1: Language and program evaluation | Rashid Al Maamari - www.enganchecubano.com

Language Programs Evaluation: Purposes, Design, Characteristics and Future Introduction There is a consensus in literature on program evaluation on the potential benefits of evaluation which almost makes it 'a byword for improvement, development and betterment' (Kiely,).

Note that the concept of program evaluation can include a wide variety of methods to evaluate many aspects of programs in nonprofit or for-profit organizations. There are numerous books and other materials that provide in-depth analysis of evaluations, their designs, methods, combination of methods and techniques of analysis. However, personnel do not have to be experts in these topics to carry out a useful program evaluation. Besides, if you resort to bringing in an evaluation consultant, you should be a smart consumer. Far too many program evaluations generate information that is either impractical or irrelevant -- if the information is understood at all. This document orients personnel to the nature of program evaluation and how it can be carried out in a realistic and practical fashion. Note that much of the information in this section was gleaned from various works of Michael Quinn Patton. Many people believe evaluation is a useless activity that generates lots of boring data with useless conclusions. This was a problem with evaluations in the past when program evaluation methods were chosen largely on the basis of achieving complete scientific accuracy, reliability and validity. This approach often generated extensive data from which very carefully chosen conclusions were drawn. Generalizations and recommendations were avoided. As a result, evaluation reports tended to reiterate the obvious and left program administrators disappointed and skeptical about the value of evaluation in general. Many people believe that evaluation is about proving the success or failure of a program. This myth assumes that success is implementing the perfect program and never having to hear from employees, customers or clients again -- the program will now run itself perfectly. Success is remaining open to continuing feedback and adjusting the program accordingly. Evaluation gives you this continuing feedback. Many believe that evaluation is a highly unique and complex process that occurs at a certain time in a certain way, and almost always includes the use of outside experts. Many people believe they must completely understand terms such as validity and reliability. They do have to consider what information they need in order to make current decisions about program issues or needs. And they have to be willing to commit to understanding what is really going on. Consequently, they miss precious opportunities to make more of difference for their customer and clients, or to get a bigger bang for their buck. So What is Program Evaluation? In nonprofits, each of these goals often becomes a program. Nonprofit programs are organized methods to provide certain related services to constituents, e. Programs must be evaluated to decide if the programs are indeed useful to constituents. In a for-profit, a program is often a one-time effort to produce a new product or line of products. So, still, what is program evaluation? Program evaluation is carefully collecting information about a program or some aspect of a program in order to make necessary decisions about the program. The type of evaluation you undertake to improve your programs depends on what you want to learn about the program. Understand, verify or increase the impact of products or services on customers or clients - These "outcomes" evaluations are increasingly required by nonprofit funders as verification that the nonprofits are indeed helping their constituents. Too often, service providers for-profit or nonprofit rely on their own instincts and passions to conclude what their customers or clients really need and whether the products or services are providing what is needed. Over time, these organizations find themselves in a lot of guessing about what would be a good product or service, and trial and error about how new products or services could be delivered. Improve delivery mechanisms to be more efficient and less costly - Over time, product or service delivery ends up to be an inefficient collection of activities that are less efficient and more costly than need be. Evaluations can identify program strengths and weaknesses to improve the program. Evaluations can verify if the program is really running as originally planned. Produce data or verify results that can be used for public relations and promoting services in the community. Produce valid comparisons between programs to decide which should be retained, e. Fully examine and describe effective programs for duplication elsewhere. This may seem too obvious to discuss, but before an organization embarks on

