

# Focusing Evaluative Inquiry: Evaluation Forms and Approaches

# 3

Over the past two decades theorists have put forward a range of evaluation models. A model can be thought of as a prescription for undertaking an evaluation, based on certain theoretical assumptions. The number of models proliferated as more social scientists entered the evaluation arena and attempts were made to classify them in terms of elements such as assumptions, methodology, and extent of involvement of stakeholders (Stufflebeam & Webster 1983).

Despite these attempts, we have found that many graduate students and commissioners of evaluation were confused about the relationship between a model and the solution to practical work-related problems. As one of our students, Susan Day, pointed out, what appeared to be missing from the evaluation literature was a framework that would make sense of this situation from the point of view of practitioners (Day 1991). To remedy this we developed a 'meta-model', consisting of five *Evaluation Forms*, within which some of the more important models or Approaches (as we shall call them) can be located. The Forms are designed to address the 'why' question in evaluation. Why an evaluation is being commissioned is of fundamental importance to both stakeholders and evaluators. Addressing the why question encourages evaluators to seek clarity about the knowledge needs of clients and sharpens up thinking about how this knowledge can be generated.

The notions of 'Form' and 'Approach' provide an epistemological framework for understanding the breadth of evaluative inquiry. For each Form there is a cluster of existing well-known Approaches that have elements in common. The Forms point to a range of roles for evaluative inquiry. This view is consistent with the comment of a noted evaluator that the 'world of evaluation has grown larger than the boundaries of formative and summative evaluation, though this

distinction remains important and useful' (Patton 1996). So let us examine each of the Forms. At this stage we wish merely to sketch their connection to evaluation Approaches. In later chapters we provide information about the Approaches within each Form, and further expand the framework by discussing implications for data management—the collection and analysis of evidence.

The notion of Form is an attempt at simplification while at the same time acknowledging the complexity of the field. For many users of this book, the selection of a Form will suffice in planning an evaluation study—that is, the planner need not delve into the differences between Approaches within the selected Form. Others who see the need to use a more refined conceptual base for a study would choose not only the Form, but also an Approach within that Form, as the basis for their investigation.

## THE 'WHY' QUESTION AND EVALUATION FORMS

Evaluative inquiry can be classified conceptually into five categories, or Forms. These have been labeled as follows:

- Proactive;
- Clarificative;
- Interactive;
- Monitoring; and
- Impact.

Below and in Table 3.1, we set out the basic tenets of each evaluation Form by including the following aspects:

- purpose or orientation of an evaluation consistent with the Form;
- typical issues (broad questions) that are consistent with each purpose; and
- major Approaches, taken from a social science or management perspective.

We see the first two of these aspects as fundamental to planning an evaluation that is consistent with the assumptions of that Form.

The third aspect needs an additional comment. It is widely acknowledged in academic circles that social scientists, and in particular those connected with the field of education, have dominated advanced thinking about the work of the evaluator profession. However, there have also been considerable contributions to practice from the management/accounting perspective. That both 'cultures' have something to say about the conduct of evaluation in the work-

place is evident to anyone who has attended conferences or meetings of professional associations of evaluators in North America and Europe. Yet, up until now, most evaluation texts have failed to integrate the thinking about evaluation that has emerged from the two cultures. Here we have made an attempt to integrate perspectives where it makes sense to provide a more holistic and inclusive view.

## Proactive evaluation

### Purpose or orientation

Evaluative inquiry within this Form takes place before a program is designed. Findings assist program planners to make decisions about what type of program is needed. The major purpose is to provide input to decisions about how best to develop a program in advance of the planning stage. Proactive evaluation places the evaluator as an adviser, providing information about the extent of the problem that policy should address, or what program format is needed. Proactive evaluation may provide leaders with ‘just in time’ advice for making key decisions which affect the future or even survival of an organization.

### Typical issues

Issues about which an evaluator might be engaged include the following:

- Is there a need for the program?
- What do we know about the problem that the program will address?
- What is recognized as best practice in this area?
- Have there been other attempts to find solutions to this problem?
- What does the relevant research or conventional wisdom tell us about this problem?
- What could we find out from external sources to rejuvenate an existing policy or program?

### Major Approaches

Approaches that are consistent with this Form include:

- *Needs assessment or needs analysis.* This is probably the best-known Approach within this Form, and a strong body of theory and practice has been developed around it. In the past, the evaluation community has perceived needs assessment to be distinct from

evaluation, because needs assessment precedes the development of a program. As the name implies, needs assessment involves assessing the perceived community want or need among the community which will be addressed by the projected program.

- *Research synthesis (evidence-based practice)*. This Approach involves a synthesis of what is known about the problem from ‘funded knowledge’—in other words, relevant research and other scholarly inquiry. The use of this Approach provides an opportunity for the aggregated work of applied research to impact on social planning and as such represents an attempt to bridge the gap between the work of the research community and applications in real settings.
- *Review of best practice (creation of benchmarks)*. In this Approach, there is an emphasis on selecting and studying exemplary practice which has relevance to the problem that needs to be addressed. The use of the term ‘benchmark’ has its origins in management, and the trend for businesses in a given field to model their activities on leaders in that field. Similar developments can now be seen in the public sector. It should be noted that the selection and analysis of how exemplary or ‘lighthouse’ agencies run their businesses is fundamental to the benchmarking activity, but is not the whole story. The creation of benchmarks must be followed by implementation of processes that will deliver more effective and efficient outcomes.

