

# **What the Hell is Program Evaluation?**

**A Forever Question**

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# Defining Evaluation

# (Mostly) Official

**Evaluation** is the act or process of determining the

*merit*  
*quality*

*worth*  
*value*

*significance*  
*importance*

of something or the product of that process

# A Closer Look

What do *merit*, *worth*, and *significance* mean to you both separately and in combination?

# A Closer Look

Can you think of real world examples of each?

# Generally

*Evaluation* answers the questions

*does it work?*

*why does it work?*

# What About the How?

We typically leave the remaining question *how does it work?* to people with grounded knowledge in a particular area

aka  
*content*  
*experts*

# More Terms with the Stem *Eval-*

## *Evaluator*

The person(s) evaluating something

## *Evaluand*

The thing(s) being evaluated



# Levels, Performances, and Measures

Of the three terms *criteria*, *standards*, and *indicators*, which of the three do you believe is harder to identify?

# Levels, Performances, and Measures

Can you think of real world examples of each?

# Primary Purposes of Evaluation

## *Formative*

Conducted with the intent to improve

## *Summative*

Conducted with the intent to inform decision making  
and/or determine judgment

# Secondary Purposes of Evaluation

## *Developmental*

To help develop an intervention or program

## *Accountability*

To hold accountable

## *Monitoring*

To assess implementation and gauge progress toward a desired end

## *Knowledge Generation*

To generate knowledge about general patterns of effectiveness

## *Ascriptive*

Merely for the sake of knowing

# *Developmental* vs *Formative* Evaluation

A video from an evaluator named Michael Quinn Patton describing the differences can be found by clicking on the icon below



# A bit more on *Developmental* Evaluation

What might the purpose of the evaluation be?

What questions might the evaluation try to answer?

## *Formative* Evaluation

The program has been designed and piloted with a group of 20 principals. What kind of evaluative feedback should the ASDC seek?

## *Summative* Evaluation

The program has been delivered to all principals in the county. What kind of evaluative feedback should the ASDC seek?

# Introduction to Roles and Styles

## Evaluator Roles:

Independent

Topical

External

Internal

The one that you take on in an evaluation will determine a lot!

# Defining Culture

What is culture?

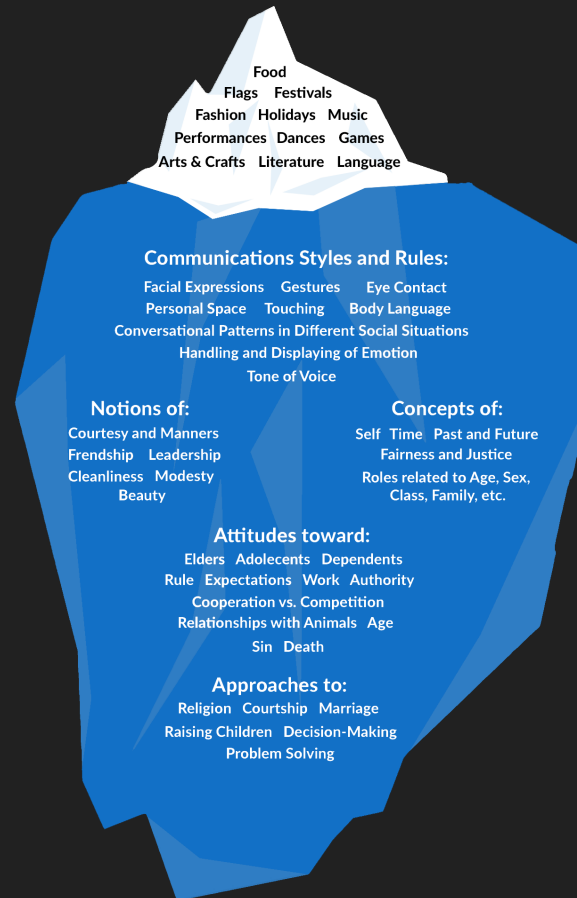
How do we recognize it?