evaluating a program, it should have well established means to conduct itself as an organization, e. You Need Program s: To effectively conduct program evaluation, you should first have programs. That is, you need a strong impression of what your customers or clients actually need. You may have used a needs assessment to determine these needs -- itself a form of evaluation, but usually the first step in a good marketing plan. Next, you need some effective methods to meet each of those goals. These methods are usually in the form of programs. It often helps to think of your programs in terms of inputs, process, outputs and outcomes. Inputs are the various resources needed to run the program, e. The process is how the program is carried out, e. The outputs are the units of service, e. Outcomes are the impacts on the customers or on clients receiving services, e. Often, management wants to know everything about their products, services or programs. However, limited resources usually force managers to prioritize what they need to know to make current decisions. Your program evaluation plans depend on what information you need to collect in order to make major decisions. Usually, management is faced with having to make major decisions due to decreased funding, ongoing complaints, unmet needs among customers and clients, the need to polish service delivery, etc. For example, do you want to know more about what is actually going on in your programs, whether your programs are meeting their goals, the impact of your programs on customers, etc? You may want other information or a combination of these. There are trade offs, too, in the breadth and depth of information you get. The more breadth you want, usually the less depth you get unless you have a great deal of resources to carry out the evaluation. On the other hand, if you want to examine a certain aspect of a program in great detail, you will likely not get as much information about other aspects of the program. For those starting out in program evaluation or who have very limited resources, they can use various methods to get a good mix of breadth and depth of information. They can both understand more about certain areas of their programs and not go bankrupt doing so. Consider the following key questions when designing a program evaluation. For what purposes is the evaluation being done, i. Who are the audiences for the information from the evaluation, e. From what sources should the information be collected, e. How can that information be collected in a reasonable fashion, e. When is the information needed so, by when must it be collected? What resources are available to collect the information? Some Major Types of Program Evaluation When designing your evaluation approach, it may be helpful to review the following three types of evaluations, which are rather common in organizations. Note that you should not design your evaluation approach simply by choosing which of the following three types you will use -- you should design your evaluation approach by carefully addressing the above key considerations. Goals-Based Evaluation Often programs are established to meet one or more specific goals. These goals are often described in the original program plans. Goal-based evaluations are evaluating the extent to which programs are meeting predetermined goals or objectives. Questions to ask yourself when designing an evaluation to see if you reached your goals, are: How were the program goals and objectives, is applicable established? Was the process effective? Will the goals be achieved according to the timelines specified in the program implementation or operations plan? If not, then why? Do personnel have adequate resources money, equipment, facilities, training, etc. How should priorities be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals? Depending on the context, this question might be viewed as a program management decision, more than an evaluation question. How should timelines be changed be careful about making these changes - know why efforts are behind schedule before timelines are changed? How should goals be changed be careful about making these changes - know why efforts are not achieving the goals before changing the goals? Should any goals be added or removed? How should goals be established in the future? Process-Based Evaluations Process-based evaluations are geared to fully understanding how a program works -- how does it produce that results that it does. These evaluations are useful if programs are long-standing and have changed over the years, employees or customers report a large number of complaints about the program, there appear to be large inefficiencies in delivering program services and they are also useful for accurately portraying to outside parties how a program truly operates e. There are numerous questions that might be addressed in a process evaluation. These questions can be selected by carefully considering what is important to know about the program. What is required of employees in order to deliver the product or services? How are employees trained about how to deliver the product or services? How do customers or clients come into

the program? What is required of customers or client? How do employees select which products or services will be provided to the customer or client? What is the general process that customers or clients go through with the product or program? What do customers or clients consider to be strengths of the program? What do staff consider to be strengths of the product or program? Outcomes-Based Evaluation Program evaluation with an outcomes focus is increasingly important for nonprofits and asked for by funders. Outcomes are benefits to clients from participation in the program.

2: FL Program Evaluation Project, SLS Department, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Although much has been written about the testing and evaluation of language students, few books have dealt with the much broader issue of measuring the success of language programs.

