Summer Institute in Program Evaluation
May 30 - June 3, 2016
The University of Manitoba

Case Study Workbook

Materials and handouts are adapted from:

Building Capacity in Evaluating Outcomes (2008) University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension, Program Development and Evaluation

Patton MQ (2012) Essentials of Utilization-focused evaluation. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

Case study instructions for teams

Over the course of the Institute participants will work in small groups to prepare an evaluation framework for the program described in their case description by following the instructions outlined below:

1. Each team has been provided with a detailed case description sheet
2. At least one member of each team is involved in the organization or program and can provide further information about the case
3. There is an outside facilitator assigned to each team. Her/his role is to provide general process guidance to the team
4. Team members should consider different stakeholders viewpoints in their discussions
5. After stakeholders have been decided, the teams should commence the process of discussing evaluation questions (brainstorming is a good initial technique)
6. Key evaluation questions should be decided and precisely formulated
7. It is recommended that evaluation questions should be properly operationalized
8. Evaluation design and other methodological decisions should be made
9. A process for sharing of findings with broader stakeholders should be specified
10. The purpose of the evaluation and use of the potential findings should be clearly identified
11. The evaluation plan should be prepared on PowerPoint slides and will be presented by the team to all participants on the final day of the Institute.

Evaluation: A seven step program

1) Identify the primary intended users of the evaluation
2) Identify the purpose/s of the evaluation and decide the relevant evaluation questions
3) Make design methods and measurement decisions
4) Collect and/or refine data
5) Analyze data with stakeholder involvement
6) Involves users in interpretation of the findings
7) Facilitate intended use by intended users

Each day of the case study work is divided into a series to tasks intended to walk groups through the above process. Worksheets and tools have been provided to assist with the steps and to keep groups on task. Groups can decide how they would best like to proceed with the evaluation planning and the extent to which they would like to rely on the tools provided or work more generally, through the steps outlined above.

1a. DESCRIBE YOUR PROGRAM

What is the program name?

Where is it located/where does it operate?

Is it a new program? In progress? Well-established?

Situation: What is the situation being addressed? What is the need or problem that gave rise to the program?

Outcomes: What will be different as a result of the program? Who (or what) will change? In what way? What might be some unintended and/or unexpected outcomes?

Participants: Who participates in the program? Who is targeted? (ages, numbers, key demographic characteristics)

Activities: What goes on in the program? What is the program doing? What are the activities?

Resources (inputs): What is going into the program in terms of human, material, and financial resources?

1b. WHO ARE YOUR EVALUATION STAKEHOLDERS?

1. **Those that are requesting the evaluation or are in a position to do or decide something with the result of the evaluation:**
    - Funders, funding agencies
    - Staff
    - Administrators, Board of Directors
    - Managers
    - Sponsors
    - Community members
    - Collaborators
    - Partners
    - Elected officials

2. **Those that may be affected by the evaluation:**
    - Clients
    - Family members
    - Neighbourhood organizations
    - Educational institutions
    - Elected officials
    - Advocacy groups
    - Community residents, community leaders
    - Professional associations
    - Skeptics
    - Opponents
    - Staff of related or partners organizations

3. **Others?**

1c. WORKSHEET: ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Individuals, Groups or Agencies	**Reason of involvement**			
	policy makers	operational decision makers	to provide input to the evaluation	to be informed (interest only)
Funding agents:				
Administrators:				
Staff members:				
Clients:				
Volunteers:				
Affiliated agencies:				
Others:				

2a. WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE FOR EVALUATING?

Purposes	
1. Judgment oriented	Aimed at determining the overall merit, worth, significance or value (e.g., summative evaluation aimed at deciding if a program is sufficiently effective to be continued or replicated).
2. Accountability	Aimed at rendering account. Includes oversight and compliance, the assessment to the extent to which a program follows the directives, regulations, mandated standards, or other formal expectations (e.g., audits; accreditation). Driven by attention to external stakeholders.
3. Improvement oriented	Improve programs (e.g., formative evaluation; continuous improvement; quality enhancement; manage more effectively).
4. Knowledge-Generating	Generate knowledge (e.g., generalizations about effectiveness; theory building; scholarly publishing; policy making; extrapolate principles about what works).
5. Monitoring	Manage the program, routine reporting, early identification of problems. Provided information to those internal to the program (e.g., quality control, management information systems; routine reporting).
6. Development	Involves changing the intervention, adapting it to changed circumstances, and altering tactics based on complex, emergent and dynamic conditions (e.g., developmental evaluation; rapid assessment; rapid feedback; environmental scanning).

