Sharing information to improve evaluation
Choosing evaluation methods to suit the complex ecologies of the particular intervention and evaluation

How the BetterEvaluation platform can support appropriate evaluation design

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BetterEvaluation

1. Challenges and opportunities
2. Harnessing the power of we
3. Demonstration scenarios – choosing methods and using them well
4. Building knowledge about evaluation that suits complex ecologies
Challenges

It is hard to choose the right combination of evaluation methods

It is hard to know how to implement them well
Opportunities

Lots of existing material on evaluation methods (some not maintained)

Many people willing to share their experience and expertise
BetterEvaluation
An international collaboration to improve evaluation practice and theory by sharing information about options (methods or tools) and

START HERE
To learn more about using BetterEvaluation

The BetterEvaluation Rainbow Framework organizes 200+ evaluation options into 7 clusters of evaluation tasks. Hover over the tabs on the right or visit the framework overview to learn more.

BetterEvaluation at American Evaluation Association conference
This week we're in Minneapolis for the AEA conference. Materials from our demonstration session at 11am on Thursday can be downloaded from here.

DEFINE
FRAME
DESCRIBE
UNDERSTAND CAUSES
SYNTHESIZE
REPORT & SUPPORT USE

SYNTHESIZE
Bring together data from one or more evaluations to make an evaluative judgement

Evaluation Tasks
1. Synthesize data from a single evaluation
2. Synthesize data across evaluations
3. Generalize findings

Evaluating networks, partnerships, collaborations, coalitions - what's the difference? One of the recurring questions...

Feminist evaluation approach is not just about women - I am at the European Evaluation Society conference in Helsinki and I attended...

Partner Tool - PARTNER is a social network analysis tool designed to measure and monitor collaboration among people/organizations...

Partnerships for Environmental Public Health: Evaluation Metrics Manual - This manual from the National Institute of Environmental...

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Founding Partners:

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Co-creation by practitioners, researchers, sector experts, method experts
Reflection, processes for quality and authenticity
Rooted in practical experience
Budgeting for Developmental Evaluation (DE)

An Interview with Michael Quinn Patton (MQP) by Heather Britt (HB) for BetterEvaluation April 2012

HB: Michael, is budgeting for developmental evaluation different from budgeting for formative and summative evaluation?

MQP: Yes, the big difference with DE is that funding has to be front-end loaded. This is in contrast with traditional summative evaluation which is back-end loaded. By this I mean that the primary expenditures for summative evaluation come at the end (though the planning must be part of the beginning) while developmental evaluation requires funding from the very start.

HB: Do you mean the front-end of the project or the front-end of the evaluation?

MQP: Well, both. DE starts quite early in the life of a project, while summative evaluation takes place after a project has stabilized or closed. In general, DE starts earlier than many formative evaluations.

Also, for DE, activities and expenditures are front-loaded in the evaluation process. There is often more work in the early phases than in later phases.

Another good reason to front-load DE is that if people find it useful then they will find it useful to continue to do it. There are some things that can be done down the road, but really DE starts at the beginning.
Task oriented taxonomy: Support to navigate options
FRAMEWORK

Over 200 methods/options related to 35 tasks in 7 clusters
Methods/Options that address all aspects of evaluation

CDC Evaluation Framework with BetterEvaluation components overlaid
Methodological pluralism
Spotlight on invisible evaluation tasks and less well known methods
Respectful, inclusive and constructive discussion
• Proof of concept and closed beta phase 2011-2012

• Now live (October 2012) and in open beta phase

• Formal launch in 2013
Content

- Nearly 200 options pages
- Over 500 resource pages
- 16 approaches (package of methods)
- 8 thematic pages – sectors or cross-cutting issues
Choose the right method

Information on methods:

• Description
• Examples
• Advice for choosing the method
• Advice for using the method
• Short list of recommended resources
• A full list of all resources, ordered by user rating
• This information helps users determine if the method suits their needs and requirements
Scenario 1 - describing a situation

- Community renewal project
- Have existing social indicator profile
- Want to learn how the residents see their community – what are its strengths and problems?
- Intended users of the evaluation – local Council for planning and advocacy

- What methods might you use?
- Under what circumstances might you use them?
Information from individuals

- Deliberative Opinion Polls
- Email Questionnaires:
- Face to Face Questionnaires
- Global Assessment Scales
- Goal Attainment Scales (GAS)
- Internet Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Key Informant

