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Did they get what they came for? Evaluating teachers' learning

Kerry Bissaker
Flinders University, School of Education *kerry.bissaker@flinders.edu.au*

Twenty-five teachers enrolled in a fully funded Graduate Certificate program in the area of Learning Difficulties were asked to comment on their motivation behind applying for the course and what they hoped the outcomes of their study would be. Research on quality teacher professional development, along with consideration of the participants' responses, were used to inform the design, aims and content of the course. Outcomes were evaluated using Guskey's (1999) model and considered participants' reactions, participants' learning, organisational change and support, participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and student learning outcomes. Following the final topic in the course participants were asked to review their pre course responses and reflect on whether they felt their intended outcomes had been achieved. The participants were also encouraged to consider the value of such a course in their development. Responses from the participants clearly highlighted that student learning outcomes had benefited along with development of their own knowledge and skills.

Teachers' learning, professional development, evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Professional development for teachers is clearly recognised as having a significant influence on promoting positive learning outcomes for students. Sykes (1999:152) notes that 'whereas professional development initially was regarded as one among a number of coequal policy instruments for promoting change, it is now reckoned as the centrepiece'. The Australian Federal government has provided significant financial assistance to support the initiative, *Teachers for the 21st Century,* basing its support on the research that 'confirms [the] value of professional development in raising educational standards' (DETYA, 2000). Further evidence of system support for professional development is reflected in South Australia where teachers are provided with an additional week of vacation if they complete 35 hours of professional development throughout the year.

Research on professional development presents a dichotomous view on optimal approaches to professional development, noting that many traditional models of professional development are considered fragmented and poorly coordinated (Guskey, 1995, Cohen and Spillane, 1992 cited in Sykes, 1999). Often little thought has been given to the strategic application of knowledge and skills presented in professional development programs. Many professional development programs are presented as 'one hit wonders' with a focus on the latest 'trend' (Hawley and Valli 1999). If governments are to fund professional development, then providers must design effective programs that can evaluate outcomes for both teachers and students.

Increasingly, it is recognised that there is no one 'perfect' approach to successful professional development because the content, process and contextual variables will differ across programs, styles of delivery and learning, and situation. However, Hawley and Valli (1999:137) describe eight characteristics of effective professional development. Some of these characteristics include:

- teachers clearly identifying their learning needs
- processes that involve collaborative problems solving

- organisation based on the continuous and ongoing involvement of a cohesive group
- opportunities to develop theoretical understanding of new knowledge and skills
- integration of professional development within a comprehensive change process including the facilitation of student learning
- incorporating evaluation of multiple sources of outcomes for teachers, students and organisations.

All of these characteristics provided the foundation for developing the project described below. However, the final aspect, that of evaluation, is the focus of this paper. Guskey (1998:1) suggests that while we engage in evaluation on a daily and ongoing basis, the evaluation of professional development requires a systematic approach that is 'thoughtful, intentional and purposeful'. Employing systematic evaluation, that could inform the provider about quality of content, processes and outcomes, was a key consideration of the project described in this paper, particularly in justifying the financial support provided by the South Australian government.

Elmore and Burney (1999:263) suggest that while we know a great deal about the features of effective professional development, 'we know a good deal less about how to organise successful professional development so as to influence practice in large numbers of schools and classrooms'. Although the project described in this paper would not be considered large scale, evaluation processes could provide feedback about the potential of this model in contrast to other forms of professional development. The evaluation process employed for the project was based on the work of Guskey (1998, 1999) who identifies critical stages and levels of evaluation. Guskey suggests that evaluation must be considered at the planning, formative and summative stages. He also suggests that outcomes of professional development should be evaluated at the following levels:

- Participants' reactions
- Participants' learning
- Organisation support and change
- Participants' use of new knowledge and skills
- Student learning outcomes

The project described below used a variety of processes to evaluate the different stages and levels. Planning evaluation sought to establish a data base of information for assisting in the design of the program and also for reflecting on desired outcomes. At the formative and summative stages information was gathered to evaluate outcomes at all five levels detailed above. Processes for doing this are detailed in sections below and appendix one provides Guskey's (1999) model for ways of gathering this information. The model also provides details of how the information can be used. In this project the information was used to: improve program delivery; ensure content was meeting the needs of the participants; document outcomes for the South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment (SA DETE); and demonstrate the overall impact the program had on the participants, students and their educational environment.

