PART

1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER

1

FOUNDATIONS OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to

1. Provide a basic definition of program evaluation
2. Understand the different activities conducted by a program evaluator
3. Understand the difference between formative and summative evaluation
4. Understand the difference between internal and external evaluation
5. Understand the difference between program evaluation and research

PROGRAM EVALUATION VIGNETTE

An urban school district receives a three-year grant to implement an after-school **program** to improve student academic achievement. As staff start to implement the program, the district administrator realizes that an evaluation of the program is mandatory. The district administrator also realizes that such work requires the expertise of someone from outside the district, and the superintendent, with permission from the school board, hires an external evaluator from a local college. After reviewing the grant, the evaluator conducts an initial review of

program
A temporary set of activities brought together as a possible solution to an existing issue or problem

the program's curriculum and activities. Next the evaluator develops an evaluation plan and presents it at the next school board meeting. The evaluation plan encompasses the objectives that the evaluator has developed and the tools that he will use to collect the data. The evaluator discusses how the plan will provide two different types of feedback as part of the data collection process. **Formative evaluation** will be used to address issues as the program is happening. For example, one question might be: Are all the stakeholders aware of the program and its offerings? **Summative evaluation** will be used to answer the overall evaluation question: Did students in the after-school program have a significant increase in their academic achievement compared to those students who did not participate?

Formative evaluation
A type of evaluation whereby data collection and reporting are focused on the now, providing ongoing, regular feedback to those in charge of delivering the program

summative evaluation
A type of evaluation whereby data collection and reporting occur after the program and all activities have taken place

The board approves the plan, and the evaluator spends the following month collecting data for the formative and summative portions of the project.

At the next board meeting the evaluator presents some of the formative evaluation data and reports that there is a need to increase communication with parents. He suggests that the program increase the number of fliers that are sent home, update the school Web site, and work more collaboratively with the parent council. In addition, he notes that there is wide variation in parent education levels within the district and that a large number of parents speak Spanish as their native language. The evaluator recommends that phone calls be made to parents and that all materials be translated into Spanish.

At the end of project year one, summative findings are presented in a final report. The report shows that lack of parent communication is still a problem, and that there is little difference in scores on the standardized measures used to gauge academic achievement between those students who participated in the program and comparable students who did not participate.

Based on the evaluation report, district officials decide to make modifications to the program for the upcoming year. A parent center, which was not part of the original plan, is added, in the belief that this will help increase parent involvement. In addition, the administration decides to cut back on the number of extracurricular activities the after-school program is offering and to focus more on tutoring and academic interventions, hoping that this will increase academic achievement in year two.

WHAT IS PROGRAM EVALUATION?

A common definition used to separate program evaluation from research is that program evaluation is conducted for decision-making purposes, whereas research is intended to build our general understanding and knowledge of a particular topic and to inform practice. In general, program evaluation examines programs to determine their worth and to make recommendations for programmatic refinement and success. Although such a broad definition makes it difficult for those who have not been involved in program evaluation to get a better understanding, it is hoped that the vignette just given highlighted some of the activities unique to program evaluation. Let's look a little more closely at some of those activities as we continue this comparison between program evaluation and research.

What Is a Program?

One distinguishing characteristic of program evaluation is that it examines a *program.* A program is a set of specific activities designed for an intended purpose, with quantifiable goals and objectives. Although a research study could certainly examine a particular program, most researchers tend to be interested in either generalizing findings back to a wider audience (that is, quantitative research) or discussing how the study's findings relate back to the literature (that is, qualitative research). With most research studies, especially those that are quantitative, researchers are not interested in knowing how just one after-school program functioned in one school building or district. However, those conducting program evaluations tend to have precisely such a purpose.

Programs come in many different shapes and sizes, and therefore so do the evaluations that are conducted. Educational programs can take place anytime during the school day or after. For example, programs can include a morning breakfast and nutrition program, a high school science program, an after-school program, or even a weekend program. Educational programs do not necessarily have to occur on school grounds. An evaluator may conduct an evaluation of a community group's educational program or a program at the local YMCA or Boys & Girls Club.

Accessing the Setting and Participants

Another characteristic that sets program evaluation apart from research is the difference in how the program evaluator and the researcher gain access to the project and program site. In the vignette, the program evaluator was hired by the school district to conduct the evaluation of its after-school program. In general, a program evaluator enters into a contractual agreement either directly or indirectly with the group whose program is being evaluated. This individual or group is often referred to as the **client**.

client
An individual or group whom the evaluator is working for directly

Because of this relationship between the program evaluator and the client, the client could restrict the scope of what the evaluator is able to look at. To have the client dictate what one will investigate for a research study would be very unusual. For example, a qualitative researcher who enters a school system to do a study on school safety might find a gang present in the school and choose to follow the experience of students as they try to leave the gang. If a program evaluation were conducted in the same school, the evaluator might be aware of the gang and the students trying to get out of the gang, and this might strike the evaluator as an interesting phenomenon, but the evaluator would not pursue it unless the client perceived it as an important aspect of school safety or unless gang control fit into the original objectives of the program.

Collecting and Using Data

As demonstrated in the vignette, program evaluators often collect two different forms of evaluation data: *formative* and *summative*. A further discussion about formative and summative evaluation is presented later in this section; essentially, the purpose of formative data is to change or make better the very thing that is being studied (at the very moment in which it is being studied). Formative data typically is not collected in most applied research approaches. Rarely would the researcher have this reporting relationship, whereby formative findings are presented to stakeholders or participants for the purposes of immediately changing the program.

Changing Practice

Although program evaluators use the same methods as researchers do to collect data, program evaluation is different from

research in its overall purpose or intent, as well as in the speed at which it changes practice. The overall purpose of applied research (for example, correlational, case study, or experimental research) is to expand our general understanding of or knowledge about the topic and ultimately to inform practice. Although gathering empirical evidence that supports a new method or approach is certainly a main purpose of applied research, this doesn't necessarily mean that people will suddenly abandon what they have been doing for years and switch to the research-supported approach.

In the vignette, we can see that change occurred rapidly through the use of program evaluation. Based on the evaluation report, administrators, school board members, and project staff decided to reconfigure the structure of the after-school program and to establish a parent center in the hope of increasing parent involvement. It was also decided that many of the extracurricular activities would be eliminated and that the new focus would be on the tutorial component of the program, in the hope of seeing even more improvement in students' academic scores in the coming year.

