Program Evaluation Standards Guiding Evaluation Capacity Development in an NIH-Funded Program

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Background:
Clinical and Translational Science Award(CTSA) Program

CTSA Clinical & Translational ®
Science Awards

- Consortium of 63 intuitions nationwide

- 5 year awards ranging from $25 million to $125 million each

- CTSA goals are to revolutionize the field of scientific and health related research and broader impacts.

- Currently the CTSA program is in some degree of reorganization and revision

Description:
University of Iowa Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (ICTS)

- ICTS is one of the 63 consortium institutes
- ICTS supported by the CTSA and University of Iowa institutional funds
- 8 service cores make up the ICTS
- ICTS implements the goals of the CTSA with special attention for the health of Iowans

Interaction Between ICTS Evaluation and the *Program Evaluation Standards*

Refine evaluation definition given context and the *Program Evaluation Standards*

"Evaluation is an orchestrated set of processes and evidence-based products for improved decision-making, including decisions about accountability"
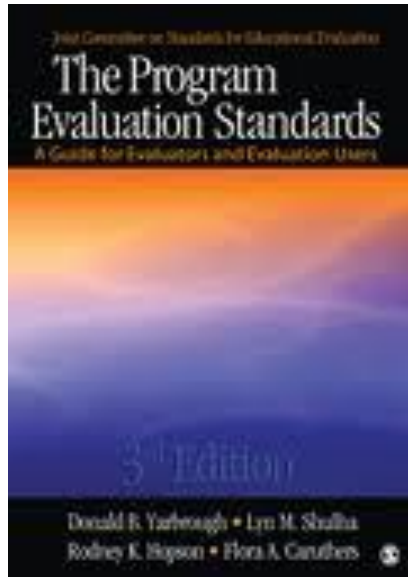
Interaction Between ICTS Evaluation and the *Program Evaluation Standards*

The *Program Evaluation Standards* dictate that high-quality, high-value evaluations:

- are useful; feasible; accurate; and ethically-, legally-, and professionally-defensible

- serve organizational learning and development; program, project, subproject and product improvement; and accountability, better decision-making, and demonstrated, improving returns on investments

- are themselves "controlled" for quality (metaevaluated)

The Program Evaluation Standards 3rd Edition

www.jcsee.org

The Program Evaluation Standards describe Dimensions of Quality in Evaluation

– Utility

– Feasibility

– Propriety

– Accuracy

– Evaluation Accountability

- Formative
- Summative

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Building Evaluation Capacity: Initial Needs Assessment

Implementation:

Administrative Decision Making

- Decisions based on administrators' professional judgment with little evaluation data utilized
- Few, if any processes to embed evaluation-based decision making or evaluation quality control into administration
- Little attention to evaluation for improvement purposes
- View that evaluation has value only to the extent it demonstrates successes (e.g., grant writing, marketing)

Infrastructure:

Limited Evaluation Resources

- Completely inadequate internal professional evaluation staff
- Evaluation is funded at less than 1% of the total budget
- Proposed evaluation capacity development is repeatedly delayed

Ideal ICTS Evaluation Quality

	Recommendation	Example Standards
Infrastructure	Requires commitment from the administrative core and program and project staff	A2 Valid Information
	Requires allocation of sufficient human and infrastructure resources	F4 Resource Use
	Usually Requires evaluation professional development both informal and formal for evaluation staff and stakeholders	U6 Meaningful Processes and Products
Implementation	Best guided by formal and informal evaluation quality assessments in all cores, directed at all users and potential users	E2 Internal Metaevaluation
	Informed by • program/project strategic planning; logic models and program theories or expanded program models	A4 Explicit Program and Context Descriptions
	• informal and formal conversations, surveys, interviews, focus groups, meeting agendas	P5 Transparency and Disclosure

Current Situation: Infrastructure

Evaluation Team Resources:

- Evaluation Team: Different from previous versions of the evaluation team, we now have 1.15 FTE dedicated to evaluation in the ICTS.

- Evaluation Support: Recently, the ICTS has hired managers for each core that can assist with evaluation implementation (data collection, idea generation, etc).

Implementing I-CART (the Iowa instance of SPARC from the Medical University of South Carolina):

- This tracking system will provide a portal for investigators to search, explore, and order ICTS services all in one place (like an Amazon shopping cart).

Current Situation: Implementation Success

- Historically, the cores have driven evaluation. Given this fact, some cores have found benefit in the data collected

- Successful projects include:
  - Iowa Summer Institute for Biostatistics (ISIB) Focus Groups,
  - Clinical Research Unit (CRU) Volunteer Survey,
  - Child Mental Health Workshop Pre/Post Surveys

- Example Project: ISIB Mixed Methods Report

Current Situation: Implementation Failure

- Other projects were less effective for providing relevant information to the cores for change
- Unsuccessful projects include:
  - Institutional Training Grant Survey (KL2) Survey,
  - Development of a REDCap database for the Clinical Research Support Core,
  - Easily tracking all users of ICTS services,
  - FQHC Focus Groups

- Given our focus on evaluation at the core level, large decisions have not been made to inform programming on the larger-scale.
- Attempted ICTS-level data collection:
  - All faculty Barriers to Translational Science Survey,
  - Meetings with the Associate Deans for Research,
  - Proposed collaboration data based on information from Sponsored Programs and the University of Iowa Research Foundation,
  - ICTS Roadmap Project

Current Situation: Challenges

Evaluation Challenges

<u>Evaluation Resources</u>:

- Our evaluation team continues to struggle juggling all of the responsibilities required for a good evaluation with the limited capacity of our 1.15 FTEs
- Though some cores have excellent support for management, other cores have busy service providers as their liaisons for evaluation, creating roadblocks for evaluation.