THE PROJECT

The South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment (SA DETE) Student and Professional Services section, in response to an enterprise bargaining outcome, sought to establish professional development programs in the area of special education. In collaboration with Flinders University, teachers were provided with the opportunity to complete a Graduate Certificate program in a specialised area. Learning difficulties was the specialisation for the project that forms the focus of this paper. Participants' course fees and some teaching release time were provided by SA DETE.

The Graduate Certificate was divided into three topics completed over a period of 18 months. The first two topics used a lecture and workshop process with the participants meeting together every four weeks for either one or two day intensive sessions. Participants completed activities in their own educational settings between sessions and opportunities for sharing feedback was provided in ongoing sessions. The final topic engaged the participants in an individually designed action research project. During this topic students met once at the commencement of the topic. Ongoing support was provided by facilitators who checked on progress, arranged for small groups to meet and provided telephone and email contact. The participants met again at the end of the topic when they presented the outcomes of their research to each other.

PLANNING EVALUATION

The design of the course provided the initial evaluation phase. As Guskey (1998) suggests program design is critical in defining a 'precise understanding of what is to be accomplished, what procedures will be used, and how success will be determined'. This 'planning' evaluation was paramount considering the collaborative process that had been established between SA DETE and Flinders University. A program committee was established to specify the goals of the program, content focus, resources available, time frames and processes of delivery and evaluation. This committee included University and SA DETE personnel, parents of students with learning difficulties, classroom teachers and community consultants in the area of learning difficulties. Each topic engaged a different committee.

The design process allowed the course coordinator of the program to identify SA DETE, community and parental perspectives about critical content. This macro perspective provided a sound basis for developing content goals. However, research clearly indicates that professional development must also consider the micro perspective (Harris, 2000, Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). The needs of the participants demanded consideration if successful outcomes were to be achieved. To assist in the 'planning evaluation' phase all participants were asked to provide a statement about their motivation in applying for the course and to identify what they hoped to gain from participating in the program. These statements provided additional information to assist in the design of the topics. The statements were also used in a post evaluation process where participants were able to reflect on their initial statement and respond to whether they felt the program had addressed their individual goals. Details of these outcomes will be provided later in this paper.

Participants' responses as to their motivation in applying for the course included the following:

- *"At times I have been unsure of what I could do to further assist students with learning difficulties and have been frustrated with current resources and assistance available"*
- *"There is hardly anyone with specific training in this area (country location) and I feel a person with these skills would be valuable to the school and wider community"*
- *"I am keen to broaden my knowledge with more theoretical understanding and I also wish to further my career opportunities"*

Reponses to outcomes participants hoped to achieve from their involvement in the course included:

- *"I hope to learn more about identifying learning difficulties in students and then to develop effective programs to cater for these difficulties and I would hope to learn many practical strategies that I can use in the classroom"*
- *"Access to current research, practices and resources, and the opportunity to meet other education workers to share ideas and resources"*
- *" I would hope by completing this course I will improve my employment opportunities and update my qualifications"*

All responses from participants could be categorised into three key areas, 1) the development of knowledge, skills and effective practices, 2) the opportunity to develop networks with other participants and 3) to upgrade qualifications and improve employment opportunities. One further outcome that was not generated by participants but by the coordinator of the program, was to assist participants to become reflective practitioners. These desired outcomes along with information from the committees provided the foundation for the content, aims and process of delivery. The information also assisted in designing an ongoing evaluation process to assess whether these aims were being achieved. Guskey (1998) suggests formative evaluation should follow planning evaluation.

FORMATIVE EVALUATION

Formative evaluation took place at multiple stages throughout the program using a variety of written and verbal feedback. The formative evaluation process provided valuable feedback on aspects of delivery enabling the program coordinator to respond with changes in time frames and delivery models. The feedback also allowed for individualising content and consideration of specific contextual issues. Finally the process allowed for monitoring of initial topic goals.

