

Reviews of Collections of Programs, Curricula, Practices, Policies, and Tools: Evaluated According to Evidence

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For more information, see: <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resources/reviews>

This collection originated as part of the Results for Kids: Resources library of The IDEA Partnership, which transferred early contents to NIRN in 2009.

Papers and Audiovisual Resources on Evaluation & Demonstration of Effects

A Primer on Evaluation Theory, Frameworks, and Tools as Relevant for School Turnaround

School Turnaround Group, Mass Insight Education, Boston. (2010).

This Primer is part of an Evaluation Toolkit "that provides local and state officials with a framework and process to conduct evaluations. . . . The Primer provides an overview of evaluation theory and provides a framework for evaluating school turnaround." The information is presented in a set of checklists, charts, and displays that outline a process for setting school goals, collecting aligned data, and using data to inform decision-making.

[Full text -- Evaluation Primer](#)

[The entire Evaluation Toolkit](#)

Afterschool Evaluation 101: How to Evaluate an Expanded Learning Program

Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (2011). E. Harris.

"*Afterschool Evaluation 101* is a how-to guide for conducting an evaluation. It is designed to help out-of-school time (OST) program directors who have little or no evaluation experience develop an evaluation strategy. The guide will walk you through the early planning stages, help you select the evaluation design and data collection methods that are best suited to your program, and help you analyze the data and present the results."

[Full text – Afterschool Evaluation 101](#)

Assessing Project Performance: Building Blocks of Evaluation and Performance Measurement – Webinar Series

National Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center, Justice Research and Statistics Association, Washington DC. (2012).

Between January and March 2012, the National Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center conducted this four-part webinar series. Topics include techniques for collecting accurate, high quality data; best practices for recording and storing data; techniques for using data and sharing results; and the use of data

collection and analysis for program development and sustainability. Slides, audio, and other materials from the four-part webinar series are available.

[Access the four webinar audios and related materials](#)

Characteristics Associated with Increasing the Response Rates of Web-Based Surveys

Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation. (2007). T. Archer.

"This research identified web deployment and questionnaire characteristics that were significantly associated with increasing the response rate of web-based surveys, based on a systematic evaluation of 99 web-based surveys. Thirteen web deployment characteristics and nine web-based questionnaire survey characteristics were subjected to correlation and regression analysis with response rate. The resultant findings prompted recommendations: (a) increasing the total days a questionnaire is left open, with two reminders, may significantly increase response rates; . . . (b) potential respondents must be convinced of the potential benefit of accessing the questionnaire; and (c) do not be overly concerned about the length or detail of the questionnaire -- getting people to the web site of the questionnaire is more important to increasing response rates."

[Full text -- Characteristics Associated with Increasing the Response Rates of Web-Based Surveys](#)

[Click on No. 12 and see related papers on this page]

Collaborative Evaluation Led by Local Educators: A Practical Print- and Web-Based Guide

WestEd, San Francisco, California. (2004).

"This guide provides a framework and process for local educators to use for continuous data gathering, sharing of findings, and planning for improvement. Designed especially for educators with limited background in evaluation, it leads through the stages of the evaluation process with guiding questions, evaluation task checklists, and corresponding web-based resources."

[Full text -- Collaborative Evaluation Led by Local Educators: A Practical Print- and Web-Based Guide](#)

Conducting Case Studies: Writing Guide

Department of English, Colorado State University, Fort Collins. (Undated).

"This guide examines case studies, a form of qualitative descriptive research that is used to look at individuals, a small group of participants, or a group as a whole. Researchers collect data about participants using participant and direct observations, interviews, protocols, tests, examinations of records, and collections of writing samples. Starting with a definition of the case study, the guide moves to a brief history of this research method. Using several well documented case studies as examples, the guide then looks at applications and methods, including data collection and analysis."

[Full text -- Conducting Case Studies](#)

Data Collection Instruments for Evaluating Family Involvement

FINE Newsletter, Harvard Family Research Project. (2009).

