

Why do we create logic models or theories of change for our programs?

to measure success!

clarity

to try to make things better and work better.

organization and direction

to ensure progression and self awareness

Measure impact

to be able to measure against objectives

In order to understand what activities are meaningful and why

align outcomes with measuring tools

Why do we create logic models or theories of change for our programs?

To help guide program development & improvement

Because theories of change are fun!

Evidence of outcomes

TO know why we do what we do and if we are successful/have the intended impact

To create a simple visual path for how we collect, manage and use data/information to evaluate our work (process and outcome)

To find the best method that works to effectively receive an outcome desired

Measure outcomes and Impact

Identify goals, structure, measurement

To guide our thought process as we work

Why do we create logic models or theories of change for our programs?

To stay focused

Map out what we want to do and how to do it

To have a shared understanding of what we hope to see for our programs

to tell us what to measure and monitor

To create a program map and determine the impact on service recipients

for consistency and direction; measure success

To allow for flexibility and adaptation in measuring success

To measure impact and hold ourselves accountable

Plans for improvement, measure success

Why do we create logic models or theories of change for our programs?

as a written down plan to follow

to measure Fidelity

to clarify assumptions and get everyone on the same page

to give them a roadmap to providing services, and identify outcome goals

To plan what we will track and measure

To ensure that the program is doing what it is set to do. Program development.

Understand if what we are doing is making a difference

Guide our work, determine success and areas that need improvement

We are human and need to grow and learn too. Maybe even more so because we are the ones who have the responsibility to help others grow so we need to even take a harder look at ourselves

Why do we create logic models or theories of change for our programs?

growth in programs

to highlight activities, resources, and expected outcomes

Communication of Cqi process and purpose across the agency and with stakeholders

To understand what we should say no to!

see the big picture of their work

To know what we are measuring

a visual aid on the goal of the program and how to get there.

Develop programs and ways to track plans and improvement

to clarify the things we care about as an organization

Why do we create logic models or theories of change for our programs?

We have found errors in what we are currently doing

To know exactly what we're doing and why we're doing it...

Focus the work

using client/consumer survey results - looking at specific questions to determine if our CQI process had the desired effect on the consumer

Do staff use the reports we share to make programmatic changes based on the results?

Clear QI process, Clear Outcomes, Start from scratch, reorganization of process, organization, turnover, accreditation

explorer

Identify 1-3 outcomes that would demonstrate the impact of your CQI system

Use of best practice measures. CW confidence level prior to participating in audit interviews with federal/state reviewers. Data quality.

Increased training evaluation scores to show efficacy of training curriculum.

Show the staff how the data tells a story – that the data doesn't pull focus from the services provided to the service receivers

- Greater standardization across programs -Increased data quality and data governance- Increase stakeholders knowledge of CQI and increased buy-in-Increase communication of QI success/challenges.

Dawn- 1. to assist program staff as we transition our outcomes system into Power BI. 2. to assist program leadership to come up with strategies related to disaggregate data by race outcomes.

Get the teams excited about the cqi meetings

Outcome would be data informed decisions making (increase the accuracy and quality of data)creating a cultural of curiosity (indicators could be asking questions about data, or staff leading reporting and generating)

Measure engagement of staff in the quality improvement culture, measure changes to actual performance measures based upon QI efforts, such as PDSAs and measure to see if a client satisfaction item changes over time due to QI initiatives.

1. Data Literacy of staff2. Engagement with staff and outside organization3. shifting culture to ownership of data by programs and staff

Identify 1-3 outcomes that would demonstrate the impact of your CQI system

Behavior change of staff, e.g. using results in meetings

Using the data on a regular basis to inform practice – get teams knowledgeable about data

Improved data literacy

Build teams into PQI Plan; train on PQI Plan...do they know it exists?; measure QI knowledge via survey

EVALUATION CAPACITY ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT (ECAI)

Taylor-Ritzler, Suarez-Balcazar, Garcia-Iriarte, Henry, D. B, & Balcazar, F. E. (2013). Understanding and measuring evaluation capacity: A model and instrument validation study. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 34(2), 190-206.