Source: Patton MQ (2012) Essentials of Utilization-focused evaluation. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

Our purposes often are more specific. Think about the program you are evaluating. Are you conducting evaluation in order to…

- See if goals and objectives were met?
- Determine outcomes for participants? Families? Groups/organizations? For the community?
- Assess ultimate impact on the community in terms of changes in human, economic, civic, and/or environmental conditions?
- Assess whether the program is worth the resources invested? To demonstrate accountability for resources invested? To determine resource allocations? To justify need for funding? To make sure resources aren't wasted on ineffective programs?
- Learn about what works/doesn't work and for whom? Which activities lead to which outcomes?
- Assess access and/or disparities in reach, participation, and outcomes?
- Improve your service delivery or teaching? To help inform what you will do the next time?
- Promote the program?
- Meet the funder's requirement?
- Other?

2a. WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE FOR EVALUATING?

Reasons for evaluating this program:

Evaluation purpose statement:

An evaluation purpose statement should include:

- A description of what is to be evaluated (the program, activities or initiative)
- Clearly states what will be measured
- Shares how the results will be sued
- Is clearly worded and easy to understand

2b. SAMPLE KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

About outcomes/impacts

- What do people do differently as a result of the program?
- Who benefits and how?
- Are participants satisfied with what they gain from the program?
- Are the program's accomplishments worth the resources invested?
- What do people learn, gain, accomplish?
- What are the social, economic, environmental impacts (positive and negative) on people, communities, the environment?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
- Which activities contribute most? Least?
- What, if any, are unintended secondary or negative effects?
- How well does the program respond to the initiating need?
- How efficiently are clientele and agency resources being used?

About program implementation

- What does the program consist of – activities, events?
- What delivery methods are used?
- Who actually carries out the program and how well do they do so?
- Who participates in which activities? Does everyone have equal access?
- What resources and inputs are invested?
- How many volunteers are involved and what roles do they play?
- Are the financial and staff resources adequate?

About program context

- How well does the program fit in the local setting? With educational needs and learning styles of target audiences?
- What in the socio-economic-political environment inhibits or contributes to program success?
- What in the setting are givens and what can be changed?
- Who else works on similar concerns? Is there duplication?
- Who are cooperators and competitors?

About program need

- What needs are appropriately addressed?
- What are the characteristics of the target population?
- What assets in the local context and among target groups can be built upon?
- What are current practices?
- What changes do people see as possible or important?
- Is a pilot effort appropriate?

2c. PRIORITIZE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Question	Can this be answered given the program?	Which stakeholder cares about this?	How important is this?	Does this involve new data collection?	Can it be answered given the time and resources?	Priority: High, Medium, Low, Eliminate

2d. EVALUATION DESIGNS

Think about the research design that will help you to eliminate plausible rival explanations.

1. AFTER ONLY (post program)

   In this design, evaluation is done after the program is completed; for example, a post-program survey or end-of-session questionnaire. It is a common design but is the least reliable because you do not know what things looked like before the program.

2. RETROSPECTIVE (post program)

   In this design, participants are asked to recall or reflect on their situation, knowledge, attitude, behavior, etc. prior to the program. It is commonly used in education and outreach programs but memory can be faulty.

3. BEFORE-AFTER (before and after program)

   Program recipients or situations are looked at before the program and then again after the program. For example, program participants may take both pre- and post-tests or have their behaviors observed before and after the program. This design is commonly used in educational program evaluation, and differences between Time 1 and Time 2 are often attributed to the program. However, many other things can happen over the course of a program that may affect the observed change.

4. DURING (additional data "during" the program)

   Collecting information at multiple times during the course of a program is a way to identify the association between program events and outcomes. Data can be collected on program activities and services as well as on participant progress. This design appears to be uncommon in community-based evaluation, probably because of the time and resources needed for data collection.

5. TIME SERIES (multiple points before and after the program)

   The time series design involves a series of measurements at intervals before the program begins and after it ends. It strengthens the simple before-after design by documenting pre and post patterns and stability of the change.