H. Westmoreland, S. Bouffard, K. O-Carroll, & H. Rosenberg.

"As evidence mounts that family involvement can support children's learning, there is an increasing call in the field for common data collection instruments to measure home–school communication and other aspects of family involvement. This resource from Harvard Family Research Project compiles instruments developed for rigorous program impact evaluations and tested for reliability. . . . A wide range of sources provided the information summarized in these tables. (The authors) identified the data collection instruments included here through seminal research studies, Web-based searches, evaluations conducted by the federally funded Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs), and recommendations from the field. In selecting instruments for this resource, (they) focused on those which collect quantitative data and have been piloted and tested for reliability and/or validity, and that can be readily obtained and used for program and policy evaluations and research studies."

[Full text -- Data Collection Instruments](#)

Eight Outcome Models

The Evaluation Exchange. (2005). Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, Massachusetts. R. Penna & W. Phillips.

"As the outcomes movement and outcome-based decision making have grown, many models or frameworks for applying this thinking have emerged. While evaluators and practitioners have benefited greatly from the development of various tools to guide outcomes thinking, understanding the unique advantages of each model and how to select the right one is challenging for many. . . . In 2004 the Rensselaerville Institute's Center for Outcomes published *Outcome Frameworks: An Overview for Practitioners*, a book that offers insights into which model might be appropriate to the particular needs of a program at a given point in time. . . . The models described in *Outcome Frameworks* fall into three main categories: (a) program planning and management, (b) program and resource alignment, and (c) program reporting. In addition, most models can be used as an evaluation tool." This article summarizes the purposes, key concepts, and strong points of the eight models subsumed across these three categories.

[Full text -- Eight Outcome Models](#)

Evaluating Online Learning: Challenges and Strategies for Success

Office of Innovation & Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. (2008).

"This publication features seven evaluations of online learning programs or resources. . . . The evaluations highlighted in the guide represent a broad spectrum of online options, from programs that provide online courses to Web sites that feature education resources. The evaluations themselves range from internal assessments to external, scientific research studies. All demonstrate how program leaders and evaluators have been able to implement strong evaluation practices despite some challenges inherent to examining learning in an online environment." Following discussion of the featured evaluations, the paper discusses (a) challenges of evaluating online learning, and (b) recommendations for evaluating online learning.

[Full text -- Evaluating Online Learning](#)

Evaluation Blueprint for School-Wide Positive Behavior Support

OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, University of Connecticut, University of Oregon, and University of Missouri. (2010).

B. Algozzine, R. H. Horner, G. Sugai, S. Barrett, C. R. Dickey, L. Eber, D. Kincaid, T. Lewis, & T. Tobin.

"A hallmark of School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a commitment to formal evaluation. The purpose of this SWPBS Evaluation Blueprint is to provide those involved in developing Evaluation Plans and Evaluation Reports with a framework for (a) addressing evaluation questions that may be most useful, (b) selecting evaluation measures and measurement schedules that practically meet the needs of local decision-makers, and (c) using evaluation information for active decision-making at the school, district, region, and state levels."

[Summary and click at the bottom for the full text – Evaluation Blueprint](#)

[Click at the left for related resources]

Find An Evaluator

American Evaluation Association, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

This source identifies American Evaluation Association members who are available to conduct evaluations. You can browse all the listings or search by area of expertise or by State.

[Search -- Find An Evaluator](#)

Improving Survey Participation and Returns

Western Regional Resource Center, University of Oregon, Eugene. (2007). D. L. M. Worsham.

"Research has shown that in census-type surveys, response accuracy is greater among the responses provided directly from the respondent than from an interviewer conducting follow-up operations for non-respondents." This paper describes (a) strategies to be considered to increase response rates to postal questionnaires; (b) incentives; (c) mixed designs and shaping the questions; (d) unique cultural considerations; and (e) considerations in interpreting the data. Although the paper is intended to improve family survey results, it is useful for any type of survey.

