A STUDY OF

THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY

FOR AN

EFFECTIVE EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

IN

WESTERN CANADIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A THESIS

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

PRESENTED BY

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A STUDY OF THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR AN EFFECTIVE EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS IN WESTERN CANADIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

BY

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Two main problems are addressed in this study. The first identifies the conditions necessary for an effective evaluation of academic programs at western Canadian community colleges. The second problem determines the extent to which these conditions are in place at selected western Canadian community colleges.

The first problem was accomplished by surveying the program evaluation literature. Twenty conditions emerged. These conditions fell into six categories: purpose, procedures, content, data, outcome, and overall participant reaction.

The second problem of this study involved five activities: the development of an instrument to test for these conditions, testing the instrument, contacting six selected colleges by telephone, collecting data about their evaluations systems, and analysis of the data in terms of the conditions for evaluation.

The data from the colleges indicated that there is a great interest in program evaluation and a willingness to share evaluation experiences at western Canadian community colleges. Another finding was that the evaluation systems at these colleges were generally not well established. At three of the colleges, the systems were in their pilot testing stage. Two other systems were not well developed.

The conditions suggested by the literature were examined in light of the data collected. This comparison

indicated that some of the conditions were more important than others. Both the literature and the data collected seemed to indicate that having one clear purpose, probably that of program improvement, is important. The procedures should be clearly outlined and evaluation should occur on a regular basis. In-house studies with some external input by relevant stakeholders such as advisory board members or employers have merit. The evaluation system should consider the objectives, the resources, the teaching-learning process, and the outcomes of a program. Several methods should be used to collect data, and data should be collected from many relevant sources. The evaluation should have a report which is action-oriented and which leads to the implementation of the results.

In general, it appears that program evaluation is in its infancy in community colleges, but that interest in the area and recognition of its importance are increasing.

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CHAPTER I

A. INTRODUCTION

Of the institutions of higher education, the newest on the scene is the community college. A community college "is a non-degree-granting public or private institution offering vocational or university parallel studies, or both, in programs of one, two, or three years' duration" (Campbell, 1971, p. 7).

A community college has certain characteristics which distinguish it from other institutions of higher learning. Campbell (1971) describes an ideal community college as having the following characteristics:

1. a liberal admissions policy,
2. a continuing education program,
3. a high degree of accessibility - both geographic and financial,
4. reduced barriers - both sociological and psychological - so as not to deter students from obtaining more education,
5. an emphasis on counselling services,
6. faculty hired more for their professional knowledge than their degrees, and
7. enough flexibility to respond to changes in industry, community and students. (p. 8)

Community colleges still strive to measure up to Campbell's ideal characteristics. In Manitoba, the provincial government has recently introduced initiatives designed to improve its community colleges' rating in each of Campbell's characteristics. These characteristics also have a bearing on program evaluation procedures used at community colleges.

Community colleges have grown very rapidly in Canada in the last twenty-five years. According to Statistics Canada (1986), full time enrollment has increased from 49,414 in 1960 to 316,560 in 1986. During this time, very rapid expansion occurred both in terms of programs and in monies spent by governments.

> Those boom days have now passed and enrollment is apt to decline in this decade as a smaller birth cohort moves through the education system. Colleges and universities are thus entering a period of some uncertainty - uncertainty about their funding, about the role society expects (or demands) of them, about the effects of economic conditions on the supply of students and the employment of graduates (Preface, Statistics Canada, 1983).

While community college enrollment is expected to continue to increase, indications are that the rate of growth will decrease. The community college seems to be the educational institution which is most affected by changes in economic conditions. In times of high unemployment, enrollment at community colleges increases; when jobs are more plentiful, college enrollment declines. These conditions add to the uncertainty about enrollment trends.

Coupled with uncertainty about enrollment patterns is a decline in the monies spent by both the provincial and federal governments in postsecondary education (Wu, 1985a; Wu, 1985b). During times of rapid expansion in the seventies, governments spent lavishly on community colleges. Now, with large deficits to manage, governments are placing limitations on hiring and expansion. College administrations are faced with the task of maintaining quality programs, often with reduced staff, increased costs, and fixed or declining budgets.

Another trend affecting the colleges is an increase in competition for students. The private sector is establishing more trade and professional schools which operate in direct competition with the colleges. In Winnipeg, the number of competing institutions increased from thirty-five in 1985 to fifty in 1986 (MTS Directory). Funds, in the form of tuition which would have gone to the colleges, are being directed to these schools and away from colleges.

Given these trends, uncertainty about future enrollment, reduced government support, and increased competition from the private sector, community college administrators have become more conscious of the need for quality programs and the role of evaluation in demonstrating this quality.

In a non-growth environment, planning is difficult, complex, and distasteful, but even more important than in a time of increased spending. Budgets are fixed and cut-backs and staff and program terminations may be necessary

(Dressel, 1976). As programs compete for sponsorship and funds and as program costs spiral, policy makers responsible for the allocation of resources, program managers who must defend implementation, and concerned advocacy groups are acknowledging the urgent need for the evaluation of established programs (Rossi and Freeman, 1982). Wilson (1982) has pointed out that program evaluation is increasing in higher education as institutions try to maintain their historic strength and capitalize on new opportunities in the face of limited resources. Conrad and Hammond (1984) concur, adding that colleges must reassess their priorities in the face of unpredictable public support. They state that quality is the key to the future. Appropriate evaluation procedures can help to generate confidence and acceptance of these measures (Dressel, 1976).

Community colleges are looking to program evaluation to help them make the hard decisions necessary about program cuts or changes. As Munitz and Wright (1980) state

> The most essential element in the continued refinement of any planning, allocating, and evaluation mechanism is a systematic, on-going, qualitative evaluation of departments and programs. (p. 38)

Appropriate evaluation enables sensible decision making both for expansion and for cut-back.

B. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine program evaluation methodology at selected western Canadian community colleges in order to determine whether the conditions which appear to be necessary for an appropriate evaluation are present at these colleges.

The specific research questions to be addressed in this study are the following:

1. What are the essential conditions necessary for an adequate or appropriate evaluation methodology?
2. Are these conditions present in the evaluation methodologies at selected the community colleges?

C. DEFINITION OF TERMS

In the context of this study, the term "program" refers to academic programs, that is, instructional activities offered by a division or department of a college, and does not include other programs such as student services. Specific examples of programs are Business Administration, Plumbing, or Hairdressing, each being comprised of a number of courses.

Program evaluation "is the process of specifying, defining, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information about designated aspects of a given program and using that information to arrive at value judgements among decision alternatives regarding the installation, continuation, modification, or termination of a program" (Craven, 1980, p. 434).

The concept of evaluation adopted in this study needs some clarification. At one time, evaluation was equated with measurement. Only those items that could be readily measured were considered to be valid data for evaluators. As Atkin (1967) states, this interpretation of evaluation leads to elaborate projects which manipulate the insignificant. Eisner (1971) agrees. He says that evaluation should concentrate more on what is educationally significant rather than merely statistically significant.

In the mid-1930's, Ralph Tyler popularized the notion that program evaluation should focus on clearly establishing the goals of a program and assessing how well the program has achieved those goals. According to Dressel (1976), this concept of evaluation is too limiting. It ignores the processes used to achieve the outcomes or changes. Thus only broad statements of satisfaction or dissatisfaction are possible. Eisner (1967) is critical of Tyler's view of evaluation as well. According to Eisner, when concentrating only on specified goals, other consequences, both positive and negative, may be ignored.

The notion of positive or negative consequences leads to a very important aspect of evaluation - the idea of assessing merit or worth. Dressel (1976, p. 4) states, "*To evaluate* in fact means to place a value on or to draw a value out of an action, decision, or experience." Coles (1978) adds

> Evaluation is, by definition, judgement, but it is a specific kind of judgement, based on measurement and expertise and involving appraisal. Program evaluation is concerned with judging the worth of some existing or proposed effort. (p. 95)

Another aspect of evaluation that should be considered is the distinction between formative and summative evaluation. Summative evaluations assess the over-all effectiveness of a program as a finished product. These kinds of evaluations are used to make decisions about the continuation or cancellation of a program. (See Anderson, Ball, Murphy, and Associates, 1975, pp. 406-408.) Formative evaluations emphasize program improvement. They indicate where a program is weak and where it is strong. They are used to provide decision alternatives for program developers, who make the necessary changes or modifications in the program. (See Anderson et al., 1975, pp. 175-177.)

A final aspect of evaluation that should be considered is its relationship to decision-making. MacDonald (1976, p. 224) states, "The basic and utilitarian purpose of evaluation is to provide information for choices among decision alternatives." Thus evaluation provides the information necessary to make sound or reasoned decisions.

Anderson and Ball (1978) summarize the points concerning the various aspects of evaluation:

> It is not simply measurement and data collection, although measurement and data collection are usually important precursors to the process. It is also not decision-making, although it must be useful for decision making to survive...It is not necessarily limited to determining how well programs achieve their objectives; it may begin before a program or policy is implemented, or it may touch on issues that were not envisioned at the time the goals or objectives of the program were formulated. (p. 15)

To conclude, given the conditions now faced by many community colleges, appropriate program evaluation is essential to maintain and judge the quality of programs and to provide the necessary information to make the hard decisions necessary by college administrations.

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

Why study evaluation? Smith (1982) states

> One of the reasons most often cited for the development of new methods in evaluation is that current procedures are not well matched to the context within which evaluation occurs in education. In fact, there has been relatively little study of the evaluation practice itself. Only with the recent interest in improving the utility of evaluation have there been studies of the setting in which evaluations are conducted...We need to know what routine evaluation practice is really like. (p. 80)

While there has been some research into program evaluation at the secondary and elementary levels, very little has been conducted in higher education, especially at Canadian community colleges. This study is intended to provide some information about the nature of the evaluations which occur at selected western Canadian community colleges.

Why examine the evaluation of ongoing programs? Anderson and Ball (1978) state

> We tend to equate program evaluation with innovation. Indeed, in many fields relatively little attention has been given continuous or periodic monitoring of programs that have been around any length of time...Yet it is frequently important to find out not only whether a once effective program continues to work but also whether the delivery system keeps delivering - and even whether the needs the program was designed to serve still exist. (p. 5)

It is generally expected in education that all new programs are evaluated both formatively and summatively. But once in place, they are often ignored. In community colleges, many programs change very rapidly as they respond to changes in the economy, student needs, or government directives. Although the name may be the same, the course content, procedure, and outcome may have changed greatly since its inception. Therefore, established programs at the community colleges should be evaluated, and such evaluation methodologies should be studied to ensure their adequacy. This study will address these needs.

In their article about the systematic review system at the University of Alberta, Harris and Holdaway (1983) state that, "little has been published on evaluation and review in Canadian universities and colleges" (p. 57).

Some material has been published about systems at Canadian universities, including Belanger and Tremblay (1982) about the University of Montreal and Cranton (1979) about McGill. At the community college level in Canada, one article was found: Cousineau's (1983) study of Vancouver Community College.

Some material exists about individual evaluation studies at Canadian universities, but almost nothing about community college evaluation studies. Dressel (1976) states that one reason for this lack of publication is the worry about misinterpretation of information and another is the general and understandable unwillingness of administrators to share critical evaluations which do not place their institutions in the best light.

The sharing of information about evaluations and the evaluation processes is very important. Craven (1980) states

> A number of institutions currently have exemplary approaches to academic program evaluation. The concepts, guidelines, and operating experience that accompany these evaluation approaches should be shared more widely with other institutions. (p. 452)

To conclude, currently there is a lack of information about the evaluation methodologies in place at Canadian community colleges and about the adequacy of those methodologies. This study is designed to provide some of this information.

It is expected that this study will have the following outcomes:

1. There will be a clearer understanding of the conditions which are considered to be important in the evaluation of community college programs.
2. Some major features of evaluation methodologies currently in use will be revealed.
3. There will be a greater sharing of information about evaluation among community colleges.

E. LIMITATIONS

Although the conditions and the data from the colleges are probably reliable, certain factors inherent in this study may influence their overall reliability.

1. The sample was quite limited. Only six colleges were surveyed. It is not expected that generalizations can be made about the evaluation systems at other community colleges in western Canada based on this sample, and caution should be taken in applying the findings to other colleges.

2. The conditions are those deemed to be important after a review of the literature alone. They were not distributed to the colleges for comment and/or ranking. Had the opinions of the evaluation practitioners at the colleges been sought, a greater degree of reliability

might have been achieved.

3. The data collected may not be totally objective due to the approach used. Simply raising certain questions can suggest to the person being questioned the desired or appropriate response. Some of the answers in this study may have been colored by the questioning technique and may not reflect the situation as it really exists at the colleges. Data were collected from only one source. Only the opinions of those responsible for the evaluations systems were questioned. Others at the college may have had different views.

4. The data collected reflect what the respondents say that they do. No attempt was made to determine whether or not this was actually the case.

5. The analysis of the data required judgment and interpretation of the responses by the researcher. Possible errors of interpretation may have arisen.