6. CASE STUDY
   A case study design uses multiple sources of information and multiple methods to provide an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the program. Its strength lies in its comprehensiveness and exploration of reasons for observed effects.

To strengthen your evaluation design:

- Add points in time
- Use multiple methods of data collection: survey + observation + …
- Use comparisons (people, groups, sites)

Adding a comparison of one or more groups, individuals, or sites can strengthen all of the above one group designs. Comparison groups refer to groups that are not selected at random but are from the same population. (When they are selected at random, they are called *control groups*.) The purpose of a comparison group is to add assurance that the program (the intervention), not something else, caused the observed effects. It is essential that the comparison be *very similar* to the program group.

Consider the following possibilities as comparisons:

- Between program participants (individuals, groups, organizations) and nonparticipants
- Between different groups of individuals or participants experiencing different levels of program intensity
- Between sites where the program operates and sites without program intervention

2e. INDICATOR CRITERIA

Direct: An indicator should measure as directly as possible what it is intended to measure. For example, if the outcome being measured is a reduction in teen smoking, then the best indicator is the number and percent of teens smoking. The number and percent of teens that receive cessation counseling does not directly measure the outcome of interest. However, sometimes there may not be direct measures or there may be time and resource constraints. In those cases, you may have to use proxy, or less direct, measures.

Specific: Indicators need to be stated in a specific and explicit manner so that anyone can understand exactly what is meant and exactly how the data are to be collected. Example indicator: number and percent of farmers who adopted risk management practices in the past year. In this example, you do not know which risk management practices are to be measured, which farmers will be included, or what time period constitutes "the past year."

Useful: Indicators need to help you understand what you are measuring. The indicator should provide useful information that helps you understand and improve your programs.

Practical: Costs and time involved in data collection are important considerations. Though difficult to estimate, the cost of collecting data for an indicator should not exceed the utility of the information collected. Reasonable costs, however, are to be expected.

Culturally appropriate: Indicators must be relevant to the cultural context. What makes sense or is appropriate in one culture may not be in another. Test your assumptions.

Adequate: There is no correct number or type of indicators. The number of indicators you choose depends on what you are measuring, the level of information you need, and the resources available. Often more than one indicator is necessary. More than five, however, may mean that your outcome question is too broad, complex, or confusing. Indicators need to express all possible aspects of what you are measuring: possible negative or detrimental aspects as well as the positive.

2f. INDICATOR REVIEW WORKSHEET

Question	Indicator(s)	Direct	Specific	Useful	Practical	Culturally appropriate	Adequate
1.	a.						
	b.						
	c.						
	d.						
2.	a.						
	b.						
	c.						
	d.						
3.	a.						
	b.						
	c.						
	d.						
4.	a.						
	b.						
	c.						
	d.						

3ai. METHODS FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION

Survey: Collecting standardized information through structured questionnaires to generate quantitative data. Surveys may be mailed (surface and electronic), completed on site through interviews, either face-to-face or telephone.

Case study: In-depth examination of a particular case (program, group of participants, single individual, site/location). Case studies use multiple sources of information and methods to provide as complete a picture as possible.

Interviews: Information collected by talking with and listening to people, either face-to-face or over the telephone. Interviews range on a continuum for those which are tightly structures (as in a survey) to free flowing, conversational interviews.

Observation: Collecting information through "seeing" and "listening." Observations may be structured or unstructured.

Group assessment: Use of group processes to collect evaluation information such as nominal group technique, focus group, Delphi, brainstorming and community forums.

Expert or peer review: Examination by a review committee, panel of experts or peers.

Portfolio reviews: Collection of materials, including samples of work, that encompass the breadth and scope of the program activity being evaluated.

Testimonials: Individual statements by people indicating personal responses and reactions.

Tests: Use of established standards to assess knowledge, skill, performance such as in pen-and-pencil tests or skills tests.

Photographs, slides, videos: Use of photography to capture visual images

Diaries, journals: Recording of events over time revealing the personal perspective of the writer/recorder

Logs: Recording of chronological entries which are usually brief and factual.

Document analysis: Use of content analysis and other techniques to analyze and summarize printed material and existing information.

Other:

Action cards: use of index cards on which participants record what they did – the "action" – and when they reached their goal; primarily used in self-assessment.

Simulations: use of models or mock-ups to solicit perceptions and reactions.