For another example, consider applied research in the area of instructional methods in literacy. In the 1980s the favored instructional approach was whole language; however, a decade of research began to support another approach: phonics. Despite the mounting evidence in favor of phonics, it took approximately a decade for practitioners to change their instruction. In the early 1990s, however, researchers began to examine the benefits of using both whole language and phonics in what is referred to as a *blended approach.* Again, despite substantial empirical evidence, it took another ten years for many practitioners to use both approaches in the classroom. This is admittedly a simplified version of what occurred; the purpose here is to show the relationship between applied research and practice in regard to the speed (or lack of speed) with which systems or settings that applied researchers evaluate implement changes, based on applied research.

Although there are certainly many program evaluations after which corresponding changes do not occur swiftly (or at all), one difference between program evaluation and research is the greater emphasis in program evaluation on the occurrence of such change. In fact, proponents of certain philosophies and approaches in program evaluation believe that if the evaluation report and recommendations are not used by program staff to make decisions and

changes to the program, the entire evaluation was a complete waste of time, energy, and resources (Patton, 1997).

Reporting Findings and Recommendations

Another feature of program evaluation that separates it from research is the way in which program evaluation findings are presented. In conducting empirical research it is common practice for the researcher to write a study for publication—preferably in a high-level, refereed journal. In program evaluation, as shown in the vignette, the findings are presented in what is commonly referred to as the evaluation report, not through a journal article. In addition, the majority of evaluation reports are given directly to the group or client that has hired the evaluator to perform the work and are not made available to others.

Formative and Summative Evaluation

Both quantitative and qualitative data can be collected in program evaluation. Depending on the purpose of and audience for the evaluation, an evaluator may choose to conduct an evaluation that is solely quantitative or solely qualitative, or may take a mixed-methods approach, using quantitative and qualitative data within a project.

The choice of whether to conduct a summative or a formative evaluation is not exclusively dictated by whether the evaluator collects quantitative or qualitative data. Many people have the misperception that **summative evaluation** involves exclusively quantitative data and that qualitative data is used for formative evaluation. This is not always the case. Whether evaluation feedback is formative or summative depends on what type of information it is and when it is provided to the client (see Figure 1.1).

Data for summative evaluation is collected for the purpose of measuring outcomes and how those outcomes relate to the overall judgment of the program and its success. As demonstrated in the vignette, summative findings are provided to the client at the end of the project or at the end of the project year or cycle. Typically, summative data includes such information as student scores on standardized measures—state assessments, intelligence tests, and content-area tests, for example. Surveys and qualitative data gathered through interviews with stakeholders may also serve

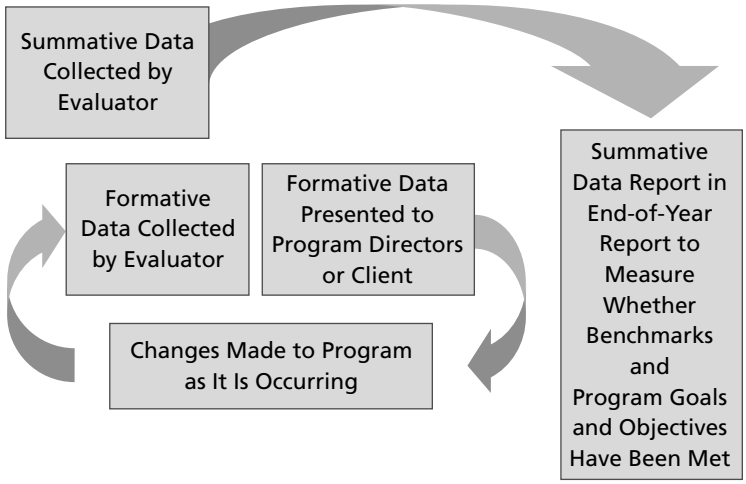

FIGURE 1.1. **Formative and Summative Evaluation**

as summative data if the questions or items are designed to elicit participant responses that summarize their perceptions of outcomes or experiences.

For example, an interview question that asks participants to discuss any academic or behavioral changes they have seen in students as a result of participating in an after-school program will gather summative information. This information would be reported in an end-of-year report. However, an interview question that asks stakeholders to discuss any improvements *that could be made* to the program to better assist students in reaching those intended outcomes will gather formative information.

Formative data is different from summative data in that rather than being collected from participants at the end of the project to measure outcomes, formative data is collected and reported back to project staff as the program is taking place. Data gathered for formative evaluation must be reported back to the client in a timely manner. There is little value in formative evaluation when the evaluator does not report such findings to the client until the project is over. Formative feedback can be given through the use of memos, presentations, or even phone calls. The important

role of formative feedback is to identify and address the issues or serious problems in the project. Imagine if the evaluator in our vignette had not reported back formative findings concerning parent communication. How many students might not have been able to participate in the after-school activities? One of the evaluator's tasks is to identify such program barriers, then inform program staff so that changes can occur. When programs are being implemented for the first time, formative feedback is especially important to developers and staff. Some programs require several years of intense formative feedback to get the kinks out before the program can become highly successful.

Formative feedback and the use of that information to change or improve the program constitute one factor that separates program evaluation from most applied research approaches. Classical experimental or quasi-experimental research approaches attempt to control for extraneous variables so that only the independent variable can affect the dependant variable. An important aspect of experimental research is a clear definition of the different treatments. A treatment is something that is given to a group of people that they previously did not have (for example, a computer-based tutoring program for mathematics). If the program itself is the treatment variable, then it must be designed before the study begins. An experimental researcher would consider it disastrous if formative feedback were given, resulting in changes to the treatment in the middle of the study. In contrast, program evaluators, while trying to keep the independent variables or treatment constant, realize that it is better to make modifications to the program—even if it "distorts" the lines of causality—than to deliver a substandard program consistently for the entire duration of the program.

Training in Program Evaluation

Many students wonder, *How do evaluators get involved in program evaluation?* and *Where do they receive their training?* These are both good questions. Although program evaluation today is certainly a much more recognized field than it was in the past, it is made up of both those who have formal training in program evaluation theory and practice and those who have been less formally trained. There is no specialized degree or certification required for people to call themselves evaluators. Today a number of colleges and universities offer course work in program

evaluation as well as advanced degrees in this area. Although course work will vary by institution, most focuses on quantitative and qualitative methods, program evaluation theory, and ethics, and includes a practicum experience.

As in any field, program evaluators come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences as well as different philosophical and methodological perspectives. Often faculty at colleges and universities serve as program evaluation consultants, working with area school districts, agencies, nonprofit programs, and other institutions of higher education. There are also private evaluation consulting companies that hire program evaluators. Furthermore, public agencies at both the state and federal levels hire program evaluators for full-time positions to conduct internal evaluations in that setting, as well as to conduct single-site and multisite evaluations.

