

Program Evaluation and Program Improvement: Improving Programs through Evaluation

An Online Educational Module Based on
the Citizen-Driven Performance Measurement Project
Sponsored by
The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Syllabus:

Like other modules in this series, this online course uses cases developed for the [Sloan-Foundation-funded Citizen-Driven Performance Measurement Project](#), to shed light on the importance of program evaluation and program performance improvement using evaluation techniques.

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Overview of the Course

This course is designed as an introduction to the meaning and methods of policy analysis and program evaluation. By the end of this course, students should understand the role these skills play in public administration and the policy process. In addition, students should be able to apply some of these skills in the practice of public administration.

Course Objectives

This course aims to:

- explain what program evaluation and policy analysis are and how they developed in the framework of public policy and administration, and as academic fields;
- explain how program evaluation and policy analysis relate to the policy process and to public administration;
- discuss the types of questions that program evaluation and policy analysis address;
- describe and apply selected methods of answering these questions (both quantitative and qualitative methods of research);
- read, analyze, and discuss evaluation reports;
- discuss how the results of evaluation and policy analysis are used at different levels of government and in different institutional settings;
- discuss the professional aspects of conduct in program evaluation and policy analysis, including ethical issues that arise therein;
- discuss the problem of utilization and ways of addressing it;
- discuss the role of logic modeling in planning and implementing evaluation;
- discuss the importance of utilizing the appropriate evaluation method.

Learning Outcomes or Competencies

Students must be able to:

1. Design a logic model designed specifically for your chosen program or service.
2. Design an evaluation plan designed specifically for your chosen program or service.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of various evaluation techniques to include qualitative and quantitative methods.
4. Understand and explain the problems associated with using inappropriate evaluation designs.
5. Understand internal and external factors that enhance and constrain evaluations.

Recommended Texts

Posavac, Emil, and Raymond G. Carey. 1997. *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies*, 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Sylvia, Ronald, Kathleen Sylvia, and Elizabeth Gunn. 1997. *Program Planning and Evaluation for the Public Manager*, 2nd. ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Optional Text

Gibbon-Fitz, Carol Taylor, and Lynn Lyons Morris. How to Design a Program Evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987.

Stecher, Brian M., and W. Alan Davis. How to Focus an Evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987.

Most of the other course materials can be downloaded from the course website. The material should be used for class assignments and other relevant educational purposes.

Evaluation Criteria (weight in final grade and due dates for work)

Elements of Grade:	Weight
Weekly Reaction Papers/Participation	20%
Course Projects (Three Assignments)	80%
Assignment 1 Logic Model Design	25%
Assignment 2 Critique of an Existing Evaluation	25%
Assignment 3 Evaluation Design Project	30%

A grade of zero will be given to anyone committing plagiarism in a paper or a project. Plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. Please be advised that online materials usually are also copyrighted. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult instructors.

Week by Week List of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

([R] refers to "required or recommended reading"; [O] refers to "optional reading." Optional readings are provided for students who have additional interest and time. Optional readings cannot be downloaded from "Course Materials" in Blackboard, but they may be downloadable from "Bibliography" section.)

Week 1 Introduction: What is program evaluation? Why is program evaluation important to program performance?

- Program Evaluation

[R] Carter McNamara, "Basic Guide to Program Evaluation," Internet article. http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm#anchor1575679.

[R] W. K. Kellogg Foundation, "Evaluation Handbook," Internet article. <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf>

[R] United States Department of Agriculture, "Program Evaluation," Internet article. <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oppde/peis/Evaluation/Types.htm#Approaches>

[O] Mary E. Ramlow, "The Program Evaluation Standards," Internet Article. <http://www.eval.org/EvaluationDocuments/progeval.html>

[O] Regional Education Laboratory, "Evaluation Program Overview," Internet Article. <http://www.nwrel.org/evaluation/overview.shtml>

Assignments:

- [1] Please discuss the role (2-4 pages), if any, evaluation plays at your organization. Has evaluation helped, harmed, or has been of no benefit to your organization?

After you finish it, please use the "Send Email" function built in Blackboard and email it to all instructors. If you belong to a group, please also send your paper to the group. If you are individually-registered, you only need to send your paper to the instructors. You may choose to post your main points on the "Discussion Board."

