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# **Systematic Evaluation**

## **Evaluation in Education and Human Services**

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# **Systematic Evaluation**

A Self-Instructional Guide to Theory and Practice

**Daniel L. Stufflebeam**

**Anthony J. Shinkfield**



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# Contents

<b>Users' Guide</b>	xii
<b>1</b>	
<b>Introduction to Evaluation</b>	1
Objectives	2
What Is Evaluation?	3
Methods	8
Standards	9
History	15
The Pre-Tylerian Period	16
The Tylerian Age	17
The Age of Innocence	18
The Age of Realism	19
The Age of Professionalism	22
Roles in Evaluation Work	25
Knowledge Test for Unit 1	35
Application Exercise	40
Questions Without Answers	41
References	42
<b>2</b>	
<b>An Analysis of Alternative Approaches to Evaluation</b>	45
Objectives	46
Alternative Conceptualizations of Evaluation	46
Pseudoevaluation	47
Covert Investigations	48
Public-relations-Inspired Studies	49
Quasievaluations	49
Objectives-based Studies	50
Experimentally Oriented Studies	51
True Evaluations	52
Decision-oriented Studies	53
Client-centered Studies	53
Policy Studies	54
Consumer-oriented Studies	55
Conclusion	55

Knowledge Test for Unit 2	57
Application Exercises	63
Questions Without Answers	66
References	66
<b>3</b>	
<b>Objectives-oriented Evaluation: The Tylerian Tradition</b>	69
Objectives	70
The Intention of the Tylerian Approach	71
Procedure for Evaluation Design	71
Advantages of the Tylerian Approach	72
Uses of the Tylerian Model	73
Some Limitations of the Tylerian Approach	74
Evaluation as a Terminal Process	74
Technical Constraints	75
Behaviors as the Ultimate Criterion	75
Bias and Narrow Focus of Evaluation Components	76
Metfessel and Michael: An Extension of the Tylerian Approach	76
The Eight-Step Procedure for Evaluation	76
The Appendix of Multiple Criterion Measures	78
Knowledge Test for Unit 2	80
Application Exercises	84
Questions Without Answers	86
References	86
<b>4</b>	
<b>Edward A. Suchman and the Scientific Approach to Evaluation</b>	89
Objectives	90
Conceptual Aspects of Evaluation	91
Purposes and Principles of Evaluation	92
Values and the Evaluation Process	93
Assumptions for Evaluation Studies	94
Types of Evaluation	95
Categories of Evaluation	96
Methodological Aspects of Evaluation	97
Evaluation versus Nonevaluation Research	97
Methodological Approaches to Evaluation	98
Variations in Evaluation Research Design	99
Principles of Evaluation Research Design	100
The Measurement of Effects	100
Evaluation and Program Administration	102
Evaluation and Administrative Science	102
Administration of Evaluation Studies: Some Problem Areas	103
Compromises to Meet Administrative Constraints	105
Knowledge Test for Unit 4	105
Questions Without Answers	112
References	113

<b>5</b>	
<b>Cronbach's Designing Evaluations: A Synopsis</b>	<b>115</b>
Objectives	116
Introduction to the Issues	117
Thoughtful Planning for Flexibility	117
The Profitable Evaluation	118
Conflicting Approaches to Evaluation	120
Consensus in Design Elements	121
Balance in Evaluation Design: Summary	122
Cronbach's Concepts of the Elements in an Evaluation Design: Uto	123
Units, Treatments, and Observing Operations	123
UTOS: The Domain of Investigation	124
Definition of the Elements of uto and UTO	126
*UTOS: The Domain of Application	127
Identifying the Research Questions	129
The Divergent Phase	130
The Convergent Phase	132
Planning for Communication	134
The Utility of Findings	134
Direct Communication	135
Extrapolating from Findings	136
The Promise of Evaluation	137
Flexibility of Design	137
Evaluations and Politics: Limitations	137
Other Considerations	138
Knowledge Test for Unit 5	139
Application Exercises	145
Questions Without Answers	148
References	149
<b>6</b>	
<b>Stufflebeam's Improvement-oriented Evaluation</b>	<b>151</b>
Objectives	152
Some Personal History	153
Development of the CIPP Model	153
The PDK Study Committee's Elaboration of CIPP Evaluation	157
CIPP Compared to Other Recent Evaluation Proposals	161
CIPP as a Strategy for Improving Systems	165
An Overview of CIPP Categories	169
Context Evaluation	169
Input Evaluation	173
Process Evaluation	174
Product Evaluation	176
Designing Evaluations	179
Metaevaluation and Standards	183
Conclusion	184
Knowledge Test for Unit 6	184
Application Exercises	196
Questions Without Answers	205
References	206

<b>7</b>	
<b>Stake's Client-centered Approach to Evaluation</b>	<b>209</b>
Objectives	214
The Countenance Statement of Evaluation	215
Description	215
Judgment	216
Format for Data Collection	216
Responsive Evaluation	225
Responsive versus Preordinate Evaluation	227
Substantive Structure of Responsive Evaluation	234
General Observations	239
Knowledge Test for Unit 7	243
Application Exercises	257
Questions Without Answers	262
References	263
<b>8</b>	
<b>T.R. Owens, R.L. Wolf: An Adversary Approach to Evaluation</b>	<b>265</b>
Objectives	266
Intention of the Adversary Model	267
Adversary Proceedings in Their Legal Context	268
Applicability to Educational Evaluation	268
Practical Implementations	269
Dimensions of the Adversary Proceedings	270
One Form of the Adversary Approach: Wolf's Judicial Model	271
Rationale	271
The Four Stages of the Judicial Model	272
Pros and Cons of Adversary Evaluation	273
The Argument For	273
The Argument Against	274
Knowledge Test for Unit 8	276
Application Exercises	279
Questions Without Answers	282
References	282
<b>9</b>	
<b>Illuminative Evaluation: The Holistic Approach</b>	<b>285</b>
Objectives	287
Traditional Evaluation: Seeds of Doubt	288
Emphasis on Learning Processes for Measurement	288
The Agricultural-Botany Paradigm	288
MacDonald and the Holistic Approach	290
Stake's Concept of Evaluation as Portrayal	290
Illuminative Evaluation: A Social-Anthropological Paradigm	291
The Context of Educational Programs	292
Organization and Methods of Illuminative Evaluation	294
Salient Features of Illuminative Evaluation	294
Reporting and Decision Making	297



