We are in the process of contacting all PIs to confirm email addresses and grant information. For the past 15 years, 95 percent of ATE PIs have participated in the survey—thanks in advance for your cooperation! You can preview the survey questions, review FAQs, and download reports and data snapshots based on survey findings from evalu-ate.org/annual_survey./

Congratulations to EvaluATE team member Emma Perk!
Her daughter, Melanie Jayne Perk, was born on November 26.

EvaluATE Webinars: 60 or 90 minutes?
Email your preference to krystin.s.martens@wmich.edu

The ATE program is community college-based, and as such EvaluATE places a priority on meeting the needs of this constituency. To help ensure the relevancy and utility of its resources, EvaluATE has convened a Community College Liaison Panel (CCLP). CCLP members Michael Lesiecki, Marilyn Barger, Jane Ostrander, and Gordon Snyder are tasked with keeping the EvaluATE team tuned into the needs and concerns of 2-year college stakeholders and engaging the ATE community in the review and pilot testing of EvaluATE-produced materials.

These resources distill relevant elements of evaluation theory, principles, and best practices so that a user can quickly understand and apply them for a specific evaluation-related task. They are intended to support members of the ATE community to enhance the quality of their evaluations.

The CCLP’s role is to coordinate a three-phase review process. CCLP members conduct a first-level review of an EvaluATE resource. The EvaluATE team revises it based on the CCLP’s feedback, then each of the four CCLP members reaches out to diverse members of the ATE community—PIs, grant developers, evaluators, and others—to review the material and provide confidential, structured feedback and suggestions. After another round of revisions, the CCLP engages another set of ATE stakeholders to actually try out the resource to ensure it “works” as intended in the real world.

Following this pilot testing, EvaluATE finalizes the resource for wide dissemination.

The CCLP has shepherded two resources through the entire review process: the ATE Evaluation Primer and ATE Evaluation Planning Checklist. In the hopper for review in the next few months are the ATE Logic Model Template and Evaluation Planning Matrix, Evaluation Questions Checklist, ATE Evaluation Reporting Checklist, and Professional Development Feedback Survey Template. In addition, CCLP members are leading the development of a Guide to ATE Evaluation Management—by PIs for PIs.

The CCLP invites anyone interested in ATE evaluation to participate in the review process. For a few hours of your time, you’ll get a first look at and tryout of new resources. And your inputs will help shape and strengthen the ATE evaluation community. We also welcome recommendations of tools and materials that others have developed that would be of interest to the ATE community.

To get involved, email CCLP Director Mike Lesiecki at mlesiecki@gmail.com. Tell him you would like to help make EvaluATE be the go-to evaluation resource for people like yourself.
EVALUATION terminology

REAL QUESTIONS

From ANCOVA to Z Scores
The Evaluation Glossary App features more than 600 terms related to evaluation and assessment. Designed for both evaluators and those who work with evaluators, the app provides three ways to access the terms. The first way allows the user to browse alphabetically, like a dictionary. The second option is to view the terms by one of eight categories: 1) data analysis; 2) data collection; 3) ethics and guidelines; 4) evaluation design; 5) miscellaneous; 6) program planning; 7) reporting and utilization; and 8) types of evaluation. The categories are a great starting point for users who are less familiar with evaluation lingo. The final option is a basic search function, which can be useful to anyone who needs a quick definition for an evaluation term. Each entry provides a citation for the definition’s source and cross-references related terms in the glossary.

App author: Kylie Hutchinson of Community Solutions. Free for Android, iOS. Available wherever you purchase apps for your Android or Apple mobile device or from communitysolutions.ca/web/evaluation-glossary.

by JASON BURKHARDT

REAL ANSWERS

What evaluation models do you recommend for ATE evaluations? by LORI WINGATE

Evaluators in any context should have working knowledge of multiple evaluation models. Models provide conceptual frameworks for determining the types of questions to be addressed, which stakeholders should be involved and how, the kinds of evidence needed, and other important considerations for an evaluation. However, evaluation practitioners rarely adhere strictly to any one model (Christie, 2003). Rather, they draw on them selectively. Below are a few popular models:

EvaluATE has previously highlighted the Kirkpatrick Model, developed by Donald Kirkpatrick for evaluating training effectiveness in business contexts. It provides a useful framework for focusing an evaluation of any type of professional development activity. It calls for evaluating a training intervention on four levels of impact (reaction, learning, behavior, and high-level results). A limitation is that it does not direct evaluators to consider whether the right audiences were reached or assess the quality of an intervention’s content and implementation—only its effects. See http://bit.ly/1fkdKfh.

Etienne Wenger reconceptualized the Kirkpatrick “levels” for evaluating value creation in communities of practice. He provides useful suggestions for the types of evidence that could be gathered for evaluating community of practice impacts at multiple levels. However, the emphasis on identifying types of “value” could lead those using this approach to overlook evidence of harm and/or overestimate net benefits. See http://bit.ly/18x5a1c.

Three models that figure prominently in most formal evaluation training programs include Daniel Stufflebeam’s CIPP Model, Michael Scriven’s Key Evaluation Checklist, and Michael Quinn Patton’s Utilization-Focused Evaluation, described below. These authors have distilled their models into checklists—see http://bit.ly/1fSXu5H.

Stufflebeam’s CIPP Model is especially popular for education and human service evaluations. CIPP calls for evaluators to assess a project’s Context, Input, Process, and Products (the latter encompasses effectiveness, sustainability, and transportability). CIPP evaluations ask What needs to be done? How should it be done? Is it being done? Did it succeed?

