Evaluation Blogging

Improve Your Practice,
Share Your Expertise,
and Strengthen Your Network

Think Tank at #Eval13 in Washington, DC
Saturday, October 19, 2013 from 9:50 – 10:35 am in the International Ballroom Center

Ann K. Emery  Chris Lysy
Susan Kistler  Sheila B. Robinson
...is that we’re going to make *six separate clustered bar charts*. When we copy and paste the charts from Excel into PowerPoint or Word, they’ll look like a single cohesive chart.

*Six small charts come together to look like one big chart.*
Popular uploads

- How to analyze satisfaction survey data in Excel
  - 11,616 views  10 months ago

- Using conditional formatting to highlight blank cells
  - 2,456 views  10 months ago

- How to automate dashboards using Excel and Word
  - 2,252 views  11 months ago

Recent uploads

- How to create a side by side bar chart in Excel
  - 465 views  4 months ago

- How to adjust the units in your Excel chart's axes
  - 222 views  8 months ago

- How to fix funny-looking line charts in Excel with a feature called 'Switch R...'
  - 154 views  8 months ago
Building an Evaluation Culture with Top Ten Lists

By Karen Flora

The best Ignite presentations are when the presenter stumbles over words [Guest post by Kevin Flora]

Exploring the Non-Profit Paradox – Evaluation and Non-Profits [Guest post by Jamie Clearfield]

Learning Evaluation through Apprenticeships [Evaluation musings by Cindy Tanaris]

Preempting Conflict in Evaluation [Guest post by Patrick German]

Greeting's from Cindy Tanaris, The folks at the University of Pittsburgh's Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity. CEAC has been thinking about blogging for some time now — and we've decided that EVERYONE starts their OWN blog, then it's hard to talk ACROSS blogs. So, we've decided to add one of our thinking here with Ann's blog!

First, let me do something that we think is really important in evaluation: CONTEXTUALIZE! Before you can really understand findings from evaluation, you have to understand context. Here's ours!

We are a university-based evaluation group of faculty, and doctoral students in the School of Education that works with folks who are trying to make a difference in the world of learning for children and adults. Our work spans lots of ranges — small to large scale, quiet to quite focus, formal to informal settings, school based to community-based, and more. I am the founder and Director of CEAC and also am an Associate Professor in Administrative and Policy Studies at Pitt, specializing in evaluation and educational leadership studies. All of our evaluators are doc students studying some aspect of education that truly represents a broad range of interests.

Now, on to the more typical blog-like entry!

A few things I wish I knew about evaluation before I jumped in headfirst... [Guest post by Karen Anderson]

Hi everyone. My name is Patrick German and I am the Director of Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance at Project Renewal, and the Founder and Director of Performance Management Professionals, a community of practice based in New York City on issues of Performance Measurement and Management and Evaluations.

Organizations are rife with politics, and politics is often the deciding factor in whether evaluations get used. This is the second of three blog posts on how I navigated and influenced organizational politics to ensure that our evaluation is appropriately supported and used in decision making. You can read last week's post here.

Week Two: Preempting Conflict in Evaluation

I was once told that I had an “excess of diplomacy.” Although my basic ten implied otherwise, I think it is a compliment. In my experience as an evaluation and quality assurance director, I have been involved in various issues and situations that have required diplomacy and tact. The ability to resolve conflicts in a constructive manner is a valuable skill in any workplace, and it is particularly important in the non-profit sector where multiple stakeholders and diverse perspectives are involved.

In this second blog post, I will share some of the strategies I have used to preempt conflicts and maintain a positive working environment. These strategies have helped me to navigate the political landscape and ensure that our organization is able to move forward with its goals.

The first step is to identify potential sources of conflict early on. This can be done by regularly meeting with team members and stakeholders to discuss their concerns and potential solutions. By doing this, you can anticipate issues before they become a serious problem.

Another important strategy is to facilitate open communication. Encouraging team members to express their thoughts and concerns in a non-judgmental environment can help to prevent conflicts from escalating. This can be achieved through regular team meetings, feedback sessions, and one-on-one discussions.

In addition, it is important to address issues promptly and fairly. This means that any grievances or complaints should be handled in a timely manner and that all parties involved are treated equally. This can help to build trust and foster a positive working environment.

Finally, it is important to lead by example. By demonstrating fairness and respect, you can set a positive tone for your team and encourage others to do the same. This can help to create a culture of respect and collaboration, which is essential for the success of any organization.

I hope these strategies are helpful and that you have found them useful in your own work. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this topic further, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best regards,

Patrick German
Susan Kistler on 4 Ways to Make the Most of Evaluation 2013 — Even if you cannot attend

1 Comment • Posted by Susan Kistler in Uncategorized

Good day! I am Susan Kistler, the Evaluation 2013 conference program coordinator and American Evaluation Association Executive Director Emeritus. Today, I’m writing about 4 ways to make the most of the conference even if you cannot attend in person.
Contribution Guidelines

We're very excited to learn from you! If you work or study in the evaluation field, have hot tips, cool tricks, rad resources or lessons learned of interest to evaluators, and would like to contribute to aea365, please consider submitting a draft contribution. Posts should:

- Be written in first-person prose.
- Be short – approximately 250-400 words and absolutely no more than 450.
- Focus on topics that will be of interest to a range of evaluators, not just on the work that you are doing.
- At the very beginning, include a 1-3 sentence introduction to you and the general theme of your Tips, Trick, Resources, or Lessons Learned (but, you don't have a lot of space and this isn't all about you – keep it short and focused).
- For each Tip, Trick, Resource or Lesson Learned, include a header (Hot Tip, Trick, Resource, Lesson Learned) under your author name, email and website.

