
Book Review: *Evaluation Theory, Models & Applications*

(2014) 2nd Edition. Daniel L. Stufflebeam and Chris L. S. Coryn. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cheryl L. Endres
Western Michigan University

Erica L. Fiekowsky
Western Michigan University

Sabrina Holley
Western Michigan University

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Intervention: N/A

Purpose: Review of the updated version of *Evaluation theory, methods & applications*, previously coauthored by D. L. Stufflebeam and A. J. Shinkfield.

Research Design: N/A

Data Collection and Analysis: N/A

Setting: N/A

Findings: N/A

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The authors' intended use for *Evaluation Theory, Methods, & Applications*, as stated in the Preface, is "as a textbook for graduate-level courses in program evaluation and as a tool for evaluators and administrators and other clients and users of evaluation" (p. xix). Graduate students learning about evaluation will certainly appreciate this second edition's use as a textbook, due to its comprehensive nature. The book provides information on the evaluation field's history, theories, and standards; various approaches to evaluation; select qualitative and quantitative methods; and steps and checklists helpful to the implementation of evaluations. The book may be less useful to experienced professionals, who may be more likely to already have the generalized knowledge covered in this text. For those already possessing some degree of familiarity with evaluation theory, *Evaluation Theory, Methods & Applications* may serve as a handbook, or tool, for conducting evaluations, both in terms of approach selection and application of the checklists. Stufflebeam and Coryn's contribution to the growing field of evaluation texts succeeds admirably in fulfilling their intended purpose to provide "one significant and useful set of insights into the complex sphere of program evaluation" (p. xix).

Organization

The book is organized into five parts. Below, we provide a brief overview of each part, followed by a critique of the text using the lenses of doctoral students, new to the field of evaluation.

With the multiple intended audiences in mind, the authors begin by providing context and background to create a framework for the rest of the text. Part One lays this groundwork for the rest of the book and contains three chapters covering the foundational underpinnings of evaluation in terms of history, purpose, theory, and standards.

Part Two contains seven chapters, which cover 23 evaluation approaches grouped by the authors into categories. The first chapter in this section explains the importance of understanding that various approaches can be used and that selection should be driven by factors including the primary purpose for the evaluation. Chapter 4 provides detail on the strategy the authors use to review and classify the 23 evaluation approaches contained in chapters five through nine. Description of other classification schemes, and a rationale for the procedures used in the classification scheme within the text is provided. The next five chapters are devoted to the categories of approaches,

ranging from pseudoevaluations to eclectic evaluations. Each chapter begins either with a background and introduction to the category (for the Pseudoevaluations), a definition of the category (for the quasi-evaluation studies and improvement-and accountability oriented approaches) or an overview of the approaches (for the social agenda and advocacy evaluation and eclectic approaches). Each of the approaches is described, with a section on the general strengths and weaknesses of each of the approaches within the chapter provided. Part 2 is pulled together in Chapter 10. In this chapter, the authors discuss the rationale used to select the approaches included, describe the methodology used, their qualifications and conflicts of interest. Standards used in the text for judging the featured evaluation approaches are discussed.

Part Three explains in great detail six of the approaches mentioned in the previous section. The first two, Chapters 11 and 12, elaborate on quasi-evaluations, the first of which is experimental and quasi-experimental design, including applicability, examples of misapplication, and alternative approaches and contexts. The other quasi-evaluation approach discussed is the case study evaluation. This chapter concentrates on case studies as an application of a larger program evaluation. Chapter 13 is devoted to Stufflebeam's CIPP model. There are several tables included in this chapter to help summarize the different aspects of the CIPP model, including one for illustrative questions, objectives, methods, and uses of the four types of evaluation, and the CIPP model's use as a systems strategy for improvement. Additionally, an extended hypothetical example is given to help explain the social systems approach. Chapter 14, titled the "consumer-oriented approach," touches briefly on this approach attributed to Michael Scriven. The larger part of the chapter focuses on Scriven's many contributions to the transdiscipline of evaluation. These contributions include concepts as well as approaches. In the final two chapters in this section, the authors expound on the responsive or stakeholder-centered approach and the utilization-focused evaluation approach. The stakeholder-centered approach chapter includes an example of its application. While the chapter on utilization-focused evaluation does not contain a similar illustration of the approach, it does include a step-by-step guide on how to go about carrying out the evaluation.

Part Four focuses on practical evaluation tasks, procedures, and tools. This section begins with the basics: How does one secure an evaluation contract? Once one has successfully won a contract, how does one decide whom to hire for their evaluation team? Then, the section moves into other practical aspects of evaluation like budgeting, contracting, data collection, and reporting. The final chapters round out the nuts and bolts of practice, and discuss data collection, analysis and synthesis as well as communication of findings.