While the ‘review of best practice’ Approach has been associated with effective private and public sector management, the needs assessment and research review Approaches are more likely to be associated with the work of social scientists. Proactive Evaluation is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

## Clarificative evaluation

### Purpose or orientation

Evaluative inquiry within this Form concentrates on making explicit the internal structure and functioning of an intervention. This is sometimes described as the theory or logic of a program. The logic of a program attends to the links between program assumptions, program intentions and objectives, and the implementation activities designed to achieve these objectives. The need to outline or define the logic usually arises when a program has not been fully specified or described, even though it is in operation. This can occur when there is pressure for developers to implement an intervention without

sufficient opportunity or knowledge to fully develop its rationale, or when those responsible for delivering a program are in conflict over aspects of its design, such as program intentions. Another possibility is that, even though program staff are implementing the program in some way, there is confusion about how the program should ideally be implemented. All these situations call for a *clarificative evaluation*, in which the evaluator usually works with policy or program staff. The *essential element* that distinguishes program planning from Clarificative evaluation is that in the latter, the collection and analysis of data is essential. The involvement of program staff in the development of draft and final versions of the logic is usually encouraged (Rutman 1980; Smith 1989).

### Typical issues

Issues about which an evaluator might be engaged include the following:

- What are the intended outcomes of this program and how is the program designed to achieve them?
- What is the underlying rationale for this program?
- What program elements or structures need to be modified to maximize program potential to achieve the intended outcomes?
- Is the program plausible?
- Which aspects of this program are amenable to a subsequent monitoring or impact assessment?

### Major Approaches

Approaches that are consistent with this form include:

- *Evaluability assessment (EA)*. Evaluability assessment is a well-known technique for developing program logic, and is included here as a separate Approach because of its historical significance. In the 1980s, evaluators developed definitions, examples of practice and guidelines for others undertaking studies of this kind. EA was originally seen as an essential step before further evaluation could be conducted. The aim was to determine if a program could be described in sufficient detail to make it amenable to monitoring or impact evaluation. In other words, the question was whether the program was ‘evaluable’, hence the rather unusual name.

While an EA can still be carried out as a precursor to Approaches in other evaluation Forms, it can also stand alone as a means of determining the essential features of a program.

- *Program logic development*. This involves the construction of an explicit description of a program. An essential final product is a

program description portrayed in schematic format, sometimes supported by documentation. A range of schemas can be used, but in most the essential elements are: program assumptions, objectives and implementation activities. Central to program logic is the nature of program causality, the ordering of events in such a way that the presence of one event or action leads to, or causes, a subsequent event or action.

- *Ex-ante evaluation.* An ex-ante evaluation assesses the feasibility and validity of the design of a program. It is designed to determine, at the planning stage, whether a program is likely to be successful in the field, whether it can be implemented as planned, and whether implementation will lead to the stated objectives. Ex-ante evaluations can be thought of as quality assurance checks before extensive resources are committed to the implementation phase. In this Approach the evaluator acts as an independent ‘honest broker’. The evaluator may have access to relevant information that program staff may not have—for example, scientific evidence that shows that the intervention will work in the field. Ex-ante evaluation has found particular application in the international development arena in recent times.

Clarification evaluation is the focus of discussion in Chapter 10.

## Interactive evaluation

### Purpose or orientation

Interactive or participatory evaluation is based on an assumption that those with a direct vested interest in programmatic interventions within organizations or communities should also control the evaluation of these interventions. Representative groups control agendas, and the evaluator (externally or internally based) responds. Interactive evaluations assist with ongoing service provision and structural arrangements, usually with a strong emphasis on process. In some instances, the evaluator may also be involved in facilitating change that is consistent with the evaluation findings (Cousins & Whitmore 1998).

While Impact and Monitoring Forms of evaluation are more likely to provide findings relevant to senior managers and funding agencies, findings provided by evaluations within the Interactive Form are more logically directed at middle level managers and program implementers.

## Typical issues

Issues about which an evaluator might be engaged include the following:

- What is this program trying to achieve?
- How is this service progressing?
- Is the delivery working?
- Is it consistent with the program plan?
- How could the delivery be changed so as to make it more effective?
- How could this organization be changed so as to make it more effective?

## Major Approaches

Approaches which are consistent with this Form include:

- *Responsive evaluation.* This involves the documentation or illumination of the delivery of a program. In addition to being focused on process, responsive evaluation takes account of the perspectives and values of different stakeholders, and is orientated towards the information requirements of audiences, often the providers of the program.
- *Action research.* This encourages extensive involvement of program providers in the design and implementation of internal evaluations based around the trial of an innovative program, technique or structure.
- *Developmental evaluation.* This involves evaluators working closely with program providers on a continuous improvement process, often on programs that are innovatory and unique.
- *Empowerment evaluation.* This involves assisting program providers and participants in the development and evaluation of their own programs, as part of a broader goal of giving citizens more control over their own lives and their destiny.
- *Quality review.* Sometimes known as ‘institutional self-study’, this involves providing system-level guidelines within which providers have a large amount of control over the evaluation agenda.

## Monitoring evaluation

### Purpose or orientation

Typically, monitoring is appropriate when a program is well established and ongoing. The program may be on a single site or it may be delivered at several sites, remote from senior management. Staff are

aware of specified goals or intentions, have identified program targets and implementation is taking place. There is usually a need for managers to have an indication of the success or otherwise of the program or one or more of its components. This is likely to be linked to the expenditure of program funds.

