Spend the next three minutes writing about your best evaluation experience
Introduce yourself and share your thoughts about evaluation with others at your table
Purpose of Presentation: Overview of selected topics

- How to prepare for evaluations
- How evaluation is different from other types of inquiry
- How to work with evaluators
- How philosophy affects evaluation
- How to mix evaluation methods
- How to use evaluations
Logic Model / Theory of Action to Prepare for Evaluation

- Why should your project produce your expected outcomes
- Theoretical and actual contingencies
- Inputs
- Processes / Activities
- Outputs / Intermediate Outcomes
- Outcomes
Think, Pair, Share Logic Models

- What are your projects’ anticipated outcomes
- What are your projects’ activities
- What outputs will result from your activities
- How will those outputs lead to the anticipated outcomes
- How will you know if these things occurred
History of Evaluation

- Early Chinese administrative corps
- Rice (1900) comparative evaluation of spelling performance
- The Eight Year Study Tyler and Smith (1942) comprehensive longitudinal study of 30 HS
- Elem and Sec Ed Act 1965 required evals
- 1970’s & con’t J DRP (joint dissemination and review panel) NAEP—TIMMS
- 1993 GPRA (governmental performance results act)
- 2007 PART (performance assessment rating tool)
Uniqueness of Evaluation

- **Evaluation vs Research**
  - Evaluation determines the merit or worth of a specific thing as opposed to “truth”
  - Evaluation deals with different value systems and audiences
  - Evaluation is concerned about descriptions and decisions rather than laws and conclusions

- **Evaluation vs Monitoring**
  - Routine collection of data on various factors
  - Can be complementary
Working with an Evaluator

- Have clear expectations about the purpose and audiences for the evaluation
- Evaluator should follow the standards (utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy)
- Evaluator characteristics (experienced, methodological, respectful, organized)
- Develop a contract with clear deliverables
- Coordinate internal and external evaluations
Think, Pair, Share

What would you include in an evaluation contract?
Evaluation Contract Check List

- **Basic Considerations**
  - Object of the evaluation; Purpose of the evaluation; Client; Other right-to-know audiences; Authorized evaluator(s); Guiding values and criteria; Standards for judging the evaluation; Contractual questions

- **Information**
  - Required information; Data collection procedures; Data collection instruments and Protocols; Information sources; Participant selection; Provisions to obtain needed permissions to collect data; Follow-up procedures to assure adequate information; Provisions for assuring the quality of obtained information; Provisions to store and maintain security of collected information

- **Analysis**
  - Procedures for analyzing quantitative information; Procedures for analyzing qualitative information

- **Reports**
  - Deliverables and due dates; Interim report formats, contents, lengths, audiences, and methods of delivery; Final report format, contents, length, audiences, and methods of delivery; Restrictions/permissions to report via diskettes, web site, etc.; Restrictions/permissions to publish information from or based on the evaluation
Evaluation Contracts Checklist

**Reporting Safeguards**
- Anonymity/confidentiality; Prerelease review of reports; Rebuttal by evaluatees; Editorial authority; Final authority to release reports

**Protocol**
- Contact persons; Rules for contacting program personnel; Communication channels and assistance

**Evaluation Management**
- Time line for evaluation work of both clients and evaluators. Assignment of evaluation responsibilities

**Client Responsibilities**
- Access to information, Services, Personnel, Information, Facilities, Equipment, Materials, Transportation assistance, Work space

**Evaluation Budget**
- Payment amounts and dates. Conditions for payment, including delivery of required reports. Budget limits/restrictions. Agreed-upon indirect/overhead rates. Contracts for budgetary matters

**Review and Control of the Evaluation**
- Contract amendment and cancellation provisions; Provisions for periodic review, modification, and renegotiation of the evaluation design as needed; Provision for evaluating the evaluation against professional standards of sound evaluation
Evaluation Philosophy
Constructions through which people make sense of their situations are in a very major way shaped by the values of the constructors. The question of whose values are to be taken into account, and how different value positions might be accommodated becomes paramount.

(Guba and Lincoln, 1989)
Philosophies Linked with Values

- **Objectivist**
  - scientific, empiricism
  - externalized
  - positivistic

- **Utilitarian**
  - impact on group
    - greatest gains
  - functional

- **Subjectivist**
  - experiential
  - internalized
  - interpretive

- **Intuitionist-Pluralist**
  - impact on individuals
  - each person best
    - judge
  - critical
Using Mixed Methods to Measure Outcomes

- Used to provide more complete descriptions
- Provides information from different perspectives to address different value orientations
- Can be within or across methodologies
  - Purist
  - Pragmatist
  - Dialectic
Panzers and Pansies
positivistic(quant)/interpretive(qual)

- Panzers are strong, push their way through, don’t care what’s in the way, can overcome any obstacle, have a predefined purpose.

- Pansies are soft, have different meanings to different observers, are sensitive to their environment, present themselves for others to make sense of them.
Oil and Vinegar

- Oil is smooth, soothing, comfortable, able to “take the heat”
- Vinegar is spicy, heightens awareness
- Together they produce something different than either but for some instances (like a salad) better than either alone
What evaluation methods have you used to gather and interpret data?

Think, pair, share
Threats to Internal Validity in
Positivistic Evaluation

History: uncontrolled events that may influence
the independent variable

Selection: subjects selected are unique or one set
of them is. Strengths and weaknesses of match

Maturation: changes in subjects over time

Pretesting: pretest could sensitize subjects
(randomized split block design)

Instrumentation: measurements could be
unreliable or invalid or change

Treatment replications: need to have sufficient
replications of treatments
Threats to Internal Validity con’t

Subject attrition: subjects who drop out may be unique

Statistical regression: extreme scores move closer to the mean (especially if selected for low or high scores)

Diffusion of treatment: one group affects the other

Experimenter effects: subjects may respond differently to different experimenters or experimenter may have preconceived ideas

Subject effects: effects from awareness of being a subject Hawthorne effect, John Henry effect (compensatory rivalry), novelty effect
Strengths of Interpretive Evaluation

- Well grounded rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts
- Preservation of chronological and natural flow: see which events led to which consequences and derive fruitful explanations
- Flexible data collection and analysis
Strengths, con’t

- More likely to lead to serendipitous findings and new integrations
- Have a quality of “undeniability” a concrete meaningful flavor that can be more convincing
- Illuminates, explains, validates or reinterprets quantitative data
Types of Interpretive Evaluation

- Case studies detailed description of a bounded entity
- Lived experience-life history, phenomenography, phenomenology
- Society and Culture-ethnography, critical theory, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism
- Language-content analysis, hermeneutics, semiotics (sign systems), structuralism (relationship of elements within a system) (Gall, Gall and Borg)
Credibility of Interpretive Evaluations

- Triangulation
- Disconfirming evidence
- Reflexivity (self)
- Member checks
- Collaborative work
- External auditors
- Audit trail
- Prolonged engagement
- Detailed description
How have you used your evaluation data

Think, pair, share
Uses of Evaluation Data

- Optimize program outcomes
- Justify program or influence policy change
- Judge the quality of outcomes
  - On participants or others
  - Immediate, intermediate or long term
- Determine the quality of the program
  - How a program operates
  - How its procedures combine
  - How to seek more funding
What questions do you have about evaluation

Discuss at your table and share with the full group so we can construct answers
Thank You

lawrenz@umn.edu