Evaluation and Intentionality: You can't have one without the other

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Sequor YDI Mission

- **Mission** - Meet the needs of public and not-for-profit agency managers, staff, and researchers for science based youth development information.

- **Main Focus Areas**
  - Applied Research and Evaluation
  - Information Dissemination
  - Training and Education
Sequor YDI Products

- Research Briefs
  - Youth and Nature
  - Retaining Older Youth
  - Youth Sub-Cultures
- Research Summaries
- Research Reports
- Parent Fact Sheets
- Successful Program Profiles

www.ydi.tamu.edu
Objectives

- Overview of Topic
- Intentionality
  - Logic Models
- Linking Intentionality to Evaluation
  - Process - Formative
  - Impact - Summative
- Exercise – How intentional is my program?
- Wrap up and questions
Impacts of OST Programs on YD

Reduce Negative Behaviors Arguments
1) OST programs can contribute to reducing juvenile delinquency.
2) OST programs can contribute to increasing positive and reducing negative behaviors.
3) Community provision of OST programs can lead to less youth exposure to violence.

Increase Positive Behaviors Arguments
1) OST programs can help youth develop self-confidence, optimism, and initiative.
2) OST programs can increase civic responsibility and participation.

Economic Arguments
1) OST programs can help improve children’s educational performance and affect the quality of the future workforce and the national economy.
2) OST programs can help decrease health care costs related to childhood obesity.
3) OST programs can increase the economic contributions of young people to society when they become adults.
4) OST programs can help reduce parental stress and affect health care costs and lost job productivity.

Activities are hooks, not the goals!

Given the previous list, the community (parents, funders, elected officials, etc.) will judge our utility to the extent that we (examples):

- Deal with the 3 – 7 p.m. – Safe and secure
- Help kids attend school, not drop out, get better grades
- Contribute to lowering crime rate, gang membership, & safety concerns
- Etc.
Intentional Programming

Five focus areas:

1) Clear statement of outcomes

2) Program explicitly focused and targeted to specific outcomes

3) Sustained staff training and support

4) Ongoing vigilance to make program adjustments as needed – fidelity

5) Insuring enough participation to make a difference

If these elements are operative:

... programs are most likely to be able to realize their goals and achieve successful outcomes for youth, families, communities, society.
Out-of-school Time programs have the:

**POTENTIAL**
...to impact a range of positive learning, developmental, societal, and economic outcomes

**REALITY**
...some programs are not maximizing this potential!

**WHAT TO DO?**
...Improve intentionality and linkages to evaluation!
Programming for Outcomes

Participation → Black Box → Something happens!

Identify needed outcomes → Develop program objectives, i.e., outcomes to be achieved → Design program to achieve outcomes → Intentional outcomes happen!
What happens when we have “Intentionality”?

- More focused academic success
- Decrease economic impact of negative behaviors
- Decreased health care costs
- Improved job-related productivity
- Etc.
Applying Intentionality

- Identify professional strengths of staff
- Scan for program strengths
- Encourage participant program review
- Make adjustments and course corrections
Some Tips about Outcomes

- Work with outcomes that matter to the stakeholders and participants
- Work with a concise list of outcomes...Don’t promise too much
- Target verifiable outcomes ...only those you can support through evaluation
- Some outcomes are more immediate than others...on-site vs. later outcomes
Inputs: What we invest

Outputs: What we do, who we reach

Outcomes: What happens to participants as a result of their participating

Proximal: What are the near term results

Distal: What are the medium term results

Ultimate: What are the long term results
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What we</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Short Term (Proximal)</td>
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<td>Invest</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Medium Term (Distal)</td>
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<td>•Staff</td>
<td>•Conduct/facilitate</td>
<td>•Learning</td>
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<td>•Volunteers</td>
<td>workshops, meetings</td>
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<td>•Time</td>
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<td>•Knowledge</td>
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<td>•Attitudes</td>
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<td>•Research</td>
<td>•Train staff</td>
<td>•Skills</td>
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<td>•Materials</td>
<td>•Provide programs</td>
<td>•Opinions</td>
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**Inputs: Program Components**
- Homework assistance related activities
- Knowledgeable staff to conduct the activities

**Outputs**
- Number of sessions offered
- Number of children attending
  - 4

**Proximal Outcome**
- Homework completed
  - 3

**Distal Outcomes**
- Better Grades
- Better test scores
  - 2

**Ultimate Outcomes**
- Graduate from high school
- Obtain employment
- Pay taxes
  - 1
Linking Intentionality to Evaluation

- **Purposes of evaluation**
  - Program Improvement – process focused
  - Program sustainability – outcome focused

- **Stakeholders**
  - Administrators
  - Participants
  - Funders
  - Community members

- **Effective evaluations require intentional logic models**
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Formative
What We Learn
• Dosage
• Fidelity
• Quality

Summative
What We Learn
• Impacts
Formative

- The goal is program improvement
- Process or implementation evaluations
  - Fidelity - The degree of adherence to a specified service delivery model
    - Were leaders trained to offer program?
    - Were components of program actually implemented?
    - How much of the program was implemented?
  - Program Quality – how well was the program delivered
  - Dosage - Amount and duration of services
  - Participant Responsiveness – engagement, enthusiasm, satisfaction
Common Fidelity Issues

1. Lack of program adherence
2. Modifying someone else’s program
3. Not high enough level of participation
4. Different people participating at different times
5. Outcomes not clearly stated
6. Outcomes are not measurable and don’t express meaningful change
7. High staff turnover
8. Reliance on other systems (e.g., school personnel) to deliver services
9. No start-up time for new programs
Formative Evaluation Procedures

- **Fidelity**
  - Curriculum logs/journals/observation

- **Program Quality**
  - Leader attitude towards the program
  - Quality of program materials and setting
  - Level of leader preparation

- **Dosage Participant**
  - Amount of program received (i.e., attendance)

- **Participant Responsiveness, e.g., satisfaction**
  - I like the program
  - I would sign up for the program again
  - I would tell my friends to sign up for the program
Importance Performance Analyses

- How important was x?
- How well did the program perform in regards to x?

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- Food
  - Concentrate efforts here
- Staff
  - Keep up the good work
- Decorations
  - Possible overkill
The goal is understanding program impact

Measuring Outcomes
- Which ones?
- With what?
- How often?
Summative Evaluation Processes

- **Evaluation Design**
  - Pre-Post
  - Retrospective
    - How do you feel about x?
    - How did you feel about x before starting this program?
  - Experimental Design
    - Causality vs. correlation

- **Data Collection**
  - Paper and pencil
  - Online – Survey Monkey, Google Docs, Rypple
Evaluation Synergy

- Measuring *processes* and *impacts* guards against implementation failure
- Provides a more holistic perspective of program performance
- First step towards dissemination
What do you want to have happen as a result of someone reading the report?

- Know your audience
  - Multiple stakeholders
- Keep it simple
- Make it applicable
- Make it timely
Exercise

Answer the following questions regarding one of your programs:

- Have we identified targeted outcomes?
- Is the program intentionally designed towards these outcomes?
- Do we have a logic model?
- Do we have an evaluation plan?
  - Is the evaluation tied to the logic model?
  - Do we conduct formative evaluations?
  - Do we conduct summative evaluations?
- Is our evaluation data promoting sustainability and program improvement?
Final thoughts

- Programming and evaluation should compliment each other.
- Intentionality is key to both

- Any Final Questions?
- What was something you liked or learned?

Thanks for Your Time!
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