

Evaluation of the IHC New Zealand National Coaching Program Case Study

Description

The IHC New Zealand National Coaching Program was developed to support the organization's mission of increasing independence and self-determination for individuals with intellectual disabilities through its "my day, my way" philosophy. The program addressed the need for frontline managers to become more effective coaches so they could better support staff in helping service users achieve personal goals and greater independence. In a public education context, I would be the frontline manager coaching my students with disabilities to complete assignments and assessments that evaluate their readiness for the workplace.

The primary audience for the training was frontline service managers responsible for supervising support workers. By improving managers' coaching skills, IHC hoped to create a ripple effect that would improve support worker performance and ultimately improve outcomes for service users with intellectual disabilities.

The learning objectives focused on managers consistently using the EPiC coaching framework, conducting ongoing coaching conversations, implementing 7-, 30-, and 60-day coaching sessions, and applying personality profiling tools to adapt leadership styles to individual staff needs.

The evaluation plan incorporated all four levels of the Kirkpatrick Model. Level 1 (Reaction) measured participant engagement and perceptions of relevance. Level 2 (Learning) measured confidence, commitment, and understanding of coaching concepts. Level 3 (Behavior) evaluated whether managers applied coaching practices on the job. Level 4 (Results) examined organizational outcomes and improvements experienced by support workers and service users.

Evaluation

One of the strongest aspects of this case study is its deliberate use of all four levels of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model. Rather than stopping at participant satisfaction or knowledge acquisition, the organization gathered evidence demonstrating whether learning transferred into workplace practice and ultimately improved organizational outcomes.

At Level 1, participants completed customized reaction surveys that measured engagement, confidence, commitment, and perceived relevance of the training. At Level 2, learning was assessed through action plans and reflective questions designed to identify

intended behavior changes. These assessments aligned well with the program's goals because they encouraged participants to immediately connect learning to workplace application. This is exactly what CTE courses aim to do for students in high school.

The most valuable assessment choices occurred at Level 3. Follow-up phone calls, interviews, observations, and coaching conversations were conducted at multiple intervals after training. These measures provided evidence that managers were implementing coaching behaviors rather than merely reporting satisfaction with the workshop. As a classroom teacher, I see great value in this approach because meaningful evaluation should focus on what learners actually do after instruction rather than what they say they learned.

At Level 4, the evaluation included both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Data demonstrated increased coaching activity, stronger team collaboration, improved support worker performance, and greater independence among service users. The detailed success stories provided especially compelling evidence because they connected organizational outcomes directly to the training intervention. Examples included increased self-advocacy, improved health outcomes, reduced self-harm behaviors, and increased independent living skills among service users.

One area where the evaluation could be strengthened is reliability and validity. While the case study demonstrates strong cross-checking methods through surveys, interviews, observations, and stakeholder feedback, it provides limited information about the skill and personality properties of the assessment instruments. Reliability appears to be supported through repeated data collection at multiple intervals and across multiple stakeholders. Validity is strengthened through the alignment between stakeholder expectations, learning objectives, critical behaviors, and measured outcomes. However, more formal descriptions of instrument development and validation would strengthen confidence in the findings. This is similar to the benchmarks and standards that we are provided with in the course framework to determine if what we are teaching and what we are measuring is valid and reliable in determining student growth.

The results were overwhelmingly positive. Behavior change was visible within 30 days and became well established by 60 days. Managers reported spending more time coaching staff, support workers received more individualized guidance, and service users experienced measurable improvements in independence and quality of life. IHC used evaluation findings to revise participant selection, improve manager preparation, increase accountability structures, and strengthen post-training support throughout the process. This demonstrates evaluation being used not simply to judge a program, but to improve it.

Recommendations

While the program demonstrated strong evaluation practices, several recommendations could further strengthen future implementations.

First, IHC should develop more standardized performance measures for Level 3 behavior observations. Consistent behavioral rubrics could improve reliability across different evaluators and regions. They need more clearly define what specific behaviors evaluators are looking for when we observe behavioral changes from receiving the training so that the same qualitative metrics can be used in every new setting and iteration to somehow standardize what they are measuring. In my own summative assessments, I develop rubrics to evaluate qualitative behavioral changes that occur as a result of the learning the student gained and grew from in the course unit.

Second, the organization could establish clearer quantitative indicators at Level 4. While the case study provides compelling stories and examples, additional metrics related to service user independence, goal achievement, and quality-of-life outcomes would provide stronger evidence of long-term impact.

Third, IHC should formalize the tracking processes that were described as inconsistently implemented during the pilot phase. A centralized data dashboard could support ongoing monitoring and help decision-makers identify trends across regions more effectively. We use this in a number of evaluation tools like Atlas in the public school setting to track patterns in cohort outcomes to help determine if the changes we made in our coursework are effective and consistent.

Finally, I agree with the case study's emphasis on pre-training readiness. Several barriers emerged because participants either lacked prerequisite skills or did not understand expectations before attending training. Future implementations should continue readiness assessments and stakeholder orientation prior to program launch. We do this in the public school setting often with pretests to gauge where the students are at with their prior knowledge and experience so that we can support individual student needs throughout the unit. This also helps us to know where to place stronger emphasis and time in our instruction to ensure that content a majority of students missed is highlighted and fully understood before moving forward with the assessments.

Application to My Project

This case study has several direct applications to my proposed Career Readiness course's online Communication Skills module. My project focuses on developing an asynchronous

online learning experience for high school students who may face barriers to traditional classroom participation, including students with work responsibilities, scheduling conflicts, disabilities, and language acquisition need.

The most important lesson I take from this case study is the importance of evaluating beyond student satisfaction. For my project, Level 1 evaluation should include learner surveys regarding engagement, accessibility, and relevance of the online module. Level 2 evaluation should involve formative vocabulary checks, communication planning exercises, discussion board participation, and the summative communication project.

The case study particularly reinforces the importance of Level 3 evaluation. Rather than simply measuring whether students understand communication concepts, I must evaluate whether students actually demonstrate improved communication behaviors. Student video submissions, self-reflections, peer feedback, and revisions will provide evidence of behavioral change over time. This is especially important for students with disabilities, where growth in communication skills and self-advocacy may be more meaningful than traditional test scores alone.

Finally, the case study encourages me to think about Level 4 outcomes. The ultimate goal of my course is not merely passing an assignment but preparing students for success in workplace and postsecondary environments. Future evaluation of the full Career Readiness course could include follow-up surveys, employer feedback, worksite observations, or student reflections about how they applied communication planning skills in authentic situations. Similar to the IHC program, the strongest evidence of success would be demonstrating that learning transferred beyond the course and into students' real lives in the future workplace.

Overall, this case study demonstrates the value of using evaluation as a continuous improvement process. As a CTE teacher who regularly adapts instruction, accommodations, and modifications for diverse learners, I found the emphasis on ongoing reflection, stakeholder feedback, and data-driven adjustments especially applicable to both my daily practice and the development of my online learning project.