- Who Receives a Report? 297
- Communication of the Spirit of the Program 297
- Diversity Among Reports 298
- Problems Associated with Illuminative Evaluation 298
- Stenhouse's Reservations 298
- Experimental Bias 299
- Large-scale Studies 300
- Knowledge Test for Unit 9 300
- Application Exercises 305
- Questions Without Answers 309
- References 309

**10**

- Michael Scriven's Consumer-Oriented Approach to Evaluation 311**
- Objectives 313
- Evaluation Defined 313
- Critique of Other Persuasions 314
- Formative and Summative Evaluation 315
- Amateur versus Professional Evaluation 316
- Intrinsic and Payoff Evaluation 316
- Goal-free Evaluation 317
- Needs Assessment 317
- The Key Evaluation Checklist 318
- Metaevaluation 319
- Evaluation Ideologies 322
  - The Separatist Ideology 322
  - The Positivist Ideology 323
  - The Managerial Ideology 324
  - The Relativist Ideology 325
- Professionalization of Evaluation 326
- Knowledge Test for Unit 10 326
- Application Exercises 339
- Questions Without Answers 341
- References 342

- Indexes 343**

# USER'S GUIDE

## **A Word to the User**

This book is intended for the use of a broad range of persons who are concerned with assessing, assuring, or improving the quality of programs. It is for lay groups, specialists in research, administrators, teachers, evaluators, and students. These groups can use the book to develop a broad view of the approaches that are available for evaluating programs. Beyond obtaining such a general orientation, they can use it to develop a basic level of proficiency in applying one or more of the approaches. The book may be studied in the context of group instruction or pursued independently. It can be worked through from beginning to end, or its units can be used selectively as handbook chapters. The advice throughout the book is relevant for evaluating programs, projects, and materials in education, health, and welfare.

The book contains 10 units. The first and second ones, respectively, provide an overview of evaluation and an analysis of three broad approaches to evaluation. The remaining units provide in-depth treatments of eight selected models for evaluation work.

We suggest that, at the outset, you study the first two units. This study will acquaint you with the emerging evaluation field in its historical perspec-

tive. It will also help you to appreciate the complexities and issues that inhere in the field. It will introduce you to the alternative approaches that have been used and advocated. And, in all likelihood, it will help you to consider whether your present conception of what is involved in ascertaining the value of something is overly restricted, out-of-date, in some ways illogical, not as useful as another possible approach, or at least in conflict with some other views.

### **Choosing Your Own Objectives**

After you have completed the first two units, we suggest that you formulate your own objectives for using and benefiting from the remainder of the text. First, you should consider what you need to gain from further study. You may need to gain in-depth knowledge of one selected approach that is already being applied in evaluating a given program so that you can thoroughly assess it or help carry it through; or, if you or the group you are involved with have not yet made a commitment to any particular approach, you may need to study several alternatives in the process of choosing or adapting the one that will best suit your situation. To make such broad choices, we suggest that you carefully review the material in unit 2, since it provides a comparative analysis of alternative approaches.

After you have decided whether your initial focus will be on multiple units or an individual unit, we suggest that you then scan the initial pages of each unit you have tentatively decided to study. Particularly, you should look at the list of objectives to which each unit is directed. Subsequently, using your analysis to this point and the objectives listed in the pertinent units, we suggest that you list your objectives for studying each unit on a separate sheet of paper. By keeping this sheet handy during your study of a selected unit, you will be more likely to guide your study in the direction of your own assessed needs, as well as the objectives given for each unit.

### **Evaluating Your Performance**

You will find that each unit contains material designed to assist you to evaluate your own performance. This material is keyed to the objectives of the unit and includes self-scoring multiple-choice questions, application exercises with keyed responses, and discussion questions. We encourage you to work through this material. Not only will this effort provide feedback about the extent of your mastery of the reading material, but it will also

help you to increase your understanding of the contents of the unit and your ability to apply the given approach.

Beyond working through the evaluation exercises that are given, we suggest that you also engage in some self-assessment regarding the achievement of the objectives you previously set for yourself. You might list what you see as your gains regarding each objective. You might rate your attainment of each objective on a scale of none, some, considerable, and a great deal. You might list the questions that you still need to answer, and also the skills and experiences that you still need to acquire. You might list what you see as unanticipated effects on your knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a consequence of studying the material; these most likely would be positive, such as new insights, but might also be negative, such as heightened confusion. We suggest that you consider developing exercises for assessing gains that are potentially available from a study of the units. If you do that, please send us a copy, as it undoubtedly would be of use in the future when we revise this book. Finally, we suggest that you make definite plans to subject your new ideas about evaluation to field-test situations, such as planning evaluations, evaluating evaluations, or conducting workshops on evaluation.