This recognition of the role of evaluation especially in the areas of accountability and program development has helped it spread everywhere that nowadays, several types of evaluations are conducted in different settings using different approaches and methods and supervised by over fifty professional associations worldwide Mertens, As the demands for accountability and development grow, so do the needs for training and professionals in the field of evaluation. This increasing need for various evaluation projects has already yielded a strong response from academics, evaluation associations and experts that there are now loads of publications, guidelines and handbooks on evaluation. Evaluations serve various purposes the most common of which are accountability, helping programs recognize their qualities, recommending measures for improvement and generating knowledge Norris, J. M, ; Patton, This paper focuses in particular on language programs evaluation which is discussed in relation to language assessment. It explains the relationship between evaluation and assessment as well as their purposes. The paper also demonstrates some characteristics of good evaluations and highlights the role of evaluators. Finally, it concludes by foreseeing the future of evaluation based on predictions from some evaluation experts. Discussing data collection and analysis and reporting evaluation results is beyond the scope of this paper. According to these definitions, program evaluation is a broad procedure that draws information from various program areas to evaluate its overall functionality and provide opportunities for revisions, reflections, formation and implementation of new decisions and actions that are likely to improve the program as a whole. In language programs evaluation, language assessment along with non-assessment data are utilized to reach final conclusions which suggests that program evaluation can include language assessment as a source of data. This clearly reflects the overlap between evaluation and assessment. However, program evaluation is broader in the sense that it is not restricted only assessment data but can also utilize data from other sources such as analyzing program documentations and observational notes from staff meetings Patton, , Evaluation in language programs seems to be driven by common underlying assumptions about the nature of what is being evaluated. These assumptions have to do with three levels of considerations namely 1 what evaluators can know about the reality of the program, 2 how we can construct knowledge and 3 what methods evaluators can employ in pursuing knowledge Lynch, Evaluation is also motivated by specific purposes like the need to check whether the programs are achieving their objectives. There are also other general purposes that stem from the overlap between evaluation and assessment. One example on these is conducting an evaluation to investigate the links between the processes of the language program and the achievement and performance of its students Kiely and Rea-Dickins, These different evaluation purposes help clarify, influence and sometimes even determine the approach to research and practice adopted by evaluators. This also applies to language assessment as approaches there are usually determined by the intended purposes of the assessment. This leads to the following detailed account of evaluation and assessment purposes. Purposes of evaluation and assessment Purposes for assessment and evaluation though discussed in different terms, they have two general types of motivation: In comparison, administrative purposes focus on decisions about placing individuals within language programs and about organizing and developing those programs. As far as assessment purposes are concerned, they are labeled as either proficiency or achievement. According to Cohen , proficiency and achievement testing serve a variety of purposes rather than being purposes in themselves. In other words, proficiency testing targets what individuals can do, not what they have learned. Achievement testing on the other hand, investigates whether individuals have learned a set of pre-specified materials or met a set of pre-specified objectives Alderson et al, It can serve diagnostic purposes such as checking the extent to which individual students have mastered the objectives and finding out where they need help most or where they require further instruction McNamara and Roever, When it comes to evaluation purposes, they are labeled as either formative or summative and each of these serves different purposes. The distinction between these types

