WHO WANTS WHAT INFORMATION – AND HOW DO WE GET IT?: ISSUES IN WORKPLACE EDUCATION EVALUATION

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Introduction

Getting the "lay of the land"

In the last 2 1/2 years, I have focused on the question of how to most appropriately evaluate workplace literacy programs. I have approached this work from what I considered a participatory, collaborative perspective. Such an approach recognizes that a literacy program is composed of a number of different stakeholders, each of whom brings particular interests and resources to the effort. In a collaborative effort, each stakeholder has opportunities to shape the program to build on his/her resources and meet his/her interests.

As I got into the question of how best to evaluate workplace education programs, I saw the need to more fully understand the "lay of the land" of how evaluation is currently done in workplace basic skills programs. Through direct interaction with workplace programs, talking with others involved in the field, and reading, I now have a better grasp of the state of the art. I have clarified basic things like how evaluation is now done, who is involved, why evaluation is done, for whom it is done, the data-gathering tools people use, and how people think of evaluation in the context of workplace education programs.

In the process, I have identified some valuable resources, as well as some problems which need to be addressed by those interested in improving how evaluation is done in workplace contexts.

For me personally, taking the time to learn what others are doing and thinking has been both rewarding and at times frustrating. It is rewarding because I now feel that I have a stronger foundation for the work of developing more effective ways of approaching evaluation. It is also frustrating because this notion of workplace literacy evaluation is a new one for me and the others I work with. We thus often lack a common language, common expectations, common prior experience. This can result in confusion.

Recent research and development projects:

This morning I'd like to share some findings from a number of projects I've worked with in the past 2 1/2 years:

• The National Institute for Literacy has funded a one-year research project in which my colleague Laura Sperazi and I are field-testing a team-based approach to evaluation. We first began developing this model two years ago for the Massachusetts Workplace Education Initiative.

• ABC CANADA, a technical assistance organization based in Toronto which specializes in workplace education issues, is developing a similar team-based planning and evaluation model for use in Canada.

• The New York State Education Department has, in the past 1 1/2 years, conducted workshops for workplace educators and redesigned its funding guidelines, with the aim of reshaping how workplace programs plan and evaluate themselves.

• And here in Texas, I've had the opportunity to learn how planning, evaluation, and assessment are used by El Paso Community College's program for garment workers, in the Workforce Instructional Network program for small businesses in San Marcos, and by other practitioners whom I interacted with in workshops at last year's Texas Workforce Literacy Conference.

Why taking time to study current practice is important:

It is important for workplace education practitioners and policy makers to take the time to "do their homeork" and familiarize themselves with what people are doing in this important area of evaluation. If they don't, they tend to rush into setting up evaluation practice and policy without knowing useful tools they might use and the stumbling blocks they might run into.

To facilitate our understanding of some basic issues in this area, I've structured this discussion today around five discussion questions:

1. In workplace education evaluations, who wants to know what information for what purpose?
2. What are the goals of workplace education? And what are indicators of progress toward those goals?
3. Besides determining whether goals are being met, what other kinds of information might an evaluation focus on?

4. What are possible sources of information? And how can information be gathered from those sources?
5. What can we do to improve how we use evaluation?

Question #1: In workplace education evaluations, who wants to know what information for what purpose?

Commonly, when people talk about evaluation they immediately get into a debate about which "test" to use. This focus on which test to use is understandable but unfortunate, because tests are only one of many possible ways of gathering information for use in an evaluation.

And in many cases, tests as most people normally think of them (that is, "standardized" tests) might not be appropriate at all, because:

- Standardized tests often don't get the information really desired by the stakeholders in a workplace context.

- These tests can have the negative effect of turning off participants, not only to the evaluation process but to the education program itself. This is because tests often have negative, punitive, or threatening connotations in many people's minds.

When looking at the question of how to set up a program evaluation, I have found that a useful place to start is a basic question of "Who wants to know what information for what purpose?" (This is question I learned from my advisor at the University of Massachusetts, David Kinsey.) If you and the people you are planning an evaluation with can answer that question, you have laid the foundation for a useful, meaningful evaluation.

1. a. Who are the stakeholders in workplace literacy programs?

When we look at evaluations now being prepared in workplace programs nationally, the potential "who's" in this question constitute the program's "stakeholders" or " interest groups." These are the people who -- for various reasons -- have an actual or potential "interest," "stake," or "investment" in workplace literacy efforts.

