FORMATIVE EVALUATION:
How to Ensure Your Program Implementation Will Provide Meaningful Results

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Learning Objectives

• Define formative evaluation
• Review trends in evaluation
• Identify categories of formative evaluation
• List types of formative evaluation activities appropriate to your organization, program
• Understand how to implement at least one formative evaluation method
• Review case studies
Poll 1

Does your organization implement any form of formative evaluation?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I have no idea
Poll 2

What would you like to learn today?

1. What formative evaluation is
2. Why I should care about formative evaluation
3. How I can implement it in my organization
4. How it and summative evaluation work together
5. Something else entirely (please describe)
What is Formative Evaluation?
Defining Formative Evaluation

• Ensure appropriate and timely **resource allocation** to meet your mission

• **Validate** that the program’s implementation methods will provide meaningful results for recipients

• Continuous quality improvement (**CQI**)

• **Qualitative** vs. quantitative
Example of Formative Evaluation

- Document the delivery of the institutes and locally-led trainings
- Document teachers' responses to training experiences
- Gain an understanding of how teachers are using the tools and resources presented in the workshops in their classrooms

How It’s Different than Summative Eval

Formative = Process
Reliability & Validity of Methodology
Before & During

Summative = Outcomes
Meaningful Results
Effect of Intervention
During & After
Evaluation Cycle: Summative + Formative

Image Credit: National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes
Trends in Formative Evaluation

Common Evaluation Approaches

- 79% outcomes evaluation
- 48% impact evaluation
- 65% before & after measures
- 6% quasi experimental research
- 38% summative/retrospective evaluation
- 25% economic evaluation
- 20% strategic learning
- 19% developmental evaluation
- 14% long-term follow-up with clients after they have stopped using your organization’s services
- 6% studies with control groups

Image Credit: State of Evaluation 2012, Innovation Network

http://stateofevaluation.org/
Before we move into types of formative evaluation, do you have any...
Types of Formative Evaluation
Poll 4

Have you been involved with any of the following activities? If so, which ones?

1. Needs Assessment
2. Stakeholder Analysis
3. Problem/Solution tree Analysis
4. Logic Modelling
5. Pilot Test
6. Continuous Quality Improvement
7. Budget & Time Tracking
8. Observation
9. Staff surveys and interviews
Proactive: Needs Assessment

- **Document** issues that are important to community
- **Identify** options for addressing needs identified
- **Develop** an action plan to address local needs
- **Create** messages to support grant seeking activities
Proactive: Needs Assessment

1. Planning
2. Literature review
3. Asset mapping
4. Gaps analysis
5. Focus groups
6. Key informant interviews
7. Quantitative and qualitative analysis
8. Reporting
Proactive: Stakeholder Analysis

- **Stakeholder**: people or organizations who can be positively or negatively affected by, or cause an impact on, the actions of a company (Freeman, 1984)

- Potential beneficiaries

- Potential risk bearers

- Sphere of influence
Proactive: Stakeholder Analysis

1. Define goal
2. Identify stakeholders
3. Interviews, focus groups
4. Classify groups (matrix)
5. Analyze relationships
6. Identify areas of conflict
7. Prioritize needs
8. Align needs with strategies
Proactive: Problem/Solution Tree Analysis

1. Identifies context
2. Reveals complexities
3. Involves stakeholders
4. Define core problem
5. Identify cause/effect
6. Develop solution tree
7. Select intervention

Image Credit: Evaluation Toolbox
Proactive: Problem/Solution Tree Analysis

Core Problem: Teenagers don’t finish school

Causes (Roots):
- Parents don’t think school is important
- Parents too busy to discipline/support
- School is not interesting
- Need to find employment to support family
- Low family income

Effects (Branches):
- Low future income
- Difficulty finding a job
- Higher teenage pregnancy rates
- Higher drug and alcohol use
- More accidents
- More crime

Image Credit: Tools4dev.org
Clarifying: Logic Modelling

- **Certain resources are needed to operate your program**
- **If you have access to them, then you can use them to accomplish your planned activities**
- **If you accomplish your planned activities, then you will hopefully deliver the amount of product and/or service that you intended**
- **If you accomplish your planned activities to the extent you intended, then your participants will benefit in certain ways**
- **If these benefits to participants are achieved, then certain changes in organizations, communities, or systems might be expected to occur**