F. ORGANIZATION

This thesis has six chapters. Chapter I contains the background information, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the terms, the limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter II presents the methodology used in this study, including how the conditions and the survey instrument were developed. Chapter III contains the review of the literature on which the conditions were based. Chapter IV presents the data collected from the six community colleges as individual case studies. Chapter V presents a comparison of the data from the colleges and the conclusions which can be drawn from that data. Chapter VI contains the summary and recommendations. The Appendices contain the letters used to communicate with the colleges and the survey instrument.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

Introduction: It is more usual to have the literature review precede the methodology, but in this study, the literature review is an integral part of the first research question. Therefore, the methodology is presented before the literature review, which follows in Chapter III.

PART A: DEVELOPING THE CONDITIONS

The first part of this thesis involved an extensive search of the literature related to program evaluation.

There is an abundance of literature dealing with program evaluation, but the bulk of it deals with American elementary and secondary schools. Writings about American university and college program evaluation have increased since 1975, but are still not abundant. In Canada, literature dealing with program evaluation in postsecondary and higher education is quite sparse.

The literature review followed the pattern outlined above. Initially, all program evaluation literature was surveyed to provide background for the topic. The focus of the readings was gradually narrowed to the specific topic: community colleges. However, many of the principles used in other institutions, such as universities, both Canadian and American, and vocational schools, also were found to be applicable to this study. From all these sources, the conditions deemed necessary to conduct an effective evaluation at a community college in western Canada emerged.

The conditions were grouped into six major areas: purpose, procedures, content, data, outcome, and overall participant perception.

A more detailed description of the process through which the conditions emerged is presented in the following section.

The first step involved a careful survey of the sources indicated above and the recording of relevant information. Very little analysis was attempted at this stage; the information from each source was simply recorded as a unit in the same order as presented in the original source. A large volume of information was accumulated.

The second step was the initial analysis of the information. The information from each source was separated into its component ideas or topics. Many of the sources had comments about the same concept or topic. When a topic seemed to reappear regularly, a file was created in which all the comments from every source related to that topic were collected. The entire volume of material was sorted in this manner.

Next the contents of each file were analyzed. New files were created if necessary, and files were combined where appropriate. As the analysis and synthesis of the information continued, certain clusters became apparent.

Further refining of the clusters resulted in the twenty conditions necessary for effective program evaluation.

The six categories into which the conditions were grouped did not emerge until the pilot testing of the interview instrument. Testing the interview instrument not only revealed the appropriate sequencing of the questions (and thus the sequencing of the conditions) but also showed the relationships among the individual conditions. The conditions were grouped on the basis of these relationships.

In summary, the conditions emerged following the careful reading of the literature related to program evaluation, the recording of the information from each source, the analysis of all recorded information, the combination of the ideas from each source around certain concepts (the conditions), and the logical grouping of these concepts into the six categories.

Listed below are the conditions grouped in appropriate categories.

I. Purpose

1. The evaluation should have one main purpose.
2. The main purpose of the evaluation should be program improvement.
3. The evaluation should have a clear statement of purpose.

II. Procedures

4. The evaluation should have clearly outlined procedures.

5. The evaluation procedures should be continuous, regular, and systematic.

6. The evaluation should be conducted in-house or as a self-study.

7. The evaluation should have strong administrative support.

8. The evaluation should be conducted by a committee whose participants are selected according to specific criteria.

III. Content

9. The evaluation should examine the goals and objectives of the program under study.

10. The evaluation should examine the resources of the program under study.

11. The evaluation should examine the teaching-learning process of the program.

12. The evaluation should examine the outcomes or results of the program.

13. The evaluation should examine the relationship among the objectives, the resources, the teaching-learning process, and the outcomes.

IV. Data

14. The data used for making judgements should be subjective as well as objective.

15. The data should be collected from a variety of sources.

16. Various methods should be used to obtain the data used to judge program worth.

17. The data should be common across programs but allow for some individualization.

V. Outcome

18. The evaluation report should have several forms, be made available to various audiences, and be action-oriented.

19. A follow-up should be conducted.

VI. Overall Participant Reaction

20. The evaluation system should be viewed as fair and open by the participants.

Chapter III contains the supporting literature for each of the conditions.

PART B: THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

A telephone interview was selected as the data gathering technique for a number of reasons. It was felt that more and better data could be obtained by telephone than with a written questionnaire. It was thought that theresponse rate would be better than with a mail-out questionnaire. It was thought that the number of responding colleges would be low; therefore, the expense of telephoning would not be prohibitive.

The telephone interview proved to be a very useful data gathering technique. The volume of data collected from each college was probably greater than that which could have been collected in the same time period with a written questionnaire. Verbal questions and responses tend to be less time consuming than written ones. Another advantage of the telephone interview was that the data may be more accurate. Some clarification of both the questions and the answers was possible to provide the best possible data. An additional advantage is that the telephone interview technique was well received by the potential respondents. Several commented that they would participate in an interview but would not complete a questionnaire. Also, the number of respondents willing to participate was far above the number expected.

A concern about using the telephone interview for data gathering is the cost. Each interview took approximately one-half hour. The costs ranged from $24 to $30 per interview. Thus not all the willing colleges could be interviewed. The number of colleges in the study was limited to six, primarily due to the cost of long distance telephoning.

PART C: THE INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Questions were prepared to determine if the conditions suggested by the literature were in fact present in the methodologies used at western Canadian community colleges. Care was taken to try to avoid leading questions; that is questions which clearly indicated the desired response.

Initially, the instrument resembled a mail-out questionnaire; it was quite lengthy and repetitive. The questions followed the original order of the conditions, and there was at least one question corresponding to each condition. It did not make allowance for the fact that when people are giving a verbal answer, they may include the answer, not only to the question asked, but also to several other questions. The first pilot testing of the instrument revealed all these defects.

The order and scope of the questions were changed to overcome the defects revealed in the testing of the instrument. Several conditions were probed in one question, rather than having one question for each condition. Two types of questions emerged: the actual question on a given topic, and a follow-up question which was asked only if the first question did not already elicit the additional material. In this way, asking a question to which the answer was given as part of another question was avoided. These follow-up questions were distinguished from the other type of questions by (**) before and after each one.

The instrument was pilot tested twice more. Red River Community College and Assiniboine Community College in Manitoba were the test colleges.

PART D: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONDITIONS AND QUESTIONS

This section gives the questions and indicates to which condition(s) each is related.

1. What is the purpose or purposes of program evaluation at your college? (Conditions 1, 2, 3)
2. How frequently are programs evaluated?

   Is there any exception to this schedule? If so, what factors determine the change in schedule?

   (Condition 5)
3. Is the evaluation internal or external? (Condition 6)
4. a) Who are the people involved in conducting the study, how are they selected, and what are the duties or resp-onsibilities of each? (Conditions 4, 7, 8)

   b) Is this procedure documented? (Conditions 4, 5)

   c) Is there an established procedure or mechanism for transmitting information among participants, especially the staff in the program being evaluated? That is, how do those being evaluated find out how the evaluation is going? (Conditions 4, 5, 20)
5. a) Which of the following aspects of a program are considered in the evaluation study: the goals and objectives?, the resources?, the teaching-learning process?, and the outcomes?

   (Conditions 9, 10, 11, 12)

   b) What is considered about the goals and objectives? That is, what are you examining?

   (Conditions 9, 13)

c) What is examined under the resources heading? (Conditions 10, 13)

d) What is examined under the teaching-learning process? (Conditions 11, 13)

e) What are considered to be the outcomes of the program? (Conditions 12, 13)

f) From what sources are data collected? Sources refers to groups of people, documents, etc. (Condition 15)

g) What methods are used to collect data about these aspects? Methods refers to questionnaires, interviews, direct observation, reviewing documents, self-reports, etc. (Conditions 14, 15)

**h) How are judgements made about each of these aspects?
What general criteria are applied to each aspect?** (Conditions 13, 14)

i) Is there any variation in the procedures and data collected among programs, or is the same data collected about each program? (Condition 17)

** i) Who determines the variations?**

** ii) What are the variations?**

6. a) How is the final report prepared? That is, who writes it, who helps, who sees it in progress, etc.? (Conditions 4, 8, 20)

b) Is more than one version prepared? (Condition 18)

c) Who gets copies of the final report? (Conditions 18, 20)

d) Does the report require response or action by anyone or any group? **If so, what? and how is it implemented?** (Condition 18)

e) How is the implementation of the report's recommendations monitored? **How soon after the report is out?** (Condition 19)

f) If any group, especially those being evaluated, has a problem with the evaluation report or outcome, how are these concerns dealt with? (Condition 20)

See Appendix B for the complete instrument.

PART E: SELECTING PARTICIPANT COLLEGES

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) was contacted. This organization supplied a list of all the community colleges in western Canada, their postal addresses, as well as the name of each college's chief executive officer (CEO).

The CEO of each college was contacted by letter. (See Appendix A.) In the letter, the CEO's were asked if their college would participate in this study. If yes, they were asked to supply the name of the person directly responsible for administering the program evaluation system at their college. The letters also indicated that no college would be identified in the study by name, location, size, or in any other way.

Table I below indicates the results of the requests from the colleges. Several of the colleges which felt unable to participate cited time restrictions and an undeveloped evaluation system as their reasons. Several colleges requested information related to the conditions when they were developed.

Table I: Results of Participation Requests

Province	Number Possible	Number Responding	Positive Response	Negative Response
Manitoba	3	3	2	1
Saskat-chewan	14	11	10	1
Alberta	11	11	9	2
British Columbia	14	12	10	2
Totals	42	37	31	6

From those which responded positively, six colleges were chosen using the following criteria:

1. Two colleges each from Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. (The Manitoba colleges were used in the pilot study to validate the interview instrument.)
2. One large and one medium sized college in each province. (The colleges were classified according to the number and variety of courses offered. Suitable colleges offered courses varying in

length from under one year to two years. The courses offered included trade, academic, and transfer, where applicable.)

3. The specific college was chosen at random from among all those meeting the criteria.

The person in charge of program evaluation in each of the selected colleges was contacted twice by telephone, once to set up an appointment and then to collect the data.

PART F: THE INTERVIEW

During the first contact with the college, when the appointment was made, the program evaluation persons were reminded of the initial letter to the college and the nature of this study. At the beginning of each interview, a brief, informal conversation occurred; then the interview began. First the definitions used in the study were read. Next the participants were asked if they had any questions or concerns. Then the questions were asked as listed on the instrument. The answers were recorded on the interview form. The interviews were not recorded on tape as was previously planned because it was not possible to obtain the appropriate equipment.

PART G: DATA ANALYSIS

In the analysis, the colleges were identified only as Colleges A to F. No identifying information was given about any of the colleges, in keeping with the policy established in the initial letter to the colleges.

In Chapter IV, each of the six colleges was treated as an individual case study. The degree to which its methodology corresponded with the stated conditions was indicated. Interesting features of the evaluation methodology were highlighted.

In Chapter V, the data from the colleges were compared and conclusions were drawn from these observations.

PART H: RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter VI, the conditions were reexamined in light of the data. The outcomes of the study were presented as well as the implications and the recommendations for further study.

PART I: ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Letters were sent to all responding colleges. Those which had indicated a willingness to participate, those which indicated why they could not participate, and those which requested information were sent a copy of the conditions along with one of the letters in Appendix C.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the methodology used to obtain the data presented in Chapter III, IV, and V, and has presented an overview of the remainder of the thesis.

CHAPTER III: THE CONDITIONS

The first task undertaken in this study was a review of the program evaluation literature to identify conditions necessary for an effective evaluation of community college programs. This chapter contains a listing of these conditions, followed by a description of each according to the literature.

THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR AN EFFECTIVE EVALUATION

1. The evaluation should have one main purpose.
2. The main purpose of the evaluation should be program improvement.
3. The evaluation should have a clear statement of purpose.
4. The evaluation should have a clearly outlined procedure.
5. The evaluation procedures should be continuous, regular, and systematic.
6. The evaluation should be conducted in-house or as a self-study.
7. The evaluation should have strong administrative support.
8. The evaluation should be conducted by a committee whose participants are selected according to specific criteria.
9. The evaluation should examine the goals or objectives of the program under study.

10. The evaluation should examine the resources of the program.

11. The evaluation should examine the teaching-learning process of the program.

12. The evaluation should examine the outcomes or results of the program.

13. The evaluation should examine the relationship among the objectives, the resources, the teaching-learning process, and the outcomes.

14. The data used for making judgements should be subjective as well as objective.

15. Data should be collected from a variety of sources.

16. Various methods should be used to obtain the data used to judge program worth.

17. The data collected should be common across programs but allow some individualization.

18. The evaluation report should have several forms, be made available to various audiences, and be action-oriented.

19. A follow-up study should be conducted.

20. The evaluation system should be viewed as fair and open by the participants.

The next section gives a detailed description of each of the above conditions and an explanation of how they are used in this study.

