

What the Hell is Program Evaluation?

A Forever Question

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Defining Evaluation

(Mostly) Official

Evaluation is the act or
process of determining
the

merit
quality

worth
value

significance
importance

of something or the
product of that
process

A Closer Look

What do *merit*, *worth*, and *significance* mean to you both separately and in combination?

A Closer Look

Can you think of real world
examples of each?

Generally

Evaluation answers the questions

does it work?

why does it work?

What About the How?

We typically leave the remaining question *how does it work?* to people with grounded knowledge in a particular area

aka
*content
experts*

More Terms with the Stem *Eval-*

Evaluator

The person(s) evaluating something

Evaluand

The thing(s) being evaluated

Levels, Performances, and Measures

Of the three terms *criteria*, *standards*, and *indicators*, which of the three do you believe is harder to identify?

Levels, Performances, and Measures

Can you think of real world examples of each?

Primary Purposes of Evaluation

Formative

Conducted with the intent to improve

Summative

Conducted with the intent to inform decision making
and/or determine judgment

Secondary Purposes of Evaluation

Developmental

To help develop an intervention or program

Accountability

To hold accountable

Monitoring

To assess implementation and gauge progress toward a desired end

Knowledge Generation

To generate knowledge about general patterns of effectiveness

Ascriptive

Merely for the sake of knowing

Developmental vs *Formative* Evaluation

A video from an evaluator named Michael Quinn Patton describing the differences can be found by clicking on the icon below



A bit more on *Developmental* Evaluation

What might the purpose of the evaluation be?

What questions might the evaluation try to answer?

Formative Evaluation

The program has been designed and piloted with a group of 20 principals. What kind of evaluative feedback should the ASDC seek?

Summative Evaluation

The program has been delivered to all principals in the county. What kind of evaluative feedback should the ASDC seek?

Introduction to Roles and Styles

Evaluator Roles:



- Independent

- Topical

- External

- Internal

The one that you take on in an evaluation will determine a lot!

Defining Culture

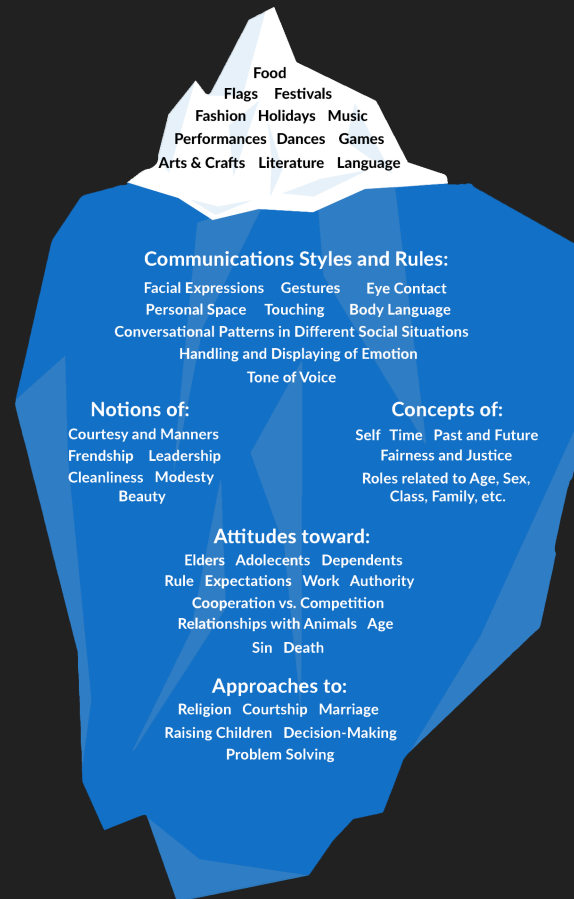
What is culture?

How do we recognize it?

Culture can be defined as the shared experiences of people, including their languages, values, customs, beliefs, and more. It also includes worldviews, ways of knowing, and ways of communicating. Culturally significant factors encompass, but are not limited to, race/ethnicity, religion, social class, language, disability, sexual orientation, age, and gender.