The critique must be emailed to the instructors (and the group) at least one day before next class (or at the end of Week 1).

Week 2 Evaluation and Planning: Why is planning integral to successful program? evaluation?

- Evaluation and Planning

[R] W.K. Kellogg Foundation, "Logic Modeling Development Guide," Internet article. <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>

[R] Program Evaluation and Planning (PEP) CSU San Marcos. http://216.239.51.100/search?q=cache:ifk4RKSA4pcJ:www.csusm.edu/academic_programs/PEP%2520guidelines%25201-14-02.doc+program+evaluation+and+planning&hl=en&ie=UTF-8

[R] United States Department of Agriculture, "Evaluation Design," Internet Article.

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oppde/peis/Evaluation/Design.htm#Strategies>

- [O] Carter McNamara, "Checklist for Program Evaluation Planning," Internet article. <http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/chklist.htm>
- [O] Ellen Taylor-Powell et al., "Planning a Program Evaluation: Worksheet," Internet article. http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/pubs/pdf/G3658_1W.PDF
- [O] CDC, "Focus the Evaluation," Internet article." http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/evaluation_manual/ch3.html
 - Participatory and Empowerment Evaluation
- [R] USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation. "Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Tips: Conducting a Participatory Evaluation." (1996), Number 1. http://www.childreenvaccine.org/files/USAID_Particeval.pdf
- [R] Beierle, Thomas C. (November 1998). "Public Participation in Environmental Decisions: An Evaluation Framework Using Social Goals." Discussion Paper 99-06. http://www.rff.org/CFDOCS/disc_papers/PDF_files/9906.pdf
- [O] Minister of Health, Canada. (1996). "Guide to Project Evaluation: A Participatory Approach." <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence/html/1project.htm>
- [O] Reinelt, Claire. "Participatory and Empowerment Approaches to Program Evaluation." Internet article.

The *following two* cases can be found on NCPP's Sloan Foundation Citizen-Drive Government Performance Measurement project website. They are useful in discussing how citizens' can improve government performance and productivity via participation in the evaluation process. The cases also illustrates how the process of decision-making is democratized by utilizing evaluation.

Cases

[Dayton](#)

Dayton, Ohio, through Rutgers University-Newark's National Center for Public Productivity and in cooperation with the University of Dayton's Center for Business and Economic Research, was one of two projects selected by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for a three-year grant to research Citizen-Driven Government Performance.

The Dayton project had two overarching objectives. The first was to facilitate the selection of Quality of Life Indicators by seven Priority Boards, ensure the initial production of the indicators and institutionalize their annual publication within the city of

Dayton Planning Department. The second was to engage in a Priority Board reform process and development of a set of Citizen Participation indicators to assess the degree of citizen participation in the life of neighborhoods and Priority Boards.

Montclair

Montclair, New Jersey is an economically and racially diverse community of 38,000 people located approximately 12 miles west of New York City. In 1997, the Sloan Foundation funded a three-year citizen-driven government performance project in Montclair because of its long and well-documented history of citizen participation and close proximity to Rutgers-Newark and the National Center for Public Productivity (NCPPI).

The project began with the convening of numerous, informal, meetings with citizens, citizen groups, elected officials and municipal managers to develop an understanding of two critical aspects of the township: How do citizens, municipal managers and elected officials communicate and interact with each other? And how do citizens, municipal managers and elected officials determine the Township of Montclair is doing a good job providing services?

In particular, the Montclair project: demonstrated the citizens' ability to work effectively with performance issues and select performance indicators; developed citizen-driven "aspirational goals" for Montclair; resulted in the first citizen satisfaction survey for Montclair; analyzed municipal department objectives based on the aspirational goals, and refined indicators for performance reporting; and established a citizen advisory committee on performance measurement.

This case illustrates how citizens can be **involved in planning and evaluating government performance**.

Assignments:

- [1] Course Project One: Please design a logic model based on the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide for **an organization you are familiar**.

<http://www.wkcf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>

See the appendix on page 53 in this document for the necessary forms.

After you finish it, please use the "Send Email" function built in Blackboard and email it to all instructors. If you belong to a group, please also send your paper to the group. If you are individually-registered, you only need to send your paper to the instructors. You may choose to post your main points on the "Discussion Board."

