
EVALUATION

How can you know that training has been helpful? In order to answer this, an evaluation may be of help. An evaluation may have several elements. One may be to go through how the training itself has been. Have there been any obstacles to training? Is there something that the person training has experienced as particularly positive or negative with the training? Another element is to check if training has had any impact. Has the person's behaviour in the classroom or at home/work changed? Does the person experience difference in his everyday life? For support and structure regarding evaluation we recommend that you use Appendix 4 for a child training and Appendix 11 for an adult.

EVALUATION – IS STARTED BEFORE TRAINING!

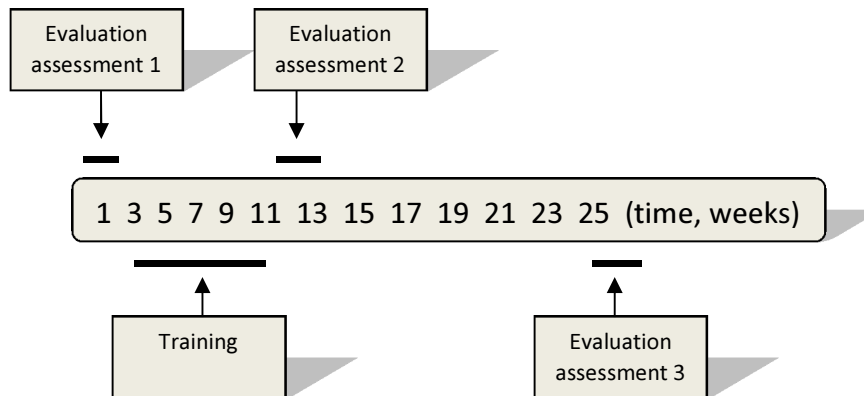
Before you as coach let the training with Memory Quest start, we recommend that you think through what measures you want to use for evaluation. This is necessary because some assessment methods require comparison of values before and after training. For example, if you as coach are interested to see if the parents and class teachers perceive differences in the concentration of the trainee it is easier to say something about that if you have collected data on how they perceived the trainee's attention span before the training began. In that case it is appropriate to distribute identical questionnaires to the assessors before and after training to be able to draw stronger conclusions about the possible training effect.

Below are the tools available in Memory Quest described: "Forms" and "Results from exercise programmes."

FORMS

Forms are a very useful tool to evaluate change in behaviour in the trainee. It is important that the chosen form is filled out by the assessors on more than one occasion for you to get a clearer picture of effects of training. The best strategy is to make an assessment before training begins, the next assessment after completed training and a final assessment a few months later.

FIGURE 7: EVALUATION WITH 3 ASSESSMENT POINTS



Often it is good to use more than one assessor to get a better idea of training effects. For example, if an adult trains, you may want to have a partner, colleague and the adult him/herself assess behaviour. Having more assessors allows you to get an idea of behavioural change in different environments and to get different views of what changes may have occurred. On the Memory Quest website you can find different forms. The forms concern areas where effects of working memory training have previously been proven (working memory, attention and hyperactivity). Note that the forms in are not standardized and are not intended to identify if problems exist in the first place. For a list of commonly used standardized assessment forms which concern attention, impulsivity and working memory see Appendix 13.

RESULTS IN MEMORY QUEST

It is important to note that the results in Memory Quest should be seen as one of several sources of information to evaluate training. The results of the training programme show whether the trainee has learned to remember longer series of stimuli and if they can remember longer sequences more frequently the longer the training has been conducted. To get a general idea of how training has gone, we recommend that you compare the results from the first training week with results from the last week of training. This will be automatically presented in the program when training is completed in the "gathered results" form. Based on evaluations conducted on Memory Quest an average increase of about 1 in "max items" indicate a positive change. An increase of two or more "max items" indicates a very big change.

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS

Training can also be evaluated using neuropsychological tests measuring working memory capacity and/or other related cognitive abilities. Most common is that neuropsychological testing is done in research, but not in everyday life. Most tests that measure neuropsychological functions require that a licensed psychologist administer them and therefore it is far from everyone that trains working memory that may be offered this type of element in the evaluation. However, we think that in most cases neuropsychological testing is not necessary to evaluate training if estimates of relevant behaviour are carried out systematically with forms. In Appendix 13, there are examples of how various factors can be evaluated using neuropsychological tests (mainly targeted at people who are certified Psychologists).

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

Once training is completed, it is advisable that you meet the trainee to gauge how they have experienced the training. Firstly this should give you information about any improvements in areas other than those assessed in the evaluation. Secondly, you may want to give the opportunity for the trainee to describe how they experienced training. Describing his/her experience of training confirms the effort of the trainee and provides an opportunity to discuss any difficulties. It can also give you information on

how you can develop as a coach. In Appendix 4 and 12 we give tips on questions to ask children and adults who have completed training.

CONCLUSIVE COMMENTS

Finally, your subjective opinion as a coach is also important to remember. The idea of any systematic evaluation is to provide an objective picture of possible changes. The downside is that it is restrictive and if the right questions are not asked, or if you fail to observe a particular behaviour, actual changes as a result of training can be missed. The contact between the coach and the trainee is very important for there to be room for a productive conversation about training after it is completed.