

NEWEST resources

Evaluat|e is always looking for additional ways to help ATE projects and centers improve their evaluation endeavors.

We recently added new materials to our website. Find these at resources.eval-u-ate.org:

Search “impact” to find our May webinar on how to increase the usefulness of evaluation. That’s why we evaluate, after all. View the whole webinar or download just the slides.

Curious about how to make your advisory committee more effective? Search for “advisory panels” to find a handy checklist and meeting best practices.

Want support for your evaluator to attend our preconference workshop? Check out the info and application materials at eval-u-ate.org/events. And see the back page for a description of the workshop.

We now have a Facebook page and a LinkedIn group! Join us by searching for “Evaluat|e.”

Conduit editor: Stephanie Evergreen



Beyond Evaluation

Evaluat|e webinars support formative learning for projects.

We are Synergy Innovation Coach Leaders, part of a validation project sponsored by NSF: Research, Practice And Transformation through Synergy. An overarching goal of the Synergy Project is to create deep and meaningful change in the way ATE centers engage with the education community.



Joyce LaTulippe, Cambridge College



By Terryll Bailey, The Allison Group &

We help our Innovation Coaches ask new and challenging questions about how best to develop and implement their center projects as more than traditional dissemination. We are asking them to fundamentally rethink how their projects impact others in profound and consequential ways, leading to broader-based adoptions as change efforts that take hold in organizations. In this way, our coaches are charting new territory in their centers, acting as change agents who question the status quo.

Part of our process of working with the coaches has been to provide them with research and tools to think about and design their projects differently. One important tool has been the logic model. We have facilitated numerous conversations on the topic of logic models. In advance of one online session, we asked our coaches to view the Evaluat|e webinar *Evaluation Tools: Logic Models, Success Indicators and Standards of Performance*. It gave us clear and straightforward information about logic models as “road maps” to the planning and evaluation of successful projects. Having this video on demand (delivered through Evaluat|e’s partnership with Maricopa Community College using Mark Viquesney’s technical expertise) also has allowed us to rewind and revisit important concepts, ideas, and examples of logic models and the performance metrics used to define and align project inputs and activities with outcomes and impact.

Our Professional Learning Community finds our coaches revising and updating their logic models to reflect changes in their thinking, *and* they are using more of the language of logic models to persuade others about the value propositions of their projects.

The Evaluat|e videos are a cornerstone and huge resource for our project to help us meet our Synergy Project goal of creating deep and meaningful change in the way ATE centers engage with the education community.

Evaluat|e’s webinars can be found at resources.eval-u-ate.org. For the one referenced here, keyword search “logic models.” Sign up for upcoming webinars at eval-u-ate.org/events. Questions? Comments? Contact Terryll (tbailey@theallisongroup.com) or Joyce (joyce.latulippe@gmail.com) or check out the Synergy home page <http://sites.google.com/site/synergy2010group/Home>

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EVALUATION terminology

Outputs

Outputs are tangible, countable products that occur as a result of a project activity. They typically can be counted the moment an activity ends. If the activity is producing curriculum materials, the output would be the number produced. Outputs are fairly easy to assess.

Outcomes

What changes or impacts do you expect to see from your work? These are outcomes. Outcomes usually cannot be determined until well after a project activity ends. They come after outputs. Classroom changes that result from the curricular materials you produced would be an outcome. These are a bit more challenging to assess.

Evaluat|e is operated by the Western Michigan University Evaluation Center, a leader in developing the evaluation discipline and a long-time contributor to the improvement of National Science Foundation evaluations.

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REAL QUESTIONS

REAL ANSWERS

How can we share methods & tools to make reliable cross-site comparisons?

The EVALU-ATE listserv.

Back at the 2009 ATE PI conference, Marion Goldstein, evaluator for WGBH (PI: Ted Sucker), asked us, “how can we share research methods and tools so that we can make valid and reliable cross-study comparisons?” At the time, we couldn’t give more than “good luck” as an answer. Now, we are happy to announce the introduction of the EVALU-ATE listserv.

Specifically targeted to support the exchange of evaluation ideas, methods, practices, and tools, the EVALU-ATE listserv is open only to those affiliated with an ATE grant.

The listserv allows users to send messages to all group members. Ask a question, share an idea, describe a best practice or success strategy you have discovered. Attachments are permitted, providing a way for evaluators and staff to get feedback on instruments or evaluation plans. As Marion suggested, users also can share these plans and tools to facilitate their use at multiple sites. Such multisite use could lead to more valid comparisons of ATE work within the entire program.

Are you worried that you’ll be inundated with e-mails if you sign up for the listserv? We were concerned about that, too. That’s why we made sure that the EVALU-ATE listserv has a feature that allows users to opt to receive a daily compilation of messages posted to the listserv, rather than each message individually. This should help reduce the potential for deluge in your inbox. Directions for selecting the daily digest option are sent in a confirmation e-

mail to all who sign up.

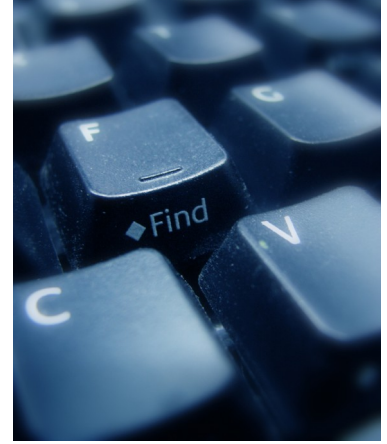
The listserv also will feature an archive, so you don’t have to hang on to every message that you think you might need in the future. The listserv’s Web-based home page archives post by month, from the moment the message is sent by a user. While organized monthly, the archives are searchable by keyword or by author. But don’t fret about your messages being publicly available—only subscribers may view the archives. Subscribers must be logged in.

