

NEEDS ASSESSMENT / ANALYSIS IN CURRICULUM PLANNING

1. Definition of needs assessment/analysis

- A needs analysis/assessment is a process for identifying the knowledge and skills necessary for achieving of an organizational goal (Brinkerhof & Gill, 1994)
- A needs analysis is a method of finding out the nature and extent of performance problem and how they can be solved (Molenda, Pershing & Reigelut, 1996)
- A needs analysis/assessment is a process for pinpointing reasons for gaps in performance or a methods for identifying new and future performance needs (Gupta, 1999)
- In general, a needs analysis/assessment is a systematic approach to identifying social problems, determining their extent, and accurately defining the target population to be served and the nature of their service needs (Rossi P.H, Freeman H.E & Lipsey W.L, 1998)

2. Needs as verb

- Need as verb points to what is required or desired (Witkin B.R & Altschuld, 1995) or what is necessary (Scriven, 1999) to fill the discrepancy (i.e. solutions, means (tools) to an end)

3. Performance Need vs. Treatment Need

- The distinction between performance needs and treatment needs is important (Scriven, 1999)
- Performance Needs
 - When we say that, international students need to be able to read English, we are talking about the needed level of performance (a gap exist)
- Treatment Needs

- When we say, they need classes in reading, or instruction in the phonics approach to reading, we are talking about the treatment (a solution)
 - Treatment Needs Assessment (NA) drives an action
 - Performance Needs Assessment (NA) drives funding
 - Treatment NA is comparative, determine where the shoe is pinching
 - Treatment is an action, is an input
 - It compares, looks for what work, looks for fault
4. So, what is a need assessment?
- A systematic a set of procedure undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about program or organizational improvement and allocation of resources. The priorities are based on identified needs (Witkins & Altschud, 1995)
 - Assessing needs is the process of determining the presence or absence of the factors and conditions, resources, services and learning opportunities that curriculum planning need in order to meet their education goals and objectives within the context of an institution's mission.
5. Purposed of a needs assessment (Schuh J, Upcraft L & associates, 2001)
- For professionals in curriculum planning, a needs assessment is specially useful in the justification of program policy
 - To examine and expressed need and develop alternative to address it
 - To generate ideas and document perceptions about various issues (exploratory in nature)
 - To collect information to support likely alternatives (decision making)

- To estimate relative acceptability of various alternatives (identifies potentially controversial issues)
- To select the most acceptable policy or program from alternatives (allow stakeholders to influence institutional response to needs)
- To determine whether needs have been met (documents effectiveness of unit)

6. What will a needs assessment do for you (use) (Rossi P.H, Freeman H.E, Lipsey, Mark W.L, 1998)

- A needs assessment answers questions about the social conditions a program is intended to address and the need for the program
- Needs assessment may also be used to determine whether there is a need for a new program and to compare or priorities needs within and across program areas

7. Key factors in conducting NAs (Witkins B.R & Altschuld J.W, 1995)

- Keep in mind the value and necessity of broad-based participation by stakeholders
- Choose appropriate means (tools) of gathering information about critical issues and other data
- Recognize core values in the group whose needs are being assessed
- Needs assessment is a participatory process; it is not “done to people”
- Needs assessment is a political activity. Some people may view the process as causing a loss control. Priorities derived may be counter to well established ideas in the system
- Data gathering methods by themselves are not a needs assessment. Data collection is one component in the process.

