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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The ADDIE model provides high-level guidance for the development and revision of programs of all sorts, including GXP training programs. The phases of the ADDIE model are analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate. These phases are sequential; each depends upon the successful completion of the preceding phase.

The analysis phase of the ADDIE model identifies a performance gap that can be addressed by a training program (i.e., a set of training and assessment materials, a qualified trainer, and a training audience). A performance gap is a discrepancy between a standard stipulated in a standard operating procedure (SOP) and some employee performance (1).

This is followed by the design phase, where a carefully planned approach, documented in a training outline, is prepared to address the performance gap. Also, behavioral objectives are specified in the design phase (2).

If management approves the design, the development phase comes next, where the training program—the training materials and the assessment materials—is developed to address the performance gap. There are four components of the development phase: identifying the objectives of the training module, based on the relevant operational SOP and the training outline; preparing the training materials, with special attention to structured on the job training (SOJT) materials and e-learning materials; preparing the assessment materials; and assembling these materials into the training program (3).

The implementation phase of the ADDIE model follows, where the training materials and assessment materials are rolled out, either provisionally in a pilot implementation (e.g., a proof of concept study) or in a final implementation. The notion that this phase may be a “pilot” of the training module, rather than just a finalized rollout, highlights the iterative feature of the model (4).

The evaluation phase follows implementation. In the case of a pilot implementation, the results of the program evaluation can be fed back, closing the loop, facilitating further refinement of the training program. This is called a “formative evaluation.” As Robert Gagné and Leslie Briggs have stated (5), “Formative evaluations provide data on the basis of which to revise and improve the materials, the lesson plans, the performance tests, and indeed the operation of the entire instructional system.” If the evaluation shows that the training module has shortcomings, those shortcomings are fed back to be analyzed again. Further design and development efforts follow, until the module meets organizational needs. Thereupon there is a final implementation, and an evaluation that documents the extent to which the training program meets the
organization’s needs. This is called a “summative evaluation.” “Summative evaluation is usually undertaken when development of an instructional entity is in some sense completed, rather than ongoing. Its purpose is to permit conclusions to be drawn about how well the instruction has worked,” state Gagne and Briggs (6).

The ADDIE model can be conceptualized as having two paths out of the development phase. One path leads to pilot implementation, followed by formative evaluation, from which a feedback loop allows further analysis, design, and development. At some point, determined by management, the training program is judged to be ready for the other path. As Gagne and Briggs (7) have pointed out, “There is no standard number of formative evaluations that small components or segments or the entire system undergo. The number depends on the budgets and time available, the degree of excellence set as the system design objective, and the total circumstances surrounding the project.” The program then moves to final implementation, followed by summative evaluation (see Figure 1).

There are several ways to conceptualize the ADDIE model at this point. One is to include pilot implementation and formative evaluation within the development phase. When the pilot and the formative evaluation are completed, the program moves into the (final) implementation phase, followed by the (summative) evaluation phase. Another conceptualization is to include two types of implementation, pilot and final, within the implementation phase, and two types of evaluation, formative and summative, within the evaluation phase. These different conceptualizations bear on the logic of the ADDIE model, but not on the process of program development.

As a final introductory point, it is clear that management has one very significant role in a formative evaluation; that is specifying the overall goal, and level of effort, for the evaluation. What might be management’s response to evaluative findings gathered during the formative evaluation of a program? The response of the program designers and developers to evaluative findings is clear; they will consider making program improvements based on the evaluative findings. What about the response of management?

FEEDBACK VERSUS RESEARCH DESIGN

The question often arises in the formative evaluation of a training program or other program: what is the effect of the dissemination of evaluative findings during the life of the program? It is often assumed that the “experimental design” dictates that intervention (e.g., training materials, training “script,” etc.) must remain invariant during the program cycle. Friedman, Furberg, and DeMets (8) state that a clinical trial study protocol “should be developed before the beginning of subject enrollment and should remain essentially unchanged except perhaps for minor updates. Careful thought and justification should go into any changes. Major revisions which alter the direction of the trial should be rare.” If preliminary findings were fed back, this would allow a modification of the training materials and other aspects of the program, thus invalidating design and the evaluative research findings.

This position has until recently been held regarding clinical trials in the pharmaceutical industry. As Derek Lowe (9) has expressed it, in a clinical trial, you “establish your ‘null hypothesis’ (typically that your drug is no better than a placebo or the current standard of care) and you start collecting data, in the hopes that you’ll fail to prove it. Everything stays carefully blinded. The investigators have no idea what they’re administering and the patients have no idea what they’re taking until a predetermined endpoint—to do otherwise would destroy the statistics.” Notice the significance of “blinding” in

Figure 1: The two paths of the ADDIE model
clinical trials, particularly “double blinding,” where both subjects and investigators are unaware of the assigned intervention—whereby findings for program improvement cannot straightforwardly be fed back (10). In contrast to the logic of blinding, the actual conduct of blinding in randomized clinical trials (RCTs) has been assessed in several recent studies, including Boutron et al. (11) and Fergusson et al. (12).

