Getting Started With Your ATE Evaluation

November 17, 2010

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Introductions

Stephanie Evergreen
Lori Wingate
Peggie Weeks
Elaine Craft

Moderator  Presenter  Presenter  Discussant

Mark Viquesney
Florence-Darlington Technical College
By the end of this webinar, you will

- Understand the role evaluation should play in your ATE project
- Have clearer expectations about what your evaluator should do for you
- Know what to expect to see in your evaluation report and what you should do with it
- Know where to turn if you need more guidance about your ATE evaluation
The Role of Evaluation in Your ATE Grant

Rate your past experience with evaluation:
A. Very positive
B. Somewhat positive
C. Somewhat negative
D. Very negative
How do you think about evaluation?

How do you think about evaluation?
Evaluation Purposes

- **Formative Evaluation**
  - Learn how the project could be improved as it is implemented
- **Summative Evaluation**
  - Provide evidence of the quality and impact of your achievements
- **Accountability**
  - Document what you did with the grant money

Formative Evaluation

Evaluator...

- provides frequent feedback
- guides project staff in understanding and using results
- takes time to learn about the project and its context
Formative Evaluation

Project staff...

- make time for evaluation
- are open to hearing negative findings
- use feedback to inform decision making

ATE Intellectual Merit Criterion

Is the evaluation likely to provide useful information to the project and others?
Formative Evaluation

- Are we reaching the right people?
- Are we meeting industry needs?
**Formative Evaluation**

Are our partners implementing the project as intended?

**Summative Evaluation**

The PI should establish claims as to the project’s effectiveness, and the evaluative activities should provide evidence on the extent to which the claims are realized.

—2010 ATE Program Solicitation
Summative Evaluation

Impacts...
- are changes in knowledge, skills, abilities, performance, practices, or policies,
- show up at the individual, program, institution, organization, regional, or national level
- occur in the short term, long term, or in between

Accountability

Documentation of...
- What you did
- Who you reached
- Who you worked with
- What you produced (outputs)
Accountability

Create a project vita
- Mission
- Goals
- Funding
- Activities
- Products
- Staff
- Students
- Contributors & collaborators
- Consultants

www.evalu-ate.org/about_us

Evaluation Information Uses

Annual reports to NSF
- Participants
- Activities & findings
- Publications & products
- Evaluation results
Evaluation Information Uses

Annual survey of ATE grantees
For example,
- # of students and their education outcomes
- # of professional development participants

www.evalu-ate.org/annual-survey

Evaluation Information Uses

ATE Projects/Centers Impact book/website
- Data on student impact
- Data on workforce impact

www.atecenters.org
www.ateprojectimpact.org
Evaluation Information Uses

Proposals for continuation funding

- Results from prior NSF support
- Demonstrate past achievements
- Show need for project continuation

Evaluation Purposes & Reporting Mechanisms

Formative Evaluation
How is the project doing and how can it improve?
- Formative report to project staff and other stakeholders

Summative Evaluation
What is the quality and impact of the project?
- Summative report to project staff & others (including NSF in some format)
- FastLane/annual report to NSF
- ATE Impacts book
- Annual ATE survey

Accountability
What was done, who was served, who contributed, what are the outputs?
- Summative report to project staff & others (including NSF in some format)
- FastLane/annual report to NSF
- ATE Impacts book
- Annual ATE survey
Advice from the Field

Peggie

Set up regular data collection milestones or checkpoints so that data is being collected as part of the normal process of carrying out the grant and doesn't have to be ‘bolted’ onto the process of the grant after it is underway.

Karl Kapp
- Professor, Bloomsburg University
- Evaluator for 6 ATE grants

Discussion

Elaine Craft
- Director, SCATE Center of Excellence
- Advisor, American Association of Community Colleges
- Background in chemical engineering
Working with an Evaluator

Lori

Internal – External Evaluation

Monitor ...
- Who is the project reaching/serving?
- How many?
- What is their satisfaction?

Advise...
- Is the project on target in terms of addressing needs?
- Is the project taking advantage of known best practices?

Assess
- What is the project’s impact?
- What is the quality of the project’s deliverables?
30 standards for ensuring the
Utility
Feasibility
Propriety
Accuracy & Accountability
of educational program evaluations

www.jcsee.org
Be an Informed Consumer

Canadian Evaluation Society
Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice

- Reflective Practice
- Technical Practice
- Situational Practice
- Management Practice
- Interpersonal Practice

www.evaluationcanada.ca
→ “Becoming Credentialed”

Advice from the Field

“Learn something about evaluation so you can have informed conversations and a better understanding of how and why data needs/should be collected.”

