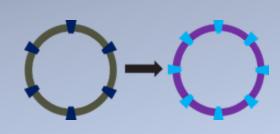


Embedding utilisation-focused, realist developmental evaluation into senior organisational leadership

An older and wiser ten-year update



AES Conference 16 September 2025



About us



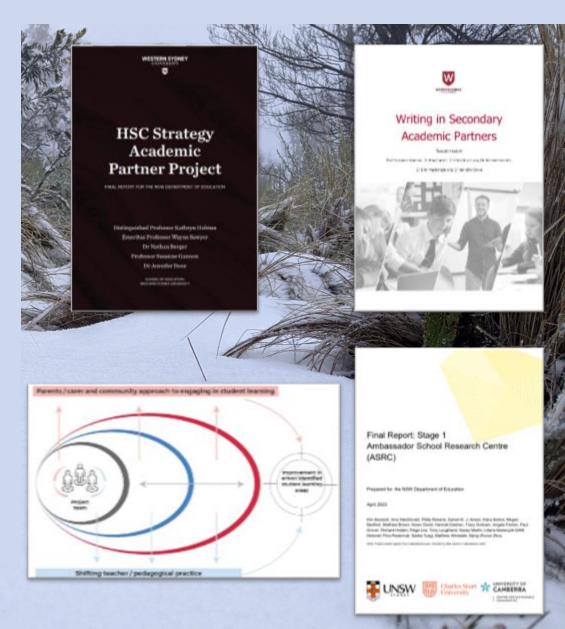
- Senior educational leader
- State and federal education, policy, and advocacy - voracious user of evaluation
- Knows Helen Timperley
- Former Director, QTP (Quality Teaching Practice)
 Now Deputy Executive Director -Education at Lutheran Education QLD

Capital E Evaluator

- Realist Developmental Evaluation, ECB and utilisation-focused evaluation
- Also knows Helen Timperley after meeting Jo
- Former Manager, Evaluation and Data, QTP (Quality Teaching Practice)
- Now Manager Research and Evaluation at Transport for NSW

Quality Teaching Practice

- Innovation unit within in NSW Department of Education running from 2019-2024
- Programs included:
 - **HSC Strategy** to improve achievement in capstone Higher Schools Certificate qualification (year 12)
 - Writing in Secondary to lift academic writing in Stages 4 and 5 in specific subjects (History, PDHPE, Science and Visual Arts)
 - Parent Partnerships Learning Ecosystems to support schools' engagement with parents and carers for academic improvement
 - Ambassador Schools to build evidence base of effective practice from effective schools



Quality Teaching Practice



Two evaluation options?

External

Internal

REFEREED ARTICLE

Evaluation Journal of Australasia, Vol. 4 (new series), Nos. 1 & 2, March/April 2005, pp. 3-11

A fundamental choice: internal or external evaluation?

Melissa Conley-Tyler

Melissa Conley-Tyler is an Associate
with the Centre for Program
Evaluation at the University of
Melbourne. She became involved
in evaluation after a decade of
working in the non-profit sector in
the US, South Africa and Australia,
primarily in conflict resolution and
violence reduction.

