5 Easy Tips for Growing as an Evaluator

Choose your research procedures based on the evaluation questions and circumstances

“Evaluators must often innovate and improvise as they attempt to find ways to gather credible, compelling evidence about social programs. In fact, evaluators have made many novel contributions to methodological development in applied social research in their quest to improve the evidence they can provide about social programs and their effectiveness.”

Peter H. Rossi, Mark W. Lipsey, & Gary T. Henry

There is more to evaluation than simply determining whether a program or policy is “effective”

“There is growing recognition that as a profession, evaluators have an influence in making sure voices are equitably heard. Professional judgment is both about disciplining our own role in evaluation practice as well as becoming more self-aware (and ethical) as practitioners.”

James C. McDavid, Irene Huse, & Laura R.L. Hawthorn

Sell evaluation to the client

“Evaluation is a tough sell if you are an internal evaluator who needs to convince your management or your evaluation client to commit resources to conduct program evaluations. As a strategy, you should point out to the client the importance of conducting an evaluation as part of the continuous performance improvement process.”

Seung Youn (Yonnie) Chyung

Be fully aware of your own context, as well as respondent context

“It might be very important to know, for example, that there has been a recent change in leadership or policy in an organization, which can influence survey responses.”

Sheila B. Robinson & Kimberly Firth Robinson

Be clear about the purpose of an evaluation and the distinction between evaluation and research

“I’ve learned to keep the data collection tools pegged to the evaluation questions, indicators, and purpose of the evaluation, and not let the researcher invade our process with ‘We need to know’ input, which can lead to the creation of long, unwieldy, and infeasible data collection tools.”

Thomas Archibald

Sources:

1. Evaluation: A Systematic Approach, 8e
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2. Evaluation Failures: 22 Tales of Mistakes Made and Lessons Learned
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3. Designing Quality Survey Questions
   Sheila B. Robinson & Kimberly Firth Robinson

4. 10-Step Evaluation for Training and Performance Improvement
   Seung Youn (Yonnie) Chyung

5. Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement, 3e
   James C. McDavid, Irene Huse & Laura R. L. Hawthorn

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