

Evaluation: A Key to Great Grant Proposals

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At the beginning of every evaluation

I know our
project works

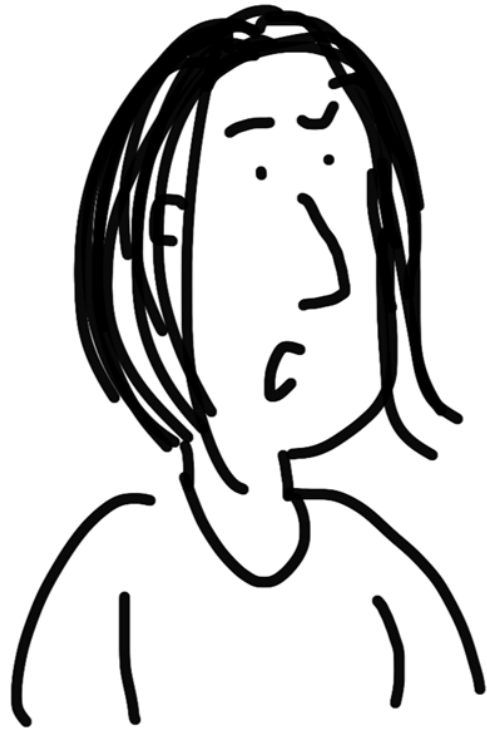


No,
you don't

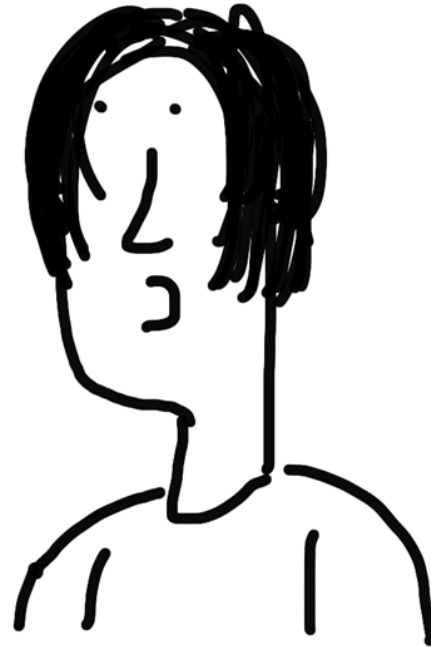


freshspectrum.com

You say your program works but why should I believe you?



Because I have evidence.



freshspectrum.com

Workshop Overview

- ▶ Evaluation in grant proposals
- ▶ Sample agency and foundation evaluation requirements
- ▶ Overview of Social Science Research Center (SSRC)
- ▶ Examples of evaluations from awarded proposals
- ▶ How the Social Science Research Center can assist with proposals
- ▶ Q&A

Evaluation in Grant Proposals

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Why Incorporate an Evaluation Plan?

(Besides the fact it is required most of the time)

- ▶ “Evaluation is not merely the accumulation and summary of data and information”
- ▶ Provides tangible evidence- What works and why
- ▶ Documents if and how goals and objectives are met and for improvement of the project
- ▶ Provides information for the improvement of a project
- ▶ Illuminates unanticipated consequences

And the results could lead to more funding!

Where do I start?

1. Outline the project
2. Research funders and funding opportunities
3. Talk to a program officer!
4. Analyze the chosen funder solicitation requirements around evaluation- What is the funder asking for?
5. Requirements may seem similar but will differ between types of funders and across agencies so one size does not fit all
6. What is the purpose of the evaluation?
7. Will the project evaluation use an internal or external evaluator (requirement, budget)

Six Phases of Project Evaluation

1. Development of a conceptual model of project and identification of key evaluation points
2. Development of evaluation questions and definition of measurable outcomes
3. Development of an evaluation design
4. Collection of data
5. Analysis of data
6. Dissemination of findings and conclusions to interested audiences

Program Evaluation

▶ Typically three types of evaluation plans

1. Qualitative Evaluation

- Are the clients satisfied with the service and that the program was of high quality
- Demonstrated by surveys and interviews

2. Quantitative Evaluation

- Reached targeted number of clients during fixed time, decrease in target numbers (crime statistics), or targeted satisfaction rating
- Outlines a detailed system for tracking the data
- Ties directly into the program or project objectives

3. Outcome Evaluation

- Behavioral or attitudinal changes in population served
- What outcomes were achieved in the lives of the clients who participated in the program or project?
- What outcomes were achieved within the community, specific systems or institutions?
- Demonstrated via pre- and post-tests and factors measured before and after the intervention

Sample Agency and Foundation Evaluation Requirements

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National Science Foundation

Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL)

▶ Required components:

1. Ensure that project gets appropriate, rigorous, external input throughout the life of the project such that the quality of the project's research and development components improve as a result.
2. Ensure accountability. Evaluation processes should address questions such as: Is the project addressing the stated goals? What was the quality of the work?

