

## DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

This course will be an introduction to evaluating programs. It will not make an expert evaluator of you, but it will enable you to watch evaluators at work and judge how well they are doing. It will give you some practice in thinking about the key concepts in evaluation. You will get that practice in connection with doing an actual evaluation.

The text is: M. Q. Patton. Utilization-Focused Evaluation. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978.

In addition to the text, you will need a book of readings that you can buy at Kinko's, 860 E. 13th Avenue. Ask for the readings compiled by Runkel for Psy 507.

Some topics in the course will be:

- Audiences
- Research design and control
- Goals
- Linear and rational versus non-linear and irrational evaluation
- Generalizability versus giving clients what they want
- Dilemmas and compromises in design

The biggest part of the course will be the actual evaluation you will do. The description of it appears later on. Your "pass" in the course will depend only on that evaluation. The lectures and discussions will help you think about what you are doing in the evaluation.

My office is in the Education complex, in the west wing that parallels Alder Street, room 125-C. I do not have regular office hours, but I am available. Feel free to drop in if you are in the neighborhood. If you want to talk with me on the phone or arrange an appointment, feel free to call: 686-3409 (office) or 343-9854 (home). You can also leave notes in my mailbox in the Psychology Department.

## THE EVALUATION EXERCISE

In this course, you will get practice in actually evaluating a program by evaluating the Master's Program in Organizational Psychology. I'll call it the OP program for short.

The class members will carry out the evaluating by splitting the task into several parts, with a sub-group of class members carrying out the work of each of the first five parts. That is, you will actually carry out only one or two parts of the work that leads you to the final document. But you will know what all the other sub-groups did, because they will give

you written reports describing their work. At the end, you (everyone) will write a report on the entire evaluation, using both your own work and the work of others as the raw material.

As you can see, I approve of collaborative work. Even when it comes to the final report on the entire evaluation, you may write it jointly with someone else if you wish.

Grading: Your grade will depend entirely on the evaluation of the OP Program. You will, I hope, give me two reports: (1) your report on the work your sub-group carried out, and (2) your evaluation of the OP Program. I shall not put letter grades on the documents; I shall mark them only "accepted" or "not accepted." If, in my judgment, you have followed the directions, then I shall mark your document "accepted" regardless of any other considerations of quality. If I find a document unacceptable, I shall ask you to re-write it, filling in what I tell you is missing.

If you give me only one document (or none) that I can mark "accepted," your grade in the course will be "N." If you give me two documents I can mark "accepted," your grade will be "P."

#### Getting Started

At the first meeting of the class, we shall form the sub-groups that will carry out the evaluation. I'll allow time during the meeting for each sub-group to agree on a time and place for its first meeting. Here are the instructions that apply to all groups.

1. When you agree on a time and place for a meeting, agree not only to the starting time for the meeting, but also the ending time. Allow plenty. Before you end any meeting, agree on time and place for the next meeting. It is better to meet and discover that you have little or nothing to do than it is not to meet and discover that there were vital things the group should have done.
2. List the sub-tasks to be done, at least between this meeting and the next. Be sure that every person knows what things he or she is to do and by when. If one person does something different from what others expect, you and all the groups following yours will be in a mess.
3. Do not postpone a meeting or cancel a meeting on the grounds that someone cannot be there. Later groups must have the reports from earlier groups to do their work. So the work must get done, regardless of absences from meetings. If you are worried that someone is not doing an adequate share of the work, find some way outside of the meeting of giving that person a part of the task. (Large-scale evaluations always require teamwork, and difficulties of coordination inevitably arise.)
4. In the instructions for each group below, a due date is specified for the group's report. Remember that the next group cannot do much until it gets your report. Please strain every sinew to get your report in on time. If your group finds that it cannot do its task by the due date, let me know as early as possible. But if you find that you can turn in only part of what you hoped by the due date, remember that the next group will probably be happier with partial information than with none.

I hope that we can carry out the whole evaluation during the term. I don't know whether we can. If we do not get it all done, we'll write reports on what we did do. But let's try to do the whole thing.