8. Once again, what is a needs assessment?

- Assessing curriculum planning needs is the process of determining the presence or absence of the factors and conditions, resources, services, and opportunities that curriculum need in order to meet

their goals and objectives within the context of an institution's mission

9. Where should we focus the needs assessment?

- Focus on the end to be attained, rather than the means (tools).
This means we must know where we want to go... mission, goals & outcomes (Witkin & Altschud, 1995)
- Institutions should narrow their focus and use their assets to advance their mission, rather than to broaden their focus and dilute what they do the best (Schuh, Upcraft & Associates, 2001)

10. Target groups & levels of need (Witkin & Altschud, 1995)

- Level 1 (primary)
 - The focus is on service receivers:
 - Students
 - Clients
 - Patients
 - Information users
- Level 2 (secondary)
 - The focus is on service providers and policy makers:
 - Teachers
 - Parents
 - Administrators
 - Caseworkers
 - Professional staffs
 - Support staffs
- Level 3 (tertiary)
 - The focus is on resources of solutions:
 - Buildings
 - Facilities
 - Equipments
 - Supplies

- Programs
- Delivery systems
- Working conditions
- Time allocation

11. Steps of Needs Assessment

- Step 1: Determine Purposes
 - Performance problems
 - New systems and technologies
 - Automatic or habitual training
- Step 2: Identify Resources
 - Who has the data
 - Where is the data
 - What are the constraints, if any, to obtaining the data
- Step 3: Select Tools
 - Interviews
 - Observations of employee performance
 - Examinations of records
 - Group facilitation
 - Surveys
- Step 4: Conduct in stages
 - Multiple steps
 - Multiple tools
 - Usually start with interview of key management personal and subsequent interviews, observations, survey, etc.
- Step 5: Use findings for decision making
 - Appropriate solution to problem
 - Other intervention
 - Content
 - Strategies
 - Reception

12. 3-phase plan for conducting a needs assessment (Witkin & Altschun, 1995)

- Phase 1: Pre-assessment (exploration)
- Phase 2: Assessment (data gathering)
- Phase 3: Post-assessment (utilization)

13. Needs Assessment Tools

- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Interviewing
- Focus groups
- Observations
- Performance measures
 - Ranking
 - Grading
 - Scoring
 - Rating

14. Educational Needs Analysis

- It primarily concerned with the purposeful collection and analysis of data and information in order to identify the need for change
- Identify the suitable strategies that will successfully promote change

15. Delphi Method Of Need analysis

- The Delphi technique is a method for obtaining forecasts from a panel of independent experts over two or more rounds. Experts are asked to predict quantities
- After each round, an administrator provides an anonymous summary of the experts' forecast and their reasons for them. When experts' forecast have changed little between rounds, the process is stopped and the final round forecasts are combined by averaging

- Delphi is based on well-research principles and provides forecast that are more accurate than those from unstructured groups (Rowe & Wright, 1991, 2001)
 - The objective of most Delphi application is the reliable and creative exploration of ideas or the production of suitable information for decision making
 - The Delphi method is based on a structured process for collecting and distilling knowledge from a group of experts by means of series of questionnaires interspersed with controlled opinion feedback (Adler & Zigo, 1996)
 - According to Helmer (1977) Delphi represent a useful communication device among a group experts and thus facilitates the formation of a group judgement
 - Wissema (1982) underlines the importances of the Delphi Method as a monovariable exploration technique for technology forecasting
16. Fowles (1978) describes the following 10 steps for the Delphi method:
- Step 1:
 - Formation of a team to undertake and monitor a Delphi on a given subject
 - Step 2:
 - Selection of one or more panels to participate in the exercise. Customarily, the panelist are experts in the area to be investigated
 - Step3:
 - Development of the 1st round Delphi questionnaires
 - Step 4:
 - Testing the questionnaires for proper wording (e.g. ambiguities, vagueness)
 - Step 5:
 - Transmission of the 1st questionnaires to panelist

- Step 6:
 - Analysis of the 1st round responses
- Step 7:
 - Preparation of the 2nd round questionnaires (if possible testing)
- Step 8:
 - Transmission of the 2nd round questionnaires to the panelist
- Step 9:
 - Analysis of the 2nd round responses (step 7 – 9 are reiterated as long as desired or necessary to achieve stability in the results)
- Step 10:
 - Preparation of a report by the analysis team to present the conclusions of the exercise