was first introduced by Scriven According to Scriven , formative evaluation occurs throughout the program implementation, focuses on its processes and recommends changes for its improvement. Summative evaluation however, occurs at the end of the program and judges the success or failure and the worth of the program. A good example on formative evaluation is that conducted by Yang in which induction practices for newly hired teachers were evaluated through a utilization-focused approach. The findings contributed to developing and improving program practices in specific and high- priority ways as well as highlighting the roles of utilization focused approach in ensuring the actual uses of evaluation results. Another purpose of evaluation in language programs is to examine how the materials are used and the products achieved Tribble, It is worth noting that the purposes vary according to the audience and context of the evaluation and these factors influence the evaluation design which is the main focus of the next section. Accordingly, the design specifies how the necessary information is obtained to make judgments or decisions about individuals or programs. These stages will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Primary stakeholders in assessment for example, include students because they are being assessed. In program evaluation however, primary stakeholders include funders, sponsors and administrators whereas secondary stakeholders include students. For example, knowing that the government agency or a sponsoring body is a major stakeholder in an evaluation entails a design that provides information on the functionality and the worth of the program to ensure the continuation of the fund or support for that program. Being aware of the context under evaluation and its dominant issues and themes is essential to the proper design and choice of approach in any evaluation process Patton, The best way to achieve this is by taking inventory of the evaluation context. This is an iterative phase as new themes 4 will continue to emerge and be drawn upon throughout the implementation of the evaluation. Preparing a context inventory is very important evaluators as informs them about how the context interacts with their goals and other possible audiences and it also helps them determine the important issues that exist in relation to these goals and audiences. A context inventory can function as an early indicator of the limits of a particular evaluation as well as inform decisions during subsequent stages of the evaluation process. It can also determine the feasibility of certain types of data collection design1. Just as equally important to having a context inventory is having a thematic framework. At early stages, a thematic framework can focus the evaluation, guide the evaluator to the aspects of the program that should be investigated and provide a conceptualization of the program in terms of the themes that have emerged from determining the audience and goals and elaborating on the context inventory Gredler, , Wolf, This framework can eventually act as a guide for the collection and analysis of evaluation data. According to these definitions, positivist paradigm, includes objectivity and requires the ability to measure the language aspects evaluators are interested in Elder, while the interpretivist paradigm includes intersubjectivity, knowledge and information about the context that is socially constructed Schwandt, The mixed design includes features of both positivist and interpretivist design. To give some examples on how to choose the right paradigm, if an outsider evaluator is invited to provide an objective view about a particular program, then that is a positivist paradigm. If on the other hand, the evaluation needs to be carried out interactively as an active dialogue between evaluator and participants to obtain and construct knowledge about the program, then this needs an interpretivist paradigm. It is very important to note that no particular approach is necessarily better than the other or is guaranteed to produce good evaluation. Rather, each has features that make them well-suited to conducting program evaluation in some situations but not in others. This leads to the next section in which characteristics of good evaluators and good evaluations will be discussed. This definition is comprehensive enough to encompass most characteristics and roles of good evaluations and evaluators as will be explained next. When it comes to evaluation in language programs, Norris suggests that a good evaluation should ensure the participation of teachers and other stakeholders, use multiple data collection methodologies, triangulate data sources, methods and analysis and communicate evaluation findings strategically. An evaluation that possesses these features is likely to encourage the acceptance and immediate implementation of the evaluation findings Patton, , capture the values of language teaching measurable outcomes from different perspectives as well as the factors that help or hinder the achievement of the evaluation goals Aspinwall et al. Many evaluation experts emphasize that good evaluations should reflect the nature and circumstances of the program being evaluated. Evaluation

