PENNSTATE

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Program Evaluation

Can I capture information from interaction in a workshop as evaluation data?

PA EXAMPLE

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Experiential Evaluation

EXTENSION'S INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Extension educators utilize many methods to teach. A demonstration plot on farms and demonstration kitchens provides an active learning opportunity with great face validity because participants can witness the implementation as well as the results of a recommended management or nutrition practice (Kolb, 1984; Boyle, 1981). A lecture and PowerPoint presentation provide a learning opportunity also, although a more passive one if not combined with another method such as small group discussions. Today *eXtension* offers information on-line along with an opportunity for participants to email a question to an expert, making *eXtension* a more active learning environment. Extension educators also use other methods to provide active learning, and one of the most frequent is a round robin interaction process that has many names, here referred to as **ROUND ROBIN INTERACTION**.

In a program where there are multiple workshops over time, educators often use the **ROUND ROBIN INTERACTION** process beginning with the second workshop as an opportunity for participants to report on the recommended practices they have tried since the last workshop. Participants also talk about the success and problems they encountered in implementing those practices. The educator keeps the objective of the interaction focused.

ROUND ROBIN INTERACTION has many educational benefits. Not only does it create an opportunity for each participant to reflect on what she/he has learned, an important step in the learning process (Boyle, 1981), it provides an opportunity for other participants in the program to learn about the reality of implementing that practice (Kolb, 1984). **ROUND ROBIN INTERACTION** provides the educator with insights on how to improve the presentation of those practices in future. This interactive learning process has proven especially useful for educators implementing a program in which the participants need to *apply principles and guidelines to their situation* such as programs in landscaping, farm financial management, ag safety, leadership, communication, parenting, coalition building, teen council, and diversity.

THE CHALLENGE OF EVALUATION

Using **ROUND ROBIN INTERACTION** produces a lot of good information. That information has the potential to provide evaluation data. But how?

One approach is to integrate unobtrusive evaluation by the educator while the **ROUND ROBIN INTERACTION** is taking place (Webb et al., 2000; Serrow, 1998). As participants report back to the group about the particular skill or practice that they have tried since the last workshop, the educator records what they say on a simply designed **EDUCATOR RECORD**. The scientific challenge is to capture what they say in a systematic, quantitative way.

To create an **EDUCATOR RECORD**, you need to identify

- the educational objectives of the program, and
- the evidence needed to capture what progress has been made in reaching the objective.

Below is an **EDUCATOR RECORD** from one successful program along with guidelines on how to

- create it
- use it to collect evaluation data
- summarize data from it and
- create one type of impact statement from the data.

PA EXAMPLE

Extension Educator Dana Ekey from Warren County integrated an **EDUCATOR RECORD** into his program, *Getting Your Product into their Shopping Basket,* a module on how to use the 4-P's of marketing to develop a marketing strategy. This module is part of a new curriculum for *Annie's Project* developed by Penn State Cooperative Extension and PaWAgN and funded by SARE. The program is a response to the needs of women farmers in northeast United States.

How to Create and Use an **EDUCATOR RECORD** to Collect Evaluation Data

- ☐ Keeping the educational objectives in mind, fill in the specific skills or behaviors you want the participants to accomplish before the next workshop. Put them in the first row. In this example, they comprise a set of behaviors to reduce financial risk through marketing. See **EDUCATOR RECORD** below.
- ☐ Fill in the names of the participants in the first column.
- ☐ As each participant conveys to the other participants in the workshop, what skills or practices he/she has tried and how it worked, unobtrusively place a check mark in the appropriate box under the correct skill or practice. This record is for the educator's use.

EDUCATOR RECORD

NAME OF PARTICIPANT	IDENTIFIED THE TARGET MARKET	IDENTIFIED THE PRODUCT	DEVELOPED A PROMOTION STRATEGY	DEVELOPED A PRICING STRATEGY	DEVELOPED A PLACEMENT STRATEGY	TOTAL PER PARTICIPANT	EDUCATOR GOAL
Linda	✓	✓				2	
Fran	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	
Helen	✓	✓	✓			3	
Sara	✓	✓		✓		3	
Kim	✓	✓				2	
Sage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	
TOTAL PER SKILL OR PRACTICE	6	6	3	3	2		
Educator Goal							

How to Summarize Data from an **EDUCATOR RECORD** and Use It

- ☐ Add across the row for each person, placing the total in the right hand total column. Those totals provide the educator with the total number of skills or practices for each participant. That tally allows the educator to compare how one person has done compared to the others in the workshop.
- ☐ Add up each column, placing the total on the bottom row. Those totals provide the educator with the total number of participants who have tried each skill or practice. That tally tells the educator how that skill or practice compares with other ones the educator has taught. If many in the workshop have not tried some of the skills or practices, the educator might think about why that was so and change how that skill or practice is taught in future.
- ☐ An **EDUCATOR RECORD** can also provide results that are easy to interpret for stakeholders. An impact statement from a workshop of 15, typical for this hands-on program could read: "As a result of the Marketing Risk module, 68 percent of the participants tried three or more recommended practices within one month of the program." That's a solid impact to report for such an easy evaluation for both the educator and participant.

OTHER ADVANTAGES

This evaluation is versatile. It can also be designed for the workshop in which the recommendations are first presented. In this context, participants would be asked to tell the group in the **ROUND ROBIN INTERACTION** what recommended skills or practices they intend to try before the next workshop detailing how they plan to apply the principles they have learned to their own situation.

DISADVANTAGES

- In the PA EXAMPLE above, the evaluation collects data on whether (or not) the participant tried one or more of the recommended skills or practices. This evidence was sufficient to measure the progress made in reaching this program's objective. What was not measured was the extent of implementation or the degree of the quality of the implementation of each skill or practice.

- The Extension educator needs to be a good listener and facilitator to keep the interaction focused. Extension educators have these skills.

- This evaluation can be used successfully with a small number in the workshop, about 10 to 15, typical of the program above.

SUMMARY

► If you, as an educator

want to know which recommended practices have been tried since the last workshop, and

want to create a learning opportunity where other participants learn from each other's experience, use **ROUND ROBIN INTERACTION.**

► If you, as an evaluator

want to capture the interaction as evaluation data, use an **EDUCATOR RECORD**.

REFERENCES

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Webb, E.J. Campbell, D.T., Schwartz, R.D., Sechrest, L. Unobtrusive Measures. 2000. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Pub.

For further information, please contact Nancy Ellen Kiernan (nekiernan@psu.edu).