Factors Leading to Literature Review

- National focus on outcomes and measurement of impact
- Early experience with statewide evaluation of 21st CCLC program in Washington State
- Referred to EA literature
Key Concerns in Evaluation Literature (1970s)

- Congress and other policy makers critical of “useless” evaluation findings and reports
- Evaluators frustrated with the challenge of evaluating poorly conceived and ill-defined programs
Joseph Wholey and colleagues at the Urban Institute (1979)

Evaluability Assessment as part of a “sequential purchase of information”
Sequential Purchase of Information

- Evaluability assessment
- Rapid-feedback evaluation
- Performance monitoring
- Summative evaluation
EA tasks (Wholey) require determining if...

- Measurable objectives
- Objectives shared by key stakeholders
- Reasonable program structure and resources to achieve objectives
- Likelihood program managers will use evaluation results
Methodologies (Wholey)

- Examine program documents
- Interview key stakeholders
- Visit program
Offered as a

Short-term, inexpensive investment to ensure usable evaluations
EA Outcomes (Rutman, Smith)

- Clarification of program goals and objectives
- Development of program theory (includes logic model and performance measures)
- Stakeholder awareness, understanding, and interest in the program
Rog (1985)

- Reviewed 57 EA studies obtained from Education and Health and Human Services
- Administered survey to a subset of program managers or others involved with EA to investigate variables that influenced EA utilization
Decline in EA use (Smith, 2005)

- Lack of clear methodology
- Ambiguous concept
- Logic model and program theory are legitimate techniques
- People conducting EA not interested in publishing findings
- Program development not a linear process
Purpose of Literature Review

Appraise EA practice since Rog (1985) study and focus on archived literature
Search Strategy

- Queried databases
- Used “evaluability assessment” and “pre-evaluation” as search terms
- Retained article if it in part focused explicitly on EA
- Conducted by academic, scholars, or practitioners for substantive or programmatic reasons
Findings

- 25 articles identified, 22 retained
- 19 articles found in a database with “evaluability assessment” as search terms
- 2 articles found through branching
- 1 article found through journal reading
Archival Information

- 9 articles in evaluation journals
- 9 articles in discipline specific journals
- 2 institutional reports
- 1 book chapter
- 1 AEA presentation
Categories of Information

- Programs, disciplines, settings
- EA models and methods
- Purposes and outcomes
- Modifications to the EA process
Programs, Disciplines, Settings
EA Models and Methods

- Most articles cited well known EA authors but were not explicit about the model used
- Most studies used conventional methodologies
Purposes and Outcomes

- Evaluability and program improvement
  - Most common purpose
- Outcomes include program modifications, evaluation plan, logic model
Modifications to the EA Process

- Thurston (1991) – two studies used this model
- Van Voorhis & Brown (1996)
- Vanderheyden et al. (2006)
Recommendations

- Be clear about EA model in publications
- Clearly document revisions or modifications
- Compare usefulness of various EA models
- Differentiate EA from similar evaluation tools
- All studies are self-reports – develop appraisal techniques
Recommendations Con’t.

- Evaluators work with professionals in other disciplines to ensure clear EA use
- Use well thought, consistent, logical archival approach
Evaluability assessment: A primer

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Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation

http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=8&n=20
Questions?