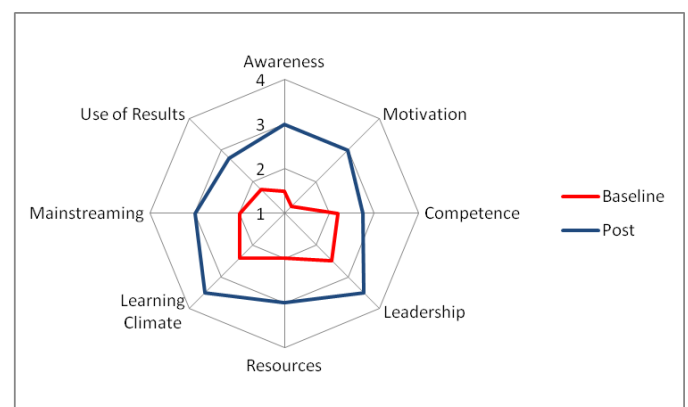
The ECAI was developed based on a synthesis model of evaluation capacity (see Suarez-Balcazar, Taylor-Ritzler, Iriarte-Garcia, et al., 2010. Evaluation Capacity Building: A cultural and contextual framework. In Balcazar et al. [Eds], *Race, Culture & Disability: Rehabilitation Science and Practice*. Jones & Bartlett: Sudbury, MA). Many social programs need to build their evaluation capacity. The ECB literature is growing and contains complex models and several instruments. The ECAI is the first instrument that is based on a model and has been empirically validated. The model and measure help us answer the questions “What is evaluation capacity?” and “How do you measure evaluation capacity?” The ECAI can be used to assess baseline levels of organizational evaluation capacity. These baseline levels can then be used to inform planning for strategies to sustain evaluation capacity where it already exists and build capacity where it is needed. The ECAI can also be used after ECB strategies have been implemented to assess their effectiveness.

Here are some tips for using the ECAI:

1. Conduct a baseline assessment of organizational evaluation capacity using the model and ECAI
 - Administer the ECAI to as many stakeholders as possible
 - Reverse code items: Thoughts about Eval - 10, 11 and Learning Climate- 9, such that 1=4, 2=3, 3=2, 4=1.
 - Compute a mean and standard deviation for each capacity component (average score for each stakeholder and then average across stakeholders or stakeholder groups)
 - Based on the SDs, determine whether you have subgroups within the organization with different perceptions of EC (if you do, these differences in perceptions of evaluation capacity must be understood)
 - Based on the means, identify evaluation capacity *strengths* to target for celebration and maintenance and *weaknesses* to target for ECB activities
2. Implement ECB activities (tools, training, TA) to build capacity in needed areas
3. Conduct a post ECB activities assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of ECB activities

<i>Capacity Component</i>	<i>Baseline ECAI Score out of 4</i>	<i>Post ECAI Score out of 4</i>
Individual Factors		
<i>Awareness</i>		
<i>Motivation</i>		
<i>Competence</i>		
Organizational Factors		
<i>Leadership</i>		
<i>Learning Climate</i>		
<i>Resources</i>		
Evaluation Capacity Outcomes		
<i>Mainstreaming</i>		
<i>Use of Results</i>		

A radar plot can be very helpful for visualizing baseline- and post-ECB evaluation capacity levels.



EVALUATION CAPACITY ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT (ECAI)

Please circle the number that best corresponds to your level of agreement with each of the statements in the sections that follow. Base your ratings on the program where you work as a staff person.

SECTION I: About You

Thoughts about Evaluation

I think that an evaluation...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Will help me understand my program.	1	2	3	4
2. Will inform the decisions I make about my program.	1	2	3	4
3. Will justify funding for my program.	1	2	3	4
4. Will help to convince managers that changes are needed in my program.	1	2	3	4
5. Will inform changes in our documentation systems.	1	2	3	4
6. Is absolutely necessary to improve my program.	1	2	3	4
7. Should involve program participants in the evaluation process.	1	2	3	4
8. Will influence policy relevant to my program.	1	2	3	4
9. Will help improve services to people from diverse ethnic backgrounds who also have disabilities	1	2	3	4
10. Is unnecessary because we already know what is best for our participants.	1	2	3	4
11. Is too complex for our staff to do.	1	2	3	4