The American Evaluation Association is an international organization devoted to improving evaluation practices and methods, increasing the use of evaluation, promoting evaluation as a profession, and supporting evaluation to generate theory and knowledge. This organization has approximately four thousand members representing fifty states and sixty countries. The association hosts an annual conference in the United States that focuses on a theme, such as collaboration, methodology, or utilization (see www.eval.org/News/news.htm). The association also comprises special interest groups that specialize in certain areas or topics, such as teaching program evaluation or environmental evaluation.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATORS

The proximity of an evaluator to what is being evaluated certainly influences the access to information, the collection of that information, and the reporting and use of that information to promote change. Take, for example, a waiter at a restaurant, whose perspective on the food and the restaurant's management is very different from that of the food critic who comes to dine and to write up a review for the local paper. An evaluator's perspective is similarly shaped by his or her relationship to the setting or program. In the field of program evaluation, this perspective is often accounted for by what are referred to as **internal evaluators** and **external**

internal evaluators
Individuals who are currently part of the program and who will also serve as the program's evaluators

external evaluators Evaluators, usually consultants, who are from outside the setting where the program is taking place

evaluators. An external evaluator is someone from outside the immediate setting who is hired to come in and evaluate the program. Because this person has no obligations to the program except in his or her capacity as evaluator, in theory he or she has no immediate biases for or against the program or any one of the stakeholder groups involved in the project. Most programs that receive federal, state, or foundation funding require an external evaluator to be present.

In contrast, many companies, agencies, institutions of higher education, school districts, and other groups also employ internal evaluators. An internal evaluator is typically an employee of the company, agency, or group who is responsible for carrying out duties that pertain to evaluation. For example, many school districts now have a program evaluator on staff. This person is responsible for establishing and working with databases to maintain student academic and behavioral data and using data to assist staff and administrators in improving practice. An internal evaluator might also provide expertise in working with the state testing and accountability data as well as monitor programs the school is currently implementing.

There are many strengths inherent in—and many barriers to—the use of both internal and external evaluators. The main reason that many funding agencies require an external evaluator to be present, as mentioned earlier, is to increase the objectivity of the data collection. This objectivity may or may not be achieved, however, and the external evaluator also inevitably will encounter some barriers. External evaluators are often faced with the difficulty of establishing trust with the stakeholders involved in the program they are evaluating. Even though the external evaluator is collecting data on the program and not specifically on the performance of program staff, this stakeholder group may not welcome the evaluator with open arms. Stakeholders may, and often do, see the evaluator as a threat to their livelihood—someone whose job it is to find "holes" in the program. In some cases the stakeholders may feel that the external evaluator "really doesn't know us" or "doesn't know what we are all about." In some cases, they may feel that the evaluator doesn't know enough about the setting or the context of how things work in that setting to be able to gather in-depth data that pertains to them and is meaningful for evaluation purposes. In many cases,

stakeholders who are uncertain about this evaluator are likely to avoid him or her altogether, not returning phone calls to set up interviews or not returning surveys. It is a daunting and often difficult challenge for even the most seasoned of program evaluators to enter a foreign setting, establish trust with the various groups involved in the program, and provide participants with meaningful data in the interest of programmatic improvements.

Internal evaluators typically do not have to deal with gaining the trust of stakeholders as external evaluators do. In addition, internal evaluators know the setting, how to access needed data, and the "language" that each group uses. In some cases both an internal and an external evaluator are retained. If an internal evaluator is already present in a program, then an evaluation plan should encompass the work of both evaluators to optimize the breadth and depth of data collected and, ideally, to ensure the overall success of the program. In such situations, the internal evaluator would be responsible for collecting certain types of data to which the external evaluator would not have access. In turn, the external evaluator would collect additional data to ensure the authenticity and objectivity of the evaluation effort and its findings.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

To provide some standardization, a framework was developed and applied to each case study in this book. Box 1.1 presents an overview of the framework sections and a brief explanation of each.

BOX 1.1. Overview of the Framework Guiding Each Case Study

Presented here are the main sections you will find in each case study, as well as a general description of what you may expect to be covered in each section. Although an attempt has been made to align the case studies with the following sections, such alignment was not always possible due to the cases' uniqueness and fluidity.

The Evaluator

In this section the evaluator (or evaluators) is introduced. The role of the evaluator is also discussed here, as well as the evaluator's

background, education, and connection to the evaluation project as a whole.

The Program

Here the program being evaluated is described: its purpose, its implementation, and relevant stakeholders and participants. In addition, where possible, the goals and objectives of the program as well as the program's structure and design are presented.

The Evaluation Plan

Here the evaluator's evaluation plan is discussed in as much detail as possible. This discussion includes, for example, the objectives driving the evaluation and the methods and tools the evaluator used or planned to use to conduct the evaluation.

Summary of Evaluation Activities and Findings

This section describes the data collection process of the evaluation and provides a summary or overview of any evaluation findings. In each of the cases, the evaluator is usually presented with a dilemma or situation at the end of this section.

Final Thoughts

This section provides the reader with a conclusion: what really happened at the end of the evaluation, how the evaluator handled the dilemma, and the results of those actions for the evaluator and the project as a whole.

As you can see, there are many different approaches to conducting an evaluation of a program. It should be noted that although the objectives-based approach is not the sole approach for conducting an evaluation, because of the requirements for securing federal and state funding and the focus on meeting goals and **benchmarks** in today's climate of accountability, it is, generally speaking, the most widely used approach. In addition, an objectives-based evaluation is most likely to be the first type of evaluation that a new evaluator just entering the trade will be exposed to and have to conduct. Therefore, most of the case studies presented in this book follow a more objectives-based approach.

benchmarks
Specific outcomes that define the success or worth of a program

The following sections present some additional resources and readings to assist those who are relatively new to program evaluation and to more clearly delineate some of the activities and concepts overviewed and described in each case study.

THE EVALUATION OBJECTIVE

In an objectives-based approach, the **evaluation objective** is the cornerstone of conducting a rigorous and successful evaluation project. Evaluation objectives are written goals according to which the evaluation data will be collected and reported. Box 1.2 presents a list of evaluation objectives used in evaluating the summer camp project. For example, the evaluation objectives that follow were developed to evaluate a summer camp for students. The camp was designed to provide students with enrichment during the summer months. Research has shown that many school-age children lose a significant amount of knowledge and skills during summer vacation. This is particularly true for students who are unable to participate in enriching experiences while out of school.

evaluation objective
A clear description of a goal used by the evaluator to judge the worth or merit of a program

BOX 1.2. Evaluation Objectives for the Summer Camp Project

Objective 1: To document stakeholder perceptions as to the purpose of the camp

Objective 2: To document activities conducted during camp

Objective 3: To document stakeholder perceptions of the lessons learned and the strengths and challenges of the camp

Objective 4: To document student outcomes as a result of participating in the camp

Objective 5: To document modifications made to programming based on the previous year's evaluation recommendations

The typical evaluation has four or five main evaluation objectives. Specific data is collected to answer or address each evaluation objective. For many grant-funded projects, evaluation objectives are already established and clearly defined in the grant. In such cases, an evaluator must work with the established objectives and begin to develop an evaluation matrix (see the following subsection). For projects with no preestablished evaluation objectives, however, the evaluator must play a significant role in their development.

