

Evaluation as Quality Assurance:

*A Demonstration of the Profiling Program Quality Process
Applied to Teacher Professional Development Programs*

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Agenda

- Outline a different role for program evaluation.
- Demonstrate the *Profiling Program Quality Process* as used by the Teachers Academy for Mathematics and Science (TAMS), Chicago, IL.
- Reflect on the implications of the process for evaluating teacher professional development programs.



Traditional Evaluation Question

Is the program doing what it
intended to do?

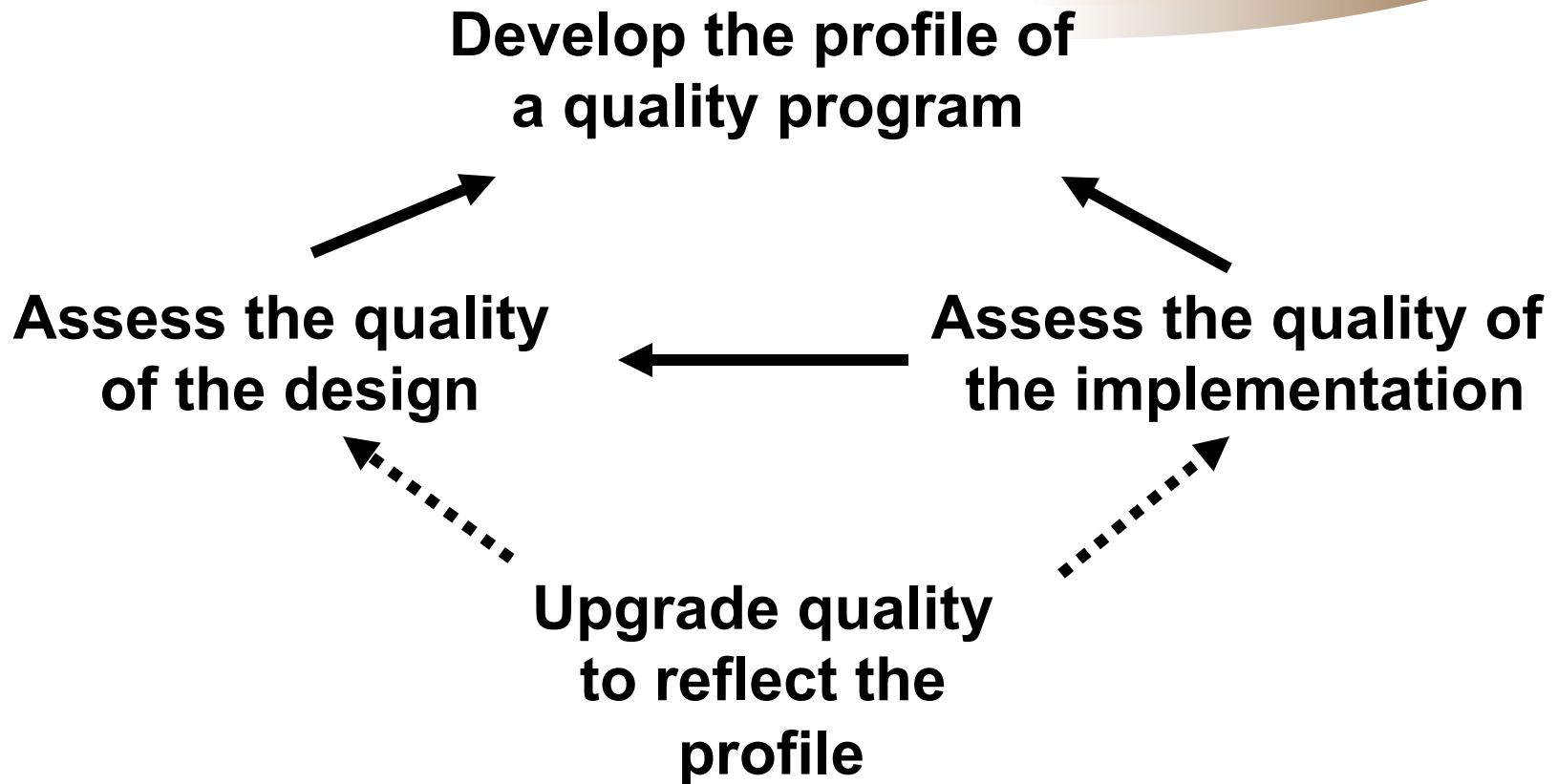
Tough Evaluation Question

Is the program doing what it
should be doing?