National Science Foundation

Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL)

Should (read required) be independent and rigorous enough to:

1. Influence the project's activities at appropriate junctures in order to improve the quality of its findings
2. Determine if the project addressed its intended goals and comment on the quality of the project's work

And include:

- ▶ The expertise of the evaluator or evaluation team
- ▶ Explain how that expertise relates to the goals and objectives of the project
- ▶ How the PI will incorporate the evaluation results into the ongoing management of the project

US Department of Education (First in the World Development Grants)

- ▶ Quality of the Project Evaluation: 30 points

- ▶ Required components:

1. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are specified and measurable.

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations.

3. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

4. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience of project consultants or subcontractors.

Foundation Grants

- ▶ Three main types of foundations:
 - Small, private or family foundations (many times local)
 - Large, national foundations
 - Corporate foundations
- ▶ No longer gifts...funders want evidence activities were performed and outcomes achieved
- ▶ Strong evaluation plans demonstrate to funders that the grantee is accountable for the activities proposed
 - Establish baselines
 - Do not overestimate projected outcomes- no program achieves 100% of anything
 - Use valid tools: surveys, evaluation instruments, test scores, crime data
 - Consider external evaluator

National Institutes of Health (Specific Aims- NIMH)

- ▶ Reviewers read this first!
 - ▶ *Make sure the Specific Aims are related but not dependent*
1. Rationale
 - How does this design relate to your hypotheses?
 - What is your reasoning (in detail)?
 2. Methods
 - General approach: Why is this method the best to answer the research questions?
 - Address the statistical analysis
 3. Anticipated Results
 - How will different outcomes be interpreted?
 - How do those potential outcomes and results relate back to the hypothesis?
 4. Problems and Pitfalls
 - Reality test
 - Be sure to explain potential pitfalls and alternate approaches if they occur

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Overview of the Social Science Research Center (SSRC)

“Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

Thomas Edison

Social Science Research Center

- ▶ Created in 1998 by the College of Arts and Letters.
 - ▶ Founding Director Dr. Jeff Harlow
 - ▶ Randy Gainey current Faculty Director
- ▶ Goal: a center devoted to acquiring, analyzing, and reporting information on behavior, attitudes, and social trends
- ▶ Services for:
 - ▶ ODU faculty with internal or external grant projects
 - ▶ Collaborate from proposal through implementation.
 - ▶ Help with networking across campus
 - ▶ Outside contractors (e.g. Local and State agencies)

SSRC Capacity

- ▶ Variety of data collection tools for survey research (phone, mail, web);
- ▶ Design studies, evaluations and other data collection efforts to examine policy and programmatic issues;
 - ▶ Sampling strategies
- ▶ Manage the logistics of both small and large-scale data collection efforts using a variety of techniques.
 - ▶ Utilize a variety of methodologies - surveys, interviews, focus groups

SSRC Capacity, cont.

- ▶ Can assist with analyzing quantitative and qualitative data (transcription assistance)
- ▶ Present project findings and recommendations in a variety of formats tailored to the informational needs of the target audience(s)
- ▶ Assist with evaluation of new/existing programs or interventions
- ▶ Staffing: faculty director, associate director, project coordinator, 2 research assistants and various temporary/hourly staff

SSRC Data Collection Resources

- ▶ Scannable Survey Technology - Teleform:
 - ▶ Create scannable survey forms to reduce data entry time and error
- ▶ Web Survey Technology - Qualtrics:
 - ▶ Create simple web-based survey instruments
- ▶ Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) Technology - Interviewer Command Center
 - ▶ Web-based



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This is a survey for families receiving Early Intervention services. Your responses will help guide efforts to improve services and results for children and families. For each statement below, please select one of the following response choices: very strongly disagree, strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, very strongly agree. You may select Does Not Apply, the last column, for any item that you feel does not apply to your family. In responding to each statement, think about your experience and your family's experience with Early Intervention services during the past year.