Motivation to Engage in Evaluation

I am motivated to...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Learn about evaluation.	1	2	3	4
2. Start evaluating my program.	1	2	3	4
3. Support other staff to evaluate their program.	1	2	3	4
4. Encourage others to buy into evaluating our program.	1	2	3	4

Evaluation Knowledge and Skills

I know how to...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Develop an evaluation plan.	1	2	3	4
2. Clearly state measurable goals and objectives for my program.	1	2	3	4
3. Identify strategies to collect information from participants.	1	2	3	4
4. Define outcome indicators of my program.	1	2	3	4
5. Decide what questions to answer in an evaluation.	1	2	3	4
6. Decide from whom to collect the information.	1	2	3	4
7. Collect evaluation information.	1	2	3	4
8. Analyze evaluation information.	1	2	3	4
9. Develop recommendations based on evaluation results.	1	2	3	4
10. Examine the impact of my program on people from diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds and/or people with disabilities.	1	2	3	4
11. Write an evaluation report.	1	2	3	4
12. Conduct an evaluation of my program on my own.	1	2	3	4
13. Conduct an evaluation of my program with support from others.	1	2	3	4
14. Present evaluation findings orally.	1	2	3	4

SECTION II: About Your Organization

Leadership

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I provide effective leadership.	1	2	3	4
2. Staff understands how everyone's duties fit together as part of the overall mission of the program.	1	2	3	4
3. I communicate program goals and objectives clearly.	1	2	3	4
4. I have a clear plan for accomplishing program goals.	1	2	3	4
5. I have realistic expectations of what staff can accomplish given the resources they have available.	1	2	3	4

Learning Climate

The program where I work fosters an environment in which...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Evaluation information is shared in open forums.	1	2	3	4
2. Staff is supported to introduce new approaches in the course of their work.	1	2	3	4
3. It is easy for staff to meet regularly to discuss issues.	1	2	3	4
4. Staff is provided opportunities to assess how well they are doing, what they can do better, and what is working.	1	2	3	4
5. Staff can encourage managers and peers to make use of evaluation findings.	1	2	3	4
6. Staff respects each other's perspectives and opinions.	1	2	3	4
7. Staff errors lead to teachable moments rather than criticisms.	1	2	3	4
8. Staff participates in making long-term plans for their program.	1	2	3	4
9. Staff concerns are ignored in most decisions regarding strategic planning and evaluation.	1	2	3	4

Resources for Evaluation

In my program...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Resources are allocated to provide accommodations for people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and for people with disabilities to collect evaluation information (e.g., interpreters, translated documents).	1	2	3	4
2. Staff has time to conduct evaluation activities (e.g., identifying or developing a survey, collecting information from participants).	1	2	3	4
3. Staff has access to technology to compile information into computerized records.	1	2	3	4
4. Staff has access to adequate technology to produce summary reports of information collected from participants (e.g., computerized database).	1	2	3	4
5. Resources are allocated for staff training (e.g., money, time, bringing in consultants).	1	2	3	4

6. Technical assistance is available to staff to address questions related to evaluation.	1	2	3	4
7. Funders provide resources (e.g., training, money, etc.) to conduct evaluation.	1	2	3	4
8. Funders provide leadership for conducting evaluation.	1	2	3	4
9. Agency leadership engages in ongoing dialogue with funders regarding evaluation.	1	2	3	4

SECTION III: About Your Work

Evaluation as part of your Job

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My program gathers information from diverse stakeholders to gauge how well the program is doing.	1	2	3	4
2. My program has adequate records of past evaluation efforts and what happened as a result.	1	2	3	4
3. I have access to the information I need to make decisions regarding my work.	1	2	3	4
4. I am able to integrate evaluation activities into my daily work practices.	1	2	3	4
5. The evaluation activities I engage in are consistent with funders' expectations.	1	2	3	4