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Image Credit: Pell Institute
Clarifying: Pilot Test

- Readiness for full-scale implementation
- Gauge population’s reaction to program
- Make decisions about resource allocation
- Prepared for outcomes measurement

Before we invest millions, maybe we should test it and see if it works.

freshspectrum.com
Clarifying: Pilot Test

Before you begin:

1. Working group
2. Community needs assessment
3. Identified appropriate best practice
4. Develop work plan and timeline
5. Design evaluation plan and instruments
6. Engage human resources
7. Select a test group
Clarifying: Pilot Test

Plan for success:

- Technology needs, especially for evaluation
- Work the plan
- Adjust as necessary
- Do NOT overhaul during pilot – it’s preliminary
- Involve the community
- Report back
Interactive: Continuous Quality Improvement

Image Credit: National Learning Consortium
Interactive: CQI

- **Plan:** Identify an opportunity and plan for change.
- **Do:** Implement the change on a small scale.
- **Check:** Use data to analyze the results of the change and determine whether it made a difference.
- **Act:** If the change was successful, implement it on a wider scale and continuously assess your results. If the change did not work, begin the cycle again.
Monitoring: Budget & Time Tracking

Tools Used to Manage Grants
(by percentage of respondents)

- Research Tools: 24% (2012), 38% (2013)
- Financial/Accounting Systems: 49% (2012), 64% (2013)
- Donor Databases: 28% (2012), 39% (2013)
- Grant Management Software: 7% (2012), 20% (2013)
- In-House Solutions: 91% (2012), 86% (2013)

Image Credit: Streamlink
Monitoring: Budget & Time Tracking

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</table>

Revenue Account

JustWrite Solutions

Dashboard  To-Dos  Calendar  Time

Latest activity across your projects
Monitoring: Observation

Image Credit: University of Rochester
Monitoring: Staff Interviews & Surveys

- Did staff implement all activities as planned? Why or why not?
- What problems did staff encounter? How were these problems resolved?
- Were any new objectives added? If so, why?
- What actual costs did the program incur (by line item)?
- Did staff learn any lessons that might be useful to other similar organizations?
Poll 5

What is one new type for formative evaluation you will start using in the next six months?

1. Needs Assessment
2. Stakeholder Analysis
3. Problem/Solution tree Analysis
4. Logic Modelling
5. Pilot Test
6. Continuous Quality Improvement
7. Budget & Time Tracking
8. Observation
9. Staff surveys and interviews
Before we move on to the case studies, do you have any...
Case Studies
Case Study #1

Purpose:
- Evaluate process to meeting goals and outcomes identified in original proposal
- Define strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in design
- Plan for next application

Types for formative eval used:
- Staff/faculty interviews
- Student focus groups
- Thematic analysis of results
- Pair with quantitative analysis of outcomes

Image Credit: Carteret Community College
Case Study #2

Purpose:
- Implement new programming for people with DD who are retiring from employment
- Evaluate wraparound services
- Assess social connectedness and quality of life

Types of formative eval planned:
- Pilot intervention
- Staff and client interviews
- Budget and time tracking
- CQI

Image Credit: Houston Chronicle
Case Study #3

Purpose:
- Obtain and analyze primary and secondary data to answer strategic questions for stakeholder groups
- Use results from this study for strategic planning, marketing, fundraising, and programming

Types of formative eval used:
- Comprehensive needs assessment

Image Credit: Globalgiving.org
Poll 7

What common themes do you notice about these case studies?

Please enter your responses in the chat box.
Poll 8

Time for your final…

Burning Questions
• To ask a question by phone, please press *1 on your touchtone phone.

• If you are using a speaker phone, please lift the receiver and then press *1.

• If you would like to withdraw your question, press *1.
Thank You!

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Follow-Up Questions

If you have any remaining questions after the conclusion of today’s webinar please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Ask our webinar producer: mbarnes@columbiabooks.com

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