Aside from day-to-day use as a method of sharing about evaluation, we also will use the listserv in targeted ways. In line with best practices about professional development, we have expanded our webinar offerings to include follow-up assistance on the listserv. For one month after each webinar, the presenters will host focused discussion threads on the listserv to support your efforts to apply webinar content into your own practice. The listserv will offer an opportunity for users and presenters to help one another test and troubleshoot.

Listsers can be great mechanisms to support the mutual development of professionals. In keeping with Marion’s interest, this is a viable way to share tools for making comparisons across ATE sites. We designed the EVALU-ATE listserv as an enactment of a community of practice ideal. This means, of course, that we can’t do it without you. For the listserv to be successful—for your colleagues to develop as professionals—your participation is needed. Sign up today at www.evalu-ate.org/community.

Sign up at evalu-ate.org/community

Featured Resource Evaluation Primer



At the March 2010 meeting of Evaluate's National Visiting Committee, it was suggested that we develop a brief document to inform new ATE grantees and NSF-ATE program officers about basic evaluation issues as they pertain to the ATE program.

In response, we developed a three-page primer that walks ATE evaluation neophytes through questions like:

What qualifies someone to be an ATE evaluator? Where can ATE grantees find qualified evaluators? Is it OK to use internal evaluators? What should be included in the evaluation section of an ATE

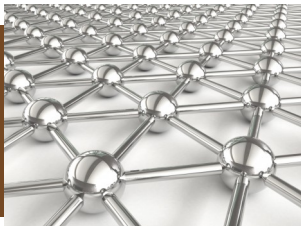
proposal? How much of a grant's budget should be devoted to evaluation? What should be in grant level evaluation reports?



We obtained feedback from NSF program officers on draft versions of the document and did our best to reflect their perspectives. However, the primer should not be construed as NSF policy on evaluation.

Moreover, we consider the primer to be a living document and will be pleased to incorporate your questions about ATE evaluation and suggestions for improvement. Just send Lori a note at lori.wingate@wmich.edu.

To download, go to resources.evaluate-ate.org and keyword search on "primer."



Webinar Evaluation

Mark Viquesney, from MATEC, shares his expert insights about what goes in to making a great webinar. When evaluating webinars, these points can serve as criteria or indicators of good preparation.

How many times have you suffered death by PowerPoint? Have you sat through a webinar, reading the slide and tuning out the presenter? Good webinars do not need to be this way. Below are some tips that Evaluate and MATEC NetWorks use that may be useful as process indicators for evaluating webinars.

1. Good Graphics/Less Text: To avoid losing your audience, try this: One concept per page, using keywords instead of sentences. The audience will need to listen to you, instead of reading ahead and tuning out. Webinars are about an audience coming to listen to a presentation, not to read your presentation.
2. Spelling and Grammar: You are a professional. Your slides should be professional. Make sure to have

someone proofread your work. We all make mistakes, but we can't always catch them. Fresh eyes can. No presentation will be perfect, but it can look professional.

3. Interaction: Webinars do not have to be one-way affairs. Make it a dynamic experience for the audience. Use the polling features. Ask questions and have participants type answers or comments into the chat box. Let the audience use the digital pens to draw something on the presentation. An audience that participates in a webinar will get more out of it.

4. Rehearsal: Evaluate webinars are some of the best. Why? Because they rehearse. It is not a rehearsal in name only, but an actual rehearsal where every presenter goes through

their presentation. They go in with a plan. They rehearse and discuss what was good and bad. They make changes, and then they rehearse a second time. Everyone involved knows what they will talk about and when. There are no surprises. To use a cliché: Practice does make (near) perfect.

5. Multiple presenters: Evaluate uses multiple presenters because the new voice helps the audience stay alert. People can listen to someone speak for 15-20 minutes. Bringing in a new voice starts that time over. It "wakes" the audience up. Have the host ask questions to break up the single voice of the presenter.

These pointers can improve a webinar and serve as indicators to look for when evaluating them, as well.

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Upcoming Webinar & Workshop

Webinar: Making Evaluation Integral to Your ATE Proposal

Wednesday, July 21, 1-2:30 PM ET

In this webinar, participants will learn how to make evaluation a strong component of their ATE proposals. Staff from the ATE Evaluation Resource Center will provide guidance about how to focus an ATE evaluation, develop a plan for data collection and analysis, describe the evaluation in a proposal, and work with an evaluator.

Seasoned ATE (Gordon Snyder & Karl Kapp) & NSF (Linnea Fletcher) folks will help navigate NSF's drive for stronger evaluations. We will discuss how thinking like an evaluator can lead to a better submission. You will leave prepared to establish a solid foundation with your evaluator and to prepare for a great evaluation.

Check out more details and register for the webinar at www.evalu-ate.org/events

Presented by the Evaluation team

Hosted by our friends at MATEC

Preconference Workshop: Designing Practical and Useful Evaluations

Wednesday, October 27, 1-4 PM ET

Join us just before the 2010 ATE PI Conference for an information-packed workshop. Designed for PI-evaluator teams, the workshop will include topics such as these:

- Developing/refining logic models
- Identifying indicators and standards
- Aligning with NSF's expectations
- Clarifying work plans

We also will feature experienced PI-evaluator teams sharing their success strategies. If you and your evaluator have the basics of your evaluation plan and are ready to take it to the next level, this is the workshop for you.

Participant support funding is available for evaluators. Apply online.

For more about participant support funds, see www.evalu-ate.org