

Evaluation Competencies and Professionalization

Presenter:

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Home of Starbucks, Boeing, Microsoft...



Seattle Seahawks

Super Bowl XLVIII World Champions



Laurie's background . . .

- Roles ► teacher, consultant, researcher, evaluator, professor
- Education ► political science (BA), curriculum and instruction (MEd), educational psychology (PhD)
- Specialties ► inquiry methods, evaluator competencies, cooperative strategies, constructive conflict, organizational change
- Passions ► faith, family, friends, art, music, creativity, culture, collaboration for social justice

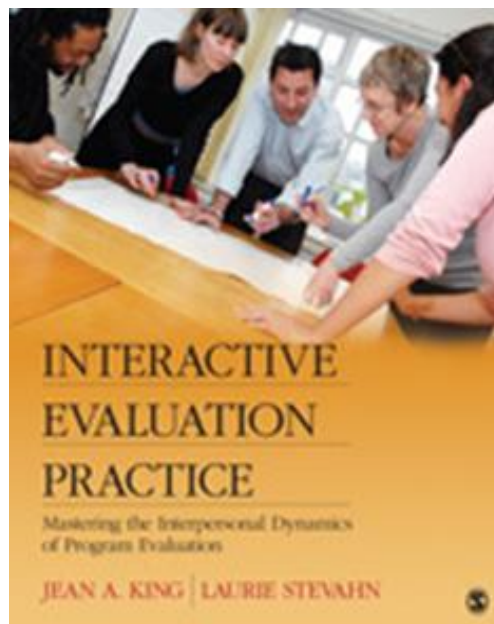


Laurie's background ...

- AEA ► long-time member, currently serving on the AEA Evaluator Competencies Task Force



- Evaluation Publications ►



Your background . . .



Voicing Variables

How long have you been involved with monitoring and evaluation?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than a decade



Voicing Variables

In what areas do you work?

- Government
- Education
- Business
- Healthcare
- Social services
- Nonprofits/Foundation
- Other . . .



Voicing Variables

Your role ...

- Evaluator
- Program Director/Manager
- M&E Advisor
- Funder
- Other ...



Voicing Variables

Your affiliations ...

- SAMEA
- DPME
- Other ...



Overall Goals . . .

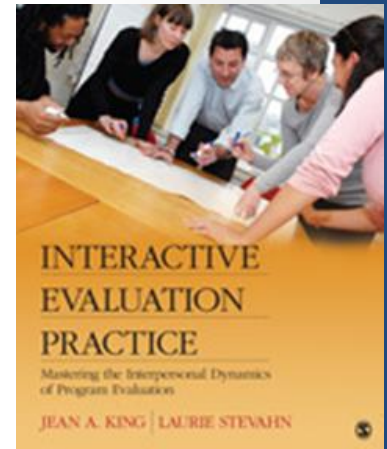


1. Consider criteria that ground professionalization of program evaluation
2. Consider the role of evaluator competencies in professionalization
3. Identify pathways for future action toward increasing evaluation competence
4. Learn from and with each other as we work together

Program Evaluation

“A process of systematic inquiry to provide sound information about the characteristics, activities, or outcomes of a program or policy for a valued purpose”

(King & Stevahn, 2013, p. 13).



Criteria for professionalization ...

(Worthen, 1994)

1. A need for evaluators
2. Certification or licensure of evaluators
3. Exclusion of unqualified practitioners
4. Unique knowledge and skills of evaluation
5. Preparation programs for evaluators
6. Professional associations
7. Accreditation of preparation programs
8. Stable career opportunities
9. Standards of practice

Cooperative Rank Order

- Consider the nine criteria for professionalization
- Sequence from most to least present in the South African context
 - ✓ Present
 - ✓ Emerging
 - ✓ Absent
- Be ready to explain/defend your reasoning

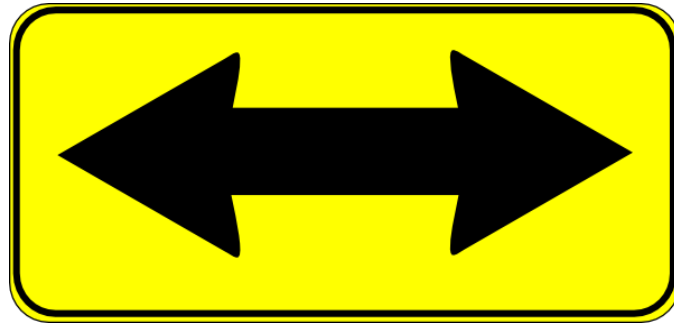


American Evaluation Association (AEA)