Developing evaluation objectives in a collaborative setting can be a useful practice for an evaluator. To both build trust and gain buy-in from the different stakeholder groups (such as teachers, staff, administrators, and parents, in a school setting), it is helpful to gather representatives from all parties for a discussion about the goals of the project and what outcomes or results they believe a program such as this should produce.

It should also be noted here that evaluation objectives are not static; they can change over time. There may be objectives deemed important in the very beginning of a multiyear evaluation that are not emphasized at the end of the project. Typically, formative evaluation objectives (discussed shortly) are emphasized in the early stages of the evaluation timeline, and summative evaluation objectives (also discussed shortly) take on a more prominent role toward the end of the project.

No matter what objectives and timelines are being used, it is imperative that evaluation objectives be aligned with the goals and activities of the project being evaluated. For example, let's say that the main focus of a summer enrichment program is literacy. As part of the program's activities, students or campers keep journals, work with local storytellers to author their own stories, and receive tutoring or interventions in literacy. Project developers and staff hope that students will, from this experience, become more interested in reading and literacy as a whole and that this enthusiasm will eventually flow over into students' increasing their performance on some standardized reading measure that they will take at a later point. From this single program component, two evaluation objectives could potentially be developed, such as the following:

- *To document an increase in students' interest and frequency of engaging in reading and other literacy-based activities.* Data for this evaluation objective could be collected through

pre-post interviews with students documenting whether they believe their interest in and frequency of such practices have increased over time as a result of participating in the project. Supporting evidence could also be collected from parents, who may be observing their child reading more books at night, taking more books out of the library, talking about the book he or she is reading at dinner, and so on. An analysis of students' journals, the lists of books they have completed, book reports, and so on could serve as additional evidence to support these claims.

The second objective could focus on more "hard" or end outcomes (such as test scores). A discussion of end outcomes is presented later in this section.

- *To document increases in student performance on a standardized reading measure administered annually.* This objective would require the evaluator to obtain student scores on the annual measure to determine whether there appears to be any relationship between student participation in the program and score increases on the assessment.

Evaluation objectives will vary somewhat depending on the program. However, there are some general categories under which all objectives can fall, as described in Box 1.3.

BOX 1.3. General Categories of Evaluation Objectives (Example for an After-School Program)

Documenting activities. Objectives such as these work toward documenting what the program "looks like" by describing what activities take place. Data for these types of objectives can be gathered through interviews, focus groups, or surveys (see the subsection "Tools for Collecting Data" later in this chapter), and through direct observations of program activities.

Documenting program implementation. These objectives focus on documenting processes associated with program start-up and basic program implementation. As part of this effort the evaluator would be interested in documenting strengths in as well as barriers to program implementation. For example, one barrier the

evaluator could discover might be that there isn't enough busing available for everyone who wants to attend field trips. Barriers that have a severe impact on the quality of the programming (such as an instructor's not using the correct curriculum) should be documented and fed back immediately to the project directors so this problem can be corrected in a timely manner. Safety concerns constitute another barrier that requires immediate feedback. Again, evaluation in which information is presented to staff in a timely fashion is formative. Because of its timely nature, formative evaluation findings are often reported to program staff through the use of memorandum reports and presentations. These presentations can be done at the project's weekly or monthly meetings.

Documenting outputs of activities. These objectives focus on outputs or changes that occur as a result of some activity. These changes tend to be associated with what people believe or how they perform or act. For example, if program staff attended a seminar on working with at-risk students, and their beliefs about poverty changed or they changed some aspect of their instruction as a result of engaging in this activity, this would qualify as a finding that would meet an objective in this category. Data for these types of objectives can be gathered through interviews and surveys (Rea & Parker, 2005). Before using a survey to document these outputs, the evaluator should allow some time to pass after participants attended the seminar, giving them time to return to the classroom. For an example of an objective pertaining to the outputs of an activity, see the first of the previous set of two example objectives, "To document an increase in students' interest and frequency of engaging in reading and other literacy-based activities."

Documenting end outcomes. These objectives focus on documenting changes in the participants themselves. In after-school and enrichment programs these end outcomes are often referred to as hard outcomes—that is, outcomes that are measured with a standardized assessment; for example, changes in students' reading, math, or science scores on a standardized measure are considered to be end outcomes. A decrease in the number of violent incidences, an increase in student attendance, and an increase in student course work grades could also be used to satisfy end outcome evaluation objectives.

DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION MATRIX

One of the first activities to be conducted during the planning of the evaluation is the development of an evaluation matrix. The matrix serves as a blueprint to guide the evaluator and to ensure that all necessary data is collected. Table 1.1 presents an example of a matrix used to evaluate the summer camp project. Although each

TABLE 1.1. Evaluation Matrix for the Summer Camp Project

Evaluation Objective	Stakeholders	Tools Used to Collect Data	When	Purpose
Evaluation objective 1: To document the depth and breadth of activities provided during the follow-up session (2004–2005)	Faculty, project directors, and campers	Interviews	July	Summative
Evaluation objective 2: To document student satisfaction with the follow-up activities	Students	Interviews and observations	March–April	Summative
	Parents	Postsurveys	May or June	Summative
Evaluation objective 3: To document faculty perceptions of the follow-up activities	Faculty and project directors	Interviews	March–April	Summative
Evaluation objective 4: To document parent perceptions of student outcomes from participating in camp and follow-up activities	Parents	Surveys	March–April	Summative
Evaluation objective 5: To document changes in student learning and abilities	Students	Word knowledge assessments	March 5 (post)	Summative

project will have its own unique evaluation objectives, the basic components essential to all evaluations are the same. Notice in the example matrix shown that the evaluation is being guided by five individual objectives. Notice also that the matrix contains the timeline detailing when the data will be collected and the methods and measurement tools the evaluator intends to use for data collection, and that it specifies whether the data is summative (findings presented at the end of the project) or formative (findings presented as the project is occurring). The more detail the evaluator can present in the matrix, the easier it will be to carry out the overall evaluation. Most evaluators use some sort of matrix, even though it may not be spelled out as formally as the one in the table.

