

## Overview of Common Evaluation Methods

(Adapted from Free Management Library: [http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl\\_eval.htm#anchor1585345](http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm#anchor1585345))

Method	Description	Purposes	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaire	Series of written questions administered to individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gain insight into learner attitudes, outcomes about the program.</li> <li>-Elicit stakeholders' perceptions of outcomes.</li> <li>-Judge program performance.</li> <li>-Assess changes in program practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Can be completed anonymously.</li> <li>-Non-threatening</li> <li>-Inexpensive and easy to administer.</li> <li>-Easy to compare and analyze data.</li> <li>-Can be administered to large groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Not suitable for collecting in-depth info.</li> <li>-Does not get whole story.</li> <li>-Might not generate careful feedback.</li> <li>-Wording can bias respondents.</li> <li>-Requires careful writing and sampling.</li> <li>-Impersonal.</li> <li>-Response rates.</li> </ul>
Interview	Interactions with individuals to gather extended responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gain insight into attitudes and perceptions.</li> <li>-Capture and describe complex processes like learning or teaching.</li> <li>-Elicit stakeholders' expectations and needs.</li> <li>-Understand learner experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Elicit full range and depth of info.</li> <li>-Develop relationship with interviewee.</li> <li>-Can be flexible, tailored to interviewee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Training interviewers, conducting interviews, and transcribing can be expensive and time-consuming.</li> <li>-Data analysis is complex</li> <li>-Results may not generalize</li> <li>-Interviewer can bias interviewee responses</li> </ul>
Focus Group	Group interaction directed and moderated by a facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gain insight into group perception of learning</li> <li>-Identify and understand needs and expectations of group.</li> <li>-Elicit group attitudes towards program.</li> <li>-Focus evaluation questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Can be efficient way of getting breadth and depth of information.</li> <li>-Can be used with wide range of topics, individuals, and settings.</li> <li>-Can convey key information on program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Training moderators, conducting sessions, and transcribing can be expensive and time-consuming.</li> <li>-Data analysis is complex.</li> <li>-Results may not generalize across individuals.</li> </ul>
Observation	Systematic observation using protocols, check-lists, ratings, and field notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Understand context, activities, people, and interactions.</li> <li>-Identify needs and areas of improvement.</li> <li>-Understand complex processes like teaching and learning.</li> <li>-“see” what people “say” and “do”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-View operations as they are occurring.</li> <li>-Adapt to events as they unfold.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Can be difficult to interpret seen behaviors.</li> <li>-Can be complex to categorize observations.</li> <li>-Observer can influence behaviors of observed.</li> <li>-Can be expensive and time-consuming.</li> </ul>
Document analysis	Examination of program-related documents (e.g., syllabi, learning outcomes, webpage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Examine trends, patterns, and consistency in program.</li> <li>-Identify gaps in curriculum.</li> <li>-Gain insight into program and its history.</li> <li>-Preliminary study for other methods (surveys, interviews, etc).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provides comprehensive and historical information.</li> <li>-Does not interrupt routine of a program.</li> <li>-Information already in existence.</li> <li>-Few biases about the information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Documents or materials may be incomplete or missing.</li> <li>-Data is restricted to what already exists.</li> <li>-Does not evaluate current staff or client opinion, needs, or satisfaction.</li> <li>-Can be time consuming.</li> </ul>
Case Studies	Intense investigation of a program, class, individual using multiple methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Document what actually happened.</li> <li>-Track perceptions, attitudes, behavior.</li> <li>-Understand individuals' needs &amp; expectations</li> <li>-Identify obstacles to program implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Fully depicts an individual's experience in a program, a class, etc.</li> <li>-Powerful means to portray program to outsiders.</li> <li>-Can generate thorough understandings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Time-consuming to collect, organize, describe, and analyze.</li> <li>-Represents depth of information rather than breadth.</li> <li>-Multiple methods require training</li> </ul>
Assessment	Systematic gathering of information about student learning (e.g., portfolios, OPI, in-class tests)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Examine student achievement of outcomes.</li> <li>-Ascertain extent to which programs meet goals.</li> <li>-Understand student progress within program.</li> <li>-Judge program effectiveness.</li> <li>-Feedback to teachers, students, admin.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Can compare students' performance to each other (NRT).</li> <li>-Can assess the degree of student achievement on a priori set goals (CRT).</li> <li>-Can direct teaching and encourage learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Developing reliable, valid, and practical language tests is difficult.</li> <li>-Time consuming to create meaningful assessment rubrics and criteria.</li> <li>-Scoring can be labor, training intensive.</li> <li>-Good understanding of various assessment tools are needed to match them to purposes.</li> </ul>

