

Guiding Principles for Implementation and Utilization

And What These Mean for Evaluation in Practice

Overarching Goal:

To obtain accurate, useful insights about the answers to evaluation questions in a manner that is feasible, is credible to relevant stakeholders, makes strategic use of limited time and resources, and contributes to our general knowledge, to future evaluations and to program evolution.

Key words above have implications for the work:

- Accurate ... This is about quality of data, including:
 - Whether people are interpreting the question the way you think they are
 - Cultural competency of all Evaluation Plan elements
 - Whether there is bias in sampling or response rates
 - Whether people were confident of their anonymity if that matters
 - Whether the process adhered to human subjects principles
 - Whether the data were “cleaned” properly and consistently
 - Quality of measure
 - Whether measures were administered properly and consistently
 - Whether answers were coded or scored properly and consistently, etc., etc., etc.
- Useful ... This is about analyzability of data and whether the evaluation strategy actually addresses the evaluation question, including:
 - Identification of variables necessary for EQ
 - Proper collection of all necessary data
 - Data management
 - Sample size/sampling strategy
 - Match between the evaluation purpose, measures, sample, design, and EQ
 - Whether the evaluation will produce knowledge and insight that serve some meaningful purpose
- Credible to all relevant stakeholders ... Relevant stakeholders may have different preferences or standards for what makes evaluation data and results compelling, and different degrees of skepticism. Dimensions include quantitative/qualitative preferences, expected statistical depth, and so on. This has implications for:
 - Documentation of all steps in the evaluation
 - Measurement strategy
 - Reporting
 - Ability to explain decisions and strategies used
- Feasible ... Can it be done? *Will* it be done, when the time comes?
 - Time allotment (for ALL steps)
 - Capacity of personnel involved (skills, access to support resources, etc.)
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 - Computer and software resources
- Appropriate use of limited time and resources ... Even if it’s feasible, is it a good use of those resources? Are the results going to be worth the effort and cost?
- Contributes to this evaluation and future evaluations
 - Documentation of all steps in the evaluation
 - Documentation of reasoning behind the steps in the evaluation
 - Current work lays groundwork for even better future work (improving future measures, etc.)