

CHAPTER 2. PLANNING AN EVALUATION

1. The first step in planning an evaluation is to
 - a. suggest outcome measurement instruments to the staff.
 - * b. identify the stakeholders of the evaluation.
 - c. try to figure out how the evaluation could be done as an experiment.
 - d. caution the program director that the evaluation will be tough.
2. Evaluators must be very careful to be sure that they understand the actual purpose of a request for an evaluation because
 - * a. many stakeholders talk about evaluation in terms that sound like summative evaluation when they really want to improve the program.
 - b. most program staff members are too willing to disrupt the service program to accommodate the evaluation.
 - c. the demand for evaluation is so widespread that program staff are eager to participate.
 - d. stakeholders are eager to apply all recommendations from an evaluator.
3. Program evaluation, like other types of applied social science research, differs from basic research in that
 - a. validity is irrelevant in applied research although reliability is critical to both.
 - b. reliable measurement is irrelevant in applied research.
 - * c. there are definite time limits for completing applied research projects.
 - d. program participants cannot refuse to provide data.
4. A skill that is more important in program evaluation compared to basic social science research is
 - * a. estimating accurately how much time each phase of the project will require.
 - b. being able to plan valid research designs.
 - c. selecting measures of behavior that are reliable.
 - d. molding the project to answer questions relevant to social theories.
5. "Evaluability assessment" refers to the
 - a. ability of the program managers to fund an evaluator.
 - b. knowing how to carry out statistical analyses.
 - c. reliability of the measures of program outcome that are chosen.
 - * d. likelihood that a valid evaluation can be completed.
6. A major failing of many evaluations is that the evaluator never learned
 - a. what the outcome measures were.
 - * b. why the program activities were expected to lead to the desired outcomes.
 - c. who was to receive the report and use the findings.
 - d. how the analysis was done or what the statistical findings were.

7. Understanding the conceptual foundation of a program provides an evaluator with
- * a. hints about how the program services are expected to lead to the outcomes that the staff and director hope to achieve.
 - b. some indication of how much impact the evaluation will actually have on the organization sponsoring the program.
 - c. some indication that the evaluation will really have an effect on the people who need the services of the program being evaluated.
 - d. the expected conflicts between the evaluator and the management that may well impact the quality of the project.
8. An evaluation of high quality usually _____ than one of lower quality.
- a. is based on data from a greater number of program participants
 - b. was designed with input from fewer stakeholder groups
 - * c. is based on data from a more representative sample of program participants
 - d. employs less costly surveys and questionnaires
9. The data collection is
- a. best turned over to the program staff since they are on the scene and can easily handle the activity.
 - b. to be handled by someone without direct knowledge of the setting of the program since it is usually a rather mechanical process.
 - * c. likely to be corrupted even by well-meaning program staff members if they are permitted to control data collection.
 - d. fairly simple since confidentiality is not an issue in applied social research projects.
10. A written proposal outlining the steps to be followed in carrying out a planned program evaluation
- * a. should always be prepared.
 - b. can be omitted if the evaluation is conducted internally.
 - c. should always bind the evaluator to exactly the procedures described.
 - d. cannot realistically be prepared since so many unplanned events impinge upon program evaluations.
11. Resistance to an evaluation is likely to be greatest when the evaluation is
- a. a formative evaluation.
 - b. a cost-effectiveness evaluation.
 - c. an outcome evaluation.
 - * d. a summative evaluation.
12. Small improvements in the achievements of program participants
- * a. can be very important if the program affects many people.
 - b. are seldom of interest to serious program managers.
 - c. cannot be justified in a politically-charged environment.
 - d. are often all that is expected by program staff members.

13. Many members of the staff of human service programs resist program evaluations in their facilities because

- a. evaluation methods cannot be sensitive to their concerns.
- * b. it may appear that they are losing control of their program.
- c. their jobs are on the line.
- d. evaluators have a way of taking over.

14. One way for evaluators to mollify the critics of a program evaluation project is

- a. to demonstrate clear analytical skills.
- b. to mold the project design to avoid any points of concern.
- * c. to listen to the worries of the critics and relieve all concerns that are founded on misperceptions of program evaluation.
- d. for the evaluator to ally him/herself with the facility management, who will see to it that the correct procedures are followed.

15. Goal-free evaluation refers to evaluations that are conducted

- a. on programs with no goals.
- b. when program managers cannot describe their goals.
- c. when the program is designed to show that the government is “doing something” but no one expects improved outcomes.
- * d. when evaluators want to examine the program without their own expectations being affected by knowledge of the program’s goals.