5. In doing your group's part of the evaluation, you may decide to compile your report as a group, in conference, and turn in a document with joint authorship. Or you may decide to parcel out sub-tasks and submit a document that is a compendium of very brief papers, each with its own author. Either way is all right with me. In my instructions to each group below, I specify sections of the report to be included.

Remember that you are writing to give information to the next group. Tell them clearly what they will need to know. But within that necessity, keep your report as short as you can.

6. Make a copy of the report from your group for every member of the class, and two copies for me. Type it double-spaced, and with at least as much margin as you see here so that I can write in comments. I'll return one copy to the convener of your group.

Please write in first person and active voice. See Kinko 24.

7. Following are the instructions for the various groups. I have written them to suit what I think is the most likely course of events. But I may not have guessed right in every instance. If you find it necessary to alter the instructions, tell in your report what you altered and why.

### Group 1

#### Audiences and Outcomes

Report due Tuesday, Jan. 22

Ascertain the audience that might have a reasonable interest in an evaluation of the OP Program. Find out the outcomes or benefits they care about. Propose to Group 2 the outcomes to be evaluated. Make a copy of of your report for every member of the class--two for me.

Relevant readings are Patton's chapters 1 through 7 and 12 and Kinko items 8, 9, 10, 13(pp. 414-424), and 18. But you won't be able to read all that before you do your work on audiences and outcomes, so maybe you should concentrate on Patton's chapters 3 and 4 and Kinko 8 and 13(pp. 414-419). Or maybe you can parcel out selected readings to members of your group, and each person can report to the group any useful ideas he or she comes across. Or something.

Your report must have at least the following sections. Use the headings below as headings in your report.

### What We Did

Tell the way you went about carrying out your assignment and the reason(s) you chose to do it that way. How did you get your first ideas about audiences? Whom or what did you consult? And so on. But be brief.

### What We Discovered

Name or describe the audiences you discovered and tell what the members of those audiences told you about the outcomes they care about from the I-O Program. I am supposing that you will get much of your information from interviews, but it may turn out that you also get some from documents. Maybe there are few relevant documents; I don't know.

If persons or documents give you specifically worded outcomes they care about, state them.

### What We Propose

Tell Group 2 (and the rest of us) the outcomes of the OP Program that you propose for evaluation. Number them. If possible, number them in order of the importance you put on them.

Your statements should be sufficiently "objective" so that Group 2 will understand easily how to write instructions (questionnaires, for example) for data-gathering.

For each outcome you propose, name the audience you think will care about it. Also tell the reason(s) you chose it. You may wax theoretical at this point if you wish, but I do not insist.

If a hypothesis occurs to you, state it.

(Note: Some writers on evaluation say that evaluation can be done without specifying outcomes (objectives) in advance. See Kinko 10.

If you reject specifying outcomes in advance, you must still give Group 2 some kind of guide to collecting data. That might mean that you would have to write a sort of rough draft of what they are assigned to write. If you choose not to specify outcomes in advance, tell why.)

### Group 2

#### Methods of Getting Data

Report due Thursday, Jan. 31

Choose the outcomes to investigate that you think are feasible. Write rough drafts of questionnaires, interviews, or other guides to data-collection for each of the outcomes--ways of assessing the extent to which the OP Program achieves the outcomes. Propose to Group 3 the instruments, guides, or procedures to be used. Make a copy of your report for every member of the class--two for me.

Relevant readings are Patton Chapters 5, 8, 10, 11, and 12 and Kinko items 11, 12, 13(pp.438-447 and 451-454), 14, and 19. That's probably too much to read, so maybe you should concentrate on Patton's Chapters 10 and 11 and Kinko items 12 and 13. Or maybe you can parcel out selected readings to members of your group, and each person can report to the group any useful ideas he or she comes across. Or something.

Your report must have at least the following sections. Use the headings below as headings in your report.

#### What We Did

Tell how you went about carrying out your assignment and the reason(s) you chose to do it that way. How did you choose outcomes? How did you decide the method for collecting data about each outcome--questionnaire, interview, direct observation, culling documents, or whatever? But be brief.

