

Under what conditions?

- “What works under what conditions” applies to evaluation theories & methods, as well as to programs and policies
- And perhaps to how we attempt to increase the likelihood that evaluation will make a positive difference

And keep in mind

- The ‘guiding star’ is not method choice per se
- It’s the potential for evaluation to make a difference, to have positive consequences, to contribute to social betterment
 - Think of evaluation as an intervention
 - Consider the equivalent of “program theory”

Consequences of Evaluation.

Consequences *of* what?

- Consequences of there *being an evaluation*
- Consequences of *findings* (or results)
- Consequences of *process*

Consequences of Finding and Process

- More frequently discussed
- But can be refined, expanded

Consequences of there *being* an evaluation

- Accountability (the “we’re having company” effect)
- Anxiety/evaluation apprehension (the company is your future in-laws)
- Signal of the nature of the problem and of potential solutions

In sum: Consequences of what?

- Of there *being* an evaluation.
- Of findings (broaden to interpretations of findings – concepts and theories – and ancillary findings)
- Of process (broaden from process use to procedural influence)

Consequences *on* what?

- Multiple ways of looking at this, notably, traditional concepts of use

Consequences *on* what?

- Understandings (conceptual)
- Actions (instrumental)
- Relationships/arrangements/organizational routines and processes (many newer evaluation theories)

And the most important consequences:

- For the client, the initial need, the social problem, ...

Consequences *by what mechanisms?*

- Again, think of evaluation (and evaluation syntheses, etc) as an intervention in the world
- And consider applying the idea of ‘program theory’, theory of change, to your evaluation work itself



Type of outcome X level of analysis

(from Mark & Henry, 2004)

	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Interpersonal</i>	<i>Collective</i>
<i>General Influence</i>	Elaboration Heuristics Priming Skill acquisition	Justification Persuasion Change agent Minority-opinion influence	Legislative hearing Coalition formation Drafting legislation Standard setting Ritualism
<i>Cognitive & Affective</i>	Salience Opinion/Attitude valence	Local descriptive norms	Agenda setting Policy-oriented learning
<i>Motivational</i>	Personal goals & aspiration	Injunctive norms Social reward Exchange	Structural incentives Market forces
<i>Behavioral</i>	New skill performance; Individual change in practice	Collaborative change in practice	Program continuation, cessation or change Policy change Diffusion
<i>Relational</i>	Self-perception of empowerment	Networks Shift in power relations	Democratic forum Learning organization Social justice

From idea to practice 1: Initial overall evaluation shaping (e.g., ToR, RFP)

- Note: Much may be determined before evaluator on the scene
 - But maybe we should try to change this?
- Initially, ask, “Where is there leverage for change”
- In light of, e.g., program stage, stakeholder information needs, windows of opportunity -- sensitive to whose interests are considered

From idea to practice 2: Evaluation planning

- Lay out the dominoes – who and how – as best you can
- Consider evaluation, “soup to nuts,” in terms of contribution to knocking over the dominoes
 - Be sure to consider countervailing streams
- Iterate. Revise. Deal with opportunities, obstacles. Expand beyond single evaluation
- Possible collaborators, communities, champions. And cumulativity

In closing: Consequences

- Many noble possibilities
- Continued work and discussion needed
- *Appropriate* consequences, not maximum
- And your role