should then be as objective and as democratic as possible especially in cases where the evaluator is also one of the major stakeholders Mathison, All these characteristics form huge challenges for evaluators who have no other choice but strive to meet the evaluation standards and fulfill the responsibilities. To bring all these characteristics into practice, evaluators should first be aware of the reasons why evaluation is being required by the stakeholders, what they want to evaluate and what goals they wish to achieve from the evaluation Patton, This is not always straight forwards as in some situations; the stakeholders themselves do not even have a clear idea why the evaluation is being planned. They should also be equipped with good interpersonal communication skills in order to be able to convey constant findings and updates or what Luthans and Peterson call degree feedback to the stakeholders. This leads to the final section in which the future of evaluation will be predicted. Future of evaluation How would the future of evaluation be like? A question that is probably occupying the minds of the evaluation professionals so much that a special issue was published in the American Journal of Evaluation in Volume No. This last section will highlight some of these predictions. Therefore, evaluation will evolve into an independent discipline whose courses will be taught in stand-alone graduate programs and may be incorporated in undergraduate courses, secondary or even elementary school subjects. Mark foretells that the impact of new technologies on the way evaluation is carried out will increase dramatically. Love and Worthen share the same vision with Mark. On one hand, Love thinks that the impact of technology will not only affect the details of evaluation practices but will even determine what is it that is to be evaluated. On the other hand, Worthen believes that techniques of data collection and analysis will be dramatically altered by the advances in electronic and technological media. In his predictions, Stufflebeam focuses on training in evaluation as he indicates that the success of evaluation in the future will depend largely on good educational programs that constantly provide flows of motivated and qualified evaluators. Finally, Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman expect continued support of evaluation activities worldwide for three reasons. Firstly, the growing skepticism among policymakers and decisionmakers leads them to look for quicker and more efficient measures on which they can capitalize and ways from which they can learn from their mistakes. Secondly, the vast development of knowledge and technical procedures in social sciences enables social scientists to take on various evaluation tasks. Finally, the ability of evaluation to prioritize and determine in an orderly manner what communal or personal problem in any society to be confronted first and what program to implement to solve that problem, makes it a preferable method for many decision and policy makers. These predictions are not data-free as they are backed up by decades of experience and immersion in the field of evaluation but they still fall within the realm of idealism what should happen? However, in light of the convincing discussions3 by the previous predicting experts, the author believes that these predictions are feasible and that they will hopefully be in action very soon. It is the most popular measure through which accountability is assessed. And with the ever increasing demand for accountability, evaluation is becoming an inseparable part of educational policies worldwide. This widespread use of evaluation and global recognition of its vital role have not only increased the number of evaluation approaches and methods and triggered a faster ongoing development in the field but also created huge responsibilities and challenges for evaluators which they will have to work even harder to keep with. This paper has tackled evaluation in language programs in relation to language assessment. The relationship between assessment and evaluation and their purposes were discussed first. Then, a detailed account of a specific design procedure based on Lynch was explained. This was followed by discussing some characteristics of good evaluations and good evaluators. The paper concluded with predictions from evaluation professionals about the future of evaluation. Language test construction and evaluation. Managing evaluation in education: Assessing Language Ability in the Classroom. Designing evaluation of educational and social programs. Reconciling accountability and development needs in heritage language education: A communication challenge for the evaluation consultant. Language Teaching Research, 13 1 , Alternative approaches and practical guidelines 3rd ed.

AELRC aims to provide leadership, scholarship, and outreach in the practices of FL assessment and program evaluation

to foreign language teachers, program administrators, and researchers in diverse educational settings.

4: Language Program Evaluation: Theory and Practice - Brian K. Lynch, Lynch - Google Books

Language program evaluation is a pragmatic mode of inquiry that illuminates the complex nature of language-related interventions of various kinds, the factors that foster or constrain them, and the consequences that ensue. Program evaluation enables a variety of evidence-based decisions and actions.

5: Basic Guide to Program Evaluation (Including Many Additional Resources)

Language program evaluation is a pragmatic mode of inquiry that illuminates the complex nature of language-related interventions of various kinds, the factors that foster or constrain them, and.

Design of multi-bit delta-sigma A/D converters Community, collaboration, and collections Eddie makes music The tale of Applebeck Orchard Fairness in sovereign debt Christian Barry and Lydia Tomitova An outline of abnormal psychology A skyway of geese (Bill Martins little seashore books) Young Howsons wife Ministering to family Lying (Peter Owen Modern Classic) List of all nuclear power plant in india Interviewing and selecting a developer Towards the use of noradrenergic agonists for the treatment of pain Divine Personality, Incarnation and Glorification of the Lord with a Critical Analysis of the Athanasian Discourse, discipline and the subject Organising Strategy Project report human resource management The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation Mathematics Done in English The Child of the Dawn (Dodo Press) Excursus I-Mark 4:11-12 : an authentic dominical saying? Clariant annual report 2015 Born Again? What Now? Current therapy in critical care medicine Foreigners in their native land Qatar traffic control manual Strong Words, Brave Deeds Bach chorales sheet music Establishing high expectations Assessment of a Patient with Lung Disease How a media buyer can make a big difference Counteracting and preventing terrorist actions : a generic model to facilitate inter-government cooperati Into the twilight, endlessly grousing Humanity in the city. V. 3. London reminiscences, and Confessions of an opium-eater. Status of the curability of childhood cancers Chinas drug practices and policies The Minor Chord: A Tale of the Middle West in the Early 70s The Sacred Art of Bowing Water resources engineering ralph a wurbs wesley p james