Problem stories: narrative accounts of past, present or future situations as a means of identifying perceptions using fictional characters to externalize the problem situation.

Creative expression: use of art forms to represent people's ideas and feeling as through stories, drama, dance, music, art.

Unobtrusive measures: the gathering of information without the knowledge of the people in the setting such as the wear and tear on a "planted" mat in front of a display.

Program Development and Evaluation, *Methods for Collecting Information, Quick Tips #8,*
University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison, WI. 2002

3aii. ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGS OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Method	Overall purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaires, surveys, checklists	when need to quickly and/or easily get lots of information from people in a non-threatening way	-can complete anonymously -inexpensive to administer -easy to compare and analyze -administer to many people -can get lots of data -many sample questionnaires already exist	-might not get careful feedback -wording can bias client's responses -are impersonal -in surveys, may need sampling expert - doesn't get full story
Interviews	when want to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences, or learn more about their answers to questionnaires	-get full range and depth of information -develops relationship with client -can be flexible with client	-can take much time -can be hard to analyze and compare -can be costly -interviewer can bias client's responses
Documentation review	when want impression of how program operates without interrupting the program; is from review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, etc.	-get comprehensive and historical information -doesn't interrupt program or client's routine in program -information already exists -few biases about information	-often takes much time -info may be incomplete -need to be quite clear about what looking for -not flexible means to get data; data restricted to what already exists
Observation	to gather accurate information about how a program actually operates, particularly about processes	-view operations of a program as they are actually occurring -can adapt to events as they occur	-can be difficult to interpret seen behaviors -can be complex to categorize observations -can influence behaviors of program participants -can be expensive
Focus groups	explore a topic in depth through group discussion, e.g., about reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints, etc.; useful in evaluation and marketing	-quickly and reliably get common impressions -can be efficient way to get much range and depth of information in short time -can convey key information about programs	-can be hard to analyze responses -need good facilitator for safety and closure -difficult to schedule 6-8 people together
Case studies	to fully understand or depict client's experiences in a program, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross comparison of cases	-fully depicts client's experience in program input, process, and results -powerful means to portray program to outsiders	-usually quite time consuming to collect, organize, and describe -represents depth of information, rather than breadth

Source: McNamara, C. (1997-2008). Overview of methods to collect information. In Basic guide to program evaluation. Minneapolis, MN: Free Management Library. Retrieved February 12, 2007, from http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm#anchor1585345

3bi. DATA COLLECTION PLAN WORKSHEET

Evaluation question *(What do you want to know?)*	**Indicator** *(How will you know it?)*	**Data sources** *(Who or what will have this information?)*	**Data collection methods** *(How will you gather the information?)*	**Schedule** *(When will the information be collected?)*

3bii. SAMPLE – PARENT EDUCATION DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Evaluation question	Indicator	Data sources	Data collection methods	Schedule
1. Were all 8 training sessions provided?	# sessions held	Program records	Record review	Each session
2. To what extent did all 30 targeted parents attend all 6 sessions?	Attendance at sessions	Attendance logs	Record review	Each session
3. Were participants satisfied with the training? What didn't they like?	#, % participants reporting positive/negative reactions; comments	Participants	Brief group discussion at end of each session asking for specific feedback	End of each session
4. Did the trainings go as planned? What didn't go as intended?	Implementation criteria	Program staff	Observation checklist	Each session
5. To what extent did participants increase their knowledge of child development?	#, % participants that report changes in knowledge of child devel. milestones, etc.	Participants	Retrospective post survey	At final session
6. To what extent did they learn new ways to discipline?	#, % participants that report changes in knowledge of ways to discipline (specify behavior)	Participants	Retrospective post survey	At final session
7. To what extent are they using the skills they learned in the program?	#, % participants that report using parenting skills covered in curriculum (specify skills)	Participants	Retrospective post survey; telephone interview	At final session; 3month follow-up
8. To what extent did child-parent interactions improve? What else happened?	#, % participants that report changes in interactions	Participants	Retrospective post survey; telephone interview	At final session; 3month follow-up
9. What else did participants gain from these sessions?	Expression of other benefits	Participants; key informants	Group discussion at end of final session; key informant interview	At final session; within 2 weeks
10. Where there any negative outcomes, for anyone?	Expression of negative consequences	Participants; key informants	Group discussion at end of final session; include in telephone interview	At final session; 3 month follow-up