A Pre-Reading Review of Current Evaluation and Assessment Practices & Beliefs

This file is copyrighted (2010) and a part of my Leadership Portfolio found at http://www.janinelim.com/leadportfolio. It is shared for your learning use only.

As I prepare to read and evaluate my current practices in evaluation and assessment, I thought it would be helpful for my thinking to describe my current experience. I will review assessment in my technology courses, annual program evaluation of my videoconferencing program, student assessment and program evaluation of the collaborative projects and events that I organize, and the potential necessity of a needs assessment in the Adventist Virtual Learning Network online course plan.

Assessment and Evaluation in Technology Courses

Over the last 10 years, I have written and taught nine online courses in instructional technology. These courses are offered for graduate credit through local universities. In addition, I teach many short face to face workshops and an occasional week long graduate credit face to face workshop.

All of the courses that are offered for graduate credit include a course evaluation form. I've been using basically the same form for all online courses, and it ask questions on the pace of the class, the usefulness of the information, whether the participants feel they can implement what they have learning, how the online course technology worked, whether they had enough feedback and if they felt the instructor was present in the class. I use open-ended questions because I like to read the additional qualitative information shared vs. just seeing the numbers of a Likert scale. The week long workshop I've been teaching recently has a Likert-like scale and some open ended questions and was prepared by another team-instructor of the course.

Each of the graduate credit courses also is set up with assignments for readings and application of the work. All of my online courses are set up with the same pattern. Participants read articles and discuss them in the online discussion; and then do assignments that require application of their learning and share that in the discussion area as well. In addition there is a final project included in almost all of the courses that is usually a lesson plan. The discussions are all based on completion credit. If the participants complete an initial post answering the questions, and then reply to at least one other participant to receive full credit. The final projects tend to be full credit as well. My assessment philosophy for my tech classes is based in my beliefs about the participants learning. Teachers attending a technology class tend to have a wide range of skill level. Some participants receive awareness knowledge from the course; others are ready to implement when they are finished. My goals are that each participant moves forward along a continuum of learning; and because I provide a somewhat overwhelming amount of options and choices, I know they always make progress in their learning. This flexibility though, means that my assessment tends to be lenient.

Annual Program Evaluation

At Berrien Regional Education Service Agency, I coordinate and manage the videoconferencing program for the schools. As part of my work, I count all the videoconferences that occur in various categories and by school and district. This annual reporting allows me to consider trends and potential challenges to my program and to adjust accordingly.

Assessment and Evaluation of Collaborative Projects and Events

As part of my work for Berrien RESA, I run several projects for the schools. One of them is called MysteryQuest, where six classes around the country present geography clues and the other classes research to determine what the other class presented. This project and the others like it have an evaluation form that is in the online survey tool, Zoomerang. However some of my other projects do not have an evaluation and probably should. In addition, we offer quite a range of programs interviewing authors and specialists that also do not currently include any evaluation.

These programs are 1-2 hour videoconferences that include at least 4-5 class periods of preparation time. However, little guidance is given to the teacher as to how to assess the student learning from the unit of study.

AVLN's Courses

Finally, another area to potentially apply my learning is the Adventist Virtual Learning Network (AVLN) courses. Attendance has dropped significantly in the last three years, yet the North American Division wants us to continue to offer courses. We also have had myriad problems with registration and course credit. A needs assessment may help gather more data on the true situation, from which plans for the future of the courses could be made.