The formative evaluation process included a mixture of open ended and Likert scale questions to rate particular aspects of the course, for example, 'Rate the value of this session in relation to your current educational setting', 1 being extremely valuable with 5 being of little or no value. Open ended questions included, 'Comment on the most valuable aspect of the session from your perspective' and 'What questions remain uppermost in your mind at the end of the session?' Angelo & Cross (1993) suggests that such questions allow the coordinator of programs to respond to issues and aspects that remain of concern for participants.

The feedback from participants could be categorised into the levels provided in Guskey's model. Examples of information from the participants at each level that reflect varying perspectives include the following:

Participants' reactions

- *"A wonderful day. Presentations used humour, related to lives and a sense of practicality. I can easily see how this could fit into my program and teaching"*
- *"Breaking into secondary/primary groups on a number of occasions increased relevance"*
- *"Overload for me on Friday, I'd like to see a bit more interaction between presenters and learners"*
- *"Great lunch and lollies, they kept me going in the afternoon".*

Participants' learning

- *"I now feel I understand what cognition really means"*
- *"It's great to be getting strategies that I can actually implement with children in my class. I was having problems with the retention rate of one of the students and had run out of ideas"*
- *"I actually found myself being able to put some of the different things we've talked about in past sessions in perspective, like the 'penny dropped' and I could see how the different topics are starting to interrelate and make sense in the big picture".*
- *"What are the consensus conclusions on the causes of ADHD and best management practices? I'm still not clear on this"*
- *"How do models of learning match the 8 models of intelligence that I have been hearing people talk about?"*

Organisation support and change

- *"I have used a number of the 'tips for teachers' from the Bos & Vaughn readings to pass out to teachers. I have conducted a workshop on modifying assessment plans for students with learning difficulties and used a number of the ideas from the course. Later this term I am running a session on strategies for students with ADHD as well."*

- *"I've talked a lot to colleagues about the assignments and then this has extended into the why's and wherefore's of the theory. It actually has been quite stimulating discussing what teaching and learning is about rather than what this student did last lesson"*

- *'I feel I have been able to help some staff move from not looking at the learner as having a deficit, changing attitudes to students who don't fit the mould. I have also been able to help teachers choose appropriate testing techniques and how to use diagnostic tests for planning intervention strategies".*

Participants' use of new knowledge and skills – many of the comments detailed in the levels above provide evidence that the participants were using new skills and knowledge. In addition specific details of the effectiveness of the application of new skills and knowledge were also sought. Assignment requirements provided a valuable source for evaluation at this level. Participants were required to complete a case study. Using information gained from appropriate assessment, an intervention program was designed for a specific student in each participants' class. Reflections on implementation of the program and subsequent outcomes were also required in the assessment. Some comments from the participants about this process are recorded below.

- *"I found the opportunity to analyse 'Tom's' learning difficulties in such detail, and then planning for specific outcomes, a valuable process, the assessments found problems that I hadn't specifically noticed"*

- *"Writing specific learning outcomes for the students with LD is a process I will use again as it provided a focus for my teaching and also showed that these kids in my special class could indeed make progress even if they were only small steps".*

Student learning outcomes – evidence at this level was also provided through the assignment requirements. Some participants completed standardised testing to establish benchmarks prior to the implementation of an intervention program. Examples of student learning outcomes included increases in spelling and reading ages, improved scores on mathematics assessments and the use of specific comprehension strategies. Other outcomes that were noted included one student using specific language to gain entry to a group, behaviour contracts being achieved and one class displaying explicitly taught group skills. The most significant examples of student learning were evident in the outcomes of the participants' action research projects. However, these outcomes should be viewed as summative outcomes as there was no opportunity to influence participants' knowledge and practices when projects were being presented. In contrast feedback on assignments could be considered as formative evaluation as the participants could use the feedback to further modify and reflect on their practices prior to commencing the final action research topic.

