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HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR GIFTED PROGRAM IS EFFECTIVE? PRACTICAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

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TO EVALUATE MEANS ... WHICH OF THESE WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN EVALUATING YOUR PROGRAM OF GIFTED SERVICES?

- × To find the value in
- × To measure the amount of
- × To judge the quality of
- × To determine the worth of
- × To express in numbers

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THE PURPOSES OF EVALUATION

- × Document need for Program, PRactice, or Curriculum
- × Document feasibility of P, PR, C
- × Document implementation P, PR, C
- × Document impact of P, PR, C
- × Identify strengths, weaknesses of P, PR,C
- × Explain results to intended audience(s)

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THE FIRST TYPE OF EVALUATION: FORMATIVE EVALUATION

- × Its purposes are to document, assess, identify, and explain results with an intent to improve the P, PR, C
- × Its audience(s) are the direct participants (decision-makers) in the P, PR, C so that changes can be made
- × The goals or intended outcomes of the P, PR, C are the “baseline” from which the evaluator works
- × NOTE: This is an evaluation that should be done either annually or biennially!

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THE SECOND TYPE OF EVALUATION: SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

- × Its purposes are to document, assess, identify, and explain results with the intent to determine the ultimate worth of the P, PR, C
- × Its audience(s) are the funders and directors of the P, PR, C who will decide on maintenance or elimination
- × The goals of the P, PR, C are the “baseline” from which the evaluators works
- × NOTE: This is a process that should be conducted every 4-5 years

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STEP ONE: DETERMINING THE TYPE OF EVALUATION

- × Meet with decision-makers to find out the questions they want “answered” about the P, PR, or C
- × These questions will guide identification of the type and purposes of the evaluation
- × “Have the goals of the P, PR, C been achieved?” is always a key question to guide the evaluation, no matter what type

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CASE ONE: TYPE? PURPOSES?

- × A small rural community is “up in arms” over the elimination of advanced classes in math, English, social studies, and science in the middle school. The parents have formed a committee to protest this elimination (happened 1 year earlier). The principal of the middle school is determined to make the new arrangement work. The superintendent is in his second year in the community and wants a smooth running school district. He has asked the evaluator to find out what is going on at the middle school and to make some recommendations for how to fix it.

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CASE TWO: TYPE? PURPOSES?

- × A large urban district mandates that each school will provide a gifted program. The district’s gifted coordinator wants to know whether the services provided in each of the site-based gifted programs (65 elementaries, 15 middle schools, 9 high schools) are of “quality.” She also wants to know if the money she provides each school is being spent appropriately. She also wants to know what her next steps should be at the district level to maintain the overall program of services.

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CASE THREE: TYPE? PURPOSES?

- × Science teachers in a middle school are concerned about how negative their seventh grade girls are about science class. They decide to offer single gender classes in science for both boys and girls to see if the girls' attitudes and achievement improve. Now they want to know if the single gender classes did the trick.

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CASE FOUR: TYPE? PURPOSES?

- × The ninth grade English teachers have jointly developed a “critical thinking” course that all students will take in heterogeneous classes. Parents of the gifted students are concerned that their children will not be challenged enough nor read enough “literature” for the year. The principal wants to know if the course is challenging enough for gifted as well as all other ninth grade students. If it is not, he wants specific recommendations for how to “fix” the course so it will meet diverse needs and abilities.

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STEP TWO: DETERMINING THE EVALUATION STRATEGIES

- × Experimental study?
- × Quasi-experimental study?
- × Correlational study?
- × Survey study?
- × Personnel assessment?
- × Systematic “expert” judgment?
- × Case study?
- × Informal observation, testimony?

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STEP THREE: MATCHING STRATEGY TO PLAYERS

- × Student growth? (attitude? outcomes?)
- × Teacher change? (attitude? behaviors?)
- × Classroom conditions?
- × Community attitudes toward P, PR, C?
- × How P, PR, C implemented?
- × Contents of P, PR, C?
- × Unanticipated outcomes?

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STEP FOUR: DETERMINING EVALUATION TACTICS

- × Test scores
- × Questionnaires
- × Interview data or focus group interview data
- × Logs, diaries
- × Observations
- × Ratings (grades, expert opinion, supervisory)
- × Clinical exams (physiological, psychological)
- × Records
- × Social indicators (census, crime rates, etc.)
- × Expert opinion
- × Hearsay, chance encounters, anecdotes

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STEP FIVE: MATCHING PLAYERS, STRATEGIES, AND TACTICS –A PLAN

Questions (F,S)	Strategies	Players	Tactics

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STEP SIX: DEVELOPING TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

- × Questionnaire
- × Interview Schedule (or focus group)
- × Observation Checklist
- × Product Checklist
- × Rating Scale
- × Test

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STEP SEVEN: TRIANGULATING DATA TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- × Each evaluation questions should be “covered” by at least two forms of data. For example, students agree with statement on questionnaire and are asked about it in depth in focus group OR students say something in focus group and it is also looked for in observations or in documents

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STEP EIGHT: ANALYZING THE DATA

- × Quantitative analysis of questionnaire, ratings, observation frequencies, etc.
- × Qualitative analysis of open-ended questionnaire ?s, interview transcripts, observation continuous narratives, etc.
- × Content analysis of logs, diaries, P, PR, or C documents/memos, anecdotes, expert opinions, etc.