- USA context—covers a large geographic area comprised of diverse stakeholders, interests, disciplines, and cultural norms/traditions
- Varied disciplines—include education, government, health, social service, business, nonprofits, foundations, grassroots community development
- Evaluation “professionals”—include academics, practitioners, policy makers, funders
- Accountability concerns—
 - Public sector (government)
 - Private sector (foundations)
 - Education (public & private)
- AEA = 15% international membership

Professionalization Criteria	?
1. A need for evaluators	YES
8. Stable career opportunities	YES
6. Professional associations	YES
9. Standards of practice	YES
4. Unique knowledge and skills of evaluation	YES
5. Preparation programs for evaluators	YES
7. Accreditation of preparation programs	NO
3. Exclusion of unqualified practitioners	NO
2. Certification or licensure of evaluators	NO

There is a difference between ...



Evaluation & Evaluator

Standards & Principles ...

Joint Committee Standards (3rd ed.)

- **Utility Standards**
(U1-U8)
- **Feasibility Standards**
(F1-F4)
- **Propriety Standards**
(P1-P7)
- **Accuracy Standards**
(A1-A8)
- **Evaluation Accountability Standards**
(E1-E3)

AEA Guiding Principles for Evaluators

- A. Systematic Inquiry**
(#1-#3)
- B. Competence**
(#1-#4)
- C. Integrity/Honesty**
(#1-#7)
- D. Respect for People**
(#1-#6)
- E. Responsibilities for
general and public
welfare**
(#1-#5)

AEA Statement on Cultural Competence (2011)

■ Role of Culture and Cultural Competence in Quality Evaluation

- *What is culture?*
- *Evaluations reflect culture.*
- *What is cultural competence?*

■ Why Cultural Competence in Evaluation is Important

- *Cultural competence is an ethical imperative.*
- *Validity demands cultural competence.*
- *Theories are inherently cultural.*

■ Essential Practices for Cultural Competence

- *Acknowledge the complexity of cultural identity.*
- *Recognize the dynamics of power.*
- *Recognize and eliminate bias in language.*
- *Employ culturally appropriate methods.*

Professionalization ...

- *What are evaluator competencies?*
- *What role do they play in the professionalization of evaluation?*





What are the
knowledge, skills and
dispositions
that a program evaluator
needs to successfully
conduct an evaluation?

Distinctions among terms . . .

Term	Meaning
Knowledge, skills, attitudes/ dispositions	<i>From curriculum and training fields—what you know, can do, and your attitudes/stance toward</i>
Competencies	<i>A “set of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable an individual to effectively perform the activities of a given occupation or job function to the standards expected in employment” (Richey, Fields, & Foxon, 2001, p. 31)</i>
Competence	<i>“Habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served” (Epstein & Hundert, 2002, p. 226)</i>

Let's be clear about competencies...



"Are we in complete agreement, then?"

Evaluator “competencies” ...

How do we become more clear?

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes/Dispositions
?	?	?

Review of the Literature



Systematically examine adopted standards . . .

Joint Committee Standards (3rd ed.)

Utility Standards

(U1-U8)

Feasibility Standards

(F1-F4)

Propriety Standards

(P1-P7)

Accuracy Standards

(A1-A8)

Evaluation Accountability Standards

(E1-E3)

Concept Formation

Identifying evaluator competencies...

What does “doing evaluation” look like for you?

What are your “go to” skills, activities, tasks?

