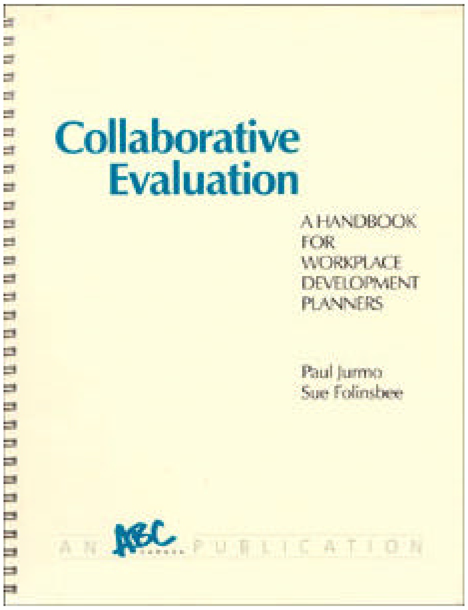


Collaborative Evaluation:

A Handbook for Workplace Development Planners

by
Paul Jurmo
Sue Folinsbee

AN ABC PUBLICATION

Printed copies of this report can be ordered from:
ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation
Tel: 1-800-303-1004 • e-mail: info@abc-canada.org • Internet: www.abc-canada.org

OVERVIEW

Collaborative Evaluation

Phase 1: Getting Ready

- Do your homework
- Organize evaluation committee

Phase 2: Planning the Evaluation

- Clarify member's expectations
- Clarify goals
- Identify audiences
- Plan for monitoring
- Design monitoring activities
- Test monitoring activities
- Finalize evaluation schedule

Phase 3: Handling Information

- Gather & organize information
- Interpret the information
- Plan the presentations
- Report findings

Phase 4: What Happens Next?

- Follow up
- Evaluate the evaluation

Collaborative Evaluation

A Handbook for Workplace Development Planners

by
Paul Jurmo
Sue Folinsbee

ABC CANADA

Authors

Paul Jurmo first worked in adult literacy programs in 1976, when he began five years in village education programs in The Gambia, West Africa. He completed a doctorate in international education at the University of Massachusetts in 1987. His dissertation became the basis for *Participatory Literacy Education*, a 1989 study of learner-centred literacy efforts in the U.S., which he coedited with Hanna Arlene Fingeret. From 1984 through 1990, he served as senior program associate at the Business Council for Effective Literacy in New York.

Since 1991 Paul has run Literacy Partnerships, a consulting firm based in East Brunswick, New Jersey. He specializes in the collaborative planning and evaluation of literacy efforts, especially in the workplace. This participatory model is designed to help create a new kind of economy and society that is both more efficient and more equitable.

His current projects include development of collaborative workplace education curriculum models and several electronic mail networks linking adult educators.

Sue Folinsbee has been involved in adult education for the last fifteen years. She is currently director of Workplace Education for ABC CANADA, with responsibility for developing and maintaining the organization's Workplace Advisory Service. She has spent the last several years refining and developing new assessment and evaluation tools for collaborative workplace basic skills programs.

From 1981 to 1986, Sue was a curriculum developer, instructor trainer, instructor, and evaluation specialist for the federal government's language training program. She worked for many years identifying and responding to education and development needs in diverse workplaces - first as Multicultural Workplace Program coordinator at George Brown College in Toronto, and later as a training and development specialist with her own consulting firm.

Sue has authored several documents on workplace basic skills education, including *An Organizational Approach to Workplace Basic Skills: A Guide for Literacy Practitioners*.

ISBN 0-9699159-2-6

ABC CANADA supports the development of an educated, flexible, and fulfilled workforce through fostering lifelong learning. ABC CANADA raises awareness of literacy issues, encourages workplace literacy programs, represents the private sector in public policy relating to basic skills, and supports local literacy organizations across Canada.

Editing and design by D. Linzey
Printing by Grattonworks

Acknowledgements

For their help and preparation, we want to acknowledge and thank the following:

Doug Linzey, editor, for spending endless hours reframing this handbook in clear language.

Sande Minke, workplace coordinator with the Learning and Employment Preparation Branch of the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board, Province of Ontario, for her continuing support and valuable guidance.

Laura Sperazi, director of Evaluation Research, for her expertise and experience from a sister project in the U.S. sponsored by the National Institute for Literacy. This project made a significant contribution in the concepts and procedures that are reflected in the model presented here.

Joanne Linzey, former executive director of ABC CANADA, for her support and guidance.

Tracy Westell, research coordinator, ABC CANADA, for her insights and her good humour in ploughing through many drafts.

Mary Ellen Belfiore, Leslie Elver, Christine Garlick-Griffin, Brigid Hayes, Wendy Johnston, Carol Leef, and Muriel Medina for information and feedback.

We would also like to thank all the workplaces where we field tested and refined our methodology.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of the Youth and Employment Preparation Branch of the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, and the National Literacy Secretariat of Human Resources Development Canada.

Sue Folinsbee
Paul Jurmo

CONTENTS

Step 4 — **Clarify goals and components of the workplace development initiative**

- *Activity: Clarify goals*
- *Activity: Clarify the components of the initiative*
- Figure: Relationships between goals & components
- *Activity: Clarify how each component relates to your goals*

Step 4 — **Clarify goals and components of the workplace development initiative**

- *Activity: Clarify goals*
- *Activity: Clarify the components of the initiative*
- Figure: Relationships between goals & components
- *Activity: Clarify how each component relates to your goals*

Step 5 — **Identify who wants what information for what purpose**

- *Activity (on your own): Anticipate who wants what information for what purpose*
- Figure: Who, what, why. . .
- *Activity: Clarify who wants what information for what purpose*

Step 6 — **Plan for monitoring progress and identifying potential improvements**

- *Activity: Identify indicators of success in meeting initiative's goals*
- Figure: Flow chart for pilot project
- *Activity (on your own): List possible ways to monitor progress*
- Figure: Ways of gathering information
- *Activity: Plan ongoing monitoring of progress and potential improvements*
- Figure: Sample activity schedule
- *Activity: Expand schedule of progress-monitoring activities to identify potential improvements*

Step 7 — **Design specific activities for gathering the information you need**

- Characteristics of useful evaluation
- Ethnographic principles
- Ethnographic Interviewing
- Sample interview
- *Activity (on your own): Prepare core questions for a pilot activity*

- Case study: Core questions used by an evaluation committee
- *Activity: Agree on a set of activities to test*

Step 8 **Try out your information-gathering activities**

- *Activity: Test your information-gathering activities*
- *Activity: Revise your draft questions as necessary*

Step 9 **Revise your evaluation schedule**

- *Activity: Revise your schedule*

Phase 3 Gathering, Organizing, Interpreting, and Reporting a First Round of Information

Step 10 **Gather and organize the information**

- Figure: Gathering information
- *Activity: Gather information*
- *Activity (on your own): Organize the information*

Step 11 **Interpret the information**

- *Activity (on your own): Interpret the information*
- *Activity: Interpret the information*
- *Activity: Draft a report for external audiences*
- *Activity: Prepare a final version of the report*

Step 12 **Plan and make your presentations**

- *Activity: Decide how to report to your intended audiences*
- *Activity: Plan your presentations*
- *Activity: Prepare your presentations*

Step 13 **Report your findings**

- *Activity: Circulate the written report to your audiences*
- *Activity: Set up meetings with your audiences*
- *Activity: Meet with your audiences*

Phase 4 — Deciding What Happens Next

Step 14 — **Take follow-up action**

- *Activity: Plan follow-up actions*
- *Activity: Implement and monitor follow-up actions*

Step 15 — **Evaluate the evaluation**

Suggested readings — An annotated select bibliography

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

GLOSSARY

action plan — A description of tasks to be accomplished in order to carry out a strategy. Usually includes a timetable for review and reporting, and specifies the responsible parties. It may also include a budget.

Brainstorming — A technique for generating ideas, usually by a group, in which all suggestions are written down without comment or discussion.

Collaboration — The involvement of all interest groups.

Continuous improvement — A management philosophy whereby every product, service, or process within an organization is subject to continuous scrutiny and improvement.

cultural interpreter — A person who not only can translate language but also has an in-depth understanding of the primary cultures of both parties in an interview.

Ethnographic interviewing — A way of eliciting information from people that respects the cultures from which their own experience is drawn, rather than the culture of the interviewer.

Evaluation — A formal process in which the elements of a workplace development initiative are examined and interpreted to determine how well the initiative is meeting its goals. Ongoing evaluation allows an organization to plan improvements to the current initiative and to plan future initiatives. It allows decision makers to make informed decisions about support.

Funder — A person, agency, or organization that provides money for a specific purpose. Such funds mayor may not be subject to conditions agreed to by both parties. (Note: We use this word, despite its not being defined in any of the better-known dictionaries. It's a useful word that has come into fairly common usage, especially for programs carried out by the non-profit sector.)

Goals — What we hope to accomplish through a workplace initiative.

key contacts — Designated representatives from management and the union or other employee group.

key findings — Information that is collected by a planning committee and considered to be particularly important.

learning organization

A group of people who, over time, enhance their capacity to create what they truly desire to create. This is likely to involve not only new capacities, but also fundamental shifts of mind, individually and collectively. (—from Peter Senge, who coined the phrase)

open-ended questions

Such questions demand information; they can't be answered with a simple yes or no. The questioner hopes to elicit thoughtful, in-depth responses.

Organization

A general term we use to describe a conglomeration of people and various resources that work together for a common purpose. In reality it could be a company or a division of a large company, a hospital, a government department, a co-op.

planning cycle

planning cycle A series of steps for carrying out a workplace development initiative. (Refer to the diagram "Planning a Workplace Development Initiative")

Stakeholder

A term that is used by some in the workplace education community to refer to groups or individual people who have an interest in workplace development. We prefer *interest group*.

statement of purpose

A concise explanation of the reason for an activity — in this case, the evaluation.

Strategy

A planning term that describes a range of steps necessary to realize a goal or objective. Reaching a goal can involve one or more strategies.

systemic discrimination

Practices that treat some members of a workforce unfairly or unequally with respect to others. Such practices result from the way the overall system works, rather than from individual actions.

workplace development

Everything that is done to improve the ability of an organization and its employees to meet their goals.

workplace development initiative

A planned set of activities that respond to workplace needs and issues. Includes workplace education and training and other change-related activities. Often referred to in this handbook simply as the *initiative*.

Workplace education

A generic term that encompasses a variety of basic skills training and education programs that might be offered to employees in the workplace. Programs can include, for example, job-specific basic skills courses, work-related and personal development courses, grade 12 equivalency, study and test-taking skills courses.

workplace needs assessment **(WNA)** A systematic way to identify all workplace needs, not just those that require an educational response.

INTRODUCTION

This handbook leads you, step-by-step, through planning and conducting the collaborative evaluation of a workplace development initiative.*

How will this handbook help you?

By working through this handbook you will learn:

- How to get commitment from key decision makers for a collaborative evaluation.
- How to set up an evaluation committee.
- How to find out what different interest groups want from an evaluation.
- How to design procedures to monitor progress and identify actions to improve the initiative.
- How to work with the committee to gather information, summarize and analyze it and make recommendations at various stages.
- How to prepare and present evaluation reports for various audiences.
- How to follow up on your report to see that needed actions are taken.

Definition: We use the term *workplace development* to encompass not only education and training but also other activities that respond to needs of both a changing workplace and an increasingly diverse workforce.

The handbook is for anyone facilitating an evaluation. We designed it for both those with formal experience as evaluators and those with none.

