

## INTRODUCTION

The definition for evaluation refers to ‘*form an idea of the amount, number, or value of; assess*’. Valuing something can be personal. We do it ourselves to a variety of products and services: it can also be highly subjective, as what appeals to one person may have little value to another. However, consider definitions given in the Oxford English Dictionary for ‘value’:

*‘The regard that something is held to deserve; importance or worth. Material or monetary worth. The worth of something compared to its price. (Values) principles or standards of behaviour. Estimate the value of. Consider to be important or beneficial.’*

The dictionary also defines ‘value judgement’ as: ‘*an assessment of good or bad in terms of one’s standards or priorities*’. Therefore, when we are evaluating we need to be conscious of the following factors:

- Have a clear idea of what you propose to evaluate.
- The means of assessment is to be used.
- Who attaches importance to the evaluation?
- What benefits are to be expected from the evaluation?
- Whose values are of importance?
- Who will take action that is based on the results of evaluation?

These are examples of concerns - the sort that we may share with other training professionals and people involved in the administration and funding of training. It’s easy to voice subjective opinions about institutions, courses, trainers, funding agencies and our own anecdotal experiences, but this rarely leads to worthwhile conclusions and action. Because many of these opinions are subjective, they lack substantive data and usually they are not expressed with any clear purpose. Also, they do not provide a suitable basis for making decisions about the effective and efficient use of resources.

## ESTABLISHING A BASIS FOR EoT

Once the concept of evaluation is examined in detail, and related to training in the Indian public sector, it’s evident that we are dealing with a highly complex situation. There are many areas to evaluate training - but which ones are of value? There are many people involved in public sector training - so who will do the evaluation? Also, there are many techniques for evaluation - so which should be used? Having done evaluation, what will be done with the results?

Making further points and asking more questions simply increases complications, without necessarily offering a way forward - it would be futile to attempt a definitive solution. What we are proposing is to establish a framework within which EoT can be developed and carried out. The framework is based on the concepts of evaluation suggested by Mark Easterby-Smith, and A C Hamblin and D L Kirkpatrick. Figure 1 illustrates how their concepts can be combined to create a common, and a generic framework for evaluating public sector training.

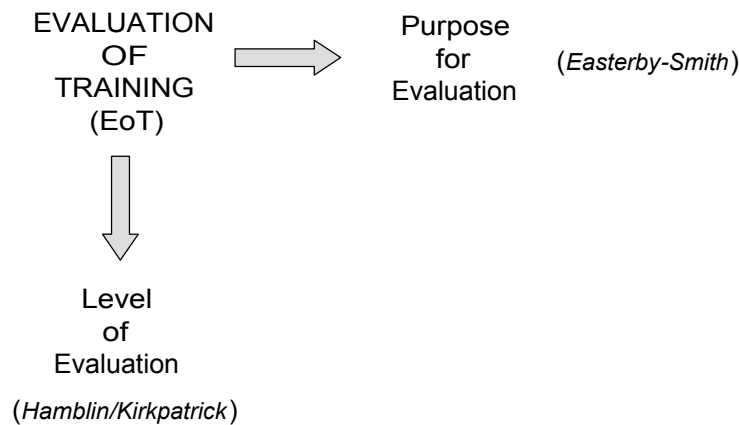


Fig.1

Figure 1 shows that a framework for the evaluation of training can be developed using two dimensions. The horizontal dimension, called the **Purpose for Evaluation**, is based on the concepts of Easterby-Smith and the vertical dimension, **Level of Evaluation**, on those of Hamblin and Kirkpatrick, as described in Part 2 of the EoT distance learning material.

#### PURPOSE FOR EVALUATION

**Learning** Processes - Focussing attention on the processes used to create optimum conditions for people to learn and develop.

**Proving** Learning and Development - Confirming the worth, value and impact of training in respect to individual, job and organisational performance.

**Improving** Learning and Development - Examining the quality and relevance of training to enable effective decisions to be made about performance improvement initiatives.

**Monitoring** Learning and Development - Ensuring effective, efficient and comparative use is made of available resources.

#### LEVEL OF EVALUATION

1. **Reaction** - A trainee's reactions to learning activities, such as pace, content and relevance.
2. **Learning** - A trainees' accomplishments in respect to satisfying training needs.
3. **Job Performance** - Changes in a trainee's job performance following training
4. **Results Achieved** - Benefit to an organisation following changes in job performance.

