WHAT IS PROGRAM EVALUATION?
What difference do definitions make?

E-VALU-ation
"Value" is the root word of evaluation
- Evaluation involves making value judgments, according to many in the field

Traditional definition: Michael S.
(from Michael Scriven, 1967, and the earlier Program Evaluation Standards)
"The systematic determination of the merit, worth (or value) of an object”

Important concepts in this definition
- SYSTEMATIC means that evaluators use explicit rules and procedures to make determinations
- MERIT is the absolute or intrinsic value of an object
- WORTH is the relative or extrinsic value of an object in a given context
An Alternative Definition: Michael P.

Systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to (1) make judgments about the program, (2) improve or further develop program effectiveness, (3) inform decisions, and/or (4) increase understanding.

Done for and with specific intended primary users for specific, intended uses.

MQP’s utilization-focused evaluation

The PERSONAL FACTOR in evaluation: "The presence of an identifiable individual or group of people who personally care about the evaluation and the findings it generates"

Commonalities among definitions

- Evaluation is a systematic process
- Evaluation involves collecting data
- Evaluation is a process for enhancing knowledge and decision making
- Evaluation use is implicit or explicit

Russ-Eft & Preskill (2009, p. 4)

Overarching Concepts in Evaluation Definitions

- JUDGMENT
  – The traditional/Scriven/Program Evaluation Standards’ definition makes judgment central to the work of an evaluator
  – Patton’s definition includes judgment as one possibility

- USE
  – Patton’s definition makes use central to the work of an evaluator
  – Scriven’s notion of the roles of evaluation encompasses evaluation use

So what?

Why does this distinction (judgment vs. use) matter to evaluation practice?
What can we evaluate?

Six “P’s”

- Programs
- Products
- Policies
- Plans
- Proposals
- People

WHY would we/do we use Program Evaluation in our organization?

What might an evaluation purpose(s) be?

- Accreditation?
- Accountability?
- Goal attainment?
- Consumer protection?
- Needs assessment?
- Object improvement?
- Understanding or support?
- Social change?
- Decision making?

Patton’s Basics of Evaluation:

- What?
- So what?
- Now what?

One basic distinction

INTERNAL evaluation

- Conducted by program employees
- Plus side: More knowledge about program
- Minus side: Potential bias and influence

SOME COMMON EVALUATION TERMS
One basic distinction

EXTERNAL evaluation
- Conducted by outsiders,
  often for a fee
- Plus side: Less visible bias
- Minus side: Outsiders have to gain
  entrée; have less first-hand
  knowledge of the program

Scriven's classic terms (1967)

FORMATIVE evaluation
- Conducted during the development or
delivery of a program
- Feedback for program improvement

Scriven's classic terms (1967)

SUMMATIVE evaluation
- Typically done at the end of a project
- Often done for other users or for
  accountability purposes

A newer term from
Michael Quinn Patton:

DEVELOPMENTAL evaluation
- Help develop a program or intervention
- Evaluators are part of the program
design team
- Use systematically collected data

The cookie evaluation

Key evaluation framework (1980)

The logic of program evaluation
- Criteria
- Standards
- Data
- Judgments

Developed by Jean King; Revised by Cindy Reich
Evaluation Logic

- Establish **criteria**: On what dimensions will something be evaluated?
- Construct **standards**: How well should it perform on the dimensions?
- **Measure** performance and compare with standards: How well did it perform?
- **Synthesize** and integrate info into judgment of worth
- Make **recommendations**

Back to the cookies... How might the evaluation results change in the following settings?
1. A child care center
2. An after-school center for teenagers
3. A down-home restaurant
4. An upscale restaurant
5. A refugee camp

Important Evaluation Concepts

1. Everyone is an evaluator
2. Different people have different--and sometimes competing--values
3. Context matters

What is the Evaluation Process?