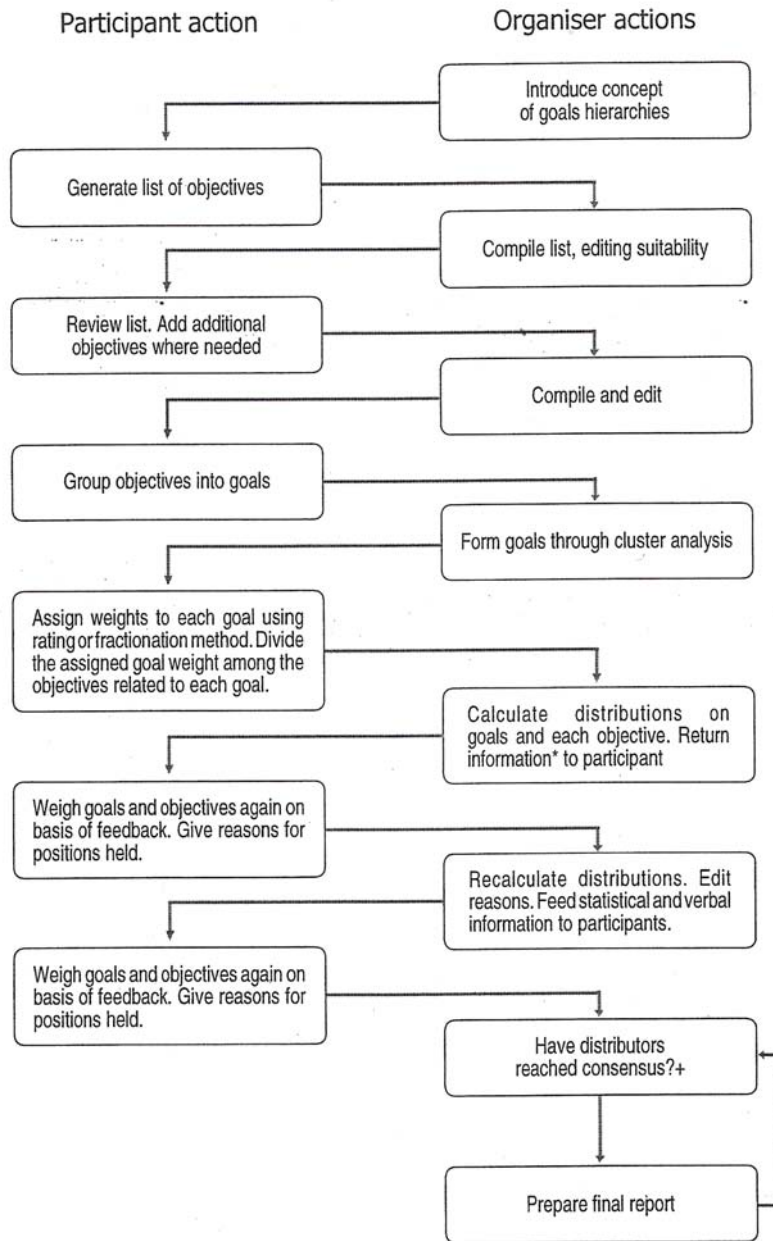
17. Needs assessment process (final thoughts)

- First focus... either performance or treatment needs level 1, 2 or 3
- Needs assessment is an inquiry tool. The process must be flexible and must look for the facts
- Look for needs, not wants
- Look for failure data or fault data, then look for treatment data and comparative data
- More needs assessment fail probably because of inadequate data presentation than for any other reason
- Use mixed methods... both quantitative and qualitative, when possible

18. Conclusion:

- Needs assessment is an essential tool in making sure that the programs that are needed and that new interventions will meet an unaddressed need of curriculum.

Goals – Delphi algorithm



* Statistical feedback chosen will depend on design needs; could be a histogram, mode, mean and interquartile range etc.

+ Consensus may be defined in terms of stability.

Adapted from Skutsch M & Schofer JL (1973). Goals-Delphis for Urban Planning: Concept in their Design. *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences* 7: 305-313