

Glossary of Evaluation Terms

Educational Research. Usually a deep, costly investigation, to determine causality.

Educational Evaluation. Usually a smaller, less costly investigation, to determine trends and correlations that can inform local decision-making.

Educational Assessment. Usually measures a learning outcome.

Program Goals. The overarching purposes of the program, usually made in general terms.

- **Program Objectives.** The major components or processes within the program that must be realized in order to achieve the program goals.
 - **Program Activities.** The action steps taken to achieve the program objectives, and ultimately, the program goals.

Program Outcomes

- **Performance Indicators.** Where to look for change or growth.
- **Periodic Benchmarks.** Periodic goals to be accomplished.
- **Performance Measures.** Includes numbers of students or percentage of change.

Purposes of Evaluation

- **Formative vs. Summative.** Improving program implementation vs. tracking program outcomes and effects.
- Advocacy, policy making.

Types of Research Designs [see descriptions of each in handout on [Evaluation Strategies](#)]

- **Experimental Impact.** Very difficult to accomplish in school settings.
- **Quasi-Experimental Impact.** Possible, but expensive; involves control groups.
- **Non-Experimental Impact.** Most common education evaluation studies.

Types of Data Collection

- **Qualitative.** Text-oriented data, such as individual and focus interviews, classroom ethnographic field notes, program documents.
- **Quantitative.** Numerical data, such as surveys, observation protocols, student records, program documents, financials/cost analysis.
- **Mixed Methods.** Combining qualitative and quantitative methods for a more thorough investigation of a program, as in a case study.

Types of Data Analysis

- **Statistical.** Uses collected numerical data, specialized software (SPSS, SAS) and mathematic formulas to determined the strength of relationships between program factors, or variables.
- **Coding and consolidation.** Used with text-based (qualitative) data, primarily, to group themes and topics and determine the strength of relationships between program factors, or variables.
- **Subjective interpretation.** The role of researcher bias, perspective and opinion in evaluation and research.

Ways to Present Findings: Papers and Oral Presentations

- **Summary Brief.** A short synopsis of program or study progress
- **Project Report.** A usually lengthy, highly descriptive report on study outcomes.
- **Monograph, white paper, research article.** A paper on the program findings created to distribute to field professionals, usually written in technical language.
- **Magazine articles.** Less research focused, this format is used to inform field practitioners or parents and often has a persuasive quality. A point is being made.
- **Oral Presentations.** Presentations to school board members, parents groups and other types of decisions makers who don't need a lot of hard data at the time.
- **PowerPoint slide shows.** Can be effective for presenting findings if kept brief and detail free. Avoid long lists of sentences. Use simple, labeled charts and graphs.
- **The Ultimate Visual Aid.** A graph with an ascending growth line.