Scriven’s Key Evaluation Checklist calls for assessing a project’s processes, outcomes, and costs. It emphasizes the importance of identifying the needs being served by a project and determining how well those needs were met. Especially useful is the list of 21 sources of values/criteria to consider when evaluating pretty much anything.

Patton’s Utilization-Focused Evaluation calls for planning an evaluation around the information needs of “primary intended users” of the evaluation, i.e., those who are in a position to make decisions based on the evaluation results. He provides numerous practical tips for engaging stakeholders to maximize an evaluation’s utility.

This short list barely scratches the surface—for an overview of 22 different models, see Stufflebeam (2001). A firm grounding in evaluation theory will enhance any evaluator’s ability to design and conduct evaluations that are useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate (see jsee.org).


A common question EvaluATE has been asked about the ATE survey (conducted annually since 2000, with an average response rate of 95 percent) is, “Why can’t you just use the information we provided in our annual report?”

Although there is overlap between the information required for the annual ATE survey and the annual reports that grantees submit through Research.gov, the survey is tailored to ATE activities and outcomes. In contrast, the Research.gov reporting system is set up to accommodate a vast array of NSF-funded endeavors—from polar research expeditions to television programming to the development technical degree programs. Also, Research.gov reports are narrative reports that are delivered to program officers in PDF format. As such, there is no way to aggregate information submitted via Research.gov into a report about the overall ATE program, which is what NSF needs to supports the program’s accountability to Congress.

Although they serve distinct purposes, much of the information asked for in the ATE Survey can and should be reported in ATE grantees’ annual reports to NSF. So, EvaluATE has developed a new resource to help streamline reporting activities of ATE grantees. We’ve extracted information from Research.gov so that PIs can see all the information required in annual reports in one place (rather than having to click through the multi-layered system or strain their eyes viewing the screenshots in Research.gov’s Project Reports Preview PDF document). The document also identifies items from the ATE Survey that are relevant to various annual report sections, so PIs can maximize the use of the data collected about their projects. We welcome your feedback on this draft resource (see p. 1). You may download a draft from evalu-ate.org/annual_survey/.

**The PI Guide to Working with Evaluators**
(Originally published as a blog at ltd.edc.org/strong-pievaluator-partnerships-users-guide)

Leslie Goodyear, M.S., Ph.D., is a Principal Research Scientist at EDC. From 2009-12, Leslie was on loan from EDC to NSF where she served as a program officer in the Division of Research on Learning.

Evaluation can be a daunting task for PIs. It can seem like the evaluator speaks another language, and the stakes for the project can seem very high. Evaluators face their own challenges. Often working with tight budgets and timeframes, expectations are high that they deliver both rigor and relevance, along with evidence of project impact. With all this and more in the mix, it’s no surprise that tension can mount and miscommunication can drive animosity and stress.

As the head of evaluation for the ITEST Learning Resource Center and as a NSF program officer, I saw dysfunctional relationships between PIs and their evaluators contribute to missed deadlines, missed opportunities, and frustration on all sides. As an evaluator, I am deeply invested in building evaluators’ capacity to communicate their work and in helping program staff understand the value of evaluation and what it brings to their programs. I was concerned that these dysfunctional relationships would thwart the potential of evaluation to provide vital information for program staff to make decisions and demonstrate the value of their programs.

To help strengthen PI/evaluator collaborations, I’ve done a lot of what I called “evaluation marriage counseling” for PI/evaluator pairs. Through these “counseling sessions,” I learned that evaluation relationships are not so different from any other relationships. Expectations aren’t always made clear, communication often breaks down, and, more than anything else, all relationships need care and feeding.

As a program officer, I had the chance to help shape and create a new resource that supports PIs and evaluators in forming strong working relationships. Rick Bonney of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and I developed a guide to working with evaluators, written by PIs, for PIs. Although it was designed for the Informal Science Education community, the lessons translate to just about any situation in which program staff are working with evaluators. The Principal Investigator’s Guide: Managing Evaluation in Informal STEM Education Projects is available at http://bit.ly/1j28nTt
**Upcoming Webinars**

**Orientation to ATE Survey 2014**  
January 22, 2014 | 1-2:30 p.m. ET

In this webinar, EvaluATE staff will help ATE grantees prepare for the upcoming annual ATE survey (which launches on February 18). We will provide a brief overview of the survey and administration process, address frequently asked questions (both substantive and technical), and clarify definitions. We will also present a crosswalk of ATE data that compares information grantees need to include in the annual survey, their NSF annual reports submitted through research.gov, as well as individual project-level evaluations.

We strongly recommend that attendees preview the survey prior to the webinar (see evalu-ate.org/annual_survey/). Attendees are also encouraged to send questions about the survey ahead of time to Corey Smith at corey.d.smith@wmich.edu.

**Right-Sizing Evaluation for ATE Small Grants**  
March 19, 2014 | 1-2:30 p.m. ET

When developing evaluation plans for NSF ATE projects, one size doesn’t fit all. How can meaningful evaluation plans be developed for “Small Grants for Institutions New to ATE” or other small-budget grant proposals? Small budgets create unique challenges in identifying impact and effectiveness of grant-funded work. Staff from EvaluATE and Mentor-Connect will provide information on approaches and strategies to plan and implement effective evaluations of smaller projects, including budget considerations for implementing these evaluation approaches.

To learn more about Mentor-Connect, see www.teachingtechnicians.org/MentorConnectLanding.aspx

Register at www.evalu-ate.org/events  
Hosted by our friends at MATEC Networks (matecnetworks.org)