

Assessing Financial Education: A Practitioner's Guide

December 2010

Measuring Impacts

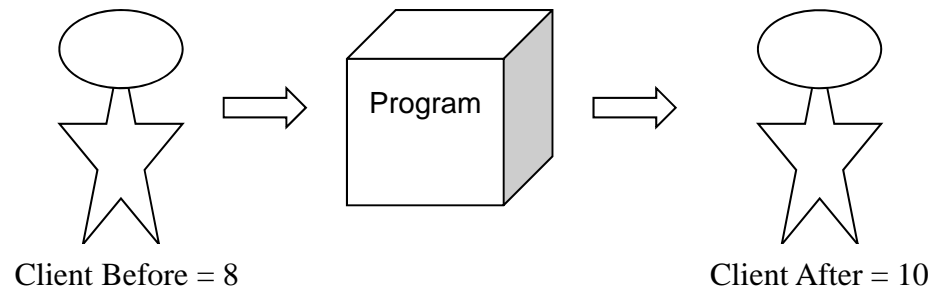
- Research
 - Research on financial literacy has not established “adequate” financial literacy levels.
 - Weak links between knowledge and behavioral change.
 - No standard or validated measures across the board

Assessment Tool and Measures

- Assessment vs. Evaluation:
 - Assessment: focuses on documenting the *outcomes* achieved by participants.
 - Evaluation: compares the outcomes achieved by participants to a counterfactual *comparison group*.
- Value of Assessment:
 - Determine the baseline level of participants.
 - Measure the progress of participants during training.
 - Document the responses to training.

Assessment Design I

- Measure participant financial literacy at two points in time:
 1. Pre-training – before the participant completes program
 2. Post-training – after all training is completed
- Example:



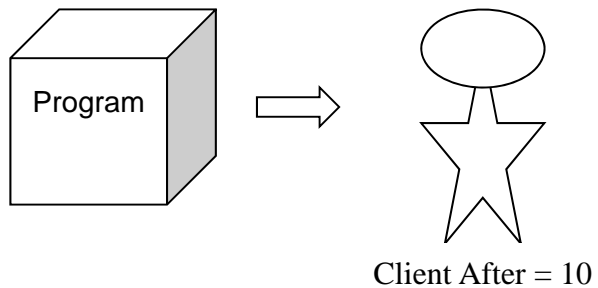
Assessment Design II

- Measure at one point in time:

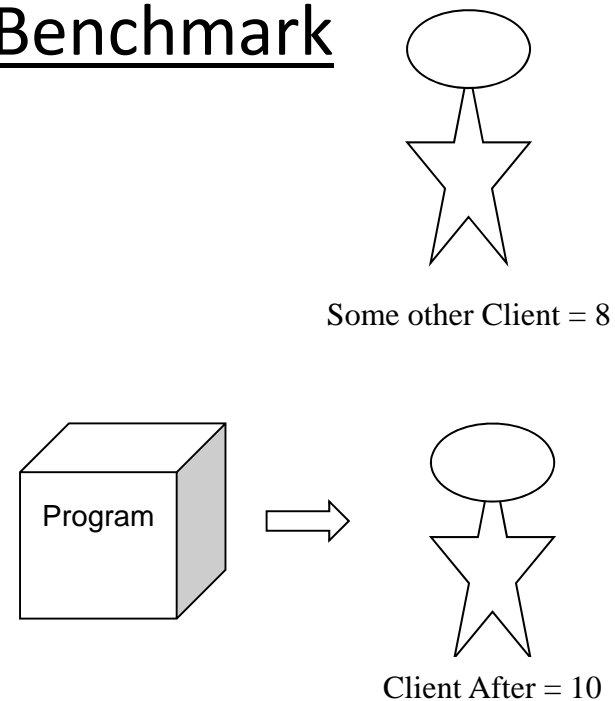
Post-training – cross-sectional

Compared to what?

Absolute level



vs. Benchmark



Other Strategies

- Pre vs. post comparisons can be complicated
- **Retrospective analysis**
 - Just ask for perceived changes at end
 - Simple to conduct – may not be as accurate
- Always Limitations:
 - Who responds?
 - Compared to what?

Survey Tools

- Limit the number of measures (people will give up)
- Use language that is clear and easy to comprehend
- Format of the survey to be easy to use
- If pre and post surveys – use SAME questions

Administering Surveys

- Online vs. paper administration – Be consistent for Pre and Post tests
- Timing of survey administration – Pre should be before any information is delivered; Post should be after program completion
- Whether to offer incentives – May be necessary if the Post test occurs after the final training session
- Plan for monitoring response rates – can ruin pre-post design
- Consider ease of both data collection and analysis

Analysis

- Administer the instrument and record data.
- Match each person's responses (if pre/post)
- Calculate changes
- Analyze the results.

Human Subjects

- Typically assessment (and some evaluation) not considered 'research'
 - “when the purpose of an activity is to assess the success of an established program in achieving its objectives and the information gained from the evaluation will be used to provide feedback to improve that program, the activity is not human participants research.” [45 CFR 46.101](#)(b)(2) and (b)(3)
- But, must follow human subjects
 - Consent; voluntary; not coercive
- Human Subjects Training – online

Guidelines for Non-research

1. Not intended to be generalizable.
 - Is the evaluation mandatory? Will the results be publicly available?
2. Not collecting information from or about living humans
3. Qualifies as exempt (may still need review)
 - Non-identifiable data on adults (not incarcerated)
 - Educational settings

Otherwise...needs review...

Additional Resources

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/index.html>

<http://staff.cce.cornell.edu/administration/program/evaluation/evalrefs.htm>

<http://extension.psu.edu/evaluation/>