1. **The evaluation should have one main purpose.**

Many purposes have been stated as reasons for conducting evaluation studies. Each purpose leads to a slightly different type of study. Miller (1980, p. 409) warns that evaluation studies should not try to "cover the universe" because they will be impractical, too time consuming or too expensive. Munitz and Wright (1980) add, "It may be unreasonable to construct a totally comprehensive evaluation system." Gaining substantial insight into a few aspects of the program may be more valuable than gaining a little information about many aspects. (p. 41)

2. **The main purpose of the evaluation should be program improvement.**

An evaluation study of an existing or ongoing program may be conducted for various reasons or purposes.

"Accountability" is an often cited reason for conducting systemic program evaluations (Anderson et al., 1975; Fincher, 1978; Wentling, 1980; Rossi and Freeman, 1982). Accountability generally refers to the relationship between outcomes and resource utilization (Dressel, 1976, p. 73). Rossi and Freeman (1982, p. 80) have listed six types of accountability: impact, is the program doing what it should; coverage, are the appropriate clients being served; delivery, are the stated methods being used; efficiency, is the program cost effective; fiscal, is money being spent honestly; and legal, are the legal requirements being met.

In an accountability study, information is being provided to the sponsors, the public, the students, or other interested parties so that they can judge the effectiveness of the program. Fincher (1978) and Munitz & Wright (1980) have noted that these studies are quite useful because demonstrating the effective use of funds can result in more funds being made available to the institution. Also, Wentling (1980) states that accountability studies can promote better utilization of facilities and resources. However, Miller (1980, p. 411) states that "bottom line" judgements about the health of an institution cannot be equated with academic excellence. A balanced budget is not evidence of a sound academic program.

Providing information pertaining to changes in the program is another reason for conducting an evaluation. These changes could be expansion, contraction or termination (Wentling, 1980; Munitz & Wright, 1980; Wallhaus, 1982; Rossi & Freeman, 1982). Munitz and Wright state the purpose of evaluation is to incorporate the observed consequences of prior decisions into the shaping of the future directions of the program (p. 22).

Professional development is a purpose cited by Wentling (1980) and Clowes (1981). Dressel (1976) states that the evaluation process should have an educational value for the faculty and staff.

House (1982, p. 6) states that an important purpose for conducting evaluations is to legitimize the programs and actions taken by the program managers. He does not consider this process one of making excuses or giving false evidence, but one of providing justification.

Wallhaus (1982) has found that these studies are used also to make decisions about the organization and personnel. These decisions are related to tenure, promotion and leadership.

The literature provides many reasons for conducting program evaluations, but the most frequently cited and perhaps the most important reason for conducting systematic evaluations of ongoing programs is to improve the academic program under study (Craven, 1980; Wentling, 1980; Clowes, 1981; George, 1982; Wallhaus, 1982).

The process should be seen as formative, not summative. A formative evaluation is conducted to determine the strengths and weaknesses of a program with a view to improving the program (Anderson, et. al., 1975, pp. 175). A summative evaluation is usually conducted to determine a program's merit with a view to making decisions about its termination or continuation (Anderson, et. al., 1975, pp. 406). Clowes (1981, p. 5) says that it is counter-productive to conduct "life or death type" of evaluations. They do not produce the harmony and co-operation necessary to implement changes. Conrad and

Hammond (1984, p. 18) have found that in most institutions the assessment of quality is a summative, threatening process, leading to lower staff and faculty morale. To avoid these negative consequences, the evaluation process should be formative. The major purpose of the evaluation process should be the improvement of the program under study.

3. The evaluation should have a clear statement of purpose.

Evaluation studies should have a clearly stated purpose (Craven, 1980; Munitz & Wright, 1980). Popham (1981) states that a clarification of the purpose of the study avoids "evaluation as ritual" or "evaluation for interest." George (1982) stresses that the purpose should be clear and shared by all participants. Wallhaus (1982, p. 26) adds that frequently there is no clear statement of purpose in an evaluation. This lack of clarity can lead to mistrust among the participants and manipulation by the evaluators.

4. The evaluation should have a clearly outlined procedure.

An evaluation must have a clearly outlined procedure and that procedure must be communicated to all concerned. Munitz and Wright (1980) and Craven (1980) stress the importance of clear definitions of the objectives, processes, data requirements, and criteria for judgement. Wallhaus (1982) and Miller (1980) add that schedules, reporting routes, and responsibilities of participants must be clearly articulated.

5. The evaluation procedures should be continuous, regular, and systematic.

Program evaluation should be conducted as a systematic, continuous process as opposed to a one-shot, grand scale effort (Wallhaus, 1982; Clowes, 1981; Munitz & Wright, 1980; Dressel, 1976). Program evaluation should be a regular, normal activity of the college. Because community college courses are very work-oriented, they must change very rapidly to meet new demands in the work force. These necessary improvements or changes can be determined by regular, systematic evaluations, which will keep the courses current.

Rossi and Freeman (1982) state that one-shot evaluations tend to be a response to a perceived crisis, such as having to make a particularly difficult decision. Wallhaus (1982) sees two disadvantages with this type of response. These are that

> Reviews [are] driven largely by negative factors, most of which may be external to the program [and it is] crisis management, the problem may be too large to address positively if uncovered too late. (p. 80)

House (1982, p. 21) adds, "The general goal has been to replace ad hoc reactions to problems (or their symptoms) with a process in which actions anticipate and avoid danger areas."

Systematic evaluations, as opposed to ad hoc studies, have several other advantages: First, they are perceived as less threatening to the academic freedom and integrity of the unit under review (Dressel, 1976). Second, they tend to encounter less staff resistance as the system becomes a routine function or activity of the institution (Miller, 1980; Rossi and Freeman, 1982). Third, they tend to be less expensive to conduct, once established, than one-shot evaluations (Rossi and Freeman, 1982). In addition, Petrie (1982) sees two other fortuitous occurrences: Some departments will use their regularly scheduled evaluation to conduct an extremely thorough review, exceeding institutional requirements, and people in the entire institution will become more reflective about their tasks and their performances.

Generally, each program within the institution should be evaluated every five years (Dressel, 1976; Munitz & Wright, 1980; Craven, 1980; Wallhaus, 1982).

6. The evaluation should be conducted in-house or as a self-study.

Philosophically, Dressel (1976, p. 455) points out that the very nature of a university or college requires that it constantly evaluates, culls, and discards information. It must be able to apply the same procedures to its own functioning and thereby serve as a model to those it hopes to educate as well as to society as a whole. "Higher education has a special obligation to develop critical self-appraisal" (Dressel, 1976, p. 458).

One important outcome of an evaluation study is that its findings and recommendations should be put to some use. An inhouse study tends to be used more frequently than one conducted by an external agent. Dressel (1976, p. 405) finds that external consultants, usually hired by the administration, tend to cater their findings too much to their clients (the administration). Thus, when the administration tries to implement the findings, lower staff morale and even animosity can result. Munitz & Wright (1980, p. 21) add that internally generated plans "are much preferable to those imposed by external groups [which may have] political or other non-academic motivations."

Clowes (1981, p. 4) states that it is "imperative that the review process be a normal, internal activity...rather than an external (threatening) event." Leithwood, Wilson, and Marshall (1981) concur and claim that external studies are threatening and have little impact as staff find flaws with the procedure. The external evaluator is often rendered impotent by suspicions of his motives, by criticism of the accuracy or adequacy of his data, or by the denial of the appropriateness of the techniques (Dressel, 1982, p. 31).

Pace & Friedlander (1978) find that the self-study not only "offers the potential for making evaluation a learning activity for those engaged in it", but also,

> if the purpose of evaluation is to facilitate change and improvement, the question of who will make the changes is obviously a significant one. It is easy for people to dismiss someone else's evaluation – the evidence was inadequate, unreliable, or invalid; the interpretations were improper; the problem was too narrowly defined. But they are less likely to react in that way to an appraisal they carried out themselves. (p. 15)

External evaluators are sometimes seen as impinging on the professional status of faculty. Professionals are guided by their own, rather than external or legal standards (Dressel 1976). House (1982) agrees that professionals should evaluate themselves but cautions that the public often views these evaluations with skepticism, as a whitewash. A slight variation on this approach consists of staff from one department acting as consultants conducting the evaluation of another department. House describes this process in use at the University of Illinois. Fernandez and Raab (1984) report a similar system at Nassau Community College.

Stake (1977, p. 23) is somewhat critical of self studies, commenting that a self-study "is a procedure which honors the *status quo*, establishmentarian values. It takes a heavy toll on staff time...[But] it has great value in keeping problem-solving responsibility at the site of the problem."

Other criticisms leveled at self-studies are that they are self serving, biased and unreliable. A study conducted by Chambers (1979), cited by Miller (1980, p. 419), refutes these criticisms. Chambers compared studies conducted by outside evaluators and studies conducted internally but monitored externally with studies conducted completely internally and found that "the internal evaluation is as reliable and accurate a method of depicting the current situation as the other two."

Thus, the literature seems to support internal or in-house evaluations of ongoing programs as being a necessary condition for effective evaluation of community college programs.

7. The evaluation should have strong administrative support.

The college administration must provide support and leadership in the evaluation process (Munitz & Wright, 1980; Clowes, 1981; House, 1982). Miller (1980) specifies the assistant vice-president level as the over-all coordinator of the evaluation system and stresses the importance of management in moving the recommendations into action at the completion of the study. The involvement of administration in the process increases its commitment to the process and its recommendations. Their involvement also reassures staff involved in the evaluation that the study will have some impact.

The administration must ensure that adequate time is provided to those involved in the evaluation process. Dressel (1976), Clowes (1981), and Warmbrod & Persavich (1981) stress this point. If an effective evaluation is to occur, evaluation cannot merely be added to a person's normal workload. The administration indicates its support of evaluation by providing adequate staff and time to the process and by taking the results seriously.

8. The evaluation should be conducted by a committee whose participants are selected according to specific criteria.

It is important to have wide participation in an evaluation study (Petrie, 1981). Warmbrod and Persavich (1981) state that only with wide participation and open communication will there be a feeling that "we" are conducting this evaluation. Braskamp notes (1982, p. 58), that "The intent is to establish an environment in which audiences become involved in as much of the evaluation process as is possible." Wider involvement leads to more utilization and more trust and co-operation (Weiss, 1983; Gold, 1983).

Miller (1980, p. 425) cautions, however, stating that a careful balance must be maintained between open participation, leading to frustration on the part of the participants because the process grinds to a halt on the one hand, and excessive control by central administration on the other.

Dressel (1976) and Clowes (1981) suggest that the evaluation structure should consist of two committees: The over-all coordinating committee, which supervises all the evaluations, and a departmental committee in charge of the evaluation of that program. Dressel's coordinating committee consists of representatives from these groups: alumni, donors, employers of graduates, the general public, government, the board, administration, faculty, support staff, and students. His sub-committee, those actually conducting the evaluation, come from the program being evaluated. Clowes' coordinating committee consists of senior faculty (other than those from the program being evaluated) and administration. His sub-committee consists of representatives from faculty, students, citizens, and administration.

The use of outside or external consultants in the evaluation process is advised by some writers. Dressel (1976) stresses their importance to prevent either a mere reconfirmation of the traditional position or a recommendation for unrealistic changes. Rossi (1982) and Wallhaus (1982) add that while the internal staff can provide the necessary detailed information about the program, sponsors oroutside stakeholders may be concerned or suspicious of the findings. They recommend the use of external consultants to provide assistance. Wallhaus (p. 84), however, cautions that the use of external consultants does add to the cost of the evaluation.

Garrity (1984) describes the role of advisory committees, consisting of representatives from industry, business and alumni in the field, in conducting evaluations. They have the aura of outside consultants. A similar procedure is reported by Paris (1985). Employers or practitioners are used as outside consultants to evaluate programs. Warmbrod and Persavich (1981, p. 18) outline the following criteria for these external evaluators: familiarity with philosophy, principles, and concepts of the program; current employment in the appropriate field; knowledge of the requirements of the occupation; and possibly previous advisory board membership.

Dressel (1976, p. 416) lists the various ways of selecting representatives for the evaluation committee: election by academic unit, selection by deans, appointment by the president from a list nominated by coordinating committee, or appointment by the president alone. He sees several concerns with the election process, such as it being a popularity contest, but also feels that appointment is no guarantee of competence. He proposes a combination of election and appointment. Criteria for membership on the evaluation committee should be such as to exclude those who have a strong, biased point-of-view, and those who see membership as a stepping-stone to advancement. Members should have the respect of others concerned with the program, and the chairman should be someone of recognized stature within the institution.

9. The evaluation should examine the goals or objectives of the program under study.

The stated goals or objectives of the program should be examined (Dressel, 1976; Munitz & Wright, 1980; George, 1982). According to Munitz & Wright (1980, p. 22), the goals of a program spell out the expectations of the program to fulfil certain requirements and can generally be derived from a meaningful interpretation of the stated mission of the institution. These goals can be determined from the documents published by the institution. As Braskamp (1982, p. 56) states, "The rhetoric of an institution has important policy implications." In examining the stated goals of a program, what must be assessed is their appropriateness for the student population, the college mission, and the community (Clowes 1981).

