

## ABSTRACT

### An Evaluation of The Basic Course for Delegates: Impact of Contextual Factors on Implementation

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This study addresses inadequacies of evaluation practices in trade union education by exploring and developing non-traditional methods and techniques of evaluation. It provides for affiliate unions and tutors of the Centre a record of the Course as implemented, recommendations for major adjustments and suggestions for ongoing evaluation of the Course.

It is based on a complex evaluation design for intensive and comprehensive evaluation of the ten-day Basic Course for Delegates. An adaptation of Stufflebeam's Context-Input-Process-Product model provides the focal points for conducting four types of evaluation of three versions of the Course in different settings.

It draws on the tradition of Illuminative Evaluation (IE) with emphases on description and interpretation, the investigation of a wide range of factors, and responsiveness to the knowledge requirements of decision-makers.

It focuses on context and process data, uses the tutor as participant/observer, but also uses the observations of participants and an external evaluator. It employs the IE method of triangulation with the use of multiple observers and cross-checking of conclusions based on a variety of instruments.

The study found that:

- 1) contextual factors, especially those of selection factors and history, have a powerful, pervasive and sustained impact on the presentation of inputs, the achievement of participants, and the nature of interpersonal relations;
- 2) the Course employs necessary mechanisms to recognise and adjust to participants' needs yet reflects a bias for private sector workers, and has a conservative orientation in its limited discussions of socio-economic and political issues, and failure to develop strategy-building skills;
- 3) the Course should be more efficiently organised around the central tasks of the delegate's role.

The results provide policy-makers and tutors with information to undertake a major reorganisation of Course inputs and institute a variety of techniques for different types of evaluation. The recommendations also point to areas for future research.