[Full text -- Improving Survey Participation and Returns](#)

[Click on the third title under Research Briefs]

Introduction to Evaluation

Web Center for Social Research Methods, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. (2006).

"Evaluation is a methodological area that is closely related to, but distinguishable from more traditional social research. Evaluation utilizes many of the same methodologies used in traditional social research, but because evaluation takes place within a political and organizational context, it requires group skills, management ability, political dexterity, sensitivity to multiple stakeholders and other skills that social research in general does not rely on as much. Here the Web Center introduces the idea of evaluation and some of the major terms and issues in the field."

[Full text – Introduction to Evaluation](#)

Juvenile Justice Program Evaluations: An Overview (Second Edition)

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. (2003).

M. Poulin & S. Orchowsky.

"Evaluation can be a useful tool for juvenile justice program managers to identify what results they are trying to produce and how the activities their staff members are engaged in are geared toward producing those results. The purpose of this briefing is to provide an overview of the program evaluation

process as it might be implemented by a local juvenile justice program manager. Juvenile justice program managers need information about what their programs are trying to accomplish, how their programs are functioning, and what results they are producing. (The authors) propose a seven-step process that juvenile justice program managers and others can use to analyze and assess the functioning of programs."

[Full text – Juvenile Justice Program Evaluations](#)

Measurement Tools for Evaluating Out-of-School Time Programs: An Evaluation Resource

Harvard Family Research Project. Cambridge, Massachusetts (Updated in 2011).
C. Wimer, S. Bouffard, P.M.D. Little. Updated by C. B. Goss.

"As part of Harvard Family Research Project's continuing effort to help practitioners and evaluators choose appropriate evaluation methods, this guide describes a select set of instruments and tools that can be obtained and used for on-the-ground program evaluation. Whether you are conducting first-time internal evaluations or large-scale national studies, these evaluation instruments can be used to assess the characteristics and outcomes of your programs, staff, and participants, and to collect other key information. . . . The instruments presented here are compiled based on the evaluations and research studies of OST programs in Harvard Family Research Project's OST Program Research and Evaluation Database."

[Full text – Measurement Tools](#)

Performance Management and Evaluation: What's the Difference?

Child Trends, Washington DC. (2011). K. E. Walker & K. A. Moore.

"Funders increasingly require managers of social programs to provide information about their programs' operations, including services provided, participation levels, outcomes, and effectiveness. As a result, organizations need the capacity to collect significant amounts of information. . . . This brief provides information on performance management — the ongoing process of collecting and analyzing information to monitor program performance — and its relationship to other forms of evaluation."

[Full text – Performance Management and Evaluation](#)

[Click on the title under Resources – the third title under 2011]

PerformWell

A collaborative effort initiated by the Urban Institute, Washington, DC; Child Trends, Washington DC; and Social Solutions, Baltimore, Maryland. (Continuing Collection).

"PerformWell provides measurement tools and practical knowledge that human services professionals can use to manage their programs' day-to-day performance. Information in PerformWell leverages research-based findings that have been synthesized and simplified by experts in the field. By providing information and tools to measure program quality and outcomes, PerformWell helps human services practitioners deliver more effective social programs." Resources are organized under three topics: (a) Find Surveys/Assessments; (b) Identify Outcomes; and (c) Improve Service Delivery.

[Home page – PerformWell](#)

Program Evaluation KnowledgeBase

Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center, Norman, Oklahoma.
(Undated)

"The Program Evaluation KnowledgeBase is an online resource aiding education professionals in understanding the basics of project evaluation in order to properly assess projects and programs. It is organized around three elements to assist educators with their program evaluation." The parts of the guide focus on planning and implementing the evaluation and using the results. Each part includes a variety of activities and tasks for carrying out the evaluation component.

[Full text -- Program Evaluation KnowledgeBase](#)

Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation: Second Edition

Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010).