10. The evaluation should examine the resources of the program.

To evaluate a community college program effectively, the resources must be examined to determine their adequacy. Equipment and labs are very important components of the program. Their adequacy is essential in conducting a quality program.

Dressel (1976) and Munitz & Wright (1980) feel that it is important to determine whether or not the resources are sufficient to meet the stated goals of the program. The resources refer to the tangible features of the program. Physical resources or assets include classrooms, equipment, light, heat, ventilation, laboratories, and libraries. The financial resources emanate from government funds, tuition, and donations. The human resources of a program include staff, faculty credentials, as well as the number of students and their qualifications (Clowes, 1981; Warmbrod & Persavich, 1981; George, 1982).

In discussing the necessity of adequate physical resources, De Bernardis (1984) finds that excellent instruction can make up for a lack of facilities, but good facilities and up-to-date equipment can achieve superior results.

11. The evaluation should examine the teaching-learning process of the program.

George (1982, p. 50) defines the teaching-learning process as what the institution does with the students, faculty, and resources. It includes the teaching methodology, the intellectual climate of the institution, and the nature of the student-faculty interaction. Munitz and Wright (1980, p. 22) consider this process to be the heart of the program, in which the faculty and students come together in class and laboratory activities for discovery, transmission, and application of knowledge.

What specifically should be assessed as indicators of the teaching-learning process? George (1982) finds that faculty morale is a good indicator of the teaching-learning process as well as the overall institutional quality. He assesses faculty's self-image, its belief in the value of what it is doing, and its belief in its ability to do a good job. Warmbrod and Persavich (1981) stress the instructional program, its content, sequencing, emphasis, and organization. Clowes (1981) assesses the extent to which the institutional activities are congruent with its stated goals. He also sees vertical mobility of the program's graduates as an important factor in the teaching-learning process. Graduates should be able to continue with further study after completing the initial training. At a community college, this factor is very relevant. Often a program gives the graduate marketable employment skills which can later be used as a prerequisite for further training.

The most important component in the assessment of the process at the community college is the evaluation of teaching. Eaton (1982, p. 21) says, "Quality education - general or technical - ultimately rests with the people we hire." De Bernardis (1984, p. 35) adds, "There is no question that the instructor, as the manager of the teaching and learning experience, is the key factor in the education process." Mauksch, quoted in Conrad and

Hammond (1984, p. 17), states that the content and teaching of a program must be evaluated. It has been ignored in the past in the name of academic freedom; that is, the instructor's right to choose method and content has been considered to be beyond the scope and legitimate purview of evaluation studies. But, if teaching, like research, is a scholarly activity, it must be open to peer scrutiny. Whitley (1984, p. 41) cites various writers who emphasize the importance of evaluating teaching:

Educational institutions must endeavor to improve instruction through the rigorous evaluation of teaching and the recognition and rewarding of excellence; and failure to evaluate instruction protects the incompetent while failing to reward the competent.

Effective evaluations must determine general health of the teaching-learning process of a program. The factors examined include the program content and its arrangement; the quality of teaching; the student-teacher interaction; and the teaching methodology. Many variations in these factors are possible. The evaluation must determine if the ones used are effective in the context of the program.

12. The evaluation should examine the outcomes or results of the program.

The outcome or results of a program are those items, be they skills, values, or knowledge, which were added to the students' make-up as a result of their participation in the program (George, 1982; Conrad & Hammond, 1984). As Dressel (1976) points out,

> The total impact of a college program on the individual is so uncertain and so fragmented by department, course, and program structure that the "value added" (achievement related to initial capacity) is unknown, though often effusively and ambiguously described in college catalogues. (p. 80)

Munitz and Wright (1980) refer to outcomes as "products," both tangible and intangible. Miller (1980) is more concrete citing professional certification and licences obtained by graduates as the outcomes of their education. Clowes (1981) includes in outcomes the number of graduates that a program produces and staff productivity.

In vocational courses, "post graduate employment in a training related occupation has been the major criterion for [determining] effectiveness" (Cobb & Preskill, 1983, p. 496). Cobb and Preskill consider this to be an unfair evaluation of a program, given that the institution has no control over external variables such as the economic situation or the personal characteristics of their students. Garrity (1984, p. 40) thinks that more appropriate factors would be whether the program is meeting existing or expected manpower needs and whether the graduates are able to perform their jobs adequately once they enter the labour market.

At the community college, the traditional outcome measured has been the number of transfer students or the number of graduates (Eaton, 1982, p. 18). Eaton proposes these outcomes as alternatives. As a result of their college experience, have the students changed significantly, achieved a specified skill level, or achieved their personal goals? In an effective evaluation, not only the outcomes but also their appropriateness aref examined.

13. The evaluation should examine the relationship among the objectives, the resources, the teaching-learning process, and the outcomes.

Using Stake's model (1976), the relationships among the objectives, the resources, the teaching-learning process, and the outcomes must be both contingent and congruent.

First, the stated objectives, resources, teaching-learning process, and outcomes are examined to determine if they are contingent, that is, if one logically leads to the other. For example, given the stated teaching methodology, can the stated objective be meet? Is the method appropriate to that objective or goal? Also, is the goal contingent or logical given the population that is to be served? Given the stated resources, are the objectives, teaching-learning process, and outcomes logical? Finally, can the stated outcomes logically result from the stated teaching-learning process? Logic is the test in each of these relationships. The appropriateness of each variable given the other related variables, is determined logically.

Next, the variables are examined to determine if they are congruent, that is, really occurring in the program. What is examined is the extent to which a stated variable is actually in place in the program. For example, is the stated teaching method actually being used? Are the specified resources, such as faculty qualifications, actually being adhered to?

Thus, the examination of the relationships among the above variables is a two step process. First the appropriateness of each variable is determined. Then the extent to which each stated variable is actually present is assessed.

14. The data used for making judgements should be subjective as well as objective.

It is generally conceded that measuring cognitive and psychomotor achievements (objective data) is not only easier, but also more readily accepted, than is measuring those in the affective domain (subjective data). However, both types are important.

Anderson, et. al., (1975, p. 203) comment that highly objective data such as the value of the plant, growth rates, and library holdings are quantifiable, reliable, and replicable, but can lead to neglect of important variables that cannot be measured as precisely. Therefore, even though subjective data, such as participants' opinions, feelings, attitudes, or reactions, may be subject to bias, they may be necessary. Miller (1980, p. 425) advocates the use of numerical data when available and purposeful, but makes no apologies for using subjective data. It is "better to be generally right than precisely wrong". Braskamp (1982), George (1982), and Craven (1980) all agree that no matter the volume of numeric or objective data, subjective data may take precedence. Braskamp (p. 60) adds, "Holistic professional judgement about a program may be preferred". Petrie (1982, p. 22) concludes, "No one can or should develop criteria to the level of explicitness that criteria could serve as a checklist for conducting evaluations".

Thus, both subjective and objective data should be used in a effective evaluation. If only objective data are used, the result might be a distorted picture of what is actually occurring within a program.

15. Data should be collected from a variety of sources.

A variety of sources of information should be used when assessing the worth of a program (Craven, 1980; Miller, 1980; George, 1982). Using such varied sources of data ensures that differing value perspectives will be represented. These sources include such groups as parents, trustees, alumni, the community, business, and industry (Miller, 1980), as well as the staff, faculty and board (Braskamp, 1982), and peers (Petrie, 1982). Evidence from various sources, if similar, makes the data more valid and reliable (George, 1982; Petrie, 1982). For example, if both the faculty and representatives of industry indicate that more modern lab facilities are required, a valid finding of the evaluation might be that better lab facilities are necessary. If two or three evaluation studies indicate that a particular teaching method is not effective, a reliable finding might be that the method should be changed.

Students as sources of information have been stressed. Rossi and Freeman (1982) find that information from students or clients is very valuable. It is the only way to assess what is actually happening in the teaching-learning process. McKeachie (1979), quoted in Whitley (1984), states that student ratings can provide information that could be used by peers or administrators to make judgements about the process. Adds Whitley (1984, p. 42), "Student rating scales are indispensable sources of information in the evaluation of instruction". They are particularly useful for program improvement. Miller (1980, p. 420) cautions that students should have significant input into areas in which they have experience or knowledge, but not in areas such as faculty qualification, institutional leadership, or fiscal arrangements, about which they are less knowledgeable.

16. Various methods should be used to obtain the data used to judge program worth.

Rossi and Freeman (1982) have listed various methods that are suitable for conducting systematic evaluations of existing programs (pp. 150-158). Direct observation can be used. Several problem exist with this method. The presence of an observer may alter the usual behavior; the observer requires special training; the process may be very time consuming; and the data collected may be hard to analyze. The analysis of data can be somewhat facilitated by the use of observation guides or structured rating scales, but is still difficult.

A second method is the use of data from service records or other records. Problems with this method concern the incompleteness of some records, the inconsistency among records, and their complexity, that is they may contain too much information. However, this may be an inexpensive and efficient method of obtaining relevant data.

Another method requires the staff to keep diaries or to prepare narratives of their activities. This is a useful method, but the information is difficult to analyze. Semi-structured check lists help to code the information, like direct observation, but the data are still difficult to analyze.

The most efficient and economical method of studying a program is the self-administered questionnaire. It is highly structured and easy to tabulate. It can be completed by the person alone or through an interview. The concern with the questionnaire method is that it is sometimes too structured; the questions asked already reflect the bias of the evaluators. Adding some open-ended questions to the questionnaire helps to overcome this drawback to some extent, but increases the difficulty of the data analysis.

Since there are some concerns about each of the available methods of collecting data, a necessary condition for an effective evaluation is that several methods be used. In a community college program, data collection methods would include completing questionnaires, examining student records, and conducting some follow-up interviews. Direct observation could also be used in some areas, for example, the assessment of the quality of facilities.

17. The data collected should be common across programs but allow some individualization.

Colleges should develop criteria and collect data that are appropriate to their needs. Munitz and Wright (1980, p. 38) advocate standard forms produced by a campus-wide committee be used to evaluate all programs. Clowes (1981) agrees, but adds that each program must be able to consider its "unique-flavours" and special interests (p. 5). The evaluation should consider issues or questions which are "program specific". Petrie (1982) stresses the importance of some latitude in developing data collection items:

> The process of developing criteria helps sensitize people to the issues involved and the salient features that they must consider in the evaluation even though the final product will require wise judgement rather than a summary of criteria met and unmet. (p. 24)

Involving the staff in the selection of issues or questions helps to create ownership in the evaluation and increases staff's acceptance of both the evaluation and its findings.

Thus, two sets of data should be collected: One set of data should be uniform for each program at the college. This set would include such data as the drop-out rate, the number of graduates, the participants' opinions about the appropriateness of the objectives, and the perceived availability of assistance when required. The other set would include data that is program specific. For example, the ESL (English as a Second Language) program might assess the adequacy of drill tapes, while the computer science program might assess the students' reactions to the work experience program. It is unrealistic to assume that all programs can be assessed using the same data. Some questions would be quite irrelevant in one program, but vital in the proper assessment of another. Thus, the two sets of data are important.

18. **The evaluation report should have several forms, be made available to various audiences, and be action-oriented.**

Dressel (1976) and Craven (1980) recommend more than one version of the final report. Craven advocates three forms: summary, complete, and brief press release.

The report should be widely circulated (Dressel, 1976; Munitz & Wright, 1980; Craven, 1980). All who participated should have access to the report.

Dressel (1976) recommends that the report be written by one or two people, the chairman perhaps, rather than the entire committee. The draft report is circulated to all participants, but probably not the public, for discussion. It should not be kept secret, but its tentativeness should be stressed. Using this procedure ensures a requirement that Craven (1980, p. 449) stresses, which is that the report must be judged credible and acceptable by those involved.

The report should be action-oriented (Braskamp, 1982; George, 1982). Miller (1980, p. 426) warns that even in the planning of the evaluation, the action orientation should be stressed lest the final report is "filed and forgotten." Dressel (1976) advocates grouping recommendations according to the administrative area of responsibility, and spreading the implementation of the recommendations over as many people as possible, thus arousing the interest of the entire group and creating a receptive attitude.

Clowes (1981, p. 6) describes a system which is very action-oriented. Following the completion of the evaluation study, a document called a Memorandum of Agreement is completed between the program under study and the program review committee. It contains the current status of the program, where it should be, how it will get there, and the resources required to accomplish the task. A Status Report is sent to the dean. This report contains a summary of the findings as well as a rating. These ratings are positive, caution, probation, or termination. Each rating carries with it certain follow-up procedures.

A necessary condition for an effective evaluation is a reporting system which provides for wide circulation of the results and an orientation towards action on the evaluation's findings.

19. A follow-up study should be conducted.

Follow-up studies should be conducted to determine if changes are occurring as a result of the evaluation system. According to Braskamp (1982, p. 65), "The ultimate defense of any evaluation system is its utility, that is, to what extent is the expenditure of time and financial resources improving the institution." George (1982, p. 53) agrees, "The institution has something more in mind than producing reports that sit on a shelf...the ultimate outcome must be some action designed...to improve the quality of the program...or some modification. Otherwise, it is probably not worth doing."

