

Responding to the Client: Choices from Across the Spectrum of Evaluation Practice

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Key Ideas

1. Responding to Client Needs
2. Applying Relevant Theoretical Concepts
3. Developing Appropriate Evaluation Protocols

Example 1

Organisation: AusAID

Program: Introductory Academic Program

Nature of the evaluation:

One point in time evaluation for review cycle for ongoing program.

Example 1: Key Theory

Pragmatic Principles

Are Salient Questions Answerable?

Can a Design be Developed to Answer Questions?

Can we Implement this Design?

Will the Results be Usable?

Example 1: Evaluation Protocol: IAP

Program Setting

- Multi-Site: Implementation in 38 universities
- Small AusAID policy team

Evaluation Decisions

- Process-outcomes focus
- Multi-method approach
- Report uncertainty in findings
- Manager control turned to positive involvement

Example 2.

Organisation: Asia Education Foundation

Program: Studies of Asia in Australian Schools

Nature of the evaluation:

Advice required on impact of range of existing and future initiatives

Example 2: Key Theory

Strategic Interactivity

Professional linkage between knowledge producer (evaluator) and knowledge user (policy maker) increases the quality of program related decision-making.

Example 2: Evaluation Protocol Studies of Asia

Program Setting

- Small scale organisation attempting national change
- Savvy leaders; ongoing commitment
- Use in political settings

Evaluation Decisions

- Several small studies at intervals over three years
- Mixed-methods
- Strategic reporting

Example 3

Organisation: University of Third Age

Program: U3A Adult Education Program for Seniors

Nature of the evaluation:

Need to provide information about future directions in a flat structured organisation.

Example 3: Key Theory

Transformative Participative Evaluation

Program Deliverers and participants should have control over all aspects of organisational decision making, including evaluative actions.

Example 3: Evaluation Protocol: U3A Seniors

Program Setting and Evaluation Decisions

- Trained evaluator manages evaluation
- Facilitation and management role of evaluator essential
- Needs assessment to establish program direction
- Involvement of U3A members in data management
- Conference to celebrate findings
- High work load for trained evaluator

Lessons Learned: Evaluator Roles

- Expansion of what counts as evaluation
- Clients may prefer one approach
- Evaluators need to understand different operational roles (eg independent/interested/involved)
- Styles have theoretical bases
- Styles have theoretical champions
 - Conventional style: eg Scriven
 - Responsive style: eg Huberman, Owen
 - Participatory style: eg Fetterman, Mertens

Roles for Evaluators: Type 1

Phases	Evaluator Roles
Planning the intervention	Passive
Planning the evaluation design	Active
Implementing the intervention	Passive
Monitoring and feedback	Passive
Adjusting the intervention	Passive
Impact evaluation	Active
Summative decision making	Passive

Roles for Evaluators: Type 2

Phases	Evaluator Roles
Planning the intervention	Maybe active
Planning the evaluation design	Active
Implementing the intervention	Passive
Monitoring and feedback	Active
Adjusting the intervention	Passive
Impact evaluation	Active
Summative decision making	Maybe active

Roles for Evaluators: Type 3

Phases	Evaluator Roles
Planning the intervention	Active
Planning the evaluation design	Active
Implementing the intervention	Active
Monitoring and feedback	Active
Adjusting the intervention	Active
Impact evaluation	Passive
Summative decision making	Maybe active

Issues for Discussion

- What approaches to evaluation are currently favored in your milieu? Why?
- Are there implications for your work based on this presentation?