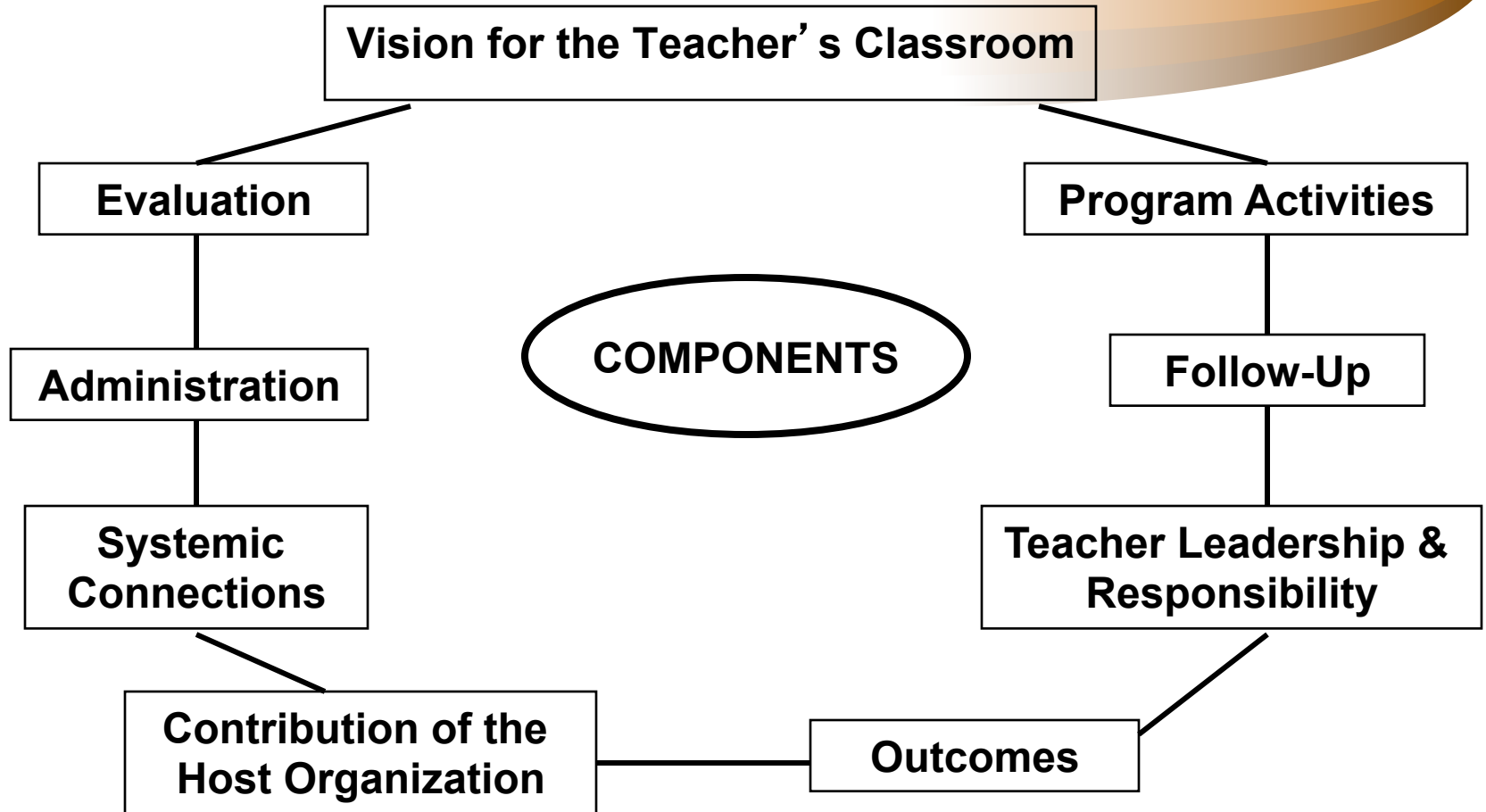
Evaluation Must Focus on the Quality of the Program.

Evaluation has a responsibility to monitor program plans, implementation, and results against quality standards or benchmarks based on what we know from our research and expert experience.

Profiling Program Quality Process



Profile of a Quality Teacher Professional Development Program



Follow-Up Component of a Quality Teacher Professional Development Program

Effective Practices

- A. Learning activities for teachers are spread out over time.
- B. Teachers have the opportunity to try out their new knowledge and skills in classrooms before follow-up occurs.
- C. Follow-up focuses primarily on the use in the classroom of teachers' new knowledge and skills.
- D. Follow-up takes a variety of forms, including additional training, problem-solving meetings, on-site or telephone consultation, networking, etc.
- E. Long-term commitment to teachers includes support from the host organization in partnership with the school and/or community.

Effective Practice - *Follow-up*

C. Follow-up focuses primarily on the use in the classroom of teachers' new knowledge and skills.

This practice is expecting teachers to immediately begin applying what they are experiencing in the program with their own students. There is the explicit expectation that teachers will apply the science and mathematics knowledge and practice the hands-on/minds-on inquiry skills developed in the program to their own teaching, reflect on their initial success, and continue to practice and improve. The program design supports this expectation.