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STEP NINE: INTEGRATING THE DATA ANALYSES

- × For each evaluation question, the analyses of each triangulated data set must be put together. For example, the mean responses of students about how well they did in the new curriculum (quantitative), meshed with their open-ended responses about how clear the curriculum was (qualitative), meshed with content analysis of actual lesson/outcomes taught, meshed with classroom observations of teacher actually teaching the lesson (qualitative). Conclusion is then drawn about how to answer the evaluation question IN FULL, considering all sources.

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STEP TEN: COMMUNICATING THE RESULTS

- × For formative evaluation, a less informal evaluation report can be directed to program implementers making recommendations for change. Should be followed up with face-to-face conference on results.
- × For summative evaluation, a formal evaluation report, must be directed to all direct and indirect audiences providing information about possible elements to keep or eliminate or monitor. All data analysis should be included, along with Executive Summary at front of report. Might be formally presented in public forum.

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SO WHAT HAPPENED IN CASE STUDY ONE?

- × Parents and students adamantly against heterogeneous classes
- × Teachers mixed in opinion on classes
- × NO differentiation took place for GTs in classes, especially in math and English
- × GTs were “harrassed” outside of class
- × RECOMMENDATIONS: Reinstitute sorted classes for math and English. Pullout seminar weekly in social science/science integrative projects for 2 hour block

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AND CASE STUDY TWO?

- × Each school was privately given its “report card” on 12 standards of “quality”, based on observations, survey data. Suggestions for improvement in low areas were provided.
- × RECOMMENDATIONS: Training and Identification had to become centralized. Self-selection was not ensuring that all cultures were represented in school services. Yearly monitoring of program service required in order to continue receiving funds.

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WHAT HAPPENED IN CASE STUDY THREE?

- × Single boys’ class attitudes declined. They wanted to be with the girls. Boys were very assertive, questioning in class, highly competitive. GT boys maintained grades. Teacher tended to joke more with students.
- × Single girls’ class attitudes improved. They wanted to stay in single gender class. They were very assertive, questioning in class, highly competitive. GT girls improved grades. Teacher tended to give more personal examples and tell of personal life with students.
- × Mixed gender class attitudes stayed the same. The class was generally passive. More teacher-direction of activities took place. Boys tended to volunteer to answer teacher-directed questions, while girls raised hands when needed help. GT grades declined for both sexes.
- × RECOMMENDATION: Offer single or mixed gender option to all students and create class periods accordingly.

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AND CASE STUDY FOUR?

- × GT students were not differentiated, nor challenged.
Grades maintained
- × Regular students were challenged, but Special Education students were “lost.” Grades of both groups declined
- × RECOMMENDATION: Train teachers to differentiate, given them planning time to develop this, monitor that they do it. Re-evaluate in year’s time.

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BLUEPRINT FOR YOUR EVALUATION PLAN

- × Formative evaluations
 - + What your questions would be
 - × Scope of yearly questions (Whole program? Parts?)
 - × Purposes for evaluation questions
 - + How you would try to answer those questions
 - × Internal evaluation
 - × Tactics and strategies
 - + What you will do with what you find out
 - × Report to whom
 - × Implement changes

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BLUEPRINT FOR YOUR EVALUATION PLAN

- × Summative evaluation
 - + What your questions would be
 - × Scope of evaluation (All components of program, curriculum only, identification and services only, program operations only)
 - × Purposes for evaluation questions
 - + How you would try to answer those questions
 - × External evaluation
 - × Compilation of annual or biennial formative evaluation results
 - × Tactics and strategies
 - + What you will do with what you find out
 - × Report to whom
 - × Implement reforms or restructuring

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FIRST OR LAST WORDS ABOUT EVALUATION

- × Evaluation is for making it work
 - + If it works... Notice and nurture
 - + If it doesn't work... Notice and change

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THOUGHTS ABOUT EVALUATION

- ✘ As budgets get tighter, the informational demands of decision making become more stringent. Programs that do not meet their goals can no longer be afforded; they must be modified or abandoned. The only way we can tell that they are not meeting their goals is by evaluation.
- ✘ Evaluation can no longer be an esoteric collection of jargon, statistics, and techniques known only to a specialized few. Everyone involved and everyone who has something at stake must know how evaluations are done.

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