## Methodology Resources

### TOOLS & GUIDES

Foreign Language Program Evaluation Project (FLPEP) site: <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/evaluation>

### QUESTIONNAIRES

Recommended text:

Brown, J. D. (2001). *Using surveys in language programs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Example L2 evaluation:

Iwai, T., K. Kondo, D. J. Lim, G. E. Ray, H. Shimizu, & J.D. Brown. (1999). *Japanese language needs analysis 1998-1999* (NFLRC Network #13). Honolulu: Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center, University of Hawai 'i.

Useful website:

[http://www.engin.umich.edu/teaching/assess\\_and\\_improve/handbook/indirect/surveys.html](http://www.engin.umich.edu/teaching/assess_and_improve/handbook/indirect/surveys.html)

### INTERVIEWS

Recommended text:

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Example L2 evaluation:

Pawan, F., & Thomalla, T. G. (2006). Making the invisible visible: A responsive evaluation study of ESL and Spanish language services for immigrants in a small rural county in Indiana. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(4), 683-705.

Useful website(s):

Preparing an interview protocol: [http://oerl.sri.com/module/mod6/m6\\_p1.html](http://oerl.sri.com/module/mod6/m6_p1.html)

Administering interviews: [http://oerl.sri.com/module/mod7/m7\\_p1.html](http://oerl.sri.com/module/mod7/m7_p1.html)

### FOCUS GROUPS

Recommended text:

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Example L2 evaluation:

Dassier, J-L. P., & Powell, W. (2001). Formative foreign language program evaluation: Dare to find out how good you really are. In C. C. Maurice (Ed.), *The Odyssey Continues: Dimension 2001*. Selected Proceedings of the Joint Conference of the SCLT and SCFLTA (pp. 91-110). GA: Valdosta State University.

Useful website:

<http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/focus.htm>

### OBSERVATIONS

Recommended reading:

Richards, K. (2003). Observation. In K. Richards, *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL* (pp. 104-171). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Example L2 evaluation:

Llosa, L., & Slayton, J. (forthcoming). Using program evaluation to inform and improve the education of young English language learners in U.S. schools. *Language Teaching Research*, 12(4).

Useful website:

<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-5.pdf>

### DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Recommended reading:

Miller, G. (1997). Contextualizing texts: Studying organizational texts. In G. Miller & Dingwall, R. (Eds.), *Context and method in qualitative research* (pp. 77-91). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Example L2 evaluation:

Purpura, J. E., & Graziano-King, J. (2004). Investigating the foreign language needs of professional school students in international affairs: A case study. *Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 1-33.

Useful website:

<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/doc-analysis.php>

### ASSESSMENT

Recommended text:

Brown, J. D. (2005). *Testing in language programs* (revised, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents..

Example L2 evaluation:

Delett, J. S., Barnhardt, S., & Kevorkian, J. A. (2001). A framework for portfolio assessment in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34(6), 559-568.

Useful website:

Comprehensive list of outcomes assessment practices in Higher Education: <http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/resource.htm>

### CASE STUDIES

Recommended text:

Duff, P. (2008). *Case study research in applied linguistics*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Example L2 evaluation:

Stephens, P. (2005). Adult EFL program development: Facilitators and impediments. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Capella University, online. .

Useful website:

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/tobacco/documents/eval/ProgramEvaluation.pdf>