



Project STAR



I. Key Terms

- Performance Measurement and Evaluation
- Independent versus Internal Evaluation
- Summative versus Formative Evaluation
- Association, Correlation, Causality

Project STAR

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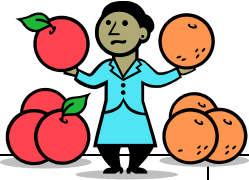
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What Is the Difference between Performance Measurement and Program Evaluation?*

	Performance Measurement	Program Evaluation
Purpose	Provides a snapshot of program functioning. Typically answers the question of whether a program has achieved its identified results and annual targets.	Provides a deeper examination of program functioning. Typically answers questions of why a program worked, unintended benefits or consequences of a program, and how a program might be improved or changed.
Components	Identification of program outputs and outcomes, indicators and tools to measure progress, targets, and regular collection and reporting of data.	Collection of broader range of information on program performance and its context. Information often includes both qualitative and quantitative data. Often includes comparison data to determine effectiveness and impact of the program's activities and model.
Scope	Usually involves data collection from all sites.	May involve data collection from only a subset of sites.
Timeframe	Outputs, intermediate and end outcomes are tracked and reported annually.	Once per grant cycle. Data collection must cover at least one year.
Uses	<p>To examine progress over time, to compare sites, or to understand progress toward pre-established output and outcome targets.</p> <p>Can serve as an early warning system to management and a tool for improving accountability to the public.</p>	<p>The more in-depth nature of program evaluation allows for an overall assessment of whether the program works and identifies adjustments that may improve its results.</p> <p>Program evaluation is also used to determine whether a program "caused" outcomes to be achieved.</p>

*Adapted from: *Selected Evaluation Terms*, Priscilla Little, Harvard Family Research Project, March 2002.
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/ost_terms.html#q1

Relationship Between Performance Measurement, Formative Evaluation, and Summative Evaluation

	Performance Measurement	Evaluation	
	Performance	Formative	Summative
Purpose	Determine if positive change has occurred.	Understand how the program actually operates..	Provide evidence of causal relationships between program services and outcomes.
Evaluation Questions	<p>What did you accomplish?</p> <p>What difference did your service activity make?</p>	<p>What did you accomplish?</p> <p>What aspects of your program contributed to the success of the program interventions?</p> <p>What unexpected changes/results occurred?</p> <p>Where is there room for program improvement?</p> <p>What decisions can you make based on the results?</p>	<p>Was the change a result of the program services?</p> <p>What unexpected changes/results occurred?</p> <p>What decisions can you make based on the results?</p>
Methods/Designs	<p>Pre-Post Surveys</p> <p>Post Surveys</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Existing Data</p>	<p>Case Studies</p> <p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Pre-Post Surveys</p> <p>Observations</p>	<p>Experimental; Quasi-Experimental Designs</p>
Approach	<p>Self-Assessment/Empowerment Evaluation</p>	<p>Internal Evaluation</p>	<p>Independent Evaluation</p>

Independent vs. Internal Evaluation

The Corporation has defined two types of evaluation: (1) an independent evaluation conducted by an external evaluator with no ties to the organization, and; (2) an internal evaluation, which may or may not be conducted by someone with ties to the organization. An independent evaluation typically has a broader scope of effort than an internal evaluation; however, all evaluations should demonstrate high data quality standards.



Independent Evaluation

What is the definition of an independent evaluation?

An independent evaluation should be a summative evaluation in that it is designed to look for evidence of a causal relationship between program activities and outcomes. For an evaluation to be deemed independent, an external evaluator needs to take the lead in designing and implementing the evaluation. The external evaluator must take responsibility for implementing the evaluation and signing off on the final report.

Who conducts an independent evaluation? What are some characteristics of independence of an external evaluator?

An external evaluator is an entity or individual that has the capacity, qualifications, and experience to evaluate program management, administration, performance and results. In addition, an external evaluator meets the following criteria:

- 1) The entity or individual is independent of the administration, operations, management, accountability, guidance and influence of:
 - a) the organization or program being evaluated; and
 - b) the organization or program funding the evaluation; and
- 2) The entity does not have equity, financial or material interest in:
 - a) the organization or program being evaluated;
 - b) the organization or program funding the evaluation; or
 - c) the outcome of the evaluation or evaluation findings and results; and
- 3) The independence of the entity is not potentially impaired by a relationship with:
 - a) the organization or program being evaluated;
 - b) the organization or program funding the evaluation;
 - c) other organizations that have an equity, financial, or material interest in, or relationship with, 3(a) or 3(b); or
 - d) other organizations that have an equity, financial, or material interest in the outcome of the evaluation or evaluation findings and results.

Internal Evaluation

What is the definition of an internal evaluation?

An internal evaluation can have a lower standard of independence and a narrower scope of effort than an independent evaluation. An internal evaluation may be more formative than summative, and include less emphasis on impacts. However, the expectation of grantees required to conduct internal evaluations is to maintain the same high quality of evaluative effort required of larger grantees (as defined in the AmeriCorps regulation 45 CFR § 2522.7000), even if they are collecting less data and analyzing fewer indicators.