"Good program evaluations assess program performance, measure impacts on families and communities, and document success. With this information, programs are better able to direct limited resources to where they are most needed and most effective in their communities. To help program managers fulfill these goals, the Administration for Children and Families has developed this guide. The guide explains program evaluation -- what it is, how to understand it, and how to do it. It answers your questions about evaluation and explains how to use evaluation to improve programs and benefit staff and families."

[Full text -- Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation](#)

Publications on Evaluating Juvenile Justice Programs

National Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center (NJJEC), Justice Research and Statistics Association, Washington DC. (Continuing Collection)

"The National Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center offers training and technical assistance to enhance the evaluation and performance measurement capacity of states, tribes, and localities." These publications provide guidance and strategies to these entities on evaluating their programs.

[Access the evaluation publications](#)

Reflect and Improve: A Toolkit for Engaging Youth and Adults as Partners in Program Evaluation

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, Takoma Park, Maryland. (2005).
Developed with the New England Network for Child, Youth and Family Services; Social Policy Research Associates; and the University of Kentucky's Department of Community and Leadership Development.

"This practical, easy-to-follow tool kit is designed for youth development and youth civic engagement organizations. It guides readers as they: (a) assess their organizational needs for evaluations; (b) design evaluations to fit their organizational goals; and (c) use evaluation data to report to funders and other community stakeholders. With real-world case studies from community organizations, interactive activities and step-by-step instructions, the tool kit prepares both young people and adults to engage in a process of reflection, learning, analysis, and decision making." Note: Although a price is shown, this toolkit is also freely available for download.

[Full text -- Reflect and Improve: A Toolkit for Engaging Youth and Adults as Partners in Program Evaluation](#)

Registry of Evaluation Researchers

What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (Continuing Collection).

"The Registry of Evaluation Researchers provides users the opportunity to search for evaluators (both individuals and organizations) who conduct research on the effects of educational interventions. The Registry allows users to search by geographic region, individual/organization, content area, and target populations. . . The information in the Registry is supplied solely by the researchers themselves. Neither the What Works Clearinghouse nor the U.S. Department of Education endorses any individuals or organizations listed in the Registry."

[To access the Registry of Evaluation Researchers](#)

Rigorous Program Evaluations on a Budget: How Low-Cost Randomized Controlled Trials Are Possible in Many Areas of Social Policy

The Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, Washington DC. (2012).

"Definition of randomized controlled trials (RCT) -- A study that randomly assigns individuals or other units (such as schools or counties) to one group that is eligible to participate in a program, or to a 'control group' that is not. The unique advantage of this process is that, with a sufficiently large sample, it ensures the two groups are highly similar in both observed and unobserved characteristics (e.g., demographics, motivation). Thus, any difference in outcomes between the groups can confidently be attributed to the program and not to other factors. . . . The purpose of this document is to illustrate the feasibility and value of low-cost RCTs for policy officials and researchers, by providing concrete examples from diverse program areas. This paper summarizes five well-conducted, low-cost RCTs, carried out in real-world community settings. . . . The studies all produced valid evidence that is of policy and practical importance." The real-life examples include programs in child welfare, parenting interventions, K-12 education, and two in criminal justice.

[Full text – Rigorous Program Evaluations on a Budget](#)

Scaling Impact: Topical Issue (on evaluation in the process of scaling up a practice or program)

The Evaluation Exchange, Harvard Family Research Project. (2010).

"Scaling up involves sharing something that is effective (such as programs, practices, or ideas) so that more people can experience its benefits. When something works well, the natural inclination is to share it. The challenge becomes how to do so effectively — and that is where evaluation comes in. . . . Several articles in the topical issue make it clear that evaluation is integral to the scaling process. At the beginning of a scaling effort, for example, evaluation can help determine whether something is ready to go to scale and which of its components should be scaled. This stage includes identifying and assessing the 'ingredients' that must be in place to successfully scale. In addition, this issue discusses how to evaluate an effort during the scaling process. Scaling takes place in developmental stages, and information needs differ over time. Evaluation questions and methods must recognize and assess those

developmental stages accordingly. Other articles consider the lessons that experienced programs and evaluators have learned about the scaling process."