Use of Evaluation Findings

Please indicate the extent to which your program currently uses evaluation results for the following purposes:	Not at All	To Some Extent	To a Considerable Extent	To a Very Great Extent
1. To report to a funder.	1	2	3	4
2. To improve services or programs.	1	2	3	4
3. To get additional funding.	1	2	3	4
4. To design ongoing monitoring processes.	1	2	3	4
5. To assess implementation of a program.	1	2	3	4
6. To assess quality of a program.	1	2	3	4
7. To improve outreach.	1	2	3	4
8. To make informed decisions.	1	2	3	4
9. To train staff.	1	2	3	4
10. To develop best practices.	1	2	3	4
11. To eliminate unneeded services or programs.	1	2	3	4



ILAC Working Paper 8

Building an Evaluative Culture for Effective Evaluation and Results Management

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November 2008

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The ILAC initiative fosters learning from experience and use of the lessons learned to improve the design and implementation of agricultural research and development programs. The mission of the ILAC Initiative is to develop, field test and introduce methods and tools that promote organizational learning and institutional change in CGIAR centres and their partners, to expand the contributions of agricultural research to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

This paper has been reformatted to comply with the style of the ILAC Working Paper series.

Citation: Mayne, J. (2008) *Building an Evaluative Culture for Effective Evaluation and Results Management*. ILAC Working Paper 8, Rome, Institutional Learning and Change Initiative.

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Building an Evaluative Culture for Effective Evaluation and Results Management

John Mayne
November 2008

Abstract

A weak evaluative culture undermines many attempts at building an effective evaluation and results management regimes. This brief outlines practical actions that an organization can take to build and support an evaluative culture, where information on performance is deliberately sought in order to learn how to better manage and deliver programs and services. Such an organization values empirical evidence on the results it is seeking to achieve.

1. Introduction

Efforts at introducing results management and evaluation in organizations are widespread, although often seen as of only limited success. Developing and maintaining an evaluative culture in an organization is often seen as key to building more effective results management and evaluation approaches. On an ongoing basis, there needs to be a climate in the organization where evidence on performance is valued, sought out and seen as essential to good management. Without such a climate, adherence to systems and procedures can dominate attitudes towards results management and evaluation. This brief discusses what an evaluative culture entails and what can be done to build and maintain such a culture.

Table 1

Characteristics of an Evaluative Culture

An organization with a strong evaluative culture:

- engages in *self-reflection* and *self-examination*:
 - deliberately seeks evidence on what it is achieving, such as through monitoring and evaluation,
 - uses results information to challenge and support what it is doing, and
 - values candor, challenge and genuine dialogue;
- engages in *evidence-based learning*:
 - makes time to learn in a structured fashion,
 - learns from mistakes and weak performance, and
 - encourages knowledge sharing;
- encourages *experimentation* and *change*:
 - supports deliberate risk taking, and
 - seeks out new ways of doing business.

2. What characterizes an evaluative culture?

An *evaluative culture* denotes an organizational culture that (Table 1) deliberately seeks out information on its performance in order to use that information to learn how to better manage and deliver its programs and services, and thereby improve its performance. Such an organization values empirical evidence on the results—outputs and outcomes—it is seeking to achieve. Other terms used for such a culture include a results culture, a culture of results, a culture of performance, an evaluation culture and a culture of inquiry.

An absence of these characteristics will be recognized by many as all too common in organizations. Thus, a weaker evaluative culture might, for example,

- gather information on results, but limit its use mainly to external reporting,
- acknowledge the need to learn, but not provide the time or structured occasions to do so,
- claim it is evidence-seeking, but discourages challenge and questioning the status quo, and/or
- talk about the importance of achieving results, but value following the rules and frown on risk taking.

3. Building an Evaluative Culture

All organizations have an existing culture, which, as Kim (2002: 3) notes, "... conveys a sense of identity to employees, provides unwritten and, often, unspoken guidelines on how to get along in an organization. ... An organizational culture is reflected by what is valued, the dominant leadership styles, symbols, the procedures, routines, and the definition of success that make an organization unique." This brief is addressing what structures, practices and actions can be put in place to build and support an evaluative culture as part of the overall organizational culture. Based on considerable literature and experience, I suggest that the several elements shown in Table 2 are needed to build such a 'culture of inquiry', i.e., the organizational culture outlined in Table 1.

Leadership

Leadership is probably the most important factor in organizational culture.

Demonstrated senior management leadership and commitment.

