

DESIGNING EDUCATION LAB EVALUATION VS. RESEARCH WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

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Research vs. Evaluation

Blome (2009) – Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation, National Institute of General Medical Sciences

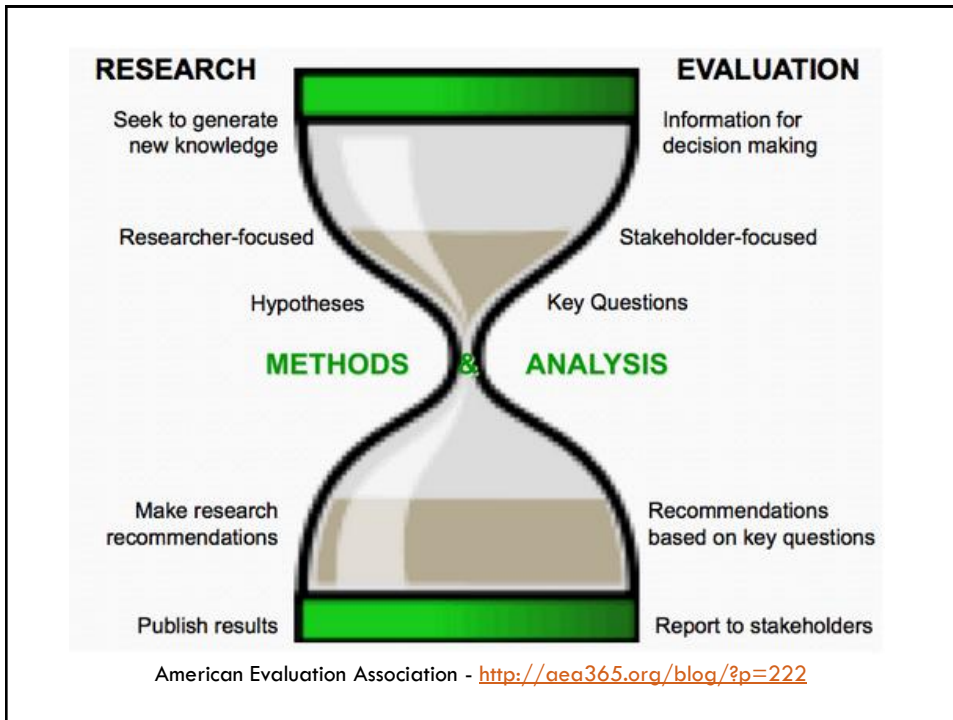
Research

- Produces generalizable knowledge
- Scientific inquiry based on intellectual curiosity
- Advances broad knowledge and theory
- Controlled setting

Evaluation

- Judges merit or worth
- Policy & program interests of stakeholders paramount
- Provides information for decision-making on specific program
- Conducted within setting of changing actors, priorities, resources, & timelines

http://publications.nigms.nih.gov/presentations/measuring_value/index.html



Evaluation vs. Research Bumper Stickers

Mathison (2007)

- Evaluation particularizes, research generalizes.
- Evaluation is designed to *improve* something, while research is designed to *prove* something.
- Evaluation – so what? Research – what’s so?
- Evaluation – how well it works? Research– how it works?
- Evaluation is about what is valuable; research is about what is.
- Evaluation provides the basis for decision-making; research provides the basis for drawing conclusions.

http://www.ncdsv.org/images/Mathison_WhatIsDiffBetweenEvalAndResearch.pdf



IRB Toolbox



Program Evaluation: When is it Research?

Program evaluation activities are not considered human subject research when:

- They do not involve experimental or non-standard interventions;
- Their intent is only to provide information for and about the setting in which they are conducted;
- They are conducted as part of the standard operating procedures of the setting; and
- They are (usually) not subject to peer review.

An Example: DIA2

**Deep Insights Anytime, Anywhere (DIA2) –
Central Resource for Characterizing the NSF
TUES Portfolio through Interactive Knowledge
Mining and Visualization**

Additional Resources



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A PERIODICAL ON EMERGING STRATEGIES IN EVALUATION

HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT • HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Volume IX, Number 4, Winter 2003/2004
Issue Topic: Reflecting on the Past and Future of Evaluation

Ask the Expert

Michael Scriven on the Differences Between Evaluation and Social Science Research

Michael Scriven is a professor of evaluation at the University of Auckland in New Zealand and a professor of psychology at Claremont Graduate University in California. One of the world's most renowned evaluators, Dr. Scriven has authored more than 330 publications in 11 fields, including Evaluation Thesaurus, a staple of evaluation literature. Dr. Scriven is a former president of the American Evaluation Association (AEA), and received the AEA's esteemed Lazarfeld Award for his contributions to evaluation theory.

How are evaluation and social science research different?

Evaluation determines the merit, worth, or value of things. The evaluation process identifies relevant values or standards that apply to what is being evaluated, performs empirical investigation using techniques from the social sciences, and then integrates conclusions with the standards into an overall evaluation or set of evaluations (Scriven, 1991).

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<http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/reflecting-on-the-past-and-future-of-evaluation/michael-scriven-on-the-differences-between-evaluation-and-social-science-research>

Program Evaluation & Human Subjects Research

Andrew Karberg M.A., Tamara Davis Ph.D., Ali Cloth M.A.

This paper profiles program evaluation¹ issues relating to human subjects research. (JAN. 2005)

Program evaluations implement a variety of methodologies to accomplish diverse objectives². Some program evaluations constitute human subjects research and others do not³. If a program evaluation is research⁴ and uses human subjects⁵, then it requires approval. Generally, program evaluations not requiring human subjects review involve data internally collected and analyzed for the normal course of business. These evaluations' goals range from simple descriptive statistics to qualitative information, and examples include program enrollment data, constituent demographics, and outcome analyses. Therefore, irrespective of human subject involvement, these program evaluations remain internal and thus do not contribute to generalizable knowledge.

However, program evaluations publishing results in scholarly journals likely require approval. The assumption being that publishing the findings generalizes the data. Moreover, evaluations connected to groups' or individuals' outcomes and affecting the development or implementation of other programs similar in nature, are generalizable human subjects research and require human subjects review. Furthermore, an evaluation⁶ impacting upon the replication of other programs or services and the population at large or public policy, should be reviewed and monitored. Finally, funding source may impact a program evaluation's human subjects requirements. Financially supported human subjects research implemented by third party agencies are subject to review by Institutional Review Boards.

Program evaluation is an example of applied social science research. Beneficial and valuable program evaluations require knowing the basic principles of social science, experimental design, and data collection methods. Successful program evaluations frequently demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between theoretical concepts of human behavior or social structure, and pragmatic interventions. Regardless of any determination of a program evaluation as research, all human subject participants deserve appropriate ethical research conduct including competency, full informed consent, and confidentiality.

1. Program Evaluation is the inquiry into past, present, and potential human service programs to understand or clarify their need, working process or impact.

http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humansubjects/special_topics/policy_updates.html



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The 2010 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation

<http://www.westat.com/westat/pdf/news/ufhb.pdf>