An evaluation of this Form may involve the development of a system of regular monitoring of the progress of the program. Typically, *quantitative performance indicators* have been used as the means of organizing data in monitoring evaluations, but more recently we have recognized that data management in any evaluation requires employment of mixed methods. Indicators cannot, in themselves, provide the last word on program effectiveness. Indicator information needs to take contextual factors into account to provide valid and useful findings.

Evaluations within this Form are likely to be driven by a performance management perspective, and key theorists in the area have described the need for evaluation to include a rapid response capability (Mangano 1989) and to provide timely information for organizational leaders (Owen & Lambert 1998).

### Typical issues

Issues about which an evaluator might be engaged include the following:

- Is the program reaching the target population?
- Is implementation meeting program benchmarks?
- How is implementation progressing between sites?
- How is implementation progressing now compared to a month ago, or a year ago?
- Are our costs rising or falling?
- How can we fine-tune this program to make it more efficient?
- How can we fine-tune this program to make it more effective?
- Is there a site which needs attention to ensure more effective delivery?

### Major Approaches

Approaches which are consistent with this Form include:

- *Component analysis*. This involves the systematic evaluation of a component of a large-scale Program, identified because there are indications that the component needs to be reviewed to bring it into line with organizational goals.
- *Devolved performance assessment*. This involves the development of systems through which component entities can report regularly on their progress.

- *Systems analysis*. This involves setting up procedures by which the central management institutes common evaluation procedures to be used uniformly across a system of agencies or programs.

In all Approaches, the findings provide an indication of performance against some standard, or as a basis for a consequent review (Wholey 1983). Evaluators are likely to be internally located at the center of organizations with access to management information systems (MIS). Alternatively, evaluators might be in the public sector—part of a government department with responsibility for the delivery of a service provided by local agencies, for example, the provision of care of the elderly through nursing homes. In this scenario the department may provide an evaluative structure with which all agencies must comply, and be charged with monitoring the homes. Monitoring evaluation is the focus of discussion in Chapter 12.

## Impact evaluation

### Purpose or orientation

Impact evaluation is used to assess the effects of a settled program. A logical endpoint for analysis is assumed—for example, establishing the outcomes of a completed adult education remedial reading program or the sustainability of a program of international assistance. Alternatively, an evaluation could be conducted to assess the effects of an ongoing program at a given point in time, such as a mid-term review. An example might be a review of a ten-year housing support program after the first five years of its life.

Typical approaches include the extent and level of attainment of specified objectives, determination of the level of performance on a suite of outcome indicators, or examining both intended and unintended outcomes.

If the intention of the evaluation is to make a decision about the worth of the program (see Chapter 1), evaluations of this Form are described as *summative evaluations*. Summative evaluations assist with decisions about whether to terminate a program or to adopt it in another place. It is important, in many impact evaluations, to determine whether the intervention described in the program plan is in place. Thus, while the emphasis in an impact evaluation is on outcomes, it may also include a review of the implementation characteristics of the program. These studies are known as *process-outcome evaluations*.

### Typical issues

Issues about which an evaluator might be engaged include the following:

- Has the program been implemented as planned?
- Have the stated goals of the program been achieved?
- Have the needs of those served by the program been achieved?
- What are the unintended outcomes of the program?
- Does the implementation strategy lead to the intended outcomes?
- How do differences in implementation affect program outcomes?
- Is the program more effective for some participants than for others?
- Has the program been cost-effective?

## Major Approaches

Approaches that are consistent with this Form include:

- *Objectives-based evaluation.* This involves judging the worth of a program on the basis of the extent to which its stated objectives have been achieved. It should be noted that objectives-based evaluation represents the foundation of evaluation practice.
- *Needs-based evaluation.* This involves judging the worth of a program on the basis of the extent to which the program meets the needs of the participants. This represents a variation on objectives-based evaluation, and makes the assumption that the objectives of a program do not necessarily represent the needs of the participants.
- *Goal-free evaluation.* This involves determining not only the stated goals, but also the unintended outcomes of the program; thus the common name given to this approach is misleading. Goal-free evaluation has implications for evaluation practice, as looking for unintended outcomes (whether both positive or negative) implies the use of flexible, rather than preordinate designs.
- *Process–outcome studies.* This involves not only determining outcomes but also measuring the degree of implementation of the program. The need for attention to implementation arose from the mistaken notion that social and educational programs were always delivered in ways that were consistent with program intentions.
- *Realistic evaluation.* These studies are based on the principle that it is not possible to ascribe universal or generalizable cause-and-effect statements to any program. Rather, it is only possible to say that a program works under certain conditions. That is, a program is effective in certain circumstances for certain groups of participants in certain contexts.
- *Performance audit.* A performance audit is an analysis of program efficiency and effectiveness. Performance audits concentrate on program outcomes, and generally involve both financial and non-financial measures.

Impact evaluations are often used to justify expenditure, which is consistent with the notion of a summative evaluation role. While such evaluations can be handled internally, external evaluators most often undertake them. Impact evaluation is discussed in detail in Chapter 13.

## USE OF FORMS IN FOCUSING AN EVALUATION

It is important for all those responsible for conducting an evaluation to choose the most appropriate way of proceeding. The Forms just discussed provide a conceptual map by which the evaluator and client can make a decision about how to proceed. Example 3.1 illuminates the use of Forms in this way.