Strong senior leadership in building an evaluative culture can be evident through such actions as:

- *supporting the results management regime*, including demonstrating the benefits of using evidence, and supporting results management with resources;
- *providing consistent leadership in results management*, including consistent and regular communication on results management, and acting consistently with an evaluative culture—walking the talk; and
- *managing expectations for results management*, through setting out reasonable yet challenging expectations for success, proceeding gradually and with modesty, and balancing accountability with learning.

In addition, senior managers need to *oversee the results management regime* through:

- *Agreeing* a results framework for the organization, and results frameworks for programs and policies;

Table 2

Measures to Foster an Evaluative Culture

Leadership

- Demonstrated senior management leadership and commitment
- Regular informed demand for results information
- Building results measurement and results management capacity
- Establishing and communicating a clear role and responsibilities for results management

Organizational support structures

- Supportive organizational incentives
- Supportive organizational systems, practices and procedures
- An outcome-oriented and supportive accountability regime
- Learning focussed evaluation and monitoring

A learning focus

- Build in learning
- Tolerating and learning from mistakes

- *Challenging* theories of change¹ behind programs, and the evidence gathered on performance;
- *Approving* feasible yet challenging performance expectations;
- *Using* results information in approving programming decisions and for holding managers to account;
- *Overseeing* key aspects of results management: evaluation and monitoring systems, results-informed learning, and results reporting by program managers; and
- *Reporting* on organizational performance.

Informed demand for evidence on performance. Results management and evaluation can be significantly encouraged and supported if there is informed and sensible demand in an organization for results information. Key ways that informed demand can occur is through:

- having managers and senior managers *routinely ask for results information*, and
- requiring that *planning, budgeting and reporting be results-based*.

Building results measurement and results management capacity. Building a culture of results in an organization requires a capacity to be able to articulate and measure results, a capacity to understand how results information can be used to help managers manage, and some level of in-house professional results management support. This capacity can be enhanced through:

providing *ongoing training* to managers and staff in the various aspects of results management,

- identifying and supporting *peer champions*,
- *integrating results management training* into the regular management training program;
- including *self-evaluation* as part of the results management training;
- providing *clear and effective guidance* to managers on results management; and
- using *results management networks* to share lessons and foster an evaluative culture.

Establish and communicate a clear role and responsibilities for results management. There is a need for a clearly articulated vision to build the organizational culture:

¹ Theories of change explain why it is believed that the objectives of the program will be met if the outputs are delivered. They lay out the logic and assumptions behind the program, the pathway of change expected.

- set out the *aims and underlying principles* for its results management regime, including developing and communicating a clear strategy for results management,
- agreeing on *key terminology*, and
- define the *roles and responsibilities* of senior managers, managers, program staff, and professional staff in the regime.

Organizational support structures

The second group of elements needed to foster a results culture (Table 2) are support structures. Specific structural aspects of organizational life give day-to-day meaning to the organization's culture.

Supportive organizational incentives. Having the right formal and informal incentives for individuals and units in place is essential to fostering a culture of results, probably more important than capacity issues. In results management, the aim is to have individuals and units deliberately plan for results and then monitor and evaluate what results are actually being achieved in order to adjust activities and outputs to perform better. The bottom line for results measurement is empirical-based learning. Evidence of this occurring is what should be rewarded. This contrasts with approaches that reward only meeting targets.

Supportive organizational systems, practices and procedures. To foster an evaluative culture, all the systems, practices and procedures in an organization need to align and be consistent with that culture. Thus, for example:

- *Managers need adequate autonomy to manage for results:* Managers seeking to achieve outcomes need to be able to adjust their operations as they learn what is working and what is not. Managing only for planned outputs does not foster a culture of inquiry about what are the impacts of delivering those outputs.
- *Evidence-friendly information systems:* The financial, human resource, planning and reporting systems in organizations need to be able to incorporate results information in a user-friendly manner. Otherwise, the gap between the rhetoric of an evaluative culture and the realities of everyday work will be quite evident.
- *Link results management with other reform initiatives.* Many organizations are instituting a variety of management reforms and results management needs to be seen as a key aspect of reform, not a one-off initiative to meet, for example, external requirements.