The formative evaluation process is critical to meeting the participants' needs and the program's objectives. The coordinator of the course was able to respond to many of the participants' suggestions for improving aspects of content and delivery. Guskey (1997) commented that evaluation questions often only seek feedback at Level 1 or 2, rarely seeking to investigate the results of a participant's involvement to the wider school community. The fact that this course was 18 months in length allowed for questions and activities to be designed that provided information at the five different levels. This would not be possible if teachers were only involved in short term (for example, a day long session) professional development activities.

Although many of the comments from participants could be viewed as summative in one sense, the model used in this evaluation process considered all feedback from participants as formative if there was an opportunity to make changes to the program delivery and/or content of the course. Collection of information at the end of each topic, and at the end of the course was considered summative evaluation as there was no further opportunity to respond to the information, except when designing a course for a new group of participants.

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Summative evaluations were completed at the end of each of the three topics. This evaluation sought responses to a range of statements including the value of the topic, whether aims were met and participants' satisfaction with scheduling of work requirements. Two open ended questions were also included. Participants rated statements using a Likert scale. A rating of 7 indicated the participants 'strongly agreed' with the statement while a rating of 1 indicated they 'strongly disagreed'. The first two topics delivered involved a lecture and workshop model of delivery and participants responded to the same summative evaluation form. The format of the summative evaluation was based on a model used for evaluating all topics at the University level. However, the standard statements used in this procedure only provided evaluation at the first two levels of Guskey's model.

Responses to the open ended questions provided more valuable information than the responses to the statements, although responses tended to provide evaluation at only the first three levels of Guskey's model. Some of the participants' responses about the best aspects of topic one included:

•   *"This course is answering a lot of questions I had before I started. I was feeling really aimless before. Now I feel challenged again"*.

•   *"I really valued the group work and discussion that came as a result of sharing different ideas"*.

•   *"I think for me the best aspects have been how directly the study has connected with my work – informed it, developed it and also increased my confidence and ability to present PD sessions to other staff"*.

Comments on how the topic could be improved included:

•   *"Better airconditioning, more reviewing of what we did in previous sessions"*.

•   *"I would like greater access to library resources. I feel a little isolated from information. Maybe some time spent in the library would assist me in getting a better picture of what is where. I liked the format of the session even though I normally hate group work"*.

Some of the participants' comments in the summative evaluation did not differ significantly from information they provided in formative evaluations. However, the comment above about 'access' to library resources being provided as a summative evaluation represents the difficulty in responding to participants' needs if this information is only provided after the event. The information may prove helpful to planning evaluation for a following program but there is also the aspect that individuals in this next program may have different needs.

The nature of the final topic involved the participants in self-generated action research projects. This allowed for some variation in the summative evaluation process. In particular the coordinator sought feedback from participants at the five different evaluation levels. Eight Likert scale statements and seven open ended questions were included. The open ended questions participants' responded to included the following:

•   I feel this topic could be improved by…..

•   Describe the most important outcomes of this topic for you personally.

- Describe the most important outcomes for your students based on your involvement in this topic.
- How do you feel your involvement in this topic has contributed to your professional disposition?
- What format of topic delivery did you prefer most, and why? (Lecture/workshop format or Action Research)
- Provide some reflections on the difference between engaging in tertiary study as opposed to engaging in short term professional development.
- List some of the elements that you believe are critical to quality professional development.

The final 3 questions above were specifically designed to seek the participants' opinions about issues beyond the course including the view of quality professional development. The questions were asked to provide information to the course coordinator and DETE about the value of such a model of professional development. It was noted that the participants' identified elements of quality professional development consistent with those suggested by Hawley and Valli, (1999) earlier in this paper. Feedback was also sought on the participants' view of the action research process. Hopkins (1993) supports the notion that teachers engaging in action research develop an increased responsibility for their actions and 'create a more energetic and dynamic environment in which teaching and learning can occur'. Encouraging the participants to develop as reflective practitioners was a major aim of the course coordinator and summative evaluation sought to establish if this had occurred. The focus of this paper restricts further discussion about participants' responses to these questions. However, responses indicated that participants valued their opportunity to engage in action research and commented on developing as reflective practitioners.