This position has been held by researchers outside the field of clinical trials as well: Michael Brooks (13) states that continuous feedback of evaluative findings “. . . has the unfortunate effect of tossing a monkey-wrench into the research design constructed at the program’s outset.” Daniel Stufflebeam, a leading figure in the evaluation community, describes (14) the development of his own position, “I had to reject basically everything I had thought necessary for evaluating educational projects, including behavioral objectives, experimental designs, and standardized tests. Instead, I advised educators to key evaluations to provide information for decision making.”

The argument against the “experimental method” is a methodological, not a practical argument (15). The critics of experimental design are speaking of characteristics inherent to evaluation theory that account for a sharply limited utility. The critics are not suggesting that formative evaluation would be more successful if the experimental designs were more precisely constructed, if randomization of subjects were more diligently pursued, or if experimental methods were more carefully practiced. According to the critics, experimental method in program evaluation, especially RCT, is defective.

The importance of this matter can hardly be overstressed. As indicated above, feedback of evaluative findings is of vital importance for improving the process in training and development. If there is an incompatibility between feedback and the “experimental method,” one obviously must be abandoned. But to abandon the former, evaluators forego their mandate to provide timely and relevant information for program adaptation. To abandon the latter, they seriously limit the research techniques they have available for evaluating the program; instead of Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley’s famous “Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs,” the formative evaluator is restricted to just the quasi-experimental designs and even more inferior approaches, such as “pre-experimental designs” (16). As Green states, “RCTs are the gold standard of treatment trial methodology, and to deprive complex (often psychosocial) interventions of their imprimatur is potentially to undervalue these areas in an evidence-based climate (17).” Moreover, this limitation sacrifices what rigor the evaluators’ discipline has. We find, however, that the critics of “experimental design” have misplaced their criticism.

The next section will give an existence proof that formative evaluation can be conducted within the framework of experimental design, and evaluative findings can at the same time be provided for improvement of the training program. This means that the full range of evaluative approaches is available to the formative evaluator, including experimental designs (i.e., RCT) as well as quasi-experimental designs.

THE GOOD NEWS, PART 1
It is not the case that training intervention must remain invariant. Program enhancement, in light of feedback from a formative evaluation, can take place concurrently with an evaluation in the framework of the RCT experimental design. Of course, desirable modification practice does not (or should not) mean a hodgepodge array of “random” interventions resulting from poor program definition; this should have been preempted in the design phase of the ADDIE model. Nor should “random” interventions result from the capacity of those who implement training programs to understand adequate definitions; that should have been addressed in the implementation phase (18). It makes no difference, for the experimental method, whether an evaluative judgment of program ineffectiveness is available for program adaptation or not. It makes no difference, for the experimental method, whether changes in training intervention are implemented or not. Evaluators can fill their mandate for dissemination of timely data and concomitant programmatic change.

The evaluator can realize, based on an on-going program evaluation, that “training intervention G will not produce the desired results.” The intervention can be revised in the “middle of the stream,” so to speak, and evaluators can still complete their formative evaluation.
The dissemination of evaluative findings through an appropriate study monitoring committee, and a managerial reaction to such findings, enhancing the likelihood of program success, will not invalidate the evaluation effort, even though an initial judgment predicted program failure. Only a misunderstanding of the nature of evaluative research could foster the view that the training intervention is fixed.

Assume that an evaluation of a training program is underway. The program, in essence, takes a set of inputs and given conditions, Z, and by means of some process G, transforms the inputs into an output described by the dependent variable x. We assume x to be a behavior. The dependent variable may be a business measure, such as number of reworked batches, or an index, such as OSHA recordables. The evaluator is randomly assigning employees to control or treatment groups, manipulating variables, recording and communicating results, etc.

Thus behavior x is a function G of a complex state of affairs z, given by

\[ x = G(z). \]  \hspace{1cm} \text{[Equation 1]}

This says G and an index z of the set of independent variables Z are sufficient for the prediction of the dependent variable x, in the absence of dissemination of G or z. This can be represented by a two dimensional diagram (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Performance levels of hypothetical program.](image)

We note that for a given interval \([z(0), z(i)]\), x will have a range of \([x(o), x(i)]\). Thus z might be an index of prior training history, on-the-job experience, etc. and x, a measure of productivity such as unit output, impounded batches, or quantity reworked. The set Z would include such items as appear in the employee’s training history, etc. We assume throughout that the interval of x is continuous and closed.