The logic model must be emailed to the instructors (and the group) at least one day before next class (or at the end of Week 3).

- Assessing Need

- [R] Life Lines, "Program Planning: Conducting Needs Assessment," Internet article. http://www.lifelines2000.org/partners/info_referral/sec_II_assessment.asp
- [R] Soriano, Fernando. (1995). "Conducting Needs Assessment: A Multidisciplinary Approach." *Sage Human Services Guide*, Volume 68. Sage Publications: Newbury Park.
- [R] Rouda, Robert H. and Kusy, Mitchell E. "Needs Assessment: The First Step." Internet article. http://www.alumni.caltech.edu/~rouda/T2_NA.html#other_articles
- [O] Lawrie, J.W.; Boringer, Clayton W. "Training Needs Assessment and Training Program Evaluation." *Training & Development Journal*, Nov71, Vol. 25 Issue 11, p6, 4p.
- [O] Lusky, Melissa B. and Hayes, Richard L. "Collaborative Consultation and Program Evaluation." *Journal of Counseling & Development*, Winter 2001, Vol. 79 Issue 1, p26, 13p.
- [O] Witkein, Bell Ruthe and Altschuld, James W. (1995). "Planning and Conducting Needs Assessment: A Practical Guide." Sage Publications, Inc: Newbury Park.

- Cases

The following two cases can be found on NCPP's Sloan Foundation Citizen-Driven Government Performance Measurement project website. They are useful in discussing how citizens' can improve government performance and productivity utilizing program evaluation. An important component of evaluation is assessing need. These cases illustrate how citizens and government use needs assessments to improve government performance.

[Iowa](#)

In 2001, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation funded a three-year project called "Citizen-Initiated Performance Assessment" (CIPA) in Iowa. The project engages citizens, city council members, and departmental staff in developing and using performance measures to evaluate public services.

The Iowa CIPA project differs from traditional performance measurement in three major respects. First, it emphasizes collaboration among citizens, elected officials, and managers in developing performance measures to ensure political credibility and receptivity of the measures. Second, it emphasizes the citizen perspective in performance measurement, not the managerial perspective that often stresses input and cost-efficiency. Third, it emphasizes public dissemination of performance measurement results to hold government accountable.

CIPA is simply a change in perspective by managers and elected officials by engaging citizens so that the public can influence the bases on which government services are

evaluated. **This is a good case to show the use of citizen involvement in the evaluation process.**

[Straphangers' Campaign](#)

Through the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), the Straphangers Campaign received a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to “launch a new in-depth effort to measure the quality of the transit service.” The goal was to accurately report on the condition of the City’s transit system and to draw media, public and governmental attention to the need to continue to invest in transit.

The Straphangers Campaign has developed a measure of how riders rate their subway lines. The Straphangers Campaign has also collected data from transit officials and all data is presented in a clear and accessible format. A panel of thirty-eight transit experts also completed questionnaires by prioritizing certain aspects of the subway and bus service. This information was compiled for use in two sets of reports: one based on a review of official transit statistics and the other, based on NYPIRG’s own field studies.

According to the 1998 report, riders just wanted to know how their lines performed. Do their trains break down more or less often than the average for New York City subways? Is there a better or worse chance of getting a seat? How clean are the subway cars? Do the trains come more or less often? Do the trains arrive irregularly or with few gaps in service? How good or bad are the announcements?

For the 2000 annual report, the Straphangers Campaign concluded that riders simply want short waits, regular and reliable service, a chance for a seat, a clean subway car and clear announcements. **This case illustrates how government responds to citizen needs.**

Assignments:

- [1] Please respond to questions posted on the “Discussion Board” for this week.

- [2] Course Project Two: *Critique and Recommendations of Existing Program Evaluation*: Choose an organization that you are familiar with to critique their evaluation plan; but this is not a must. Describe in detail whether they conducted an evaluation? Describe in detail whether they used a logic model in the planning process? If they did not use a logic model during the planning stage, what type of planning instrument did they use? What type of evaluation design did they use? In your opinion, was it the appropriate instrument used for the program under study? Describe in detail their system of evaluation. What type of data did they collect? Who collects it? How did they identify their targeted population? Did they identify goals and objectives? Did they identify measures or develop measures for the data they collected? Were the measures appropriate for the program under study? What were the outcome (s) of the program? Did the outcomes relate to the theory? Did they conduct a needs assessment? After describing the evaluation, tell me what you think. Is this a good system? Why or Why not? What would you do

differently? Would you use the same instruments and evaluation design? Why or Why not? Discuss three specific recommendations you have for improvement. This assignment is due at the end of week 4.