- Logs and Diaries
- Mobile Phone Logging
- Peer/Expert Reviews
- Photolanguage
- Postcards
- Projective Techniques
- Questionnaires
- Seasonal Calendars
- Sketch Mapping
- Stories (Anecdote)
- Telephone Questionnaires
Information from groups

- After Action Review
- Brainstorming
- Card Visualization:
  - Concept Mapping
- Convergent Interviewing
- Delphi Study
- Delmocracy
- Fishbowl Technique

- Focus Groups
- Future Search Conference
- Hierarchical Card Sorting
- Keypad technology
- Mural
- ORID
- SWOT Analysis
- World Cafe
Scenario 1- methods to collect data

- Which methods were suggested by the group?
- Which methods were not suggested?
- What new methods sound potentially useful?
- What information would you need to be able to use (or oversee someone using) a new method?
Scenario 1 - PhotoVoice

Participatory photography method
Particularly useful for giving a voice to marginalized people

Community members:
• Take photos
• Select the most significant photos
• Tell stories about what they mean
• Identify key themes
Evaluation Option

Photo Voice

Photovoice is a registered charity that promotes participatory photography as an empowering option of digital storytelling for vulnerable populations.

"Photovoice’s mission is to build skills within disadvantaged and marginalized communities using innovative participatory photography and digital storytelling options so that they have the opportunity to represent themselves and create tools for advocacy and communications to achieve positive social change." (PhotoVoice, 2012)

Brief Example

Dana Harley (2011) in her dissertation, describes how PhotoVoice was used to explore the feelings of ‘hope and hopelessness’ among poor African American adolescents.

In 2001, African American minors comprised 30 percent of children living below the poverty threshold. High poverty environments tend to intensify feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, depression, and high levels of stress among such youth. Yet, few studies have examined the perception of hope and hopelessness among poor African American adolescents. Furthermore, children and adolescents have not historically co-constructed research.

This study explores the constructs of hope and hopelessness from the viewpoint of research participants utilizing photographs taken by research participants and in-depth interviews. The following questions guided the research study:

- How do low-income African American adolescents perceive and experience hope?
- How do low-income African American adolescents think about goals, future orientation and hope?
- How do low-income African American adolescents experience and perceive hopelessness?

In-depth interviews were conducted and photographs representing hope and hopelessness were taken by 16 African American adolescents aged 13-17. Constant comparative analysis was employed to analyse interviews and photographs. Qualitative analysis software NVivo was utilized to assist in data reduction and for the generation of themes across the data. The use of photovoice with such populations offers unique perspectives and allows for expression of sensitive topics. The analyses yielded important information about how hope and hopelessness are experienced and perceived in the everyday lives of the youth. Hope generated five themes including caring connections, spirituality, education, “basic needs,” and “gotta make it mentality.” Perceptions of hopelessness were connected to negative attitudes and beliefs, external constraints, negative behaviors, and deleterious environmental conditions.

This study reshapes the constructs of hope and hopelessness beyond the cognitive process related to goal attainment. It provides specific factors that promote hope and failure that inform work in vulnerable African American adolescents. This study...
• What would you need to know in order to appropriately choose and use PhotoVoice?

• What questions would you ask of someone who had used it?
Some insights from an evaluation practitioner

• Lynne Man - User of PhotoVoice
AEA 2012 Poster 109 Through the Eyes of Older Adults: Using PhotoVoice to Understand Volunteers
Scenario 2- causal inference

• Completed health intervention to reduce early childhood obesity
• Series of evening information sessions
• Ten participating families
• Data (from service records) show children’s weight was high at the beginning and lower afterwards
• Intended users – management of health service to inform decision about future funding

• What methods might you use?
• Under what circumstances might you use them?
Figure 13.2 Variations in baby weights over time

Weights of subsequent children

Scenario 2 - Check timing is consistent with program theory

- Use time series data to go beyond just ‘Before’ & ‘After’
- See if the change trajectory is consistent with the theory that the program has caused the observed results
Scenario 2 - General Elimination Method

• Identify possible alternative explanations
• Gather and analyze data to see if these can be ruled out
Scenario 2 - methods for causal inference

- Which methods were suggested by the group?
- Which methods were not suggested?
- What new methods sound potentially useful?
- What information would you need to be able to use (or oversee someone using) a new method?
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- I’m interested in writing about
- Description

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Hand this form to BetterEvaluation’s Patricia Rogers or Simon Hearn at the AEA conference in Minneapolis.
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