Based on your own experience, who would you consider to be the stakeholders in workplace literacy efforts in this country? (Author's note: The participants at this point developed the following list of stakeholders, which were recorded on a flipchart:)

Potential stakeholders in workplace literacy programs (as defined by Dallas conference participants)

- Students
- Management
- Teachers
- The company's human resources department
- Funders
- OSHA
- Taxpayers
- Employees not in class
- Insurers
- Administration of the educational institution
- Union
- Families of students
- The company's stockholders
- Other local companies
- The company's customers
- The community and larger society

Your list in fact reflects what most documents on workplace literacy now tell us. They say that workplace literacy programs should be seen as a "partnership" among a variety of stakeholders or interest groups. Typically these partners are listed as "management," "workers," "unions," and the "education provider." More recently, "learners"-- the workers participating in the program -- have also been added to some people's lists of stakeholders.

But this kind of depiction of a workplace program's stakeholders is a bit of an over-simplification, because it leads one to believe that these are monolithic categories.

- In fact, "management" needs to be further broken down to include not only higher-level managers, but also supervisory-level people, as well as management representatives from various departments within an institution.

- This is also true of learners themselves. They:
  - come from different departments and communities,
  - have had different experiences with literacy, and
  - can't be treated as though they are all the same and have identical interests and knowledge bases.

Being more precise about who we consider to be a program's stakeholders is not being "picky" or "academic." If this clarification of who interests groups are isn't done, program planners are likely to focus only on serving one or two sets of interests while leaving other interests out.

When this happens, those whose interests are not being responded to are likely to see the program as of limited relevance, not get much out of it, and not give much to it in terms of support and cooperation.

Similarly, planners of evaluations need to be clear just who might constitute "audiences" for the information to be generated in the evaluation. A good evaluation would focus on developing information relevant to the people who are asking for the evaluation. A clear list of potential stakeholders is a good place to start when trying to clarify the audiences for an evaluation.

A comprehensive list of potential stakeholders in workplace education programs might consist of:

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS IN WORKPLACE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

At the program level

<u>Management representatives</u> (from various departments concerned about basic skills)
- Higher-level managers
- Supervisory-level managers

<u>Union representatives</u>

Employees:
- Current participants in the program
- Possible participants in the program
- Employees who chose not to participate in the program
- Co-workers not likely to participate in the program.

Education staff (from inside or outside the workplace)
- Instructors
- Curriculum designers
- Administrators

Learners' "communities"
- Family members
- Friends
- Other local community institutions

The organization's customers
- Customers/clients who want quality service and products from the organization.

Beyond the program level

Funders
- Public-sector funders (local, state, and federal)
- Private-sector funders (e.g., unions, trade associations)

Economic development policy makers
- Public sector (e.g., state workforce development agencies....)
- Private sector (e.g., Hudson Institute, Southport Institute...)

Adult education providers

News media with responsibility for covering workforce and education issues

Vendors of workplace education services and products

A truly comprehensive list of stakeholders might be some combination of the above two lists and others like it developed by others in the field.

Question #1.b.: What kind of information do these stakeholders typically want from an evaluation?

If we see evaluation as to a large degree a process of gathering information for someone to use to make decisions with, then we need to be clear just what information it is we should be gathering. This brings us back to our question of "who wants to know what information for what purpose?"

If we agree that the above lists of stakeholders represent the range of possible audiences for an evaluation, we next need to ask just what kind of information it is that these groups want an evaluation to provide them with. Let's just look at our lists of stakeholders for a minute, and take them one by one.

To make this more concrete, let's assume, for example, we have been asked to plan an evaluation of a workplace education program for nurses aides in a nursing home. Management wants to help aides to be prepared for more-responsible roles in a new patient care system which emphasizes teamwork, "quality," new safety procedures, and careful written documentation.

We have been told that one of the audiences we should develop information for is the category of "supervisors." These are the people who decide whether to release the employee to go to class and can otherwise encourage -- or discourage--the employee's participation. Supervisors can also provide valuable ideas for how to make a curriculum meaningful.

If one of our audiences were to be supervisors, what kind of information do you think they would like us to provide them with? (Author's note: The paricipants at this point developed the following list:)

What Information Might Supervisors Want?
(as defined by Dallas conference participants)

- Are residents more independent?
- Is communication better between aides and supervisors?
- Is documentation better?
- Are there fewer "incidents" (complaints)?

- How much employee time was required (to participate in the education program)?

In an actual nursing home program I worked with, supervisors referred to a list of skills which all nurses aides were supposed to possess. This list, developed by the state nursing home association, included: "using oral and written English to report emergencies, fill out flow charts, communicate with patients at bath and meal times, read dietary information . . .")