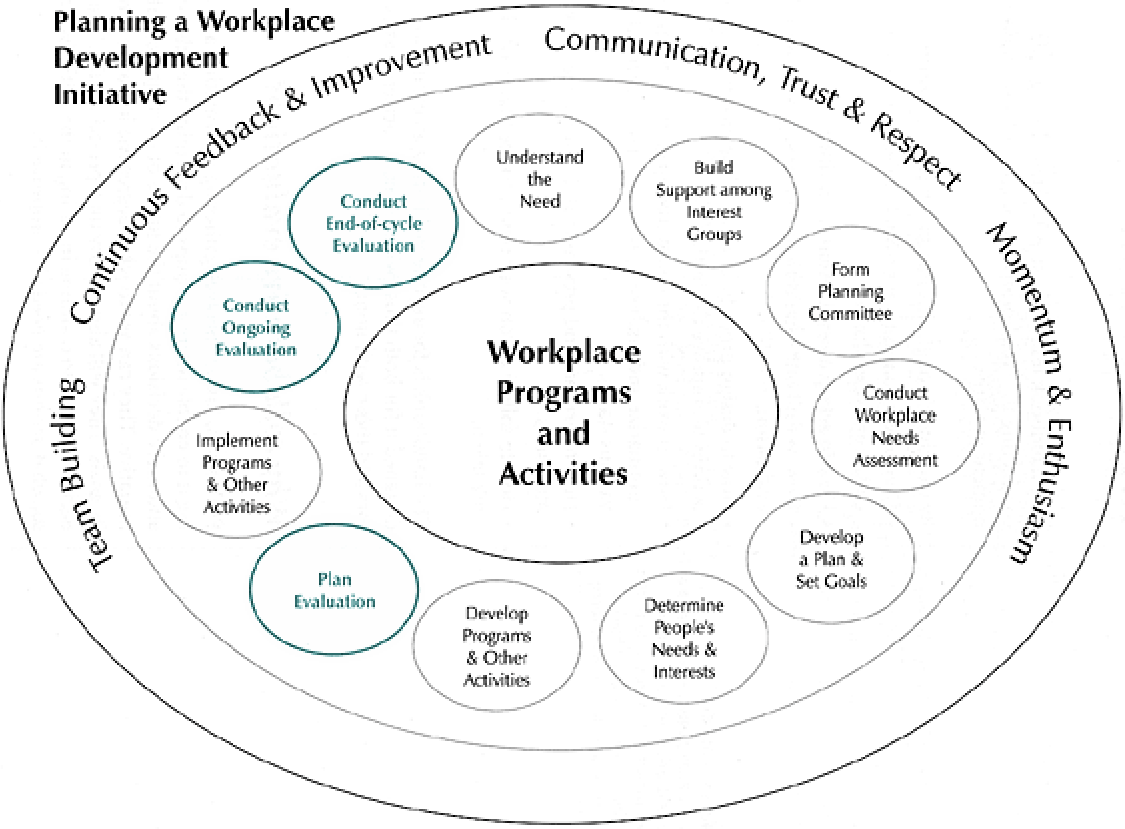
Why collaborative evaluation?

Evaluation, for us, involves gathering information and analyzing it to enable interest groups to determine the value of — and make decisions about the future of — their workplace initiative. They can see to what degree the initiative is meeting its goals. They will also see any unexpected results. They can decide whether to continue investing in the initiative and, if so, what actions are needed to improve it.

We hope to enable those involved in workplace development to see evaluation as an essential part of good planning and a useful tool for keeping on track.

* For information on ordering other handbooks in this series, see *Ordering Information*.

Planning a Workplace Development Initiative



Evaluation is more than giving a test or otherwise assessing the academic progress of individual people. That may be only one of many types of information for evaluators to look at. An evaluation might also examine whether the workplace as a whole is changing in some way as a result of the initiative. Furthermore, the evaluation can get suggestions from those involved in the initiative about improving it.

Goal of evaluation

Therefore, the goal of any evaluation is to ensure a high-quality workplace development initiative.

A *collaborative* evaluation differs from most in several ways. Too often, evaluation has been seen as a burden imposed by funding agencies, done by an outsider with limited understanding of — or interest in — the initiative. Those who have invested time and other resources in the initiative are unlikely to know, until after it is over, what it is achieving and how they might strengthen it.

Advance planning

Evaluation must be planned before programs and other activities begin, rather than at the end merely to satisfy a funder. This can ensure that you capture results accurately and are able make timely decisions to improve your initiative.

Interest-group involvement

Collaborative evaluation is planned and carried out by a committee of people representing the groups that have contributed to or stand to benefit from a workplace development initiative. The committee sets goals, monitors progress, and identifies actions for continually improving the initiative.

When different interest groups are involved, they will likely have a better understanding of — and more interest in — the initiative.

By working together in collective inquiry, members of an evaluation committee will develop decision-making skills that they can also apply outside the committee in other situations.

As the facilitator for an evaluation, you will work with the goals and plans that employer and employees have already developed. The evaluation can help them consider broadening their initiative if they haven't already done so.

Note: The diagram on the previous page illustrates how evaluation fits into the planning cycle.

Values and characteristics

We consider certain values and characteristics to be the foundation of a solid evaluation. You will want to make sure that they fit your own philosophy and that of your organization. An evaluation should:

- Respect the confidences of everyone involved.
- Come across as a positive, useful tool.
- Produce clear, relevant, and reliable information.
- Enable the organization to clarify goals, identify achievements, make decisions about the initiative's future, and follow up various aspects of the initiative.
- Encourage all involved to be frank in looking at the initiative, in a spirit of collective inquiry, lifelong learning, and continuous improvement.
- Rest on an understanding of good workplace education practice.
- Use clear procedures.
- Enable a wide range of people to participate actively.
- Be part of the initiative plan from the outset.
- Use several ways of gathering information from various sources, to get a balanced picture of the initiative's achievements and needs.
- Be able to shape funding guidelines and future initiatives.

Using this handbook in your own situation

Be prepared

We urge you as a facilitator to prepare well for each activity that you'll lead your committee through. We have included a number of preparatory exercises you can do on your own — trial runs of the group activities to follow. You be the judge of how many to do. The key is to be prepared.

Diverse contexts…

No two sites will have the same workplace contexts, workforces, or activities. No two committees will have the same amount of time, expertise, group identity, and motivation for carrying out an evaluation. We acknowledge that many workplace initiatives were not originally overseen by a committee.

Those cases will require extra efforts to put a solid group in place if the evaluation is to be done collaboratively.

Therefore, we recognize and expect that this handbook will be used in different ways.

…different strategies

Some committees may be content with a modest effort that elicits useful information and stimulates communication and interest from people who might otherwise not have been consulted. Others might be motivated to invest in longer term or more intensive information-gathering and analysis.

Some groups may want to cast a broad net, asking open-ended questions; others may have specific questions in mind.

The facilitator could be an insider from the workplace or an outsider from, for example, a local education agency.

In some committees, all members will be active throughout the process. In most, member involvement will vary, depending on the tasks at hand, with much of the detail work being carried out by the facilitator.

This handbook is designed for adaption by any group to its own situation. You should approach it creatively, constantly asking: *Is this relevant and realistic in my situation?* Feel free to expand on, reduce, or revise any step, while being careful not to weaken your evaluation.

Optimum conditions for collaborative evaluation

Others who have tried this approach suggest that any attempt at collaborative evaluation will have a better chance of succeeding under the following conditions.

Inclusiveness

- Collaborative decision-making ethic, methods, and skills are already in place in the initiative and in the organization.

Security

- Respect, trust, and confidentiality are valued in the organization. Employees feel secure in expressing their ideas, needs, and concerns — without fear of repercussion.

Commitment

- Interest groups have committed time and other resources to the initiative.

Phase 1

Preparing to Facilitate, and Organizing the Committee

In this first phase, you prepare for your role as facilitator of a collaborative evaluation. You also ensure that a committee is in place — either an existing one or a new one — ready, willing, and able to plan and carry out a high-quality evaluation.

In Step 1, you anticipate who might serve on the evaluation committee, their interests, etc. You determine what evaluation procedures are now in place and reflect on your own experience with evaluation.

In Step 2, you meet potential committee members to negotiate purposes and ground rules for an evaluation. You then figure out how to ensure that all can participate actively in carrying out team-building activities.

Step 1: Do your homework

Hint: To keep track of the notes and documents generated by the evaluation, set up a filing system with clearly marked folders or envelopes (or organize these files chronologically, by the steps you go through with the committee.

To begin, read this handbook in its entirety. Where appropriate, do a trial run of the various activities that you will be leading the group through. Jot down your own responses to the questions that you will be posing to the group; also, try to anticipate how members might respond to those questions. You will be that much better prepared and self-confident when it comes time to work with the committee.

Activity (on your own): Anticipate the committee

After reviewing the handbook, answer the following questions:

- *Is a planning committee already in place? If so, what has it done so far?*
- *What needs assessment has been done? What has the committee learned from the information and from the experience of gathering it?*
- *Who will you likely be working with? (Who has made an investment — of time, money, or other resources — and, in turn, has expectations of the workplace development initiative?)* This group may include managers, supervisors, sup- port staff, union representatives, participating workers, educators, outside funders, and others.
- *What do you think these people will expect the initiative to achieve?*
- *For this evaluation, what information might the committee want to collect? What would they likely do with it?*
- *What kinds of information -gathering activities (interviews; focus groups; reviews of project documents, workplace practices or policies, etc.) will they feel comfortable with?*
- *What will individual committee members do in gathering, summarizing, and analyzing information, and in presenting the findings to various audiences?*
- *How much time will they have for the evaluation? What other resources (expertise, funds, meeting facilities, computer equipment, etc.) can they contribute to an evaluation? How interested will they be in using an evaluation report once it is finished? How willing and able will they be to maintain confidentiality and work in a team?*

Note: Answer these questions for yourself, too — as you are effectively a member of the committee.

These are the kinds of key questions you will be discussing with the committee. To answer them, try brainstorming. Write down your responses. Where you simply don't have enough knowledge, you could meet with key contacts among the interest groups, ask them the questions, and record their answers.

Now take some time to analyze your own experience with evaluation. The following exercise will help.

Activity (on your own): Reflect on your evaluation experience

Jot down responses to the following questions.

As an evaluator

- *What evaluation activities have you carried out?*
- *What were the purposes of those activities?*
- *What kinds of information did you get?*
- *Who used it? For what purpose?*
- *What were the positive aspects of that experience?*
- *What problems did you encounter?*
- *What would you do differently? Why?*

As the one being evaluated

- *In what situations have you or your organization been evaluated?*
- *Who did the evaluating?*
- *What information were they looking for?*
- *Who used it? For what purpose?*
- *How did you feel about being evaluated?*
- *What were the positive aspects of that experience? What was accomplished? Did you gain anything?*
- *What problems did you encounter?*
- *What would you do differently? Why?*

Note: See the suggested readings in the bibliography.

The previous two activities can help you think through many of the issues of evaluation. By talking with other people, you can introduce them to the idea of participating in a committee and get them thinking about the questions they'll face.

You may also want to do some additional reading about evaluation.

You can review the sample information-gathering methods shown in Step 8 to get a feeling for the range of methods. You can talk directly with others who have participated in collaborative evaluations. Ask them about their own experiences and what guidance they can offer for your project.

Case study: Facilitators help each other prepare

Two workplace educators were considering evaluations in their respective workplaces. Though intrigued by the notion of collaborative evaluation, they had never tried that method before and were looking for some guidance.

Collaborative preparation

They decided to pool their interest and knowledge. They set up a meeting with another workplace educator who had carried out a number of collaborative evaluations. He led a four-hour workshop in which he challenged each of them to think through the questions [outlined in the first activity above].

They recorded their responses on flip charts and typed them up as a record of their workshop. The two educators were now better prepared to discuss these same questions, as they went through evaluation with the other participants in their respective sites. They also gained a peer-support relationship with each other and with a resource person experienced in collaborative evaluation.