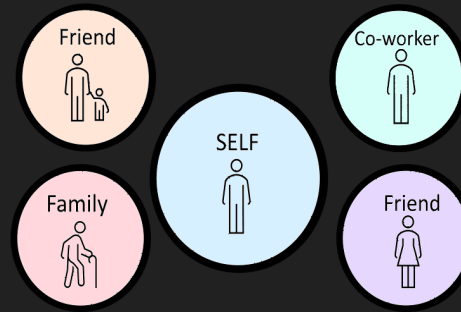
-- American Evaluation Association (2011)

The Iceberg

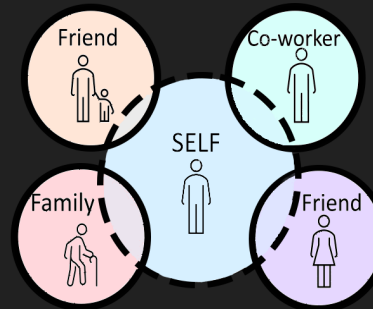


Markus & Kitayama (1991)

Independent view of self



Interdependent view of self



Cultural Influences Activity

How might each of the following influence an evaluation's design and implementation?

Language of participants

Role of food and eating

Evaluators attire when interacting with participants

Concept of time

Communication styles

Importance of family relationships

Values/norms re: individualism, independence, conflict

Understanding of social structure

Increasing your Cultural Sensitivity

Assess your own attitudes, beliefs, values

Incorporate culturally diverse groups and perspectives throughout evaluation process

Build in sufficient time to negotiate access and build trust in community / organization

Demystify evaluation, avoid jargon (please!), build buy-in

Be flexible in choice of evaluation methods, use multiple data sources, multiple data collection methods, multiple perspectives

Meta-evaluation

A *meta-evaluation* is an evaluation of an evaluation or evaluations

Classifications

According to the role the evaluation plays

Formative or Summative

According to the content or the program phase evaluated

Design, Process, or Results

According to the moment of the evaluation

After the fact - aka ex-ante or before the event -aka ex-postfacto


According to the evaluator's role

Internal or External

Concentrate on the idea of a **formative** and **summative** evaluation this week. There is no need to worry if you don't know what any of remaining terms mean and/or imply (and yes that includes this idea of a **meta-evaluation**)! You'll have plenty of opportunities to learn about them as we progress through the term.

Considerations

Things to Evaluate



Evaluation criteria


Evaluation standards

Performance

Program costs

Program goals

Things to Assess



Evaluation Standards

Location

Stakeholder Needs

Sponsor Needs

Your costs

A Look at Goals

Include

Preparatory conditions

- What does it take to be ready to target a goal?
- Progress toward that state is a goal

Intended operations

- What a program tries to implement to achieve a goal is a type of goal.

Targeted outcomes

- Short-term (initial)
- Medium-term (intermediate)
- Long-term (distant)

Whose are Important?

It's not always obvious!

How to Decide Which Matter Most?



Talk to stakeholders/sponsors; explicitly ask their perspective on recipient needs, program goals, and evaluation goals



Figure out other ways to find needs



Read all available program documentation



Develop a logic model connecting needs through program activities, outputs and outcomes associated with goals

Logic Model Parts

INPUTS

Program Investments

what resources go into a program - aka *investments*

OUTPUTS

Activities

what is produced through those activities

Participation

the activities the program assumes - i.e. *what actually occurs*

who is part of the program and how are they served - i.e. *who is served like stakeholders and sponsors and what engagement they have*

Logic Model Parts

OUTCOMES

changes or benefits that result from the program

Short

Learning like *awareness, aspirations, attitudes, knowledge, motivations, opinions, skills*, ect.