If we look at another category of "stakeholders" in this nursing home program -- "learners" -- what information might program participants want to get from an evaluation? (Author's note: Here participants developed the following list:)

<u>What Information Might Learners Want</u>?
(as defined by Dallas conference participants)

- Did my test scores go up?
- Will I get a raise or promotion as a result of participating?
- What did supervisors say about us?
- What did residents say about us?
- What more do we have to learn?
- Will I be fired if I don't improve my skills?
- What did the evaluation tell my supervisor about me?

Let's look at one more category of stakeholders: "funders." In this case, let's assume that a key funder is the U.S. Department of Education. What information might the U.S. Department of Education want from an evaluation of this program? (Author's note: Here the participants developed the following list:)

<u>What Information Might the U.S. Dept. of Ed. Want</u>?
(as defined by Dallas conference participants)

- Did the program do what they said they would do?
- Did the program document impact on productivity?
- Is the program replicable by other providers elsewhere?

In addition to the above kinds of information, U.S. Department of Education might want to know whether it should continue funding this program, as well as what worked and what didn't (so we know how to shape policy in the future).

In my own interaction with the field, I have found that -- when stakeholders are asked what types of information they want from an evaluation, they respond in several ways, as follows:

TYPES OF INFORMATION
COMMONLY WANTED BY STAKEHOLDERS

1. What are/should be the goals of the program?
2. What in fact is being achieved in the program?
   a. In terms of the intended/anticipated outcomes?
   b. In terms of other, unanticipated outcomes?
3. What factors are helping or hindering progress toward program goals?
4. Should we continue to "invest" (money and time) in the program?
5. If it is to be continued, what needs to be done (and by whom) to improve the program?

Question #1.c.: What do stakeholders want to use that information for?

We have now clarified, in broad terms, what kind of information the various stakeholders in workplace literacy programs might like from an evaluation. Imbedded in those categories of information are answers for the third part of our question "who wants to know what information for what purpose?" If we look at the list of "types of information commonly wanted," the following are purposes which stakeholders might use the information for:

COMMON PURPOSES FOR EVALUATING
WORKPLACE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

To help stakeholders decide:

- whether to continue investing in the program and, if so,
- how those "investments" (resources) should be used.

Question #2: What are the goals of workplace education? And what are indicators of progress toward those goals?

2.a. What do stakeholders see as the goals of workplace education?

As I mentioned, many stakeholders in workplace programs want their evaluations to clarify what in fact the program should be trying to achieve. In other words, they see evaluation as a means for goal clarification. It is important for stakeholders to have a clear understanding of the program's goals or purposes for two reasons:

1. If stakeholders understand the purposes of the program, they can know how best to tailor services to meet those interests.

2. With a clear statement of goals, those designing an evaluation will know what criteria to use to judge whether in fact the program is meeting its goals.

Put another way, if you're planning to start a week-long car trip, it's important to know your destination so that:

1. you'll be able to figure out how to get there, and
2. you'll know whether you made it when the week is up.

When you read guidelines from some funders, research reports from some researchers, and press accounts of the workplace literacy issue, you might conclude that there is only one legitimate purpose for workplace literacy programs. That purpose is "to improve employee productivity (or job performance)." Some would even go so far as to speak for the entire U.S. business community and say that this is in fact the view of all employers and that, therefore, workplace literacy education is fundamentally a "bottom line" issue of improving the productivity of the U.S. workforce.

However, when you listen to what other people are saying about this topic, it turns out that there is not universal agreement within the field on this question of "What are the purposes of workplace literacy education?" These "people," by the way, are the full range of stakeholders: employers, union representatives, learners, and education providers. When these stakeholders are asked that question, they cite "improved job performance" as well as a number of other purposes.

"WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF WORKPLACE LITERACY EDUCATION?": WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

"Contextualized" orientation:

To improve workers' job performance

- Workers are better able to perform specific tasks within specific jobs.
- Workers are better able to work in teams to analyze and solve problems across tasks and jobs.

To encourage employee's personal development

- Workers improve their job opportunities.
- Workers can achieve non-job-related goals.

To facilitate both improved job performance and personal development

"Decontextualized" orientation:

To help workers develop "basic skills" for use at a later date

We need to be careful about jumping to conclusions about the purposes which various stakeholders expect workplace education programs to achieve. For example, it is tempting to assume that all employers take the "job performance" view, while employees and unions take the "personal development" perspective. This, however, is in fact not true. For example:

- Some employers conceive programs to be primarily for employees' "personal development."
- Many employers see these programs as a mix of job-related and personal growth.
- Many educators appear not to support a "contextualized" view of learning (perhaps due to their historical reliance on decontextualized learning in school settings). They therefore prefer a "decontextualized" view.