The open ended questions within the summative evaluation of all topics provided a rich source of evidence. However, it is interesting to note that most comments made by the participants only reflected outcomes at the evaluation level of 1 and 2. There were some comments that reflected outcomes at other levels. Examples of feedback at the different levels include the following:

Participants' reactions – gained from asking students how the felt the topic could be improved.

- *"Working alone was difficult"*
- *"An extra release day for preparing the presentation"*
- *"Don't ask me, I thought it was all great"*

Participants' learning – feedback was gained from asking the participants to describe the most important outcome of the topic for them. Responses to this question were compared with the participants' pre course desired outcomes.

- *"I now have a successful, manageable and functional program in my classroom which is continually changing and improving as I continue to learn and make connection. This is because I have developed into a reflective practitioner".*
- *"I learnt so much about teaching strategies, particularly the importance of phonological awareness and developing auditory memory for all students".*
- *"I now have a qualification in this area and improved employment prospects".*

Organisation support and change – feedback at this level came from a variety of sources including responses describing the most important outcomes for participants and also from their summative reflections in the action research journals.

- *"My participation in this topic has helped me define and guide the development of my school based position. The outcomes have been more effective use of my time with positive feedback from my colleagues"*

- *" I have increased recognition at the school as someone with relevant skills in the area of LD. The parents also have someone to relate too."*

- *"Through gaining a new position with the LD support team I am able to share my knowledge with teachers across the state".*

Participants' use of knowledge and skills – feedback at this level was generally gained from the action research documentation and presentations.

- *"I have realised that my planning for collaborative learning must be thorough and explicit. Too often I have been setting 'group work' which is more about classroom organisation and children cooperating by sitting in groups, rather than tasks demanding collaborative learning."*

The following comment is a response to outcomes from an action research project involving the use of anti bias language in a pre school setting.

- *"I believe I now understand and feel some confidence in challenging bias. I have seen how bias can restrict children's access to the curriculum. I am also more aware of ways of observing children and their play. I use more modelling now and don't assume children know how to play".*

Student learning outcomes – feedback at this level was generally gained from the request for participants to describe the most important learning outcome for their students but the action research documentation also provided a powerful source of information for this level of evaluation. The first comment, from the anti bias action research project featured above, reflects an important learning outcome at a critical developmental stage. The comment is an observation made by the teacher in her final observation process for the project.

- *"Josh approaches a group of boys who are playing with a ball. He watches, then some discussion takes place and Josh states, "but that's not fair". Josh steps into the middle of the circle and addresses the child holding the ball and states again, "but that's not fair only him getting a go". The child with the ball sighs and states, "okay, everyone can play, but then me and Luke want a turn on our own".*

The following comment was a participant's description of the most important learning outcomes for her students.

- *" Having an informed educator to work with them who is very involved with their best interests and who is deeply committed to their learning".*

Other comments that relate specifically to outcomes for students include:

- *"Increased experiences of success in maths including increased automaticity for 5 out of 7 students with learning difficulties using the Westwood(1995) minute maths tests".*

- *"Increased work output with a more positive attitude towards what they have to do".*

Further aspects of summative evaluation included participants rating on a scale from 1 to 9 their perceived skill and knowledge level pre and post the program. Figure 1 illustrates these ratings. Every participants' post program rating was higher than their pre program rating. The increases in rating varied for individuals with the smallest change being a 1.5 increase and the greatest being 6.5. The participants whose pre ratings were the highest recorded the smallest increase. This may indicate their prior knowledge was a variable to consider in post rating scores. These ratings provide limited information in contrast to that provided by the use of Guskey's model. Indeed such ratings only serve to provide information at level 2, that of participants' learning. However, details about the quality of the learning is absent in such forms of evaluation. A provider using such information may only be able to comment that

