MODULE SIX

UNIT FIVE

Using Evaluation Findings

Introduction

As you will now appreciate from your study of Units 1-4 evaluation is a systematic planned enquiry undertaken in order to enable decision-makers to make judgements concerning the worth of an educational policy, project or programme and to achieve certain aims and purposes. Evaluation can be a costly waste of time and effort, but when done efficiently, vigorously and with the intention of improving educational provision, it is likely to be worthwhile, for the new knowledge gained can be fed back into the system to improve what goes on in the name of education.

But, quite often, the findings of evaluation are not implemented. In this unit you will be asked to consider how evaluation findings can be disseminated and to examine how we can ensure that the evaluation findings are used by all concerned to enhance school effectiveness.

Individual study time: 2 hours

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit you should be able to:
• state the importance of reporting the results of monitoring and evaluation programmes to those who need to know
• integrate the analysis of evaluation findings into the school decision-making process
• relate the quality of evaluation findings to the level of effectiveness of the school management.

The importance of evaluation findings

The host of educational problems besetting schools today, such as pupil wastage in terms of drop-outs, and the low standard of education, all point to the need to overhaul our educational systems and programmes. But before this can be done, we need reliable and objective data about their current status. Through regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting we will know much better where we are and thus be able to decide what changes are needed to bring about improvement.

As we have seen in the previous units, monitoring is the regular collection of information about ongoing projects and programmes within the school system with a view to determining the nature and level of their performance. A report from a

monitoring team should be an objective account of progress in carrying out plans, which provide a baseline against which to judge the impact of inputs into the system under study. Monitoring should be done mainly by school heads and inspectors, but also by district or local government officials, and by officials of the Ministry of Education.

Evaluation also concerns judgements made for the purpose of improvement or accountability. It is also a formal process which may be formative or summative in nature, but it is designed for a particular educational purpose.

Activity 5.1
(1) List down some reasons why you think that reports from monitoring or evaluation exercises are not always made widely available.
(2) What steps might be taken to rectify the situation?

<div align="right">15 minutes</div>

Comments
There are a number of reasons you may have listed, including:
• lack of a requirement to document and report findings
• inadequate mechanisms to disseminate findings
• need for secrecy when the findings are critical
• paucity or unreliability of data which makes the evaluation report worthless
• 'knowledge is power', so the fewer people who know the better.

The steps which need to be taken to rectify the situation include:
• writing reports which can be read (that is, they are brief and to the point and use intelligible language)
• improving the means of production and reproduction (which could include word-processing)
• recognising that knowledge and power are for sharing
• ensuring accuracy and reliability in our reports, through setting and demanding high standards.

Evaluation reports
In order to appreciate how to improve the dissemination and use of evaluation findings, it will be helpful to recall the steps which lead up to the planning and implementation of an evaluation project, and the preparation of the report.

We have seen (in Unit 3) that before embarking on evaluation there are certain points that we need to clarify, including:
• for what purpose is an evaluation required?
• who will organise the evaluation and who will participate and in what ways?
• what are the possible modes of evaluation?
• what are the appropriate tools of evaluation?
• how will the data be recorded and analysed?

- who will use the information?
- what are the best ways of bringing the information to them?

The information gathered should be seen as relevant to the purpose of the evaluation. The credibility of an evaluation process and its findings can be established in relation to the following:

1 It has to pass scrutiny amongst all those concerned with the overall quality of schooling.

2 It needs to be seen to be credible in the school, for example, in respect of what is being evaluated.

3 Finally, it has to satisfy people that any conclusions drawn derive from good quality information and are valid and reliable.

Activity 5.2

Identify the qualities of a good evaluation report. Use your school experience and knowledge of reports by inspectors to answer this question.

20 minutes.

Comments

You will probably have included in your list qualities such as: systematic, comprehensive, relevant, usable, valid, reliable. It must also be readable!

If the purpose of an evaluation is absolutely clear it is more likely that the correct information will be gathered to enable conclusions to be drawn and recommendations made as a basis for decision-making. It is therefore very important that after an evaluation is done one or more meetings between the evaluation team and the rest of the staff are held, during which the findings can be discussed before the release of the evaluation report. Results could also be disseminated, for example to parents, through other means, such as a newsletter or a briefing at one of the PTA meetings.

Evaluation findings by external agents, such as inspectors or researchers, can help to justify the huge amounts of money spent on education every year, as well as to clarify the progress of major innovations in education such as the introduction of a new curriculum. This highlights how important it is for school heads to be able to analyse evaluation findings and decide whether, for example, the advantages claimed for a particular innovation which formed the focus of an evaluation, are valid enough for them to continue to use it or perhaps to adapt it more precisely to the school's needs.

The relationship between evaluation and effective management

We can illustrate the relationship between evaluation and the use of evaluation data or findings for effective school management by considering a number of examples.