Impact of Early Intervention Services on Your Family

During the past year, Early Intervention services have helped me and/or my family:

Table with 22 rows of statements and 7 columns of response options: Very Strongly Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, Very Strongly Agree, Does Not Apply.



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Scannable Survey Forms

Automated data tabulation increases accuracy and reduces cost.

Web Surveys

- ▶ Qualtrics - Probably quickest and least expensive form of data collection BUT not suitable for all research
 - ▶ Not the best method for trying to reach the general public
 - ▶ Better for when you have a known population with email addresses (ODU students, employees, professional organizations, etc.)
- ▶ Gubernatorial Poll example

Telephone Surveys

- ▶ The Center is equipped with a computer assisted telephone interview system (CATI).
 - ▶ 10 Station CATI Lab (+4)
- ▶ The CATI system gives the capability to conduct telephone interviews at the local and national level, to access data and results for a given interview at any point during the project, and to transfer data to one of many useable formats for data analysis.

SSRC CATI Lab



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Examples of Evaluations from Awarded Proposals

Examples of ODU faculty projects

- ▶ **Fleet and Family Services Community Capacity Study (Public Administration/Urban Policy & US Navy):**
 - ▶ Designed a study to gather information on the Hampton Roads community's ability to serve transitioning military members.
 - ▶ Self-administered (pen/paper) survey, web survey, face-to-face interviews, telephone follow-ups
 - ▶ Also developed a community capacity handbook for Fleet and Family with instructions about how to conduct a community capacity study.

Examples of ODU Faculty Projects

- ▶ **AccessEU Program Evaluation - YR 1 (Regina Karp and Larry Filer (ODU); The European Commission) - Development of program evaluation and data collection instruments:**
 - ▶ Survey data collection, focus groups, data entry, data analysis, and reporting.
 - ▶ Ten (10) AccessEU events were evaluated over 18 months.
 - ▶ Events included public school teacher seminars, speaker series, graduate courses, Model United Nations conference, and a study abroad trip.
 - ▶ Data was used to apply for an additional grant - PIs were successful in obtaining YR 2 monies.

ACCESSEU EVALUATION, CONT.

- ▶ Evaluation instruments included questions about:
 - ▶ How they heard about the event,
 - ▶ Quality of speakers/presenters and information shared,
 - ▶ Relevance of information shared to field of study/occupation,
 - ▶ How they would use information from the events,
 - ▶ Demographic and geographic “reach”
- ▶ For teacher workshops - pre/post-test to measure changes/improvement in knowledge
 - ▶ Self-ratings of knowledge
 - ▶ “Quiz” questions regarding workshop content
- ▶ Study Abroad
 - ▶ Focus groups with students before & after travel

Examples of ODU Faculty Projects

- ▶ **Acting for Scientists - Jenifer Alonzo (A&L), Fred Dobbs (Sciences)** - investigate how early career researchers rate their effectiveness and challenges as presenters.
 - ▶ Week long workshops during the summer
 - ▶ Daily evaluation surveys completed to assess effectiveness of various presentation/acting exercises
- ▶ A post-workshop web survey which was administered in the fall following the summer workshops.
 - ▶ Gathered additional feedback from workshop participants about how they have used the tools and exercises in their daily communication and for professional/scholarly presentations.

Examples of ODU Faculty Projects

- ▶ **Working Caregivers- ARDRAF - Karen Karlowicz (Health Sciences)**
 - ▶ Focus groups and interviews with working caregivers for those with dementia
 - Assisted with recruitment, moderating focus groups, and transcription
 - ▶ Qualitative data collected will inform larger scale quantitative web-based survey
 - Consult on web-based survey instrument and program web survey instrument
 - ▶ Long-range plans to expand the study of dementia caregivers to examine implementation of workplace policies in organizations across Virginia and other states

How the Social Science Research Center Can Help With Proposals

Benefits of using SSRC

- ▶ Assist with designing evaluation methods, data collection plans, human subjects review/IRB, and sampling
- ▶ Capacity to collect data with a variety of data collection tools/methods
 - ▶ Experience collecting data “at a distance”
- ▶ Help develop budget for evaluation/data collection component
- ▶ Neutrality of SSRC - PI not involved in evaluation data collection
- ▶ SSRC summarizes all evaluation data - provide final evaluation report

