes | No | N/A |

**Perceived Changes in Motivation, Confidence or Abilities**

To what extent do you feel more able to[……] as a result of this training:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  |  | Great Extent |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

As a result of this workshop, I feel that I can:

Benefits to me from today’s training:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent | N/A |
| Stimulated me to think |  |  |  |  |  |
| Motivated me to want to learn more |  |  |  |  |  |
| Motivated me to do something different |  |  |  |  |  |
| [list others] |  |  |  |  |  |

**Perceived Changes in Knowledge and Skills**

Short quizzes or content specific questions may be used to show what people know at the end of the event. Without a baseline, comparison or linkage to the event, do not attribute this knowledge to the educational event. Participants might have had this knowledge before attending. Examples of questions to measure a participant’s perceptions before and after a training are included later.

In what areas do you feel knowledgeable enough to make decisions and in what areas do you feel that you need more information or training?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [list topic areas] | Knowledgeable | Need more help |
| a. |  |  |
| b. |  |  |
| c. |  |  |

As a result of this training, to what extent do you understand the following topics: (circle one number for each topic)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list topics] | Not Very Well | Understand Most | Understand Very Well | Already Knew |
| a. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Please circle the answer that best describes how much you learned today about each topic listed: (circle one number for each item)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list topics] | Nothing | A Little Bit | Quite A Bit | A Lot |
| a. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

What did you learn at this field day? (circle one number for each item)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list expected knowledge changes] | Gave Me New Information | Reinforced What I Already Knew | Nothing New Presented |
| a. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

To what extent do you feel you’ve gained new skills in: (circle one number for each item)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list specific skills] | Not Much |  |  |  | A Lot |
| a. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

To what extent has this workshop helped prepare you to do the following: (circle one number for each skill area)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list skill area] | No Difference | Somewhat Better Prepared | Much Better Prepared | More Confused |
| a. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

As a result of participating in the workshop:

(SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neither agree nor disagree; D = disagree; SD = strongly disagree)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| I learned new skills that will help me [….] |  |  |  |  |  |
| I increased my knowledge about […..] |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am more aware of [….] |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am stimulated to learn more |  |  |  |  |  |

**Intended Changes**

Changes in behaviors and practices only become evident once the participant returns to his/her home, work or life. In an end-of-session evaluation form, you can only ask about changes in behavior and practices that participants **intend** or **plan** to make. Follow up evaluation, several months after the training, is an opportunity to determine what changes actually were made.

What is one thing you intend to do as a result of this conference?

Which of the following practices do you intend to use that you did not use before this training? (check one answer for each)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list practices] | Used Before | Intend to Use | Don’t Intend to Use |
| a. |  |  |  |
| b. |  |  |  |
| c. |  |  |  |
| d. |  |  |  |

Please check the appropriate answer for the changes we talked about today:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list change] | Currently Doing This | Expect to Make This Change | Not Sure About Doing This |
| a. |  |  |  |
| b. |  |  |  |
| c. |  |  |  |
| d. |  |  |  |

As a result of this training, do you intend to make changes in the following area? (check one space per item)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [list areas] | Low |  |  | High |
| a. |  |  |  |  |
| b. |  |  |  |  |
| c. |  |  |  |  |
| d. |  |  |  |  |

**Perceptions of Before and After**

One way to strengthen the measure of outcomes is to ask participants to compare their knowledge or ability at the beginning of the event with that at the end. This evaluation design is called the retrospective or post-then-pre design and it has certain advantages over the traditional pre-post design.

Please CIRCLE one rating for both BEFORE and AFTER the training:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  | Moderate |  | High |
| I understood the value of […..] | | | | | |
| 1. Before the training? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. After the training? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I knew how to […..] | | | | | |
| 1. Before the training? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. After the training? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I could perform […..] | | | | | |
| 1. Before the training? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. After the training? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Check the appropriate column to describe your degree of understanding of the listed topics BEFORE the workshops and AFTER the workshop.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | My understanding | | | | | | | |
| **BEFORE** the workshop | | | | **AFTER** the workshop | | | |
| [List the topics] | Very Little | Some | Quite a Bit | A Lot | Very Little | Some | Quite a Bit | A Lot |
| a. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| b. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| c. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| d. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Sample of Open Ended Questions to Gather Information Related to the Current Session:**

What would you like covered that wasn’t included today?

What kind of follow-up on today’s workshop do you think would be helpful?

What assistance do you need in order to put into practice the ideas covered in this training?

Do you have any suggestions that might help the group continue its learning?

**Alternatives to End-of-Session Questionnaires**

A written questionnaire at the end of the session is a very common practice. However, other methods might be more appropriate given your purpose or the participant characteristics. A questionnaire requires that the participants be able to read and write. This may be difficult for young children or for participants with low literacy or disabilities. A variety of ways to gather immediate feedback, other than a written questionnaire, are outlined below:

* Observations of interactions, skill development or learning
* A group discussion at the end of the training guided by specific evaluation questions
* Personal interview with participants
* Personal interview with someone who is in a position to see the changes (parent/boss/4-H leader/etc.)
* Photographs or a videotape of the workshop or particular pieces of the training

**Source:** University of Wisconsin Extension, Program Development and Evaluation, Ellen Taylor-Powell, Marcus Renner and Sara Steele

“*Questionnaire Design: Asking questions with a purpose*” May 1998

“*Collecting Evaluation Data: End of Session Questionnaires*” September 2000