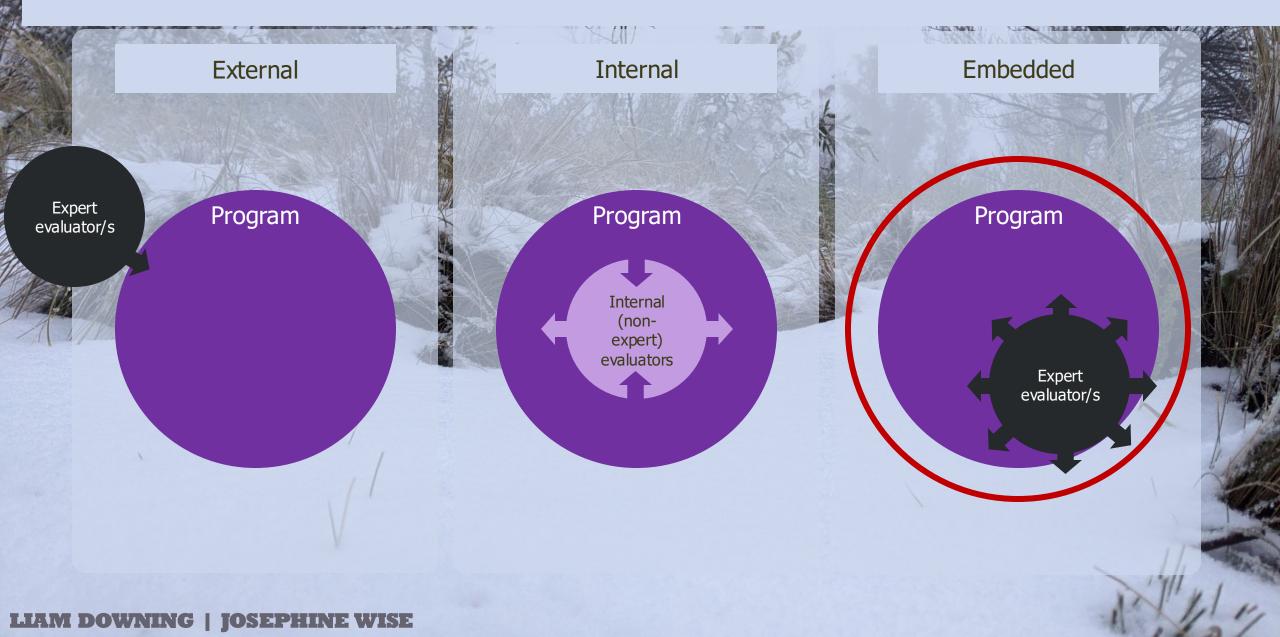
An organisation wishes to evaluate one of its programs. It can ask a staff member or hire someone outside the organisation. Which should it choose?

Surprisingly little guidance is available for this common scenario. A review of 30 texts dealing with organisational performance and evaluation shows that too often the issue is assumed one way or the other.

Management texts aimed at business and organisational audiences tend to presume that evaluation is conducted by internal evaluators, usually managers. By contrast the specialist



Three evaluation options



Embedded evaluation

A quick primer

- Distinct from but built upon internal evaluation as described by Conley-Tyler (2005), Volkov (2011) and McCoy, Rose & Connolly (2013)
- Situates expert evaluation function within delivery unit
- Expert evaluators perform all evaluation activities within the unit
- Minimal to no commissioned evaluation





REFEREND ARTICLE Confestion regress of Australiana William | Boy | 2016 | pp. 4-14

LIAM DOWNING | SUE ROGAN

Evaluation as an integrated management tool: embedding an evaluator into a program

In 2013, Charles Sturt University submitted a successful proposal for a \$4.4 million, two-year program called Future Moves. The program aimed to raise aspirations for university study among primary and secondary school students. The Manager of Pre-Entry Programs and the Director of Academic Success at Charles Sturt University made the decision to create a dedicated evaluation position within the program—a first for the university. The embedded evaluator' position differs from an external evaluator (as an independent, external observer) and an internal evaluator (who is typically also responsible for aspects of program management).

The article demonstrates that this role has the ability to contribute greatly to knowledge of programs and the ability of program managers to make informed, evidence-based decisions in close to real time. While it could be argued that embedded evaluators are biased, the article outlines ways in which this has been addressed. The experience of the Future Moves evaluation and management team (referred to throughout the article) serves as a compelling case study of the advantages and the potential pitfalls of embedded evaluation, whilst providing program managers, funders and evaluators with valuable insight into how similar programs could be evaluated.

Program background

Future Moves in a program handed by the Higher Edmantion Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPP) to improve university enrollment among NSW and Northern Victorias situatests from low socio-conomic hadeguoused (identical as those students artending schools kower than the national average of 1 000 on the Indian of Comparative Socio Economic Advantage value (ICEEA) and those who identify as Abertijshal or Turers Strait Idander. In terms of its specific long torm controller, Parame Moves aints to increase the manches of students from partner reducit enrolling, participating and on cureding in higher selection—larger through operationalising inhorsest aspiration. In keeping with a

logical progression of outcomes and objectives, the main short-term objectives of the progress are:

- iii to increase the motivation of students to study in higher education
- to enhance participants' confidence that they can succeed in this setting.

