
The Program Evaluation Toolbox

Using End-of-Meeting Questionnaires to Assess KOSA Change

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One of the most frequently used program evaluation tools is the end-of-meeting questionnaire. However, we miss an important opportunity to take full advantage of its utility when we fail to include questions related to whether program participants gained knowledge, changed their opinions, mastered a skill, or heightened their aspirations. Instead of asking questions related to program impact, we often ask questions about the adequacy of the facilities, quality of instruction, or relevancy of the content. While such questions provide us with important information needed to improve the program in the future, they provide little information about what happened as a result of the program. By changing the nature of the questions we ask on end-of-meeting questionnaires, we can gain insight into the impact our programs are actually making.

Limitations

It is important to realize that questionnaires which ask participants about what they learned or what they can now do as a result of a program do not truly test the program participants. What they believe they learned and what they actually learned may be different. Consequently some degree of caution is warranted when using questionnaires for assessing knowledge gain or skill acquisition. Although there may be times when testing of participants is required, it is often impractical or inappropriate. In such cases, the methods introduced here may prove useful. While somewhat limited in their ability to measure knowledge and skill acquisition, questionnaires can be very useful in determining opinion change or participant intentions to implement a new practice or behavior.

Question Format

On the next page of this publication, you will find examples of questions that can be incorporated into end-of-meeting questionnaires to assess changes in knowledge, opinions, skills, and aspirations. The examples are all forced-choice questions, where a potential respondent is presented with a set of choices from which they must select the most appropriate response.

Knowledge Gained

Below is an example of a question that can be used to assess whether or not program participants believe they gained knowledge as a result of participating in a program. A separate item can be added for each program topic.

Example: Please circle the word or phrase that best describes how much you learned about each of the topics listed below.

Control of broadleaf weeds.	Nothing	A Little	Quite A Bit	A Lot
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Opinions Changed

Sometimes, you will want to know how the opinions of participants changed as a result of their participation in a program. Here is an example of a question designed to assess opinion change.

Example: Please circle the word or phrase that best describes how your opinion has changed regarding each of the following practices.

Contributing to workplace savings plans.	No Change Or Less Positive	Slightly More Positive	Somewhat More Positive	Much More Positive
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Skills Acquired

Often it is either impractical or inappropriate to test participants to determine if they can perform a particular skill. When this is the case, questions designed to assess the participants' perceived degree of comfort in performing the skill may be appropriate.

Example: Please circle the word or phrase that best describes how comfortable you are with your ability to perform each of the following skills.

Introducing a speaker.	Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable
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Aspirations Heightened

The example below is designed to ascertain whether or not a program participant intends to make a behavioral change as a result of a program. An intent to take action is often the highest level of impact that can be documented immediately after conclusion of a program.

Example: Please circle the word or phrase that best describes how likely you are to do the following things within the next three months.

Screening for diabetes.	Probably Not	Maybe Quite Likely	Definitely
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Analyzing the Data

After the questionnaire has been administered, the data must be summarized in some manner so that it can be easily used by those individuals who have an interest in the program's performance. Let us say, for example, that ten people participate in a program on home lawn care. On the final night of the program, participants each complete an end-of-meeting questionnaire that contains the question on the previous page relating to the control of broadleaf weeds. The ten participants respond as follows:

John	A Little	1
William	A Lot	3
Holly	Quite A Bit	2
Bob	A Lot	3
Kelly	A Lot	3
Sam	A Lot	3
Chris	Nothing	0
Ben	A Lot	3
Rick	A Lot	3
Cathy	Quite A Bit	2
	Total	23

There are several ways to summarize the data presented above. One way is to simply calculate the percentage of participants who selected each response category. For example, in the data set above, 60 percent (six participants) said they learned *A Lot*, 20 percent (two participants) said they learned *Quite A Bit*, 10 percent (one participant) said they learned *A Little*, and 10 percent (one participant) said they learned *Nothing*. In all, 90 percent reported gaining knowledge regarding the control of broadleaf weeds.

Another way of summarizing data is to convert each response to a numerical score. In the example above, the far right column represents the code number corresponding to the actual response made by the participant (*Nothing* = 0, *A Little* = 1, *Quite A Bit* = 2, and *A Lot* = 3). By adding up the total and dividing by the number of people who answered the question, we can calculate a mean score. In this case, the mean score is 2.3 (23 divided by 10). This mean score tells us that, on the average, the participants learned quite a bit. Mean scores also allow us to compare how much participants learned about one topic with how much they learned about other topics that were addressed by the program.

Communicating the Results

There are multiple vehicles for communicating results of evaluation projects to stakeholders and decision-makers. Regardless of the format of the report it is important to be as thorough as possible in explaining the procedures by which the data were collected and summarized. For example, if actual responses are converted to numerical scores for the purpose of calculating means, it is important to tell the reader how the responses were coded. A mean score of 2.3 means little unless the reader knows the highest and lowest possible score and what the score represents. If percentages are used, it is often helpful to also provide the actual number of people who responded a particular way along with the percentages. At the very least, provide the total number of people who completed questionnaires.

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