

Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators

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Agenda for the session

- Identifying competencies intuitively
- Beliefs about evaluator competencies
- The ECPE and how they work in different settings
- Case application
- Do-it-yourself concept maps
- Self-assessment and planning for professional development



Identifying competencies intuitively

What are the knowledge, skills and dispositions that the program evaluator needs to successfully complete the evaluation?



Evaluator relationships

- A relationship exists among
 - The evaluator
 - The client
 - The program staff and other evaluation stakeholders
- Primary responsibility for two tasks:
 - Making evaluation decisions
 - Implementing the evaluation

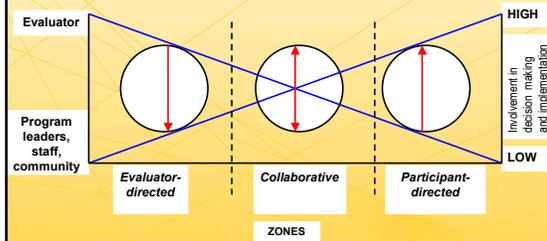


Evaluator relationships

- Primary responsibility for making and implementing evaluation decisions may lie:
 - (1) with the evaluator
 - (2) with someone else in the setting
 - (3) jointly with both
- The evaluation relationship may shift during the study



Interactive participation quotient



Two basic questions

Who plans
the evaluation?
Who conducts it?



What do you believe?

COMPETENCY STATEMENTS



Presenting . . .

ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES FOR PROGRAM EVALUATORS

How were the ECPE developed?

- **Began:** With an idea in a graduate course
- **Then:** "What does the literature tell us?"
- **Then:** A pilot study using the initial set of competencies, *AJE* publication (2001)
- **Then:** A revision process including a crosswalk
- **Then:** ECPE published in *AJE* (2005)
- **Then:** Articles in *CEJ* (2005) and *AJE* (2006)
- **Next:** A national validation study

Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators



1) Professional practice

➤ Fundamental norms and values of evaluation practice

- Applies evaluation standards
- Works ethically
- Respects all stakeholders
- Considers the general and public welfare
- Contributes to knowledge base

2) Systematic inquiry

- **Technical aspects of evaluation practice**
 - Understands knowledge base
 - Knows quantitative and qualitative methods
 - Knows mixed methods
 - Conducts literature reviews
 - Specifies program theory
 - Frames evaluation questions
 - Designs the evaluation
- PLUS. . .

2) Systematic inquiry (cont.)

- Collects and interprets data
- Makes judgments and recommendations
- Provides rationales for decisions
- Reports procedures and results
- Notes evaluation strengths and limitations
- Conducts meta-evaluations

3) Situational analysis

- **Unique interests, issues, and contextual circumstances of evaluation**
 - Describes program
 - Determines program evaluability
 - Identifies stakeholders' interests
 - Serves intended users' informational needs
 - Addresses conflicts
 - Attends to evaluation use
- PLUS. . .

3) Situational analysis (cont.)

- Examines organizational and political context
- Attends to organizational change
- Respects site and client uniquenesses
- Remains open to input
- Modifies evaluation as needed

4) Project management

- **“Nut and bolts” of evaluation work**
 - Responds to RFPs
 - Negotiates with clients
 - Writes formal agreements
 - Communicates with client
 - Budgets evaluation
 - Justifies cost
- PLUS. . .

4) Project management (cont.)

- Identifies needed resources
- Uses technology as appropriate
- Supervises & trains others
- Conducts evaluation in nondisruptive manner
- Presents work in timely manner

5) Reflective practice

➤ One's own evaluation expertise and need for growth

- Knows self
- Reflects on practice
- Pursues professional development:
evaluation and content areas
- Builds professional relationships

6) Interpersonal competence

➤ "People skills" necessary for evaluation practice

- Uses written and verbal/listening communication skills
- Uses negotiation skills
- Uses conflict resolution skills
- Facilitates constructive interpersonal interaction
- Demonstrates cross-cultural competence



Now the fun part...

ECPE CONCEPT MAPPING

Work context and program evaluator competencies

Professional Practice

Systematic Inquiry

Situational Analysis

Project Management

Reflective Practice

Interpersonal
Competence

Create a concept map--

In your work context, what are the relationships between and among the competencies?



What's next for you?

SELF-ASSESSMENT

ECPE self-assessment

Reflecting on your own practice, how do you rate your knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively carry out program evaluations?



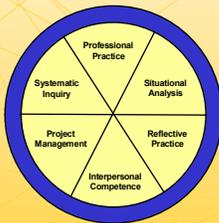
ECPE rating scale

Entry /
Novice

Proficient/
Skilled

Mastery/
Expert

ECPE self-assessment



- Learned?
- Affirmed?
- Challenged?

Now what?

What is your professional development plan?



References

Ghere, G., King, J.A., Stevahn, L., & Minnema, J. (2006). A professional development unit for reflecting on program evaluator competencies. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27, 108-123.

Stevahn, L., King, J. A., Ghere, G., & Minnema, J. (2005). Establishing essential competencies for program evaluators. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 26, 43-59.

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