

- Exam #2
- Program Evaluation and Needs Assessment
- Affinity Group Work

Program Evaluation and Needs Assessment

“People only see what they are prepared to see.”

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

- I. A Program Evaluation Story—when people *really, really* want a certain result
- II. What is “program evaluation”?
 - A. *The use of social research procedures to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs.*
 - B. What is “program”?
 1. *Usually refers to an organized collection of services or activities that have the same objective. (It has a lot in common with evaluative research, but implies something larger.)* For example,
 - a) Day treatment program
 - b) In-home services program
 - c) School-based health program
 - d) The Welfare-to-Work Program
 - e) Parent skills education program
 2. *Can also refer to a policy*
 - a) The “Three-Strikes” law
 - b) The Healthy Families Program (low cost health insurance)
 - c) Multi-Ethnic Placement Act in child welfare
 - d) The Mental Health Services Act
 - e) The Medicare prescription drug benefit
 - C. *Because of the complexity of these programs and policies, evaluative research is*

also more complicated and often involves *all* exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory types of research activities

D. Two types:

1. *Summative*—assessing the success of a program for the purpose of deciding its future. This type of evaluation is done by the end of a pilot program, grant funding cycle, or legislatively mandated end date.
2. *Formative*—assessing the program in order to assist in planning and developing the program. This type of evaluation is done at all stages of the program planning and implementation periods.

E. Program evaluations typically use multiple quantitative and qualitative methods

1. *Needs assessment*—conducted during the planning stages of the program, typically to support decision making—What is the social problem to be addressed and who are the targeted populations? What are the service gaps in the community? How large is the problem? What intervention(s) can remedy the situation?
2. *Process evaluation*—is program delivered as intended to recipients? Were the right recipients adequately targeted? Was the program implemented correctly with *fidelity*?
3. *Impact evaluation*—Were the desired outcomes achieved? At what cost? What were the unintended effects?

III. Program evaluation and The Transcultural Perspective

A. Program evaluation often involves community involvement in the planning and implementation of the research

1. To ensure relevance and “useability” of topic to stakeholders
2. To ensure cultural relevance & appropriateness of methods and measures
3. To maintain proper equality of power distribution (e.g. to ensure that stakeholders representing study population have adequate say in decisions)
4. To ensure adequate and appropriate interpretation of findings

B. Example: Participatory Action Research with communities

IV. Dilemmas in reporting research findings

A. The complexity of programs and program evaluation can often lead to contradictory or competing interests and priorities of *stakeholders* – those people who can be directly or indirectly affected by the findings

B. The role of the researcher is to predict this and intervene as early as possible to clarify the objectives of the research, “manage expectations,” and minimize potential disappointments about the findings

Concepts to Understand:

- Program evaluation
- “Program”
- Summative evaluation
- Formative evaluation
- Needs assessment
- Process evaluation
- Impact evaluation
- Stakeholders

Article for today:

Epstein, M. H., Nordness, P. D., Kutash, K., Duchnowski, A., Schrepf, S., Benner, G. J., & Nelson, R. J. (2003). Assessing the wraparound process during family planning meetings. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research, 30*, 352-362.

1. What do the authors mean by “fidelity of the wraparound process”? Why is it important?
9: Rachel
8: Nicolette
2. There is no specific theory stated, but there is a theoretical basis of how wraparound should work. What are some of the components of wraparound?
3. This study is an early testing of an instrument. What would be a good research design if the instrument were to be used in a study of the effectiveness of wraparound?
4. Did the care coordinators implement wraparound “as intended”?
9: Eli
8: Dana

Affinity Group Work—Moving Forward with your Methods

Putting it all together. Can you describe the following in 5 minutes?

I. Introduction

- A. Title of study
- B. Problem area addressed
- C. Importance

II. Literature Review

- A. Brief summary of what you learned
- B. Research question(s) and, if relevant, hypothesis

III. Methods

A. Research design

1. Is your quantitative study descriptive, explanatory (non-evaluative), or evaluative?
2. If descriptive: Cross-sectional or longitudinal?
3. If explanatory:
 - a) Cross-sectional or longitudinal?
 - b) Prospective (looking forward) or retrospective (looking backward)?
 - (1) Prospective example—surveys of adolescents looking for factors predicting school success, and then reviewing school grade records later
 - (2) Retrospective example—sampling adolescents representing those along the continuum of grade performance, then surveying them to understand past factors. (Another term for this: *case control study*)
4. If evaluative: type of group design
 - a) Experimental, quasi-experimental or pre-experimental?
 - b) Specific type of design (e.g. pretest, posttest nonequivalent comparison group). *Note—no need to use X O notation in Final Paper.*

B. Study population & sampling strategy (probability or non-probability, & specific strategy)

C. Study site

D. Variables to be used—conceptual and operational definitions

E. Human subjects considerations

F. Study procedures & data collection strategies (survey, secondary data analysis, interviews, etc.)

G. Study design limitations

1. Design limitations (e.g. causality and internal validity)
2. Sampling limitations (to whom can the sample be generalized)

IV. Is your study qualitative, or does it have a qualitative component?

A. Qualitative research question(s)

B. Qualitative approach

1. Narrative
2. Phenomenological
3. Grounded theory
4. Ethnographic
5. Case study—single or collective?

C. Qualitative method

1. Sampling strategy
2. Study procedures (interviews, analysis of documents, focus group, etc.)
3. Researcher's stance (relationship to topic and study population; extent of participant observation)
4. Anticipated themes

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!