Part Five includes two chapters that discuss the need for metaevaluation (Chapter 25) to improve evaluation practice and the rationale and purpose for institutionalizing and mainstreaming evaluation. Both of these topics are very timely, given that 2015 has been declared the International Year of Evaluation by EvalPartners, which includes many prominent evaluation groups, such as the American Evaluation Association, European Evaluation Association, International Organization for Evaluation Cooperation, and the United Nations Evaluation Group, among numerous others. Chapter 26 provides a summary discussion of the nine themes of the text and offers practical steps that organizations can use to make evaluation an integrated practice within organizations, as opposed to an occasional, or required task. In addition to providing an overview of growth in the field that contributes to the possibility of making this a reality in the near future, a checklist is included that organizations can use to guide their efforts.

Reviewers' Opinions

Evaluation Theory, Methods, & Applications provides a comprehensive introduction to evaluation as a field—so much so that it should be used for a two-semester course rather than one-semester. The book is beneficial to students as a textbook, although evaluation practitioners would also benefit from the checklists, how-to guides, and summaries and components of approaches. Among its strengths for classroom use are the detailed learning objectives at the beginning of chapters and the summaries and review activities at the end to organize thinking. These are helpful both for students as a focus to chapter readings and instructors as a source for learning assessment. Descriptions of approaches and theories are made relevant and applicable to real world uses and contexts throughout the text. Of particular use to students are tables throughout

that concisely summarize detailed information, which seems improved from the previous edition.

The text did leave us wondering about a few weaknesses. For example, in the eclectic approaches section, it is not clear why some of the approaches were included. In the introduction to the book, historical importance and prevalence in the field are mentioned, but the rationale is not explained for each approach. In terms of current topical coverage, there is no discussion of complexity or systems thinking, and very little discussion of empowerment evaluation other than as a quasi-evaluation approach. The text emphasizes the interplay between theory and practice, which is a key issue in the field of evaluation, but it spends more time on theory than practice. We found that the limitations and examples for each approach were particularly illuminating in understanding how and when each approach should be used. However, in discussing evaluation approaches with other students and practitioners, it became clear that the theoretical approaches are not often used in practice, and this issue was not adequately addressed in the text.

Most of the book was consistent in formatting, structure, and level of detail. Part One was an effective introduction to evaluation, Part Two presented different approaches in a handbook-style format, and Part Four continued the handbook-style with practical applications of conducting an evaluation. Part Three did not fit well with the flow of the rest of the book. While considered an extension, or elaboration, of select, previously-mentioned approaches, Part Three was more a conglomeration of historic perspective, multiple perspectives (theories) on a single approach, and significant contributions to the transdiscipline of evaluation.

Addressing Previous Reviews

Reviews of the first edition of this text had several criticisms that were addressed in the new edition. Most notably, one review (Wiersma, 2009) found the text to have too much documentation and not enough figures. The second edition includes various types of tools and visual aids—including figures, tables, checklists, and exhibits—to support the wealth of information in the text.

Another criticism of the first edition was that most supporting examples came from the field of education (Wallis, 2008). While education remains prominent in the second edition, the variety of examples offered—including health, public administration, and education—was sufficient to us. Wallis did not think that the

authors had sufficiently differentiated between approaches, models, theories, and applications. In the current edition, the authors briefly mention their rationale for their choice of terms, but additional clarification would be useful. Wallis also thought that the authors left the difference between program evaluation and evaluation research vague, but the definition of evaluation as a transdiscipline in the current edition adds some clarity.

Datta's (2007) review of the first edition took issue with the lack of detail included about certain topics, in particular empowerment evaluation, systems theories, and complex adaptive systems. The authors do give attention to empowerment evaluation, but only as a pseudoevaluation approach, which some readers may find problematic due to its prominence in the field. However, the authors provide justification for their classification, by pointing out that once evaluators take on the role of social advocates or shift their focus to empowering a population of interest, bias enters into the evaluation. In addition, the degree of control that is given to the client for the evaluation often means that the evaluator is lending his or her name more than his or her expertise to the final evaluation product. While some attention to empowerment evaluation was included in this text, systems theories and complex adaptive systems continue to be omitted from the second edition.

Ideas for Future Editions

While it may be beyond the scope of any single text to cover all possible applications of evaluation, a brief discussion of emergent trends could be incorporated, with reference to external sources for more information. Today, that would include systems theory and complex adaptive systems. By the time the next edition is published, these may be more established, or may have evolved, in which case the upcoming trends would be different. An alternative would be to include a section on the political nature of evaluation, and how approaches and practice are influenced by context, which includes politics.

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