**THE COEXISTENCE OF RCT AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS**

Consider the following scenario. G is the training and qualifying process, exemplified in a particular training program and including training materials, training “script,” etc. Through an appropriate channel such as the study monitoring committee, the program manager has discovered a credible RCT evaluation report indicating that some aspect of G was tending to increase the quantity of rework. Say this aspect was the hour in the shift (i.e., whether the training event occurs early in the shift or late). Say further that the manager would be held accountable for the increase of rework. Then the manager might react to the report and implement a change from G to G*. An example of such a change would be mandating all training programs be offered early in a shift. Then the output, rather than being x would be \(x^*\) (19).

Let a reaction function R be introduced, indicating the dependence of the actual outcome \(x^*\) on the program manager’s knowledge of the disseminated judgment (or prediction) of x. This is given by

\[ x^* = R(x) \]  \hspace{1cm} \text{[Equation 2]}

Given the relevant range \([x(o), x(i)]\), we can represent the reaction function by a two-dimensional diagram (see Figure 3).

With the variance of x through the range \(x(o)\) to \(x(i)\) will be associated a variance of \(x^*\) between \(x(o)^*\) and \(x(i)^*\). If R(x) is continuous over \([x(o), x(i)]\), and if R(x) is bounded (i.e., \(0 < R(x) < F\)) then by the generalized Brouwer Fixed-point Theorem there exists at least one x and one \(x^*\) such that, \(x = x^*\). Also, for \(x = x^*\), the system described by equations 1 and 2 is in equilibrium (20) (i.e., the manager will cease to react to x). Thus, for \(x = x^*\), that value of x is the correct public
prediction, as well as the correct formative evaluative judgment.

In this section, we have shown that formative evaluation can be conducted within the framework of experimental design, and evaluative findings can at the same time be provided to the manager of the training program that is being evaluated, via the study monitoring committee or another appropriate channel. This means that the full range of evaluative approaches is available to the formative evaluator, including not only quasi-experimental designs but experimental designs (i.e., RCT) as well.

THE GOOD NEWS, PART 2
The preceding material incorporated an existence proof, showing that under specified conditions, training program modification could take place in response to evaluative findings developed within an experimental design. The following questions can still be raised: What are the implications of this for evaluation practice? Does anyone care? The answer to these questions is yes.

Let us look at a methodologically analogous situation, that of clinical trials of investigational new drugs. There is a long history of interest in adaptive designs in clinical trials, dating from Abraham Wald’s pioneering researches in the 1940s (21). The US Food and Drug Administration has expressed interest in adaptive clinical trials, including response-adaptive designs for statistical experiments, where the accruing data from experiments—the observations—are used to adjust the experiment as it is being run (22). He goes on to say “the advantages of these approaches, rigorously designed, are becoming more evident, including among the ranks of our experts at FDA. It’s essential that we at the FDA do all we can to facilitate their appropriate use in modern drug development.” Gottlieb discusses several adaptive approaches to the design of experiments including the following:

- In an adaptive clinical trial, patient outcomes can be used as they become available to adjust the allocation of future patients or some other aspect of the study design
- A second type of adaptive trial design involves on-going assessment of the sample size, to avoid under- or over-allocation of patients (23)
- [Another includes] seamless designs that allow learning to be more iterative and less method-limited. That allow continuous discovery that isn’t defined by phases but rather by what we learn as we go (24).

Gottlieb acknowledges that “adaptive approaches are not a panacea to all of our challenges, and enabling them is not a sure thing. Adaptive procedures are more complicated to design and to analyze, and in some settings to show that the trial itself was set up wrong, in ways that only became clear after the data were unblinded. Did the numbers show that your dosage was suboptimal partway into a two-year trial? Too bad—you probably weren’t allowed to know that. Were several arms of your study obviously pointless from the start? Even if you knew, what could you do about it without harming the validity of the whole effort?” (22)
are more difficult to implement.” Moreover, he is well aware of “trepidation about the use of adaptive features and reluctance to consider a variety of enrichment and adaptive designs. In many cases, researchers are still unaware of the option to use adaptive designs because standard statistical courses and packages do not include them.” (op. cit.)

There are political and ethical issues here as well. “Purists will argue that changing a trial midway through a study somehow benefits pharmaceutical companies by potentially allowing them to manipulate results. Some worry that bias is more likely when results are known during the trial, compared with keeping trials blind,” notes Steve Zisson (26). Concrete proposals are under consideration to mitigate such worries (27).

Since FDA is interested in adaptive designs for the study of investigational new drugs, it is unlikely they would object to the use of adaptive designs in the formative evaluation of training programs. What works for clinical trials can just as well work for the evaluation of training initiatives.