1. Individually write one response per sticky note, about 5-10 responses (or more) per person.

2. Together organize “alike” items into clusters/groups/themes.

3. Label each cluster/group/theme.

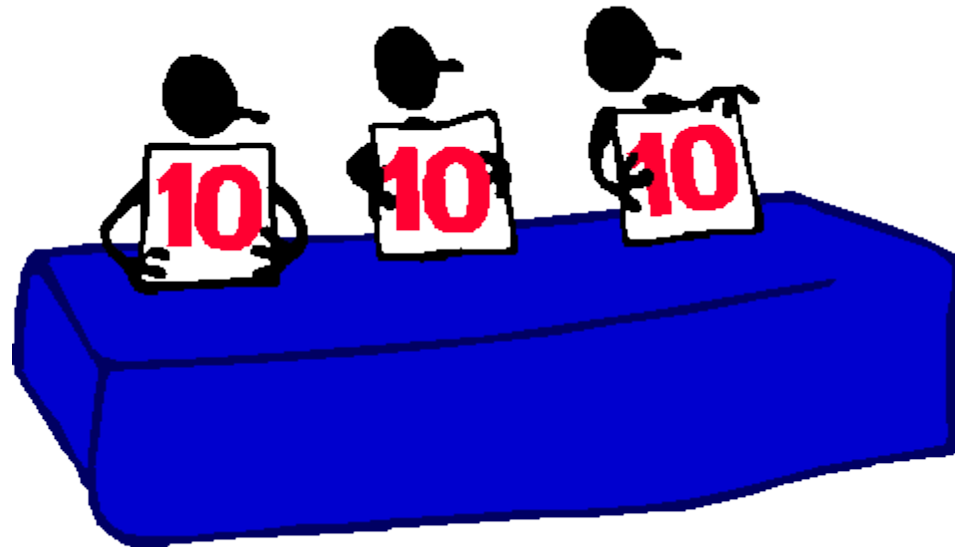
4. Determine relationships among clusters.



Ask experts in the field . . .

Conduct a study . . .

- Panel review
- Delphi method



Once upon a time. . .

It began with an idea in a graduate course

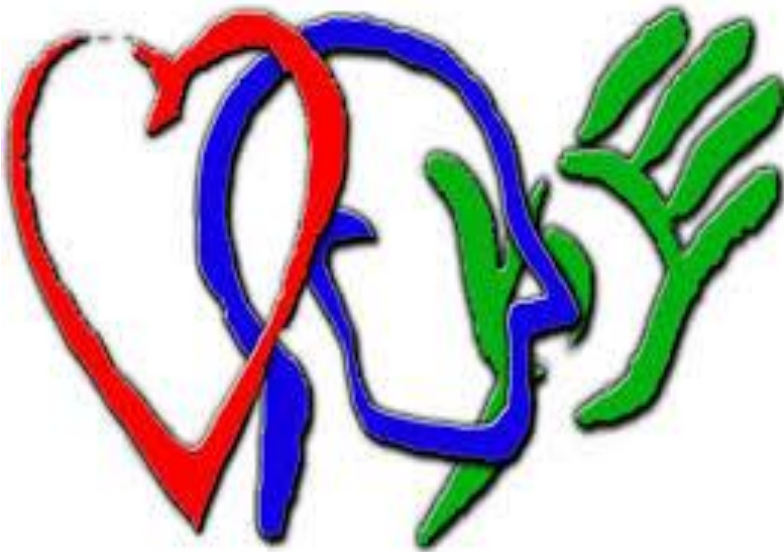


Statement of the Problem

- Program evaluation is an established field
- Preparation programs and career opportunities
- Professional associations worldwide
- *Program Evaluations Standards* (Yarbrough et al., 2011)
- *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (AEA, 2004)
- *Cultural Competence Statement* (AEA, 2011)

-
- Recognized as an established profession?
 - Competencies for evaluator practice?

Research Question



What are the salient knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function as an effective evaluator?

Essential Evaluator Competencies
(King, Stevahn, Ghere, & Minnema, 2001)

I. Systematic Inquiry

(research, evaluation, both)

II. Competent Evaluation Practice

(intended users, situational analysis, manage projects)

III. General Skills for Evaluation Practice

(logical/critical thinking, written, verbal, interpersonal, computer)

IV. Evaluator Professionalism

(know self, ethical, know/apply standards, professional development)

Validation Study #1:

Essential Evaluator Competencies (EEC)

(King, Stevahn, Ghere, & Minnema, 2001)

Method

- EEC: created from a comprehensive review of the literature
- Sample: $n = 31$ participants
(snowball sample in Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN—participants were diverse in role, context, age, training)
- Protocol: **MACR procedure**
(Multi-Attribute Consensus Reaching)
- Analysis:
Quantitative (means & range)
Qualitative (content analysis)