### **Example 3.1 Evaluation of training program for child welfare workers**

We were asked to undertake an evaluation of a training program for child welfare workers in a large state agency. In initial negotiations, the stakeholders expressed a strong desire for an impact evaluation based on program goals. After further discussions with the program manager and inspection of program documentation, particularly the course plan and materials provided for participants as handouts, it became evident that the program plan was not specific and that members of the training team were not clear about program themes or how various course components linked together.

These deliberations led to a realization among stakeholders that a Clarificative evaluation was needed. The methodology employed included observation, analysis of all documentation, then some interactive sessions with all members of the training team, including the program manager, to develop a revised program plan.

A key feature of the evaluation was that the training team, through the development process, recognized the need for a more systematic plan, and developed a commitment to implementing a program which had greater internal coherence.

In summary, this was a classic Clarificative evaluation:

- The orientation was towards clarification of course description;
- The program was still in a stage of development;
- The focus of the evaluation was on its design; and
- It was undertaken during cycles of program delivery.

The revised plan became the basis for ongoing delivery of the training program, offered several times. When it was deemed to be settled, the impact evaluation originally suggested by the stakeholders was carried out.

Example 3.1 emphasizes the point that it is essential to take into account the state of the development of a program when deciding on the appropriate evaluation Form (Owen 1991). It would have been illogical to proceed with an outcomes evaluation of an intervention that was incoherent and had little chance, in its original state, of being effective. The evaluative thrust, at least in the first instance, needed to be directed toward program clarification. Later, an outcomes evaluation made sense.

The following scenarios provide an opportunity for you to classify them according to the evaluation Forms just introduced.

**Scenario A:** The Willand Anti-Violence Project aims to lower the instance of alcohol and drug-related violence across the Willand County. A management team chaired by the head of the local fire brigade oversees the project. The management team has little program design expertise, and, while key members of the team have knowledge of their areas (police, fire-fighting, ambulance, etc), they have few ideas on how to go about implementing the project. A member of the team suggests hiring an expert in violence reduction who also has good people skills. The expert's role includes undertaking small action-research projects in towns in the shire and generally assisting with the development and delivery of the strategy.

**Scenario B:** Two years ago the Billie Senior Citizens Association initiated a Community Safety Project. The project involves service personnel visiting the homes of elderly people and giving advice about safety. Follow-up visits are designed to check on the implementation of the advice given. The project is well managed by the director of the association, is well designed and 'in place'. The project committee wants a study that will determine whether the project has been effective.

**Scenario C:** The Ozieland Government has recently instituted a Safe-Towns Program. This involves the development of a policy of improving the general safety levels of people in their day-to-day living. The policy encourages cooperation between town councils and those responsible for safety, and community

groups. Initially 27 towns are involved. Senior management wants an indication of how the program is progressing over time.

**Scenario D:** The Bellet City Board of Management wants to develop a program to reduce the incidence of assault and associated activities in a defined area of the city. A couple of members of the board have strong ideas about what should be done. The chief executive hires a well-known large consultancy firm to develop some options about the nature of the intervention that is needed.

**Scenario E:** The Scragga City Council had a major street drug problem and obtained a grant to develop strategies to reduce the incidence of drugs on the streets. This involved appointing a program coordinator who was to be responsible for developing an articulated program plan. Some processes have been implemented but, despite the best efforts of the coordinator, an overall program has not been developed. The council wants to produce such a program.

You may decide, for example, that Scenario C can be classified within the Monitoring Form and Scenario E belongs to the Clarificative Form. The importance of this exercise is that we are providing some order in what could be a bewildering array of possibilities for attacking the realities of evaluation practice. There is more guidance at hand to help classify evaluation scenarios and this is provided in the following section.

## FORMS OF EVALUATION: ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS

Table 3.1 provides a summary of the three dimensions we have used to introduce the Forms: orientation, typical issues and key approaches. It should be useful in helping you decide which Form (or Forms) is the most appropriate for a given evaluation situation. However, there are additional dimensions for this conceptual framework. These are described below and outlined in Table 3.2.

- *State* of the existing program. State means the degree to which the program under review has been implemented at the time of the proposed evaluation. State can vary: at one extreme the program will not be in existence and needs to be developed, while at the other extreme, the program will have been operating for