*Culture can be defined as the shared experiences of people, including their languages, values, customs, beliefs, and more. It also includes worldviews, ways of knowing, and ways of communicating. Culturally significant factors encompass, but are not limited to, race/ethnicity, religion, social class, language, disability, sexual orientation, age, and gender.*

-- American Evaluation Association (2011)

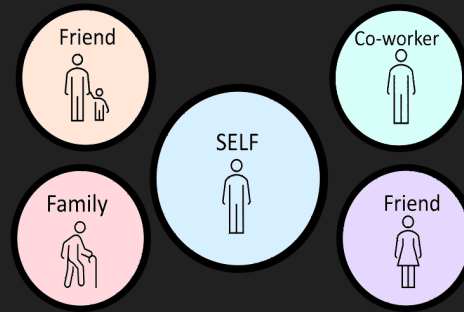


# The Iceberg

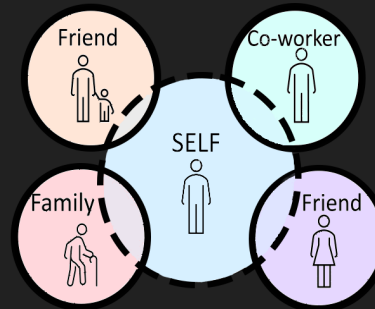


# Markus & Kitayama (1991)

## Independent view of self



## Interdependent view of self



# Cultural Influences Activity

How might each of the following influence an evaluation's design and implementation?

Language of participants

Role of food and eating

Evaluators attire when interacting with participants

Concept of time

Communication styles

Importance of family relationships

Values/norms re: individualism, independence, conflict

Understanding of social structure

# Increasing your Cultural Sensitivity

Assess your own attitudes, beliefs, values

Incorporate culturally diverse groups and perspectives throughout evaluation process

Build in sufficient time to negotiate access and build trust in community / organization

Demystify evaluation, avoid jargon (please!), build buy-in

Be flexible in choice of evaluation methods, use multiple data sources, multiple data collection methods, multiple perspectives

# Meta-evaluation

A *meta-evaluation* is an evaluation of an evaluation or evaluations

# Classifications

*According to the role the evaluation plays*

Formative or Summative

*According to the content or the program phase evaluated*

Design, Process, or Results

*According to the moment of the evaluation*

After the fact - aka ex-ante or before the event -aka ex-postfacto

*According to the evaluator's role*

Internal or External

Concentrate on the idea of a **formative** and **summative** evaluation this week. There is no need to worry if you don't know what any of remaining terms mean and/or imply (and yes that includes this idea of a **meta-evaluation**)! You'll have plenty of opportunities to learn about them as we progress through the term.

# Considerations

# Things to Evaluate

Evaluation criteria

Evaluation standards

Performance

Program costs

Program goals



# Things to Assess

Evaluation Standards

Location

Stakeholder Needs

Sponsor Needs

Your costs

# A Look at Goals

# Include

Preparatory conditions

- What does it take to be ready to target a goal?
- Progress toward that state is a goal

Intended operations

- What a program tries to implement to achieve a goal is a type of goal.

Targeted outcomes

- Short-term (initial)
- Medium-term (intermediate)
- Long-term (distant)

# Whose are Important?

It's not always obvious!

# How to Decide Which Matter Most?



Talk to stakeholders/sponsors; explicitly ask their perspective on recipient needs, program goals, and evaluation goals



Figure out other ways to find needs



Read all available program documentation



Develop a logic model connecting needs through program activities, outputs and outcomes associated with goals

# Logic Model Parts

## INPUTS

Program Investments

what resources go into a program - aka *investments*

## OUTPUTS

Activities

what is produced through those activities

Participation

the activities the program assumes - i.e. *what actually occurs*

who is part of the program and how are they served - i.e. *who is served like stakeholders and sponsors and what engagement they have*