Various time-frames are suggested for follow-up investigations: Braskamp (1982), six months, Craven (1980), periodic, and Dressel (1976), two to three years.

In his discussion of evaluation utilization, Smock (1982, p. 72) observes that "We lack knowledge about how to use negative information to produce positive change, and evaluation for improvement often must criticize if it is to serve its purpose." Criticism, he notes, can produce a very defensive reaction mitigating against change.

The literature stresses the importance of evaluation utility. The evaluation must be of some use. It must be seen to be an effective evaluation. To determine whether some use has been made of the evaluation results, it is necessary to conduct a follow-up study. This study will indicate if and how the results were used. It may lead to further investigations to determine better ways of using evaluation results.

20. The evaluation system should be viewed as fair and open by the participants.

The evaluation system must be viewed as fair by the participants, or it will not function properly. Hoyt (1982, p. 91) stresses "no hidden cameras" and the importance of maintaining confidentiality of responses when such confidentiality was promised. The individual should know what will happen. Munitz & Wright (1980) comment on the fair use of results. Braskamp (1982, p. 66) says that the system must be viewed as fair or it is not worth retaining. Wallhaus (1982, p. 85) states that assurance of due process is a sign of a fair evaluation.

House (1982, p. 13) and Wilson (1982, p. 101) have articulated several features which must be present in a fair evaluation. These include validity, reliability, relevance and openness. These can be achieved if there are open communication channels among relevant constituents, explicit and publically known procedures, actions which are not arbitrary but consistently applied, multiple sources on which judgements are based, and flexibility and adaptivness in the organization of the evaluation. Fairness and openness go hand-in-hand. Craven (1976) stresses the need for open communication throughout the study to prevent the rumors which can result from secrecy.

Braskamp (1982, p. 58) sees the communications network among the participants in the study as the core of the system. It establishes an environment in which audiences become involved in the process and results in open two-way communication which can lead to mutual problem solving.

The literature suggests that an effective evaluation must be seen as being fair and open. At all stages of the evaluation, information must be available to stakeholders. Following the completion of the evaluation, due process must be available for those who feel they need it.

CONCLUSION

The twenty conditions identified above are important in the effective evaluation of a community college program. Evaluations are generally time-consuming and costly. If these conditions are not in place, the time and money spent on evaluation could be wasted. The evaluation may sit on the shelf along with all previous evaluations. The conditions listed above should result in the desired outcome of the evaluation - improvements in the program, because they will foster an acceptance of the evaluation process by the faculty, students, and other stockholders. Without the co-operation, involvement, and active support of these stakeholders, no evaluation can be effective. Their attitudes are the key. These conditions, if in place, should foster the type of attitudes which will lead to improved evaluations.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the conditions necessary for an effective evaluation of academic programs at western Canadian community colleges. It has also presented the literature on which each of the conditions is based.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter are presented the results of telephone interviews with those responsible for program evaluation at six western Canadian community colleges. Each college will be examined individually as a case study.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the conditions outlined in this study fall into six categories: purpose, procedure, content, data, outcome, and overall participant reaction. In each case, the program evaluation methodology at the college will be discussed using these categories.

COLLEGE A

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of program evaluation is not clearly defined or stated. This lack of clear purpose can result in an evaluation methodology which is also unclear and unfocused, and an overall evaluation which is possibly unproductive and has questions as to its reliability and validity.

The general purpose for evaluating a program at this college is to see if it is effective in meeting its objectives, that is, if it is doing what the college planned. The focus is not specifically to improve the program.

II. PROCEDURE

The procedures used to evaluate programs at this college are very haphazard and are not documented. This finding is not unexpected given the poorly defined purpose. The procedure involves conducting an internal evaluation study, but not on any regular or systematic basis. Evaluations are conducted if staff are available, if those staff have some competence in evaluation, and if financial resources permit. The main criterion for selecting a particular program to evaluate is that it has been going for a number of years and should be checked to see if it is still meeting its objective. This criterion is quite valid (See Anderson and Ball, 1978.); however, it should be applied on a regular and systematic basis to all programs.

Senior college administration appears to have little input into the evaluation except to determine which program is evaluated and to receive the final report. The actual participants responsible for conducting the evaluation are the instructors and the program head, who are responsible for conducting the entire evaluation. The criterion for their selection is that they are involved in the program which is to be evaluated. A major concern about the effectiveness of the evaluation arises: How is quality control achieved? If there is no clear statement of purpose, and no clear outline of procedure, and no administrative input, what checks are in place to assure a valid and reliable evaluation?

III. CONTENT

College A examines the four major areas (objectives, resources, teaching-learning process, and outcomes) that should be considered in an evaluation and also examines the relationship among these areas. The goals and objectives are examined to insure that they have been specified and that they are appropriate. Human, physical, and financial resources are examined to determine if they are sufficient to meet the given objectives. The teaching-learning process is examined to determine if the teachers are adequate and specifically if they are using principles of adult learning. This system is unique in that it is the only one which stated that teachers were evaluated. The outcomes were examined to determine if the objectives of the program have been met. For example, if the training is for employment, the graduate's finding a related job is a key outcome. If graduates do not get jobs, the college will try to determine the cause.

IV. DATA

The college collects data from several sources: students, employers, and instructors. Students are not specified as to current, graduates or early terminators. It uses a great variety of methods: questionnaires, interviews, direct observation, reviewing documents, and self-reports. However, how these are actually used is not clearly identified or specified. Also, since each evaluation is potentially different, all these methods may not be used in each evaluation. The data collected vary from program to program. Those conducting the study are free to collect whatever data they feel necessary. No common data are collected for all courses. Additional guidelines in this area would provide more valid and reliable evaluations.

V. OUTCOME

A report is prepared at the conclusion of the evaluation by the person who conducted the evaluation. It is not circulated in draft form. No standard format exists. It is forwarded to the CEO, who has the responsibility for any action taken as a result of the evaluation. The report is not widely distributed and does not appear to be action-oriented. There might be a follow-up study to see if anything has been done about the report's recommendations.

VI. OVERALL PARTICIPANT REACTION

The participants in the evaluation process at this college have not had any major concerns about the openness or fairness of the evaluation process. Since those conducting the study appear to have a completely free reign, it is understandable that openness and fairness are not concerns to those conducting the study. Other stakeholders in the program may have concerns, particularly about the validity and reliability of the evaluation.

In general, the evaluation system at this college is as yet not very well developed. It lacks a clear purpose, clearly articulated, systematic procedures, and appropriate evaluation outcomes. However, the college does have a concern about evaluation, does seem to be looking at appropriate aspects of a program, and does seem to be collecting data from a variety of sources. The judgements it makes about the data seem to be appropriate; that is, the college examines the adequacy and appropriateness of such items as goals and resources in relation to other variables such as the outcomes. It is the only system which examines what many experts feel is the key to the educational process, the teacher.

On the whole, this evaluation system has many deficiencies, but has some interesting and appropriate features. The greatest problem with this evaluation methodology is that because there are few set procedures and quality assurance measures, the validity and reliability of the evaluations conducted might be in doubt.

COLLEGE B

I. PURPOSE

College B has set up its programs as a series of tasks, similar to objectives. The purpose of program evaluation at this college is to determine if the tasks specified in the program are relevant to the particular occupation for which students in that program are being trained. Thus, the college has one main purpose, and it is quite clearly stated: not program improvement, but the relevance of the objectives and the content flowing from those objectives to employment.

II. PROCEDURE

The evaluation system appears to be regular and systematic. Annually, the advisory board of each program reviews the tasks/objectives of that program and makes its recommendations to the appropriate administrators. Every five years, internal evaluations are conducted of each program. An exception would be to delay or advance an evaluation, especially in the health sciences area, so that it would correspond with an external accreditation study.

The procedures state that the division chairperson, or his designate, takes charge of the evaluation. The manager of the program and the staff development unit are also part of the evaluation committee. Thus, the evaluation has strong administrative support, but noticeably absent are representatives from other relevant stakeholders: staff and students, in particular. Criteria for selecting committee members are not necessary since no selecting is required. These procedures are formulated quite clearly but have not been published since this methodology is still in its pilot stage.

III. CONTENT

The evaluation seems to centre around the objectives of the program. Thus it is not surprising that the content areas are all examined in relation to the program objectives. First, the actual goals and objectives are examined to determine their relevance to the current job situation. Then the resources are considered to determine if they are sufficient to deliver the tasks described. Under the teaching-learning process, materials, such as learning guides, audio/visual offerings, and text books, are examined to determine if they will accomplish the objectives. Individualization of learning is a goal at this college; therefore, a criterion for rating a program is whether or not it is using an individualized rather than the traditional learning approach.

A component deliberately omitted in this evaluation methodology is the teacher. The college stresses that it is not a teacher or personal evaluation, but a program evaluation. Often stressing that an evaluation is not a teacher evaluation is a technique used to calm staff fears about the evaluation process. However, omitting the instructor may be omitting the key factor in the program. A better way to alleviate staff concerns may be to give them a role in the evaluation process. Often, a system which has individualization of learning as a priority places more emphasis on the materials used than the staff involved. Thus it is quite logical for this college to stress material evaluation over teacher evaluation.

The outcomes examined in this system are again related to the objectives. The college measures whether or not these objectives lead to employment for the students. Secondarily the college examines student satisfaction and meeting the individual student's needs.

IV. DATA

Data are collected from a variety of sources: students, employers, graduates, and advisory committee members. Again, a noticeable absentee from this list is the instructional staff. They seem to play no role in the entire process. Questionnaires are the only data collection method. The questionnaires have two versions: one for traditional programs and one for those using individualized learning. No other variations are used. All the other data are the same for all programs.

V. OUTCOME

Overall, the evaluation methodology has a strong administrative bias, which is also evident in the outcome or report. Only one version of the report is prepared by either the staff development unit representative or by the division chairman. It is made available to the CEO, the staff of the program being evaluated, and the chairman of the advisory committee. The report is not action-oriented and does not require a follow-up to determine if anything has happened as a result of the evaluation.

VI. OVERALL PARTICIPANT REACTION

No concerns have been expressed about the fairness or openness of the process by those in the program. With the lack of staff input, more concerns might have been expected. Two possible explanations may exist: First, this is the pilot run of the methodology. It is still in flux. It may not as yet have had a real impact on staff. Second, if there are no clear outcomes or results from the study, it may never have any impact on staff. The real test will come when the evaluation indicates that some changes have to be made by the staff. Then perhaps their concerns will present themselves.

The evaluation system at this college is still evolving. The college is quite concerned about evaluation and has just introduced the five-year interval study to supplement the annual review already in place. The system stresses the objectives throughout, and examines other aspects of the program only in relation to the objectives. An important factor which has been omitted in the evaluation is the instructors. They have no input into the conduct of the evaluation; they are not asked to submit data; nor is their performance evaluated. These three factors may be a part of the reason for the lack of impact of the evaluation study on the program.

COLLEGE C

I. PURPOSE

The only purpose for program evaluation at College C is to provide data for academic decision making. It is clearly stated and drives the evaluation. It leads to an evaluation which is quite different from one designed for improvement. The main audience for this type of evaluation is the administrator who makes the decisions and therefore needs the data on which to base these decisions. (In an evaluation methodology designed for improvement, the main audience is the program staff who will implement the necessary improvements.)

II. PROCEDURE

The procedures for evaluation are clearly stated and documented. Evaluations are conducted every five years by internal staff. The vice-president academic provides the administrative leadership for the evaluation, but the actual responsibility of organizing the evaluation falls to the research and evaluation department. A representative from this department meets with the relevant people in the program and then designs and tailors the evaluation to that program. The relevant people appear to be the dean of the division, who determines the actual focus of the evaluation, and to a lesser extent the program head. Absent are the program staff. A committee structure, with representation and input from all relevant stakeholders has not been used.

These procedures are quite consistent with the college's stated purpose. Decisions are made, generally, by administrators. Therefore, if the information gathered is primarily for them, to aid them in making decisions, they should have the greatest say in the conduct of the evaluation. The evaluation is for administrators, not for staff.

III. CONTENT

The four major aspects, goals and objectives, resources, teaching-learning process, and the outcomes, are examined. The objectives are rated as to whether they are still appropriate, if they have been properly stated, and if the participants are aware of them. Under resources, all the financial, human and material resources are considered. Various interactions are examined under the teaching-learning process including student-staff, faculty-administration, and program-advisory committee. The major outcomes considered are the success of graduates in the labour force (from their own and their employers' perceptions) and the success and number of graduates proceeding to other education.

IV. DATA

Since the primary purpose of evaluation is to provide data for decision making, it is to be expected that a large volume of data will be collected. Data are collected from employers, graduates, program faculty and administrators, students, support staff, outside educational experts, government personnel connected with the program, advisory committee members, and others. Data are collected by means of questionnaires, interviews (personal and telephone), direct observation, and reviewing documents. An interesting aspect of the document review is that included with a study of the program's curricula and objectives is an examination of the documents from similar programs in operation elsewhere. This kind of examination relates again to the purpose of the evaluation: to provide data for decision making. Not only are data provided from their own environment, but also different perspectives are provided through the examination of programs with similar aims in operation elsewhere.