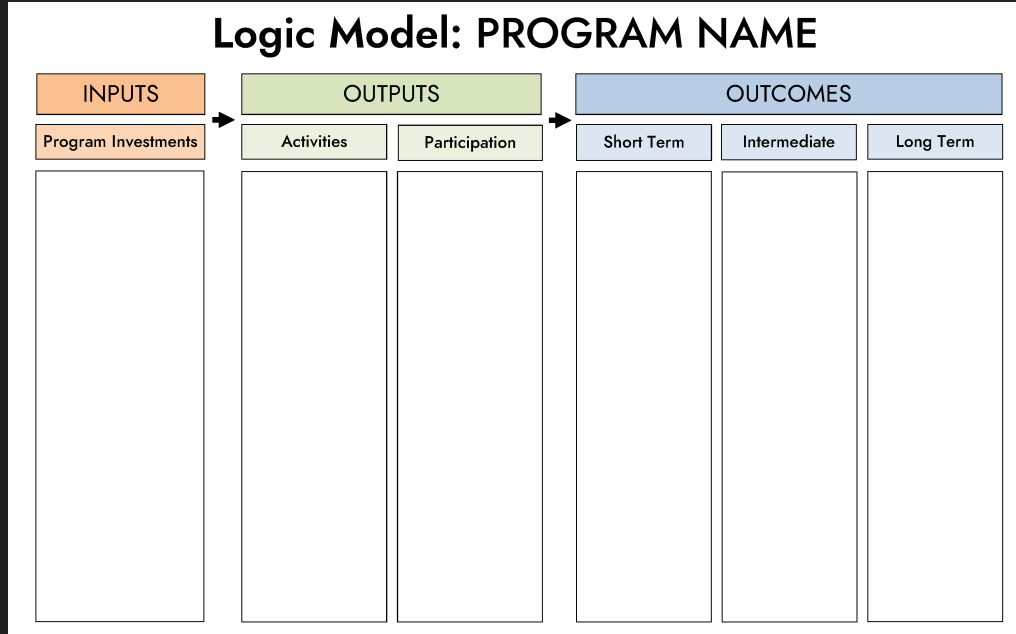
Medium/Intermediate

Actions like *behaviors, decisions, policies, practice*, etc.

Long

Consequences like those that are *civic, economic, environmental, political, professional, social*, etc.