An outcome-oriented and supportive accountability regime. How accountability is exercised in an organization plays a key role in defining its culture, since accountability defines what aspects of performance are important. If managers are simply accountable for following procedures and delivering planned outputs, there is little incentive to actively seek evidence on the outcomes being achieved. Accountability for outcomes (Mayne, 2007) should consist of (a) providing information on the extent to which the expected outputs and outcomes were attained, and at what cost; (b) demonstrating the contribution made by the program to the outcomes; (c) demonstrating the learning and change that have resulted; and (d)

providing assurance that the means used were sound and proper. Thus, for example, if outcome targets and other expectations have not been met, a key accountability question should be what has been learned as a result and what will change in the future?

Learning-focussed evaluation and monitoring. Undertaking evaluation and monitoring can significantly help to foster an evaluative culture. If managers and staff are involved in the process of measuring and analysing results information, they are likely to see the value of such efforts and to make use of the information gathered. Seeing positive results of that use in terms of better design or delivery will further increase interest in learning from such information. But if the main purpose of evaluation and monitoring is seen as a means to check up on managers and staff, then learning—and hence an evaluative culture—is less likely to be supported. Carden and Earl (2007) discuss how improved process use was used to enhance evaluative thinking at the International Development Research Centre.

A learning focus

The third and last set of elements in Table 2 deal with the deliberate efforts needed to build a capacity for and acceptance of learning in an organization.

Build in learning. Building learning in an organization is widely discussed in the literature (see, for example, Cousins, Goh, Clark and Lee, 2004). Here I want to discuss several specific ideas:

- *Institutionalized learning events*—In my view, most useful is the idea of institutionalized learning events. A learning event could be structured around a current issue of concern where the available information and evidence is brought together in a digestible format for an informed discussion by the interested parties of the issue and what the available evidence implies for future actions. The International Development Research Centre holds annual learning events on a topic of current interest (IDRC, 2006).
- *Encouraging knowledge sharing*—An evaluative culture values sharing information and knowledge, such as providing group learning opportunities and developing supportive information sharing and communication structures.
- *Encouraging leaning through experience*—Learning also occurs through direct on-the-job experience. Organizations can enhance this type of leaning by encouraging efforts to identify and communicate good practices.
- *Making time for learning*—A key constraint for many managers is time. Keeping a program on track is a full time job, and it is hard to find time for reflection and learning. Briton (2005: 31-32) offers numerous suggestions on specific ways an organization can create ‘learning spaces’.

Tolerating and learning from mistakes. Mistakes occur in organizations and are not welcomed. But in a learning and evaluative culture, mistakes need to be tolerated and seen as an opportunity to learn what went wrong and how to do better the next time.

4. What not to do

All organizations have numerous formal and informal incentives in place to which managers and staff react. In some cases, while the original impetus for the incentive or procedure may have been valid, the incentive in a results management regime may now be in fact a disincentive. Across-the-board budget cuts is a good example. While simple to implement, they clearly send the message that when it comes to budgets—the kingpin of bureaucratic life—results don't matter. Table 3 provides examples of

Table 3

Examples of Disincentives for Fostering an Evaluative Culture

- Penalizing programs/projects that provide results information (perhaps showing weak performance) over those that do not provide such information.
- Across-the-board budget cuts.
- A constant focus by management on outputs rather than outcomes.
- Penalizing individuals or units that make unpleasant truths visible.
- Setting unrealistic results targets and then sanctioning 'poor' performance, or setting targets too low.
- Poor quality results information that cannot be trusted.
- Results information overload, with inadequate synthesis done.
- Accountability that focuses only on following rules and procedures. Meeting indicators rather than achieving important results is what gets rewarded.
- No apparent organizational interest in learning and adapting.
- Inadequate regular review of the results being sought and the underlying theory of change, leading to perverse behaviour chasing the wrong results.

organizational actions that do not support an evaluative culture.

5. Systems of Results Activities or a Culture of Results?

Many organizations today engage in results management and most have put in place a number of results-related systems, for planning for results, for measuring results, for evaluating results, and for reporting on results. There likely is, as a consequence, a lot of activity and discussion going on related to 'results'. But is all that 'buzz' evidence that there is indeed a culture of results, an evaluative culture in place?