After you finish it, please use the “Send Email” function built in Blackboard and email it to all instructors. If you belong to a group, please also send your paper to the group. If you are individually-registered, you only need to send your paper to the instructors. You may choose to post your main points on the “Discussion Board.”

The evaluation critique must be emailed to the instructors (and the group) at least one day before next class (or at the end of Week 4).

Week 4 Evaluation Design Planning

- [R] Gilbert Valdez, “Evaluation Design and Tools,” Internet article.
<http://www.ncrel.org/tandl/eval2.htm>
- [R] Doris Marcus, “Notes On Evaluation Design,” Internet article.
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/FIPSE/notes.html>
- [R] NW Regional Educational Laboratory, “Evaluation Design and Process,” Internet article.
http://www.nwrac.org/whole-school/overview_g.html
- [R] NSF, “Evaluation Design for Hypothetical Project,” Internet article.
http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pubs/NSF97-153/CHAP_6.HTM
- [O] BJA Evaluation Website, “Reference List for Evaluation Designs,” Internet article.
http://www.bja.evaluationwebsite.org/html/resources/bibliography/choosing_an_evaluation_design.html
- [O] North Central Regional Education Laboratory, “Evaluation Design Matrix,” Internet article.
<http://www.ncrel.org/tech/tpd/res/matrix.htm>
- [O] The World Bank Group, “Evaluation Designs,” Internet Article.
<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/impact/methods/designs.htm>
- [O] The World Bank Group, “Understanding Impact Evaluation,” Internet article.
<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/impact/index.htm>
- [O] Internet article, “Before and After Design.”
http://www.ipso.asn.au/safebk/Chp_3.pdf
- [O] Internet article, “selecting an Evaluation Design.”
[http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/hdnet/hddocs.nsf/0/fc14259c793a6ad585256880007cf69d/\\$FILE/chap4.pdf](http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/hdnet/hddocs.nsf/0/fc14259c793a6ad585256880007cf69d/$FILE/chap4.pdf)
- [O] Internet article, “Evaluation Design.”
[http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/hdnet/hddocs.nsf/0/fc14259c793a6ad585256880007cf69d/\\$FILE/chap4.pdf](http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/hdnet/hddocs.nsf/0/fc14259c793a6ad585256880007cf69d/$FILE/chap4.pdf)

Case

Worcester

In 1999, the Worcester, MA, Municipal Research Bureau received a three-year planning grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to:

- Connect government goals to community results
- Produce a comprehensive municipal data inventory
- Utilize benchmarking data to help the City achieve its goals

Maximizing community involvement was the first step in the planning efforts. Early in the grant period, three advisory groups were assembled to support community leaders and neighborhood representatives who had contributed to the development of preliminary performance measures, all of which were based upon the City's strategic plan. These representatives from Worcester's neighborhood associations and community development corporations played a key role in helping to refine the performance measures, developed accurate maps of Worcester's neighborhoods and participated in public forums which focused upon developing strategies for revitalizing Worcester's neighborhoods. **This case underscores the importance of planning to improve productivity and performance.**

Assignments:

- [1] Please respond to questions posted on the "Discussion Board" for this week.
- [2] Course Project Three: *Plan an Evaluation Design*: The plan you should develop should be based on one of the five cases below developed for the [Sloan-Foundation-funded Citizen-Driven Performance Measurement Project](#). The plan you develop should be appropriate, meaning it should measure the success and failures of the program under study. Will you build on their existing evaluation or use a different evaluation? If you will use a different evaluation design, please explain your reason (s). How long will you take to implement the plan? The resources needed? Who are the stakeholders? Included in your plan should be examples of data collection tools, surveys, sample reporting formats, etc. This assignment is due at the end of week 4. Please use the following format for your design: