Small Group Evaluation

Chapter 5
Planning and Conducting
Formative Evaluations
Small Group Evaluation

One of the most popular methods of evaluation

Conducted after expert and one-to-one evaluations

Students are the primary data source
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**Advantages**

- More accurate measure of learner performance
- Greater number and variety of learners are tested
- Done in a more realistic setting
- Can be inexpensive
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Disadvantages

- Lack of personal interaction
- Cost
Planning Small Group Evaluation

Is the instruction

- Effective
- Efficient
- Useable
- Appealing
Who do you choose?

- Ideally 8 to 20 students per session
- Variety of student types
  - Learner’s ability
  - Learner’s knowledge
  - Motivation to learn
  - Motivation to evaluate
  - Technological literacy
  - Language and cultural factors
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Who do you choose?

- Instructor who will actually teach the instruction
- Teaching experience
- Content knowledge
- No personal investment
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Prepare the evaluation

Prepare questions

- How much do the students already know?
- Did they spend too much time?
- Could they do it without help?
- Did it work in the time frame?
- What objectives did they miss?
- Do the students think this will help them?
- Would the instructors actually use this?
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Prepare the evaluation

- Design data collection tools
  - Entry skills test
  - PreTests/Posttests
  - Embedded practice items
  - Attitude/Acceptance survey
  - Job performance measures
  - Instructor surveys
  - Observational logs
  - Debriefings
  - Student comment logs
  - Computer databases
  - In-text feedback
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Prepare the evaluation

- Prepare environment
  - Close to real work environment
  - All learners do not have to be together
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Prepare the evaluation

- Prepare administrator
  - Does not mean additional training for instructor
  - Understand the purpose and procedure for administering the instruction
  - Explain role of observer
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Prepare the evaluation

- Prepare learner
  - Tell them what you are doing and why
  - Identify what tests will be given
  - How the students can record comments and criticisms
  - Your role (as instructor or observer)
  - What debriefings will occur and why
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Manage the evaluation

- Gather data
- Administer tests/surveys
- Debrief the learners
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Analyze the results

- Review data
  - What did the students get right?
  - How much did the students learn over what they already knew?
  - Did the students like the instruction?
  - Are there patterns or errors or criticisms?
  - Can the instruction be used easily?
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**Analyze the results**

- Revise the instruction
  - May be the final chance
- Repeat the cycle
  - If you have the students
  - If it has not been through expert or one-to-one evaluations
  - Should only be tried if there is enough time
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How to analyze the data

- Both individual and group information
- Performance on objectives
- Items by objective performance
- Hierarchical skills information
- Procedural performance information
- Job performance information
- Time to completion information
- Attitude and implementation information
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Making Revisions

Learners do poorly on the entry test but well on the pretest
Solution: Rewrite the tests or drop some entry skills as prerequisites

Learners do well on the entry test, poorly on the pretest and fail the post test
Solution: Add items for missing objectives.
Making Revisions

Learners do well on the entry test, poorly on the pretest but pass the posttest
Solution: None needed but could check test items for difficulty and validity

Learners do poorly on the entry test but well on practice and posttest items
Solution: Remove items on entry test and reexamine test items
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**Making Revisions**

Learners do poorly on the entry test, pretest, and posttest

Solution: Try another group of learners or ask if more instruction on entry skills would help

Learners master sub-objectives but fail the terminal objective

Solution: Add new instruction for the missing objective
Making Revisions

Learners succeed at the instruction or posttest but fail on-the-job performance
Solution: Review match between learning objectives and work performance, then revise instruction

Learners do well on practice and posttest items but are not interested in the instruction
Solution: Allow students to move at a quicker pace or determine if the learners already knew the information
Making Revisions

Learners master the instruction but take too much time to complete it
Solution: Allot more time or individualize the instruction so students can do it at their own pace or remove some of the instruction.

Learners fail the instruction and complete it quickly
Solution: Check instruction in smaller modules or add a coaching section.
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Making Revisions

Instruction is not implemented correctly

Solution: Redesign problem area or add job aids to assist
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Special Problems

- Polish
- Realism
- Learners
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Questions