Maybe. If there were little results-based planning and little measuring of results, there would, indeed, be an insufficient foundation for even beginning to create and nurture an evaluative culture. However, as reviews of RBM regimes in many organizations have concluded, *systems do not a culture make*. An organization may have systems of results without the accompanying evaluative culture to adequately exploit their utility. Indeed, results systems in many organizations may be seen as a distraction from getting on with managing. Results management systems used mainly or only to feed external reporting are all too common. And as such, they may actual work against a culture of seeing results information as some valued and worth pursuing. A recent review of many years of experience in the UN system concluded that "results-based management will continue to be an administrative chore of no real utility" unless

significant changes are made in how the General Assembly operates (Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2008: 2).

Key to an evaluative culture is the routine use of results information to learn from past experience and to inform decision-making on the design and delivery of programs. In an organization with an evaluative culture, decision on design and delivery would rarely be made without credible empirical information on relevant past experience and on clear statements of what results will be accomplished if decisions are taken.

Table 4 suggests what would be expected in an organization with an evaluative culture, over and above systems of results.

Table 4

Systems of Results or a Culture of Results?

Many organizations have **systems of results**:

- a results-based planning system with results frameworks for programs
- results monitoring systems in place generating results data
- evaluations undertaken to assess the results achieved by an evaluation unit
- reporting systems in place providing data on the results achieved

But these should not be mistaken for an evaluative culture. Indeed, on their own, they can become a burdensome system not helping management at all.

An **evaluative culture** would show evidence of:

- structured learning events routinely held to discuss future directions, using available results data and information
- senior managers regularly stressing the importance of credible results information for good management, and asking for results information at programming meetings
- organizational units accountable for demonstrating that they are learning
- participation in measuring results occurring throughout the organization
- decisions on design and deliver routinely and visibly informed by results information
- good results management showcased
- results information widely shared around the organization
- honest mistakes tolerated and seen as opportunities to learn and improve rather than as opportunities to blame or penalize
- training on ‘results matters’ integrated into regular manager and staff training, supplemented with specific results management
- managers able to adjust their activities and outputs to reflect what is being learned

6. A strategy for moving forward

All or most of the elements identified in Table 2 and more concretely in Table 4 are needed to foster an evaluative culture, in the sense that their absence—and certainly their inverse—can undermine moving to a results culture. But an organization cannot advance on all these fronts at once. Changing organizational culture is a difficult task, and there has been much written about how to bring about culture change in organizations.

A first step might be to undertake a ‘culture audit’ (Pal and Teplova, 2003) to try and determine just what is the current attitude and experience with evaluative inquiry, and what are the current disincentives. Are any of the characteristics in Table 1 or in Table 3 in evidence? It is also clear from the literature that some level of senior management visibility and consistent support is essential to moving forward. This need not require 100% gung-ho support from senior management, but a level of support that is consistent with the actual beliefs of senior management, and with a realistic understanding of where the organization currently is. As the benefits from evaluative inquiry are realized, one can expect senior support to strengthen.

A strategy of specific actions can then be developed, based on the framework in Table 2 and the specific situation at hand. For an organization, a first level strategy might be:

1. Get senior management support.
2. Institute results-based planning and reporting.
3. Get managers asking the results questions.
4. Acquire a minimum level of internal expertise.
5. Hold and support learning events, at both the small unit and corporate levels.
6. Provide ongoing training to managers and staff.

Organizations often indeed implement some of these steps, especially the first two with some initial training. I would argue that is not enough, and the steps 3 through 6 are required to build a critical mass of support and interest in an evaluative culture.

A second level strategy could then be:

7. Identify and support results management champions.
8. Recognize and showcase good efforts at results management.
9. Encourage process learning—learning by participation in evaluation and results management activities.

Then, over time, additional elements of the framework outlined in Table 2 and Table 4 could be brought into play.

