

# Use and User Focused Conference Evaluation: Collaboration, Negotiation, and Action

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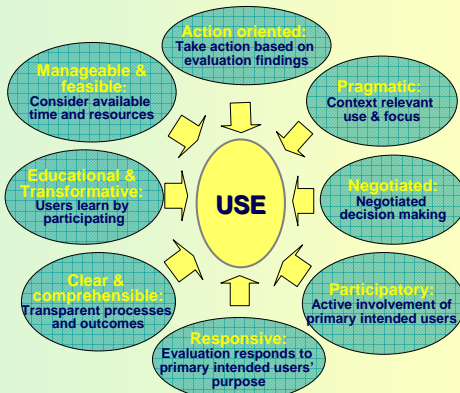


## PLANNING

### Background

The Hawaii-Pacific Evaluation Association (H-PEA) hosted its inaugural conference, "Evaluation Exchange", in September, 2006. Six graduate students from the University of Hawaii at Manoa were entrusted by the H-PEA conference organizing committee to design a conference evaluation that provides information for future conference decision making. The poster describes the process and the accomplishment of the utilization-focused approach taken in the evaluation of the 2006 H-PEA Annual Conference.

### Use & User Focused Evaluation Approach



### Evaluation Purpose, Intended Users & Uses

- ▶ **Purpose of evaluation:**
  - ❖ **Formative:** Improve & inform 2007 conf.
  - ❖ **Summative:** Judge success/effectiveness
  - ❖ **Modeling:** Demonstrate conf. eval practice
- ▶ **Primary intended users:**
  - ❖ Newly elected HPEA officers
- ▶ **Uses of evaluation:**
  - ❖ Plan 2007 conference based on participants' feedback and needs.
  - ❖ Post the conference evaluation report on the H-PEA webpage to demonstrate conference evaluation and to inform future participants about the conference.

## PROCESS & IMPLEMENTATION

### 1. Prioritization

- ▶ **Step 1: Gathered contextual information & example evaluation forms and reports.**
  - ❖ Reviewed H-PEA conference program and logistics
  - ❖ Reviewed example evaluation forms and reports to generate common categories
- ▶ **Step 2: Created a prioritization survey (specified focus & format).**
  - ❖ Major categories common across conference surveys:
    - Attendee background
    - Conference organization
    - Conference program
    - Conference outcomes
    - Overall impression & value
    - Future planning
  - ❖ Scale formats: 4pt or 5pt, bar scale or box-style scale
- ▶ **Step 3: Presented prioritization survey results to the conference planning committee (see results below).**

### 2. Development (Iterative process)

- ▶ **Step 1: Designed the first draft of the conference evaluation form based on the prioritization survey.**
  - ❖ Internal eval committee's feedback
  - ❖ User feedback through
    - Email
    - Meeting: Constructive & individual feedback
- ▶ **Step 2: Gathered feedback on the format and question types.**
  - ❖ Meeting
  - ❖ Reported user feedback to the evaluation committee
- ▶ **Step 3: Incorporated feedback to a second draft. Gathered feedback from the users.**
- ▶ **Step 4: Third draft and review from the Chair of the H-PEA conference.**
- ▶ **Step 5: Final draft**

### 3. Implementation

- ▶ **Strategies taken to obtain high return rate (68%):**
  - ❖ Use distinct colored paper
  - ❖ Dedicated personnel for collecting the eval form at the conference room entrance.
  - ❖ Announce the value of evaluation form.
  - ❖ Constantly remind participants to return the form.
  - ❖ Timing of collection

### 4. Data Analysis

- ▶ **Quantitative data:**
  - ❖ Descriptive statistics
  - ❖ Frequency report
  - ❖ Bar graphs and tables
- ▶ **Qualitative data:**
  - ❖ Thematic analysis and use of representative quotes

## REPORTING & USE

### 5. Reporting Results

- ▶ **Format:** Oral and written report
- ▶ **Audience:**
  - ❖ Oral: Newly elected and former officers.
  - ❖ Written report: Anyone interested in the organization has access on the web.
- ▶ **Purpose:**
  - ❖ Oral+Written:
    - To inform planning of future conference.
    - To judge the effectiveness of the conference.
  - ❖ Written: To demonstrate good conference evaluation practice.
  - ❖ Oral: To facilitate discussion for future planning.
- ▶ **Content:**
  - ❖ Short summary of the conference
  - ❖ Results of the conference evaluation
  - ❖ Strategy suggestions
- ▶ **Timing:**
  - ❖ Draft of written report
    - 3 weeks after the conference for the H-PEA officer's meeting.
  - ❖ Final written report
    - 1 month after the conference.
  - ❖ Oral report → 1.5 month later

### 6. Use of the Evaluation Results

- ▶ **Broadened channels of communications and publicity of the conference**
- ▶ **More representation from education sector to accommodate the majority (+50%) audience → More panel speakers from education**
- ▶ **Take people's suggestions for panel topics into account**
- ▶ **More opportunities for professional development → Add workshop component and more methodology content in the conference**
- ▶ **Shorter business meetings**
- ▶ **Mindful about keeping time for the panel sessions**
- ▶ **More focused round-table activity**

### User Summative Feedback

- ❖ "Well-designed eval form; well-organized report; great that you took the extra step of compiling the list of topics and list of local conferences."
- ❖ "Well-organized by topic; charts excellent! Liked that you shaped some ideas for strategies & recommendations."
- ❖ "Excellent – highly professional, detailed, useful and PLEASANT!"
- ❖ "very organized, knowledgeable. Congratulations! I learned a lot from your work. Thank you!"

