



DISTRICT 11 NEW AGENT NEWSLETTER

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Extension Evaluation:

According to Radhakrishna (1999), “the most frequently asked question for Extension professionals is ‘What happened as a result of your program?’ Extension educators at every level are bombarded with terms such as documentation, impact, outcome, output, effectiveness and accountability (Radhakrishna, 1999). In order to become practitioners of the program development process which evaluation is a critical element, it is imperative that we begin with some of the fundamental principles associated with program evaluation.

Some of these fundamental principles include a definition of evaluation, reasons to evaluate, overview of formative and summative evaluations, and scholars who have made significant contributions to program evaluation.

Evaluation is defined by Scriven (1991) “...as the systematic determination of the quality or value of something.” Evaluation of an Extension program can be defined as a systematic application of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, improvement or outcomes of an educational program (Rossi & Freeman, 1993).

The reason to evaluate programs can be categorized either to prove something (accountability) or to improve something (Seevers, Graham, Gamon, & Conklin, 1997). Evaluations that are focused on accountability are defined as **summative evaluations**, while evaluations that focus on improving something are called **formative evaluations** (Seever et al, 1997). According to Seevers et al (1997), “formative evaluations yield results useful to improve programs, whereas summative evaluations yield results useful for making decisions on the continuation of programs. Seldom are evaluations strictly formative or strictly summative; their purposes usually overlap.”

Seevers et al (1997) listed the following as reasons for Extension educators to use summative evaluation:

1. Collect evidence for reports.
2. Document achievement of objectives

3. Justify expenditures
4. Assess program impact and outcomes
5. Document that new practices were adopted
6. Increase visibility of programs
7. Provide evidence of program accomplishment to voters, private donors, youth, families, volunteers, and Extension personnel
8. Ensure that client expectations are met
9. Measure economic benefit to participants, communities, and society at large.

Seevers et al (1997) listed the following as reasons to use formative evaluations.

1. Find out what works or doesn't work with a particular audience and situation
2. Help educators grow professionally
3. Increase efficiency
4. Provide personal satisfaction

Seevers et al (1997) listed the following reasons to use both formative and summative evaluation;

1. Provide a basis for decisions on beginning, changing, and stopping programs.
2. Give a rationale for personnel
3. Set priorities
4. Give direction to programs
5. Establish vision
6. Allocate and reallocate resources

Some of the scholars who have made significant contributions in developing models or elements that have led to evaluation models utilized by Extension include the following:

1. P.H. Rossi and H.E. Freeman developed an evaluation model which provides a systematic application of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, improvement or outcomes of an educational program.
2. Donald Kirkpatrick developed an evaluation model that utilized four levels. These levels include the following:
 - Level 1- Reaction
 - Level 2- Learning
 - Level 3- Behavior
 - Level 4- Results

This model provides a sequence of methods to evaluate programs. Each level is critical and has im-

pact on the next level. As evaluators move from one level to the next, the evaluation process becomes more difficult and time consuming, but the information provided by that level of evaluation becomes more valuable.

3. Blaine Worthen is credited with the development of a Classification Schema for Evaluation approaches with James Sanders and Jody Fitzpatrick. These scholars have classified approaches to evaluation as follows:
 - Objective-oriented approaches focusing on goals and objectives and determine if these goals and objectives are met
 - Management-oriented approaches focusing on evaluation for management decisions
 - Consumer-oriented approaches focusing on evaluation of products or services
 - Expertise-oriented approaches that depend on experts to assess the quality or value of a program
 - Adversary-oriented approaches where planned opposition is the hallmark of the program evaluation strategy
 - Participant-oriented approaches where involvement of participants are of primary concern in determining the value or worth of a product
4. Ralph Tyler is cited in numerous Extension Program Development articles, journals, and publications including the Texas Cooperative Extension Program Development model for his groundbreaking contributions in curriculum development that provides a foundation for numerous Program Development and Evaluation models today. Tyler alleged that learning objectives need to be determined by the student behavior in the classroom. After more than 10 years of study Tyler published his work on behavior objectives. As a result of this study Tyler developed four objectives for the educational process that include; defining learning objectives, developing effective learning experiences, organizing learning in a sequential manner for maximum outcome, and utilizing evaluation to redirect and refocus learning experiences.
5. Robert Stake is responsible for the utilization of responsive evaluation methods. Stake has widely utilized the use of case studies in evaluation efforts.
6. Michael Scriven is credited with the development of the Key Evaluation Checklist, and Product Evaluation Checklist. The Key Evaluation Checklist is designed to determine the value or worth of a program, plan, or policy and is utilized to promote comprehensiveness in evaluation efforts.
7. Daniel Stufflebeam is credited with the popularization of the CIPP Evaluation model.

This model provides a framework for guiding evaluations of programs. The key elements of CIPP include; Context, Input, Process, and Product. The context element or component represents the program design phase, the process component represents the implementation phase of the model, and the product component represents the evaluation phase of the model.

References:

- Radhakrishna, R. (1999). Program evaluation and accountability training needs of Extension Agents. *Journal of Extension*. 37 (3). Retrieved October 23, 2006 from, <http://www.joe.org/joe/1999june/rb1.html>
- Rossi, P.H., & Freeman, H.E. (1993) *Evaluation: A systematic approach* (5th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Scriven, M. (1991). *Evaluation thesaurus* (4th ed.). Newbury Park, CA:Sage.
- Seevers, B., Graham, D., Gamon, J., & Conklin, N.(1997). *Education through Cooperative Extension*. Albany, NY. Delmar Publishers.

Recommended Reading:

Please read and review the following websites and Journal Articles:

- <http://www.joe.org/joe/1999august/iw2.html>
- http://s142412519.onlinehome.us/uw/pdfs/G3658_1.PDF
- <http://www.joe.org/joe/1995october/a4.html>
- <http://danr.ucop.edu/eee-aea/Evaluation%20Attitudes.%20AEA%20Paper.htm>
- <http://www.joe.org/joe/1989summer/a5.html>
- <http://www.joe.org/joe/1998june/rb5.html>
- <http://www.joe.org/joe/2002december/a1.shtml>
- <http://www.joe.org/joe/1995april/a4.html>
- <http://wwwjoe.org/jow/2003august/comm1.shtml>
- <http://www.joe.org/joe/1990summer/f1.html>

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