

The Nuts and Bolts of Evaluation

Project Planning and Budgeting

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Evaluation Circle Session

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Evaluation Within MSU

The Provost's Committee on University Outreach (1993) defined outreach as scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences. MSU advocates a **scholarly** model of outreach and engagement that fosters a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship between the University and the public.

- **Evaluation** is a key way that:
 - MSU scholars conduct outreach and engagement activity *and*
 - MSU programs and units identify needs of their constituents and make improvements



Context of this workshop

- Active learning—we'll do at least 2 activities
- If it doesn't meet your needs, go ahead and leave. Time is precious
- Examples tend to be from human development and prevention programs
- 10-minute break about halfway through



By the end of this session, you should be able to...

- **Focus** your evaluation questions
- Create an **evaluation plan**
- Identify **resources** needed to implement your evaluation plan
- Develop an evaluation **budget**

Not addressed: Evaluation design, instrument development, data collection, analysis, and reporting

Basics



Where does an evaluation start?

With a problem, question, or need

- **Summative evaluation.** A determination of merit, worth, or significance (Scriven, 1967)
 - *Does this program work?*
 - *Are these teachers effective?*
- **Formative evaluation.** Identification of ways to improve
 - *How can this program reach more people?*
 - *What staff training is needed to provide better quality interactions?*
 - *Are activities implemented as intended?*
- **Needs assessment.** Identification of a need
 - *What problems need to be addressed in this community*
 - *What services are lacking in this population?*

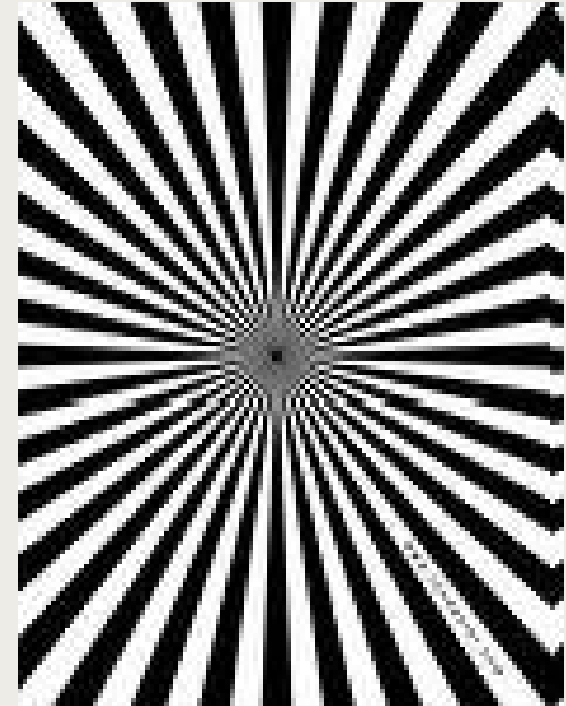


Where do the problems, questions, needs come from?

- Evaluation Request for Proposal (RFP)—federal, state, local organization
- Grant RFP—NIH, NSF, USDA, foundation
 - Program grants—may not be the main focus
 - Research grants—may be the primary purpose or may be an add-on
 - May or may not be called “evaluation”
- Organizational requirement (e.g., MSU Extension)
- Internally driven



Focusing the Evaluation



You have your RFP. How do you focus what you'll do?

- Identify the evaluation questions
 - May be clear from the RFP (often not)
 - Logic model, preferably with partners
 - Review RFP (submit questions, talk to those knowledgeable)



Reviewing the RFP



- What is the purpose of the evaluation?
- What evaluation questions are identified in the document?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Who is the primary audience for the evaluation results?
- How will the evaluation results be used?
- What information is missing? What questions arise when reviewing the document?

Purpose Statement

- **What:** The purpose of this evaluation is to [determine, identify] [information that can be acted upon].
- **Why:** The results will be used by [audience] to [do something—determine, improve, inform].



Purpose Statement Examples

- The purpose of the evaluation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Volunteer Training. The results of the evaluation will be used by the developers to modify the workshop series prior to future implementation.
- The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the impact of Head Start on children's school readiness. The results will be presented to the legislature to inform decisions about continued funding.
- The purpose of the evaluation is to identify gaps in special education services among low-income families with an autistic child. The results will be used by the Collaborative body to develop programming to meet unmet needs.



Evaluation Questions



- Fit with the intended purpose for conducting the evaluation—they are focused
- Are framed beyond a yes or no answer
 - To what extent...
 - Why...
 - How...
- Consider the concerns of multiple stakeholders
- Be feasible to address within the scope of this evaluation

Assessing Evaluation Questions

	Not at all likely Very Likely				
	1	2	3	4	5
Help improve the program	1	2	3	4	5
Help show the program's effect (or reduce uncertainty about its effectiveness)	1	2	3	4	5
Be of interest to stakeholders and have leverage to influence deliberation and action	1	2	3	4	5
Be of interest to program managers and have leverage to influence deliberation and action	1	2	3	4	5
Be of interest to staff and have leverage to influence deliberation and action	1	2	3	4	5
Be answerable given the timeframe	1	2	3	4	5
Be answerable given the budget	1	2	3	4	5
Be answerable given our evaluation experience and expertise	1	2	3	4	5



Adapted from Worthen et al., 1997

Practice - Focusing the Evaluation



- Materials:
 - 21st Century Community Learning Centers Request for Proposals
 - Focusing the Evaluation handout
- Small groups (about 5 per group)
- Instructions:
 - Review the RFP
 - Go through the checklist
 - Finalize evaluation questions and write on post-its
 - Put post-its on big sheets. Group evaluation questions together that you think are similar