Step 2: Organize the evaluation committee

The evaluation committee could be an earlier planning or advisory committee that has overseen the workplace development initiative, a subcommittee of that group, or an entirely new group.

We advocate collaborative planning right from the beginning of the initiative. In that case, you would already have an informed, committed, and representative group to work with for your evaluation.

Where no such group exists, you will have to work with a few key management, union, and worker contacts to determine who might serve on the committee.

Activity (with your key contacts): Identify potential committee members

Explain to your key contacts that committee members should have:

Useful criteria for successful committees

- A commitment to improving the workplace initiative.
- Time to carry out each step of the evaluation.
- A willingness to work in a team with others.
- A willingness to try something new, to take some risks, and to learn new skills.

It's not necessary that all members of the group possess all of these characteristics (although it would be great if they did). With input from your key contacts, draw up a list of the various employees who could be interested in being on the team.

Your team must represent:

- Various types of interest groups (including managers, supervisors, union representatives, workers, and education providers).
- Diversity in the workforce (gender, ethnicity, age, experience, and so forth).

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

You will want to explain to potential members what you hope a collaborative evaluation will accomplish and what they can expect to do on the committee.

Activity: Meet with potential committee members

Establish ground rules

Committee members must understand why an evaluation is important to their workplace and what the ground rules for a collaborative evaluation are.

- Brainstorm reasons to do an evaluation and what advantages a team evaluation would have.
- Explain that, for the committee to work, a certain commitment is necessary.
- Explain that, although you don't expect them to be experts in evaluation, members need to be willing to help you design the evaluation tools, gather and analyze information, and report the results. That way, they will develop their own evaluation expertise.
- Encourage them to ask questions about their roles in the evaluation; answer their questions and concerns.
- Explain that they don't have to join the team if they feel they don't have the time or for other reasons don't want to participate.
- Ask who else would be good candidates for the committee.

Through such meetings, potential members will get to know each other (especially important if they haven't worked together before). They'll better understand what can be accomplished, and decide whether to participate.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

To form a committee...

If you're lucky, you'll smoothly pull together a group ready to get going with the evaluation. However, you may have to do a fair amount of explaining, massaging, and negotiating to clarify expectations, generate interest, and identify who is ready to participate.

In some cases, you may not be able to pull together the broad group you want, and will have to work with only a few people.

...or not

If you conclude that, under the circumstances, you are unlikely to find an appropriate group, you should postpone the project until such time that a group with the right elements can be put in place. You might explain that, in lieu of a collaborative evaluation, the organization could arrange to have someone conduct a more traditional outside evaluation.

Activity (on your own): Consider how to ensure that members can participate to their full potential

Think carefully about ensuring that the diverse people on the planning committee will be able to feel part of the group, participate actively, and use their talents to full potential.

- *How will I ensure that everyone's ideas get heard, given different communication styles, experience, and language abilities?*
- *How can I build respect and trust between me and the group, and within the group?*
- *How will I make sure that people are asked to do things they feel comfortable with, given their experience and skills?*
- *How will I support people in their efforts to grow and to develop confidence and new skills?*

To respond to these questions, review the team-building guidelines that follow.

Team-building guidelines

- Develop group guidelines that take individual needs and abilities into account.
- Have people work through team-building activities that build on their common experiences while acknowledging their differences.
- Operate in a spirit of respect, in which everyone's ideas are heard and acknowledged. Give extra time to those who need it to reflect and answer.

- Give people choices in how they can participate. Don't assume that everyone will feel comfortable writing on a flip chart or being a group spokesperson.
- Design activities in such a way that people who are reluctant to speak out in a group can shine in other ways and develop confidence to speak in the group.
- Be prepared to change your agenda on the spot to deal with issues and concerns that come up unexpectedly.

Keep in mind that team building will be an ongoing responsibility, not something you do only once at the beginning. Keep watching for ways to help committee members develop trust and open communication.

Where a planning group has been in place for some time, team- building activities may not be necessary. However, for a new group — or where people join an existing committee — new members may not have formed a true group identity yet and probably still have questions about what they'll be doing.

Don't assume that a team really exists and expect it to function as a cohesive unit if the members haven't worked together before. Consider whether, in the culture of your workplace, it would be helpful to take some extra time for team-building activities. This can help build common will and knowledge so that the group can get off to a good start.

Day-to-day team building

Here are some ways you can embed team-building in day-to-day committee activities.

- Members take turns doing various tasks.
- Members take turns bringing refreshments to meetings.
- Members take time at end of meetings to discuss what was accomplished, what helped or hindered participation, and what could be done next time to enable all to participate more fully.
- Members appoint one trusted person to be in charge of ensuring that everyone feels comfortable. (This person can be available for confidential discussion outside team meetings as needed.)

To foster a group identity and a deeper understanding of one another, here are a few initial activities for group members. Some require more preparation and resources than others.

Social activities

Members get to know each other outside the normal work environment. Possibilities include lunch or dinner, a picnic, or a reception.

On-site workshops

Members meet on-site for a half-day or day-long workshop to deal with questions about operation of the committee. They will get to know each other better, air expectations, and demonstrate skills that the team can use.

Discussions with resource people

Members prepare a set of questions related to team evaluation. Then — individually or as a group — they talk with others who have had team-evaluation or related experience to get their perspectives.

If your group has not already agreed on guidelines for how they will work together, the following activity will be useful.

Activity: Develop guidelines for working as a group

Ask members to brainstorm endings to the sentence: *For us to work effectively as a group, we need to . . .*

Record their responses on a flip chart and add your own suggestions. They could possibly include:

- *. . . respect each other*
- *. . . listen to what others say, even if we disagree*
- *. . . share responsibility for tasks*
- *. . . maintain confidentiality of what group members and others involved in the evaluation say.*

Phase 2

Planning the Evaluation

In Step 3, committee members agree on what they expect from this evaluation. Members will consider prior experiences with evaluation and say what they'd like to achieve this time.

In Step 4, the committee clarifies goals, reviews the components of the workplace development initiative, and relates the components to the goals.

In Step 5, you help the committee determine the audiences for the evaluation, what information you'll provide to them, and what they'll use it for.

In Step 6, you decide how to track progress toward the initiative's goals and flag potential improvements.

In Step 7, you consider some technical questions that face those designing evaluation activities. You then design specific activities to gather the information you need.

In Step 8, the committee tests the activities you drafted in Step 7, and revises them accordingly.

In Step 9, the committee revises the tentative schedule, based on what happens in Step 8.

Step 3: Clarify members' expectations for the evaluation

In Step 1, you got yourself into an evaluation mode by recalling prior experience and thinking through your roles in the evaluation ahead. The committee now needs to do a similar exercise.

This next part will serve as a team-building activity.

Activity: Examine members' experience with evaluation and planning

Lead the committee through a discussion of the questions listed below. This focus-group format serves the multiple purposes of team-building, orienting the entire group to

Note: Although this handbook focuses on evaluating programs and activities in an initiative rather than on individuals. some members — especially teachers and program participants —

may perceive that they will personally be the focus of your proposed evaluation. This activity will sensitize committee members to the potentially intimidating nature of evaluation.

the notion of evaluation, and exposing members to a common evaluation activity. It helps members to understand each other better, see what they have in common, and learn who has particular strengths useful in evaluation.

Record the group responses on flip charts.

In this or other workplace initiatives

- *What, if any, evaluation-type activities have you carried out so far?*
- *What were the purposes of those activities?*
- *What did you find out from those activities?*
- *Who used the information? For what purpose?*
- *What were the benefits of that experience with evaluation? What problems did you encounter?*
- *Based on that experience, what would you do differently in the future when carrying out evaluation activities?*

In other situations

- *When have you had to evaluate someone or something?*
- *What information were you collecting, and for what purpose?*
- *Who has gathered information about you, and for what purpose?*
- *How did you feel about being evaluated*

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Looking ahead

Now that they have reviewed their collective and individual experience with evaluation, it's time for the committee members to look ahead.

Tell them what the evaluation is all about and what roles they may choose. Layout the steps you hope to go through and the time that will be required.

The following activity outlines a way of negotiating expectations with your group.

Activity: Negotiate expectations for the evaluation

Tell the group that you want to make sure that everyone is in agreement about their responsibilities and the purposes of the upcoming evaluation. Explain that you'd first like to hear what their thinking is at this point, and that you will share your own ideas afterward. Ask them:

- *What do you think could be accomplished by working as a group to do an evaluation of this workplace development initiative?*
- *What do you think your role could be?*

Record members' responses on a flip chart. Then explain that:

Key purpose of evaluation

- Evaluation is a way to gather information about the workplace development initiative, so that the committee can determine not only what is being achieved, but also what actions need to be taken to improve the initiative.
- By working as a team, members can not only improve the initiative but also learn how to handle other workplace and community issues collaboratively.

Explain that the committee will:

Clarify...

- Clarify the initiative's goals.

Create...

- Create strategies for determining progress towards those goals and strengthening the initiative.

Implement...

- Implement those strategies. This will include gathering, organizing, and interpreting relevant information from various sources, and reporting the committee's findings to appropriate audiences at various stages.

Follow up...

- Follow up to ensure that evaluation findings are acted on.

Encourage all members to participate as actively and fully as possible. Explain that you (the facilitator) are there to help them make this experience truly collaborative. Members must ensure that differences of perspective are respected, special needs are dealt with, and that there is openness and trust.

Step 4: Clarify goals and components of the workplace development initiative

To know whether the initiative is successful, and to decide on actions to keep it on track, committee members must understand the initiative's goals.

Though earlier planning should already have set goals, they can change. Furthermore, newcomers may not be fully aware of the goals that others have set.

By taking time at this point to update and clarify goals, members — especially newcomers — will get to know each other better. They'll be making decisions as a unit. The committee will gain clear criteria for judging the initiative's effectiveness.

Activity: Clarify goals

Explain to the committee that you'd like members to clarify the goals of the initiative.

For already established goals, you will want to ask: Do these goals still accurately address the reasons for the initiative?

If no goals have been set, you could ask the committee:

- *What do you think the reasons for this initiative are?*
- *What should it accomplish for the workers?... for the company?... for the union (where applicable)?*

Record goals

Record the members' responses on a flip chart, titled GOALS FOR INITIATIVE. When they've all had a chance to respond, ask them whether they would like to change the list in any way, by adding, expanding, or deleting items. Be sure that members consider the expectations of other interest groups not represented on the committee. Note what goals *they* may have for the initiative.

Set priorities

The committee may want to indicate which goals should be given the highest priority in this evaluation. In turn, they can consolidate the list into a concise statement.

Sample statement of goals

This workplace initiative should strengthen the abilities of all employees to solve the problems they face on and off the job. It should also help the company to facilitate communication and teamwork among employees, particularly given the multicultural nature of our workforce.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Until now, the team has been talking about the workplace development initiative. But some team members — especially those who haven't been actively involved before — may not know very much about it.

Activity: Clarify the components of the initiative

In a meeting, ask a key contact to outline for other members all the activities and programs that have been planned to meet the goals of the initiative.

Write them down, agree on the list, and give it a title (Activities &.Programs of Our Workplace Initiative).

Your list should include all the activities that the organization has committed to as a part of the initiative.

It may be useful to the group to go one step further and relate the components of the initiative to its goals.

Example: Clarifying relationships between initiative goals and components.

Activities & Programs ➔ **Goals of Initiative ⬇**	**ESL course**	**Advanced reading & writing course**	**Clear writing course**	**Diversity training for all employees**	**Create clear language policy**	**Revise training policies & practices**
Enable participants to advance on the job	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
Improve communication	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Improve morale & self-esteem	✔	✔		✔		
Enable employees to participate in training activities	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
Enable employees to participate in activities outside work	✔	✔				

Note: Your table might look something like the example shown on the previous page.

