



**CALIFORNIA SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION  
CENTER**

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE

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***Steps in Designing Embedded Evaluations***

*(Cindy Parry & Jane Berdie, April 2004)*

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**STEP 1: IDENTIFY PURPOSE**

*Criteria*

Several purposes for the evaluation may be chosen. The most common include:

- providing feedback for course improvement,
- demonstrating that training has increased skill levels of participants (either overall in aggregate, or individual skill levels), and
- demonstrating that participants are meeting a competency standard (again either in aggregate or individually).

Different purposes have different design and resource implications so it is important to clarify them early. For example, demonstrating that participants increased their skill levels as a result of attending training requires two parallel sets (in content and difficulty) of evaluation materials that can be used as pre and post assessments. This requires more classroom time for evaluation and more development time for the evaluation materials than a situation in which the assessment can be done once as a posttest, as when the purpose is to see if the individual or group has met a competency standard.

*Roles*

Curriculum developers, training administrators, trainers, subject matter experts and other relevant stakeholders take the lead to define the desired purpose and outcomes for the evaluation. The evaluator provides information and assistance as needed to support the decision making.

**STEP 2: IDENTIFY AN APPROPRIATE COMPETENCY**

*Criteria*

Appropriate competencies are any that deal with teaching a skill or behavior. Some examples are: testifying in court hearings, assessing family interaction patterns, using age-appropriate interviewing strategies, writing treatment plans, and using techniques for effective time management.

*Roles* Curriculum developer, trainer and evaluator jointly choose competencies. Curriculum developer and trainer take the lead.

### **STEP 3: REVIEW CURRICULUM AND OBSERVE TRAINING**

- Criteria*
1. Does the content provide the right information and in sufficient breadth and depth to support development of the skill?
  2. Does the written curriculum follow a skills teaching model that includes explanation, demonstration, practice, feedback and discussion?
  3. Is there enough direction to the trainer to support consistent, standard delivery?
  4. Is the curriculum delivered as written?

*Roles* Evaluator reviews and observes with the needs of the evaluation in mind. Curriculum developer, trainer and evaluator jointly determine what changes, if any, are needed.

### **STEP 4: IDENTIFY/CONSTRUCT AN APPROPRIATE EXERCISE**

- Criteria*
1. Does it address a skill competency?
  2. Is the exercise covering the practice portion of the skills teaching model (step 3)?
  3. Is the skill adequately taught?
    - a. Does the design include the full 5 steps of the model for teaching skills?
    - b. Is enough time provided to do each step adequately?
  4. Is the task standardized to provide a common experience and basis for feedback and evaluation? (e.g. Is a common case used to develop a case plan so that the same elements might be expected to appear and scoring can be based on those expectations?)

A “no” to any of these questions does **not** mean that the task should not be considered for embedded evaluation, but all of these points will need to be addressed and some modifications made in order to use it successfully.

*Roles* Curriculum developer, trainer and evaluator jointly choose exercise and make modifications. Evaluator takes the lead on structuring the exercise to be “evaluation friendly” and trainers/developers ensure that learning objectives are still met.

### **STEP 5: DESIGN THE EMBEDDED EVALUATION**

- Criteria*
1. What information is desired and what purposes will it be used for?

*Purpose gets at whether you want:*

- Feedback for course improvement
- Evidence of overall course effectiveness, or

- Evidence that individuals have mastered the skill

*Purpose also determines whether you will need an:*

- Individual or group response from the exercise
- Data from a sample vs. every trainee
- Anonymous responses vs. confidential responses
- Data collection pre and post training or post only

2. What procedures will be used?
  - a) Who will conduct the evaluation?
  - b) Who will evaluate performance and provide feedback?
  - c) What instruments and instructions are needed for the trainer? Trainees?
  - d) How will data be collected and forwarded for analysis?

*Roles* Evaluator takes the lead. Agency administrator(s), training administrator, curriculum developer and trainer(s) make decisions regarding purpose and information desired. The trainer may also be asked to carry out procedures for conducting the evaluation listed under Step 2.

## **STEP 6: DEVELOP SCORING RUBRICS/EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS**

- Criteria*
1. What will adequate performance look like?
    - a. What are the dimensions (items),
    - b. What are the levels of performance for each item and how are these levels described (“anchors”)?
    - c. What is an acceptable level of performance for each item?, and
    - d. What is an acceptable overall level of performance (passing)?

*Roles* Evaluator takes the lead and designs instruments with input from the curriculum developer and trainer(s).

## **STEP 7: PILOT TEST THE EVALUATION**

- Criteria*
1. Is the evaluation being conducted as designed?
  2. Are the evaluation instruments reliable and valid?
  3. Have the persons who are scoring the instruments (e.g. trainer, a trainee taking the role of evaluator or evaluators themselves) and providing feedback to trainees been adequately trained?
  4. Has enough time been allotted to conduct the evaluation?
  5. Are trainees and the trainer(s) comfortable with the exercises and the evaluation tools and able to use them effectively?

*Roles* Evaluator takes the lead and conducts statistical analyses. Trainer(s) and trainees provide logistical and satisfaction feedback.

**STEP 8: CONDUCT THE EVALUATION**

*Criteria* Is the evaluation being conducted as designed?

*Roles* As agreed to in step 5, the design phase.

**STEP 9: ANALYZE DATA AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK**

*Criteria* 1. Have the evaluation questions been answered?  
2. Have the findings been communicated clearly and to all stakeholders?

*Roles* Evaluator produces this with stakeholders having a chance to review and comment.