The data collected for each program can vary, with each program's dean and program head determining the variations. However, with so much data being collected about each program, there is probably little actual variation among programs. Almost all the possible data are already being collected.

This system may be one in which collecting a variety of information from a variety of sources has been taken to the extreme. With so much information about so many items from so many sources, it may be difficult for the decision maker to process it all. One step which this college has taken to overcome this drawback is the publishing of a summary report, which highlights the findings and which has references to the complete, very detailed document.

V. OUTCOME

The outcome of the evaluation is a report which is prepared by the research department and circulated in draft form to upper and lower administration. A meeting of five to ten administrators is held to review the content. Interested faculty may attend, usually as observers. Recommendations for action, directed primarily to the dean of the division, are formulated with the authority of the vice-president academic, who has the overall responsibility for evaluation. Within a year, the dean is required to indicate to the vice-president the extent to which the recommendations of the report have been implemented.

A summary report is prepared with references to the original, complete document. Copies are available on loan from the division dean or the research department.

The length of time taken to complete the evaluation and the report at this college presents some problems. It can take up to or more than a year to complete the evaluation and produce the report. By the time all the data are tabulated, the information may no longer be current, and thus no longer be useful. It is important that the information provided to decision makers is current so that they can make appropriate decisions. Stale data may not allow the decision maker to make fresh decisions.

VI. OVERALL PARTICIPANT REACTION

The system appears to be viewed as fair and open. The faculty has input at several stages. They can send a representative to observe at various meetings of the evaluation personnel and can make their concerns known at the meeting held to review the content of the evaluation report. The onus for keeping faculty informed during the evaluation process rests with the administrators. The college reports that no unsolvable problems have as yet arisen.

An area of concern might be the lack of direct input from faculty in the actual evaluation process. However, the system seems to be quite open, with a well documented purpose and procedure. Faculty know what to expect and when they can have some input into the system. Also, the evaluation is clearly not for the faculty. From the outset, it is clear that this evaluation system is for the administration. Therefore, faculty have less to gain or lose by the outcomes than from a evaluation geared to them. Thus, it appears reasonable to conclude that since they have less at stake, they will have less concern.

In general, the evaluation methodology at this college is quite well developed. It has been in use for quite a while and participants seem comfortable with it. The college is unique in that it collects the largest volume of data of all the colleges surveyed, perhaps more than it needs.

Its interesting features include the comparison of its programs to similar ones elsewhere, its interest in assessing the participants' awareness of the program's objectives, and its assessment of the interactions between various groups. It permits any stakeholder input into the evaluation. A concern may be the length of time each evaluation takes. After one year, the data may no longer be current.

COLLEGE D

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of program evaluation at College D is to make value judgements, based on solid evidence, about continuing, modifying, or terminating a program. It is also a process of validation of the current program. The purpose is quite clear, and it is very limited. Some improvement may occur as a result of the modification aspect of the purpose, but this is not the general thrust of the evaluation. The purpose seems to call for a summative, final yes/no type of judgement about a program.

An immediate concern is the effect that this very summative type of evaluation has on program staff. Often a staff can feel very threatened by such a methodology, especially if staff has little input into the system.

II. PROCEDURE

The procedures are not as clear cut as the purpose. Programs are not evaluated according to any regular schedule. Why a particular program is evaluated, and another is not, is not indicated. Using this approach can lead to a great deal of uncertainty, frustration, and anxiety among the staff with regard to the evaluation process, particularly given the finality of the stated purpose. Adding to these potentially negative staff feelings is the fact that the evaluation is not internal, conducted in-house, but external, conducted by a committee composed of employers who have hired students from the course being evaluated and other employers in the industry. The person directly responsible for the program, the program supervisor, has direct responsibility for establishing the committee and conducting the evaluation. Senior administration does not appear to be involved. No set procedures have been established. Each committee has a free reign. One of the key conditions necessary for an effective evaluation is to have clearly stated procedures. This evaluation methodology is clearly lacking these.

III. CONTENT

Given the limited purpose of the evaluation, very limited scope is expected. The only aspect of the program which is examined at this college is the program goals and objectives and their relationship to the outcomes. The terminal objectives, that is, the skills that a student is expected to acquire while attending the program, are the only items examined. The criteria used to judge the worth of these objectives are do the objectives lead to (1) the graduates' employment, (2) the graduates' progress in their chosen field, or (3) the graduates' ability to progress in further training required to achieve (1) or (2). There are many other factors which influence these outcomes besides the program such as the economic climate and the attitude of graduates, to name but two. Using only the three criteria cited by this college to evaluate an entire program may not be valid or fair.

IV. DATA

The data are collected in the following manner: The program staff list the objectives that the program is designed to achieve. Questionnaires are constructed; the external committee cited above rates the objectives, using these questionnaires. They are asked to rate the importance of the skill/objective listed and how frequently it is actually used in the industry. The same general format is used to collect data for each program, but the questions vary as the objectives vary for each program. Since the questions determine the evaluation, each evaluation is probably quite different in scope, depth, accuracy, credibility, validity, and reliability. If better guidelines existed, or if some common administrative input were provided to oversee all the evaluations, more consistency across evaluations would result.

The data collection is limited. Only one source is used, employers. Another useful source, even for such a limited evaluation, might be the graduates.

V. OUTCOME

The outcome of the evaluation is rather vague. Given the very definite purpose, that is to validate the objectives, it would be expected that the report would make clear statements about these objectives. It would validate them, alter them, or completely remove them. However, after the data are collected from the external committee, the program supervisor prepares a report which is for internal use only. The manager will receive a copy and perhaps the advisory committee as well. The report does not seem to be action-oriented. The program staff is asked to use the results. There is no monitoring to see if anything happened as a result of the report of the evaluation. With such a clear purpose, a clearer outcome would have been expected.

VI. OVERALL PARTICIPANT REACTION

The evaluation process has not as yet encountered any problems concerning its openness and fairness. Perhaps this is due to the fact that little appears to be done to see what has happened as a result of the evaluation. Were a program to be terminated as a result of this evaluation methodology, staff concerns would surely arise, given their lack of input.

This evaluation methodology is in its pilot stage. Therefore, it is not surprising that it is focusing on an assessment of the objectives. Testing objectives is the best known methodology and therefore often used when colleges are first introducing an evaluation system. A unique feature of this system is the total reliance on the opinion of external evaluators (employers) to judge the worth of the program. While other systems have cited using employers to evaluate, this system was the only one to use only employers to the exclusion of all others. If information were collected from a greater variety of sources, more use might be made of the results.

COLLEGE E

I. PURPOSE

This college has two stated purposes. One purpose of program evaluation at College E is to ensure that the program is meeting its objectives or to assess its progress towards meeting them. The overall objectives to be met are student, employer, and community needs. The other stated purpose is that the evaluation should indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the program and indicate a clear action plan for implementing the findings. These directives seem to indicate that improvement should occur, especially when the action plan is specified right in the purpose.

II. PROCEDURE

This college has its general procedures documented.

These include the participants, their duties, the specific information to be collected, the analysis of the data, and the outcomes expected. Programs are to be formally evaluated every three years. Accreditation requirements may vary this schedule, but internal program factors will not. It has a combination of internal and external participants. The external component is a committee composed of representatives from other institutions, professional organizations (where applicable), employers, graduates, and the community at large, who have overall control over the evaluation. The internal aspect is the dean of the program being evaluated, who coordinates the evaluation. The dean ensures that the evaluation is carried out by recommending committee membership, procuring appropriate information, facilitating data collection, and preparing the final report. Given the broad nature of these responsibilities, the evaluation really proceeds under the dean's direction; this administrator has de facto control. Program staff may be called upon as resource people and have the right to make presentations to the evaluation committee, but have no direct input. They are excluded from the outlined procedures. This exclusion may lead to implementation problems later. Since in many ways the staff are seen as peripheral to the evaluation process, they may not have a strong commitment to the recommendations of the evaluation.

III. CONTENT

The evaluation passes judgement on the goals and objectives, the resources, and the outcomes. It does not examine the teaching-learning process other than to look at outlines of the courses which comprise the program to determine if they are suitable and complete. These outlines or curricula are often compared with other similar programs at other institutions. The goals and objectives are examined to determine their suitability and appropriateness. The adequacy of resources is examined. All facilities, support equipment, and labs are examined. One criterion used to judge resources is sufficient access to facilities, such as computers and audio-visual materials. Under outcomes, two criteria are applied: For employment oriented programs, does the training provide the appropriate skills to meet the needs of the employers? For general education and generic skills programs, can the skills be transferred to a variety of skill areas?

The teaching-learning process was omitted by design because it is felt that an external committee cannot assess its effectiveness since its members are not directly involved in the work of the college. If internal staff had more involvement in the process, such as representation on the evaluation committee, the teaching-learning process could then legitimately be assessed, adding a worthwhile component to the evaluation content.

IV. DATA

Data are collected from a variety of sources including records of the institution, graduates, employers, but generally excluding staff and current students. A self-report might be prepared by the program, but the most extensive data collection methods are questionnaires, reviews of documents, and telephone surveys. The committee determines the kind of data to be collected, but fairly standard information is required from each program including enrollment patterns, admission and graduation requirements, graduate employment, etc. Thus, there are common data, but room is allowed for individualization of the questions for each program.

V. OUTCOME

The report is prepared by the dean who presents it in draft form to the committee for their approval. It must also be approved by the appropriate advisory committee. Once approved, it passes to the upper administration and becomes publically available. The report is to have recommendations, which if sound, are to be implemented by the dean and program personnel as part of the regular operations of the program. If program personnel had greater input into the evaluation, their enthusiasm to implement the recommendations might be greater. They would have more ownership of the evaluation and give more credence to its recommendation. However, the college has indicated no concern in this area.

After one year, the dean is required to indicate to upper administration the progress made by the program with regard to implementation of the recommendations.

VI. OVERALL PARTICIPANT REACTION

This evaluation system has encountered few problems concerning its fairness and openness. Although staff are not directly involved in the planning, organizing, and conducting of the evaluation, there are several opportunities for input from them. Staff may make voluntary submissions or may be called to provide information to the committee in a resource capacity.

The use of employers as external evaluators is very interesting. Similar approaches have been cited by Garrity (1984) and Paris (1985). This approach can lead to greater credibility of an evaluation, especially for those outside the institution. Totally internal studies are often seen as being mere reaffirmations of the status quo. External critics help to counter this criticism.

Another interesting feature of this methodology is the use of not only employers of graduates but also representatives of professional organizations, where applicable.

This system appears to make good use of its evaluation results. A reason for this could be that the requirement for an implementation action plan is stated right at the outset with the purpose of the evaluation.

COLLEGE F

I. PURPOSE

The purpose for program evaluation at College F is program improvement. This college is in the process of testing a new model. Guidelines have been prepared, but official documentation is still in progress. However, the stated thrust is program improvement.

II. PROCEDURE

The schedule calls for all programs to be evaluated once in five years, but according to the college this timeframe is an impossible goal due to financial restraints. The programs are evaluated in rotation, systematically. There is no "hit list." Factors within the program do not trigger an evaluation. The evaluation is an internal self-study overseen by the instructional manager for that program. The office of institutional research acts as an information broker, providing the raw data for the program staff to analyze. A high degree of instructor involvement is evident. These procedures follow well from the stated purpose. If course improvement is the goal, those who are directly concerned with the program, and those who will be the ones actually to use the suggestions, should be directly involved in all stages of the evaluation. One factor which should be more clearly articulated is the actual composition of the evaluation committee. How are the faculty representatives selected? What process and criteria are used?

III. CONTENT

The evaluation methodology requires the examination of the goals and objectives of the program. The students' goals for enrolling in the program are considered in relation to the outcomes they derived from it. Also considered are the stated objectives of the program, such as employment and transfer of credit, to see the extent to which they are being met. Under resources, the cost of the program is examined. Data such as the cost per student contact hour are generated. Other resources examined include professional development of staff, library facilities, computer availability, and industry trends. Both the need for these resources and their adequacy are examined.

The teaching-learning process does not come under as close scrutiny as do the previous components of the evaluation. Instructors, the key to any program, are not specifically considered. The use of various teaching aides, such as computers, is examined, but not general teaching methodology. This omission could make the evaluation less useful than it could otherwise be. However, given the type of data collection devices outlined below, relevant information about the teaching-learning process is probably generated. With this information, improvement can occur even in this area.

IV. DATA

Data are collected from a variety of sources: graduates, discontinuers, advisory committee, faculty, but not current students. Questionnaires, with both objective and subjective questions, and self-reports are the main data collection instruments, although some telephone follow-ups are conducted. Newspaper articles related to the program or its field are tabulated. Group interviews are used to obtain information from faculty. For all programs, the same statistical data are generated, such as total enrollments, graduates, and drop-outs, as well as financial information. But the more subjective data vary according to the direction desired by the program, particularly the program manager. The data collection techniques are both varied and comprehensive and could yield a reliable evaluation.