Activity: Clarify how each component relates to your goals

Prepare a table on a flip chart. Down the left side, list each goal you identified in Step 4 (Activity: Clarify goals). Across the top, list the activities and programs that you identified in the previous activity (Clarify components).

You can use this table to help members clarify which goals are being served by each of the initiative's programs and activities.

Step 5: Identify who wants what information for what purpose

You now have a committee in place. Members have generally agreed what will happen in the evaluation. And they have agreed on a set of goals and components that can serve as a framework for the evaluation. Now it's time to plan the details.

Activity (on your own): Anticipate who wants what information for what purpose

Divide a flip chart into three columns — WHO, WHAT INFORMATION, and WHY.

Who...

Consider who the audiences are likely to be for the evaluation. Presumably they will include the interest groups represented on the committee; but are there other groups who may also be interested in the initiative? List your potential audiences down the WHO column.

What...

What kinds of information is each audience most likely to want? Brainstorm a list of questions these audiences will probably want an evaluation to answer. Jot them down in the WHAT INFORMATION column.

Why...

Consider what purposes each audience will want that information for. How will the audiences use the information? Record the reasons in the WHY column.

Example: who wants what information for what purpose.

Who	What (information)	Why
Senior management	• How much are staff participating? • Is program worth the investment? • How are participants benefitting? • How is company benefitting?	• To determine funding • To determine lifelong-learning policy
Supervisory group	• What does the program do? • What's offered? • How are participants benefitting? • How is the company benefitting?	• To know how program might help staff (and thereby solve worker problems or performance issues)
Participants (and potential participants)	• What did participants learn? What were benefits to participants? • Is this of interest to me? Will I benefit? • Is it user friendly? • What comes next?	• To determine whether to enroll • To determine what their needs are • To develop lifelong-learning plan
Education provider (community college)	• Are needs of company and employees being met?	• To determine changes needed in program
Corporate headquarters	• What have been the benefits to the company? • What have been the benefits to the community?	• To decide whether to expand to other divisions
Human resources department	• How does this fit in with other HR services and the overall corporate vision? • Who is participating? How many? What are they asking for? Who is not attending? (Look for shifts, types of jobs, language, age)	• To determine whether to continue • To determine what services to focus on
Unions	• How is program benefitting members?	• To determine if union should support program • To determine if members should enroll • To determine if members' needs are being met • To develop members' lifelong-learning plan

Note: The figure shown on the previous page is an example from an actual evaluation activity.

You have now identified a number of possible audiences and the kinds of information they will want an evaluation to provide them with. Note that people typically want answers to some key questions.

Progress-related

- *What are realistic, meaningful goals for the initiative?*
- *To what extent are our goals being met?*
- *What are the other, unexpected outcomes?*

Improvement-related

- *What factors help or hinder progress towards our goals?*
- *What actions are needed to strengthen the current initiative?*
- *How might experience from the current initiative inform future workplace development?*

Those who will make up your various audiences typically want this kind of information so they can decide whether or not to continue and how to improve the existing workplace initiative. They also can decide how best to invest resources in the future.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Now you can lead the rest of the team through a similar exercise.

Activity: Clarify who wants what information for what purpose

Explain to the committee that you now want to lay a foundation for the evaluation by determining 1) the audience(s) for the evaluation, 2) the types of information those audiences want, and 3) the reasons they want the information.

Warm-up

For a warm-up, ask members — as representatives of various interest groups — what questions the evaluation might help them answer. Record the questions on a flip chart, noting who contributed each one. (Typically, members will have questions such as: *Are goals being met? Are programs and activities on target and meeting needs?*) Give the chart a title such as QUESTIONS THE EVALUATION MIGHT ANSWER.

Who...

Now lead the group through an exercise similar to your own in the previous activity. On one flip chart, titled WHO, ask members to list the possible audiences for this evaluation. (*For whom are you going to generate information?*) Note that these audiences will likely include the groups represented on the committee, as well as many, if not all, of the others you identified on your own.

What...

Ask members to select an important audience. Have them list — on another flip chart titled WHAT INFORMATION — questions that audience could have about the initiative. If necessary, encourage members to refer to their own list (prepared in the warm-up exercise above).

Why...

Ask members to review those questions and consider why that audience would want such information. Write those possible reasons on another flip chart titled FOR WHAT PURPOSE. (Typically, audiences want information so they can decide whether to continue supporting the initiative, and, if so, what steps they and others need to take to support current or future workplace development efforts.)

Now ask the committee — together or in smaller groups — to do the same for each of the other audiences. If it's helpful, show the team the responses you came up with on your own.

Through this labour-intensive activity, the committee will learn what information it needs to collect.

Step 6: Plan for monitoring progress and identifying potential improvements

Note: The figure on the following page gives you a picture of the process.

As noted earlier, most evaluations will monitor and document the initiative's progress, impact, and achievements.

In this step, you and the committee will 1) determine what evidence you will need to document progress and 2) develop ways to collect that evidence.

You will also figure out how to identify potential improvements to the initiative. You will then generate a schedule to guide your evaluation activities.

Activity: Identify indicators of success in meeting initiative's goals

Evidence of progress

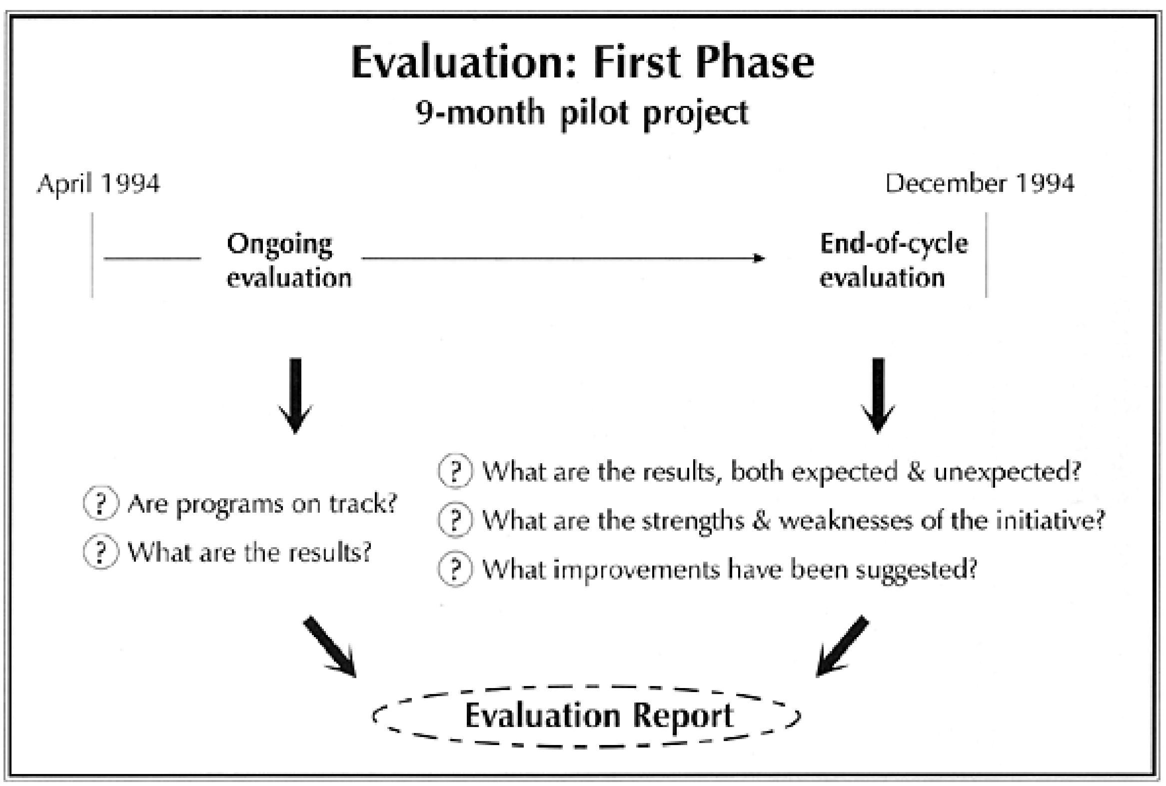
Explain that members will now decide what evidence of progress they will look for.

Display the table of relationships developed in Step 4, and prepare a separate flip chart for each of the goals listed on that table.

For each goal, ask members to imagine what the situation would look like if a particular goal is being met. For example, the following could be indicators of success for a goal of improved communication.

At work

- Participants in ESL course clearly express ideas in problem- solving situations on the shop floor and in group meetings.
- Managers are writing more clearly.
- Employees in general are more sensitive to diversity. People from diverse groups have received promotions.
- Employees are taking advantage of training opportunities in the company.



- Participants in ESL course understand day-to-day requests and information from neighbors and others they meet) and vice versa.
- Participants in reading and writing course can read labels, write letters, and fill in forms.
- Employees are taking more courses.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Before your next meeting with the committee, do the following.

Activity (on your own): List possible ways to monitor progress

Refer to the lists of possible indicators that the committee developed in the previous activity. For each indicator, brainstorm ways for the committee to collect evidence. For example, if one indicator of improved communication is "participants clearly express ideas in problem-solving situations on the shop floor and in group meetings," the committee could periodically ask participants, managers, or union representatives whether they have seen such evidence of improved communication.

Such queries are one way to monitor how well the initiative's activities are meeting the corresponding goals. Your list of ways to monitor the initiative may include:

Some ideas

- Regular committee meetings to discuss the initiative's progress and needs.
- Regular contact between the committee and management and union representatives to identify achievements and needed improvements.
- Oral and written reports from instructors and other service providers to update committee members on progress and needs. (Progress reports could include participants' self-assessment as well as summaries of instructors' assessments.)

Example: Ways of gathering information.

Sources	Interviews	Focus groups	Analyze documents	Survey	Written report
Instructors					
Participants					
Non-participants					
Managers					
Evaluation committee members					
Steering committee members					
Documents • evaluation forms • expense statements • enrollment figures • anecdotes					

Note: The table on the previous page is an example of ways to gather information for a typical industrial evaluation.

- Feedback from participants — as a group and as individuals — immediately after workshops.
- Diaries maintained by committee members to capture day-to-day observations about initiative progress and needs. These diaries could be shared at committee meetings and summarized in an end-of-cycle report.
- Regular review of attendance figures for initiative activities.

Activity: Plan ongoing monitoring of progress and potential improvements

Display the flip charts showing possible indicators for each of your initiative's goals (See: Activity: Identify indicators...).

Ask members to brainstorm — together or in smaller groups — how they would determine progress toward the goals at various points in the initiative's cycle. Point out here that meeting employee and organization goals is a long-term undertaking. Therefore, it will be important not to create false expectations about what can be achieved. If helpful, refer members to your own list from the previous activity.

Note: You will design the specific content and format of each monitoring activity in Step 8.

Once members have identified possible activities for monitoring progress toward each goal, help them prepare a schedule. It should show how the activities will be carried out at various points (beginning, mid-point, end, etc.) of the initiative's cycle. It should clearly show who will carry out which monitoring activities, and when.

Note: An actual 11-month schedule of activities for monitoring process and potential improvements is shown in the table on the following page.

As you monitor progress, you will generate a lot of information from a number of sources. The committee should systematically record the information it gathers, any decisions, and resulting actions taken. You or another designated member can serve as recorder.

Example: Activity schedule for the first phase of an eleven-month pilot project.