If you are submitting a draft contribution, please include a short description of the type of post you are submitting (e.g., hot tip, trick, resource, or lesson learned) and a brief description of its content.
Chris Lysy

freshspectrum.com
evalcentral.com
rtpeval.org
cplysy@gmail.com
@clysy
On Interactive Data Visualization, Illustrated

This past week the latest edition of New Directions for Evaluation started hitting mailboxes. The issue covers Data Visualization in Evaluation (it’s part 1 of 2). In it you’ll find an article written by yours truly on recent developments in ... [Continue reading]

filed under: data visualization, social media • tagged with: amanda cox, audience, ben fry, ben shneiderman, data visualization, eric rodenbeck, interactivity, visual information seeking mantra

22 bloggers with advice for researchers and evaluators, illustrated

**UPDATE** This post really struck a nerve. I want to thank everyone who has read it and shared with others. Now you can get a take home pdf version, just download it here. I really think that you should blog. That whatever is getting in ... [Continue reading]

filed under: blogging, evaluation, research • tagged with: advice, ann emery, beth kanter, blogging, bonnie koenig, chi yan lam, david henderson, ewen le borgne, henry jenkins, jamie clearfield, jane davidson, jara dean-coffey, jessie daniels, karen anderson, lisa wade, molly engle, molly hamm, nathan yau, pablo rodriguez-biletia, robert kosara, seth godin, sheila b robinson, stephanie evergreen, tom murphy

Computer Simulation in Evaluation

chris lisy • 8 comments

16 Blogging styles for researchers and evaluators

chris lisy • 7 comments
My stomach hurts

Maybe it was the bad tuna I had for lunch

Too bad I don't have a proper control group, now I'll never know
Emery Evaluation: Dataviz Challenge #6: Unit Charts
October 11, 2013 by Ann K. Emery

Lately I've been feeling let down by summary statistics: the min and max, mean and median, quartiles and standard deviation... They do their job well enough. Summary statistics tell a summary. An aggregate story, bringing all the messy ... [Continue reading]

Development that Works: Five steps you need in education evaluation
October 10, 2013 by Francisco Mejia

One thing that you probably needed when you first learned how to count was your ten fingers (or twenty if you count your toes too). So it is very handy that the IDBs new Guide on evaluating education projects comes in five steps. Not easy steps, mind ... [Continue reading]


Recently we've noticed that, not surprisingly, some people have been confused about the difference between genuine, real, and better evaluation. Let's clear that up. Genuine Evaluation The blog you're currently reading and a set ... [Continue reading]

Visual Brains: A little sketch on Performance Management and Evaluation
October 10, 2013 by Sara Vaca

Even though I'm quite busy with work and preparing my trip to D.C. (yea!!), I wanted to elaborate another infographic I had promised myself to do, even though it is still mainly a draft... When you have a background like mine (trained in ... [Continue reading]
Communication in Evaluation: a Q&A with Kelci Price and August meeting preview

August 7, 2013 by Chris Lysy • Leave a comment

On Friday, August 16 we’ll be meeting at the usual spot (RTP Marriott) for our August meeting. Book club will start at 10 AM, professional development session at 11 AM, and the networking lunch in Newton’s Restaurant at 12 PM.

Send an RSVP to Amy Germuth (agermuth @ gmail. com) if you plan to attend.

This month we’ll be doing something new, beaming in Kelci Price via Webinar to lead our professional development session. I have a little pre-meeting Q&A down below, here’s the preview.

Communication in Evaluation: Professional Development Preview

Communication in evaluation involves evaluators translating complex data into understandable information for stakeholders. It sets the stage for the utilization of evaluation findings, so is a foundational skill for all evaluators. In recent years there has been a renewed focus on how to better communicate evaluation findings in ways that are accessible, meaningful and actionable.
EVALUSPHERIC PERCEPTIONS Reflections of an everyday evaluator/learner/educator exploring the evalusphere

DATA VISUALIZATION & INFORMATION DESIGN
THE LEARNER'S PERSPECTIVE

UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM: Putting the WHY Before Presentation Design

Click to follow this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email, join 198 other followers

Short-term outcomes...
- Unconventional Wisdom: Putting the WHY Before the WHAT of Presentation Design
- Data Visualization & Information Design: One Learner's Perspective
- Time to turn some pages... into evaluation know-how!
- Declare YOUR independence from "proper" presentation design... in favor of a more meaningful, relevant, and engaging approach!

