

Evaluation Capacity Building: Art, Science and Shape shifting



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FEB. 16, 2009
ISCE SIG ON EVALUATION RESEARCH

Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB)



- What is it and do you do it in your job?
- Next to conducting evaluations, the two most commonly practiced forms of evaluation work are providing technical assistance and evaluation capacity building. (54 percent of a 49 percent response rate to AEA web survey of 5,460 members, according to Preskill & Boyle, 2008)

ECB “defined”



Evaluation capacity building is “the intentional work to continuously create and sustain overall organizational processes that make quality evaluation and its uses routine” (Compton, Baizerman & Stockdill, 2002).

Steps toward ECB Design



- Diagnose your organization
- Set goals collaboratively with evaluation champions
- Characterize your role
- Be ready to mix it up

Characterizing Your Role



- Internal Evaluator
- External Evaluator
- Evaluation Capacity Builder
- Evaluation Capacity Building Practitioner
- Evaluation Educator
- Other _____

Here's how I roll in my role



- Individual technical assistance for Virginia Cooperative Extension faculty
- Workshops for VCE faculty, technical assistance, resources
- Supported by administration and colleagues

Rolling On



- Use an adult learner framework
 - They have life experience, respect it
 - They need or have a purpose
 - Make it relevant
 - Make it practical
 - Make it interesting, when the situation and personalities allow

Let it roll



- I offer suggestions, when people seem up for it
- Remember, they don't need to be expert evaluation specialists (Douglass, Boyd & Gundermann, 2003)
 - Doubter
 - Proctor
 - Practitioner
 - Consultant
 - Scholar

ECB Framework



Professional development

- training
- technical assistance
- collaborative evaluation projects
- mentoring/coaching
- communities of practice

(Taylor-Powell & Boyd, 2008)

ECB Framework



Resources and supports

- evaluation and ECB expertise
- evaluation materials
- evaluation champions
- organizational assets
- financing
- technology
- time

ECB Framework



Organizational environment

- leadership
- demand
- incentives
- structures
- policies and procedures

Art



- Reading your organization and its taste for evaluation
- Determining what can be done
- Adapting to different needs, learning styles and timeframes

Science



- Working with faculty members, some of whom use limited methodological frameworks
- Using best practices, promising practices, what works
- Using the Program Evaluation Standards
- Remembering that this is a field, not so much a discipline, at least from the perspectives of people in other disciplines

Shape shifting



- Adapting to what the organization needs, even if it is not my schtick
- Being of help in situations that arise, as I can
- Going with the flow and changing form between educator/advocate/researcher

How we sometimes measure it



- Participant feedback on satisfaction and self-report on attitude and skills change
- Logic models and other templates completed
- Content and theme analysis for outcomes as proscribed by logic model or related framework

How we could measure it



- External review in addition to federal partner feedback
- Explicit connections to performance and communication of outcomes
- Peer review on outcome communication

Context of Cooperative Extension



- Complex organizational system
- Culture of reporting may overpower culture of evaluation
- Proximate issues get the attention – county vs. state
- 50 percent turnover of field faculty hired fewer than 5 years ago

Lessons Along the Way(s)



- ECB as organizational development, not just professional development
- Use external demands for results as the lever, not the control
- Practice creative and mixed approaches
- Every interaction has potential
- Look more like an evaluation educator and facilitator than an evaluator
- Keep growing the pool of those interested
- Connect with partners and collaborators along the way

Citations and Resources



- Compton, S., Baizerman, M., & Stockdill, D. (2002). Toward a definition of the ECB process: A conversation with the ECB literature. *New Directions for Evaluation, 2002, 93, 7-26.*
- Douglah, M., Boyd, H. & Gundermann, D. (2003). *Nurturing the Development of an Evaluation Culture in Public Agencies.* Paper presented at the American Evaluation Association Conference, Reno, Nevada.
- Taylor-Powell, E., & Boyd, H. H. (2008). Evaluation capacity building in complex organizations. In M. T. Braverman, M. Engle, M. E. Arnold, & R. A. Rennekamp (Eds.), *Program evaluation in a complex organizational system: Lessons from Cooperative Extension. New Directions for Evaluation, 120, 55–69.*

Program Planning worksheet

<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1W.PDF>

Quick Tips (for community-based educators)

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/index.html>

Logic Model curriculum

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html>