Effective Practice - *Follow-up*

C. Follow-up focuses primarily on the use in the classroom of teachers' new knowledge and skills.

This practice is NOT expecting or planning for little or no relationship between what teachers are experiencing in the program (i.e., the mathematics and science knowledge they are accruing and the hands-on/minds-on instructional skills they are developing), and their professional development focus with respect to their own classroom teaching. Neither is this practice follow-up that consists of “show and tell” with teachers presenting what they have done with little or no reflection on what did and didn't work and the implications of the experience for themselves or others.

Assessing Program Quality

1. Deciding whether the profile of the program design reflects the profile of a quality program.
2. Deciding whether the profile of the program in operation reflects the profile of a quality program.
3. Identifying threats to quality and making recommendations for addressing them through revisions to program (a) design and/or (b) operation.

Assessment Results

Design and/or operations are:

- Inconsistent with a quality program.
- A partial reflection of a quality program.
- A complete (or almost complete) reflection of a quality program.
- Absent.

Recommendation is:

- Make major redesign and operations controls.
- Fine tune the design and/or operations.
- Maintain design and/or operations over time.
- Adjust expected outcomes or add practice.

How is TAMS Implementing the Profiling Quality Program Process?

- What is TAMS?
- How does TAMS use the profiling process?
- Who conducts the profiling process; what do they do?
- What are the required knowledge and skills?
- What's the source of a TAMS profile?
- How was the profile of program intentions developed?
- What's an example of intent?
- How was the profile of program operations developed?
- What were the primary data sources?
- What's a description of a program in operation?



What is TAMS?

- TAMS mission.
- Description of the people who work at TAMS.

How Does TAMS Use the Profiling Process?



- Length of time TAMS has been using the profiling process.
- Types of programs with which TAMS uses the profiling process.

What are the TAMS Programs Like?

- Professional development for primary and intermediate teachers.
- 30 instructional sessions at TAMS and 7 follow-up sessions in the schools.
- 2 years in duration.
- School-wide services unit to deal with institutional issues such as securing release time.
- Serve multiple schools at any one time.

Who Conducts the Profiling Process and What Do They Do?



- The Team
- The Consultants

What Kind of Knowledge and Skills are Required to Serve on the Profiling Process Team?

- Experience with the TAMS professional development programs.
- Understanding of evaluation and how TAMS uses the profiling process as a formative evaluative process.
- Skill in collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data.
- Skill in writing up and disseminating qualitative and quantitative data.
- Skill in using data for decision making.
- Openness to critical reflective practice to improve program offerings and delivery.

Where Does TAMS Profile of a Quality Professional Development Program Come From?



- Our profile of effective practices for quality teacher professional development programs.
- Minor editing of this profile to apply to TAMS.
- Determining intentions.
- Assessing operations.

How Was the Profile of Program Intentions Developed?



- Reviewing documents.
- Interviewing staff (professional developers and mid-level managers).
- Drafting intentions for each descriptor of effective practice.
- Getting approval of Senior Managers.

What's an Example of an Effective Practice and a Corresponding TAMS Program Intention?

Effective practice:

Teacher development program activities are relevant and practical.

TAMS intention:

- Program activities (e.g., instructional strategies, lessons, and classroom activities) are presented to teachers in ways that make it easy for teachers to use them with their own students.
- Teachers share and reflect on their experiences using the activities with their own students.

How Was the Profile of the Program in Operation Developed?



- Plan developed for gathering data.
- Training conducted, as needed, to prepare team members to gather data.
- Data gathered, compiled, and entered into the profile.
- Data analyzed and degree of agreement or disagreement with intentions and effective practice identified.

What Were the Primary Sources of Data?



- Observations of instruction.
- Focus groups of teachers and staff.
- Review of documents, especially any evaluation reports.
- Teacher evaluation of their instruction.
- Accounts of follow-up visits to the teachers' classrooms.

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What Does a Description of the Program in Operation Look Like?

Program in Operation:

- Two Chicago focus groups mentioned that activities were relevant and practical but not all were easy to transfer....One group mentioned having time for sharing their experiences....
- Data from session observations indicated that teachers have some opportunity to share their experiences during the instructional sessions....At each session the teacher receives a folder with handouts that they use during the session as well as handouts that they take home for later use.
- Two out of 4 focus groups directly mentioned...taking lessons back to the classroom. One mentioned an unmodified junior high lesson....

Assessing Program Quality at TAMMS



- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Drawing Conclusions
- Utilizing Results
- Value-Added
- Lessons Learned
- Plans for the Future

Data Collection

- **Purpose: Assemble Evidence**
 - Data from multiple sources.
 - Qualitative and quantitative data.
- **Actions: Utilize Tools for Data Collection**
 - Observation of program in operation.
 - Customer and staff focus groups.
 - Internal and external studies.
- **Benefit: Prevent “drowning in data”**
 - Profile helps determine what data to collect.
 - Profile structure helps data organization.