The matrix below in Figure 2 shows how both Easterby-Smith's '*purposes*' can be associated with Kirkpatrick/Hamblin's '*levels*'. When either accepting an EoT task, or specifying such a task for others, it will be important to clarify the primary focus of attention for evaluation. If this is not done a vague, poorly focussed EoT may not provide the information required. In addition, if the specification is too broad, it is likely to take some time to complete and incur considerable costs.

<b>EoT MATRIX</b>	<b>Learning Processes</b>	<b>Proving Learning &amp; Development</b>	<b>Improving L&amp;D Interventions</b>	<b>Monitoring Learning &amp; Development</b>
<b>Level 1</b> Reaction	L-1	P-1	I-1	M-1
<b>Level 2</b> Learning Outcomes	L-2	P-2	I-2	M-2
<b>Level 3</b> Job Performance	L-3	P-3	I-3	M-3
<b>Level 4</b> Results Achieved	L-4	P-4	I-4	M-4

Fig. 2

### USING THE EoT MATRIX

The matrix can be used to make decisions about EoT. It will enable you to discuss EoT requirements with stakeholders and negotiate an evaluation suited to their needs. A variety of situations will arise where an evaluation is required - for example:

- You need feedback on a pilot course you are running.
- A funding agency requires evaluation procedures for non-DLM packages.
- An EoT to justify continuing provision of an existing course.
- A system needs to be set up to evaluate a new course.
- A training institution wishes to carry out internal validation of its course provision.
- A funding agency requires a comparative efficiency report on a national calendar course.
- A client organisation requires external validation included with TNA recommendations.

Each of these examples puts a different focus on EoT, bearing in mind the need to provide information that is factual, relevant and sufficiently comprehensive to satisfy the requirements of stakeholders. It's important to recognise that EoT requires resources. Somebody needs the time and funding to do it. So, who should specify what's to be done? It's also recognising that information provided by EoT is used for making decisions - some of which may be of great significance. Inevitably, decisions will be made - but whether they are effective and relevant to the issues being evaluated depends on what is evaluated. There's a risk of the following situations occurring:

- There's no clear specification of requirements, so that an EoT report is likely to be vague and an inadequate basis for effective decision-making.
- A vague request for EoT allows people to provide information that confirms their beliefs, or points of view. Any difficulties or negative views can be obscured to ensure favourable decisions are made.
- Too much, irrelevant information is provided. This makes it difficult to have precise information that is relevant to the decisions that have to be made.
- Major funding resources are sanctioned without establishing clear, objective justification. If proposals for training are not evaluated, using agreed criteria, there's a risk of making wrong decisions.
- Training institutions focus on internal validation. They concern themselves with evaluating what they do, without regard to the outcomes of training - improved job performance.
- Although evaluating training, there's failure to link EoT to the government's policy of 'training for all'. What about evaluating the consequences of not training for those who need it to enable them to improve performance?

#### APPLYING EoT MATRIX REFERENCE CODES

Each cell in the EoT matrix shown in Figure 1 has a designated reference code. This defines a specific **purpose** for each cell in the matrix, and the **level** at which evaluation is to be done. By agreeing with stakeholders the use of certain cells you are defining the boundary and focus for an EoT task, the people involved and, by implication, specifying the tools and systems to be used.

Although it would be expensive and unrealistic to require all sixteen cells to be used for an EoT task, it's essential to consider the following factors:

- Cells at levels 2 and 3 are primarily concerned with training activities and are therefore useful for internal validation. This will be of particular interest to training institutions and for funding agencies who are monitoring institutional provision.
- At present, with EoT being done mainly by IRQ's, the focus is usually on cell L-1 - and to some extent cells immediately adjoining it. Thus, information available may have limited utility in deciding whether institutional training courses can be credited with helping to improve performance.
- Bearing in mind the needs of stakeholders, and the means by which information obtained can be communicated to them, selection of cells will require collaboration. It's unlikely that any individual can carry out an EoT task without the support and contribution from others.

If an EoT TMIS is established, then organisations such as funding agencies and training institutions will be required to specify what information they wish to import. In doing this, they may also have to devise suitable documentation and a communication system.

However, this may require putative exporters to be helped to develop EoT systems and tools to obtain it. For example, if an EoT is focussed on external validation, it would be unrealistic to expect a typical government section to provide information related to improved job performance. Therefore, specifying certain cells in the matrix imply initiatives to set up systems and procedures for the collection and dissemination of training or performance-related information. At present, almost certainly, such systems do not exist. Therefore, it's futile to specify cells without considering the means by which they can be 'activated'.