# Logic Model Parts

## OUTCOMES

Short

Medium/Intermediate

Long

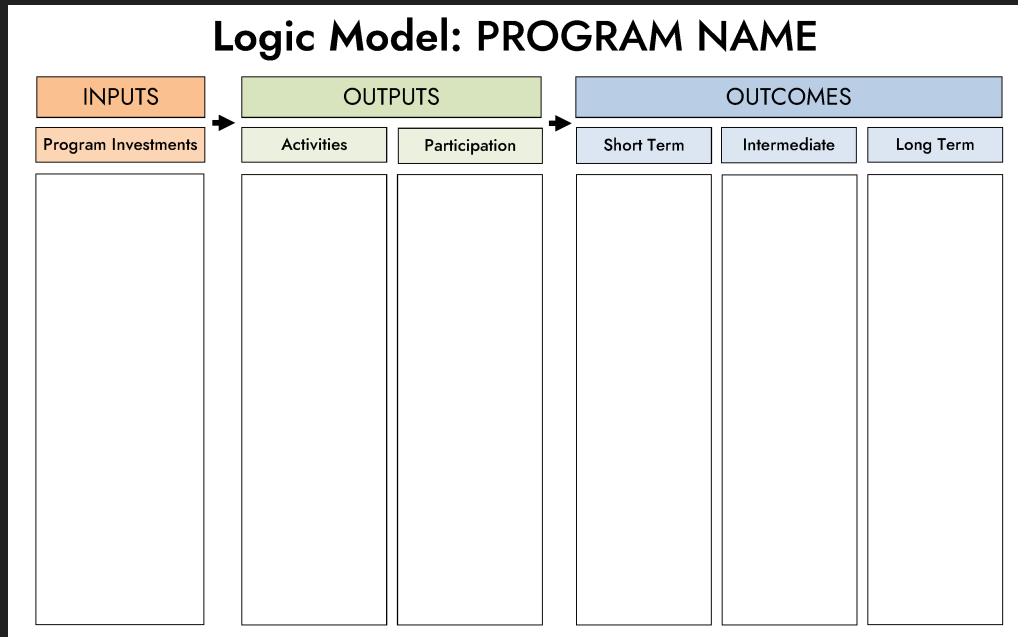
changes or benefits that result from the program

Learning like *awareness, aspirations, attitudes, knowledge, motivations, opinions, skills*, ect.

Actions like *behaviors, decisions, policies, practice*, etc.

Consequences like those that are *civic, economic, environmental, political, professional, social*, etc.

# A Basic Model



## Terminology

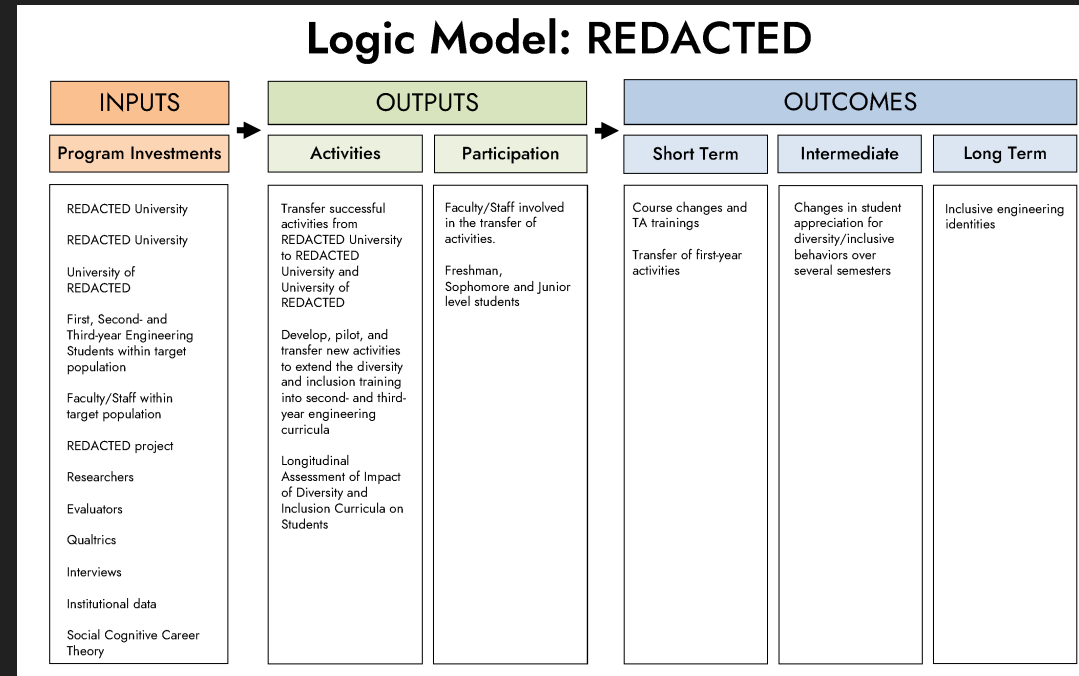
- Inputs
  - Investments (what is put in)
- Outputs
  - Activities (the actual tasks performed)
  - Participation (who is served; customers & stakeholders)
  - Engagement (how those served engage with the activities)
- Outcomes
  - Short Term (immediate, measurable – e.g. *learning: awareness, knowledge, skills, motivations*)
  - Medium Term (by the conclusion of the program, measurable – e.g. *action: behavior, practice, decisions, policies*)
  - Long Term (distant, immeasurable – e.g. *consequences: social, economic, environmental etc.*)