In addition to helping organize the evaluation, the evaluation matrix is also a wonderful tool in helping the evaluator build trust with the various stakeholder groups involved in the project. In doing so, the evaluator may have early discussions with representatives from individual stakeholder groups (such as teachers, parents, and staff) about the data collection process and the kinds of information that stakeholders perceive as important and useful. It is recommended that the evaluator incorporate the assistance and feedback from all stakeholders into the building of the evaluation matrix before data is collected. Keep in mind that on a multiyear project, the matrix and data collection activities are likely to change slightly as new objectives are added to the evaluation plan and old objectives that have been met and no longer need to be monitored are done away with.

DATA COLLECTION

As specified in the evaluation matrix, the tools that the evaluator uses to collect data will vary depending on several factors, including the size of the stakeholder groups, the education or developmental level of the stakeholder group, and the evaluator's access to the stakeholder group. This section presents a few of the basic tools commonly used by evaluators and typical methodologies used for evaluations.

Data Sources

The survey or self-report measure is perhaps the most common data collection tool used by program evaluators. One reason this

tool is so popular is the overall ease with which such a survey can be administered. Surveys are usually administered through a mail-out, mail-back procedure; however, in some cases they may be collected on-site, typically following an activity, such as a workshop or an information session.

Surveys can be administered across multiple groups involved in a program. Keep in mind that wording of items may need to be modified slightly for the different groups. The following is a list of stakeholders that the evaluator may want to consider surveying when conducting an evaluation of an after-school, enrichment-oriented, or summer program.

- Parents and guardians
- Project administrators
- Project staff
- Community members, volunteers, and senior citizens
- Students
- Presenters and service providers

Designing a Survey

When designing a survey it is important that its final form be piloted or field tested prior to being sent out, to ensure that there are no errors in the survey that would keep participants from being able to properly complete it. In addition, it is important to be aware of possible language or reading ability barriers for those being surveyed. Pretesting the survey with a handful of those participants should give the evaluator an accurate idea of how the survey will perform when administered to the entire stakeholder group (Rea & Parker, 2005).

Exhibit 1.1 presents a survey designed to gather information from parents and guardians of the students participating in the summer camp project. The survey was specifically developed to address multiple evaluation objectives.

Scales for Collecting Data Through Surveys

A successful survey asks for only needed information and is easy and quick to complete. A survey that is too general and appears to be asking questions that have little or nothing to do with the

EXHIBIT 1.1. Parent or Guardian Perception Survey—Summer Camp

PLEASE RETURN by July 30

As part of the effort to evaluate the summer camp, the following survey has been designed to gather your perceptions regarding the activities associated with the camp. The information you provide will assist us in delivering important formative feedback to program coordinators and to the granting agency, as well as help us meet the intended objectives and outcomes of the overall project. Your responses are confidential and will not be shared with anyone in any way that identifies you as an individual. Only aggregated data will be presented in the final evaluation report. Your participation in this survey process is completely voluntary and will not have an impact on your child's future attendance in the program. Your time and cooperation are greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about this survey or the overall process, please contact Dr. Dean T. Spaulding, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, College of Saint Rose, Albany, NY 12203, (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Perceptions of Recruitment

The following items seek to gather your perceptions regarding your overall beliefs about the recruitment process for summer camp. Please read each item carefully and use the scale that follows to show your level of agreement with each item. The last, open-ended item seeks to gather more in-depth information from you.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Slightly Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree

I was provided with camp information in a timely fashion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The program brochure provided me with a way to get additional information prior to enrollment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I found the enrollment process to be easy.	1	2	3	4	5	6

How did you hear about camp? _____

Perceptions of Orientation

The following items are designed to gather your perceptions about the orientation process for summer camp. Please read each item carefully and use the scale that follows to show your level of agreement with each item.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Slightly Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree

I believe the check-in process at orientation was well organized.	1	2	3	4	5	6

I left orientation feeling confident that my child was in good hands.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I believe dinner at orientation allowed me to meet the counselors and teachers my child would be working with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think having dinner with my child at orientation allowed me to be included in the camp experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The information session at orientation provided me with a clear understanding of what my child would be doing at summer camp.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I was encouraged to participate in camp activities throughout the ten-day program.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I was provided with contact numbers and information.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I was provided with enough information so I could attend camp activities and field trips.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The food was appropriate for children.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I enjoyed the Hudson River Rambler performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6

If you went to the dorms with your child either on orientation night or during a later visit, please answer the next three questions:

I left the dorm feeling my child was in a safe place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I felt the dorm was clean.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I felt the dorm would be a comfortable place for my child.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Perceptions of Parent Involvement During Camp

If you participated in the following activities, indicate your participation with a √:

Date	Breakfast	A.M. Session	Lunch	P.M. Session	Dinner	Field Trip
Monday 7/5						
Tuesday 7/6						
Wednesday 7/7						
Thursday 7/8						
Friday 7/9						
Saturday 7/10						
Sunday 7/11						
Monday 7/12						
Tuesday 7/13						
Wednesday 7/14						
Thursday 7/15						

(*Exhibit 1.1 continued*)

If you did not participate in any or all of the activities just listed, please circle your reason (circle all that apply):

A. I did not have transportation.

B. I had other child care needs.

C. I had work conflicts.

D. I thought I would have to pay to participate.

E. I was not interested.

F. I did not know I could participate.

G. Other: _____
_____

Reflections on Camp

From what you have heard or observed from your child, what did your child like about summer camp? (check all that apply)

___Food
___Field trips
___Night activities
___Campers' cameras
___Dorm room
___Counselors
___Speakers and guest lecturers
___Final presentations
___Class time
___Teachers and professors
___Other campers
___Working on the computers

Other (please explain): _____

From what you have heard or observed from your child, what didn't your child like about summer camp? (check all that apply)

___Food
___Field trips
___Night activities
___Campers' cameras
___Dorm room
___Counselors
___Speakers and guest lecturers
___Final presentations
___Class time
___Teachers and professors
___Other campers
___Working on the computers

Other (please explain): _____

The following items seek to gather your perceptions about the outcomes of your child's participation in summer camp. Please read each item carefully and use the scale that follows to show your level of agreement with each item.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Slightly Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree

I believe my child wants to come back to camp.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My expectations of camp were met.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I believe my child's expectations of camp were met.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Perceptions of the Impact on Academics and School

The following items are designed to gather your perceptions about the possible impact attending camp may make on your child's academics and school-related work in the upcoming school year. Please read each item carefully and use the scale that follows to indicate your level of agreement with each item.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Slightly Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree

I believe that this camp experience will help my child in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My child has been continuing activities experienced at camp.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have noticed improvement in the way my child interacts with other children.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I plan to attend the follow-up sessions with my child.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would be willing to send my child to summer camp next year.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would recommend summer camp to other parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Demographic Items (Optional)

About you (check or fill in all appropriate items):

School district:_____

Grade level (fall 2003):_____ Child's age:_____

Child's gender:_____ Male_____ Female

Did your child attend camp last year?_____ Yes_____ No

What is the total number of members within the household?_____

Number of children:_____ Number of adults:_____

Which camp did your child participate in?

