Keys to Success With Assessment & Evaluation

H. Frank Cervone, PhD
Computers in Libraries 2015
April 29, 2015
Assessment and evaluation

The Purpose of...

assessment is to **INCREASE** quality.

evaluation is to **JUDGE** quality.

Too short and not enough leaves. C-
Evaluation and assessment are grounded in research.
Evaluation and assessment are social research

Social research is different
What are the major issues in conducting research in libraries?
Research quality

- Systematic Reviews
- Randomised Controlled Trials
- Cohort Studies
- Case-Controlled Studies
- Programme Evaluation, Opinion Surveys
- Case Studies, Expert Opinion

Image courtesy of credo
Systems thinking can help improve results

Sure glad the hole isn’t at our end.
The goals of evaluation and assessment

review on our

Excellent
Good
Average
Poor
Research methodology is critical
Scientific-experimental models

Observation -> Question
Hypothesis -> Prediction
Testing -> Conclusion
Communicate

Image courtesy of askabiologist
Qualitative/anthropological models
Participant-oriented models
What do we like to assess and evaluate?

**Resources**
- Number of books or electronic journal titles

**Physical environment**
- Study spaces or comfortable seating

**Units in the organization**
- Group productivity, growth, and well-being

**Functions**
- Identification, selection, and acquisition of materials

**Processes**
- Applying bar codes to materials or creating resource guides
What should be evaluated and assessed?
Types of evaluation

**Formative evaluations**
- Strengthen or improve the object being evaluated
- Examine the delivery of the program or technology
- The quality of its implementation
- Assessment of the
  - Organizational context
  - Personnel
  - Procedures
  - Inputs

**Summative evaluations**
- Examine the effects or outcomes of some object
- Describe what happens subsequent to delivery of the program or service
- Assess whether the intervention can be said to have caused the outcome
- Determine the overall impact of the causal factor beyond only the immediate target outcomes
- Estimate the relative costs associated with the object
Examples of formative evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determines who needs the program, how great the need is, and what might work to meet the need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluability assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determines whether an evaluation is feasible and how stakeholders can help shape its usefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structured conceptualization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps stakeholders define the program or technology, the target population, and the possible outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation evaluation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors the fidelity of the program or technology delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process evaluation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigates the process of delivering the program or technology, including alternative delivery procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of summative evaluation

**Outcome evaluations**
- Investigate whether the program or technology caused demonstrable effects on specifically defined target outcomes

**Impact evaluation**
- Assesses the overall or net effects -- intended or unintended -- of the program or technology as a whole

**Cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis**
- Address questions of efficiency by standardizing outcomes in terms of their dollar costs and values

**Secondary analysis**
- Reexamines existing data to address new questions or use methods not previously employed

**Meta-analysis**
- Integrates the outcome estimates from multiple studies to arrive at an overall or summary judgement on an evaluation question
Survey research

Customer Survey

What do you think of the quality of our menu?
- Excellent
- Good
- Poor
- Very Bad

How good was our service?
- Excellent
- Good
- Poor
- Very Bad

Do you get value for money?
- Yes
- No

Thank you for your feedback.
Components of survey research

Selected sample of subjects that is representative of the study population

A standardized questionnaire

The method to administer the questionnaire to the sample of subjects
  • Self-administering
  • Interview
Pretest

5
Other things to consider in design

Relevance of questions to users' knowledge
• If you ask questions that are irrelevant to your respondents, or don't make any sense to them, they may just make up answers to your questions.

Long questions or statements make people lose their patience
• Respondents should be able to read an item quickly, understand what it means, and select or provide an answer without any difficulty.

Avoid negative terms when constructing a question
• Not only just the literal negative words like no, not, never, but also words that have negative meaning.

Biased terms in question formulation should be avoided
• Inappropriate wording of questions that encourages respondents to answer in a particular way.
• Avoid questions starting with “Don't you think” or “don't you agree” as they will generate more affirmative answers.
Focus groups
Problems with focus groups
Open ended vs closed questions

- Open-ended questions allow for greater variety in responses
- Closed-ended questions provide greater uniformity and are more easily processed than open-ended
Voice of the customer
Understanding your customers

- Who is the primary customer?
- Where are there similarities and differences in the pain points of the different customer groups?
- Which customers have the greatest worth?
- What are the issues with the largest impact?
- What is the best way to rectify pain points and weaknesses?
In summary

- Evaluation and assessment are grounded in research
- Qualified personnel are a must
- Formal strategy must guide the plan
- Understanding what you want to know is crucial
- Pretest your data collection instruments
- Focus groups require special care
- Voice of the customer can help you focus your efforts
Q & A

H. Frank Cervone, PhD
University of Illinois at Chicago
fcervone@uic.edu