

Evaluation 2019: 33rd Annual Meeting of the American Evaluation Association (AEA)

Perspectives on Publishing Studies using Participatory Evaluation Practices

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Session Number: 1920

Time: Sat, Nov 16, 2019 (09:15 AM - 10:00 AM)

Track: Collaborative, Participatory & Empowerment Eval

Room: Hilton Marquette III

Session Abstract:

Stakeholders and funders are increasingly seeking research and evaluation partners who utilize participatory approaches, particularly when addressing "wicked problems" such as substance use. The results of these evaluations often garner valuable contributions for the scientific literature; however, this work can be challenging to publish in academic journals because participatory evaluations do not follow a traditional, linear methodological approach. The roundtable presenters bring a variety of experiences using participatory evaluation approaches but have encountered a common challenge: how to publish in academic journals to share the worthwhile results and experiences of this work. This roundtable will discuss the challenges to, and potential solutions for, publishing journal articles when using participatory evaluation methods.

Grounded in Theory

Writing Circles

"Small groups ... meeting regularly to share drafts, choose common writing topics, practice positive response, and in general, help each other become better writers" (Vopat, J. (2009). *Writing circles: Kids revolutionize workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, p. 6.

Roberts, S. K., Blanch, N., & Gurjar, N. (2017). Exploring writing circles as innovative, collaborative writing structures with teacher candidates. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 56(2), p. 1-21. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol56/iss2/2

Writing circles: A formula for scholarly collaborations between campus and county extension faculty (2008, September). Arizona Cooperative Extension Newsletter. Retrieved from <https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1443.pdf>

Participatory Evaluation

Partnership approach to evaluation in which stakeholders actively engage in developing the evaluation in which stakeholders actively engage in developing the evaluation and all phases of its implementation.

Zukoski, A. & Luluquisen, M. (2002, April). Participatory evaluation: What is it? Why do it? What are the challenges? Community-based Public Health Policy & Practice: Partnership for the Public's Health. Retrieved from: https://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/Evaluation.pdf

Developmental Evaluation

Developmental evaluation is especially appropriate for innovative initiatives or organizations in dynamic and complex environments where participants, conditions, interventions, and context are turbulent, pathways for achieving desired outcomes are uncertain, and conflicts about what to do are high. DE supports reality-testing, innovation, and adaptation in complex dynamic systems where relationships among critical elements are nonlinear and emergent. Evaluation use in such environments focuses on continuous and ongoing adaptation, intensive reflective practice, and rapid, real-time feedback (from <http://comm.eval.org/viewdocument/si11-session-25-dev>).

Patton, M. Q. (2011) *Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Empowerment Evaluation

Empowerment evaluation is an approach to evaluation that is designed to facilitate participation, collaboration, and empowerment. The basic steps of empowerment evaluation include: 1) establishing a mission or unifying purpose for a group or program; 2) taking stock - creating a baseline to measure future growth and improvement; and 3) planning for the future - establishing goals and strategies to achieve goals, as well as credible evidence to monitor change. The role of the evaluator is that of coach or facilitator in an empowerment evaluation, since the group is in charge of the evaluation itself (from <http://comm.eval.org/viewdocument/2012-summer-institut-8>).

Fetterman, D. M. & Wandersman, A. (Eds.). (2005). *Empowerment evaluation principles in practice*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Supporting our Practice

Ohio's Strategic Prevention Framework - Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) Initiative: Needs Assessment

Abstract: Using a community-based research (CBR) approach, the Strategic Prevention Framework – Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) in Ohio is guided by a collaboration between researchers and community leaders from 10 rural and Appalachian communities. As a part of the SPF-PFS initiative focused on building capacity in these communities, we utilized qualitative research methods (i.e. focus groups) to obtain information about the local conditions affecting substance misuse. We designed a series of face-to-face and virtual learning opportunities to scaffold communities through a replicable and rigorous process of conducting, analyzing, and reporting on focus groups. This strategy used an empowerment evaluation approach to enable communities to take complete ownership of the data and the qualitative process. Over five months, project directors each conducted and reported on a total of four focus groups in their communities. This process provided a pedagogical framework via which all 10 emerging capacity communities were able to assess the conditions in their communities using qualitative methods that they may never have undertaken before, making them local leaders in the research as well as enhancing their capacity as researchers.

Website: <http://pfs.ohio.gov/>

Manuscript Citation: Schweinhart, A. & Raffle, H. (2019). *Accomplishing Radical CBR While Upholding Rigorous Standards*. Manuscript in preparation.

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Ohio's Youth-Led Initiative

Abstract: Over the past several years, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), Ohio University's Voinovich School for Leadership and Public Affairs (OHIO), and Prevention Action Alliance (PAA) have been collaborating with adult allies of youth-led programs from across the state in an effort to refine and develop youth-led programming. Through consultation with the adult allies (i.e. the adults responsible for facilitating these programs), it was collectively determined that the goal of YLP in Ohio is for young people to engage in a data-driven strategic planning process to implement evidence-based prevention strategies to create change. In short, Ohio's Youth-Led Initiative empowers young people to address the pressing issues facing their communities. These programs are distinct because they empower young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be catalysts for change. Two evidence-based frameworks inform youth-led programs as community-based processes: the Youth Empowerment Conceptual Framework (YECF; Holden et al., 2004) and the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF; SAMHSA).

Website: www.ohioadultallies.com

Manuscript Citation: Collura, J., Raffle, H., Collins, A., Kennedy, H. (2019). Creating spaces for young people to collaborate to create change: Ohio's youth-led initiative. *Health Education & Behavior*, 46(1_suppl), 44-52. doi: 10.1177/1090198119853571

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Ohio's Strategic Prevention Framework - Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) Initiative: Data Mini Grantees

Abstract: The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), funded under a cooperative agreement with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), developed an innovative strategy to cultivate infrastructure, workforce, and leadership capacity among high need community organizations. When reviewing proposals under the Strategic Prevention Framework Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) initiative, six community organizations with the highest need for prevention services could not meet SAMHSA's stringent evaluation requirements. OhioMHAS collaborated with three sectoral partners to create a performance-based, stepping-stone investment strategy. This upstream health equity strategy focused on rural and Appalachian counties in Ohio, a subpopulation vulnerable to economic and behavioral health disparities. In addition to a monetary award, community organizations received intensive, customized training and technical assistance at no additional cost to them. At the local level, this support utilized community empowerment principles in order to cultivate local capacity to engage in data-driven substance use planning. At the systems level, a developmental evaluation approach allowed evaluators to test this innovative intersectoral investment strategy.

Website: <https://pfs.ohio.gov/PFS-Communities/Data-Mini-Grantees>

Manuscript Citation: Milazzo, L. Z., Raffle, H., & Courser, M. (in press). Building sustainable planning capacity in rural and Appalachian communities: an intersectoral collaborative approach in Ohio, *The Foundation Review*, 11(4).

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