Future Mores aims to adiare these contenses: through lecolined, strong and engaging partnerships with interestite activities for students who may not have considered university as a femable option. Hunted from the Barbarst, Ossage, Dubbo, Wagga, Fort Macquaries and Albury-Woolonga congrues of Charles four! University (CSD, Future Mores works with 78 partner adoctols. Fifty free external community partners also.

Embedded evaluation 2015 model

The 2015 model was designed for small-scale embedment of evaluation in a single higher education equity program, with 1-2 evaluators and 15-20 staff members.



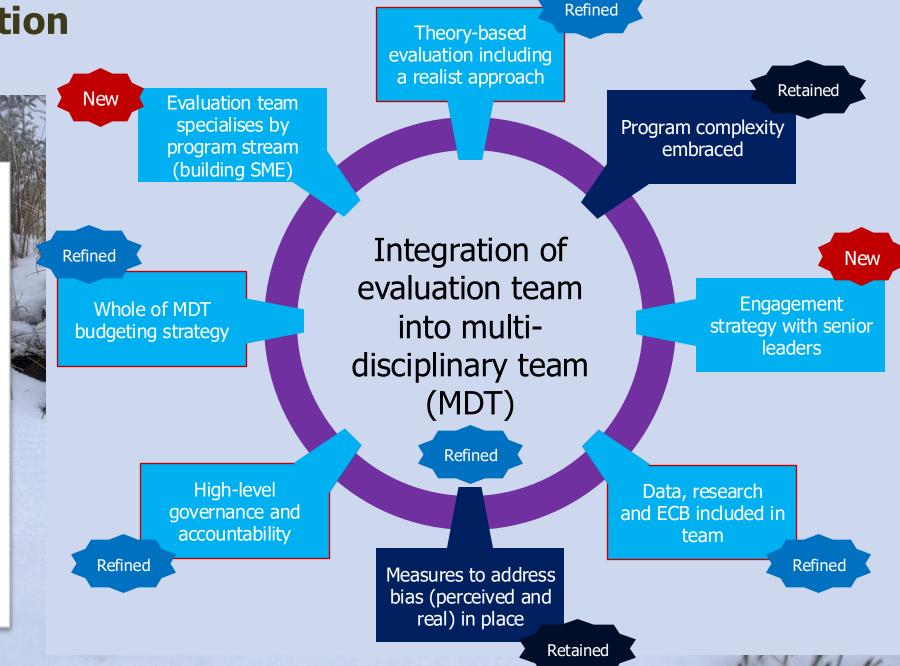
Embedded evaluation

Refinement

QTP Evaluation needed to account for greater:

- Complexity,
- Funding,
- Scrutiny,
- Politics,
- People, and
- Programs

... than the previous model could handle.

