Introduction to Program Evaluation

Maureen Berner
University of North Carolina
School of Government

Online Documentation

You will find electronic copies of the files for Introduction to Program Evaluation at the following website if you would like to follow along during class:
https://www.sog.unc.edu/courses/introduction-program-evaluation

What is NOT Program Evaluation?
Performance Measurement

- Monitors performance data
- Used for comparisons with self over time or peer organizations
- Is ongoing

Performance Audits

- Audits are always “after the fact”
- Audits tend to focus on adherence to rules
- Did you do what you said you would do

Six Sigma

- Process improvement approach
- Statistical approach to reduce error
Price/Per Studies

- Are you doing the most for the least?
- Could you do more with the same amount of $?
- Could you do the same with less $?

What is Program Evaluation?

- Is there a problem?
- How would a program solve the problem?
- Is it working the way we intended?
- Is there any way we can improve the current program?
- Did the program work?

Problem? Needs Assessment

Understanding the nature and extent of a problem
**What Can Happen if Needs Assessment is Ignored?**

- Right program → wrong population
- Wrong program → right population
- Program → no need
- Program (can be) doomed from start

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**What is your problem?**

Describe the problem your program or service is meant to ‘solve’

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**Solution Idea? Program Theory**

Showing the connections between problem and proposed solution

Also called Logic Model
Steps in Outlining Program Theory

• What is program supposed to do and what results are expected? Outline theory of how program addresses need.
• Talk with stakeholders, get materials, articulate and question assumptions
• I.D.’s the links between theory and program goals/objectives/implementation

What Can Happen if Program Theory is Ignored?

→ Poor focus of evaluation
→ Misunderstanding/Miscommunication
→ Conflict of expectations
→ Failed program
→ Flawed evaluation

What’s your theory?

Outline the logic model behind your program
What is Going On? Process Eval

Outlining exactly how a program works

Steps in Process Evaluation

• Outline the program activities (the step by step) that should take place (and are they linked to the program theory?)
• Outline the program activities that actually do take place

What Can Happen if Process Evaluation is Ignored?

Evaluation results can be misleading, even wrong

Limits accountability

Even with good results, there is question about link between program and outcome — where/why did program fail or succeed?
If you evaluated a process...

Brainstorm how you would evaluate a process in your program or service.

Links Between All

- Needs Assessment is basis for intervention
- Program theory provides blueprint for program/intervention design
- Process Evaluation tests design to see if it is working as intended

Is it Working (Part 1)?

Formative Evaluation:
Assessing the **short-term** impact of your program in order to improve program design.
Is it Working (Part 2)?

Impact/Outcome Evaluation: Assessing the long-term impact of your program

Measuring Your Success

“Real” Evaluation

• Did you meet your goals/objectives? Goal-based Evaluation
• Did you program make a difference – did it address the need? Impact Evaluation

Pull It All Together

How do people “do” Impact Evaluations?
Impact Evaluation – Goal and Outcome Based

- Must answer the "if you are successful" and "why or why not" questions
- Must define success with agreed upon goals, objectives, and outcomes
- Must define criteria and standards
- Must gather data
- Must know your timeline, stakeholders, budget and audience

How do people gather data?

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Documents – records, memos, numerical data
- Case Studies/Comparison studies
- Almost way is legitimate if done well, is acceptable to stakeholders and objective

Additional Approaches

- Participatory Evaluation
- Collective Impact Evaluation
Where do I start?

Important Context

• Before you start, you should know…

• Program’s history, growth, target audience

• The reason the evaluation is taking place

• How results will be used
Important Context

• What’s the story? And just the facts, ma’am . . . .

Stakeholders

• Who funds, supports, criticizes the program?

• Who does the program impact, positively or negatively?

Stakeholders

• Who is important to the evaluation?

• Who are involved, from program delivery to program beneficiaries?
Stakeholders

• All are stakeholders, but not all need to be involved in the actual evaluation

• Who should participate in the evaluation?

• Who should be directly consulted?

• Who should be just informed?

FM Food Donation Program

• Example: The TarHeelBoro Farmer's Market Food Donation Program

FM Food Donation Program

• Farmers
What is success in this program?

- What was the hoped for outcome? (remember logic models and program theory?)
- Operationalized
- Measureable!

Success!

- In X years, I'll know the program is a success if….

Success!

- In X years, I'll know all the hard work I put was successful if I get an admission letter…
Success!

- In X years, I'll know all the hard work I put was successful if I get an admission letter…
- Anywhere..

Success!

- In X years, I'll know all the hard work I put was successful if I get an admission letter…
- Anywhere..
- Please…..