V. OUTCOME

A final report is prepared at the conclusion of the evaluation by the program manager. It is examined in draft form by the program staff and the administration. Any concerns or problems are dealt with at this point. The changes recommended by the report become part of the regular functioning of the program. The actions to be carried out and whose responsibility they are are clearly stated. No formal follow-up is required; the implementation of the recommendations becomes part of the regular administrative duties.

VI. OVERALL PARTICIPANT REACTION

The entire process is very open to those involved. The final report is also publically available. Misconceptions and concerns are dealt with early. Thus the overall system is seen to be fair.

Validity and reliability may be a concern since little external input is evident. However, the evaluation is really designed to be of benefit to the program staff so that they can improve the program. It is to them that the evaluation must be seen as credible. They will have to be committed to making the necessary changes. If they do not view the evaluation as credible, they will resist any proposed alterations.

Another feature which may be lacking is strong administrative support for the evaluation. Program staff can only do so much unless they have the backing of the administration. When senior administration is involved in the evaluation, generally there tends to be a greater implementation of the results. However, the college states that its recommendations are used.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the data collected from the six participating community colleges, and discussed these data in relation to the conditions deemed to be necessary for an effective evaluation. The data were organized using the six categories (purpose, procedure, content, data, outcome, and over-all participant reaction) into which the conditions have been organized. Each college's evaluation process was presented as an individual case study. The next chapter will compare the data from the colleges.

CHAPTER V: COMPARISON OF COLLEGES

In this chapter will be presented the inter-college analysis of the data. The six categories, purpose, procedure, content, data, outcome, and overall participant reaction, will again be used. The relevant observations will be given followed by the conclusions which can logically be drawn from the data.

I. PURPOSE

A. Observations

Three of the colleges cited verifying the objectives as the one of the main purposes for evaluating academic programs. This fact is not surprising since, historically, the first type of evaluations were almost all designed to determine the extent to which the objectives of the program had been met.

One college had a very summative purpose, to validate, modify or terminate the program. One had as its purpose providing data for academic decision making.

Only one college had improvement as its sole purpose. This college had been involved in program evaluation extensively in the past and was this year testing a new model. It is interesting that the college which had the greatest experience in program evaluation considered improvement to be the essential purpose for evaluation.

Five of the colleges had clear statements of purpose, though not all were documented. Only one college was very vague in its purpose.

B. Conclusions

The purpose is very important in an evaluation; it provides the focus for the evaluation. Each purpose leads to a different type of evaluation. For example, College C had `providing data for academic decision making' as its purpose. Its system was geared to the administration, who ran the evaluation, received its findings, and were expected to do something with them. In contrast was College F, which had improvement as its purpose. The evaluation was geared to the program personnel. They had great input, received the findings, and were expected to do something with them.

A clear purpose usually leads to a clear evaluation. The exception to this was College D, which had a very clear purpose, but did not follow through with a clear evaluation. A good example was College A, which had a vague purpose and a vague overall methodology. Colleges C, E, and F had clear purposes and well-documented procedures.

Improvement seems to be the best purpose for conducting an evaluation at a community college. Two colleges F and E stated this purpose, and these were two of the three colleges at which the results of the evaluation study seemed to be implemented. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that using improvement of the program as a reason for evaluating is more likely to result in an evaluation which has results that are implemented than other kinds of evaluations.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Observations

Four of the colleges had their procedures outlined and specified so that everyone concerned had a good idea of what was happening. Two of these were documented; two were still in the pilot stage and had not published their procedures. Two colleges had no written or prescribed procedures for evaluations; each evaluation study at these two colleges had or could have had completely different procedures. There was no uniformity among their evaluations.

Only two of the colleges did not evaluate their courses on a regular schedule. One used a three year interval; the other three had five years between evaluations. Two colleges would alter the pattern to coincide with an outside study, such as an accreditation review. Two of the colleges mentioned that the five year rotation was the ideal, but that in fact, it had not been achieved. In these cases, a lack of manpower and other resources prevented the ideal.

Four of the evaluations were internal, one was internal-external, and one was completely external.

In three of the evaluation processes, an upper level administrator, such as the vice-president, division chairman, or dean, played a large role in the evaluation. In one methodology, the CEO merely decided which program was to be evaluated and received the final report, but the program head actually had full responsibility. In the other two, only the immediate supervisor was involved. All evaluations had some administrative representation involved in overseeing the study.

Other groups represented in the evaluation process included staff, students (current, graduates, and early leaver), employers, advisory committee members, professional organizations, and support personnel such as representatives from the program development or research departments. No college specified by what criteria individual representatives were selected.

B. Conclusions

There is great variety among the procedures used at the colleges surveyed. The procedures ranged from well-documented and clearly outlined at Colleges E, C, in place but not yet published at Colleges B and F, to not standardized at all at Colleges A and D.

The types of participants who direct the study vary. All had some administrative input, but even in this area there was variation. Colleges B, C, and E had senior administrators with ultimate responsibility, while at

Colleges A, D, and F, program level administrators were in charge. Four of the colleges (B, C, D, and E) did not have program staff participating in the planning and conducting of the evaluation. Two had participation from people external to the institution; College D had just employers, but College E had employers as well as representatives from professional organizations, other institutions and the community at large. Three of the colleges (B, C, F) had research/development departments whose representatives had a role on the evaluation committee.

This variety is also demonstrated in the timeframes for evaluations. Colleges A and D had none, College E had a three-year interval, while Colleges C and F tried to evaluate every five years.

Having strong administrative support for the evaluation has several positive outcomes: It leads to more consistency among the evaluations conducted by different programs at the institution. Those with strong administrative support have more inter-program commonality in procedures, data, and content, leading to more validity and reliability for the entire system than do those colleges without strong administrative guidance. Colleges A, D, and F had low level administrative input and little consistency across evaluations, while the other colleges had higher level administrators and more consistency. A second advantage is that generally, giving a high level administrator a great deal of input and ownership in the evaluation leads to greater utilization of the results. Some action followed the evaluations in two of the colleges with upper level administrator input; it did not at one (B) with such input. Two with lower level administrative input had no action following the evaluation, but one (F) did.

III. CONTENT

A. Observations

Four aspects of a program, goals and objectives, resources, teaching-learning process, and outcomes were examined by five of the colleges. One college looked only at objectives and outcomes.

The major considerations under the **objectives** heading were determining whether or not the goals and objectives were appropriate, relevant, and being met. Two colleges also assessed whether or not objectives had been specified; one of these wanted all objectives stated in behavioral terms. One college checked to see if participants were aware of what the objectives were.

Under **resources**, the physical, human, and financial aspects of the college program were assessed to determine if they were appropriate and sufficient by all but one college.

The **teaching-learning process** generally consisted of an examination of texts, program guides, and course outlines. Only one system assessed the teachers to ensure that they were using adult teaching methods. One college stressed that it was a program, not a teacher evaluation system. One looked at the interactions between staff and students, staff and administration, and program and advisory committee as part of the overall learning environment. Only one college completely omitted the teaching-learning process of the program.

Five of the six colleges consider graduate employment or success at work to be the main **outcome** on which a program should be rated. The sixth specified appropriate skills required for employment to be the outcome on which a program should be evaluated. Student satisfaction and meeting student needs were also desirable outcomes.

B. Conclusions

Program evaluation methodologies shy away from examining the effectiveness of the instructor/teacher in the teaching-learning process. In this area, examination is limited to written materials such as texts and course outlines. Teacher evaluation is deemed to be too sensitive for evaluation. However, as the literature states, it is a critical area and should be evaluated. (See Conrad and Hammond, 1984, and Whitley, 1984.) Only College A attempted evaluation in this sensitive area.

College programs see as their main outcome the employment of their graduates. The literature suggests that unless the college has a job placement service, employment is not an appropriate outcome on which to rate the program. (See Cobb and Preskill, 1983, and Garrity, 1984.) They suggest that the job readiness of the graduate is a more appropriate criterion.

The relationship among the four aspects of content are usually assessed, particularly their appropriateness and relevance. Outcomes are an exception.

One aspect of this relationship which the interview instrument failed to assess was the extent to which the stated or expected aspects of the program actually existed; that is, whether or not the college's evaluation system actually checked to see that in fact a student had ten hours of computer access when this amount of time was specified in the program.

VI. DATA

A. Observations

Most colleges obtained data from a great variety of **sources**. However, one college obtained information from employers only; two others omitted faculty; and one omitted current students.

The most common **method** used was the questionnaire. All colleges used questionnaires; two used no other methods. Three reviewed documents of the program, and of these, two also reviewed documents of similar programs elsewhere. Telephone and/or personal interviews were used by three; one college used a group interview to obtain data from faculty. The same college also used newspaper articles related to the program or its field to discover or make note of trends.

Two colleges had no commonality in data collected across programs; in theory, each evaluation could collect completely different data. One college collected the same data for all programs with two versions of the instruments: one for individualized learning and one for traditional methods. The other three had some common data collected for all programs and some variation, usually determined by the committee directing the actual evaluation.

B. Conclusions

A great variety of sources of information have legitimate input into an evaluation. Care must be taken to select those most relevant; otherwise, an information overload, as may be happening in College C, could occur.

Information can be gathered in a variety of ways. The most commonly used method was the self-administered questionnaire, used by all six colleges. It is seen as the most efficient for obtaining large quantities of data from many people. Its popularity could also be that it is the best known method. Different techniques, such as the group interview, are being tried by colleges which have more experience in the field of evaluation. College F used this technique.

Colleges vary as to the amount of commonality of data among the evaluations at one college. Colleges A and D had none, while the other colleges had some. College B had the same data collection for all programs. Two colleges, E and F, had common statistical data but variation in other data.

V. OUTCOME

A. Observations

All colleges produced a report when the evaluation was completed. Often the representative from the administration or from the research department prepared the report. Some circulated draft forms to those concerned for comments. The completed report was usually directed to a senior administrator. Only one college directed its report to the program personnel; this was the college which evaluated to improve its programs.

Three of the methodologies required an action plan as part of the report; three did not. Two had a follow-up to determine the effect of the evaluation, both within one year. For one college, the recommendations became a regular part of the functioning of the administration and therefore required no formal follow-up.

Only two colleges made the report publically available; the others' reports had limited circulation.

B. Conclusions

At all colleges, the report was written by one person. It was circulated in draft form among the participants in Colleges B, C, E, and F before being finalized.

Systems which do not use an action-oriented format in the report are those in which little happened following the evaluation. Examples were Colleges A, B, and D.

Administrative input into the evaluation is important if some outcome is to occur as a result of the evaluation effort. Of those colleges with strong administrative input, C, and E indicated that something happens with the evaluation results. College B with strong administrative input was one exception, and College F, which did not have strong administrative support but used its results, was the other.

VI. OVERALL PARTICIPANT REACTION

A. Observations

None of the colleges reported any concern about the fairness or openness of the methodologies as viewed by the participants. The comments about the systems were obtained from the persons responsible for conducting the evaluations, who may not have been the best people to comment on these reactions. Some of the evaluation systems have potential problem areas with regard to fairness to participants. Were the participants asked for their reactions, a different view might appear.

B. Conclusions

Very few conclusions can be drawn in this area because the instrument did not question those who might have concerns about the fairness and openness of the evaluation.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the inter-college analysis of the data and the conclusions which flow from these data.

It has compared the methodologies used at the six participating colleges. The following headings were used: purpose, procedure, content, data, outcome, and overall participant reaction. Under each heading, the observations were given followed by the conclusions which could logically be drawn from the data. Evidence from the colleges was given to support each conclusion.

The next chapter will provide more general conclusions and recommendations. It will also examine the appropriateness of the conditions (See Chapter III.) in light of the data from the six colleges.

CHAPTER VI: THE CONDITIONS REVISITED

(SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine the conditions which are necessary for an effective evaluation. From the literature twenty such conditions were identified. A questionnaire was constructed which could be used to determine whether these conditions were in use in the evaluation approaches at selected western Canadian community colleges. A telephone interview was conducted using the instrument. The instrument was pilot tested several times and revised. The data were analyzed first as an individual case study for each college, and then the data from the colleges were compared. Observations were made about these evaluation processes and conclusions were drawn.

THE CONDITIONS REVISITED

PURPOSE

The first three conditions are related to the purposes for conducting an evaluation study. The literature suggests that an evaluation should have only one clear purpose. Data from the colleges seems to concur. Four had one main purpose, one had two, and one had a very vague purpose(s).

The third condition, related to having improvement as the only purpose, is less conclusive from the college data. Utility of the study seems to be related to having improvement as the purpose. The two colleges with this purpose used the results to make program changes, had an action plan, and monitored the implementation of the changes. However, the college with 'providing data for decision-making' as its purpose also utilized the information gained from the study, had an action plan, and monitored its implementation.

One interesting point to note is that the college with improvement as its only purpose was the one which had the most experience in program evaluation. It was currently testing a new system having found their previous one with a different purpose to be lacking. Perhaps "improvement" is the way of the future. "Objective validation" is, according to the data from these six colleges, currently the most prevalent purpose. Historically, it was also the first type of evaluation developed. Thus, since many of the evaluation methodologies are still in their developmental stages, they may find, as they gain experience, that improvement is a preferable purpose leading to a more useful evaluation.