Pupils' enrolment

Often school enrolments fluctuate from year to year; many factors may account for this. It might be difficult for a head to explain such a phenomenon, let alone suggest solutions, unless some evaluation is conducted and the findings disseminated. Such an evaluation might enable factors like school performance in public examinations,

distance of school from the village, safety and security of pupils, availability and quality of transport, movement or transfer of parents, etc., to be taken into account in an analysis of the situation. There are also the issues of drop-outs, early leavers, and drop-ins in schools, particularly in towns and cities, which result in erratic fluctuations and movements. A school may wish to evaluate the influence of some of these factors to try to rectify the situation. On the other hand, the government might decide to evaluate the situation in a sample of primary schools, the results of which may provide useful conclusions and solutions which may be applied to all schools.

Activity 5.3
(1) Using your school experiences, show in a table the enrolment of pupils for the last two years by class. Indicate the following as a percentage of the total:
- drop-outs or early leavers;
- drop-ins or repeaters;
- pass-out rate;
- drop-out rate.
(2) How do these figures compare with those for other schools in your locality? To what extent would you say your problems are common or unique?

<div align="right">30 minutes</div>

Comments
You may have difficulty in completing this activity in the suggested time given, if your school records and data are not well kept or up-to-date. You may not have been aware of the importance of such records nor how to keep them correctly maintained, in which case it could be that you and your staff should try to obtain more training in record-keeping. You may also feel that training is required in the use of evaluation instruments and in the interpretation of data and in the use of evaluation findings.

Leadership effectiveness
Evaluation can be used to assess leadership effectiveness in a school. Firstly, you may need to consider what leadership effectiveness is, and the extent to which it is determined by:
• personal characteristics of the leader
• nature of the situation
• personal characteristics of subordinates.

Next you would need to develop evaluation criteria in order to assess your own leadership effectiveness together with that of your other promoted staff. The chart opposite suggests five criteria for judging leadership and you might like to develop this by adding more evaluation criteria. If you were to undertake such a self-evaluation exercise, how might such findings be useful to you as a school head in improving your management practice?

Fig 7 Assessing leadership effectiveness

Indicators	Low	High
1 Readiness for responsibility		

2 Ability to delegate
3 Maturity
4 Interest and motivation
5 Knowledge and expertise in education

Evaluating staff performance
A school head is also likely to be involved in assessing the performance of staff and using the evaluation findings to help improve school effectiveness.

Activity 5.4
Use the assessment tool presented below in Fig 8 to assess the performance of staff in your school. You may wish to add additional performance criteria as appropriate.

15 minutes

Fig 8 Assessing staff performance

Performance criteria	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1 Relationship with other academic staff				
2 Relationship with administrative staff				
3 Relationship with pupils				
4 Superior-subordinate relationship				
5 Oriented to the goals of the school				
6 Acceptance of responsibility				
7 Allocation of time				
8 Communication skills				
9 Ability to motivate others				
10 Participation in co-curricular activities				

Monitoring school effectiveness
Your studies of this unit, and of others in this module, will, we hope, have convinced you of the importance of monitoring and evaluating and of using the findings to bring about school improvement. We have provided only a few examples.
There are of course many areas where an evaluation exercise is likely to produce findings which could inform the school decision-making process and contribute towards school effectiveness, for example in:
•financial management
•classroom teaching
• school-community relations.

Summary
In this unit, you should have noted that monitoring school effectiveness involves the regular review of all the facilities of your school. Through the collection and analysis of relevant information and the setting of appropriate criteria, you may draw conclusions about the extent to which the mission, objectives and targets of your school are being achieved.

Fig 9 relates monitoring and evaluation to decision-making, which is the essence of any effective managerial activity.
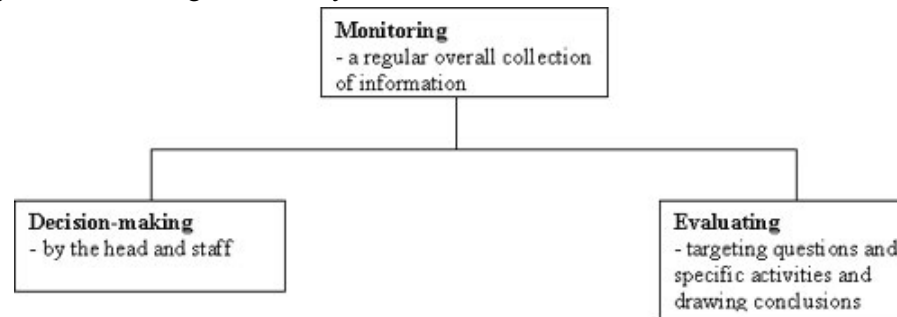

Fig 9 Monitoring, evaluating and decision-making

Self-evaluation exercise
Prepare a one page proposal for an evaluation of one specific area of concern in your school. Include in your proposal the following:
- title (this should indicate the purpose);
- key questions;
- identification of evaluators;
- methods of data collection;
- time-frame;
- reporting procedures.