Results

- Agreement on 78% of the total competencies
- Disagreement tended to be role and context specific

Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators
(Stevahn, King, Ghere, & Minnema, 2005;
further validated by Wilcox, 2012)

1. Professional Practice	Fundamental norms and values of evaluation practice
2. Systematic Inquiry	Technical aspects of evaluation practice
3. Situational Analysis	Unique interests, issues, and contextual circumstances of each evaluation
4. Project Management	Logistics of managing/monitoring evaluation projects
5. Reflective Practice	One's own evaluation expertise and need for growth
6. Interpersonal Competence	"People skills" necessary for evaluation practice

Validation Study #2:

Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators

(ECPE) (Stevahn, King, Ghere, & Minnema, 2005)

Method

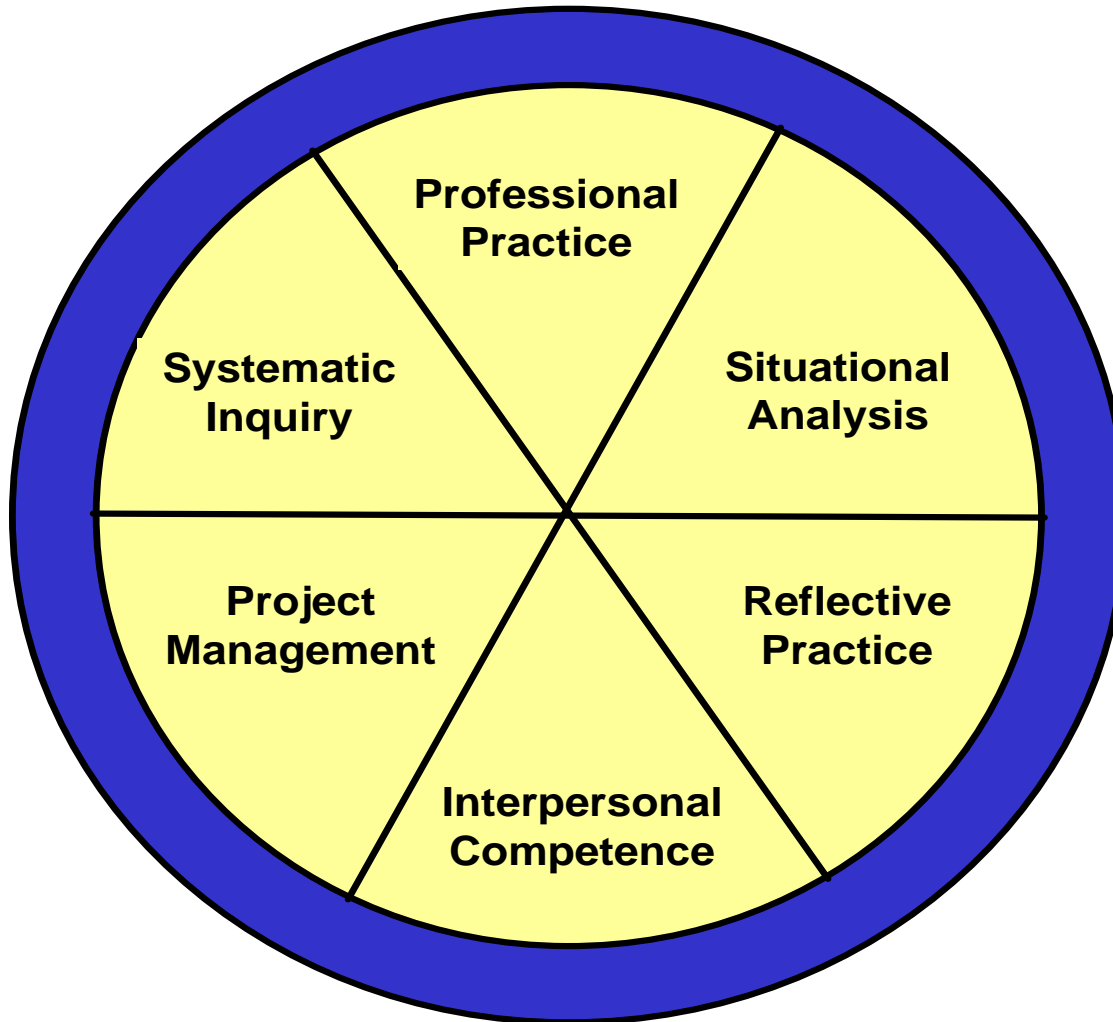
- ECPE: revision of the EEC
- Sample: $n = 3$ sources
 - Joint Committee Program Evaluation Standards (1994)
 - AEA Guiding Principles (1995)
 - CES Essential Skills Series (1999)
- Protocol: Cross-Comparison
- Analysis:
Qualitative (content analysis)