_____ Storytelling_____ American history_____ Don't know

Which residence hall did your child live in?

_____ Fontebonne_____ Charter_____ McGinn_____ Don't know

PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

project will quickly be dismissed by those who are expected to fill it out. A survey should collect only data that is essential for the evaluator in completing the evaluation of the project. In addition, the evaluator should know exactly which questions or items on the survey are aligned with which objectives. For example, an evaluator should know that items 4 through 14 will answer evaluation objective 1, items 15 through 26 will address objective 2, and so on. Planning in such detail will ensure that only the needed information is collected.

The following are a few common scales and approaches that can be used to solicit information from participants.

Likert scales. These scales are commonly used in surveys (see Exhibit 1.1). Respondents are presented with complete statements (for example, "I found the program increased students' interest in reading") and use an agreement scale to indicate their beliefs, selecting the number that best represents how they feel. Here is an example of a Likert scale:

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree
4=Slightly Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree

Checklists. A checklist is essentially a list of possible answers that respondents check off if applicable, and it represents an easy way to gather broad information from participants. Although constructing a checklist is not difficult, generating such breadth of items can sometimes pose a challenge, especially if the evaluator is not fully aware of all the possible answers that would be appropriate. Sometimes conducting a few initial interviews with members from stakeholder groups can help the evaluator expand the checklist to ensure that it gathers valid data. It is also advisable to include an "Other" category at the end of each checklist, thus allowing respondents to write a response that was not posted. (See Exhibit 1.1 for examples of checklists.)

Open-ended or free response items. These items ask an open-ended question and expect respondents to give a detailed answer. Unlike the other methods just described, open-ended items allow the respondents to describe "how" and "what" in much more depth. In constructing a survey it is important, however, not to overuse open-ended questions. Too many open-ended items on a survey can deter participants from filling it out. As part of using

open-ended questions appropriately, data derived from them should be linked directly to answering evaluation objectives, and the evaluator should avoid putting open-ended items at the end of a survey just to fill in any extra blank space.

Demographics sections. A demographics section can be placed at the beginning or end of a survey to gather personal information about the participants. The information requested can vary widely depending on the purpose of the project. The survey in Exhibit 1.1 has limited demographics; additional possibilities include the respondent's gender, age, marital status, years employed in current position, education level, and annual income.

One-to-One Interviews

Although many of us probably have some idea of how interviews are conducted, we may not realize that they involve more than simply asking questions of someone and writing down his or her responses. To have a successful interview requires proper advance planning. The evaluator needs to establish the time and location and develop a list of questions, often called the **interview protocol**. Typically, an interview protocol contains no more than six to eight open-ended questions. Interviewing with such a list should take about an hour, depending on the project and the level of detail that is needed. As with the other tools, questions from the interview protocol must also be linked to specific evaluation objectives (Kvale & Brinkman, 2008).

interview protocol
A list or series of open-ended questions used to collect in-depth information

Aside from developing six to eight broad questions, the evaluator may also want to develop subquestions, or **probes**. Probes help ensure that the evaluator is addressing specific information within the larger context of the questioning process. One of the benefits of using an interview protocol in conducting multiple interviews is that the protocol helps standardize the process, so everyone is asked the exact same questions, word for word.

probes
Specific questions highlighted on an interview protocol

Exhibit 1.2 presents an example of an interview protocol that was used to interview camp instructors in the evaluation of the summer camp. Questions 3 and 7a provide examples of subquestions or probes.

Another method of collecting data from stakeholders, the **focus group**, is very similar to one-to-one interviews. To conduct a focus group, the evaluator first develops a protocol—a series of open-ended questions; however, instead of asking them of an

focus group
A small group of people, guided by a group leader, assembled to discuss an issue or topic in depth

EXHIBIT 1.2. Interview Protocol for the Summer Camp Project

1. What was the purpose of the follow-up sessions?

2a. What was the overall process for developing the follow-up sessions?

2b. How does that extend and support the curriculum delivered at the summer camp?

3. Describe the activities used in the follow-up sessions. Which of these did you find the campers were most and least engaged in?

4. What do you see as the main learning objectives of the activities?

5. Overall, have the learning objectives been met? If so, how?

6. What changes would you make to the curriculum for next year's follow-ups?

7a. What changes have you seen, if any, in these students in the time you have been working with them?

- As a group?
- On an individual student basis?

7b. What other possible changes in student performance could you expect to see as a result of students' participating in this experience?

8. What do you see as the Saturday follow-up's strengths?

9. What do you see as challenges?

10a. Has your experience in developing and implementing the curriculum for camp and the follow-up sessions changed how you think about or develop curriculum for your college classes?

10b. Has it changed how you instruct others to teach this population?

11. What are some of the lessons you have learned from this experience?

individual, the evaluator poses the questions to a group of stakeholders for discussion. The advantage of this technique is that often the conversations will get much deeper because of the different perspectives of the assembled individuals.

When conducting a focus group, it is important that the evaluator set ground rules beforehand to make sure that all participants respect each other, even if their views on the situation

are very different. At least two evaluators should be present when conducting a focus group: one to ask the questions and the other to take notes.

A video or an audio recording device can be used during both interviews and focus groups. This will help ensure the accuracy of the data being collected by allowing the evaluator to add further detail and quotes that might not otherwise have been recorded. If the evaluator is planning to use such a device, it is important that those being interviewed are informed and agree, both off and on tape (Kvale & Brinkman, 2008).

Alternative Forms of Data

In addition to using surveys and interview protocols, evaluators are always seeking creative ways to collect different kinds of data. Often, when working with school-age children, evaluators will have the students keep a journal about their experiences with the project. When considering using journals as a source of data, it is important—especially with middle school students—to provide some sort of structure for their journal entries. One way to do this is to provide daily or weekly themes or even questions to which students must respond in writing. In addition, the evaluator should make it quite clear that students' journals are going to be collected and read as part of the evaluation.

Photography is another excellent method of collecting data. An evaluator who wishes to use photography as an alternative data collection method has several options. First, the evaluator can choose to either be the photographer and photograph students engaging in activities or allow the students to be the photographers. During the summer camp program, campers were each given a disposable camera and asked to photograph things that they liked or didn't like about camp. Over the course of the next ten days, campers took lots of pictures during field trips, class time, and free time. Later the photographs were developed, and evaluators interviewed students, using their photographs as prompts to further the conversation.