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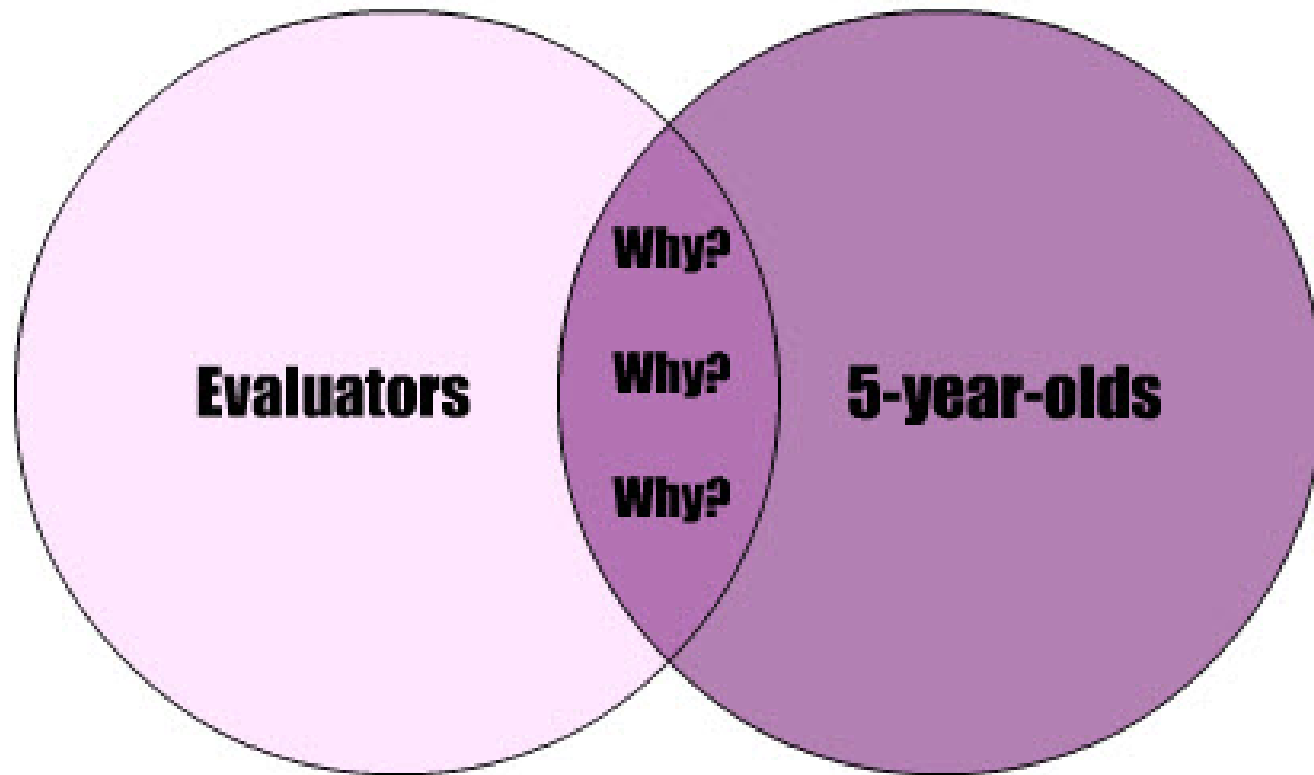
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What do evaluators share with children? One timeless question...



Questions?

Presentation Resources

- [*The 2010 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation*](#). National Science Foundation Directorate for Education and Human Resources (2010)
- [*A Guide for Non-Profit Organizations on Proposal Writing*](#). Ellen Green
- [*W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook*](#) (2010)
- [*Designing Education Projects: A Comprehensive Approach to Needs Assessment, Project Planning and Implementation, and Evaluation*](#). US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Education (2009, Second Edition)
- [National Institutes of Mental Health](#)
- [*The Nine Key Elements of Successful Proposals*](#). Katz, Jay (2000, Michigan State University Libraries)
- [*Writing an Evaluation Plan*](#). Presentation of University of Texas, El Paso Office of Research & Sponsored Projects (2012)