
Week 2: Evaluation

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Rich Kids, Poor Kids

What are the benefits and limitations of an evaluation?

The clear benefit of evaluation for this financial literacy program is that the results could help validate the program's educational value--this is stated as one of the motivating factors for the company to seek evaluation. The deeper benefit would be, ideally, that the company would be able to analyze the efficacy of its program on its target audience and the wider community.

The limitations of this evaluation are that there was not stated goal of changing or altering the program in face of the evaluation results, so the evaluators have no explicit assurance that evaluation results would lead to action on the part of the company. There is also a risk that because the evaluators are technically students, their credibility could be called into question.

What factors ensure that an evaluation will be successful?

The outcomes of the evaluation, including long-term actions that the company are willing to take, should be clarified and agreed upon with evaluators. The design of the evaluation should be communicated clearly to the company, and they should have input into the design and implementation.

The evaluation design should include, if possible, acknowledgement of limitations inherent to the evaluation process and the importance of objectivity and transparency. This strengthens the relationship between evaluator and evaluated parties and can improve credibility.

How might one use evaluation results?

Different stakeholders can and will use evaluation results differently. In many cases, they help decision-making processes at different levels in the organization. They can assist a department to change direction, focus or approach.

The aim of the evaluation itself--efficiency, effectiveness, or impact--can change the use of its results.

Evaluation results can also be used to test new ideas before launch.

My Evaluation

How might one use evaluation results?

We will be using the results of this evaluation to determine whether the current math program I am piloting should be continued next year with the same three central elements--Eureka Math, IXL (fluency practice) and project-based inquiry. In this short time frame, I want to see how effective the program is in improving student retention of math concepts and performance on standardized tests.

What are the inherent limitations in the evaluation of the program? Note: We're talking about potential limitations of the evaluation, not the program itself.

The administrators at my school may not read this evaluation's results. The management team at my school struggles with internal communication and organization issues. There is a likelihood that due to the social/political situation, the head administrator will not read my evaluation results. Fortunately, I will likely be allowed to develop the program as I see fit anyways...

How might you use the evaluation results to benefit the organization, community, schools, or yourself?

I am working with a teacher who is coordinating the development of the whole school's math curriculum. She is waiting on the results of my pilot year to determine how to implement curriculum in the elementary school program.