Archival Data

Program evaluators often find themselves at some point using **archival data**, which is data that has already been collected by someone other than the evaluator. In education, evaluators often

archival data
Data that has been collected by some person or group other than the evaluator

have to use student achievement data, which may be gathered annually through the state's testing system. But archival data does not have to be obtained through standardized assessments alone. Student quarterly school report card data, records of office referrals and suspensions, and even observation notes on student performance taken by a teacher during a classroom activity could all fall under the heading of archival data.

Evaluators might also use archival data to determine how things were or how students were performing before the program being evaluated was put into place. The information used in this instance is sometimes referred to as baseline data, or data that is collected consistently over a period of time. The evaluator can examine this baseline data and use it to discern or show a pattern. Then later the evaluator will gather new data once the program is in place and examine this information to see if there is any change or shift in that pattern. If a change is discovered, the evaluator will suggest that this outcome is due (in part) to the program and will recommend that the programming continue as is.

Although archival data may sound ideal for the busy evaluator, it is important to note that like any other type of data, archival data does not come without its challenges. One challenge evaluators face when using archival data is that they did not directly collect it, and therefore cannot know for sure how accurate the information is. Although standardized assessments administered by the state would have testing procedures guiding them, for example, the evaluator cannot be sure that these procedures were followed exactly during the testing or that there wasn't variability across state assessments from year to year.

The same is true for archival data that is less standardized in nature. Take, for example, students' being referred by the classroom teacher to the principal's office. Let's say that the evaluator uses the school's archival data to determine the average number of students by grade level referred to the principal's office for each quarter. The evaluator might go back several years into the archival data to gather enough data points to establish a pattern. Let's say that for the last three years, however, a new principal at the school put into place new criteria for teachers' sending students to the office. As part of these new criteria, teachers can no longer automatically send students to the office for misbehavior. Teachers must now counsel the student, and after three warnings send the student to the office.

As you probably recognize, this would dramatically reduce the number of office referrals and show a decrease in referrals that doesn't really reflect student behavior. Because this new procedure would have been implemented over several years, it would naturally yield a pattern of lower-than-expected office referrals, even though student behavior had not necessarily improved.

Because of the challenges with archival data, it is important that an evaluator not use archival data exclusively when conducting an evaluation. If one is using archival data, it is important to juxtapose it with rigorous interview data, survey data, and observation data to determine whether the archival data contains any inconsistencies.

TRIANGULATION OF DATA

Triangulation is a term used to describe a data analysis technique whereby three or more different types of data are collected and analyzed together. It is sometimes referred to as cross-referencing. The idea behind triangulation is that coming to the same conclusions using three different types of data helps ensure that the findings are indeed accurate. The concern is that with only one type of data, an evaluator might come to incorrect conclusions—a problem that triangulation helps to alleviate.

Triangulation A process whereby the evaluator takes into consideration three different types of information (observation data, survey data, and interview data about the effectiveness of a program) and brings them together to examine an issue

For example, an evaluator may send out surveys to teachers to gather information about their recent participation in a three-day professional development program. In addition to gathering quantitative data from surveys, the evaluator also may have observed the three-day professional development program, taking in-depth notes (qualitative), and then conducted interviews with teachers afterward (qualitative). In doing so, the evaluator is trying to ensure that the findings are valid or accurate, and that stakeholder responses on the surveys are similar in nature to those in the interviews and supported by his or her direct observations. Triangulation of data may not always be possible, but when it is, evaluators should consider using this method to increase their confidence in evaluation findings.

WRITING THE EVALUATION REPORT

There is no one way to construct an evaluation report, but there are some general guidelines. Typically, summative evaluation

reports are written and presented at the end of each project year. In some cases, a midyear project status report is required. As the evaluator, you should determine whether such a midyear report is needed and plan accordingly.

The following are the basic sections of an evaluation report:

Cover page. This should contain the title of the project, the evaluator's name and credentials, the client or name of the organization that commissioned the report, and the date or time of year that the report is being submitted (for example, summer 2005).

Executive summary. For short reports, an executive summary is not necessary. Typically, an executive summary runs one or two pages and provides a short purpose and methodology for the report, the essential main findings, a conclusion, and recommendations, if appropriate. Often administrators use the executive summary as a stand-alone document to highlight key findings at meetings, media events, and the like.

Introduction. A two- to three-paragraph introduction is a good way to set the stage for the evaluation report and how the project came to be. In addition, the introduction should contain the overall purpose of the evaluation, the name of the client or organization for which the report has been written, and both the project goals and the evaluation objectives.

Methods. In this section the evaluator presents an overview of the different types of tools that were developed, when they were administered, what kinds of data were collected, and the sources for the data.

Body of the report. The body of the report contains the analyzed data and findings from the evaluation. It is best to start off each new objective on a new page. First, the evaluation objective should be restated, followed by another short description of what tools were used as well as what kinds of data were collected, and from whom. Following this, the evaluator will want to report the summarized data in a table (or in a figure or in bulleted form). The evaluator will then include an evaluation finding or findings based on this information. These evaluation findings generally include an overall theme or summary of the data being presented. Additional data that supports the main data and findings can be presented in bullet form under the main table (see Exhibit 1.3, an example of the body of a report from the summer camp evaluation).

EXHIBIT 1.3. Overview of an Evaluation Objective and Findings

Objective 3: To document stakeholder perceptions of the lessons learned and the strengths and challenges of the camp.

The purpose of this objective was to document stakeholder perceptions of both lessons learned from the experience and the strengths of and barriers to the camp. To meet this objective, qualitative data was gathered via either one-to-one interviews or focus groups. Parent perception data was provided through open-ended questions on the survey.

Finding: All stakeholders reported that maintaining friendships and becoming motivated to learn and build skills were the strengths of participating in the experience; lack of full participation and inconsistent attendance at camp were noted by some to be barriers. Table 1.2 presents these findings by stakeholder category.

