Legislative Program Evaluation in the American States

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Background

- Basis of knowledge of state LPE
  - Performance Audits and Evaluations
  - What are the states doing
  - Research concerning evaluation
  - Metaevaluation (one of six areas)
- Funkhouser (2005)
  - Examination of performance audit content
  - Difference in audit unit structures
LPE Literature

- Growth, survey, description of units
  - Growth of units
  - Characteristics of staff
  - Organizational structure
- Limited review of evaluations and audits conducted
  - Case studies
  - Review of multiple reports
Metaevaluation Literature

- Metaevaluation theory
  - Extensive metaevaluation
  - Limited metaevaluation
  - Use of standards and Guiding Principles
- Metaevaluation of multiple reports
  - Standards-based criteria
  - Limited classification (met/unmet)
## Metaevaluation Literature: Multiple Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Reports</th>
<th>Random Sample</th>
<th>Relied Solely on Reports</th>
<th>Other Data Examined</th>
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<td>Bollen, Paxon, &amp; Morishima</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>Chatterji</td>
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<td>Cooksy &amp; Caracelli</td>
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<td>Scott-Little, Haman &amp; Jurs</td>
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<td>Larson, et al.</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>200</td>
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Methodology: LPE Units and Reports

- LPE units selected
  - LPE units under legislative control
  - NLPES members
  - Search of states and statutes for others

- Reports
  - Other than strictly financial audits
  - Classification issues
Methodology: Metaevaluation

Criteria

- Combination of GAGAS for performance auditing, PES, and KEC
- Concise criteria with three ratings (met, partially met, and failed to meet)
- Recognition of limitations
  - Limited information in reports
  - Limited ability for confirmation
  - Limited by selected criteria
Findings

- High percentage meeting criteria
- Performance Audits vs. Evaluations
  - Standards (GAGAS vs. PES)
  - Comparisons
  - Stakeholder identification
- Lack of information on some criteria
  - Timeliness, Quality Control, Human Subjects’ Rights
Issues

- Revision of criteria
  - Drop criteria with little evidence in reports
  - Different categories (poor, fair, etc. vs. met, unmet)
- Focus on generalizability and comparisons
- What is being evaluated
  - Agencies/boards vs. programs and policies
- Unit structure and report content
  - Units with a financial focus vs. nonfinancial
- Goal-based vs. needs-based