Program Evaluation: An Overview

NOVA Southeastern University
Abraham S. Fischler
School of Education
Topics

• General Ideas and Definitions
• Purposes for Program Evaluation
• Program Evaluation Standards
• Logic Models Defined
• Use of Logic Model to Develop Evaluation Plan
• Example of Logic Model’s Use in Evaluation Planning
• Major Types of Program Evaluation Models
• Explanation of CIPP Program Evaluation Model
The Accountability Era

- What gets measured gets done.
- If you don’t measure results, you can’t tell success from failure.
- If you can’t see success, you can’t reward it.
- If you can’t reward success, you’re probably rewarding failure.
- If you can’t see success, you can’t learn from it.
- If you can’t recognize failure, you can’t correct it.
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.

Program Evaluation Defined

• “Evaluation: Systematic investigation of the value, importance, or significance of something or someone along defined dimensions” (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011, p. 287).

• “Evaluation is the systematic process of delineating, obtaining, reporting, and applying descriptive and judgmental information about some object’s merit, worth, probity [moral correctness], feasibility, safety, significance, or equity” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 698).

“... the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object’s value (worth or merit) in relation to those criteria” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p. 5).

• Program evaluations can involve ongoing monitoring of programs, or one-time studies of program processes, outcomes, and/or program impact.
Purposes of Program Evaluation

• Who needs this evaluation and why? Clearly define the purpose for the evaluation.
• What questions need to be answered? What do the stakeholders want to know?
• Who is going to use the evaluation results?
Formative Evaluation

- Formative evaluations help strengthen or improve the program.

- The more innovative a program, the more likely the evaluation will uncover processes and other information for program improvement.
Formative Evaluations

• Help determine what works best
• Accept the fact that negative results are valuable because they teach you something
• Provide feedback for improvement
• Do not use experimental designs but allow for interaction and observation
• Used most often with new programs
Summative Evaluation

• Summative evaluations examine the overall quality and outcomes of a program.
• These evaluations are conducted for decision-making purposes and determine whether the program has met its intended outcomes relative to its cost.
• Summative evaluations are usually done for established programs and completed projects and conducted by outside experts.
Formative and Summative

“Both formative and summative evaluation are needed in the development of a product or service. . . . Too often, summative evaluation is carried out only for judging programs. . . . This restricts development processes.” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 24).
Program Evaluation Standards

• The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994; Yarbrough, Shula, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011

• www.jcsee.org

• Identified five major attributes and 30 standards to guide evaluations ✔
Program Standards: Five Attributes

Ensure the Evaluation Will:

• be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal; increase evaluation effectiveness and efficiency. (FEASIBILITY)

• serve the information needs of the intended users. (UTILITY)

• Increase dependability and truthfulness of evaluation representations, propositions, and processes. (ACCURACY)
Program Standards: Five Attributes

Ensure the Evaluation Will:

• Support what is proper, fair, legal, right and just in evaluations. (PROPRIETY)

• Encourage adequate documentation of evaluations and a metaevaluative perspective focused on improvement and accountability for evaluation processes and products. (EVALUATION)
A logic model is your program ROAD MAP

Where are you going?
How will you get there?
What will tell you that you have arrived?
Logic Model

What it is:

• An advanced organizer for designing evaluations.
• Logic models are flowcharts that depict program components.

What it is not:

• A theory
• An evaluation model or method
Logic Modeling

• A diagram of the theory of how a program is supposed to work—a graphic depiction of relationships between activities and results

• A logic model is a logical chain of connections showing what a program intends to accomplish

• Core of planning and evaluation
Benefits of Logic Modeling

• The process of developing logic models can serve to clarify program elements and expectations for your stakeholders.

• By depicting the sequence and logic of inputs, outputs, and outcomes, logic models can help ensure that the necessary data are collected to make credible statements of causality.

(Continues)
Benefits of Logic Modeling

• Provides a common language

• Helps us differentiate between “what we do” and “results” – outcomes

• Increases understanding about program

• Guides program evaluation design and methodology

• Leads to improved planning and management

(Continues)
Benefits of Logic Modeling

- Increases intentionality and purpose
- Guides prioritization and allocation of resources
- Helps to identify important variables to measure; use evaluation resources wisely
- Supports replication
Use of Logic Model to Develop Evaluation Plan

- Identify the program’s components:
  - program’s rationale/design, (Input)
  - goals and/or objectives or desired outcomes for a target population, (Input)
  - intervention(s) or process(es), and (Outputs)
  - Results, Impact (Outcomes)

- Look for the extent to which the program’s objectives include four elements: *(i.e. who, what, when, how much)*
How to Develop an Evaluation Plan Using Logic Modeling

Draw Links (arrows) Showing How Program is Supposed to work
Note: relationships between activities and results

Model shows a logical chain of connections
How to Develop an Evaluation Plan Using Logic Modeling

Graphic Organizer of Program Components
How to Develop an Evaluation Plan Using Logic Modeling

Graphic Organizer of Program Components

Needs

Processes

Outcomes

Impact

May Identify Assumptions

May Identify Expectations

Inputs

Outputs

Outcomes - Impact

Activities

Participation

Short Term

Medium Term

Long Term
Application of Logic Model in Eval. Planning

SITUATION: During a school wide needs assessment four years ago, the majority of teachers reported they were not well trained in inclusion. They planned and implemented a set of activities to address the need.