<u>Evaluative Thinking</u>:

- Though the definition of this term is vague, the spirit is that the leadership team should be thinking in terms of data driven decision making.

Programming Challenge

<u>Ambiguous Programming</u>:

- Often the struggle working with the cores is that the programs are not hard and fast or the leadership will not commit to specific aims and activities

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Current and Future Efforts

- Continue making recommendations based on all 5 dimensions of quality

- Consider a cross-walk with other standards and criteria for evaluation quality

- Focus on developing evaluation awareness through the ICTS

Questions?

- Contact Valerie Moody with any inquires about this presentation:
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Program Evaluation Standards, 3rd Edition

- 30 standards, organized into five dimensions of quality
  - Evaluation Utility: 8 standards
  - Evaluation Feasibility: 4 standards
  - Evaluation Propriety (ethicality, morality, professionalism): 7 standards
  - Evaluation Accuracy: 8 standards
  - Evaluation Accountability: 3 standards
- Each standard is presented with explanatory discussion, guidelines, caveats, and illustrations to facilitate applications
- Standards are JCSEE- and ANSI-approved standards
- They require professional judgment and reflective practice (in ANSI language are "open, consensus" standards)
- They are designed for "Evaluators and Evaluation Users," i.e., evaluation quality is a collaboration among evaluators, program staff, and other users/stakeholders.

Utility Program Evaluation Standards

Standard	Statement
U1 Evaluator Credibility	*Evaluations should be conducted by qualified people who establish and maintain credibility in the evaluation context.*
U2 Attention to Stakeholders	*Evaluations should devote attention to the full range of individuals and groups invested in the program and affected by its evaluation*
U3 Negotiated Purposes	*Evaluation purposes should be identified and continually negotiated based on the needs of stakeholders.*
U4 Explicit Values	*Evaluations should clarify and specify the individual and cultural values underpinning purposes, processes, and judgments.*
U5 Relevant Information	*Evaluation information should serve the identified and emergent needs of stakeholders.*
U6 Meaningful Processes and Products	*Evaluations should construct activities, descriptions, and judgments in ways that encourage participants to rediscover, reinterpret, or revise their understandings and behaviors*
U7 Timely and Appropriate Communicating and Reporting	*Evaluations should attend to the continuing information needs of their multiple audiences.*
U8 Concern for Consequences and Influence	*Evaluations should promote responsible and adaptive use while guarding against unintended negative consequences and misuse.*

Feasibility Program Evaluation Standards

Standard	Statement
F1 Project Management	*Evaluations should use effective project management strategies.*
F2 Practical Procedures	*Evaluation procedures should be practical and responsive to the way the program operates.*
F3 Contextual Viability	*Evaluations should recognize, monitor, and balance the cultural and political interests and needs of individuals and groups.*
F4 Resource Use	*Evaluations should use resources effectively and efficiently.*

Evaluation Accountability Program Evaluation Standards

E1 Evaluation Documentation	*Evaluations should fully document their negotiated purposes and implemented designs, procedures, data, and outcomes.*
E2 Internal Metaevaluation	*Evaluators should use these and other applicable standards to examine the accountability of the evaluation design, procedures employed, information collected, and outcomes.*
E3 External Metaevaluation	*Program evaluation sponsors, clients, evaluators, and other stakeholders should encourage the conduct of external metaevaluations using these and other applicable standards.*

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Propriety Program Evaluation Standards

Standard	Statement
P1 Responsive and Inclusive Orientation	*Evaluations should be responsive to stakeholders and their communities*
P2 Formal Agreements	*Evaluation agreements should be negotiated to make obligations explicit and take into account the needs, expectations, and cultural contexts of clients and other stakeholders.*
P3 Human Rights and Respect	*Evaluations should be designed and conducted to protect human and legal rights and maintain the dignity of participants and other stakeholders.*
P4 Clarity and Fairness	*Evaluations should be understandable and fair in addressing stakeholder needs and purposes.*
P5 Transparency and Disclosure	*Evaluations should provide complete descriptions of findings, limitations, and conclusions to all stakeholders, unless doing so would violate legal and propriety obligations*
P6 Conflicts of Interests	*Evaluations should openly and honestly identify and address real or perceived conflicts of interests that may compromise the evaluation.*
P7 Fiscal Responsibility	*Evaluations should account for all expended resources and comply with sound fiscal procedures and processes.*

Accuracy Program Evaluation Standards

Standard	Statement
A1 Justified Conclusions and Decisions	*Evaluation conclusions and decisions should be explicitly justified in the cultures and contexts where they have consequences.*
A2 Valid Information	*Evaluation information should serve the intended purposes and support valid interpretations.*
A3 Reliable Information	*Evaluation procedures should yield sufficiently dependable and consistent information for the intended uses.*
A4 Explicit Program and Context Descriptions	*Evaluations should document programs and their contexts with appropriate detail and scope for the evaluation purposes.*
A5 Information Management	*Evaluations should employ systematic information collection, review, verification, and storage methods.*
A6 Sound Designs and Analyses	*Evaluations should employ technically adequate designs and analyses that are appropriate for the evaluation purposes.*
A7 Explicit Evaluation Reasoning	*Evaluation reasoning leading from information and analyses to findings, interpretations, conclusions, and judgments should be clearly and completely documented.*
A8 Communication and Reporting	*Evaluation communications should have adequate scope and guard against misconceptions, biases, distortions, and errors.*