• Some educators assume that employers and funders want improved job-performance. The educators adopt job-performance "lingo" and goals, even if they don't fully believe in them.

The point here is that, when planning an evaluation, it is very important to take the time to clarify what all stakeholders' expectations for the program are. It might not be possible for a program to meet all the expectations of all stakeholders, but these expectations should be aired, negotiated, and prioritized. In so doing, you can come to some agreement on what the program should be trying to achieve and which of those program goals to focus on most in the evaluation.

While you might think that all stakeholders are clear about what the program should be achieving, in fact many aren't so sure. This could be due to several reasons:

WHY STAKEHOLDERS AREN'T ALWAYS CLEAR ABOUT PROGRAM GOALS

• Stakeholders were not available to give input at the beginning: In some cases, stakeholders come into the program cycle late, and were never involved in the goal-setting done early in the program.

• Stakeholders were available, but no one asked for their input: In some cases, stakeholders were in fact available during the early planning of the program, but they were never given the opportunity to have input or learn just what the goals were that were being developed by others.

• Stakeholders are not familiar with range of possible purposes for workplace education: Most stakeholders are "new" to the idea of basic skills education in the workplace. They have not thought or studied much about what such programs might achieve. Stakeholders might thus figure the program should teach the kinds of "basic skills" they learned in grammar school. Or they might merely adopt the language of funders or media accounts which emphasize literacy for "the bottom line."

• Stakeholders are intimidated from stating their real hopes and expectations: Some stakeholders might think that a program should focus on job-related goals. However, they might be reluctant to say so if everyone else involved in the program is talking about the a program as a vehicle for the employees' personal growth. And vice versa.

• Realities have changed and goals haven't been updated: In some cases, the context and/or workforce have changed since the beginning of the program, and goals have not been updated to reflect those changes.

• Goals are stated in overly-broad, intangible terms: In some cases, goals were set at the beginning of the program, but they were not stated in specific terms. (For example, program planners might have declared that they wanted to "improve communication" or "improve productivity" through the education program, but they never got any more specific than that.) In such cases, stakeholders often "go with the flow" but are never quite sure in tangible, practical terms what the program should be trying to accomplish-- or is in fact accomplishing.

These are the reasons -- some more "legitimate" than others, perhaps -- why evaluations are often asked to help clarify what the program should be trying to accomplish, even after the program has been underway for some time.

Let me make one other point about goals: So far most stakeholders seem to be concerned about "changing the individual worker" in some way. By so doing, however, programs end up overlooking the fact that, to improve productivity, other things (like equipment, decision-making procedures, institutional racism, compensation, and so forth) might need to change at the same time. Workplace programs should probably start broadening their thinking about their goals, to focus not solely on changing individuals but on changing the organization and individuals together.

Question #2.b: What are possible indicators of progress toward those goals?

As I mentioned earlier, stakeholders commonly want to know what the program is accomplishing. Normally they are thinking more specifically in terms of whether the program is meeting its intended (or stated) goals. Stakeholders should also be aware, of course, that the program might be achieving other, "unanticipated" outcomes, as well, which might be useful to know about.

So there is wide agreement that, in an evaluation, it is vital to determine what the program is in fact accomplishing. Why is this so important? It's because clear goals provide a basic standard against which stakeholders can judge the program's value and then make decisions regarding program continuation and improvement.

Too often, however, evaluations don't get much beyond the "smile sheet" approach to evaluation. This term refers to the sheets of paper passed out to participants at the end of a course, which don't ask for much more feedback than whether you were happy with the course or not.

There is now a greater interest in clarifying in more specific terms what impact programs have, especially on job performance. This is often being done in the name of "accountability," on the assumption that, if we can show key decision-makers (especially employers) that we are having an impact on productivity, then they are more likely to continue the program and maybe even pay for it themselves.

But good practitioners also want clearer feedback/evidence of what the program is accomplishing, so that they can make sure the program in fact meets its goals.

To provide clearer evidence of whether a program is meeting its goals, it is necessary to know just what specific evidence -- or indicators of "progress" (or "success" or "ability") -- to look for. Let me give you some examples of the indicators which evaluation teams have come up with in several different programs.

