Program Evaluation Plan and Implementation: Master of Arts in English Education

Gayle W. Griggs

Nova Southeastern University

ARO 8613, Dr. Sharon Griffin

August 20, 2004
Program Evaluation Plan and Implementation

Evaluation Model

The formative evaluation of the Master of Arts in English Education (MAEE) program will follow the objectives-oriented and the participant-oriented evaluation approaches. The objectives-oriented program evaluation will determine whether the program’s original goals and purposes established in 1979, implemented in 1982, and revised in 1990 by the English Department of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez (UPRM) are still relevant or whether they require modification to better serve the needs of present-day Masters Degree students. Information gathered through the objectives-oriented evaluation will examine the program’s original purposes, and determine the “extent to which those purposes are achieved. . . . [or if the findings of the evaluation] could be used to reformulate the purposes of the activity” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p. 71).

The participant-oriented approach will observe, interview, and survey students to determine whether the MAEE program’s objectives and purposes correlate with the present program and its curriculum, and if students find them practical, appropriate, and directly related to their professional goals and aspirations. This utilization-focused evaluation follows Patton’s (1997) pattern of thinking (as cited in Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p. 143) and may aid in enhancing the program’s efficacy, and contribute to increased enrollment in the program.

The internal evaluation will be managed by two professors in the Department of English with the support of two graduate students who have completed the course curriculum and are working on their theses. Since the evaluators are not directly affiliated with the MAEE program, its curriculum, the Graduate Program Committee, or the university’s Office of Graduate Studies (OGS), their relationship with the program and their findings should be regarded as more objective and impartial, and less biased. The graduate students, although directly related to the program, will provide valuable support to the evaluators through their experiences and knowledge of the program’s structural realities and limitations. They will assist in collecting and compiling data for the evaluation, but will not participate in summarizing findings or writing the
The utilitarian approach of the program will assess the overall effect that the program has on the majority of graduate students enrolled in the MAEE program. The evaluation will establish the students’ general standpoints, raise consciousness of any existent problems, and may influence policy or program modification for improvement. This approach follows House’s (1983) position that accentuates “the idea of maximizing happiness in society. . . . [and the] greatest good for the greatest number” (as cited in Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p. 62).

The Tylerian approach of the evaluation will ascertain “the extent to which the objectives of a program are actually being attained. . . . [and] compare performance data with behaviorally stated objectives” as defined by the evaluators, and based on the program’s objectives (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p. 72). The evaluators will define and determine the behaviors that validate the objectives, and corroborate the presence of these behaviors while observing, interviewing, and surveying graduate students. The behaviors, responses, and data that are collected will be compared to the program’s original objectives and detailed in its final report.

*The Stakeholders*

The principal stakeholders are the present students enrolled in the MAEE program of UPRM. The current students have a direct association, interest, and stake in the present program and are the primary consumers most affected by the program. Reineke (1991) stressed the need to actively involve stakeholders early on in an evaluation (as cited in Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p. 54). For this reason, the principal stakeholders will participate actively in the program evaluation throughout its duration. The participation of the two graduate students in the evaluation will promote more comfort for the students to complete the surveys with more opportunity to reflect their personal viewpoints, suggestions, attitudes and values impartially.

The Department of English and the MAEE program professors and administrators are also stakeholders of the program since they are the proprietors, policy makers, and practitioners of the program. Ultimately, any modifications designed for the program would affect all the
stakeholders, and program revision would be determined by the administrators of the MAEE program, and the Graduate Program Committee members.

**Evaluation Questions**

After examining the objectives of the program, interviewing graduate students, and identifying anticipated behaviors, the evaluators will have sufficient criteria to compile specific evaluation questions, along with the standards required to satisfy the objectives.

The student survey will consist of questions related to the objectives listed in the MAEE program and will ask students open and closed-ended questions regarding the following criteria:

1. The student’s motive for enrolling in the MAEE program.
2. The teaching level (primary, secondary, college) sought.
3. Students’ professional expectations after completing the program.
4. The degree of satisfaction achieved with required pedagogical courses in the program.
5. The practicality of the program to teach English as a Second Language (ESL).
6. Students’ degree of satisfaction to teach ESL in the school systems of Puerto Rico.
7. The degree of value the teaching assistantships offer in relation to students’ professional goals.
8. The choice of Plan I (With Thesis) or Plan III (With Comprehensive Exam), and the reasons for their choices.
9. The need for Primary and Secondary Teacher Certification in the program.
10. The degree of technology knowledge provided for teaching in the classroom.

**Evaluation Methods**

Each specific objective of the MAEE program will be examined during the evaluation. The researchers will utilize Sanders and Cunningham’s (1973, 1974) approach that considers both logical and empirical methods to evaluate the goals of the program (as cited in Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p. 73). The logical approach will assemble qualitative data through observing the structure and activities of the pedagogical courses in the program, and exploring the relationship, rationale, limitations, discrepancies and applicability of the objectives to the
curriculum of the present program. The empirical approach will collect quantitative data through personal interviews and surveys to establish the value each objective has for the student within the program.

The evaluation will be conducted in three stages. The first stage will consist of 15-minute interviews with the 40 MAEE students enrolled in the program to compile quantitative and qualitative data to assess and define students’ professional goals, attitudes, values, behavior and viewpoints about the program and its curriculum, and their understanding of the program’s objectives.

The second stage will consist of collecting qualitative data through the researchers’ noted observations of student behavior and teacher interaction while attending the graduate courses in pedagogy and English education. The evaluators will assist one session of class for each of the four required courses in the program. The education and pedagogy courses utilized for collecting data will be: Foundations of English Education (EING 6005), Second Language Acquisition (INGL 6020), Models for Teaching Literature (INGL 6009), and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Materials and Testing (INGL 6010). Total session observations will sum to 12 hours of in-class observation (three hours for each individual course).

The third stage of the evaluation will consist of administering anonymous surveys to all the graduate students to compile empirical data, and corroborate the stakeholders’ judgments and values in relation to the program and its curriculum. The survey will contain open and closed-ended questions and will be administered by the two graduate student assistants. These surveys are intended to expand upon the findings discovered from the brief interviews and the in-class observations performed in stages one and two.

Through observations, interviews, and surveys, the evaluators will have sufficient data to analyze and demonstrate the values and perspectives of the participants (the stakeholders) to present the realities of the program, and identify any discrepancies that exist between the program, its performance, and its outcomes. These findings would provide a practical and informative report with both qualitative and quantitative data to determine whether the program’s
objectives require modification, or if they satisfactorily serve the needs of contemporary students enrolled in the MAEE program of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez.

**Required Resources**

A total of four persons will participate in the program evaluation. The evaluation will be managed by two evaluators, and assisted by two graduate students who have completed all but their thesis in the program. The duration of data collection and report findings will take nine months, with sufficient time allotted for thorough evaluation and presentation of the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline and Tasks</th>
<th>Staff and Total Hours</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January to March, 2005</td>
<td>2 Researchers @ $50/hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minute interviews with 40 graduate students</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April, 2005</td>
<td>2 Researchers @ 50/hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class observations of four 3-hour classes</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2005</td>
<td>2 Assistants @ $10/hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-hour surveys given to 40 graduate students (10 students/hour)</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July to August, 2005</td>
<td>2 Researchers @ $50/hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis and Report Writing</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer Ink and Photocopies</td>
<td></td>
<td>$160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report to policy makers, administrators, and Graduate MAEE Program Committee members.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Program Evaluation Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References