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EDAE 6353: Evaluation and Assessment in Adult Education (21W) Section A

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What have I learned in the last few units of the Evaluation and Assessment in Adult Education course (EDAE 6353)? This is my final course before beginning my capstone which ultimately leads to my graduation with my Master of Education in Adult Education. This made this course not only important but exciting, I have learned a few valuable concepts, skills, and considerations to take away. I have found that in the last few units there were many opportunities for me to discover new methods of evaluation and assessments. Recognizing that evaluation and assessment in teaching is beneficial both to the teacher and the student, I have absorbed the information in this course whole-heartedly. Here I may start with my self-assessment, a practice that is meant to provide the instructor the opportunity to determine their own development and areas for continued learning (Mackeracher, 2012)

In unit five, there is the expectation that I can discuss unique considerations when evaluating institutions and consider the culture of evaluation in my own organization. To ensure programs are maintained and resources not wasted on disorganization and ineffectual programs, ongoing evaluation is necessary. Evaluation in this instance is meant to monitor progress of the programs' goals, determine if the program modules are producing the desired outcomes and find

opportunities for continuous improvement. When I am considering the evaluation of a program within my organization the first things that I think of to assess are the mode of delivery, the learning modules and how they fit with the outcomes (Spaulding, 2014). I also consider the number of students in a class as that changes the learning environment as well. In a smaller class there is more time for students to ask questions and have conversations regarding the materials they are learning.

According to Bollenback (2014) some institutions are considering hiring business intelligence specialist that can bring the assessments to the institution that will point them in the direction necessary to ameliorate their programs based on the needs of the students. A learning management system can be used by higher education institutions in all courses, regardless of modality of instruction. There are several benefits and concerns using a learning management system, one of the concerns is missing the gaps where that system has been used differently (Picciano, 2014). I have never personally used any sort of system, my assessment work is all done manually therefore, I cannot comment on the efficacy of the learning management systems.

Universities stay aware of the changes that are relevant to their programs and their sharing of current information by monitoring changes, advances, and improvements to knowledge, market trends, government, and institutional needs (Bentley et al., 2012). There are strategies used by the institutions to ensure that they are staying abreast of the information; recruiting educators that have relevant experience which ensures that the academics are connected and have contacts that enable them to maintain the most current educational materials.

They do this using several strategies. First, academic programmes recruit staff with relevant experience. This experience ensures that the academics are connected and have contacts that enable them to stay connected with trends. The design is iterative which makes using evaluation throughout the program a valid method of ensuring the courses. The use of formative versus summative evaluation can be decided before the evaluation takes place. It will depend on the type of information that is ultimately used to assess the program and when it is delivered to the managers (Spaulding, 2014).

After studying the differences between the assessment types, my preference is formative, meaning that the changes needed can be integrated into the curriculum as it goes. In my agency, evaluation is summative. Currently, we do not have any courses that are more than a day or two in length and everything is online. We have determined that the evaluation being summative is not as useful as it could be if it were formative regardless of the short length of the courses. The evaluation objective must be to improve performance with guidance and include suggestions on how to improve and meet the expected standards (Harm & Roebuck, 2010). Clear expectations and clarity of the issue are essential in providing useful formative assessment. Formative assessment uses feedback and opportunities to use that feedback, which enriches execution and success (Wiggins, 2012). One of the many designs for feedback is a 360-degree assessment, where data can be used to formatively assess student learning needs this information can be used to inform curriculum development (Ladyshevsky et al., 2015).

This method is used by the senior management in our agency when having their reviews done; however, it is not used on the remaining staff. I believe that this is the most useful type of

evaluation as it provides the feedback from several different perspectives. This offers the staff being evaluated a greater chance of finding the necessary resources to improve their work, learning, and their personal agency. We must also consider the ethics of assessment and evaluation. What we encounter in the practice of evaluation are ethical dilemmas, where we must make a complex judgment, choose between alternative courses of action, considering a multitude of factors – social, personal, political, cultural – that are pertinent in the particular context (Simons, 2006, p 243). Ethics in any instance is a code that is meant to educate the evaluator on common standards (Simons, 2006, p 249) thereby providing a more concise evaluation. In my agency we follow a strict code of ethics that drives all of our work including the evaluation of our programs, departments, staff and client participation within those.