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS OF PROGRESS TOWARD JOB-RELATED GOALS

ESL program for nurses aides (Massachusetts):
Indicators of "oral communication" abilities included:

- "explaining contents of trays to patients,"
- "explaining what I am doing when helping patient with personal care (bathing, bathroom, grooming, dressing, etc.)"

ESL program for electoronics assembly workers (New Jersey):

Indicators of "oral communications" and "teamwork" abilities included:

- "explaining one's job to co-worker"
- "asking for help"
- "suggesting an idea"
- "requesting a job change"
- "giving a compliment"
- "talking with team leader or supervisor about performance reviews"

ESL program for electronics assembly workers (Massachusetts):

Indicators of job-related reading, teamwork, communication abilities:

- Speaking up in meetings
- Using technical terms
- Reading blueprints
- Reading safety signs
- Reading performance appraisal forms
- Assessing one's own goals
- Giving feedback to co-workers
- Writing memos
- Writing notes to people on the next shift
- Understanding oral communications from my supervisor
- Understanding oral communications from my co-workers
- Speaking to supervisors
- Speaking to co-workers

These are examples of specific job-related functions identified by planning and evaluation teams in three programs. They used these functions as (1) focal points for instruction and (2) focal points for the evaluation. Keep in mind, however, that a program might also choose non-job-related goals to focus on. "Helping my kids succeed in school" is a common non-job-related goal. In such a case, similar lists of indicators might be developed for each of those non-job-related goals.

Question #3: Besides determining whether goals are being met, what other kinds of information might an evaluation focus on?

If you recall, when we dealt with our first question of"Who wants to know what information for what purpose," I stated that, while stakeholders typically want an evaluation to clarify to what extent program goals are being met, that is not the only kind of information they want. When we carefully look again at our list of "Types of Information Commonly Wanted by Stakeholders," we see that, apart from looking for information related to "intended/anticipated outcomes/goals," an evaluation might also look for information which will help stakeholders to:

- clarify program goals(#1)
- identify unanticipated outcomes (#2.b.)
- clarify whether to continue "investing" in the program (#4)
- clarify what factors are helping or hindering progress toward program goals (#3)
- decide what needs to be done (by whom and when) to improve the program. (#5)

These are common types of information which stakeholders say they want. Practitioners tend to want to look at all of these issues. Funders (including employers) might focus more on the program continuation question.

When you are planning the data-gathering activities you'll be using in an evaluation, you need not focus solely on "assessing progress toward stated goals. You can also, in many cases, gather several types of information in one data-gathering activity. For example, if you're interviewing a supervisor to ask what impact she feels the program has had, you might also ask whether the supervisor thinks the program should continue and, if so, how it might be improved.

Question #4: What are sources of information? And how can information be gathered from those sources?

We have now mapped out the range of information you might want to collect in an evaluation. The next question facing us is a dual one: "What are sources of information? And how can information be gathered from those sources?"

Here are some possible sources of the kinds of information sought in workplace education evaluations:

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR WORKPLACE EDUCATION EVALUATIONS

Human sources:

Learners
- Current
- Past

Managers
- In various departments
- At higher levels and supervisory level

Union representatives

Education staff

Employees who chose not to participate
- Those who considered participating but chose not to.
- Those who began participating but left the program early (a.k.a. "dropouts").

Learners' co-workers

Material sources

Documents
- From the workplace
- From the classroom
- From learner's life outside the workplace and classroom

These are "sources" where we might find the kind of information our audiences want. Now our question is, "what kinds of activities might we use to collect data from those sources?" Here are some ideas, drawn from experience, readings, and talking with other practitioners.

POSSIBLE DATA-GATHERING ACTIVITIES FOR WORKPLACE EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

Interviews
- Individuals
- Groups ("focus groups")

Questionnaires

Observation (of learners, instructors, others)
- On the job
- In the classroom

"Feedback sessions" (Education team members meet to review program activities and identify strengths, limitations, and needed improvements.)

Portfolios: Folders in which individual learners (or groups of learners) collect evidence of their goals, interests, progress, problems. Contents could include:

- Interest inventories (a record of learner's evolving interests)
- Daily/weekly dialogue journals (written notes between learner and instructor, or possibly between learners)
- Writing samples
- Attendance records
- Record of materials read
- Audio-recordings of learner speech
- Anecdotal observations by instructor

Combined instructional/evaluation activities: Activities conducted as a normal part of the instructional process which facilitate learning while also providing evidence for use by instructor (or other person) in an evaluation. Examples include:

- Simulations (learners demonstrate their use of particular oral and/or written communication skills to solve a problem in a simulated situation)
- Research projects (Learners identify a question they want to investigate, gather relevant information, and prepare a report. This report can be presented orally or in writing.)