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*Other types of logic models*



# An Example



*Download a high quality PDF*

*More examples of logic models*

# Basic Factors of an Evaluation

# Identifying Criteria

What matters enough to measure given what you know about all the other factors?

Any relevant past performance data

Costs

Existing literature and standards

Needs and Goals

# Estimating Cost

Often very hard to do and do well

Almost always addressed in a relative way

- Relative resource intensity of alternative programs (including development and/or retraining costs)
- Proportion of resources allocated to different program activities (logic modeling can be very helpful for thinking about this)

# Measuring Performances

Sponsor perception

Staff performance / perception

Stakeholder performance / perception

In a nutshell

Who is best positioned to really know?

Multiple times, multiple perspectives

# Evaluation Statements

# Developing a Purpose

Step 1

*Critique sample evaluation purpose statements<sup>1</sup> to better understand what might go into crafting a good one*

Step 2

*Write preliminary evaluation statement for the program you'll evaluate*

Step 3

*Write 3 - 7 potential evaluation questions relevant to the evaluation purpose statement you wrote for step 2*

<sup>1</sup> More about this coming up later

# Thinking About Statements

In the following slides, take a look at the sample evaluation purpose statements and *for each* try to identify the following four things



what is being evaluated?



how will results be used?



what kind of evaluation will be implemented (developmental, formative, or summative)?



how could the statement of purpose be improved?



## Example of Evaluation Statements

1. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine employees' level of awareness of the new vision for the organization. This information will be used to decide whether further training or communication about the new vision is needed.
2. The purpose of this evaluation is to understand the knowledge and skills needed by customer service representatives as they prepare to implement a new order entry system. This information will be used to develop a training program for teaching customer service representatives how to use the new system.
3. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the cost-effectiveness of providing online word-processing training. The results will be used to determine whether this approach serves the organization's needs better than providing the training in a traditional classroom format.
4. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine whether the listening skills course should continue to be offered.
5. The purpose of the evaluation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the newly developed online course on healthy communities. The results will be used to modify and refine the design and content of the course.
6. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if students' test scores have increased as a result of teachers' involvement in the new professional development program.
7. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which supervisors followed the procedures for employees' performance review as presented in the New Supervisors Workshop. In addition to concerns about the design and content of the workshop, the evaluation will examine the factors that support or prevent the use of these skills. The results will be used to modify the workshop design and content, identify interventions to support the use of these skills, or both.
8. The purpose of the evaluation is to obtain the reactions of employees to the newly established program development process. The results will be presented to the Executive Team.

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# Some Tips

Be confident but **never** demeaning or overpowering

Be clear

Be concise

Be truthful

Don't overpromise<sup>1</sup>

Get buy in

Write in a way that's meaningful to your sponsor(s)/stakeholder(s)

<sup>1</sup> Under-delivering can destroy careers!

# Thats it!

If you have any questions, please reach out



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