Activity	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec Jan**	**Feb**
Hold regular planning committee meetings	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦
Get ongoing reports from instructors	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦
Look at enrollment numbers	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦
Report to Plant committee			✦		✦				
Examine written forms from diversity workshops		✦		✦					
Collect stories	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦
Do performance review of instructors			✦			✦			
Hold focus groups for feedback on diversity workshops				✦					
Review workload of instructors		✦							
Write interim report				✦					
Make recommendations for summer — courses, recruitment, budgets			✦						
Have mini-startup					✦				
Plan end-of-cycle evaluation • Revisit evaluation plan • Fine-tune questions • Decide when to do it • Decide who…							✦		
Do end-of-cycle evaluation								✦	
Complete end-of-cycle pilot evaluation report								✦	
Make recommendations to Plant committee								✦	
Share results with others outside company									✦

Rather than set up a whole new set of activities, the committee can use most of its progress-monitoring activities to gather additional information related to potential improvements.

Activity: Expand schedule of progress-monitoring activities to identify potential improvements

To get started, have the committee review the schedule of progress-monitoring activities. Have them select one — for example, "committee meeting discussions." Ask members how a committee meeting can provide an opportunity to identify potential improvements to the initiative.

If it's helpful, answer your own question, as in the following example.

Example

> *Here's how a committee meeting could serve to both monitor progress and identify potential improvements. Members first take time to state what evidence they have seen since the last meeting that the program is meeting its goals. More specifically, members refer to a check-list of the indicators developed [in Step 6, page 35], and discuss how these indicators are being observed - or not.*
>
> *To deal with program improvement, members then go through each component of the initiative to identify any problems in that specific area.*

Ask members to consider the remaining progress-monitoring activities, noting on the schedule which ones can also be used to identify potential improvements. Then ask them to add any other activities that could be used only for identifying potential improvements.

Step 7: Design specific activities for gathering the information you need

In Step 6, you developed a schedule of activities to monitor progress and identify potential improvements. In this step, you can plan the details.

To design high-quality, efficient activities for gathering and using information, you as facilitator should have a solid understanding of — and a position on — several key issues.

Characteristics of useful evaluation

Confidentiality and anonymity

All information collected in the evaluation must be confidential. The committee should agree not to reveal a source of information and not to use any information against that person. The key here is to ensure trust and open dialogue among all involved in the evaluation.

User-friendliness

The activities that the committee uses to collect information need to be as clear and simple as possible, and respect people's time limitations.

Fine cabinet-making versus rough carpentry

Some committees may assume that an evaluation must present a highly specific, statistically precise picture of the workplace. Most of the time, however, "rough carpentry" is quite suitable, and the "fine cabinet" is more than is needed or feasible.

Validity

A data-gathering tool must actually measure what we want to measure. For example, to find out what can be done to improve procedures for attracting workplace development participants, we must ask questions based on the realities of the recruitment procedures used. Asking too general a question or using confusing terminology will likely elicit a confused response.

Be sure to ask questions of the right people. If the committee wants to know why few employees respond to particular recruitment activities, then it should logically ask some of those who did not come forward, rather than rely solely on instructors or current participants.

Reliability

A means of gathering data must be accurate and consistent. For example, if a person responds in significantly different ways when asked the same question twice in a short time, you might have to reconsider the question's reliability. Similarly, if different interviewers ask the same questions of a participant, they should get similar information.

Using several ways to collect information from several different sources

You can ask essentially the same questions of learners, supervisors, and instructors, rather than rely just on what instructors say. Learners may prefer to give you feedback in individual interviews, while supervisors and instructors may prefer to meet with you in group discussions. Mixing information sources and collecting methods gives you more balanced information on which to base your judgments.

Tests and other tools for measuring individual progress

A workplace with a basic skills program could be tempted to use a test as an evaluation tool. Evaluation committees should understand what tests actually measure, and their potential strengths and limitations, before agreeing to use them.

Generating test scores or other information about individual people should not be equated with evaluation. Evaluation is more comprehensive, drawing on a number of sources and kinds of information to monitor progress towards goals and to identify problems.

Statistics versus other types of information

You can organize information in statistical (numerical) formats, in descriptive (narrative) formats, or in some combination of the two. Each has advantages and disadvantages. For example, if you collect a lot of information from many different sources, it could be useful to boil it down to a set of numbers. This is especially true if your audience is busy and doesn't have time to read through detailed description.

The disadvantage of numbers is that they often don't capture the richness of a program. Narrative summaries of what your sources have to say can reveal nuances and complexities that statistics can't. But they tend to be lengthy and hard to analyze in a quick reading. We recommend that a committee try both formats.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

In your initial attempts to collect information. you should ask a mix of structured and open-ended questions. The former will produce numbers. and the latter will encourage your respondents to state freely what is on their minds. We tend to favor open-ended interviewing techniques borrowed from the field of ethnography. This encourages respondents to think carefully about the program and to participate more actively in the evaluation. The following is an introduction to ethnographic interviewing.

Understanding the workplace context: ethnography

Ethnographic interviewing is a way of getting rich information from participants. It can elicit the interviewee's story, feelings, ideas, and suggestions in ways that more-structured interviews might not.

Committee members involved in conducting individual interviews or focus groups — especially where people do not come from a common culture — should understand the principles and procedures of effective ethnographic interviewing.

Ethnographic principles [1]

Start from ignorance

Resist the temptation to appear to already understand the situation. Be aware of your personal biases, and resist inserting your own interpretations into the interview.

Start without assumptions about what you will find

Assume instead that patterns will emerge from the data you collect. Don't apply bias to the information by trying to make it fit pre-conceived hypotheses.

Learn by gradually building up a picture

Listen to the language used by interviewees, their framework for explaining and describing. Use their language, not yours, in probing further.

Ethnographic interviewing

Interviews differ from informal conversations

- Turn-taking is less balanced. A large majority of talk time is for the interviewee.
- Repetition is used to clarify, verify, and encourage expansion, by restating phrases and words used by the interviewee.
- The interviewer expresses ignorance and interest rather than displays knowledge.
- The interviewer shifts from judgment to curiosity.
- The interviewer adjusts the pace to that of the interviewee, to allow time for the interviewee to think, reconsider, or formulate an answer.
- The interviewer avoids interrupting and quick topic shifts.

---

1 Compiled by Mary Ellen Belfiore from *Ethnographic Interviewing* (National Centre for Industrial Language Training) and *Conflict Resolution: Dealing with Interpersonal Conflict* (Justice Institute of British Columbia).

In ethnographic interviewing, your aim is to initiate interviews, engage the interviewees, and enable them to explore topics, make connections, and possibly discover new ideas in a trusting atmosphere.

Not only is it important to word your questions properly, but you also need to know how to listen effectively. How you listen can determine whether interviewees will speak freely and thoughtfully. You also need to understand what they have to say.

Listen effectively

- Show interviewees that you are interested in what they have to say. If you don't lead them to pre-determined, predictable answers, they will more likely be forthcoming with insights and meaningful, interesting information. This, in turn, will make it easier for you to listen.
- Show interest with gestures and comments.
- Express empathy — a willingness to "stand in another person's shoes." Through empathy, you allow others to express them- selves. You show that you accept and respect their expressions, whether or not you agree with the content.
- Allow interviewees time to pause and reflect.

Encourage elaboration

- Restate what interviewees have said, using their own words.
- Incorporate their own words or phrases in follow-up questions.
- Repeat explanations, purpose, and questions when necessary to ensure understanding and momentum.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

The following is a sample interview — a guide that a committee member may refer to when interviewing a program participant. It has some specific questions and special instructions (in parentheses) for the interviewer. Feel free to modify it for your own script.

Sample Interview

Purpose of interview

- *You were told that I would be interviewing you today. Did anyone tell you what the purpose of this interview is?*
- *[If so] What do you understand to be the purpose?*

Note: Be explicit and repeat throughout interview if needed.

- *[If not] Let me explain that I'm here to find out from participants what they feel the [name of initiative] is achieving and how it might be improved.*

Evaluation ground rules and procedures

- *I'm on the committee that's doing this evaluation. We'll be interviewing a number of other people, including participants, instructors, supervisors, union representatives, and anyone else involved in [the initiative].*
- *We'll be writing a report next month with recommendations about how [the initiative] can be improved.*
- *Your comments will be confidential. No one else will know what you said.*
- *If at any time you're not clear about what I'm saying, or if you feel uncomfortable answering any question, please tell me.*
- *Do you have any questions about this evaluation?*

Goal clarification

- *What do you think [this initiative] is supposed to do?*
- *What personal goals have you achieved?*

Program impact to date

Hint: To get more information, use such words as describe, explain, tell me about, expand, and handle a situation.

- *Earlier, you said [the program] has helped both you and others in many ways. Could you tell me how it has helped?*
- *Are there other things you'd like to get from [the program] but haven't yet? Please tell me more.*

General feedback

Hint: Make note of categories of problems and needed actions for further probing.

- *Strengths: What do you like most about [the program]? What do you find helpful or useful?*
- *Limitations: What don't you like about [the program]? What problems or troubles have you run into?*
- *Improvements: How do you think [the program] could be improved? Who do you think could make it better?*

Feedback on specific components of particular concern to evaluators

- *Support from supervisors: How would you rate the support you get from your supervisors? How could they make it easier for you to participate in the program?*

- *Support from union: How would you rate the support you get from your union? How could it help you participate in the program?*

- *Relevance of curriculum: How do you feel about the topics covered in [the course]? Are there other topics you'd like to focus on? How would you rate the way the courses are taught? How could the instructors improve the way they run the classes?*

- *Scheduling: How do you feel about the schedule of program activities? How could it be improved*

Note: These questions give interviewees a chance to talk at length about specific issues. Ask them later in the interview, as they may be intimidating early on. Be careful not to lead interviewees by giving answers.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Cultural interpretation

In workplaces with diverse language and cultural groups, many people may not feel comfortable being interviewed in English or French. You could bring in a cultural interpreter to conduct interviews.

Using an outsider is important because there can be problems asking a co-worker from the same language group to act as an interpreter. Cultural aspects of gender and power relationships, among other factors, can discourage frank and accurate responses.

Definition: A *cultural interpreter* is a person who not only can translate language. but also has an in-depth understanding of the primary cultures of both the interviewee and interviewer.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

For some of your team members, many of these issues will seem like technicalities, which only the facilitator needs to be concerned about. You can cover them briefly, perhaps providing a concise handout. Explain that some of the issues — especially confidentiality and empathy — should concern all team members. Clarify your own position on them and get the team's feedback.

Now it's time to get your feet wet. On your own, try designing one information-gathering activity to present to the rest of the committee. If you have previously designed questionnaires or interviews, you can build on that experience to develop a set of questions to ask as part of the evaluation.

Activity (on your own): Prepare core questions for a pilot activity

Core questions are those that you will ask of several different sources — through individual interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, or some combination of the three.

In Step 6, the committee discussed collecting information to (1) monitor progress and (2) identify potential improvements. Your core questions should try to capture both kinds of information.

The following sample core questions include several that focus on achievements, and thus should not be asked until the initiative has been underway for some time. Adjust the wording according to when you will be asking the questions (the beginning, middle, or end of your initiative's cycle).

Progress-related questions

- *What did you hope this workplace initiative would achieve for you personally? ... for the company? ... for the union? ... for other interest groups (specify)?*
- *What has the initiative achieved to date?*
- *To what degree and in what ways has it met your expectations?*
- *What else (if anything) has it achieved beyond what you expected?*

Improvement-related questions

- *What do you like about the initiative? What's working well? What's helping the initiative and individuals to succeed?*
- *What don't you like so much? What isn't working? What's blocking progress? What problems have you noted?*
- *What would you like to change about the initiative? How might it be improved?*

Consider how you could adapt these sample questions to one or more of your information sources. How might the wording for program participants differ from that used for supervisors or union representatives or instructors? You will likely want to add extra questions related to the specific knowledge of your various sources.

Though it is useful to tailor the core questions to different information sources, you should also try to maintain enough consistency for valid comparisons.