PROCEDURE

Clearly stated procedures seems to be an important condition. Those three colleges which had clearly stated procedures were the ones at which it was reported that the results of the evaluation had an impact.

A continuous and regular system also seems to have advantages over one that is less regular. Four systems had regularly scheduled evaluations of varying intervals. The two colleges with the most experience in evaluation reported that although the ideal at their college was evaluating each program every five years, this goal had never been achieved.

The data from the colleges seem to support the idea that the evaluations should be in-house. Five of the six college had internal evaluations. The use of employers as external evaluators was cited by two colleges. The literature also has several successful examples of this kind of evaluation. Using employers as external evaluators helps to counter the criticism that self-studies are not valid because the participants are not objective enough.

When senior administrators are involved in the evaluation, the data indicate that there is more commonality and uniformity among the evaluations. Whether it leads to greater utility is inconclusive. Of the three colleges with strong administrative support, two used the results. Of the three with lower-level support, only one used the results.

The literature suggests that a committee should have overall control of the evaluation and that membership on the committee should be according to specific criteria. No college met this condition. One had a very comprehensive committee but did not articulate how members were selected. Perhaps there are a limited number of people who are available to conduct the evaluations and selection criteria are not easily applied.

CONTENT

All evaluation methodologies agreed that the objectives and the outcomes of a program should be assessed. Five others also agreed with the literature that the resources and teaching-learning process are important areas to assess. Each methodology examined the relationship among the variables that it considerd.

The area which the literature considers to be the key to a college program, the teacher, is generally not assessed by the colleges. Only one college examined the adequacy of the teacher. One other looked at the interactions between the teachers and the students. One admitted that evaluation of instruction was the main weakness in its methodology. One stated very firmly that it was a program evaluation, not a teacher evaluation system.

The area of outcomes is one in which the data differ with the literature. The literature states clearly that unless the college has a job placement service or component, graduate employment is not a fair criterion on which to rate the program. The literature suggests that preparing students to enter the work force, that is providing them with the necessary skills to fill a job, if one were available, is a better criterion. Most of the colleges used post-graduate employment as a criterion for judging the worth of a program.

DATA

The literature suggests that the data used to judge programs should be objective as well as subjective. The interview instrument did not directly address this issue. Therefore, no conclusions can be noted in this area.

Most colleges collected data from a variety of sources as the literature recommends. They ranged from a high of nine sources to a low of only one. The rest had either three or four sources.

All colleges used questionnaires as a data collection technique. The literature suggests that this is the most efficient and economical method to collect large volumes of data. Two colleges used only questionnaires, but others used from four to six different data collection methods each.

Three colleges collected some data that were common for all programs at the college but also allowed programs to collect data relevant to individual programs. Two had no common data, and one had no individual data. The three colleges which had both common and unique data were also the ones that reported that their findings had some impact on their programs. Thus the data seem to support the condition that an effective evaluation collects the same data for all programs while allowing the collection of data about unique features, important to a specific program alone.

OUTCOME

The literature suggests that the ideal outcome of an evaluation is a report which is action-oriented, has several forms, and is available to various audiences. Only one college had two versions of its report. This is the college that collected the most data. It had a summary report with references to the complete version. All other colleges had reports with only one version. Three reports were action-oriented. These were the ones which indicated that their results were used.

Most reports were directed to a senior administrator. One college directed it to the program staff. All reports were made available to the program staff. Three colleges made their reports publically available. Thus, in this area the data are congruent with the literature.

Formal follow-ups were required by only two of the methodologies. The third incorporated the recommendations directly into its operations and therefore did not require a formal follow-up. Perhaps the latter is a better way of ensuring that the recommendations of the evaluation are implemented.

OVERALL PARTICIPANT REACTION

All six colleges reported that their systems were fair and open. Communications appeared to be open among the participants. Discussion was the main technique cited to solve any differences. Some colleges had a formal mechanism for voicing concerns, but others mentioned that informal discussions "over coffee" usually cleared up misconceptions.

In general, this area is hard to assess because the group who might have raised concerns were not questioned. Only the person responsible for the overall evaluation was consulted in this study.

In summary, while all conditions are relevant, there appear to be certain conditions which are more important or necessary for an effective evaluation, that is to ensure an evaluation which will have some use. These conditions include a clear purpose, probably to improve the program under study. Clearly outlined procedures which evaluate all programs in rotation, systematically, not on a "hit list" basis are necessary. Strong administrative support is probably important as is input from a variety of other sources. All four aspects, objectives, resources, teaching-learning process, and outcomes, should be considered, as well as the relationship among these aspects. Collecting data using at about four methods appears necessary, at least three sources should be tapped, and common as well as individual data should be collected. One version of the report seems sufficient, but it should be made widely available both in its draft and final forms. Follow-ups may be necessary unless the recommendations become a part of the operations of the program. An action-orientation is a must to have the results used. Fairness and openness, stressed in the literature could not be assessed.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has had several outcomes:

1. It has presented twenty conditions which appear to be necessary for an effective evaluation of academic programs at Canadian community colleges. These conditions provide a framework around which an effective evaluation methodology can be built.

2. It has indicated which conditions appear to be the most important from among the twenty listed.

3. It has compared these twenty conditions with the evaluation methodologies which are in place at selected western Canadian community colleges and has identified which conditions were present and which were not at each college surveyed.

4. It has revealed that there is a great interest in program evaluation at western Canadian community colleges.

5. It has shown that evaluation methodologies are not well established and that they are very much in their developmental stages.

6. It has used the telephone interview and has indicated that it has certain advantages over other data gathering techniques.

7. It has revealed that there is great variation among the methodologies and that there are some very interesting features in use by Canadian community colleges as part of their evaluation systems.

8. It has indicated key areas that should be investigated further as stated below.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. A key area that needs further study is the evaluation of teaching at community colleges. The literature has suggested that the evaluation of instruction is essential to an effective evaluation, and yet most colleges shy away from it. Research should be conducted to find ways to overcome the resistance to this type of evaluation and to demonstrate the reasons for this resistance.

2. The condition related to fairness and openness was not very well addressed in this study. The literature has stressed that if participants are going to react favourably and contribute to the evaluation, it must be seen to be fair and open. Further research into the components of fairness and openness as well as their implementation is necessary.

3. This study assessed the program evaluation methodology from the point of view of the person responsible for evaluation at each college. It would be interesting and useful to examine the methodology as perceived by other participants, particularly the program staff.

4. This study was limited to investigating six colleges. A more comprehensive study would be useful. If all colleges could be surveyed, a more complete picture of the state of program evaluation in western Canadian community colleges would emerge.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The twenty conditions outlined in this study are all important when conducting an evaluation of a program. Ideally, all conditions should be in place. However, the ideal is not always possible. It is still possible to have an effective, adequate and useful evaluation without all of the conditions in place. Certain conditions, however, are critical. These include that the evaluation has a clear purpose and procedures, is an in-house study with some external verification, has strong administrative support and input from as many stakeholders as is feasible, examines the objectives, resources, teaching-learning process, and outcome, collects data from several sources using several methods, has common and individual data, and has an action-oriented report.

In an ideal situation, all conflicts can be resolved by discussion. However, in reality this is impossible. Conflicts will occur during the conduct of an evaluation. Not all stakeholders can have their own way. However, given the conditions outlined in this study, there is an openness which allows everyone to be heard, even though not everyone can be accommodated.

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APPENDIX A

FIRST LETTER TO COLLEGES

760 Municipal Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3R 1J4
Date

name
coll
stre
city
code

Dear *dear*

I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba and am conducting a study of program evaluation at western Canadian community colleges. I am searching for colleges that are willing to participate in this study, which will constitute, when completed, my Master's thesis.

I am in the process of developing a set of conditions that the literature suggests should be present in an effective evaluation of an ongoing, regular college program. Once this set of conditions is identified, I want to determine if these conditions are in place in the program evaluation approaches used by western Canadian community colleges.

I hope that you are willing and able to participate in this study. If you are, please let me know who at your college has the overall responsibility for conducting regular program evaluations and to whom I would direct my questions. The questions are directly related to the conditions which I have identified as desirable in order to conduct effective program evaluations. For example, one of the conditions identified is that evaluations should be conducted an a regular basis, generally every five years. The question related to this condition would be, How frequently is each course evaluated at your college?

I intend to share the overall results of this study with all participants. Each participating college will be acknowledged, but individual responses will remain confidential.

Would you be willing to participate in this study? If yes, please complete the attached form and return it in the self-addressed envelope.

Thank you for your time.

Yours truly,

Margaret Braid

Participation Form

coll

(is / is not)

able to participate in this study of program evaluation.

The person who has overall responsibility for program evaluation at this college is

Name

____

Mailing address

____

____

____

Phone number during day ______________________

(I will be conducting telephone interviews to collect the data.)

Thank you.

Comments:

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Interview Schedule

Before we begin, I would like to go over the definitions used in this study.

Definitions:

Program: refers to an academic program, including transfer, technical, and trade programs. It is a set of instructional activities offered by a department, division, etc. of a college, usually consisting of a number of courses. Examples would be business administration or hairdressing.

Program evaluation: refers to the process of specifying, defining, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information about designated areas of a given program and using that information to make value judgements about the installation, continuation, modification, or termination of that program.

This study is limited to the evaluation of ongoing programs, those that have been going for some time, not those in their first run or pilot stage.

Are there any questions? Let us begin.

1. What is the purpose(s) of program evaluation at your college?

2. How frequently are programs evaluated at your college?

**Is there any exception to this schedule? If so, what factors determine the change? **

3. Is the evaluation study internal or external?

4. The following questions concern the process or procedure of the evaluation. a) Who are the people involved in conducting the study? How are they selected? and What are the duties and responsibilities of each?

b) Is this procedure documented? If so, where? and May I have a copy?

c) Is there any established procedure or mechanism for transmitting information among the participants, especially the staff in the program being evaluated? That is, how do those being evaluated find out how the evaluation is going?

5. The following questions concern the content of the evaluation: a) Which of the following aspects of a program are considered in the evaluation study: the goals and objectives? the resources? the teaching-learning process? and the outcomes?

b) What is considered about the goals and objectives? That is, what are you examining?

c) What is examined under the resources heading?

d) What is examined under the teaching-learning process?

e) What are considered to be outcomes of the program?

f) From which sources are data collected? Sources refers to groups of people, documents, etc.

g) What methods are used to collect data about these aspects? Methods refers to questionnaires, interviews, direct
observation, reviewing documents, self-reports, etc.

**h) How are judgements made about these aspects? What general criteria are applied to each aspect? **

i) Is there any variation in the procedure and data collected among programs, or is the same data collected about each program?
** i) Who determines the variation?**
** ii) What are the variations?**

6. The following questions concern the outcome of the evaluation: a) How is the final report prepared? That is, who writes it, who helps, who sees it in progress, etc.

i) Is more than one version prepared?

b) Who gets copies of the final report?

c) Does the report require response or action by anyone or any group?

d) How is the implementation of the report's recommendations monitored? **How soon after the report is out?**

e) If any group, especially those being evaluated, has a problem with the evaluation report or outcome, how are these concerns dealt with?

Thank you.

APPENDIX C

ACKNOWLEDGMENT LETTERS TO COLLEGES

760 Municipal Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3R 1J4
March 25, 1987

name
coll
stre
city
code

Dear *dear*

I wish to thank you for indicating your willingness to participate in my study of program evaluation at western Canadian community colleges. Due to financial restraints, I was unable to survey all the willing colleges. I selected, at random, eight colleges from among the thirty-one which responded positively.

I have enclosed a copy of the conditions that the literature suggests should be present in an effective evaluation of an ongoing, regular college program for your information.

I will have my study completed in early September. If you would like more information, please contact me at the above address.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate.

Yours truly,

Margaret Braid

760 Municipal Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3R 1J4
Date

name
coll
stre
city
code

Dear *dear*

I wish to thank you for responding to my letter asking for your participation in my study of program evaluation at western Canadian community colleges. I was very pleased with the over-all response from western colleges. Thirty-one colleges responded positively. From these colleges, I selected six at random for my study.

In your response, you indicated an interest in the conditions that the literature suggests should be present in an effective evaluation of an ongoing, regular college program. I have enclosed a copy of these conditions for your information.

I will have my study completed in early September. If you would like more information, please contact me at the above address.

Thank you again for your response.

Yours truly,

Margaret Braid

enc.

760 Municipal Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3R 1J4
Date

name
coll
stre
city
code

Dear *dear*

I wish to thank you for participating in my study of program evaluation at western Canadian community colleges. The information you provided was very useful.

The information will be treated confidentially. No college will be identified by name or province.

I was very pleased with the over-all response from western colleges. Thirty-one colleges responded positively. From these colleges, I selected six at random for my study.

I will have my study completed in early September. I will be sending you a copy of the over-all results.

Thank you again for taking the time to participate in my study.

Yours truly,

Margaret Braid