

# **Evaluation II: How Do You Know that Your Work Makes a Difference?**

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April 2008

# Session Overview

- Revisit basics of evaluation
- A conceptual framework for evaluation
- Defining concepts and areas of emphasis
- Moving to evaluation methods/design
- Next steps
- Questions and resources

**We are just beginning ...**

**How will we know  
that our work  
makes a difference?**

# “Good” and “Bad” Evaluations

(Gelmon, Foucek & Waterbury, 2005)

- “Good” evaluations will:
  - ◆ define strengths
  - ◆ validate knowledge
  - ◆ provide evidence for resource decisions
  - ◆ identify opportunities for improvement
- “Bad” evaluations will:
  - ◆ consume energy and resources
  - ◆ encourage an unproductive environment

# Ask Key Questions

(Gelmon, Foucek & Waterbury, 2005)

- What do you hope to learn through evaluation of your work?
- Who wants/needs the evaluation results?
  - ◆ Do different audiences have different needs?
- What resources are available to support evaluation (people, time, dollars)?
- Who will do the evaluation -- conceptualize, collect data, analyze, report?
- How will you use the results?

# “Assessment” or “Evaluation”?

- Evaluation: classic program evaluation suggests point in time snapshot
  - ◆ Often viewed as static and summative
- Assessment: used in particular for student learning outcomes and suggests review of process over time
  - ◆ Viewed as ongoing and focused on improvement
  - ◆ Use of assessment for all aspects of SL impact, not just student learning
- Both focus on systematic collection and use of evidence for evaluation and improvement

# Assessing the Impact of Your Work

- Consider a multi-constituency approach (Gelmon, Holland, et al., 2001)
  - ◆ Students
  - ◆ Faculty
  - ◆ Institution
  - ◆ Community
  - ◆ Partnerships
- Multiple perspectives regardless of focus of work
- Connect plans, activities, evidence

# The Matrix/Multiple Method Approach

(Gelmon, Holland, et al., 2001)

- Methodological framework
- Evaluation matrix
  - ◆ Core concepts
  - ◆ Key indicators
  - ◆ Multiple methods
  - ◆ Sources of information
- Using the matrix for analysis, synthesis and reporting

# Methodological Framework

(Gelmon, Holland, et al., 2001)

- What do we want to know?
  - ◆ What are the major areas the program addresses?
  - ◆ Identify key concepts
- What will we look for?
  - ◆ What can we observe or measure to generate evidence?
  - ◆ Select measurable/observable indicators
- How will we gather the evidence to demonstrate what we want to know?
  - ◆ How will we collect the evidence?
  - ◆ From whom or where will we obtain this information?
  - ◆ Identify/design/use appropriate tools and sources

# The Evaluation Matrix

(Gelmon, Holland, et al., 2001)

Concept	Indicator	Method/Source
1.	1. 2. etc.	1. 2. etc.
2.	1. 2. etc.	1. 2. etc.
3.	1. 2. etc.	1. 2. etc.

# Key Concepts: Students

- Awareness of community
- Commitment to community service
- Career development
- Sensitivity to diversity
- Understanding of course content
- Involvement with community
- Self-awareness
- Communication

# Student Example

- What do students know about their communities?
- Concept: awareness of community
- Indicators: knowledge of issues, ability to identify assets/needs, understanding of problems and resources
- Methods: interviews, focus groups, observations in class/community
- Sources: students, faculty, community partners, SL coordinator

## What Have We Learned?

- Heightened awareness of community issues
- Positive attitudes towards service
- Experiences helpful in career development
- Increase in self-awareness
- Reflection helps connect service and course content

# Key Concepts: Faculty

- Motivation and attraction to community work
- Professional development
- Impact/influence on teaching
- Impact/influence on scholarship
- Areas of emphasis in scholarship
- Awareness of community
- Barriers and facilitators to community work
- Satisfaction with experience

# Faculty Example

- How does service-learning influence faculty pedagogy?
- Concepts: philosophy of teaching, teaching and learning methods
- Indicators: teaching roles, class format, organization, environment, values
- Methods: observations, interviews, syllabi
- Sources: faculty, students, community partners, SL coordinator, university administrators, institutional research office