Try to develop fairly polished drafts of the questions you will ask of two or three sources. These customized questions can serve as scripts to keep your interviews focused on what is important to the committee.

Case study: Core questions used by an evaluation committee

The following core questions were asked of instructors [for an employee education program]. The committee adapted the same questions for use with several other information sources, including participants, supervisors, and union representatives.

Progress-related

- *Who is participating in the program and using the services of the learning centre? (profile and numbers)*
- *In what ways and how often are these people participating?*
- *What benefits has the program provided for participants (and families and friends)? ... for the company? ... for the union?*
- *What drawbacks, if any, have there been for participants (and families and friends)? ... for the company? ... for the union?*
- *How well did participants meet their personal goals?*
- *What do people in the company and union know about the program?*
- *What additional education or workplace opportunities have participants taken advantage of?*
- *What impact is the initiative having on the larger corporate vision*

Improvement-related

- *How could the initiative better address the needs of participants? ... of non-participants? ... of the company? ... of the union?*
- *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the services the learning centre offers? . . of the supports given by the company (senior management supervisors, co-workers, union)? ... of consultation and types of programs offered? ... of the centre's response to the needs of different shifts, departments, etc. ? ... of the content of courses and the way they are taught? … of scheduling? ... of how needs and interests are determined?*
- *What improvements would you suggest?*
- *How well is information about the program communicated? How could it be improved?*
- *How convenient is it for participants to sign up for courses? Can you suggest any improvements?*
- *How satisfactory is the issue of paid versus unpaid time? What would you do to improve it?*

- *How would you rate the facilities and equipment? What suggestions do you have for improvement?*

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

In addition to the core questions, your scripts should contain an introduction and wrap-up remarks.

Here is a suggested outline for an interview, focus group, or questionnaire.

Introduction

Introduce yourself. Ask your information sources to introduce themselves. Explain the purpose and ground rules (respect, confidentiality, etc.).

Ask core questions

Ask the questions about progress and potential improvements.

Solicit additional comments or questions

Add a question or two at the end of your interview, focus group, or questionnaire such as: *Have we covered everything? Do you have any other comments, questions, or suggestions?*

These kinds of questions allow people to raise anything that might have occurred to them during the discussion or as they answered the questionnaire.

Make closing remarks

Commend and thank your sources for their co-operation and thoughtful input. Remind them how you will use the information (stress that you will maintain confidentiality). Tell them if you can be available for further one-to-one discussion. Explain when and where your report (if any) will be available.

Once you've drafted your scripts, estimate how long it will take you and your sources to complete the activity. Note in the margins of your scripts how much time you should give to each section, to keep yourself on target during the discussion. If it appears that you won't have enough time to deal with all the questions, you may have to reduce or delete specific parts, or schedule more time.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Involve the committee

Now it's time to involve the evaluation committee in drafting interview and focus-group questions. You'll also want to consider a number of other ways to gather information. For example, you might review attendance records to determine how actively participants are using the initiative's services.

Activity: Agree on a set of activities to test

Lead the committee through an abbreviated version of what you did in the previous two activities.

- Explain that they can now develop a set of information- gathering activities to test. A field test will let members get some practice with various activities, which can then be revised. Members will also know if they need some further preparation.
- Go over the core questions you developed in the previous activity and revise them, based on members' suggestions.
- Show how you adapted a set of core questions for use with several information sources, using interview, focus group, and questionnaire formats. Revise, based on the team's suggestions.
- Keep in mind that you won't ask exactly the same questions at the beginning of the initiative's cycle as you will at the end.
- Decide which members of the committee will conduct interviews and focus groups, and who will collect other information.
- Decide how the resulting information will be organized and analyzed by the committee (*Who will do these tasks, and when?*).
- Find out whether team members have any other questions or suggestions related to this initial round of activities.

Record what the team decides and file as part of your committee records.

Step 8: Try out your information-gathering activities

You now have one or more sets of questions to ask of various information sources. These questions are still in the draft stage, and should be tested before you use them fully.

You can do this by asking your questions of 1) other team members, 2) a sample of those you eventually hope to gather information from, or 3) others outside the committee who won't necessarily serve as actual information sources.

In this way, the team will find out if the wording or format of the questions needs to be changed. Those who will eventually pose the questions will have a chance to learn to use them effectively.

Activity: Test your information-gathering activities

To test an activity, you might first ask committee members to try the questions out on each other. For example, have a member interview you. Make these trials as realistic as possible, asking those involved to be themselves. (You could play the role of a timid interviewee — or a long-winded or cantankerous one — to give members practice in dealing with less-than ideal interview situations.)

Switch roles and give all members an opportunity to practice, either asking the questions or answering. If time permits, members could arrange to interview selected representatives of the various groups from which they eventually want to get information.

As they go through these trials, ask members to analyze their experience.

- *How did it feel to ask these questions?*
- *Did they get information they needed from their sources?*
- *What did they learn about being an interviewer or leader of a focus group?*
- *How could the questions be improved - in both content (what was asked) and format (how they were asked)?*
- *How — and by whom — will the information be organized?*
- *What skills and knowledge do members need to develop to be better able to use the questions they've developed?*

Activity: Revise your draft questions as necessary

From these trials, you and the committee can decide:

- What, if any, revisions to make in the information-gathering activities now planned
- Whether any activities should be discarded
- Which members should use which activities
- What additional practice or training members need to use the activities effectively and comfortably.

Make the necessary changes, and give members additional practice in using them.

Step 9: Revise your evaluation schedule

You have designed, tested, and revised several sets of questions to guide the various activities you will use to monitor progress and identify potential improvements. You have also prepared a cadre of information seekers to bring the results back to the committee from interviews, focus groups, and other activities.

Now take another look at your schedule of activities from Step 6. Subsequently, in Step 7, you developed a deeper understanding of both the potential benefits and the demands (on time and expertise) of various information-gathering activities. If necessary, use the following activity to revise the schedule to show only the most feasible, useful activities.

Activity: Revise your schedule

Ask members to consider how often each activity will be done. For example) will you conduct focus groups with learners only once? Or will you do it at the beginning, mid-point, and end of the initiative cycle?

Go through each activity point-by-point, to clarify timing, responsibilities, etc. Explain that the committee has not yet decided how to organize, analyze, and report the information to be collected, but that you will be meeting with them to facilitate those additional steps as you get to them.

Be sure that no members feel coerced or confused by the plan. See that they all feel comfortable with the tasks they agree to do. Your revised schedule is the action plan that will guide your evaluation activities during the initiative.

The group should agree to meet periodically to monitor progress and revise the plan as needed. Their input and active participation is vital to ensure that the plan is on target and that the team feels in control.

Phase 3

Gathering, Organizing, Interpreting, and Reporting a First Round of Information

In Step 10, the committee carries out its first round of information-gathering activities. Members organize the information to allow efficient analysis.

In Step 11, the committee studies and interprets the information collected, with a special emphasis on planning the next steps - actions to be taken on issues that emerge. If the committee wants to present its findings to any external audiences, you prepare a written report.

In Step 12, the committee plans to present its findings to external audiences. Then those responsible prepare their presentations.

In Step 13, members first circulate their written reports to their external audiences and set up meetings in which the reports can be discussed. Committee representatives then meet with the various audiences and convey their findings. Meetings are carefully organized to ensure that the audiences consider the issues and actions important to the committee.

Step 10: Gather and organize the information

With your action plan in place, it's time to begin using the tools you've developed. In this step, you will gather a first round of information and organize it as it comes in.

Example: Gathering Information for an end-of-cycle evaluation.

Sources	**Sample size**	**How**	**When**
Instructors	100%	• Written reports • Interviews • Monthly reports*	End of first cycle – December 1994 or January 1995
Participants	Overall: 50-100% Diversity: 100%	• Interviews • Focus groups • Evaluation forms*	End of first cycle . . .
Non-participants	15-20%	• Interviews • Focus groups	End of first cycle . . .
Management	100%	• Interviews • Focus groups	End of first cycle . . .
Planning committee	100%	• Interviews • Focus groups	End of first cycle . . .
Plant committee	100%	• Interviews • Focus groups	End of first cycle . . .

Activity: Gather information

Those who have agreed to collect information should now do so, following your schedule, and respecting the principles set in Step 7.

Given the constantly changing schedules of many workplaces, you will have to be flexible. As necessary, revise your schedule to match the availability of your information sources. Also be willing to revise the wording and number of questions — and other aspects of your information-gathering — as experience dictates. Members might meet periodically once information-gathering gets underway.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

As the committee collects information, you need to keep it organized.

Note: The table on the previous page is an example of an information- gathering schedule.

Activity (on your own): Organize the information

Refer back to the schedule you developed in Step 6 and revised in Step 9, noting at what points you agreed to organize and summarize the information as it comes in. This is a detail job that you — and possibly one or more others with time, interest, and creativity — can take on.

Organize by core questions

As information from interviews and other sources comes in, you could mark all of the responses to a given question with one color or number. Then, in the next step, you can easily retrieve the information pertaining to your core questions.

Organize by source

Store the information you collect from each source in a separate folder. To summarize the responses to a given question, extract the relevant information from each folder, and list as in the following example.

Sample outline

Question: *What has been accomplished by the workplace initiative so far?*

- What managers said.
- What supervisors said.
- What workers said.
- What union representatives said.
- What program participants said.
- What education staff said.

Identify categories...

Identify categories of themes and issues that emerge from the responses. For the above question, for example, categories of responses might be "self-esteem," "job-related outcomes," and "non-job related outcomes."

Note frequency of responses

Note how often particular responses were given — even if only in general terms such as "frequently cited," "less frequently cited" "miscellaneous other responses," "minority view," etc.

Maintain objectivity

Avoid inserting your own interpretations at this point. If you do, record them — with your initials — in parentheses. Your views should be clearly separated from what your information sources said.

Maintain anonymity

As you list the sources of information mentioned in the responses, avoid identifying individuals by name or any other means of personal identification. If necessary, you can code each source.

Step 11: Interpret the information

Once the information has been organized, you and the team can interpret it. You might continue to work on your own (or with some members of the committee) to do some initial interpretations. You can then present a draft summary of the information collected and your interpretations to the rest of the committee for their input.

Activity (on your own): Interpret the information

Facilitator's interpretations

Read through the summary of information you prepared in the previous activity. For each category, jot down on a separate page any comments, recommendations, or questions you might have in response to the data. Mark those pages with a separate heading, such as FACILITATORS INTERPRETATIONS.

In a sense this is where you actually begin to evaluate (determine the value of, judge, examine, make decisions about) the information you have spent all this time collecting.

You must recognize that you come to the situation with certain values and biases. Rather than pretend they don't exist, make your own perspective clear here, designating your comments as such.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Circulate to the committee your written summary. (Don't show them your interpretations yet.) At the end of each category of that summary, leave a space titled COMMITTEE MEMBERS' INTERPRETATIONS.

Ask the members to read through your summary carefully, and jot down any comments, ideas, or questions they might have.

Activity: Interpret the information

Committee interpretations

In a committee meeting, ask members to interpret each type of information (as organized in Step 10), noting comments, observations, trends, contradictions, questions, ideas, and possible follow-up action that come to mind. Record their interpretations on a flip chart.

Then describe the "facilitator's interpretations" you came up with in the previous activity, and compare them with the committee members' interpretations.

Try to agree how the group will interpret each type of information. If no clear consensus can be reached, note the range of interpretations. If necessary, note any differences of interpretation. See those differences not as conflicts, but as legitimate differences of opinion.

Include recommendations

As you record the committee's interpretations, make it clear what, if any, actions members would like to see happen. The committee might want to make specific statements about continuing the initiative and what actions are needed — and by whom — to improve various components.