there was an increase in participants' knowledge and skills but could not elaborate as to how this increase affected students learning outcomes or organisational support and change.
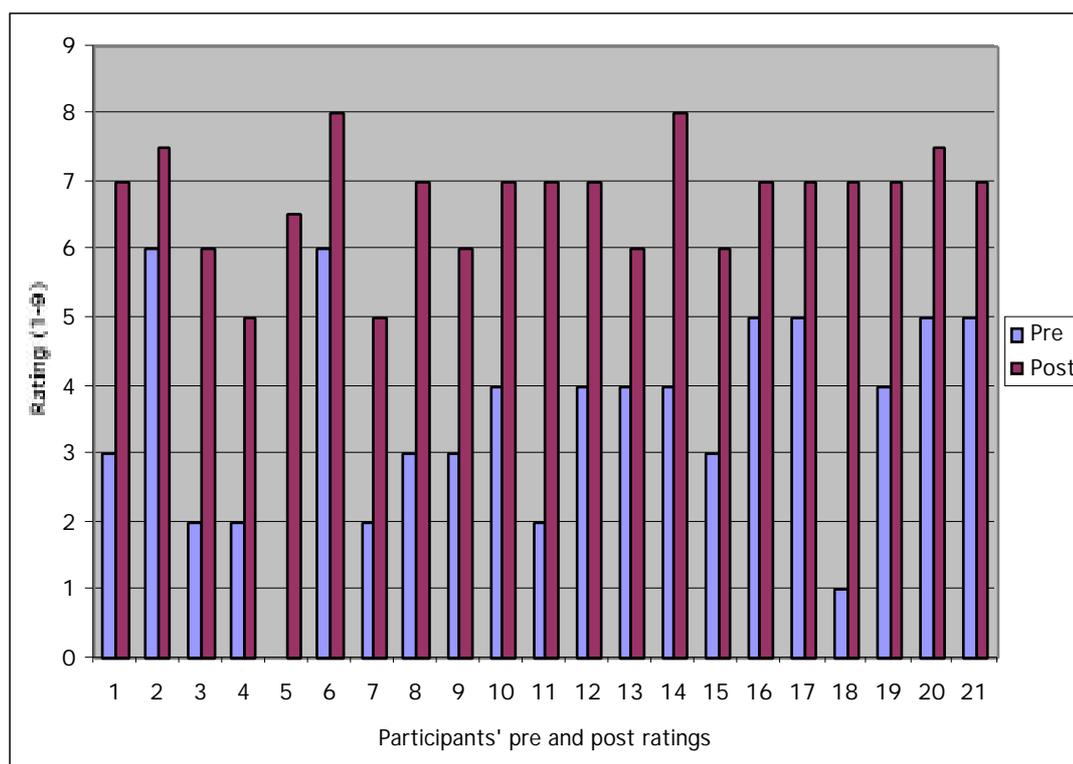

Figure 1: Participants' pre and post program ratings for level of knowledge and skills

Participants were also asked to comment on roles they felt confident in undertaking, having completed the course. Such roles included, providing support for colleagues in the area of learning difficulties, presentations at cluster group meetings, school leadership roles or participation in school management teams and finally, presentations at conferences. Responses to this question provided information to evaluate outcomes at level 3 of Guskey's model, that of organisational support and change. Figure 2 illustrates the number of participants who felt confident about undertaking specific roles following their participation in the course. It is interesting to note that while most participants felt confident about providing support for colleagues fewer participants felt confident about presenting at conferences. Several participants added comments next to their nominations indicating that they had never presented at a conference before and viewed this as frightening prospect for which they did not feel ready. Others felt they would prefer to present at staff meetings and cluster groups prior to considering a conference presentation. These responses need some further investigation by providers and systems, as an additional level in Guskey's model could be to generate information beyond the school level to the wider community. If systems intend to support teacher development then teachers sharing their learning and experiences with other teachers beyond the school environment would appear to be a desired outcome too.

A final element in the summative evaluation process involved the participants reflecting on the comments they made prior to the course and responding to whether they felt their desired outcomes had been achieved. This reflective activity also resulted in some participants identifying previously unrecognised learning opportunities that arose from their participation in the program. The opportunity to reflect on their pre program statements can be noted in the specific details about desired outcomes in some of the following comments:

- *"I wrote in my initial statement that I wanted to develop confidence in my ability to work with students with learning difficulties. My support prior to the course had been very 'ad hoc' and I didn't have a sound knowledge base and understanding of methodologies used*

for students with LD. I now feel very confident in my ability to make a difference for these students".