### Example instruments

**Results of the Prioritization Survey**

( ) indicates the mean score on a 4 pt scale.

	1	2	3	4
Not necessary at all				
Not so necessary				
Somewhat necessary				
Strongly necessary				

**I. Please rate whether the following aspects of the conference should be evaluated.**

**Attendee background**

(3.13) How the attendee learned about the H-PEA conference.  
(2.75) Area of interest (discipline)  
(2.50) Evaluation experience → excluded  
(2.25) Affiliation (organization) type → excluded  
(2.00) Where they traveled from (e.g., I traveled from ...) → excluded

**Conference organization**

(3.50) Program (e.g., Adequate choice in programming, scheduling)  
(3.13) Pre-arrival information  
(3.13) Conference Location/Facility  
(3.00) Arrival  
(2.88) Abstract submission and review process  
(2.63) Volunteers  
(2.38) Food → excluded  
(2.38) Break → excluded

**Conference Programs**

(3.50) Each component of the program  
(3.50) Topic  
(3.25) Allocation of time

**Conference Outcomes**

(3.50) Professional development  
(3.38) Networking  
(3.25) Facilitation of knowledge

**Overall evaluation**

(3.50) Value (e.g., I feel my attendance was worthwhile).  
(2.50) Cost effectiveness → excluded

**Future Planning**

(4.00) Future topics and activities  
(4.00) Improvement (e.g., What should we do differently for the 2006 H-PEA?)  
(3.88) Improvement (e.g., What did you like about this year's event?)  
(3.75) Scheduling

**II. Any other aspects/components of the conference you would like to know for future improvement of the conference? Also, please indicate your preference of the scale format.**

- Provide the opportunity for attendees to give lots of open-ended feedback and suggestions on any of the above  
- Be sure to pilot-test your questionnaire with the organizers  
- Articulate your scale to the constructs in each section (should probably differ across the sections)

Hawaii-Pacific Evaluation Association First Annual Evaluators' Exchange (September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006)

**I. Participant Information (Please circle all that apply).**

1. Which of the following are you? [ Faculty / Consultant / Student / Other \_\_\_\_\_ ]  
2. What is your primary work setting? [ Faculty / Consultant / Student / Other \_\_\_\_\_ ]  
[ Higher ed. / School system / Government agency / NPO / Private business / Other \_\_\_\_\_ ]  
3. How did you learn about the conference? [ H-PEA email list / Flyer / Colleague / Website / Other \_\_\_\_\_ ]  
4. What is your area of interest in evaluation? [ Education / Health / Social services / Other \_\_\_\_\_ ]

**II. Please rate the following features of conference organization (Please 'v' the box).**  
Scale: 1 = poor; 2 = fair; 3 = good; 4 = excellent; n/a = not applicable

Off-site	1	2	3	4	n/a	On-site	1	2	3	4	n/a
Conference pre-registration						Check-in procedure					
Availability of conference information						Lunch and refreshments					
Timely announcement of the conference						Conference packet					
Poster submission procedure						Location (i.e., convenience)					
Conference publicity						Adequacy of the facility					

Comments:

**III. Please rate each event you attended (Please 'v' the box).**  
Scale: 1 = poor; 2 = fair; 3 = good; 4 = excellent; n/a = not applicable

Conference program	1	2	3	4	n/a	Comments
Panel discussion						
Business meeting						
Keynote address						
Poster session						
Conversation tables						

Topic of the conversation table you joined: [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]

**IV. Please rate your overall conference experience (Please 'v' the box).**  
Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = strongly agree

Overall conference	1	2	3	4	Comments
The session topics were important and timely.					
Length of time for each event on the schedule was adequate.					
The conference was a valuable professional development experience.					
I found new contacts and opportunities for future collaboration.					
Overall, attending the conference was a worthwhile experience.					
I plan to attend next year's H-PEA conference.					

**V. Future planning of the conference**

1. Would you prefer to have the next conference during a particular time of year? [ Yes / No ]  
If yes, when? [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]

2. Who would you like to have as a keynote speaker at a future conference?  
Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What did you like about this year's event that should be continued?

4. Are there any topics/activities that you would like to see included in future events?

5. What aspects of this year's event should be changed for the 2007 H-PEA conference?