Outputs...
- @AnnKEmery @evalu8r @clysy Gene Shackman's site is probably the most comprehensive collection of eval resources
- Sheila B Robinson, Ed. D
  - Voracious learner, career educator...
  - Evaluation, Professional Development, Special Education.
  - Personal Links
  - LinkedIn
  - View Full Profile ➔

Inputs...

Follow blog via email

FOLLOW BLOG VIA EMAIL

Click to follow this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email, join 198 other followers

Inputs...

Sheila B Robinson, Ed. D
Voracious learner, career educator...
Evaluation, Professional Development, Special Education.
Personal Links
LinkedIn
View Full Profile ➔

Outputs...
- Unconventional Wisdom: Putting the WHY Before the WHAT of Presentation Design
- Data Visualization & Information Design: One Learner's Perspective
- Time to turn some pages... into evaluation know-how!
- Declare YOUR independence from "proper" presentation design... in favor of a more meaningful, relevant, and engaging approach!

Outputs...
- @AnnKEmery @evalu8r @clysy Gene Shackman's site is probably the most comprehensive collection of eval resources

FOLLOW BLOG VIA EMAIL

Click to follow this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email, join 198 other followers

Inputs...

Sheila B Robinson, Ed. D
Voracious learner, career educator...
Evaluation, Professional Development, Special Education.
Personal Links
LinkedIn
View Full Profile ➔

Outputs...
- Unconventional Wisdom: Putting the WHY Before the WHAT of Presentation Design
- Data Visualization & Information Design: One Learner's Perspective
- Time to turn some pages... into evaluation know-how!
- Declare YOUR independence from "proper" presentation design... in favor of a more meaningful, relevant, and engaging approach!

Outputs...
- @AnnKEmery @evalu8r @clysy Gene Shackman's site is probably the most comprehensive collection of eval resources
What makes a good question GOOD? (cross-post with Actionable Data)

01/06/2013 by Sheila B Robinson, Ed. D | 4 Comments

Now, THAT’S a very good question!

Sheila here, writing with the fabulous Kim Firth Leonard of the Actionable Data blog.

We have been tweeting and emailing about changing the nature of surveys to get aresult, this is the first in a series of posts we are writing on the topic.

I (Kim) have recently been flummoxed by the lack of solid published guidance and broad advice (preferably evidence-based) about how to craft and write questions for survey design don't include a lot of advice when crafting questions.

I have shared a few resources with my survey design colleagues. There are certainly great resources out there, but there is a lot of solid published information about survey design, particularly in terms of phrasing? Is it hard to verify, or confirm. For example, take advice on survey design for example, take advice (like using emotive language to phrasing questions) because it’s too subjective. Yet, wording questions and the architecture of effective questions. Or, at the very least, we’ve encountered plenty of what NOT to do advice: avoid jargon, leading questions, loaded questions, and double-barreled questions. What we did NOT find in the literature base, however, is specific advice on using double negatives. But little detail about what works in terms of question wording itself.

Sheila likes How to Conduct Surveys: A Step-by-Step Guide 3rd Ed. by Arlene Fink. Fink offers basic advice, such as “you have to define the attitude, belief, value or idea being measured” (p. 11) but little else on question wording. Like other texts, Fink addresses question types, response options, question order, etc. and facets of survey research.

Kim regularly consults Dillman's internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys. But Dillman doesn't really get at the guts of our original question: “What makes a GOOD question GOOD?” Oh sure, there are threats to validity to consider, and reliability considerations, and some general advice that is as much common sense as it is good practice (e.g. don't use double negatives). But little detail about what works in terms of question wording.

Unlike other evaluation areas we study, there does seem to be agreement about the architecture of effective questions. Or, at the very least, we’ve encountered plenty of what NOT to do advice: avoid jargon, leading questions, loaded questions, and double-barreled questions. What we did NOT find in the literature base, however, is specific advice on using double negatives. But little detail about what works in terms of question wording itself.
Happy (Evaluation) Places

Happy (Evaluation) Places is devoted to organizing my favorite evaluation websites that offer both content and resources for evaluation learning and practice.

SITES WITH LINKS TO EVALUATION-RELATED BLOGS:

Blogs are a tremendous resource for evaluation learning and serve as excellent supplements to scholarly journals and texts. You can find some of my favorite evaluation and education-related blogs under Additional Inputs on my home page.

Betty C. Jung’s Website


Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Office of the Associate Director for Program – Program Evaluation

“Must read” blog posts on evaluation

These represent just a smattering of my favorites among the many wonderfully educative blog posts on evaluation concepts.

*NOTE: Be sure to read the comments on these posts. Some have stimulated interesting discussion among readers and authors.
Evaluation Blogging

Improve Your Practice, Share Your Expertise, and Strengthen Your Network

Ann K. Emery
emeryevaluation.com
@annkemery

Susan Kistler
aea365.org
@sukist

Chris Lysy
freshspectrum.com
evalcentral.com
rpteval.com
@clysy

Sheila B. Robinson
sheilabrobinson.com
@sheilabrobinson

Think Tank at #Eval13 in Washington, DC
Saturday, October 19, 2013 from 9:50 – 10:35 am in International Center