Results

Six competency categories:

- **Professional Practice**
- **Systematic Inquiry**
- **Situational Analysis**
- **Project Management**
- **Reflective Practice**
- **Interpersonal Competence**

Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators



Validation Study #3:

An initial study to develop instruments and validate the Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators

(ECPE) (Wilcox, 2012)

Method

- ECPE: validity standards (Messick, 1995a, 1995b)
- Sample:
 $n = 102$ of 208 (49%)
via Minnesota Evaluation Association (MEA) listserv
- Protocol:
Validation Survey Instrument
- Analysis:
Quantitative (means and range)

Results

- 61 competencies total within the six domains:
- 58 = “*strongly necessary*”
- 3 = “*moderately necessary*”

NOTE: None rated lower

... plus “think aloud” interviews with 9 evaluators from three different contexts

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

- Research methodologies were sound and systematic
- MACR protocol had established validity and reliability
- Multiple independent coders for qualitative data and cross-comparison analyses
- ECPE Survey grounded by established validity standards

Limitations

- Small and local sample sizes (but diverse across demographics)
- Self-report data (but multiple sources and types of quantitative and qualitative data)
- Lack of specific definitions of terms (need a glossary)
- North American sources/locations only (USA and Canada)

Despite limitations (e.g., regional vs. national sampling) . . .

ECPE has been useful for pragmatic real-world practice—
*professional evaluation associations and university training
programs have drawn upon and/or applied the ECPE
in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes*



***Validated or not,
competencies
seem to provide
useful grounding
for real-world
work!***

Implications/Applications

Competencies provide a foundation for:

- Planning and implementing professional development and university programs/courses
- Enhancing reflective practice, including self-assessment of skills
- Mapping “what matters” to guide hiring
- Advancing research on evaluation
- Professionalizing the field



ECPE Self-Assessment Tool

(Ghere, King, Stevahn, Minnema, 2006)

- What are your strengths?
- What are opportunities for development?



