

PD Practice #6: Evaluate

Audio Descriptive Text

Title: Professional Development 101: The Basics; PD Practice #6: Evaluate. Image of PD practices with an icon for each: Sustain, Design, Promote, Deliver, Follow Up, and Evaluate. Image of CDC logo. Evaluate icon. Image SMART to represent SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-based. Image of document Sample Retrospective Pre-Post Evaluation Questionnaire. Image of next course title: Professional Development 201: From Basic to Dynamic.

Video Summary

Evaluation is the systematic monitoring of professional development offerings by collecting data and using it to improve future efforts.

Audio Script

The last PD Practice is **Evaluate** Professional Development Processes. This is the systematic monitoring and evaluating of your professional development offerings by collecting data and using it to improve future efforts.

Evaluation can help you assess how participants use the information from your PD offerings three, six, nine months, or even a year or more after your event. Evaluation is a powerful tool to help you determine if you need to refine your training designs to make your offerings more sustainable.

Starting with a set of clear learning objectives is THE most important element of good evaluation because it is those objectives that are the basis for measuring participant change in behavior. Remember, we said in the Design practice that SMART learning objectives not only set the stage for helping your participants develop, but they provide a basis for determining what to evaluate. Careful wording is important; the data you collect will only be as good as the questions you ask.

The data you collect can be used for future professional development planning and to report indicators of success to your stakeholders.

It is critical to know if your participants are using the new skills and knowledge learned in your professional development offerings. The simplest way to find out is to ask them. In other words, obtain their feedback through data collection and use it to evaluate your offerings.

Evaluation Instruments

There are several data collection methods to measure the success of your PD offerings. First, let's consider pre- and post-questionnaires.

Traditionally, participants complete a pre-questionnaire on a set of items before training and then complete a post-questionnaire on the same set of items using the same rating scale at the end of the training. The underlying idea is that any improvement between the pre- and post-questionnaires represents the effects of the training.

However, research has shown that this method may underestimate the impact of training. Participants frequently overestimate their knowledge or skills on the pre-assessment.

A better method is the “retrospective pre-post method.” Participants complete a single questionnaire at the end of the training. They are asked to estimate, retrospectively, their knowledge or skill level before the training and then to assess it now, after the training. This lessens the probability of bias because the participants use the same frame of reference to answer both pre-and post-questions.

Another method to collect data is an evaluation form. The most effective evaluation forms include options for both quantitative and qualitative responses; that is, developing both direct and open-ended questions.

Be sure to check out *Professional Development 201: From Basic to Dynamic*, where you can learn more about best practices for retrospective pre- and post-questionnaires and evaluation forms.

Key Strategies

Key strategies to implement during the Evaluation phase include:

- Develop a plan to measure your stated objectives;
- Collect data on processes and outcomes; and
- Identify or create instruments to collect evaluation data.

As we wrap up our discussion of the six PD Practices, let’s review the Deliver, Follow Up, and Evaluate practices.