

What Makes an Effective Teacher?: One School's Journey to Self-discovery

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The Miami Valley School

Evaluation Project
2007-2009



Derivation of Action Evaluation

Action
Research

Assessment
& Evaluation

Action Evaluation



What is action research?

Action research is a cyclical, dynamic, and collaborative process in which people address social issues affecting their lives.

- Kurt Lewin

What is action research?




Action research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human processes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

- Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury



What is action research?


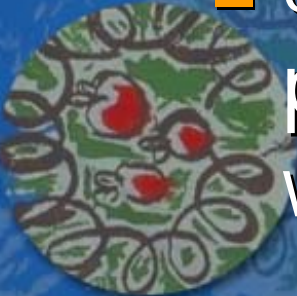

Participatory action research is a collaborative process in which the researcher works with community members to identify an area of concern to that community, generate knowledge about the issue, and plan and carry out actions meant to address the issue in some substantive way.



- Mary Brydon-Miller



Essential Components of Action Research

- collaboration among all parties (stakeholders)
 - identify an area of concern
 - inquiry-based exploration of that concern
 - cyclical – you continually evaluate progress and start the process anew when concerns and issues arise again
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Action Research Cycle





Evaluation Process

In any evaluation process, we need to keep three key things in mind:

- What evaluation is
- The value of the evaluation
- The value of working together to conduct an evaluation.





Evaluation Defined

Numerous definitions of evaluation exist. However, all definitions seem to include 2 aspects:

- it is a process that is systematic; it is planned and executed in accord with the plan
- There is a determination of worth of that which is being evaluated.





Value of an Evaluation Model

Value of working from a model, such as using the tenets of action research, to underlie the evaluation process include:




- identifies who will be involved
- provides structure to the entire task
- identifies boundaries
- identifies who will perform and/or be in charge of which tasks
- Provides a way of conceptualizing
- Reduces likelihood that mistakes or omissions will be made.








Evaluation as Applied Research

In developing the evaluation and keeping in mind the evaluation level, keep in mind the following:

- What questions are addressed/
 - How will the information be gathered?
 - What is measured or assessed?
 - How will the information be used?
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Incorporating Action Research in the Evaluation Process

- minimizes the importance of generalizing to other persons, settings or situations.
 - focuses on getting information that will enable them to change conditions in a particular situation in which they are personally involved
 - centers around the attention paid to the active involvement of the stakeholders as well as those likely to be affected by the outcomes.
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Action Evaluation

- A method that incorporates:
 1. Goal setting
 2. Monitoring and evaluating into an organization's life

Rather than the above being distinct activities outside of a process.

In a cyclical process – like action research





Action Evaluation Stages

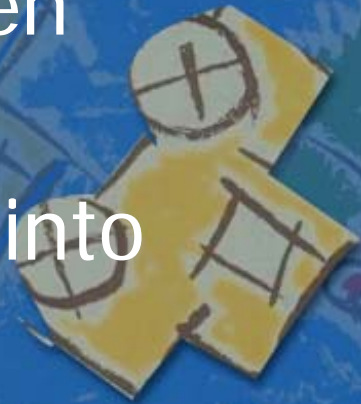
- I. Establishing a Baseline
 - Goal-setting and consensus-building on definition of success
- II. Formative
 - Reflection and monitoring
- III. Summative Evaluation
 - Collaborative assessment which occurs at the end of the project





I: Establishing a Baseline

- Articulation of definitions of success
- Negotiation of definitions between individual stakeholders
- Individual definitions are woven into shared goal of success








II: Formative Monitoring

- Enactment of the definitions of success
- Monitoring and adjustment of definitions based on insights gained during real-life activity





III: Summative Assessment

- Questions are asked and measures are taken to see how well an intervention has “stacked up” against its own internally derived and consciously (or dynamically) evolved own goals
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Action Evaluation in Practice

Creation of a Faculty Evaluation Process

Design team creates survey; administers it to faculty and staff.



Faculty and administration respond; responses are collected and analyzed



Faculty and administration separately come to agreement on attributes



Attributes are merged into 5 which are shared between faculty and administration.