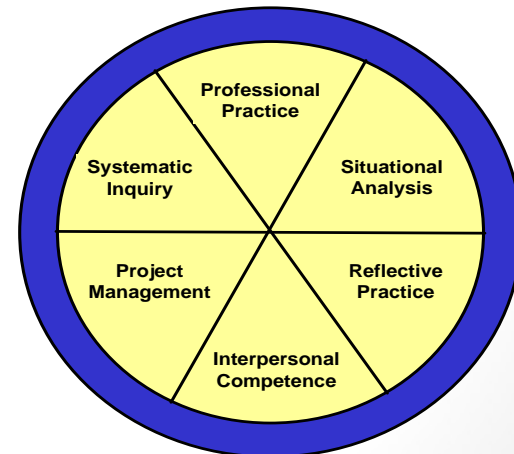
ECPE Rating Scale

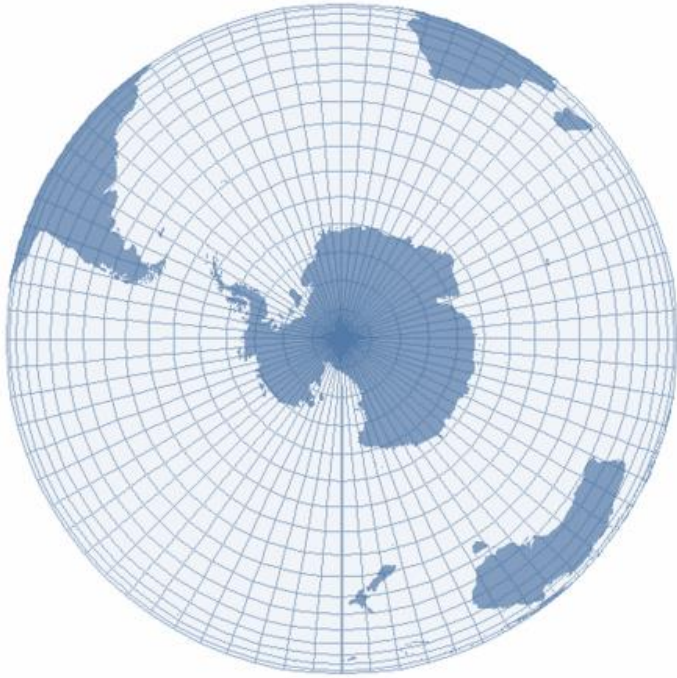
**Entry /
Novice**

**Proficient/
Skilled**

**Mastery/
Expert**

Reflecting on your own practice, how do you rate your current knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively carry out program evaluations?





What recent developments are triggering conversation?

CURRENT STATUS OF COMPETENCIES DEVELOPMENT AND USE AROUND THE WORLD



The pace of evaluator competency activity around the world has increased rapidly

Evaluator Competencies

(International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction [ibstpi], 2006;

Russ-Eft, Bober, de la Teja, Foxon, & Koszalka, 2008)

■ Professional Foundations	5 competencies
■ Planning and Designing the Evaluation	4 competencies
■ Implementing the Evaluation Plan	3 competencies
■ Managing the Evaluation	2 competencies

Recommendations on Education and Training in Evaluation: Requirement Profiles for Evaluators (German Evaluation Society [DeGEval], 2008)

- 1. Theory and history of evaluation** (4 domains in this field)
- 2. Methodological competencies** (5 domains in this field)
- 3. Organisational and subject knowledge** (3 domains in this field)
- 4. Social and personal competencies** (5 domains in this field)
- 5. Evaluation practice** (3 domains in this field)

Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice (Canadian Evaluation Society, 2010)

NOTE: *These competencies ground the Canadian Evaluation Society's
Credentialed Evaluator Professional Designations Program*

1.0 Reflective Practice

2.0 Technical Practice

3.0 Situational Practice

4.0 Management Practice

5.0 Interpersonal Practice

Additional Comparisons

What does it take to be an effective qualitative evaluator?

Essential Competencies

(Stevahn & King—conducted in 2010, published in 2016)

Common Core Competency Domains

1. Professional Focus
2. Technical Focus
3. Situational Focus
4. Management Focus
5. Interpersonal Focus

Evaluator Competencies (Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association [ANZEA], 2011)

1. Contextual analysis and engagement

(contains 4 sub-competencies)

2. Reflective practice and professional development

(contains 3 sub-competencies)

3. Systematic evaluative inquiry

(contains 5 sub-competencies)

4. Evaluation project management and professional practice

(contains 3 sub-competencies)

**The EES Evaluation Capabilities Framework
(European Evaluation Society [EES], 2011)
NOTE: Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review (VEPR)**

1. Evaluation knowledge

1.1 Appreciates the distinctive role played by evaluation in society5

1.2 Masters the antecedents of evaluation quality5

1.3 Understands the potential and limits of evaluation instruments and tools...5

2. Professional Practice

2.1 Demonstrates capacity to manage and deliver evaluations5

2.2 Displays interpersonal skills5

3. Dispositions and attitudes5

**Competencies for Development Evaluation Evaluators,
Managers, and Commissioners
(International Development Evaluation Association
[IDEAS], 2012)**

1.0 Professional Foundations	(9 competencies)
2.0 Monitoring Systems	(1 competency)
3.0 Evaluation Planning and Design	(4 competencies)
4.0 Managing the Evaluation	(5 competencies)
5.0 Conducting the Evaluation	(2 competencies)

Evaluation Department Technical Competency Framework (Department for International Development [DFID], 2013)

- 1. Best Practice in Evaluation Approaches and Methods**
- 2. Gathering and Using Evidence for Evaluation**
- 3. Communicating and Sharing Evaluation Findings, Knowledge, and Expertise**
- 4. Upholds Evaluation Independence, Quality & Standards**
- 5. Leading, Managing and Delivering Evaluations**

Evaluators' Professional Learning Competency Framework (Australasian Evaluation Society [AES], 2013)

- 1. Evaluative Attitude and Professional Practice**
- 2. Evaluation Theory**
- 3. Culture, Stakeholders and Context**
- 4. Research Methods and Systematic Inquiry**
- 5. Project Management**
- 6. Interpersonal Skills**
- 7. Evaluation Activities**

Evaluation Competency Framework for Government (Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, Republic of South Africa, 2014)

- 1 Overarching Considerations**
(3 domains containing descriptors)
- 2 Evaluation Leadership**
(1 domain containing descriptors)
- 3 Evaluation Craft**
(2 domains containing descriptors)
- 4 Implementation of Evaluation**
(4 domains containing descriptors)

What about AEA ?!