[Full text -- Scaling Impact](#)

Stepping Stones to Evaluating Your Own School Literacy Program

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Naperville, Illinois. (2005).
Distributed by the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC).

This is "a tool for elementary school improvement teams to evaluate and strengthen their reading programs. Each Stepping Stone is a guided activity to stimulate reflection and guide systematic inquiry. It is a collaborative, active research approach to evaluation. . . . The goal is to eliminate the gap between what the school improvement team states it believes about good reading programs and classroom instruction and actual program practices that work well consistently."

[Full text – Stepping Stones](#)

The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation

Directorate for Education and Human Resources,
National Science Foundation, Arlington, Virginia. (2002). J. Frechtling.

"This Handbook was developed to provide managers working with the National Science Foundation (NSF) with a basic guide for the evaluation of NSF's educational programs. It is aimed at people who need to learn more about both what evaluation can do and how to do an evaluation, rather than those who already have a solid base of experience in the field. It builds on firmly established principles, blending technical knowledge and common sense to meet the special needs of NSF and its stakeholders. The Handbook discusses quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods, suggesting ways in which they can be used as complements in an evaluation strategy."

[Full text -- The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation](#)

Thinking About How to Evaluate Your Program? These Strategies Will Get You Started

Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation. (2004). R. Gajda & J. Jewiss.

In this article, the authors "introduce and demystify common evaluation terminology and present a series of strategies to help those delivering direct services and programs to begin down the road of program evaluation. The approaches described in this article will help those with little or no experience in program evaluation to: (a) identify and document the outcomes, activities, and indicators to be evaluated, and (b) assess the quantity and quality of the program's achievements. By way of illustration, (they) showcase how these strategies were used by a school-based program committed to enhancing the lives of young children and supporting the professional development of their educational providers. This article demonstrates how these approaches can be used to assess education, human service, and/or health care goals, and discusses how they can be adapted for use with various initiatives."

[Full text -- Thinking About How to Evaluate Your Program?](#)

Using Evaluation Methods to Promote Continuous Improvement and Accountability in After-School Programs: A Guide

Policy Studies Associates Inc, Washington DC. (2004). E. R. Reisner.

"Although diverse interests have joined forces around their common objective of increasing and improving after-school opportunities, they tend to hold different expectations for programming and for the results that after-school programs might achieve. The experiences of successful after-school initiatives prove that multiple interests can be successfully accommodated, however, and, despite their diversity, can enrich program development and implementation. Even so, a multiplicity of stakeholder voices can present challenges to after-school program operators. One challenge arises in the evaluation of these programs. . . . Knowledge of a few key steps can help program operators and evaluators design and conduct evaluations that address the major interests of program stakeholders. This paper describes a series of steps for designing and conducting such evaluations."

[Full text – Using Evaluation Methods to Promote Continuous Improvement](#)

Utilization Logic Models

Research Utilization Support and Help (RUSH), SEDL, Austin, Texas. (2007).

"A logic model is a graphic representation or 'blueprint' of the key elements of a program or project and how they will work under certain conditions to 'solve' identified problems. It is a tool depicting the chain of events that link inputs and activities to outcomes." This site provides guidance on using a logic model for research and evaluation in six sections that you can access separately. Although developed for grantees of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, this resource is broadly useful.

[Full texts of six parts -- Logic Models](#)



This information is an attempt to gather wide-ranging information in one place, to convey what others have accomplished, and to make valuable resources readily accessible. Information is presented in the language of the developer, publisher, distributor, or author to the maximum possible extent. The National Implementation Research Network has no ownership of contents described in this library. Nor does NIRN make claims about any models, curricula, strategies, tools, products, or papers that are annotated. Links to evidence are provided, so that you can decide whether the evidence is convincing and the material is relevant to your context. Some collected reviews are developed and distributed by a U.S. Government agency. Otherwise, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of any U.S. Government agency, and no endorsement should be inferred.
