Approaches to Training Evaluation—How Training Effectiveness Can Be Measured

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In the beginning (~1987) there was no evaluation

- Reviewers from the 1\textsuperscript{st} round of NIEHS WETP proposals:
  
  This is a training grant not a research grant. The grantee should drop its extravagant plans for evaluation.

(Paraphrased)
About this same time...

- Votjecky and Schmitz (1986) conducted a study of 100 U.S. safety and health professionals and concluded:
  - Limited evaluation information is being collected
  - What is collected, is little used.
The paths traveled since

• 1992, 1994, 1995 – WETP articles special issues of three occupational health and safety journals – emphasis on empowerment

• 1996 & 2012 – NIEHS evaluation reviews

• 1997-2000 – Solidarity Research and Evaluation Project (SREP).
Other paths traveled …

- 1998, 2010 – NIOSH, Reviews of the Effectiveness of Training and Education for the Protection of Workers
WETP’s and NIOSH’s paths have not crossed.

- How could we benefit from exploring bridges and sharing learnings?
- We should talk.
Models and Practice
(Theories of the Program)

- Theories of the Problem
- Worker Education Programs
- Strengthened Capacities
- Theories of Action
- Targeted Outcomes
The Subjects and Focus of Evaluation

What we assess and how we assess it should depend on our:

• Perceptions of the problems workers confront,
• Knowledge and beliefs about how to solve those problems,
• Outcomes targeted, and
• How our training reflects these.
A Broad Focus

Collectively, we should be examining:

- Prevention
- Preparedness
- Response
- *Relationships among these*
A Broad Focus (Cont’d)

We should be examining:

- Occupational Safety and Health
- Environmental Health
- Community Health and Environmental Justice
- *Relationships among these*
A Broad Focus (Cont’d)

We should be examining:

• Individuals and collectives
• Processes and outcomes, and
• Relationships among these
Evaluation for Learning

- Theory of the Program (Logic Model)
- Design of Evaluation
- Application and Testing of Values and Beliefs
- Cycles of Evaluation and Learning
- Interpretation of Findings
- Changes in Knowledge and Understanding
“Evaluation is power.”
Carlos Siqueira at a workshop of the Solidarity Research and Evaluation Project (SREP)
Evaluation is a Knowledge-making Process

It establishes:

• The criteria used to measure success
• The questions that get asked, and often, the possible answers
• How the data are analyzed
Evaluation is a Knowledge-making Process (cont’d)

It establishes:

- Who decides what the data mean, and sometimes,
  - Who is in and who is out,
  - Who passes and who fails,
  - Who wins and who loses.
Strengthening Evaluation for the Future

1. Evaluation should check assumptions about:
   • Participants’ work environments
   • How training programs affect change
   • How programs lead to increased knowledge and skills, strengthened capacities and improved safety and health
2. We should align it with the values of participation and empowerment.
3. It should help participants become more critically aware of problems and what needs to be changed.
Strengthening Evaluation (Cont’d)

5. Evaluation should be a vehicle for applying learnings to program development.

6. Evaluation should promote sharing and building solidarity within and across programs.
“If we cannot tell a story of what happened to us, nothing happened to us.”