Table 3.1 Evaluation Forms: orientation, typical issues and key approaches

Orientation	Proactive	Clarificative	Interactive	Monitoring	Impact
Typical issues	<p>Synthesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a need for the program?</li> <li>What do we know about this problem that the program will address?</li> <li>What is recognized as best practice in this area?</li> <li>Have there been other attempts to find solutions to this problem?</li> <li>What does the relevant research or conventional wisdom tell us about this problem?</li> <li>What do we know about the problem that the program will address?</li> <li>What could we find out from external sources to rejuvenate an existing policy or program?</li> </ul>	<p>Clarification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the intended outcomes and how is the program designed to achieve them?</li> <li>What is the underlying rationale for this program?</li> <li>What program elements need to be modified in order to maximize the intended outcomes?</li> <li>Is the program plausible?</li> <li>Which aspects of this program are amenable to a subsequent monitoring or impact assessment?</li> </ul>	<p>Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is this program trying to achieve?</li> <li>How is this service going?</li> <li>Is the delivery working?</li> <li>Is delivery consistent with the program plan?</li> <li>How could delivery be changed to make it more effective?</li> <li>How could this organization be changed so as to make it more effective?</li> </ul>	<p>Checking/refining/accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the program reaching the target population?</li> <li>Is implementation meeting program benchmarks?</li> <li>How is implementation going between sites?</li> <li>How is implementation now compared with a month ago?</li> <li>Are our costs rising or falling?</li> <li>How can we fine-tune the program to make it more efficient?</li> <li>How can we fine-tune the program to make it more effective?</li> <li>Is there a program site which needs attention to ensure more effective delivery?</li> </ul>	<p>Learning/accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the program been implemented as planned?</li> <li>Have the stated goals of the program been achieved?</li> <li>Have the needs of those served by the program been achieved?</li> <li>What are the unintended outcomes?</li> <li>Does the implementation strategy lead to intended outcomes?</li> <li>How do differences in implementation affect program outcomes?</li> <li>Is the program more effective for some participants than for others?</li> <li>Has the program been cost-effective?</li> </ul>
Key Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs assessment</li> <li>Research synthesis (evidence-based practice)</li> <li>Review of best practice (Benchmarking)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluability assessment</li> <li>Logic development</li> <li>Ex-ante</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsive</li> <li>Action research</li> <li>Developmental</li> <li>Empowerment</li> <li>Quality review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Component analysis</li> <li>Devolved performance assessment</li> <li>Systems analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objectives-based</li> <li>Needs-based</li> <li>Goal-free</li> <li>Process-outcome</li> <li>Realistic</li> <li>Performance audit</li> </ul>

Table 3.2 Evaluation Forms: all dimensions

	Proactive	Clarificative	Interactive	Monitoring	Impact
Orientation	Synthesis	Clarification	Improvement	Checking/refining/accountability	Learning/accountability
Typical issues	(see Table 3.1)	(see Table 3.1)	(see Table 3.1)	(see Table 3.1)	(see Table 3.1)
State of Program	None	Development	Development	Settled	Settled
Major focus	Program context	All elements	Delivery	Delivery/outcomes	Delivery/outcomes
Timing (vis-à-vis program delivery)	Before	During	Mainly during but could be at other times	During	After
Key Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs assessment</li> <li>Research synthesis (evidence-based practice)</li> <li>Review of best practice (Benchmarking)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluability assessment</li> <li>Logic development</li> <li>Ex-ante</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsive</li> <li>Action research</li> <li>Developmental</li> <li>Empowerment</li> <li>Quality review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Component analysis</li> <li>Devolved performance assessment</li> <li>Systems analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objectives-based</li> <li>Needs-based</li> <li>Goal-free</li> <li>Process-outcome</li> <li>Realistic</li> <li>Performance audit</li> </ul>
Assembly of evidence	Review of documents and data bases, site visits and other interactive methods. Focus groups, nominal groups and delphi technique useful for needs assessments.	Generally relies on combination of document analysis, interview and observation. Findings include program plan and implications for organization. Can lead to improved morale.	Relies on intensive onsite studies, including observation. Degree of data structure depends on approach. May involve providers and program participants.	Systems approach requires availability of management information systems (MIS), the use of indicators and the meaningful use of performance information.	Traditionally required use of pre-ordinate research designs, where possible the use of treatment and control groups, and the use of tests and other quantitative data. Studies of implementation generally require observational data. Determining all the outcomes requires use of more exploratory methods and the use of qualitative evidence.

- a period of time without modification. If a program can be described in this way we refer to it as being fully implemented or ‘settled’.
- *Focus* of the evaluation. Focus refers to the program component(s) on which the evaluation is likely to be concentrated. For a given program four possible foci are:
    - the social, political and economic context in which a program is to be developed;
    - the coherence and adequacy of program design;
    - elements of program delivery or implementation; and
    - program outcomes.
  - *Timing* refers to the temporal links between the evaluation and program delivery. For example, evaluations consistent with the Proactive Form take place before a program is developed, while those consistent with Monitoring evaluation occur over time as the program is being delivered.
  - *Assembly of evidence*. This refers to the methodology and techniques selected; the design of the empirical part of the evaluation process. In evaluation studies, the questions drive the selection of *data-management techniques*. Data management involves things such as sampling, choice and application of data collection techniques and analysis. The end point is to arrive at findings that address the evaluation questions.

In summary, each Form can be classified by the seven dimensions represented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. The inclusion of the variables ‘state of program’, ‘focus’ and ‘timing’ imply that different forms of evaluative inquiry are related to different stages of program development. That is, a Proactive evaluation would logically precede the development of a given program, and an Impact evaluation can be thought of as an evaluation that takes place at the conclusion of a program.

## USING THE FORMS IN PRACTICAL SETTINGS

The Forms should be regarded as conceptual or heuristic devices that aid planning of real evaluations. They are designed to act as a guide to thinking about evaluative inquiry and the different meanings we have given it. It is now time to apply these ideas to practical situations. How can we make these ideas operational to guide evaluators, clients, audiences and other interested parties through the conduct of a given evaluative study? Consider the following example.

