

# Evaluation Tools and Techniques

The evaluation process can take many forms. These resources are designed to aid you in exploring the many forms of program evaluation and in developing a system that works best for your program.

Program evaluation is ongoing. It begins during planning and continues throughout the life of a program and beyond. As an ongoing process, program evaluation is also ever-changing. Find a method that works for you, but don't be afraid to evaluate your evaluation process.

Program evaluation can provide you with feedback for continually improving program design and with powerful tools for speaking to outside organizations, parents, school boards, legislators, etc., regarding the value and importance of your work.

- ❖ Tools and Websites
- ❖ Evaluation Fact Sheet

*For more information contact the Arts Learning Department at the Arizona Commission on the Arts.*  
<http://www.azarts.gov/who-we-are/staff>



# arts learning

## Evaluation Tools & Techniques

### TOOLS AND WEBSITES

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- **American Evaluation Association** - An international professional association of evaluators devoted to the application and exploration of program evaluation, personnel evaluation, technology, and many other forms of evaluation. <http://www.eval.org/>
  - **Arts Council of England** (PDF) - Arts Council of England "Partnerships for Learning: A Guide to Evaluating Arts Education Projects" by Felicity Woolf, 1999, 60 pages, ISBN 0-7287-0791-8. This guide helps organizations and individuals evaluate arts education projects. Includes the Evaluation Center "Evaluation Checklists". [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/partnerships-for-learning-a-guide-to-evaluating-arts-education-projects/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/partnerships-for-learning-a-guide-to-evaluating-arts-education-projects/)
  - **The Evaluation Center** - The site's purpose is to improve the quality and consistency of evaluations and enhance evaluation capacity through the promotion and use of high-quality checklists targeted to specific evaluation tasks and approaches. This part of the site contains glossaries, helpful web links, and more. <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/index.html>
  - **The National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts** - The Education and Evaluation section of the National Guild website contains links to information on education policy, reform and research. It covers current teaching and evaluation and assessment practices. <http://nationalguild.org/resources/education.htm>
  - **Out-of-School Time Program Evaluation Bibliography** - The Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) Out-of-School Time (OST) Program Evaluation Database is a compilation of profiles written by HFRP of evaluations of OST programs and initiatives. It provides accessible information about evaluation work of both large and small OST programs to support the development of high quality evaluations and programs in the out-of-school time field. Programs are categorized by program type. Program type can refer to a method of service delivery or a primary program goal. <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/bibliography>
  - **Readings in Program Evaluation and Measurement in the Arts** - Compiled by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, this document provides recommended reading and select web resources on the subject of evaluation. [http://www.nasaa-arts.org/nasaanews/evaluation\\_measurement.pdf](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/nasaanews/evaluation_measurement.pdf)
  - **Steps for Developing and Implementing Program Evaluation** (PDF) - A very simple outline for organizing a program evaluation. [http://azarts.yourdesk.biz/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Program-Evaluation\\_Horowitz.pdf](http://azarts.yourdesk.biz/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Program-Evaluation_Horowitz.pdf)
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### EVALUATION FACT SHEET

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**What is program evaluation?**

Program evaluation is a systematic process of gathering objective evidence about a program and using that evidence to make judgments about the merit or worth of the program.

**When should program evaluation occur?**

Program evaluation should be ongoing. It begins during planning and continues throughout the life of the program and beyond.

**What is the difference between formative and summative evaluation?**

**Formative** evaluation occurs during program planning and implementation. **Summative** evaluation occurs after the program or one of its major phases has been completed.

**How is evaluation information used?**

Evaluation information provides evidence that can be used to:

- Make ongoing improvements to the program. Formative evaluation helps in determining whether progress toward program outcomes is adequate and whether changes need to be made in how the program activities are conducted or supported.
- Make major decisions. Summative evaluation provides information about the program outcomes and impacts that helps in deciding whether the program should be revised, expanded, discontinued, or replicated. Funders often use summative program evaluations in deciding whether to continue supporting a program.

**What is the evaluation process?**

The process of planning and implementing a formal evaluation can be described in ten steps.

1. Describe your program context, desired outcomes, and activities.
2. Develop evaluation questions.
3. Identify acceptable evidence.
4. Choose evaluation methods.
5. Design and plan the evaluation.
6. Collect the evidence, employing the methods you chose in step 4.
7. Analyze and interpret the evidence.
8. Integrate and synthesize what you have learned to draw conclusions.
9. Report your findings.
10. Apply your findings.

**What are the major questions that are typically addressed in an evaluation?**

According to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a comprehensive evaluation focuses on:

- Context--how does the program function within its environment?
- Implementation--what happens as the program activities are carried out?
- Outcomes--what results has the program achieved, particularly what positive changes have occurred in the lives of those served by the program?

- **What is a logic model?**

A logic model is a tool often used in program planning and evaluation. It combines words and graphical devices to visually represent a program. It shows clear connections between resources or inputs, activities, desired outcomes, and public value. In its program evaluation guide, the Kellogg Foundation refers to a logic model as “a picture of how your program works.”

- **What makes program evaluation findings credible?**

- The evidence that is collected supports the claims being made.
- Evidence should be a combination of **quantitative** data (the results of numerical measurement and statistical analysis) and **qualitative** data (the results of investigating perceptions, opinions, and behaviors).
- The **evaluator** (the individual or group conducting the evaluation) has the necessary expertise and will not be significantly affected by the outcome of the evaluation.

- **What are some common methods for collecting evaluation evidence?**

Evaluation evidence often comes from examining documents (such as student work), examining numbers and statistics, administering opinion surveys, conducting interviews and focus groups, engaging in direct observation of the program, and analyzing case studies.

Each method has advantages and disadvantages. Methods should be selected based on their ability to answer evaluation questions, as well as the resources and time that are available.

## **Resources**

Stevens, L.K. (1993). *Through a mirror: A guide to evaluating programs*. National Endowment for the Arts.

W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (1998). *Evaluation handbook*. Battle Creek, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (2001). *Logic model development guide*. Battle Creek, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

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