The desire in internal evaluation is to foster a learning culture within the organization to make the program more effective, rather than just to judge whether it worked. (Cowin 1994).

Who conducts an internal evaluation?

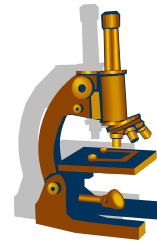
An internal evaluation can be designed and conducted by an internal or external evaluator. An internal evaluator may have ties with the organization, such as your staff, board members, partners, volunteer affiliates, or other stakeholders. An internal evaluator does not have to meet the criteria of an external evaluator as described in the *independent evaluation* description. However, an internal evaluator should still be an entity or individual that has the expertise in research methods and evaluation design. The internal evaluation should have the same high quality and degree of rigor required of a larger grantee, even if less data are being collected and fewer indicators are being analyzed.

Source:

- Cowin, Bob (1994), From *INITIATING CHANGE THROUGH INTERNAL EVALUATION* Promoting Ownership of Program and Service Evaluation Results, Institutional Research and Development, Douglas College, New Westminster, BC V3L 5B2.

Summative Evaluation vs. Formative Evaluation

Are all internal and independent evaluations required to be summative evaluations, which focus on causal relationships?



Summative Evaluation

An independent evaluation should be a summative evaluation in that it is designed to look for evidence of a causal relationship between program activities and outcomes. A summative evaluation assesses the results or outcomes of a program, and is concerned with a program's overall effectiveness. A summative evaluation may describe what happens subsequent to delivery of the program; assess whether the program can be said to have caused the outcome; determine the overall impact of the causal factor beyond only the immediate target outcomes; and, estimate the relative costs associated with the program. Some categories of summative evaluations include outcome evaluations, which investigate whether your program caused demonstrable outcomes; and impact evaluation, which is broader and assesses the overall or net effects—intended or unintended—of the program as a whole. (Source: Trochim, William M., *Research Methods Knowledgebase*, 2002, most recently updated January 16, 2005; <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/>)

Formative Evaluation

An internal evaluation can be a formative evaluation; however, a summative evaluation is encouraged. A formative evaluation is typically conducted during program planning and the early stages of implementation to provide information to improve the program under study. It may examine delivery of a new service or component, sometimes as part of a “trial run” or field test, including the quality of its implementation.

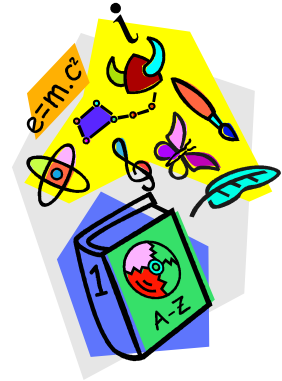
The emphasis of a formative evaluation is on increasing the success of service interventions; information learned is used to revise and improve service delivery. A formative evaluation may examine a representative group of the target population to receive services as a test case to see how the process works. Formative evaluations often uncover unforeseen obstacles. For example, a formative evaluation may examine retention; does the target population complete the program or access services as intended so that benefits may occur? If not, why not?

A formative evaluation may also include an assessment of the program's organizational context, personnel, procedures, available resources and inputs, and so on. Additionally, the formative evaluation allows opportunities to pilot and revise future evaluation and monitoring efforts. (Source: Rossi, Peter H., and Howard E. Freeman, *Evaluation: a systematic approach*, 5th ed., 1993; Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.)

Association, Correlation, and Causality (Basic Definitions)

Association is simply when two variables (A and B) occur or change together. For example, the temperature rises and sales of ice cream increase.

Correlation goes further and measures the “extent of association between and among variables” (Fink, p. 91). A perfect correlation is when A and B occur or change together in a consistent way, and in the same direction: A increases by the same amount for each unit that B increases (e.g. for every 2 degrees the temperature increases, ice cream sales increase by 10%). A perfect *inverse* correlation means that A decreases by the same amount for each unit that B increases (e.g. for every 2 degrees the temperature increases, hot cocoa sales decrease by 10%). Note that this does not mean that A causes B or that B causes A – only that they occur or change together in a predictable way.



Do not confuse correlation with *causation*. It may be that a third unknown variable (C) is causing the change in A and B. For example, a sore throat increases in intensity as a fever increases, but they are both caused by a third factor: a virus.

Causality

*Most generally, causation is a relationship that holds between events, objects, variables, or states of affairs. It is usually presumed that the cause chronologically precedes the effect. Finally, the existence of a causal relationship generally suggests that - all other things being equal - if the cause occurs the effect will as well (or at least the probability of the effect occurring will increase).**

For example, A is the presumed cause and B the effect. To show that A is a likely cause of B, three things have to happen:

1. A and B must both occur (association).
2. A must always occur before B (temporal precedence).
3. Whenever A occurs, B occurs.

Sources:

- Fink, Arlene (1995). The Survey Kit: 8. How to Analyze Survey Data. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia (www.wikipedia.org)

* Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causality#Necessary_and_sufficient_causes)