### Example 3.2 Using a combination of Forms to plan a large scale evaluation: The National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme (SAAP)

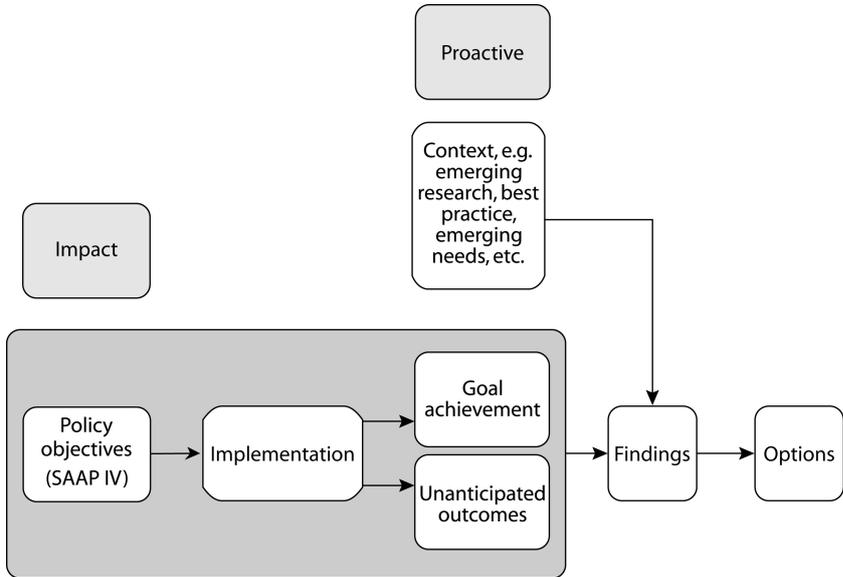
SAAP is a combined Commonwealth and states program designed to fund and administer services to the homeless in Australia. Since it was established about 20 years ago, it has become the major policy focus for providing assistance to homeless people across the country. Over 1200 agencies provide services and in 2003 over 140,000 clients were given assistance. SAAP policy is evaluated every five years as a major input into future policy development relating to homelessness.

In 2003, an evaluation of the fourth cycle of the program (SAAP IV) was undertaken by Erebus Consultants. After extensive consultations with the key stakeholders, the following evaluation issues were developed to focus the evaluation:

- *Program effectiveness.* What outcomes have been generated? How had they have been achieved to meet the needs of diverse clients?
- *Program accountability.* Has compliance worked? Has the program's management (at national and at jurisdictional levels) worked? Has expenditure been tracked? How have stakeholders seen program accountability?
- *Program efficiency.* How much was spent for what outcomes? What is the cost of homelessness to society generally? Has there been improvement both administratively and at service levels relative to previous performance levels?, and
- *Future directions.* What should constitute policy to address homelessness in the future? Are there alternative ways of implementation that would be more effective? Is there policy divergence or convergence between stakeholders? (Wyatt et al. 2004).

The Erebus team produced the following framework in Figure 3.1 as the basis of designing the evaluation, from which we can see that the evaluation was conceived in terms of two of the evaluation Forms. The first was Impact, which concentrated on effectiveness, accountability and efficiency; the first three of the issues listed above. The second was Proactive, and sought to provide information drawn from the context. The Proactive component related in particular to the fourth and last of the issues listed above. This is a good example of linking evaluation issues to Forms, and provided conceptual clarity for the evaluation team. Note that the Figure 3.1 also lists the methodologies used in the evaluation design of the Proactive component—for example, summaries of emerging research, best practice, etc.

Figure 3.1 Combined use of Proactive and Impact Forms in an evaluation



Adapted from *National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP IV) Final Report*, 1994. Erebus Consulting Partners, May 2004.

## Evaluation forms and change management

Faye Lambert has linked Evaluation Forms to business and management principles (Lambert 1996). This work is grounded in the change management literature and the work of Kotter (1995) in particular. Based on observations from about 100 organizations, Kotter suggests that eight critical steps are required to successfully manage a major organizational change initiative. They are:

- 1 *Building a case for change.* Key stakeholders, such as staff and shareholders, need to understand why change is necessary, thus the evidence supporting the change must be collected and articulated to those affected by it. Change is about risk, so the risk of not changing needs to be perceived as greater than the risk of going ahead with it.
- 2 *Forming a powerful guiding coalition.* This involves molding a group of individuals into an effective team and providing them with enough power to lead the change effort.
- 3 *Creating the vision.* What is initially required is a sense of direction, not myriad plans. There is a need for those involved in the change

- effort to share the vision, which could come from a charismatic leader or be developed by a coalition.
- 4 *Communicating the vision.* The nature of the vision needs to be communicated synergistically to stakeholders.
  - 5 *Empowering others to act on the vision.* This requires administrators to set up structures to support the change and to remove potential obstacles standing in the way of its introduction.
  - 6 *Planning for and creating short-term wins.* This is about ensuring tangible signs of improvement early on in the initiative to provide momentum for furtherance of the change. In association with this, there should be opportunities to recognize and celebrate success.
  - 7 *Consolidating improvements.* This involves incorporating the change into the very fabric of the organization. This almost always involves both person-centered and resource support from the administration.
  - 8 *Institutionalizing new approaches.* This involves making sure that those within the organization make the connections between the change and outcomes which follow from the change. This is done with a view to ensuring that the coalition understands and supports the change.

These steps are set out in Figure 3.2. While the diagram implies a linear sequence, the truth is that implementing change is far more messy, with plenty of recursive loops involving the steps set out above.

Where does evaluative inquiry fit into this change scheme? Critical diagnostic evaluation should be an integral part of decision-making related to the change process. Lambert's research suggests that the average manager spends about 80 percent of the available time on implementation, with only around two percent spent on diagnosis, whereas she suggests that 20 percent of management time should be spent on the diagnostic effort, and just 40 percent on implementation. We suggest that a major reason for this discrepancy is that, up to now, the typical manager has had limited understandings of how diagnostic evaluation can aid the change effort.

