

Formative Evaluation of Instruction: Case Study

Background: You have been assigned to do a formative evaluation of a training product. The product development manager is interested in finding out if the project is “on the right track.”

What does she mean by this? Does she want her boss’s opinion of how well the project is coming along? Does she want to know if project staff is happy? What do you need to evaluate? What is the best way to design the evaluation?

This case study is designed to give you a guided experience in conducting a typical formative evaluation of an educational product so you will have a jump start in conceptualizing the formative evaluation of your own project.

Evaluation Questions:

After discussing the project with the product development manager, you discern that the key questions for this evaluation are as follows:

1. Are learners able to meet the outcomes of the training upon completion of the lesson?
2. Do learners feel that they have mastered the material and can transfer what they’ve learned back to the job?
3. Did learners enjoy the experience?
4. What needs to be changed about the delivery of the training. This depends on the type of training product being developed. If the training product is a workshop, your investigation into this would center on how well the instructor materials worked, how clear instructions were to the students, to what degree were students and instructor able to get the workshop with relative ease. If the training product was computer-based, it would enter on how usable the training program was from a human/computer interaction perspective. What screen designs need to be improved? Should anything about the user interface be changed in order to facilitate the learner’s ability to get through the program?

Participants: Participants for the project are approximately 5-10 employees in your organization (other students in our CDES 303 class).

Time Available: Due to budgetary constraints, you will have only approximately 1.5 hours to conduct the formative evaluation.

The Task: Your task is to plan and implement a formative evaluation for the product development manager. Once the formative evaluation is completed, you will analyze the data you gathered and generate a set of recommendations for changes to the product.

In order to complete the task you will have to do the following:

1. Clarify each of the key evaluation questions by assigning it with a label and a definition so that you can be specific about what you are, and are not measuring.
2. Determine how you will gather data for each of your evaluation questions.
3. Design data gathering instruments (questionnaires, observation forms, interview questions) as needed.
4. Define the procedure to be used during the formative evaluation.
5. Conduct the formative evaluation.
6. Analyze the data.
7. Generate an evaluation report providing an overview of the evaluation as well as offering a set of recommendations for program revision based on your findings.