- "I stated initially that I specifically wanted to develop motivational techniques for my students in a secondary setting, the most helpful thing I have learnt in respect to this is to give control and responsibility back to the students, it has worked wonders for my students".

- "I think overall the course has returned far more than I originally expected, especially in making links with others and in opportunities to write and reflect".

- "My desire to broaden my knowledge with more 'theoretical learning' has certainly been achieved. I have been bombarded with a huge amount of valuable and interesting information which motivates me to continue with further studies".

- "The course has been supportive of all my desired outcomes and in addition has provided me with an extensive range of resources and practices to use".

- "My original outcomes have been achieved as I have read more widely and been updated on current methodology. I think I still need more work in the maths area though this was not stated as an original outcome".
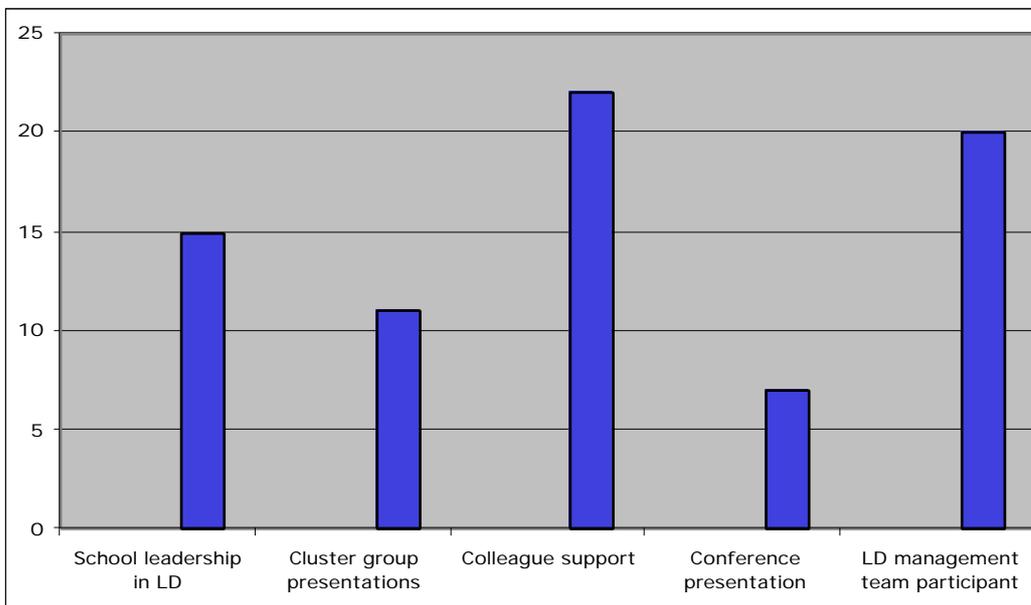

Figure 2: Participants' confidence for undertaking specific roles

DISCUSSION

The participants' stories provided a positive picture from a number of perspectives. Significant outcomes for participants, their students and in many cases, organisations have been achieved from the perspective of the participants. One participant was able to establish a whole school model of tracking students' progress and structuring effective support processes as required, without the need for additional staffing resources. Another participant won a position as a project officer to provide statewide professional development and policy advice in the area of Learning Difficulties. Outcomes for students that could also be noted in the participants' feedback included both individual and whole class improvements. Participants' energy levels to complete the program were often driven by the knowledge that they were making a difference for their students. Guskey (1998:9) notes that *"...anecdotes and testimonials....are typically biased and highly subjective. Nevertheless, they can be powerful and convincing. They are an important source of evidence that should never be ignored".* He goes on to suggest that *"good evidence is not hard to come by if you know what you are looking for'.* This is a critical point and the success of this project was supported by clearly

establishing the goals of such an investment and designing the program based on characteristics of effective professional development (Hawley and Valli, 1999).

Throughout the Australian Federal government's initiative, *Teachers for the 21ˢᵗ Century* (2001), reference is made to the connection between teachers' learning and student learning outcomes. However, establishing what these specific connections are, has been challenging.