16. One way to reduce fear and resistance to evaluation activities is to reassure staff that

- a. the larger community will be better off knowing when a program is ineffective.
- b. program participants (i.e. the clients) have a right to know how effective the program is.
- * c. documenting success would increase the organization’s commitment to the program.
- d. less than half of outcome evaluations result in the curtailment of a program.

17. The social science model for program evaluation served to

- a. get rid of a lot of ineffective services.
- b. demonstrate that a non-significant statistical test showed that the program was ineffective.
- c. introduce more creativity into program evaluation methods.
- * d. introduce additional rigor into program evaluation practices.

18. Using expert opinion as a form of program evaluation is especially useful when

- * a. the program is complex and there are few clear objective criteria of effectiveness.
- b. there are readily observable outcomes from a program.
- c. it is essential that the causal connection between the program and the outcome be definitely understood.
- d. new medications are being evaluated.

19. Finding discrepancies between client needs and services offered or between projected outcomes and achieved outcomes

- a. shows why a service ought not be supported.
- b. identifies ways to improve a program.
- * c. reveals the issues that must be faced in making program improvements.
- d. shows that evaluators have done their work.

20. Inappropriate reasons to evaluate a program include

- a. documenting program activities to satisfy a funding agency.
- b. demonstrating effectiveness prior to seeking a new source of funding.
- c. seeking more efficient ways to provide social and educational services.
- * d. commissioning an evaluation to deflect criticism and postponing a decision.

21. Considerable assistance can be obtained in planning a program evaluation from

- a. published evaluations.
- b. the Internet.
- c. informal conversations with other evaluators.
- * d. all of the above

22. An evaluation to focus on participants who have achieved the program goals

- a. is usually a good basis for a summative evaluation.
- b. is inherently dishonest.
- c. lies at the heart of the social science model.
- * d. is called the Success Case Method.

Essay Questions

23. Describe how one would discuss random assignment to treatment or non-treatment conditions with a group of people who applied for a new oversubscribed job-training program.

24. How would the difference between formative and summative evaluations affect the negotiations with program staff and other stakeholders in the planning of an evaluation?

25. Discuss the advantages of involving the relevant stakeholders in the planning of an evaluation.

26. If during the planning of an evaluation, an evaluator discovers that critical stakeholder groups differ in their views of central objectives of a program, what are the best courses of action for the evaluator?

27. What can evaluators do to encourage stakeholders to take additional responsibility for programs in which they are involved?

CHAPTER 3. DEVELOPING AND USING A THEORY OF THE PROGRAM

1. The selection of indexes of program effectiveness is usually difficult because
 - a. program staff members refuse to specify what changes are to occur in their clients.
 - * b. different stakeholders have different views about what the most important criteria of program success are.
 - c. program effectiveness cannot be measured.
 - d. it is unethical to measure program effectiveness when participants need the program's services.
2. When there is disagreement about the choice of the criteria of program effectiveness, the best procedure for program evaluators would be to
 - a. take over the choice of criteria.
 - b. use the criteria preferred by the stakeholder who is funding the evaluation.
 - c. use the criteria preferred by the program staff.
 - * d. arrange discussions among stakeholders to find common concerns and to gain agreement to measure a variety of criteria.
3. The program goals are usually described to evaluators because
 - * a. goals help evaluators to determine what variables to measure.
 - b. evaluators confine their attention to the goals that program sponsors can describe.
 - c. it is impossible to carry out any form of evaluation when an evaluator does have not an explicit statement of goals.
 - d. program goals will show evaluators which negative side-effects should be studied.
4. The criteria used in a program evaluation may include an assessment of how completely the program has been implemented
 - a. whenever evaluators doubt the honesty of the program staff.
 - b. whenever severe side-effects are likely to lead the staff to reduce the strength of the program.
 - * c. because practical difficulties can lead well-intentioned people to depart from program plans.
 - d. because stakeholder groups usually view each other with hostility and suspicion.
5. In outcome evaluations, the achievement of intermediate goals is often examined because
 - a. it shows that evaluators understand the program.
 - b. staff members insist on measuring such criteria.
 - c. success in achieving intermediate outcomes can often make up for failure to achieve outcome goals in summative evaluations.
 - * d. this aids evaluators to learn whether program activities do indeed contribute to changes in the participants even when the achievement of the ultimate outcomes is minimal.