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 (Gelman, 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)

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<th>Concept</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Method/Source</th>
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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
(Gelman, 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

- CCPH resources (www.ccph.info)
- National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (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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