As described here, this activity requires a lot of reading and writing by committee members. You will have to decide how to make it accessible for members not comfortable with so much print. You could, for example, report key findings orally to the committee and ask them to respond orally.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

You now have in hand detailed documentation of the information gathered, the committee's interpretations, and your own. It is necessarily detailed, as you want to include all of the key findings and committee members' thinking.

Decide how to handle the report

Committee members should now decide what to do with the document. They may see it as one of several internal reports for members' eyes only, which they will use to monitor the program and eventually compile into an end-of-cycle final report, Or, they may see it as a final report, or one of several periodic reports to pass on to external audiences.

If members want to treat it as an internal document, then it can remain in its current form.

If they want to share the findings, they should be clear who the external audiences will be. Audiences might include an external funder (such as a government agency), management (an executive committee), the main office of the union, or the education provider.

Hint: Review your conclusions about audience identification from Step 5.

These audiences may not have time to study every detail of your findings. They will probably appreciate a concise version. Now is the time to prepare an executive summary.

Activity: Draft a report for external audiences

Write up, with any other committee members who have the time and interest — as concisely as possible — a detailed summary of the information, interpretations, and recommendations that you and the committee members have noted for each type of information.

Make executive summary

Then edit your detailed summary into a 2- to 5-page executive summary containing the key findings, interpretations, and recommendations.

You also need to prepare a brief introduction that describes the purposes and methodology (the process you went through) for the report.

Your new document should thus have an introduction, followed by an executive summary, then a more detailed report.

If appropriate for your audiences, prepare appendices containing interview and focus group procedures, schedules, and other information of interest.

When all of this is assembled, make a table of contents and a cover page.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

As you assemble the report, pay attention to the way it looks. It should be attractive and professional looking. Avoid a dense, cluttered look. Make it easy to read.

Use clear language. keep sentences short, and avoid needlessly long words and jargon.

Hint: If you have the resources, ask a professional editor (perhaps someone from the company's or union's communications department) to help with layout graphics and clear language.

Activity: Prepare a final version of the report

Get committee feedback

Before meeting with the committee again, submit your draft report to members and ask for their feedback on both its content and format. Explain that now is the time to fine-tune it before it goes to your external audiences.

This report is all that many of your audiences will know about your initiative. Once members have submitted their editing suggestions to you, revise the draft to create a clearly written, quality document that effectively conveys the committee's message.

Step 12: Plan and make your presentations

You now have to figure out how best to present the report to your intended audiences. Some of them will have time to review only the executive summary. Others might want to read the detailed report and meet with you to discuss it. Some will prefer you to convey your key findings orally.

Activity: Decide how to report to your intended audiences

Note: see Step 5 - "Who..."

Meet with the committee to show members the final version of the report. Remind them that the purpose of all of their work to this point was to produce information for use by various audiences. Display a flip chart titled POSSIBLE AUDIENCES (the WHO chart from Step 5)

Ask them to revise that list as necessary, adding new audiences, deleting others.

Ask them to identify which of those audiences they consider most important at this stage. Mark those on the chart as Primary and the remaining audiences as Secondary.

Explain that there are a number of ways to present the report prepared in Step 11.

Written versions

- Full, detailed report.
- Executive summary of the full report.
- Charts containing key information.
- Transparencies containing key information (for use with overhead or slide projector).

Oral presentations

- Varying degrees of detail
- Visual aids as necessary

Taped presentations

- Video.
- Audio.
- Slide-tape.

Explain that, to convey its findings to an audience, you can take one of two approaches. You can merely send in the report without any expectation that you will hear back from your audience. (We might call this the "send only" approach.) Or, you may use the report as a way of opening further dialogue with your audience, assuming that they will consider taking action on your recommendations. (This could be termed the "send and discuss" approach.)

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Activity: Plan your presentations

For each of the primary audiences identified by the team, prepare a separate flip chart with the name of the audience at the top.

Divide each flip chart into three columns:

Approach

- Will you take the "send only" approach or the "send and discuss" approach?

Format

- Will you use a written, oral, or taped format to convey your findings?

Schedule

- Who will be responsible for putting the findings into the appropriate format, presenting, and following up?

When flip charts have been filled in for each audience, tape them next to each other on the wall.

Determine how often the same reporting format is used. This will let you know, for example, how many copies to make of the executive summary.

Determine whether the various schedules are in sync with each other. Does one person have to make too many presentations in the same time period? Should all the audiences receive the report at the same time, to avoid slighting anyone of them?

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

The committee has now agreed who will make presentations to each audience. Work with those people to help them get ready. This is an opportunity for members to demonstrate their competence in the team process and ownership of the initiative. They can also stretch themselves to develop new communication skills.

Activity: Prepare your presentations

Help members with their presentations

Work with the members responsible for each presentation to ensure that they have all necessary documents, visual aids, and other resources (for example, refreshments and meeting rooms). Help them plan their sessions. They should allow time for presenting key findings and for follow-up discussion.

Here are some questions to consider when preparing to meet an audience.

- *What will be the agenda for the meeting? What are the objectives? (What do you hope will happen as a result of the meeting?)*
- *Who will facilitate the meeting?*
- *Who will speak for your committee?*
- *Who will serve as secretary for the meeting, recording minutes (on paper, computer, or tape)?*
- *Who will help with taping up flip charts, running the overhead projector, or distributing handouts?*
- *Do we need greeters?*
- *Who will be in charge of refreshments?*
- *Where should you sit?*
- *How should you dress?*
- *What supplies (for example, handouts, flip charts, refreshments) do you need to have ready?*

Dress rehearsal

You might help members do a dress rehearsal of their presentations. You could also enlist the help of colleagues who are specialists in communications (for example, public speaking, preparation of visual aids) to guide the presenters.

Step 13: Report your findings

The exact way you convey your findings to different audiences will depend on what you decided in Step 12.

Individual committee members can now take responsibility for circulating a written version of your report to the appropriate audiences.

Activity: Circulate the written report to your audiences

For most audiences, the committee will likely submit either the executive summary or a complete, detailed report.

"Send only"

Tell those audiences for whom you decided to take a "send only" approach: *Here is our report for your information, as promised.*

You can do this in a cover letter, in person, or by phone. You may or may not want to add a general comment welcoming feedback or questions.

"Send & discuss"

To those audiences for whom you decided to take a "send and discuss" approach, you might say: *Here is our report. We would like to discuss it further with you.*

Ask them to read it carefully, jot down any comments or questions they have, and be prepared to meet you at a particular date to discuss the report. You might even send a brief list (in questionnaire form) of specific things you'd like them to consider when reading the report. By filling out this informal questionnaire prior to meeting you, audiences will be more likely to study the report carefully and pay attention to issues you think are important.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Activity: Set up meetings with your audiences

Contact your "send and discuss" audiences, and arrange to meet them in person. Explain that you'd like to get their feedback and discuss specific recommendations contained in the report.

Agree on a suitable time and place for that meeting. The place should have adequate seating, wall space (for displaying flip charts), an overhead projector, and whatever else you need. You might arrange to have refreshments served.

In addition to making logistical arrangements, you and the other members should go over the plans you made in Step 12 for making effective presentations.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

In most cases, you hold a meeting to:

- Help the audience understand the key findings of the report.
- Build communication between your committee and the audience.
- Get the audience to take action on one or more of the specific recommendations detailed in the report.

Activity: Meet with your audiences

At the beginning of each meeting, explain what you hope to accomplish. Emphasize your interest in specific actions that might be taken in response to the report. Whoever facilitates the meeting should keep the discussion focused on the meeting's objectives.

You might organize the discussion around the following points.

What does the report say?

If the audience has not already studied the report, you or another team member can summarize it.

What is the audience response?

For each section of the report, ask your audience to respond with questions, comments, ideas, or recommendations.

What actions should be taken next?

Ask the audience what actions should be taken next in response to the report. Time permitting, identify both long-term and short-term actions. Clarify who will take those actions — and when. If there is not enough time to plan specific actions in this meeting, agree to have another meeting soon, while interest is still high.

Someone on the committee should record the proceedings.

The facilitator should make sure that everyone has a chance to speak to each topic.

Phase 4

Deciding What Happens Next

Members should have emerged from the discussions they had with each other and with external audiences with a clear agenda for follow-up actions.

In Step 14, members clarify who has agreed to do what, implement those actions that they've agreed to take responsibility for, and monitor how well the committee and other parties carry out the actions.

In Step 15, the committee turns its evaluation expertise on itself. Members take some time to look at the evaluation they have just gone through, to decide whether they want to continue working as a team and, if so, how to improve their performance.

Step 14: Take follow-up action

Now that you have discussed your findings as a committee and perhaps met with external audiences, review the notes from your meetings, and be sure that the agreed-upon actions are carried out.

Activity: Plan follow-up actions

Assemble the notes from the meetings you held as a commit- tee and any you held with external audiences. Prepare minutes for each of those meetings. You could organize them according to the three discussion points suggested in the previous activity.

- What did the report say?
- What questions or comments did the audience have in response?
- What actions did the audience decide should be taken next?

Who will do what?

In the minutes, make it clear who agreed to take what action. Review the minutes with the committee. If members were not all present in the meetings held with your external audiences, explain what was discussed and what actions were agreed on.

Agree on which actions committee members now need to take on themselves. Decide who is responsible for which actions, when they will do them, and what help and resources they might need. Schedule the next committee meeting to monitor progress.

The committee should also decide who will monitor the external audiences. Are they doing what they agreed to do, and how can the committee follow up and provide assistance?

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Activity: Implement and monitor follow-up actions

The committee should meet periodically to monitor progress on those actions. This monitoring could, in fact, be central to the next round of the committee's evaluation activities.

Step 15: Evaluate the evaluation

The committee has planned and carried out an initial round of evaluation activities. In the spirit of continuous improvement and self-reflection, the committee should practice what it preaches and evaluate its own activities, now that it has had some time working together.

Circulate a questionnaire to all members. Ask them the following kinds of questions.

- *What was the committee trying to achieve in the evaluation?*
- *What was achieved?*
- *What did you personally get out of participating in the committee?*
- *What did you like about the committee?*
- *What didn't you like?*
- *Should the committee continue to operate?*
- *How might it be improved?*

The committee can decide whether members should sign the questionnaires.

Ask members to return their questionnaires to someone willing to summarize their responses. That person should prepare a brief summary for discussion at a future meeting.

Future of the evaluation committee

In a meeting, discuss the summary. Decide whether to continue operating as a committee and, if so, what action to take to strengthen it. Refer to the schedule of evaluation activities developed in Step 9 as you plan future evaluation work together.

Suggested Readings
— AN ANNOTATED SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following documents provide food for thought for those interested in collaborative methods of workplace development. Most of them make strong arguments for non-traditional approaches to workplace education. Some have a more traditional perspective, but suggest a need for new ways of defining goals and measuring outcomes. Several, going beyond theory, describe practical steps that workplace educators can take to create new, collaborative programs.

Trends and issues

Draper, I.A. 1991. "Understanding Values in Workplace Education" in *Basic Skills for the Workplace*, edited by M.C. Taylor, G.R. Lewe, & I.A. Draper, 85–106. Culture Concepts, Toronto. Summarizes five philosophies of adult education (liberal, behaviourist, progressive, humanist, and radical) and challenges adult educators to clarify their own philosophies — individually and in dialogue with others. With a clear set of principles, we can avoid being pushed into forms of practice that violate our personal principles.

Evaluation Research. November 1992. *Workplace Education: Voices from the Field*. Proceedings of National Workplace Literacy Program Project Directors Conference, September 1991. Washington: Division of Adult Education and Literacy, U.S. Department of Education. Representatives of 39 U.S. federally funded workplace education programs give feedback on such key components as partnership building, curriculum development, staff development, assessment, evaluation, and recruitment. This was a rare opportunity for practitioners to speak directly to federal policy makers.