Several uses of such adaptive designs include the following:
- The first step is to develop a formative evaluation plan for the training module, including an evaluation design, and any evaluative instruments
- The second step is to collect evaluative data as you begin to pilot the training module, including data from both the pilot trainees and from your training and development peers
- The third step is to review all the evaluative data you have gathered, in light of the statistical portion of the formative evaluation plan
- Then, prepare an evaluation report summarizing the evaluations; propose revisions to the training module
- Get the study monitoring committee as well as management approval of these revisions
- The sixth step is to utilize the feedback for program improvement
- Then, continue the pilot (with further adaptations as required), until management is satisfied that the training module meets the organization’s needs.

The essence of this process is the negotiation between the evaluator and program manager. This negotiation works towards a settlement that takes into account both methodological rigor on the one hand, and program goals and values on the other.

MANAGEMENT’S PREROGATIVE
Management has an overarching role in a formative evaluation. That role is to specify the overall goal, and level of effort, for the evaluation. What does management want from this evaluation? There is a range of possibilities here. Does management want the most credible evaluative report possible? Or does management want the most blatant problems in the pilot project to be corrected? The evaluator must negotiate with management to determine the actual goal.

Once management’s goal is set, the evaluator can recommend approaches to aspects of the formative evaluative design, such as the following:
- Parallel group or cross-over design
- Recruitment of trainees
- Random assignment
- Blinding
- Sample sizes
- Statistical analyses.

With recommendations of costs and benefits of each approach, management can decide between
the approaches. A memorandum of understanding between management and evaluator can then be prepared, including a statement of the level of effort that will be required to attain the goal that management has set.

At that point the evaluator can begin to plan the logistics of the formative evaluation. The primary audience for this evaluation will be the instructional designer who will make program revisions as warranted.

CONCLUSION
This article has reviewed the possibilities for formative evaluation of training programs as well as any other kind of program, within the framework of the ADDIE model. It can be concluded that the formative evaluation of training programs can utilize the full range of experimental and quasi-experimental designs, as well as any other approaches. In this paper, the possibilities of employing adaptive designs have been considered. Thereby, the data gathered in that evaluative effort can at the same time be made available to management, during the course of the training process, to allow decisions to be made about program improvement. FDA has recently expressed interest in the use of adaptive designs in clinical trials.

This does not mean that the evaluator must use any particular design or approach. While the full range of methods and techniques is available, the decision about which of those techniques and methods will depend upon two factors. One is management’s goal for the evaluation; the other is the needs of the main audience of the formative evaluation, namely the needs of the instructional designer who will revise the training program. The formative evaluation and re-piloting of the training module can continue until management has decided that the needs of the organization have been met. Once the formative evaluation has been completed and all necessary changes to the module have been made, it is time to move to final implementation of the training program.

ENDNOTES
5. Robert Gagné and Leslie Briggs, Principles of Instructional Design (2nd ed) NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston (1979), p. 37; see also p. 290: “Evidence of an instructional program’s worth is sought for use in making decisions about how to revise the program while it is being developed. In other words, the evidence collected and interpreted during the phase of development is used to form the instructional program itself.”
some of the flexibility managers have experienced previously.”

14. Daniel S. Stufflebeam, “The CIPP Model for Evaluation: An Update,” Presented at the 2003 Annual Conference of the Oregon Program Evaluators Network (OPEN), Portland, OR, October 3, 2003. See also his early “The Use and Abuse of Evaluation in Title III,” Theory into Practice, Vol. VI: 3, 1967, p. 128: “the application of experimental design to evaluation problems conflicts with the principle that evaluation should facilitate the continual improvement of a program. Experimental design prevents rather than promotes changes in the treatment because treatments cannot be altered in process if the data about differences between treatments are to be unequivocal.”

Subsequently, in “MetaEvaluation,” Occasional Paper Series, No. 3. Kalamazoo, MI: Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University, 1975, p. 54, he maintained that “experimental design often would not provide timely feedback for decision making.” See also his “Evaluation Checklists,” American Journal of Evaluation, Vol. 22, Issue 1, Winter 2001, p. 72: “almost everything I had learned about experimental design, measurement, and statistics was largely irrelevant to evaluating new, heavily funded, but ill-defined projects […] Gradually, I began to evolve an approach to evaluation that seemed to work […] The approach was directed to designing evaluations that would address stakeholders’ evaluative questions and provide them a flow of timely, relevant information.”


24. See also Paul Gallo, op. cit., pp. 281-282.

25. See also Paul Gallo, op. cit., pp. 280-281.


27. See Paul Gallo, op. cit., pp. 278-279.


ARTICLE ACRONYM LISTING

ADDIE: Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate
FDA: US Food and Drug Administration
RCT(s): Randomized Clinical Trial(s)
SOJT: Structured On the Job Training
SOP(s): Standard Operating Procedure(s)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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