Every evaluation shares similar procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Phase Name</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Object description</td>
<td>What will we evaluate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Context analysis</td>
<td>1. Why are we doing an evaluation? 2. What do we hope to learn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Evaluation plan</td>
<td>How will we conduct the study?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The basic inquiry tasks (BIT)

1. Framing questions
2. Determining an appropriate design
3. Identifying a sample
4. Collecting data
5. Analyzing data and presenting results
6. Interpreting results
7. “Reporting”
What do you want to know about your program?

• How does your program work?
• What is the impact of your program?
• What opportunities do you have to expand your program to serve others?
• How or to what degree do the resources and activities meet the needs of stakeholders?

Answering the question requires...

Systematic collection and analysis of data
  - This might mean using quantitative measures, qualitative measures, or both

Possible ways to collect data for an evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative:</th>
<th>Qualitative:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Surveys</td>
<td>o Focus Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Participant Assessments</td>
<td>o Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Cost-benefit Analysis</td>
<td>o Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Statistical Analysis of existing program data</td>
<td>o Appreciative inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Some kinds of record and document review</td>
<td>o Some kinds of record and document review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are the best methods for your evaluation??

It all goes back to the question you started with...

• Some data collection methods are better than others at answering your questions
• Some tools are more appropriate for the audience you need to collect information from
• Each method of collecting data has its advantages and disadvantages (e.g., cost, availability of information, expertise required)

Evaluation stakeholders

• People who have a "stake" in evaluation findings (but who may not participate in the study itself or read its results)
• Cf. stockholder
• Those who may be directly affected by evaluation results

WHO ARE THE PLAYERS IN AN EVALUATION PROCESS?

It's not just the evaluator...
Chart format for stakeholder concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder (Individual or Group)</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder #1</td>
<td>[LIST]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder #2</td>
<td>[LIST]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder #3</td>
<td>[LIST]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What roles can evaluators play?

- A relationship exists between the evaluator and the client, the program staff, and other evaluation stakeholders
- The evaluation decision making and implementation relationship may shift during the study

Examples of evaluator roles

- Technical expert on research design, measurement, statistics
- Facilitator of group interaction
- Coach of others doing their own evaluations
- Others?

Interactive Evaluation Quotient

Types of constraints on program evaluations

- Organization politics: support, opposition, security of the object
- Resources available: some say to spend 5-10%, but more often it is 3% or less
- Leadership: control, people’s goals, fit of evaluation

Constraints on program evaluations

Limitations or concerns that are likely to have an effect on how the evaluation will be conducted (e.g., time, money, political pressures)
Types of constraints on program evaluations (cont.)

- History: program stability, duration, past evaluations
- Social patterns: attitude of staff, clients, agencies, organizational climate
- Guidelines and standards: "standards," human subjects rules, confidentiality, legislation, professional ethics

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“Reports” take many forms

- Informal conversations
- Lollypops with notes attached
- PowerPoint presentations
- Pamphlets
- Formal documents (plain to fancy)
- Any creative means imaginable

The Joint Committee
Program Evaluation Standards

The five categories:
- Utility
- Feasibility
- Propriety
- Accuracy
- Evaluation Accountability
Remember UFPAE!

AEA Guiding Principles

- Systematic Inquiry
- Competence
- Integrity/Honesty
- Respect for People
- Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare


EVALUATION AS A FIELD
How to construct a logic model (by any name)

It ain't rocket science . . .

“A we build the road, and the road builds us.”
-Sri Lankan saying

Logic modeling is a way of thinking . . .
not just a pretty graphic

A logic model is...

• A way of describing your program that identifies the underlying assumptions
• Graphic linking of program activities to desired outcomes

Simplest form of a logic model

Results-oriented planning

A bit more detail . . .

So what? What is the value?

What does a logic model look like?

Examples . . .
Regardless of format, what do logic models have in common?

- They show activities that lead to outcomes
- They show a chain of outcomes: short, medium, long-term
- They show relationships/connections that make sense (are logical). Arrows are used to show the connections (the “if-then” relationships)
- They are understandable – communicate easily