Data Collection: Example

- **Example: Sessions Observations**
 - Staff trained in observations.
 - Utilized observation protocol.
- **Actions: Conducted 18 Observations**
 - Utilized two observers.
 - Observed session more than once.
- **Benefit: Objective View of Program**
 - Depicted what occurred without critique.
 - Captured reality of program experience.

Data Analysis

- **Purpose: Link Research, Intent & Evidence**
 - Holistic view of data from all sources.
- **Actions: Find Evidence for Descriptors**
 - Evidence based input in each column of profile.
 - Determine relevance of data in broader context.
 - Triangulate data to corroborate evidence.
- **Benefit: Meaningful Focus**
 - Context of research and intent creates focus.
 - Balance of sources prevent over-emphasis on importance of isolated piece of evidence.

Data Analysis: Example

- **Example from Program Activities**
Component: *Program Activities are Relevant and Practical.*
- **Actions: Analyze Qualitative and Quantitative Data**
 - Program observations.
 - Customer focus groups.
 - Study by internal and external evaluators.
- **Benefit:** Corroborative Evidence of Program Quality

Drawing Conclusions

- **Purpose: Utilize Discrepancy Model**
 - Find Gaps in program design and/or operations.
- **Actions: Utilize Rating Tools**
 - Compare intention to effective practice.
 - Compare program in operation to intentions.
 - Compare program in operation to effective practice.
- **Benefit: Determine Priority for Change**
 - Identify targets for improvement.

Compare Evidence in 3 Columns

	Effective Practice	Intentions	Program in Operation
Component: Descriptor	For each descriptor within each of the 9 components there is a statement of best practice based upon research	In this column we describe intentions relative to the best practice: This descriptive statement is based upon documentation (e.g., program outcomes)	Compiled in this column are descriptive statements that summarize evidence from several data sources that document the program in operation.

Drawing Conclusions: Example

- **Example:** *Activities are Relevant & Practical.*
- **Actions: Compare Profile Columns**
 - TAMS' definition of this descriptor is a partial reflection of effective practice, but is incomplete.
 - Year 1: This descriptor in operation indicates a clear commitment to reflecting its intent although one or a few key aspects of the intent are not carried out.
 - Year 2: The descriptor in operation reflects its intent (and effective practice).
- **Benefit: Determined Improvement Targets**
 - Refine intention to reflect effective practice.
 - Keep relevant and practical program activities.

Utilizing Results

- **Purpose: Improving Quality of Program**
 - Defining actions steps in design and operations.
- **Actions: Change Design or Operations**
 - Redefine intentions.
 - Influence program design.
 - Foster reflective practice.
- **Benefit: Credible Basis for Changes**
 - Changes have solid basis in research and evidence.
 - Priorities for changes are clear.

Utilizing Results: Example

- **Example: Activities are Relevant & Practical**
 - Ensure quality through relevant and practical program activities.
- **Actions: Change Design or Operations**
 - Redefine intention to reflect effective practice.
 - Reflective Practice: Increase utilization of participant input in sessions and link session activities and follow-up.
- **Benefit: Credible Basis for Changes**
 - Increased value to customer using their input.
 - Prevent reactionary decisions on program changes.

Value-Added from the Profiling Process



- Grounded in research.
- Systematic use of data for decisions.
- Quickly pinpoints improvement areas.
- Fosters consensus building.
- Builds a common language.
- Promotes use of reliable evidence.
- Builds shared vision of program quality.

Lessons Learned

- Determine priority/focus early.
- Build commitment for long term.
- Create a diverse team from the start.
- Clearly define roles.
- Define scope.
- Develop consensus on purpose.
- Access supporting resources.



Where Is TAMS Now?

- What are its future plans regarding the profiling program quality process?

What Has TAMS Been Able to Accomplish?



- Gained commitment of staff.
- Collected a wealth of valuable data.
- Secured commitment and support of senior management.
- Used data for program improvement.

What Has Hindered TAMS' Progress?



- Significant turnover in personnel.
- Conflicting priorities.
- Reports have not always been timely or user-friendly.
- Fuzzy process for using profiling data for decision making.

What's Facing TAMS Now?



- Reconstituting a team.
- Using data currently available.
- Deciding their own next steps.

What Are We Recommending?

- Organization reconstitutes team.
- External consultants provide guidance to the team, including developing a manual for training personnel in the profiling process.
- External consultants and a core team apply the process to three components of the program that of high interest at the moment.
- External consultants model data-driven decision making and help organization develop a procedure for using results of the process.