PROGRAM EVALUATION FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: AN EMPOWERMENT EXAMPLE

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Background

The importance of program evaluation in educational settings

To reflect back on our teaching program to decide the weaknesses and strengths

Because we need to do the necessary adaptations to maximize learning opportunities for the learners (Fetterman, 2002)
Empowerment

Depending on stakeholders

Building capacity on self-evaluation

Democratic participation in the program evaluation process
Empowerment Technique

- a self-evaluation in a performance appraisal (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004)
- helps reversing power relations, building evaluation capacity and self-determination (Fetterman, 2002)
- immediate stakeholders can tell us what is present in the setting (Berry, Fuller & William, 2008)
- stakeholders contribute to the decision-making and problem solving process by active cooperation (Murray, Ryley, Spain & William, 2011)
- helps stakeholders to be aware of the details and components of the program and gain self-management (Urtega, 2011)
- using qualitative data inquiry to refine a logic model (Crane, 2010)
- includes enhanced mutual understanding among those participating in the evaluation, support and reinforcement for the program intervention (Feterman, 2002)
Empowerment Technique
(Fetterman, 2002)

- gives way to program, organizational, and community development and increased participant engagement in evaluation processes
- shows the ways in which participants in an evaluation can come to value both the processes and findings of an evaluation
- the insiders or participants design and implement the evaluation with the evaluator's guidance and assistance
- the staff members and participants control the means of making their own changes. However, this approach can only take place in a community that has the potential to determine its own fate. It also requires that the group control the resources necessary to make the changes it desires
- empowerment evaluators may write in public forums to change public opinion, embarrass power brokers, and provide relevant information about a situation in decision-making forums
Empowerment Technique
(Fetterman, 2002)
The Advantages

- **Training**: evaluators can teach people to conduct their own evaluation
- **Facilitation**: evaluators can act as a facilitator and coach to help people conduct their evaluation
- **Advocacy**: evaluators may help empower people through evaluation by writing on forums, embarrass power brokers, and provide information in decision making process
- **Illumination**: this evaluation can be illuminating and create a dynamic community
- **Liberation**: empowerment evaluation can free people from traditional expectations and roles. People can take charge of their own evaluation with the help of this evaluation
Mission
• A mission statement to focus the group on the needs and strengths
• Reflects the values of the groups and represents the foundations of the next steps in the evaluation
• Consensus on it is enough

Taking stock
• Generating a list of key activities that are crucial for the functioning
• Most voted activities are identified
• Performance on these activities is self-evaluated one by one

Planning for the future
• Setting improvement goals
• Devising strategies for reaching these goals
• Developing measures to decide if the goals are reached

Framework (The three-step approach, Fetterman, 2002)
Research Context

The mandatory preparatory English year in a state university in Ankara, Turkey

- for students who will study in English Language Teaching and English Language and Literature departments
- starting with a placement test
- starting level between intermediate and upper intermediate English level
- due to the university entrance exam in English for studying in these departments in Turkey
- for nine months from September to May
- 25 lessons a week
Participants

Target Population
110 Students

- n=94
  85%

Target Population
13 Instructors

- n=9
  70%
Research Design

first phase with students
- survey study with close-ended questionnaire to 94 students

second phase with instructors
- self-evaluation with 9 instructors

Evaluator
an immersed coach or facilitator engaged in the daily operations of the evaluation
First Step: Mission

a mission statement that serves to focus the group on specific needs and strengths within the context

- The mission statement was already formed by the administration of the institution because the institution was already going through a curriculum development process.
- The foundation of evaluation in this study;
  - heavily textbook based
  - the school lacks its own core curriculum
  - components should be determined according to student profile
  - seeking help to prepare own curriculum
  - need for the guidance of curriculum professionals
Second Step: Taking Stock

generating a list of key activities that are crucial to the functioning of evaluation and rating performance on these activities

Taking Stock

Students formed the list of the key activities to be rated

Instructors conducted self-evaluation on these key activities
Taking Stock

Questionnaire

- To choose 5 out of 10 items
- 10 items - the stated aims of the program 2 items related to
  - content of the curriculum
  - materials
  - implementation of the curriculum in the classroom
  - assessment
  - expectations from the teachers

Below you may find ten different items that are related to the program you are enrolled in. Please tick five of these ten items which you think to be more important than the rest. There is no need to rate the items according to their importance level, ticking five would be enough.