Gowen, S.G. 1992. *The Politics of Workforce Literacy: A Case Study*. New York: Teachers College Press. This study of a functional context program for hospital workers shows that the workers in many cases found the curriculum to be unmotivating and irrelevant. Questions the assumptions underlying the functional context approach.

Hull, G. *Hearing Other Voices: A Critical Assessment of Popular Views on Literacy and Work*. Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education. Argues that, if workplace education is to prepare workers to take initiative, solve problems, and work in teams on the job, it needs to involve participants in shaping program goals and running the education program itself.

Imel, S. and Kerka, S. 1992. *Workplace Literacy: A Guide to the Literature and Resources*. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Cites key focal points in workplace literacy research to date and points to an emerging literature that questions the functional context thrust of earlier writings.

Johnston, Wendy E. 1993. *Workplace/Workforce Literacy: Trends and Issues in 1993*. Presentation at Workplace/Workforce Literacy: A Conference, held in Mississauga, Ontario, February 12-13, 1993. Questions many assumptions underlying current workplace education efforts, including the mismatch between worker abilities and job demands and literacy's impact on competitiveness. Challenges adult educators to rethink whether and how to get involved in workplace education, to avoid well intentioned but misguided efforts.

Jurmo, P. April 1994. "Education in the New Workplace" in *Literacy at Work*, 9:4. Describes a new, "collaborative" perspective on workplace education in the U.S. Collaborative programs involve a broader range of stakeholders in setting goals and running the program.

Jurmo, P. 1994. *Workplace Education: Stakeholders' Expectations, Practitioners' Responses, and the Role Evaluation Might Play*. East Brunswick, NJ: Literacy Partnerships. Begins with an overview of purposes for and approaches to workplace basic skills education. Then analyzes the current state of evaluation in workplace programs. Then profiles a number of projects that support the creation of a new, "collaborative" approach to workplace education. Concludes with recommendations for workplace educators, employers, unions, funders, and learners.

Pritz, S.G. and Imel, S. 1993. "Involving Workers in Workplace Literacy" in *Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference: A Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education*, October 13-15, 1993, edited by K. Freer and G. Dean, 115-120. Columbus, OH. Argues for greater worker involvement in workplace education programs, and describes several ways of involving workers in needs .assessment and other activities.

Sarmiento, A.R. and Kay, A. 1990. *Worker-centered Learning: A Union Guide to Workplace Literacy*. Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute. Argues for greater worker involvement in workplace education programs.

Sarmiento, T. and Schurman, S. April 1992. *A Job-linked Literacy Program for SPC: Are We Talking about Worker Training, Work Reorganization, or More Equitable Workplaces?* A paper prepared for the Work in America Institute. Analyzes workplace education programs that focus on narrow job-related skills and don't deal with other factors that inhibit worker productivity.

Schultz, K. December 1992. *Training for Basic Skills or Educating Workers? Changing Conceptions of Workplace Education Programs*. Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education. Shows how narrowly defined workplace education programs violate principles of adult education and high-performance management. Suggests ways of analyzing the options available to practitioners vis-a-vis philosophy, curriculum, assessment, and the roles of stakeholders.

Senge, P.M. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency. Makes the case for a new kind of workplace, which sees ongoing collaborative learning and decision making as the thread that ties the organization together.

Soifer, R., Irwin, M.E., Crumrine, B.M., Honzaki, E., Simmons, B.K., and Young, D.L. 1990. *The Complete Theory-to-Practice Handbook of Adult Literacy: Curriculum Design and Teaching Approaches*. New York: Teachers College Press. Presents a whole-language, holistic approach to workplace basic skills education.

Stein, S.G. May 21, 1993. *Continuous Learning for Continuous Improvement, or Basic Skills, Worker Empowerment, and High Performance Work Organizations: Why You Can't Have One Without the Other*. Keynote address at May 1993 annual conference of the Texas Workforce Education Consortium, Dallas, TX. Calls for new approaches to workplace learning that more directly integrate learning into day-to-day shop-floor work activities.

Stein, S.G. and Sperazi, L. October 15, 1991. "Workplace Education in Context: A Chart Comparing Traditional and High-Performance Work Organizations." *Part of Tradition and Change: The Role of Workplace Education in the Transformation of the Workplace*, a paper presented by Sondra G. Stein at the annual meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, in Montreal. Succinctly contrasts features of traditional and high-performance workplaces. In particular, compares how workplace education programs in traditional and high-performance workplaces approach goal-setting, curriculum, scheduling, assessment, evaluation, and other key components.

Turk, J. and Unda, J. "So We Can Make Our Voices Heard: The Ontario Federation of Labour's BEST project on worker literacy" in *Basic Skills for the Workplace* edited by M.C. Taylor, G.R. Lewe, & J.A. Draper, 267-280. Toronto: Culture Concepts. Presents an alternative approach to workplace education that features greater worker involvement and a more holistic view of what an education program should focus on.

Waugh, S. (Folinsbee). 1992. *An Organizational Approach to Workplace Basic Skills: A Guidebook for Literacy Practitioners*. Ottawa: YMCA-YWCA Employment Initiatives. Argues that worker productivity can be shaped by many factors other than just their basic skills. Shows how an organization can analyze those many possible factors and develop a systematic strategy for dealing with them through various education, training, and other organizational development activities.

Weiner, Nan. 1993. *Employment Equity: Making It Work*, 1:1-20. Butterworths Canada. The introduction to this book is a good overview of the definition, history, and need for employment equity in a Canadian context. It also looks at what implementing employment equity involves, with examples of several interesting case studies.

Evaluation and needs assessment

Barker, K.C. October 1991. *A Program Evaluation Handbook for Workplace Literacy*. Ottawa: National Literacy Secretariat. An overview of issues and approaches related to workplace literacy evaluation.

Employment and Immigration Canada. 1991. *Employment Systems Review Guide*. Supply and Services Canada. This guide provides good practical, step-by-step assistance for conducting an employment systems review.

Fingeret, H.A. 1993. *It Belongs to Me: A Guide to Portfolio Assessment in Adult Education Programs*. Durham, NC: Literacy South. A comprehensive guide to the use of portfolio assessment for adult literacy programs. Can be adapted for use in workplace programs.

Jurmo, P. 1994. *Workplace Education: Stakeholders' Expectations, Practitioners' Responses, and the Role Evaluation Might Play*. East Brunswick, NJ: Literacy Partnerships. Begins with an overview of purposes for and approaches to workplace basic skills education. Then analyzes the current state of evaluation in workplace programs. Then profiles a number of projects that support the creation of a new, "collaborative" approach to workplace education. Concludes with recommendations for workplace educators, employers, unions, funders, and learners.

Kinsey, D.C. 1978. *Evaluation in Nonformal Education: The Need for Practitioner Evaluation*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, Center for International Education. Shows why adult educators should see evaluation as a useful tool for improving their program rather than an external imposition.

Lam, Cindy S.M. 1990. *The MWP Process: A Developer's Guide*. City of Toronto Board of Education. This manual describes the process of developing educational programs and organizational change strategies that can help organizations respond to the challenges of a culturally diverse workplace. It offers a practical, detailed way to plan strategies for the specific needs of a given workplace.

Lewe, G.R. 1993. *Literacy Task Analysis*. New Westminster, British Columbia: B.C. Construction Industry Improvement Council. Presents an alternative approach to literacy task analysis, which more actively involves learners and focuses on identifying skills needed for advancement within trades.

Lytle, S.L. and Wolfe, M. 1989. *Adult Literacy Education: Program Evaluation and Learner Assessment*. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. A comprehensive overview of the current state of adult literacy assessment and evaluation. Recommends new ways of looking at these important program functions, which emphasize greater involvement of learners and other stakeholders in analyzing needs and progress of individuals and programs.

Mikulecky, L. and Lloyd, P. 1993. *The Impact of Workplace Literacy Programs: A New Model for Evaluating the Impact of Workplace Literacy Programs*. Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy. Summarizes issues and options facing evaluators of workplace education programs and presents sample instruments for monitoring program impact. Suggests going beyond focusing solely on changes in decontextualized skills and/or job performance. Evaluators might instead track 1) impact on learner beliefs about literacy, self, and education; and 2) improved literacy practices at work and elsewhere.

Philippi, J. W. May 1992. *How Do You Know if It's Working? Evaluating the Effectiveness of Workplace Literacy Programs*. Springfield, VA: Performance Plus Learning Consultants, Inc. Summarizes issues and options for evaluators of workplace education programs. These include the transition from outdated hierarchical work systems, creating evaluation responsive to stakeholder interests, and integrating education with organizational development.

Sarmiento, A.R. 1993. "Alternative Designs for Evaluating Workplace Literacy Programs." *Proceedings of U. S. Department of Education Work Group Conference on Design Guidance for Evaluating Workplace Literacy Programs*. Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute. Argues that workplace education programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education have not been adequately evaluated. Says that program goals need to be more clearly articulated and not defined narrowly as improvement of only the literacy skills required by participants' current jobs. States that education programs require a supportive context —— one committed to transformation to a new way of organizing work — to produce meaningful, lasting results.

Sarmiento, T. July 1991. "Do Workplace Literacy Programs Promote High Skills or Low Wages? Suggestions for Future Evaluations of Workplace Literacy Programs" in *Labor Notes*, a monthly newsletter of the Center for Policy Research of the National Governors Association, Washington, D.C. States that a workplace education program has the choice of preparing workers for old, top-down-style workplaces or new, high-performance organizations. In the new workplaces, education programs should be structured in the same collaborative way as other workplace activities.

Sperazi, L. and Jurmo, P. July 1994. *Team Evaluation: A Guide for Workplace Education Programs*. East Brunswick, NJ: Literacy Partnerships. Shows stakeholders in workplace education programs how to plan and carry out a collaborative evaluation. Based on an 18-month project funded by the National Institute for Literacy.

Sperazi, L. and Jurmo, P. June 1994. *Team Evaluation: Case Studies from Seven Workplace Education Programs*. East Brunswick, NJ: Literacy Partnerships. Describes how collaborative evaluation was carried out in seven workplace programs (six in the U.S., one in Canada) and analyzes lessons learned in the seven sites — strengths, limitations, and needed improvements of the team evaluation concept.

Waugh, S. (Folinsbee). 1991. "How to Assess Organizational Needs and Requirements" in *Basic Skills for the Workplace*, edited by M.C. Taylor, G.R. Lewe, & I.A. Draper, 147-168. Toronto: Culture Concepts. Outlines practical ways to conduct an organizational needs assessment. Mentions pitfalls to avoid.

Waugh, S. (Folinsbee). 1992. *An Organizational Approach to Workplace Basic Skills: A Guidebook for Literacy Practitioners*. Ottawa: YMCA-YWCA Employment Initiatives. Argues that worker productivity can be shaped by many factors other than just their basic skills. Shows how an organization can analyze those many possible factors and develop a systematic strategy for dealing with them through various education, training, and other organizational development activities.

Young, C.D. 1994. *Assessing Workplace Literacy: Asking New Questions*. Latham, N.Y.: Civil Service Employees Association. An ethnographic methodology for eliciting from workers' how they perceive and use literacy and what they might gain from a basic education program.

To order books in this series, please send a cheque or money order to:

ABC CANADA
1450 Don Mills Road
Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2X7

Tel: 416-442-2998
Fax: 416-442-2987

COLLABORATIVE WORKPLACE DEVELOPMENT:
AN OVERVIEW
$10.00

COLLABORATIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT:
A HANDBOOK FOR WORKPLACE DEVELOPMENT PLANNERS
$20.00

COLLABORATIVE EVALUATION:
A HANDBOOK FOR WORKPLACE DEVELOPMENT PLANNERS
$20.00

e-mail: info@abc-canada.org
Internet: www.abc-canada.org