

Observation Checklist for High-Quality Professional Development (Version 3)
(HQPD Checklist-3)

May 2020

The Observation Checklist for High-Quality Professional Development - Version 3 (HQPD Checklist-3) was designed to be completed by an observer to determine the inclusion of evidence-based adult learning indicators within professional development. These data should be incorporated into ongoing feedback and coaching to the individuals who provide professional development. Furthermore, the indicators can be used as guidance when designing or revising professional development. The tool represents a compilation of indicators, identified through a review of relevant research and more than fifteen years of experience evaluating professional development, that promote learning and implementation of evidence-based practices.

Preparing for Learning
1. Prior to the professional development, provides learning objectives addressing the critical concepts.
2. Prepares participants to engage in the content by assigning activities in advance.
3. Follows an agenda that outlines the flow of the content and includes beginning times, ending times, and key breaks.
4. Establishes credibility by communicating content expertise and/or experience.
Contextualizing the Content
5. Illustrates alignment between the content and participants' organizational standards, goals, or priorities.
6. Summarizes the evidence base for the content, including providing references or links.
7. Emphasizes the impact of the practice/content on improved outcomes (e.g., student achievement, client well-being).
8. Provides model examples of the content in practice, connected to participants' context.
Engaging in Learning
9. Builds on or relates to participants' prior learning.
10. Engages participants in higher-order thinking to learn each critical concept.
11. Prompts each participant to relate the content to their context.
12. Facilitates opportunities for participants to collaborate related to the critical concepts.
13. Facilitates opportunities for each participant to practice applying the critical concepts.
Reflecting on Learning
14. Provides constructive feedback within practice opportunities to promote the acquisition of skills.
15. Engages each participant in assessment of knowledge/skill acquisition with corrective feedback.
16. Facilitates opportunities for participants to reflect on how learning will influence their practice.
17. Establishes a process for participants' continued reflection on implementation and impact.
Transferring Learning to Practice
18. Outlines criteria that illustrate a successful transfer of the critical concepts to practice.
19. Ensures that participants leave with detailed action steps to apply their learning.
20. Provides resources and technical assistance for continued learning.
21. Establishes ongoing, two-way communication (coaching) to improve the implementation fidelity of critical concepts.

Authors' Note: The developers have observed more than 500 professional development sessions, including face-to-face, virtual, and hybrid instructional formats. This experience, as well as the evidence cited below, inform the revisions. Group events (e.g. workshops, seminars, conferences, webinars) continue to be the most common form of professional development because they are “the most efficient and cost-effective professional development model for sharing ideas and information with large groups” (Guskey, 2000, p. 23). This checklist was originally designed to improve and evaluate the quality of single-event training but has since been applied to mentoring models, multi-week courses, webinar series, book studies, etc.

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