Evaluation 201:
Data Collection Methods

National Council

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League of Women Voters®

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Director, Outcomes and Evaluation

About Me

- Policy and research experience

- Worked on Capitol Hill.

- Taught at numerous colleges and universities.

- Currently pursuing my Ph.D. in Higher Education at the University of Maryland. I study the civic engagement of diverse communities.

- Creating a culture of effective data use

- Shifted the culture at CASA de Maryland to focus on data and outcomes.

- Conducted research, elevated data systems, and developed internal process to track outputs and outcomes.

- Worked with Urban Institute on federal grants, launched data ambassadors and Faculty Learning Circle.
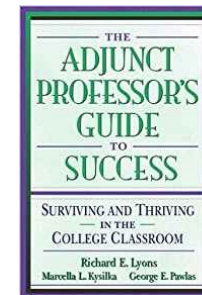
Agenda+ Objectives

- About me

- What is evaluation?

- Pair-Share?

- Methods of Data Collection
  - Surveys
  - Interviews
  - Focus Groups

- Small group discussion

- *Providing the fundamental building blocks on data collection methods.*

What is Evaluation?

- Measuring the success of our programs and initiatives through qualitative/quantitative data collection.

- Collecting factual, timely and actionable information.
  - Surveys
  - Focus Groups
  - Interviews
  - Datasets
  - Internal planning and reporting

How do we define evaluation?

Qualitative Methods: data are in the form of quotes, observation notes or interview transcripts. Interviews, focus groups are used to capture qualitative data.

Quantitative Methods: data in the form of numbers, statistics, charts or tables and can be based on a larger sample. Questionnaires and computer software are used to capture quantitative data.

Evaluation Terminology

Outcome: The ultimate impact of the body of work. Outcomes are not numeric and instead help expand our thinking of how our work makes a difference.

Example: Ensuring that all eligible voters in our state vote during state, local and national elections.

Evaluation Terminology

<u>Strategy:</u> The body of work that will help us reach the intend outcomes.

Example: Mobilize voters in our state (California, Florida, New York, etc.) through X. Not numeric-it narrows the scope of the work.

<u>Tactic:</u> Numeric targets that will allow us to implement sound strategies and reach intended outcomes.

Example: Increase voter turnout by X in 2019 Virginia elections. Over 50,000 voters vote in Virginia during the 2019 elections.

PAIR- SHARE

- What types of data collection have you/your League used in the past?

- Have your data collection efforts been effective?

Surveys

- Used to gather information from a large sample of people in a uniform way.

- Types
  - Telephone surveys
  - Self-administered paper and pencil surveys
  - Self-administered computer surveys (typically online)

- Best Practices
  - Start with the end in mind
  - Keep it short, and sweet!
  - Likert scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

Interviews

- A guided discussion used to gather information from one individual at a time.

- Types
  - In-person
  - Phone
  - Online

- Best Practices
  - Develop a script
  - Let the conversation flow
  - Record sessions (if possible)

Focus Groups

- A guided discussion used to gather information from a group of individuals at one time.
- Types
  - Consumer Research
  - Market Research
  - Single Focus Group (Single moderator)
  - Mini Focus Group (Typically 4-5 people)

- Best Practices
  - Develop agenda and schedule
  - Provide a comfortable setting and refreshments
  - Record sessions (if possible)

Small Group Discussion

- Your League holds a debate with two local candidates prior to an election.
  - Check your table for potential survey questions to examine the outcome of your event.
  - Are there additional questions that you think would be effective to ask?

Thank you and contact me, anytime!

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