A Basic Model

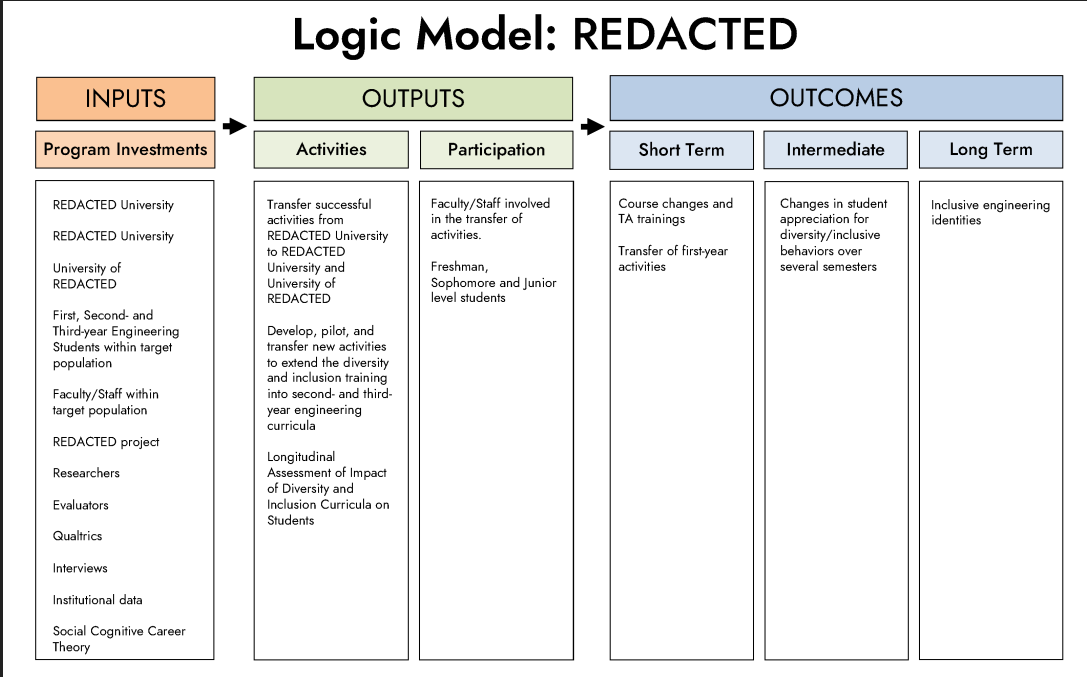


Terminology

- Inputs
 - Investments (what is put in)
- Outputs
 - Activities (the actual tasks performed)
 - Participation (who is served; customers & stakeholders)
 - Engagement (how those served engage with the activities)
- Outcomes
 - Short Term (immediate, measurable – e.g. *learning: awareness, knowledge, skills, motivations*)
 - Medium Term (by the conclusion of the program, measurable – e.g. *action: behavior, practice, decisions, policies*)
 - Long Term (distant, immeasurable – e.g. *consequences: social, economic, environmental etc.*)

Other types of logic models

An Example



More examples of logic models

Basic Factors of an Evaluation

Identifying Criteria

What matters enough to measure given what you know about all the other factors?

- Any relevant past performance data

- Costs

- Existing literature and standards

- Needs and Goals

Estimating Cost

Often very hard to do and do well

Almost always addressed in a relative way

- Relative resource intensity of alternative programs (including development and/or retraining costs)
- Proportion of resources allocated to different program activities (logic modeling can be very helpful for thinking about this)

Measuring Performances

- Sponsor perception

- Staff performance / perception

- Stakeholder performance / perception

In a nutshell

- Who is best positioned to really know?

- Multiple times, multiple perspectives

Evaluation Statements

Developing a Purpose

Step 1

Critique sample evaluation purpose statements¹ to better understand what might go into crafting a good one

Step 2

Write preliminary evaluation statement for the program you'll evaluate

Step 3

Write 3 - 7 potential evaluation questions relevant to the evaluation purpose statement you wrote for step 2

¹ More about this coming up later

Thinking About Statements

In the following slides, take a look at the sample evaluation purpose statements and *for each* try to identify the following four things



what is being evaluated?



how will results be used?



what kind of evaluation will be implemented
(developmental, formative, or summative)?



how could the statement of purpose be
improved?

Example of Evaluation Statements

1. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine employees' level of awareness of the new vision for the organization. This information will be used to decide whether further training or communication about the new vision is needed.
2. The purpose of this evaluation is to understand the knowledge and skills needed by customer service representatives as they prepare to implement a new order entry system. This information will be used to develop a training program for teaching customer service representatives how to use the new system.
3. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the cost-effectiveness of providing online word-processing training. The results will be used to determine whether this approach serves the organization's needs better than providing the training in a traditional classroom format.
4. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine whether the listening skills course should continue to be offered.
5. The purpose of the evaluation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the newly developed online course on healthy communities. The results will be used to modify and refine the design and content of the course.
6. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if students' test scores have increased as a result of teachers' involvement in the new professional development program.
7. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which supervisors followed the procedures for employees' performance review as presented in the New Supervisors Workshop. In addition to concerns about the design and content of the workshop, the evaluation will examine the factors that support or prevent the use of these skills. The results will be used to modify the workshop design and content, identify interventions to support the use of these skills, or both.
8. The purpose of the evaluation is to obtain the reactions of employees to the newly established program development process. The results will be presented to the Executive Team.

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Some Tips

Be confident but **never** demeaning or overpowering

Be clear

Be concise

Be truthful

Don't overpromise¹

Get buy in

Write in a way that's meaningful to your sponsor(s)/stakeholder(s)

¹ Under-delivering can destroy careers!

Thats it!

If you have any questions, please reach out



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