7. Concluding remarks

While organizations may tip their hats to the importance of an evaluative culture, little is usually done to deliberately build and maintain such a culture. Efforts are typically put into building systems of measurement and reporting, and, usually one-time,

enhancing the capacity of staff, all of which can be delegated to somewhere down in the organization. Yet, without a compatible evaluative culture, efforts at building capacity and systems are not enough for an effective evaluation or results management regime to thrive. Over and over again, assessments of evaluation and results management regimes find them wanting and burdensome, and point to the lack of a culture that supports and values the use of empirical evidence to routinely inform management as a major barrier.

Developing an evaluative culture in an organization will not happen through good intentions and osmosis. It requires deliberate efforts by the organization and especially its senior managers to encourage, implement and support such a culture. This brief has suggested numerous ways that such a culture can be developed and maintained in an organization.

8. Further Reading

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About the Author

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CQI Stakeholder Survey Guide

Presented at the CQI Community Conference in 2021 by Emily Shapiro, Mimi Stern, and Ashleigh Rosen. Developed by the CQI Department at JCFS Chicago based on the Evaluation Capacity Assessment Instrument (Taylor-Ritzler, Suarez-Balcazar, Garcia-Iriarte, Henry, D. B, & Balcazar, F. E. (2013)). For questions on this guide, contact CQI@jcfs.org.

Quantitative Analysis Instructions

1. Compute a mean score for each domain for each respondent. Ensure the correct items are reverse-coded.
2. Average the respondent-level mean scores for an overall domain score for each domain.
3. Compare the overall domain scores to the benchmark targets.

Outcomes Key

Survey items on the following page relate to one of the four outcomes below.

Key	Outcome
A	Increase/maintain understanding of clients & program
B	Increase/maintain ability to articulate the impact of services
C	Increase/maintain ability to make evidence-based decisions
D	Increase/maintain commitment to a culture of continual improvement

Survey Items

Key for analysis	Please indicate the extent to which your program currently uses CQI data for the following purposes:	Not at All	To Some Extent	To a Considerable Extent	To a Very Great Extent
A	To improve services or programs.	1	2	3	4
A	To design ongoing monitoring processes.	1	2	3	4
A	To assess implementation of a program.	1	2	3	4
A	To assess quality of a program.	1	2	3	4
C	To make informed decisions.	1	2	3	4
C	To train staff.	1	2	3	4
C	To develop or incorporate best practices.	1	2	3	4

Key for analysis	Please indicate your level of agreement with the following items:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
D	The CQI process provides opportunities to assess how well we are doing and what we can do better.	1	2	3	4
D	CQI information is shared transparently with me.	1	2	3	4
D	Staff encourage colleagues to make use of CQI findings.	1	2	3	4
D	Staff concerns are overlooked in most decisions regarding quality improvement and evaluation. [REVERSE CODE]	1	2	3	4
A	My program gathers information from diverse stakeholders to gauge how well the program is doing.	1	2	3	4
C	My program has adequate records of past CQI efforts and what happened as a result.	1	2	3	4
D	The CQI process is inclusive of voices at all levels in my program.	1	2	3	4
D	Staff at all levels participate in developing improvement plans for my program.	1	2	3	4
C	I have access to the CQI information I need to make decisions regarding my work.	1	2	3	4
B	I am able to articulate my program's key outcomes.	1	2	3	4
B	I am familiar with my program's theory of change or program philosophy.	1	2	3	4
B	I know where to find the outcome results for my program.	1	2	3	4

Key for analysis	I think that CQI activities...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	help me understand my program.	1	2	3	4
A	help me better serve our clients.	1	2	3	4
C	inform the decisions I make about my work.	1	2	3	4
C	demonstrate which improvements are needed in my program.	1	2	3	4
C	inform changes in our documentation systems.	1	2	3	4
A	will help improve services to people of diverse backgrounds and needs	1	2	3	4
D	are unnecessary because we already know what is best for our clients. [REVERSE CODE]	1	2	3	4
D	are integrated into my regular work.	1	2	3	4

Demographic Items (adjust based on your survey population)

- Department or Program
- Position
- Do you supervise staff?
- Tenure at the agency
- Tenure on CQI Committee (if applicable)

Open Items

- “Any feedback regarding the questions on this page?” - *provided at the end of each section*
- “What is one suggestion to improve CQI at the agency? How could CQI better serve you and the agency?”
- “Anything else you would like to share?”