## What Have We Learned?

- Enhances faculty knowledge about community issues
- Sparks inquiry into relevant questions
- Creates opportunities for collaborative scholarship with community partner
- Offers new venues for dissemination
- Expands faculty role in new directions

# Key Concepts: Community

- Partner organization
  - ◆ Capacity to fulfill organizational mission
  - ◆ Economic benefits
  - ◆ Social benefits
- Community-university partnerships
  - ◆ Nature of community-university relationship
  - ◆ Nature of community-university interaction
  - ◆ Satisfaction with partnership
  - ◆ Sustainability of partnership

# Community Example

- How do you describe the impact of the partnership and its impact on capacity?
- Concepts: capacity to fulfill mission, economic impacts
- Indicators: # clients, impact on resource utilization, development of funding, staff changes, program insights
- Methods: focus groups, interviews, document review
- Sources: community partners, faculty, students, board of directors, community database

# What Have We Learned?

- Students gave staff new energy
- Increased services to clients
- Insights into program delivery
- Positive and negative impact on resources
  - ◆ Burden of scheduling students
  - ◆ New networks
  - ◆ Evidence gathered for funding

# Selecting Evaluation Methods

(Gelmon, Foucek & Waterbury, 2005)

You will need to think about:

- What instrument(s) to use
- Why and when to use it/them
- Consideration of characteristics
  - ◆ Types of questions
  - ◆ Format/design
- Process of data collection
- What to do with the data

# Evaluation Instruments/Methods

(Gelmon, Foucek & Waterbury, 2005)

- Surveys
- Interviews, focus groups
- Journals
- Review of curricular/learning documents
- Structured observations
- Critical incident/event reports
- Institutional documentation

# Selection of Methods/Instruments

(Gelmon, Foucek & Waterbury, 2005)

- Assessment of relative merits
  - ◆ Design, data collection, bias, flexibility, accuracy
  - ◆ Context, eventual uses, nature of indicators
- Time/value tradeoffs
  - ◆ Set-up, administration, analysis
  - ◆ Resource availability (human, fiscal, physical, information, etc.)

# Methods and Process Issues

(Gelmon, Foucek & Waterbury, 2005)

- Reliability and validity
- Protecting anonymity and confidentiality
- Participant rights and consent
- Cultural awareness
- Economic impact and benefits of work
- Cross-cultural challenges
- Humanitarian considerations
- Service and career decisions
- Need for institutional review (IRB)

# What To Do With the Data

(Gelmon, Foucek & Waterbury, 2005)

- Approaches to analysis
  - ◆ Quantitative -- ease of statistical software
  - ◆ Qualitative -- systematic review and assessment via hand or aided electronically
- Synthesizing the information
  - ◆ Follow framework of concepts
- Report writing and dissemination

# Developing an Evaluation Plan

- Begin with your conceptual matrix
- Develop draft evaluation plan
- Include goals, purposes, audiences, who does the work, timeline
- Elaborate the methods you have considered in the discussions here
- Share and get feedback
  - ◆ “Benchmark” ideas
  - ◆ Thoughts on improvements
  - ◆ Areas of clarification

# Resources

- Gelmon, Holland, et al.: Assessment Monograph, 2001 (order from [www.compact.org](http://www.compact.org))
- Gelmon, Foucek, Waterbury; Program Evaluation Handbook, 2005 (free at [www.nwhf.org/technical/learning\\_lab.php](http://www.nwhf.org/technical/learning_lab.php))
- CCPH resources ([www.ccph.info](http://www.ccph.info))
- National Service-Learning Clearinghouse ([www.servicelearningclearinghouse.org](http://www.servicelearningclearinghouse.org))
- Disciplinary associations
- See bibliography for more on methods

# Questions

- Defining goals and areas of emphasis?
- Methods and instruments?
- Developing an evaluation plan?
- Personal experiences?
- Identifying local expertise/other consultants?

## For Further Information

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