Given our mission, what are the most important attributes of an excellent teacher inside and outside of the classroom at MVS?

WHY do you feel that this attribute is so important?

HOW can this attribute best be nurtured and evaluated?



Evaluation manual created and ready for implementation fall '09.



Portions of the evaluation process are piloted



Several of these plans move forward into the evaluation stage



Groups are formed to create steps to nurture the attributes



Timeline



- **Fall 2007-** identified need for an effective and objective evaluation system
- Design team formed
- Faculty and administration surveyed and asked to define the attributes of an excellent teacher at MVS
- **Spring 2008-** full faculty met to reach consensus on those attributes
- Administration also met to achieve consensus
- Attributes from both groups were merged into the final 5 attributes



What are the most important attributes of an excellent teacher inside and outside the classroom at Miami Valley School?

How would you respond to this question, and why is it important?



The Attributes

An excellent teacher at MVS...

1. Compassionately engages, inspires, and nurtures students
2. Demonstrates passion for teaching and learning
3. Is an effective communicator who demonstrates a collaborative and collegial spirit
4. Enthusiastically and actively supports the school community, its mission and core values
5. Demonstrates knowledge and expertise in teaching methodology and content

... in and out of the classroom.



- Teachers volunteered to work throughout the summer to discuss how best to **nurture and support** these attributes.
- Suggestions were made about improving communication, providing training and support in expanded computer use, increasing opportunities for cross divisional interaction, and clarification of professional development opportunities.
- Results of this work include the formation of a cross-divisional **Academic Affairs Committee**, "Tech **Tuesdays**" (and sometimes Thursdays), a **faculty choir**, and a revamped **professional development** pro



Summer
2008





Putting the Parts Together

Fall 2008 to Spring 2009

The goal setting and reflection portion of the evaluation process was put into place for the start of school year 2008-2009.

Acting on input from the faculty and administration, the Evaluation Committee designed and informally piloted two additional pieces: peer observation among faculty and student feedback from upper school students.

Fall 2009

Peer observation standards and student feedback guidelines are formally implemented. Formal and informal observations by faculty members by division heads and/or department chair complete the process.






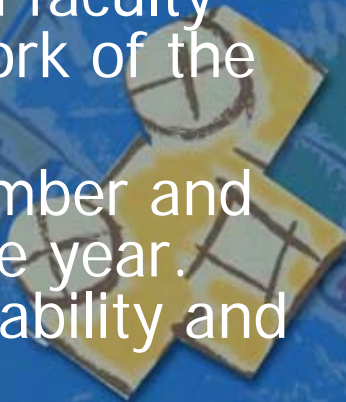
Goal Setting and Reflection

Goal setting and reflection is the centerpiece of the evaluation process.

Working with the division head, goals for each faculty member are established within the framework of the 5 attributes.

Verbal and written dialog between faculty member and division head occurs periodically through the year. Faculty members reflect on the progress, viability and needed adaptations of goals.

At the end of the school year, these reflections support consideration of those goals. Some may be considered completed, some carried into the next year, and some revised.



The Action Evaluation Process as Implemented at MVS



Evaluation Piece	Summer	Fall-Winter	Winter-Spring	Summer
Goal Setting and Reflection	Goals from previous year adapted and moved forward.	Goal setting discussions; Faculty give 2 reflections; Div. Heads give 1 response .	Goal setting discussions; Faculty give 2 reflections; Div. Heads give 1 response.	Goals from previous year adapted and moved forward.
Observing Others	Faculty members observe one other person. Observations completed by April 1.			
Official Observation	During cycle year, or during first year for new faculty, faculty members are observed once each by Division Heads and Department Chairs. Observations completed by March 1.			
Student Feedback	At the end of 1-term courses and at the end of the year, students give feedback via survey, which are tallied by Department Chairs.			

The plan: that this evaluation process will provide the framework for attracting and supporting the finest faculty-

The
outstanding
teachers of
**The Miami
Valley School**




Feasibility of Implementation of Action Evaluation in the School Setting

Pros

Cons





“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

Marcel Proust