Example:  

1. Enriching the lessons with various kind of materials
2. Technology usage in the lessons
3. Textbooks with up to date, related to daily life and attractive content
4. Getting feedback about the performance in exams
5. Getting advice about extracurricular activities that can help English learning
6. Various methods of assessment
7. Regular feedback and interest from teachers for one’s language development
8. Going back to the already taught topics in the lessons
9. Flexible lessons which give possibility for reversal
10. Preparing the curriculum according to the students’ interests and learning styles
Taking Stock

- 5 most chosen key activities ($N=94$)
- Info sheet for self-evaluation
- Instructors’ self evaluation
- Within the frame created by the students

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks with up to date, related to daily life and attractive content</td>
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<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enriching the lessons with various kinds of materials</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>Regular feedback and interest from teachers for one’s language development</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting advice about extracurricular activities that can help English learning</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>Technology usage in the lessons</td>
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Info Sheet for the Self-Evaluation

Dear Instructor Committee,

Within the frame of this research, the students enrolled in the department have chosen five items that they think to be more important to be evaluated.

In this part of the research, you are asked, as the instructors committee, to evaluate the program performance on the basis of these five items and to provide suggestions and plan for future for each item.

You may find the five most chosen items below according to the frequency of rating.

1. Textbooks with up to date, related to daily life and attractive content
2. Enriching the lessons with various kinds of materials
3. Regular feedback and interest from teachers for one’s language development
4. Getting advice about extracurricular activities that can help English learning
5. Technology usage in the lessons
Third Step: Planning for Future
setting goals for each activity listed

Instructors decided what to do next and for what to ask next
Results

‘Textbooks with up to date, related to daily life and attractive content’

Evaluation

- Listening Book
  - not attractive
  - tasks are not clear
  - few pictures and songs
  - lacks good warm-up parts
- Reading Book
  - not attractive and up to date
  - so repetitive
  - time consuming to warm class up
- Writing Book
  - good content and related to daily life

Plan for Future

- Listening Book
  - adapt the book
  - add some new tasks
  - rewrite the already existing tasks
  - add some pictures, videos, and songs
  - extent the warm-up activities
- Reading book
  - change the reading book
  - prepare a better one collectively all together
- Writing Book
  - slight changes related to the model texts
Results

‘Enriching the lessons with various kinds of materials’

Evaluation

- good performance about using additional materials
- good supplementary materials
- not used effectively
- limited to time
- too many materials coming with the textbooks to cover

Plan for Future

- adaption in the program content
- replace the textbook materials with some attractive extra materials
Results

‘Regular feedback and interest from teachers for one’s language development’

Evaluation

- answer all the exam questions in the class collectively
- no office hour
- no face-to-face feedback
- problematic due to students’ hesitations of asking for extra clarification

Plan for Future

- asking for office hours to the administrative board
- rearrangement in the program
- allocation two more hours for writing classes to give feedback about writing tasks
Results
‘Getting advice about extracurricular activities that can help English learning’

Evaluation
► self-criticism about being passive by some teachers
► going to exhibitions
► distributing storybooks and publications in English
► suggesting some useful websites for language learning

Plan for Future
► directing students to extracurricular activities should be a part of the program
► sharing such activities with other colleagues
► using the Facebook page of the department more actively
Results
‘Technology usage in the lessons’

Evaluation
- limited to showing movies from VCR or doing listening activities from the text book CD
- internet-based activities is not at the desired level
- lack of infrastructure for technology
- teachers get tired of dealing with cable or connection problems
- computer access as a whole class is impossible

Plan for Future
- computer labs should be open for longer hours
- improvement on the infrastructure for wireless network and sustainable connection
Discussion

- students emphasized content, materials, and expectations from teachers
- instructors could build consensus over four items
- but no consensus on the item related to guidance to extra-curricular activities !!!
- students made their instructors to discuss this point indirectly
- teachers showed agreement on concrete, applicable, feasible suggestions for the improvement of the program
- teachers emphasized the importance of up to date textbooks, regular feedback, more various materials, labs and internet access and active direction to extra-curricular activities
- teacher and student agreement to a remarkable extent
**Evaluation Standards** (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluations, 1994)

- **Utility**
  - ongoing curriculum innovation process
  - serving the process of curriculum development
  - dissemination of the evaluation
  - relatively high participation (85% for the students and 70% for the instructors)

- **Accuracy**
  - carefully examination of the program and its components
  - the detailed analysis of the school content
  - data sources of the study were identified and discussed thoroughly and clearly in the evaluation report
  - questionnaire was piloted in another institution for the validity concern

- **Propriety**
  - permission of the institution administration
  - voluntary based participation
  - filling in a consent form
  - the instructors were not forced to answer any question
  - each unique idea was respectfully welcomed with no judgment
  - disclosure of findings was achieved by submitting the evaluation report to the instructors and the school administration

- **Feasibility**
  - school was feasible in terms of its access and transportation
  - cost effective
  - school administration supported the evaluation costs
Conclusion

- The aim was to contribute to the process of curriculum development in the upcoming academic year
- The results indicated that this study might serve this aim and be a helpful source for this curriculum development process
  - content of the textbooks needed revision
  - extra time for various materials usage
  - accessible computer labs
  - arrangement of office hours
- An Empowerment example where students and teachers raised their voices
References


Thanks for your attention

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