We show how these links can be forged in Figure 3.3. Proactive evaluation would be employed in Steps 1 and 2. Clarificative evaluation would be employed in Steps 3 to 6, and so on.

Imagine that a small, forward-looking university has made an in-principle decision to introduce information technology across all departments. The administration decides to use evaluation to help in introducing an information technology policy. A Proactive evaluation could be based around the following questions:

Figure 3.2 Eight critical steps in leading and managing change

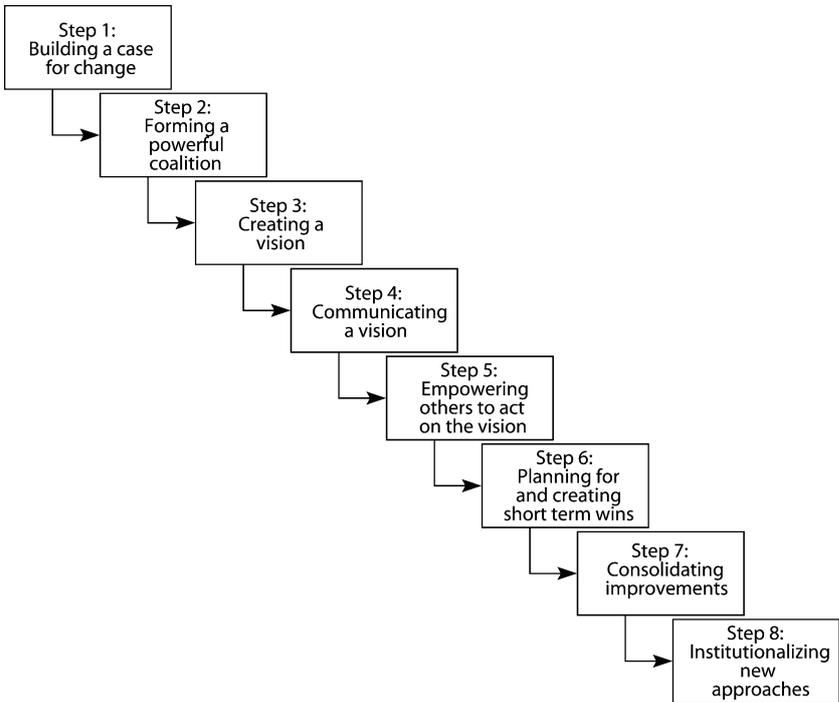
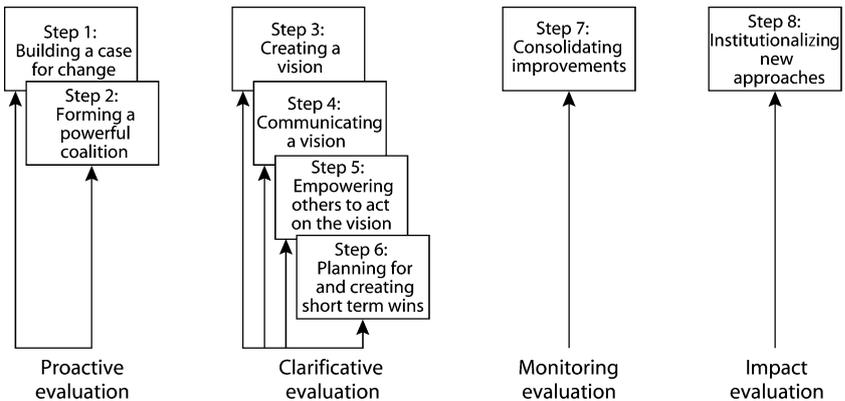


Figure 3.3 The change process and the use of evaluative inquiry



- What are the skills and abilities that will enable students to effectively participate in and shape their world of the future?
- What do we know already about the potential of information technology to help meet their needs?

- How might technology be used to develop those abilities in this university context?

To get people onside, a case for the change must be made, particularly among those with clout, those who Kotter describes as the ‘powerful coalition’. Proactive evaluation would involve engaging staff in discussions about how they could use technology, not simply to familiarize students with technology, but how to use it proactively in reshaping the ‘college curriculum’. Actively involving the coalition in leading staff through a needs analysis would be one way of building support for the change effort.

A Clarificative evaluation would be undertaken in conjunction with Steps 3 to 6 of Figure 3.3: the design and development of the information technology policy. Typical questions would be:

- What are the intended outcomes from the implementation of the policy?
- What are the underlying assumptions?
- What would it mean to the work of each department if the policy were implemented?
- What aspects of the program should be chosen for Monitoring or for Impact evaluation?

The evaluative effort to this stage has resulted in:

- development of a clear understanding of the intended outcomes of the policy and the strategies used to achieve them;
- a basis for monitoring evaluation process for the program in action; and
- a basis for future modifications, because the original policy has been based on explicit identification of policy need.

Similar questions could be developed for the Monitoring evaluation phases (see Figure 3.3).

Experience suggests that if staff are involved, there is increased understanding that most worthwhile innovations take time to implement. The use of evaluation not only provides useful knowledge, but also helps clarify expectations for the different stages of policy development. Clarifying expectations goes hand in hand with clarifying policy. This alleviates much of the anxiety of the change initiative and can assist with ongoing policy implementation.

Perhaps the most important message from these examples is that ‘real evaluations’ can span one or more of the evaluation Forms. The following is another example of this.