AMERICAN
EVALUATION
ASSOCIATION

Development and Validation Process

AEA Evaluator Competencies—DRAFT

(AEA Evaluator Competencies Task Force, 2016)

Method

- Created from cross-comparison of existing evaluator competencies taxonomies (world-wide)
- Six coders cross-checking agreement
- Word/Phrase refinements by Stevahn & King
- 2015 AEA Conference Listening Session ($n = 40$)
- Task Force refinements plus Table of Issues/Concerns
- AEA TIG leader Interviews/discussions
- Virtual focus groups with international VOPE leaders
- Refine & conduct Validation Survey

Results

Five competency categories:

- **Professional Domain**
- **Methodology Domain**
- **Context Domain**
- **Management Domain**
- **Interpersonal Domain**

Table 5.1. Evaluator Competency Frameworks and Interpersonal Facilitation Skills (ordered by year; original numbers/bullets/formats maintained).

Evaluator Competency Framework	Interpersonal Domains and Competencies
<p><i>Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators</i> (Stevahn, King, Ghere, & Minnema, 2005)</p>	<p>6.0 Interpersonal Competence 6.5 Facilitates constructive interpersonal interaction (teamwork, group facilitation, processing)</p>
<p><i>Evaluator Competencies</i> (International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction, 2006; Russ-Eft et al., 2008)</p>	<p>Professional Foundations 3. Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills.</p>
<p><i>Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice</i> (Canadian Evaluation Society, 2010)</p>	<p>5.0 Interpersonal Practice 5.6 Uses facilitation skills (group work) 5.7 Uses interpersonal skills (individual and teams)</p>
<p><i>Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association Evaluator Competencies</i> (Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association, 2011)</p>	<p>Evaluation management and professional evaluation practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A demonstrated ability to develop collaborative, co-operative and respectful relationships with those involved in and affected by the evaluation (stakeholders) and evaluation team members by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● building relationships and developing engagement and commitment
<p><i>The EES Evaluation Capabilities Framework</i> (European Evaluation Society, 2011)</p>	<p>2. Professional practice 2.2 Displays interpersonal skills</p>
<p><i>Competencies for Development Evaluation Evaluators, Managers, and Commissioners</i> (International Development Evaluation Association, 2012)</p>	<p>7.0 Promoting a Culture of Learning from Evaluation 7.3 Champions evaluation and seeks to build the evaluation capacity of others.</p>
<p><i>Evaluators' Professional Learning Competency Framework</i> (Australasian Evaluation Society, 2013)</p>	<p>6. Interpersonal Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● have the capacity to build relationships with a range of people ● use facilitation skills (group work), interpersonal skills (individual and teams) and conflict resolution skills to elicit

Back to the future . . .

American Evaluation Association Evaluator Competencies (AEA Task Force, 2016)—DRAFT

NOTE: Consultations are in progress toward revising/refining/finalizing, followed by a validation survey to AEA members, followed a decision whether to adopt.

1.0 Professional Domain	5 competencies
2.0 Methodology Domain	14 competencies
3.0 Context Domain	7 competencies
4.0 Management Domain	9 competencies
5.0 Interpersonal Domain	9 competencies

From *ECPE (Stevahn et al., 2005) . . .*
To *AEA Evaluator Competencies Draft (2016)*

What's similar?

What's different?

Issues / Concerns



Issues to consider

Conceptual

- Validity evidence exists
- Importance of context (Wilcox, 2012)
- Relationship to improved practice?