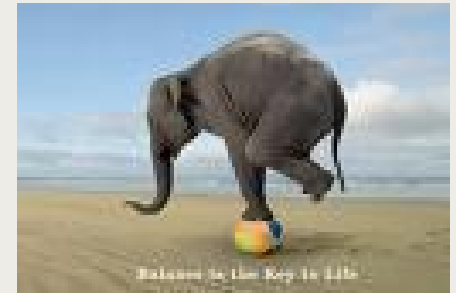


Creating an Evaluation Plan



The Evaluation Plan is the Blueprint

- Managing an evaluation requires balancing:
 - Time
 - Costs
 - Desired outcomes, results, scope of work
- Goal of the evaluation plan
 - We can address each question satisfactorily
 - We have the capacity (personnel, expertise, experience, and resources) to conduct the evaluation
 - We understand the challenges and can either overcome or give a rationale about limitations in the evaluation plan



Evaluation Plan Sections – handout

- **Section I:**
 - Introduction to the problem
 - A description of the evaluation framework which specifies what you want to evaluate
 - What questions are to be addressed in the evaluation
 - The timeframe for conducting the evaluation.
- **Section II:**
 - A description of the program implementation objectives.
- **Section III:**
 - A description of the program outcome objectives and performance measures.
- **Section IV:**
 - Procedures for managing and monitoring the evaluation.
 - Personnel, including responsibilities and experience
 - Capacity of the organization
 - Deliverables and dissemination plan
- **Timeline** (see handout – Sample Timeline)



Evaluation Plan – Table Summary

- Most evaluation plans include a project management table
- They can be constructed in multiple ways
- May include:
 - Evaluation questions
 - Tasks and subtasks
 - Who is responsible for what (evaluation team/specific team members, partner)
 - Data source
 - Data collection method
 - Instrument
 - Time period
 - Due dates
 - Analytic method
 - Problems that may arise



Practice (if time) – Evaluation Management Plans



- Materials:
 - Analyzing Evaluation Management Plans– Handout for Activity 62
 - Sample Management Plans – Handout for Activity 62
- Small groups (about 5 per group—different groups than last time)
- Instructions:
 - Review the RFP
 - Review the plans and, as a group, complete the handout “Analyzing Evaluation Management Plans”



Practice (if time) – Evaluation Management Plans



- Which management plans do you think were most important?
- What are the potential consequences of not developing evaluation management plans?
- In your opinion, what is the most important reason to include one or more evaluation plans?
- Follow up handouts – sample timeline, 21st CCLC proposal



Budgets



Budgets are an evaluation planning tool

- The budget should be specifically tied to the evaluation plan
- A detailed budget forces you to think more clearly through the evaluation plan
- The result of budgeting often leads to a revision of the evaluation plan
- Be specific in outlining your budget. Estimate numbers of items needed, cost of each, etc. You won't submit that one, but it will be essential later.



Evaluation Costs

- Personnel
 - Faculty (academic, summer academic, annual)
 - Staff (Administrative Professionals, Clerical)
 - Graduate assistants
 - Graduate students or undergraduate (hourly)
 - Data collectors (hourly)
 - Fringe benefits
- Materials, supplies, equipment, services
 - Communication (phone, postage)
 - Printing and copying
 - Transcription
 - Computers/software
- Travel (mileage, mandatory conferences)
- Overhead/indirects



Estimating Costs – Two Methods

- Line item method – Personnel (Salary/Fringe), Supplies, Travel, Indirects
- Deliverable method
 - Identify each deliverable (reports, instruments)
 - List tasks to complete deliverable
 - Identify costs per deliverable
 - Estimate hours for each type of personnel and hourly rate (including fringe)
 - Supplies/travel for that deliverable
 - Indirects overall



Simple Line-Item Budget

INTERVIEW PROJECT

May 1, 2007-December 31, 2007

Personnel	
Principal Investigator	\$5,603
Qualitative evaluator	\$13,334
Project coordinator	\$6,199
<i>Personnel subtotal</i>	\$25,136
Travel	
Monthly trainings (2), June-Dec; 4 meetings; interviews/site visits	\$2,764
<i>Travel subtotal</i>	\$2,764
Supplies and Services	
Office supplies, phone, copies, postage, administrative support	\$1,600
Transcription	\$500
<i>Supplies and Services subtotal</i>	\$2,100
TOTAL	\$30,000



Complex Line Item Budget

- See budget



Deliverable Method Budget

- More accurate cost estimate
- See budget



Practice – Creating an Evaluation Budget



- **Materials:**
 - Data Collection: Plan B
 - Worksheet for Creating an Initial Budget
- **Small groups** (about 5 people—different groups than before)
- **Instructions:**
 - Develop a line-item budget for the data collection component of an evaluation plan
 - Review “Data Collection: Plan B”
 - Decide on the hourly rate for the personnel
 - Use “Worksheet for Creating an Initial Budget” as a guide—feel free to create specific sub-items
 - Bring the completed “Worksheet for Creating an Initial Budget” to Laurie when complete—make sure the total for each category is clear



Practice – Creating an Evaluation Budget



- What other information would have been helpful as you developed your budgets?
- Was anything missing?
- What might these differences tell us about the context of the evaluations?

Wrap Up

- Questions?
- Evaluation will be sent through surveymonkey



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