- Quizzes (for vocabulary, grammar,...)

Standardized tests (Some tests are relatively more relevant to particular contexts than others.)

Review of records and sample materials
- From the workplace
- From the classroom
- From learner's home life

When considering all the possible information sources and data-gathering activities, you might consider combining these two lists in a "grid" format. Here's one taken from an evaluation team currently implementing its own evaluation. We used it to point out all the possible combinations of data-sources and data-gathering activities. The team reviewed each option, then selected a half-dozen as being the most meaningful and feasible.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND WAYS OF GATHERING INFORMATION (Sample from a hospital education program.)

	Inter-view	Focus Group	Quest' naire	Writ. Simu-lation	Oral Simu-lation	Obser-vation	Doc-ment Review
Learn-ers							
Super-visors							
Higher Level Mgrs.							
Union Reps.							
Instruc-tors							

Tutors							
Docu-ments re: job perfor-mance							
Class-room records							

Question #5: What can we do to improve how we use evaluation?

I have now touched on only some of the components of a solid evaluation, and haven't gotten into what you might do to design instruments and use the data once they are collected. You need to organize the information, summarize it, analyze it, and report it. These steps in an evaluation process will be covered in the handbooks and reports which will emerge from the above-referred-to National Institute for Literacy and ABC CANADA projects.

In the interest of time, I would now like to skip to the last question of "What can we do to improve how we use evaluation?" In this case, we are applying the principle of "continuous improvement" -- an organizing principle in the workplace "quality" movement -- to our own work in the area of evaluation.

WHAT CAN WE DO
TO IMPROVE HOW WE USE EVALUATION?

1. Consider the choices available to us now.
We should examine the way programs are now approaching evaluation, and assess the strengths and limitations of each option:

a. **Look for The Perfect Instrument.** (e.g., a "test," "a readability formula," "a literacy task analysis methodology")

Pro's:

-- Relatively simple, "follow-the-numbers" approach to planning and evaluation.

-- Provides a number (e.g., a test score, a readability estimate) to show to funders

Con's:

-- Tests generally provide only one type of information, from a decontextualized view

-- Readability formulas don't capture the complexity of the actual written and oral communication tasks carried out in most workplaces.

-- LTAs can be useful if done well, but are only part of a larger planning process.

b. Hire an Outside Evaluator.

Pro's:

-- Evaluator saves you effort, does most of the work for you.

-- "Outside experts" lend legitimacy to the evaluation and program.

Con's:

-- Evaluators typically have only limited time to spend with you.

-- Evaluation might be seen as something controlled by someone else, rather than as a tool for stakeholders to use themselves.

c. Squeeze evaluation in when you can.
(The Eclectic Approach: a little of this, a little of that.)

Pro's:

-- You save money by doing it yourself while possibly getting information of use to you.

-- You get experience doing evaluation work.

Con's:

-- You add to the burdens you already carry.

-- Information is of limited quality.

-- Information isn't used as fully as possible.

d. Develop a systematic, "team" approach to planning and evaluation. Stakeholders get involved in planning and carrying out their own evaluation activities. They thereby:

• See evaluation as part of a larger planning cycle, with all components of program operation integrated rather than in isolation from each other.
• Plan evaluations in a systematic way, attending to the kinds of fundamental questions discussed above.
• See evaluation as not only a way of gathering information for decision-making, but as a way of helping the organization shift toward a team-based model of decision-making and work.

<u>Pro's</u>:
-- You integrate evaluation into a larger, coordinated planning strategy.
-- You produce information tailored to your needs.
-- You develop expertise.

<u>Con's</u>:
-- You and other team members need to invest time and energy.
-- You might need help (e.g., training, technical assistance) to do this.

2. Demystify evaluation.
• See evaluation as a positive, useful tool, rather than as something intimidating, imposed, obtrusive.

3. Make a personal investment.
• Take the time to develop your expertise in evaluation. "Do your homework" through reading, talking with others, and reflective practice.
• Argue to funders and others that good programs require good planning and evaluation. Make it clear that good planning and evaluation take time, time which staff should be paid for. Suggest that special funding be given to evaluation-related pilot projects, as has been done elsewhere in the U.S. and in Canada.
• By organizing these "investments" in evaluation and planning, you will not only help yourself and your program, you will also contribute to the "continuous improvement" of our field.