### Example 3.3 Evaluating the progress of a skills management program

Maher (1996) employed several evaluation Forms in relation to an innovative teaching program designed to assist students at risk of dropping out of high school. The program was of one week's duration and was held before the beginning of the conventional school year. Program content focused on research skills, task and time management, and report writing. The study reflected the use of several Forms and Approaches which were consciously used in conjunction with the program over a fifteen-month period. They included:

- needs analysis prior to and in the early stages of planning;
- monitoring during the program;
- needs-based outcomes evaluation, designed to answer the question 'Was it worth doing?', to account for the use of resources, to identify the effects on students, and to document what was done (Maher 1996).

## CONCLUSION: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE FORMS

Evaluation Forms provide an overarching framework to assist those involved in planning an evaluation. The introduction of Forms is a manifestation of the move from evaluation as the judgment of worth, to evaluation as the production of responsive empirical knowledge. The fact that there are five Forms suggests that evaluation should no longer be seen as a unitary concept. Rather, it implies that there are five dominant styles of evaluation, and that each of them produces useful knowledge for decision-making. This extends the reach and influence of evaluation well beyond that of solely determining the worth of a program.

Table 3.3 summarizes this position and is organized around two concepts: Assumption and Imperative. *Assumption* provides an epistemological basis for carrying out evaluative work within this Form. So, for example, the Proactive Form is based on an assumption that what is already known about a given problem—and which could be ameliorated through a programmatic intervention—should be brought to bear on the design of that intervention.

*Imperative* amplifies the notion of Purpose to include the importance of the Form, a fundamental characteristic, which, presumably would be acceptable to stakeholders who commission that Form of evaluation. For example, in the Proactive Form, a commitment to

**Table 3.3 Epistemological bases of Forms**

<i>Form</i>	<i>Proactive</i>	<i>Clarificative</i>	<i>Interactive</i>	<i>Monitoring</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Purpose</b>	Synthesis	Clarification	Improvement	Checking/ refining/ accountability	Learning/ accountability
<b>Assumption</b>	What is already known should influence action	Program rationale and design needs to be laid out	Those close to action need information for ongoing change	Programs need to be monitored to ensure quality	Need to know what works and why
<b>Imperative</b>	Importance of external frame of reference	Importance of making intervention explicit	Importance of provider involvement	Importance of quality control	Importance of transferability: contribution to funded knowledge

using external relevant information in designing the program would be important to the stakeholders.

Taken together, Assumption and Imperative can be thought of as representing a value position regarding the role of evaluation and, by implication, what knowledge is important. While Forms can be used to complement each other in a given evaluation, it is also possible that evaluators and stakeholders exhibit a preference for one Form over another. There is for example an inherent tension between the Interactive and Monitoring Forms and their use in an organization. While one encourages the use of democratic principles in the determination of what needs to be evaluated, the other takes a management control position, supporting the right of managers to use evaluation resources for their own agendas.

These issues will be explored in more depth later in this book. To encourage the intelligent use of each of the Forms we go into more detail about each one in Chapters 9 to 13. Conceptually, this involves working down the columns of Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.

## REFERENCES

- Cousins, J. B. and Whitmore, E. (1998). Framing participatory evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 80, Winter 1998, 5–23.
- Day, S. (1991). *Casework Evaluation*. Unpublished Paper for the Graduate Diploma in Evaluation, Centre for Program Evaluation, The University of Melbourne.
- Kotter, J. P. (1995). Leading change. Why transformation effects fail. *Harvard Business Review*, March–April 1995, 59–67.
- Lambert, F. C. (1996). *The Introduction of Technology into Classrooms: Change Management and the Role of Evaluation*. Paper presented at the Expanding Horizons Conference, Geelong College, Geelong, Australia.
- Maher, M. (1996). *Educational Evaluation*. Unpublished Major Project for Doctorate of Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne.
- Mangano, M. F. (1989). *Rapid Response Evaluation for Decision Makers: The Story of the HHS Inspector General*. Washington DC: US Department of Health and Human Services.
- Owen, J. M. (1991). An Evaluation Approach to Training Using the Notion of Form: An Australian Example. *Evaluation Practice*, 12(2), 131–139.
- Owen, J. M. and Lambert, F. C. (1998). Evaluation and the Information Needs of Organizational Leaders. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 19(3), 355–365.
- Patton, M. F. (1996). A World Larger than Formative and Summative Evaluation. *Evaluation Practice*, 17(2), 131–144.
- Rutman, L. (1980). *Planning Useful Evaluations*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Shadish, W., Cook, T.D. and Leviton, L.C. (1991). *Foundations of Program Evaluation*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Smith, M. F. (1989). *Evaluability Assessment: A Practical Approach*. Norwell, MA: Kluwer.
- Stufflebeam, D. S. and Webster, W. L. (1983). An Analysis of Alternative Approaches to Evaluation. In G. F. Madaus, M. Scriven & D. L. Stufflebeam (eds), *Evaluation Models*. Boston, MA: Kluwer-Nijhoff Publishing.
- Wholey, J. (1983). *Evaluation and Effective Public Management*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Wyatt, T., Carbines, R., Willett, J., and Robb, L. (2004). *National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP IV)*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Copyright © 2007 John M. Owen. All rights reserved under International Copyright Convention. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, or stored in or introduced into any information storage or retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the written permission of [The Guilford Press](#).