INPUTS → OUTPUTS → OUTCOMES

Assumptions

Short

Intermediate

Long

Staff

Developed inclusion training workshop

Conducted training sessions

Targeted teachers attended

Teachers increased their knowledge of inclusion

Teachers identified appropriate actions to take

Improved teaching style

Money

Conducted training sessions

Provided mentoring

Teachers better understood their own teaching style

Teachers implemented effective classroom strategies

Increased classroom success of children with special needs

Partners

Developed inclusion training workshop

Conducted training sessions

Targeted teachers attended

Teachers increased their knowledge of inclusion

Teachers identified appropriate actions to take

Improved teaching style

Research

Developed inclusion training workshop

Conducted training sessions

Targeted teachers attended

Teachers increased their knowledge of inclusion

Teachers identified appropriate actions to take

Improved teaching style

INPUTS

OUTPUTS

OUTCOMES
Logic Model and Evaluation Questions?

• Formulate evaluation questions based on logic modeling

• Write questions reflective of the program components you want to assess

• When writing the questions, consider
  – how to collect the data needed to answer these questions.
  – whether answers to the questions help those who will use the results of your evaluation?
Sample Questions: What do you want to know about this program?

- What amount of $ and time were invested?
- Were all sessions delivered? How effectively?
- Did all teachers attend that we intended? Who did/not? Did they attend all sessions?
- Knowledge and skills increase? For whom? Why? What else happened?
- Behaviors change? For whom? Why? What else happened?
- More effective style?
- Greater student success?

Staff

Develop inclusion training workshop

Conduct training sessions

Targeted teachers attend

Teachers increase their knowledge of inclusion

Teachers better understand their own teaching style

Teachers gain skills in effective teaching practices

Teachers identify appropriate actions to take

Teachers implement effective classroom strategies

Improved teaching style

Increased classroom success of children with special needs

Money

Partners

Research

Provide mentoring
Beware! Programs Are Not Linear

Feedback Loops

INPUTS

OUTPUTS

OUTCOMES

Program investments

Activities

Participation

Short

Intermediate

Long

What we invest

What we do

Who we reach

What results

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Determine an Evaluation Plan

• Once the Logic Model and evaluation questions have been formulated, determine the type of evaluation to conduct (formative and/or summative?)

• Which type or types of component analyses (context-design-input, intervention/process, outcome/impact, etc.) will provide the information for a formative and/or summative evaluation?

• Can you meet the Evaluation Standards and do you have the resources (time, money, etc.) to conduct the type of evaluation chosen?
Selecting an Evaluation Plan

• Program evaluations include more than 35 different types of models (e.g., needs assessments, accreditation, cost/benefit analysis, effectiveness, efficiency, goal-based, process, outcomes, etc.)

• Select the type that may address the formative and/or summative needs in the situation.
Objectives-based Evaluation (Tyler, Popham, Steinmetz, Provus)

Curriculum Evaluation Model (Popham)

Formative and Process Evaluation Model (Royse, Tyler, & Padgett)

Participatory-oriented Evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, Patton, Stake)

Decision/Accountability-oriented Evaluations (Stufflebeam – CIPP)
Major Types of Evaluation Plans

Objectives-oriented Evaluation Model
• Examines program’s objectives to determine whether they have been achieved
• Conducted internal to organization
• Has narrow focus

Curriculum Evaluation Model (Popham)
• Prompted by Popham’s criterion-reference assessment
• Cutting edge of education evaluation in 1990s
Major Types of Evaluation Plans:

Formative and Process Evaluation Model (Royse, Thyer, & Padgett)

- Addresses program implementation according to plan
- Assesses whether strategies and activities delivered as planned
- Examines whether benefits reached participants
- Seeks participants feedback and opinions

Participant-oriented Evaluation

- Prompted by naturalistic inquiry
- Includes participants as active players
- Has created controversy in the field
- Costs and labor intensity are problems
- Includes stakeholders who are left out of evaluation
Decision/Accountability-oriented Evaluation (Stufflebeam – CIPP)

“The basic purpose of decision- and accountability-oriented studies is to provide a knowledge and value base for making and being accountable for decisions that result in developing, delivering, and making informed use of services that are morally sound and cost-effective. . . . Evaluation’s more important purpose is not to prove but to improve. . . . Approach is applied both formatively and summatively” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 199).
The CIPP Model is a social systems model applied to program evaluation. CIPP stands for:

- Context evaluation
- Input evaluation
- Process evaluation
- Product evaluation

These components are or can be viewed as separate forms of evaluation, but they can also be viewed as steps or stages in a comprehensive evaluation.
Context evaluation includes examining and describing the following:

- program context
- target population and its needs
- opportunities for addressing needs
- problems underlying the needs
- whether program goals are sufficiently responsive to the assessed needs

CIPP Model

- *Input evaluation* includes activities such as a:
  - description of the program inputs and resources
  - comparison of how the program might perform compared to other programs
  - evaluation of the proposed design of the program
  - examination of what alternative strategies and procedures for the program should be considered and recommended

- In short, this type of evaluation examines what the program plans on doing. It helps in making program structuring decisions.
CIPP Model

- *Process evaluation* includes:
  - examining how a program is being implemented
  - monitoring how the program is performing
  - auditing the program to make sure it is following required legal and ethical guidelines
  - identifying defects in the procedural design or in the implementation of program (Feedback responsiveness?)

- It is here that evaluators provide information about what is actually occurring in the program. This feedback can be helpful in making *formative* evaluation decisions (i.e., decisions about how to modify or improve the program).
CIPP Model

- *Product evaluation* includes:
  - determining and examining the general and specific outcomes of the program (i.e., which requires using impact or outcome assessment techniques)
  - measuring anticipated outcomes
  - assessing the merit of the program
  - conducting a retrospective benefit/cost assessment (to establish the actual worth or value of the program)

- Product evaluation is very helpful in making *summative* evaluation decisions (e.g., What is the merit and worth of the program? Should the program be continued?)