Jane Ostrander
- ATE PI & National Visiting Committee chairperson
Clarify Needs & Expectations

For example...
- What will be evaluated?
- How will the client facilitate access to information?
- What rules govern communication between the evaluator and other stakeholders?

www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists

Communicate

- Get regular updates
- Keep your evaluator informed
- No surprises from either side
- Meet face-to-face, over the phone, or via video-chat
Define Boundaries

- Project Design & Execution
  - Project staff do internal evaluation

- Project Evaluation
  - Evaluators make recommendations for project improvement

Define Boundaries

- Disseminates evaluation reports
- Communicates with NSF about project & evaluation
- Helps evaluator understand context and evaluation needs

- Writes evaluation report & gives feedback
- Collects data independently
- Protect identities of informants
If your evaluation involves collecting data from human subjects:

- It may be necessary to obtain Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) approval.
- HSIRBs ensure that researchers comply with Federal guidelines.

**Definitions from Federal regulations:**

**Research** is a systematic investigation ... designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

**Human subject** is a living individual about whom an investigator ... conducting research obtains data through intervention or interaction ... or identifiable private information.

**Interpretations** vary by institution.
Typical HSIRB requirements:

- Participation in research must be voluntary
- Participants must be informed about
  - who will have access to the information they provide
  - the risks/benefits of participating
  - the purpose of the research

What HSIRB means for projects:

- Need to clarify upfront *who will own the data*
- Obtaining HSIRB approval takes TIME
- May impose limitations on how questions are asked and how data are collected and reported
“What should we expect to receive from our evaluator?”

— Participant in the 2010 ATE PI Conference
Getting Started Workshop

Evaluation Deliverables

- A written evaluation plan
- Opportunities to review and provide feedback on draft plans and materials
- Interim reports
- Annual reports
- Knowledge and insights you could not have obtained on your own
Advice from the Field

The evaluator is the expert in evaluation but you are the expert on your project. If you feel that the evaluation is not providing the information you need, then talk to your evaluator. Do it immediately. ... You can change evaluators but first, communicate, communicate, communicate.

Jane Ostrander
ATE PI & National Visiting Committee chairperson

Discussion

Elaine Craft
- Director, SCATE Center of Excellence
- Advisor, National Science Foundation
- External evaluator for ATE grants
Evaluation Reporting

- Project staff review & provide feedback on drafts
- Evaluator is responsive to feedback
- Evaluator facilitates understanding and use of results

www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists
Effective Reports

- Succinct
- Use headings and graphics to draw attention to key information
- Organized according to a hierarchy of interest

Report Contents

- Executive summary (~1-page)
- Brief project overview
- Evaluation questions & results (claims, evidence, & conclusions)
- Recommendations (if desired)
- Technical appendix
**Audiences**

- **Evaluator**
- **PI**
- **Program Officer**
- **Other Project Stakeholders**, e.g.: partners, advisors, participants, host administrators

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**Reporting to NSF**

- Ask your program officer how he/she prefers the evaluation results to be conveyed.

- Ways of reporting evaluation results to your program officer:
  - Complete original report
  - Original executive summary
  - PI’s summary in annual report
  - Evaluators’ summary in annual report
Discussion

Elaine Craft
- Director, SCATE Center of Excellence
- Vice Chair, South Carolina’s Governor’s Math and Science Advisory Board
- Mentor for new ATE PIs

Using the ATE Evaluation Resource Center

www.evalu-ate.org
Visit Us Online

**Visit our Resource Library**
Evaluate's resource library contains materials related to evaluation theory, methodology, practice, and use. We have selected materials that are especially pertinent to the evaluation of ATE projects and centers. We invite you to help us expand the library by recommending or submitting evaluation resources you have found useful in your evaluation work.

**Join our listserv!**

evalu-ate.org/community
Newsletters

- Feature articles by experienced ATE PIs and evaluators
- Q & A
- Definitions & discussion of evaluation terms
- Resource highlights

Digital Resource Library

What you’ll find here:

- Evaluation Primer for ATE grantees
- Logic model template
- Workshop materials
- Checklists to guide evaluation work
- and much more...

Search by: evaluation task | ATE topic | author | format | keyword
Webinars

- Upcoming webinars
- Past webinars, including
  - Recordings
  - Handouts
  - Slides

Topics: proposal writing | reporting & use | surveys | logic models

ATE Evaluator Directory

- Connecting ATE PIs with qualified & experienced evaluators

Search by: location | discipline | project type | keyword
Annual Survey

- Survey form in PDF
- FAQs
- Past reports

Archive

Visit evalu-ate.org/resources
Keyword search: getting started
Upcoming Webinars

January 19
Making Sense of Your Evaluation Data

March 16
Claims + Evidence: Assessing the Impact of Your ATE Grant

Register at www.evalu-ate.org/events

Thank You!
## Contributors

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