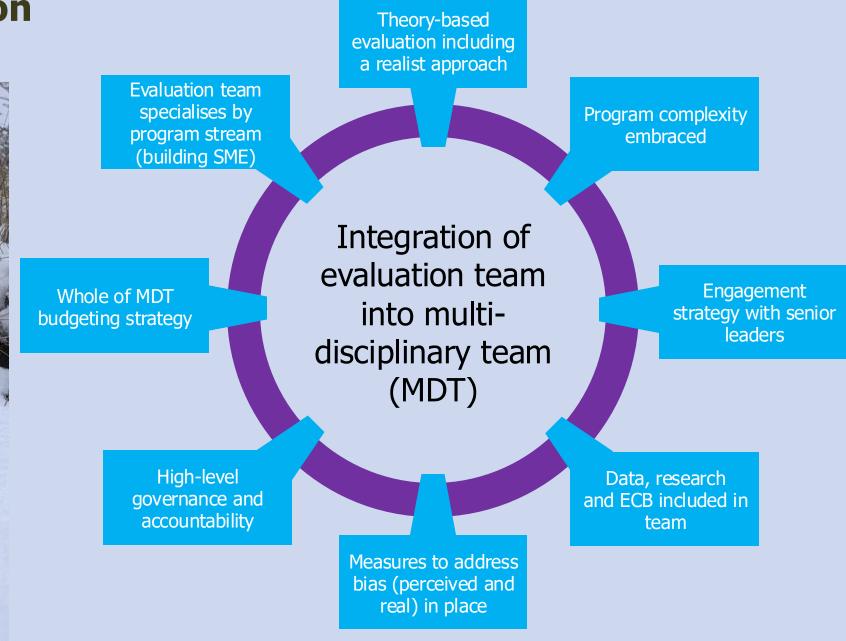


LIAM DOWNING | JOSEPHINE WISI

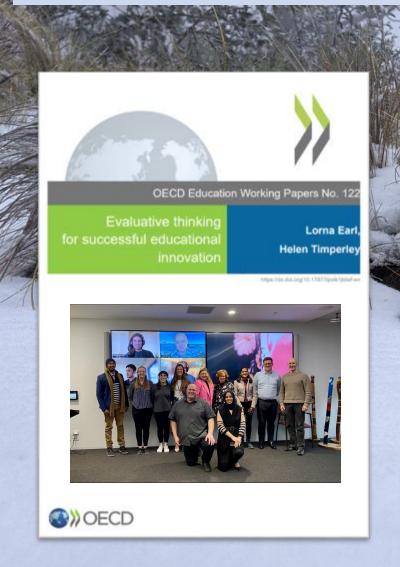
Embedded evaluation 2025 model

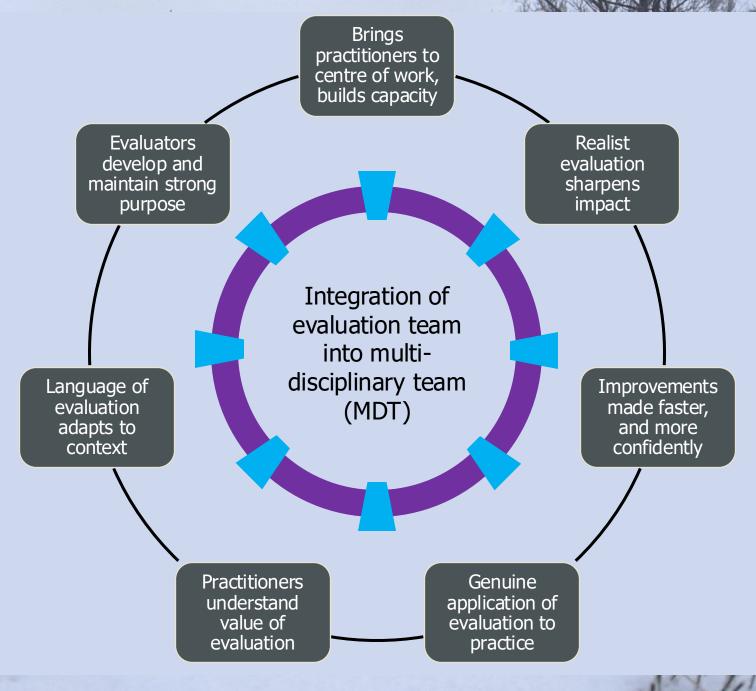
The 2025 model includes:

- Consideration of interaction between evaluation and an MDT
- Resourcing strategy that includes evaluation as non-negotiable component of MDT
- A specific strategy to engage senior leaders in meaningful evaluation
- A means of building subject matter expertise among evaluators.



Embedded evaluation Affordances for leadership





Embedded evaluation: Our next steps



- Evaluation is a live question in Lutheran Education QLD
- · Enthusiasm to learn and try
- Considering embedded evaluation and evaluative mindsets in early childhood education context
- BUT resourcing is a challenge

- Strong focus on building evaluative thinking (TfNSW and higher education)
- Engaged in lots of strategy and partnerships on evaluation
- Investigating embedded evaluation possibilities on smaller scale
- BUT resourcing is a challenge

Embedded evaluation: DiscussionDo you see possibility for this model in your work?