TABLE 1.2. Stakeholder Perceptions of Strengths of and Barriers to Camp

Stakeholders	Strengths	Barriers	Suggestions
Program directors	• Continued friendships, making new friends • Exposure to students from different schools and backgrounds • Students' continuing to learn and refine skills learned from previous lessons	• Tutoring sessions occurring at the same time • Families' moving • Lack of contact information • Transportation problems • Conflicts with other school or family obligations	Seeing if tutoring could come before or after; better integration
Camp instructors	• Continued friendships, making new friends • Exposure to students from different schools and backgrounds • Students' continuing to learn and refine	• Only 50 percent of students' attending • Month of time between each session (too long) • Difficulty keeping students on target	Linking students together via the Internet or Blackboard

(*continued*)

(*Exhibit 1.3 continued*)

TABLE 1.2. (*continued*)

Stakeholders	Strengths	Barriers	Suggestions
	skills learned from previous lessons	with learning between sessions • Inconsistency with student attendance, difficulty providing continuity	
Campers	• Seeing friends and staying in touch • Learning more about history and storytelling • Improving computer skills	• Overly short sessions • Not all students' attending	Longer sessions; mandatory attendance
Parents	• Continued learning and growing • Friends	• Family or school obligations on the same day • Need for sessions to be known about in advance so planning could occur	Saturday morning sessions

Finding: Camp instructors noted that this experience has benefited their own pedagogy and teaching at the college level, as follows:

- Examination of qualitative data revealed that camp instructors noted several areas in which their work serving as instructors for camp has benefited them or changed how they think about or deliver instruction at the college level. More specifically, instructors noted that because of this experience they have tried to do more with interactive activities in their college classroom and have seen how effective such practices are when teaching an adult population.
- Camp instructors reported that this experience has also changed how they instruct others to work with urban at-risk youth. More specifically, instructors have gained this insight: it is important to stress to preservice teachers that when instructing students from these backgrounds they should allow for extra time to start an activity, as it takes these students a little more time to get into the activity.

Finding: Stakeholders noted several areas in which changes could be made to next year's programming in relation to the follow-up sessions:

- *Address the issue of low attendance at follow-ups.* During the initial greeting of parents at the summer camp, the follow-up sessions will be stressed, as well as their function to support and extend the work and learning that have occurred at summer camp. Parents will be reminded of these sessions at the closing of camp, and perhaps via a notice sent out at the beginning of the school year.
- *Offer an incentive for students to attend the follow-up sessions.* Stakeholders believed that offering some type of incentive to students for completing the follow-up sessions would greatly help to increase the low attendance and to decrease inconsistencies in attendance that occurred with this year's sessions.
- *Combine sessions.* Another area to be addressed is the time constraint with the current three-hour sessions. Stakeholders noted that combining two months of sessions would allow for a half- or quarter-day field trip to a museum or other appropriate educational venue.
- *Increase parent involvement.* Stakeholders also noted the need for more parent involvement in the follow-up sessions; they believed that field trips could be used as a way to get more parents involved.

DISSEMINATION AND USE OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

It is the role and responsibility of the evaluator to deliver the evaluation report on time to the client or agency that has directly commissioned the work to be conducted. In the case of summer enrichment programs, the client is most likely to be an administrator or a project director (or both). In most cases it is the responsibility of the administrator or project director to submit the final evaluation report to any relevant funding agency. Even if an evaluator has established trust and a positive relationship with a particular stakeholder group (such as parents), he or she cannot give the evaluation report to the group without the expressed permission of the client. Once the client has reviewed the report and made comments to the evaluator, the client will disseminate the report to whichever groups he or she feels should receive it. In some cases the client may wish to have the evaluator present the

key findings from the executive summary at an upcoming project meeting and field any questions that stakeholders might have.

The appropriate use of evaluation findings and recommendations is key to a successful evaluation project. Ideally, throughout the process the evaluator has established a professional degree of trust among the stakeholders with whom he or she has been working. One of the silent roles of the evaluator is to present evaluation findings and recommendations to the client in such a way as to make change occur. The role of the evaluator does not stop with the delivery of the report and recommendations. The evaluator should work with the client to address the issues requiring further attention, and to continue to gather and feed data back to the client until those issues are resolved.

One way an evaluator can monitor progress toward meeting the recommendations for the project is to build this activity into an evaluation objective. As part of the evaluation of the summer camp, the evaluation team did just that: they built in a specific objective that focused on the project staff's ability to address limitations or concerns within the project. At the end of the camp, all areas of concern had been successfully addressed. Exhibit 1.4 presents this objective.

EXHIBIT 1.4. Example of an Evaluation Objective and Finding Focused on Program Modifications

Objective 5: To document modifications made to programming based on the previous year's evaluation recommendations.

The purpose of this objective was to document any programmatic changes made in year two that were based on program evaluation recommendations from year one. To complete this objective, a review of the year one follow-up report was conducted. In addition, qualitative data were gathered from stakeholders, and data across the entire report was analyzed to determine whether program refinements had been made and whether they were successful.

Finding: In 2004–2005 all recommendations made from year one were addressed, and intended outcomes were achieved (see Table 1.3).

TABLE 1.3. Status of Prior Recommendations Made for the Summer Camp Follow-Up Sessions

2003–2004 Recommendations	2004–2005 Changes	Results	Status
Increase interest in and awareness of follow-up sessions during summer camp in 2004.	An effort was made by prior campers and staff to increase awareness of follow-up sessions.	There was a 50 percent increase in the total number of campers attending follow-up sessions.	Achieved
Decrease the number of sessions, and increase their length to include trips.	The number of total sessions was shortened from six to five.	Campers attended a full-day trip to Boston.	Achieved
Provide field trip opportunities.	• Five Rivers—snowshoeing • Albany—Underground Railroad tour • Boston	Campers realized that learning can take place outside of a classroom environment.	Achieved
Provide an incentive for completing follow-up activities.	The culminating activity was a trip to Boston's aquarium, IMAX, and planetarium.	A total of thirty campers attended the culminating activity.	Achieved

SUMMARY

Program evaluation is the process associated with collecting data to determine the worth or value of a program. To do this, evaluators use a wide variety of instruments or tools to collect data, such as standardized measures, surveys, interview protocols, observation protocols, and archival data. Data is collected at different times during the process to address specific program evaluation needs. Data that is collected while the program and its activities are unfolding is considered formative. Data collected at the end of the process or annually to report how the program did in a given time frame is considered summative. Most evaluators use

both formative and summative data to successfully evaluate a program. Many times evaluators collect data from groups of people called stakeholders. Stakeholders are those who participate directly in or are affected in some way by the program itself. Evaluators regularly write evaluation reports and present these reports to the agencies or groups who funded the program.

KEY CONCEPTS

Archival data

Benchmarks

Client

Evaluation objective

External evaluators

Focus group

Formative evaluation

Internal evaluators

Interview protocol

Probes

Program

Summative evaluation

Triangulation

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between internal and external evaluators? Taking the summer camp program described in this chapter, what might be some benefits and challenges of being an external versus an internal evaluator in this situation?
2. If you were evaluating the summer camp program described in this chapter, what would be the benefits and challenges of using surveys, interview protocols, and archival data?

CLASS ACTIVITIES

1. Review the vignette at the beginning of this chapter. Pretend you are the evaluator for this project. Develop formative and summative surveys and interview protocols to collect data. Remember, the purpose of formative data collection is to improve the program as the program is taking place. Summative data is used to develop a summary of how the program did in meeting its intended goals, objectives, and benchmarks.

SUGGESTED READING

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