Guskey's model of evaluating teachers' learning provides the opportunity to recognise that outcomes for teachers and organisations can underpin the connection to improved outcomes for students. In the project described in this paper teachers recognised their improved knowledge and skills promoted a more confident approach in their abilities to make a difference for students with learning difficulties. This would appear to be a critical connection to improved learning outcomes for students.

The project continues to provide opportunities to gather further valuable information. Future evaluation processes could include interviews with participants to investigate the continued influence of the course on their practices. Ongoing evaluation may also seek to establish whether the participants continue to engage in reflective teaching or whether they have established more formal action research projects with other colleagues. It would also be of interest to track career changes in future years. To measure outcomes for students, the participants could share their beliefs about how the course had specifically supported them to make differences for students in an ongoing way. In addition, students could also be interviewed to establish their perceptions about whether there had been changes in teaching strategies, enthusiasm and/or classroom programs. Students could be asked how these changes had been of benefit to them. For those who prefer more quantitative measures, of which there were some participants in the program, establishing pre and post program measures of student learning or using comparison groups would also provide evidence to evaluate the program at future points. However, as Guskey points out, investigators must establish where they are going if they wish to find out that they have arrived. The use of pre program desired outcomes in this project certainly allowed the participants to reflect on whether they 'got what they came for'.

In gathering planning and ongoing data, investigators need to carefully establish what they are looking for. For example, in reflecting on this project, the pre program information gathered from participants only provided information about their personal desired outcomes. Information was not specifically sought to inform the course coordinator about participants' desired outcomes in respect of influencing students' learning or school organisation, levels 3 and 5 of Guskey's model. Although making a difference for students was alluded to in the participants' pre program comments, and indeed one participant noted there were no people with training in learning difficulties at his location, seeking more specific information at all levels of Guskey's model would be a worthy consideration.

The use of Guskey's model to evaluate outcomes for participants involved in professional development programs is only one element within the bigger picture of evaluation. As noted previously, a number of people representing different organisations contributed to the design of the present program. Contributors included the South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment (SA DETE), parent advocates, community consultants in the area of learning difficulties and university personnel. All of these contributors had a vested interest in outcomes at different levels of Guskey's model. For example, SA DETE could be interested in outcomes at all levels but in particular level 3, 4 and 5, whereas parent advocates may be more interested in evaluation at level 5 being student learning outcomes. While course aims were established based on input from these groups, this process only sought to guide the design of the program rather than clearly identify the desired outcomes of the different parties. To determine if all parties 'get what they come for' specific details would need to be gathered from these parties prior to the commencement of a program. In completing such a strategic process, evaluation beyond outcomes for participants may also be possible.

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APPENDIX 1: GUSKEY'S MODEL OF 5 LEVELS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION (1999)

Evaluation level	What questions are addressed?	How will information be gathered?	What is measured?	How will information be used?
1. Participants' reactions	Did they like it? Was their time well spent? Did the material make sense? Will it be useful? Was the leader knowledgeable and helpful? Were the refreshments fresh and tasty? Was the room the right temperature? Were the chairs comfortable?	Questionnaires administered at the end of the session	Initial satisfaction with the experience	To improve program design and delivery
2. Participants' learning	Did the participants acquire the intended knowledge?	Pencil and paper instruments Simulations Demonstrations Portfolios	New knowledge and skills of participants	To improve program content, format and organisation
3. Organisation support and change	What was the impact on the organisation? Was implementation advocated, facilitated and supported? Were successes shared and recognised?	School records Questionnaires Structured interviews Participants' portfolios Participants' reflections	The organisation's advocacy, support, accommodation facilitation and recognition	To document and improve organisational support To inform future change efforts
4. Participants' use of new knowledge and skills	Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge & skills?	Questionnaires Structured interviews Direct observations	Degree and quality of implementation	To document and improve the implementation of the program content
5. Student learning outcomes	What was the impact on students? Did it affect student achievement? Did it influence students' physical or emotional well-being?	Students records School records Questionnaires Structured interviews Participants portfolios and reflections	Student learning outcomes: Cognitive (performance & achievement) Affective (attitudes and dispositions) Psychomotor (skills & behaviours)	To focus and improve all aspects of the program design, implementation, and follow up To demonstrate the overall impact of professional development