Practical

- People are using competencies, regardless
- Need to update existing sets

Possible next steps—*conceptually*

- Create a formal approach to developing and validating competencies
- Teach evaluation using the competencies
- Study the effect and effectiveness of competencies in a variety of settings

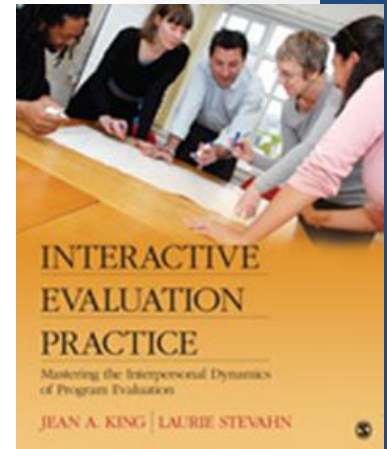
Possible next steps—*practically*

- Update existing competencies
- Create professional learning communities (ongoing support/study groups) to discuss practice relevant to competencies
- Explore credentialing options—
or not?

Program Evaluation

“A process of systematic inquiry to provide sound information about the characteristics, activities, or outcomes of a program or policy for a valued purpose”

(King & Stevahn, 2013, p. 13).



Persistent Issues, Personal Perspectives, and Future Possibilities

- Identifying and agreeing upon a handful of core domains and competencies for adaptation in varying contexts may be most important for developing skilled evaluators—rather than searching for one detailed/definitive taxonomy that cannot possibly serve all contexts well



To be or not to be ... ?

Keep the focus on . . .

- What influences high-quality evaluation?
- What conditions enable, support, encourage, nurture, advance continuous learning for increased competence?
- What role do associations play in this process?

Questions? Comments? Insights?



References

- Stevahn, L., King, J. A., Ghere, G., & Minnema, J. (2005). Establishing essential competencies for program evaluators. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 26(1), 43-59.
- Wilcox, Y., & King, J. A. (2014). A professional grounding and history of the development and formal use of evaluator competencies. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 28(3), 1-28.
- King, J. A., & Stevahn, L. (2015). Competencies for program evaluators in light of adaptive action: What? So what? Now what? In J. W. Altschuld & M. Engle (Eds.), *Accreditation, certification, and credentialing: Relevant concerns for US evaluators*. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 145, 21-37.



Let's think about the ECPE together

APPLYING THE COMPETENCIES

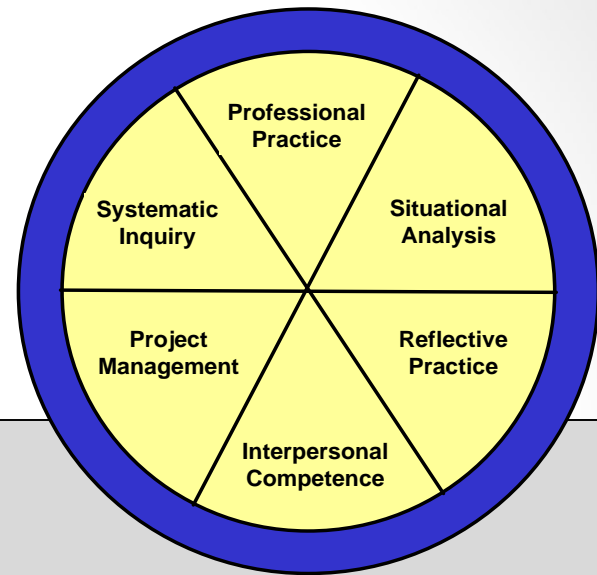
Jigsaw

Let's dig deeper . .



1. Home groups divide information/readings
2. Expert groups of two read their specific part and prepare to teach
3. Back to home groups to present
4. Apply the entire body of information

Jigsaw process . . .



- **HOME TEAM** —each member gets a different part/domain of the ECPE
- **EXPERT PAIR** of two—find one other person in the room who has your same part/domain
- Read and discuss specific competencies within the domain—what do you notice, what stands out, what strikes you as important?
- Return to **HOME TEAM** . . .
 - *Share major points/insights from each competency domain*
 - *Compare/Contrast across all domains—interrelationships?!*

Form context-alike groups . . .

- Discuss how the six ECPE competency domains “play out” in your evaluation context— i.e., education, business, government, health, foundations, nonprofits, social service, etc.
- Arrange the ECPE competency domains (colored strips) to create a visual representation that reflects priorities/connections/relationships in your area of evaluation practice.



Interpersonal Skills

Professional Practice

**Reflective
Practice**

**Situational
Analysis**

**Systematic
Inquiry**

**Project
Management**



Thanks for participating!