#### Outcomes and Data-Collection

You may wish to accept the list of outcomes you got from Group 1 as it stands. You may wish to delete some as not feasible; if so, tell why you judged them not feasible. You may wish to add one or two; if you do, tell why.

List the outcomes you choose and, for each, tell Groups 3 and 4 (and the rest of us) how you think data to assess the outcome can be collected and from whom or what. If you propose doing it by interview, draft some questions for the interviewer. If you propose to get the information from existing documents, specify the documents exactly and tell where they are to be found. And so on.

If a hypothesis occurs to you, state it and tell what data can be compared with what to test it.

#### Group 3

##### Preparation of Data-Collection Instruments and Guides

Due Tuesday Feb. 12

Revise and polish what you get from Group 2. Prepare all data-collection instruments and guides in final form and in the required numbers. Deliver them to Group 4. Also deliver one copy each to the rest of us (two copies for me) as part of your report.

If permissions to collect or use data will be necessary, it will be the duty of your group to get them.

Relevant readings are Patton's Chapters 8 through 11 and Kinko items 3 through 7, 11, 12, 13(pp. 438-447 and 451-454), 14, 15(pp. 56-57 and 67-79), and 20. Maybe you can parcel out selected readings to members of your group, and each person can report to the group any useful ideas he or she comes across. Or maybe you can scan the readings and pick out some you think will be most useful to you.

Your report must have the following sections. Use the headings below as headings in your report.

#### What We Did

Tell how you went about carrying out your assignment and the reason(s) you chose to do it that way. How did you divide the work? How did you decide on alterations in what Group 2 gave you, if any? How did you get copies made? But be brief.

#### The Instruments and Guides

You will have revised for clarity, ease of use, and so forth, what Group 2 gave you. Maybe you will have re-ordered items on a questionnaire. And so on. It will be necessary once again, therefore, to list, by item number in your attachments, the items that will serve to evaluate each chosen outcome, just as Group 2 did.

#### Respondents

Tell Group 4 (and the rest of us) the respondents to which each instrument should be administered and where to find them. Or the documents from which the specified information should be culled. Or whatever. If permissions are necessary, get them. In sum, tell Group 4 where to go to get the information and the instrument or guide to be used for each source of information.

#### Group 4

#### Data-Collection

Report due Tuesday, Feb. 26

Collect data. Give all the records (filled-out questionnaires or other records) to Group 5. Be sure everything is adequately labeled so that Group 5 can carry out analysis. For example, if it is necessary to label different categories of respondents, be sure the records are correspondingly labeled. Read Kinko items 6, 7, 15(pp. 56-58), and 21.

Give a copy of your report to every member of the class--two to me.

Your report must have the following sections. Use the headings below as headings in your report.

#### What We Did

Tell how you divided up the work. Tell what difficulties you encountered in collecting data and how you coped with them. Tell any experiences you had that might affect the interpretation of the data. But be brief.

#### The Data

Tell the percentages of usable questionnaires (or interview records, or whatever) you got from each category of respondents. If certain items on questionnaire or on guides for document-culling, or whatever, gave an unusual fraction of non-response, name them.

Group 5Analysis

Report due Tuesday, Mar. 12

Analyze the data. Marshal the data for each outcome and summarize them in a way that will give information about the extent to which the outcome is being achieved.

Read Patton's Chapter 11 and Kinko items 15(pp. 64-65 & 70) and 22.

Give a copy of your report to every member of the class--two to me.

Your report must have the following sections. Use the headings below as headings in your report.

What We Did

Tell how you went about carrying out your assignment and the reason(s) you chose to do it that way. How did you parcel out the work? If you omitted some data from your analysis, why did you? If you compared some portion of data to other portions (for example, the array of responses from some respondents with the array from some others, or the responses of respondents to item 5 who were high on item 2 with the responses of those who were low on item 2), why did you do that? But be brief.

The Data

Organize this section by outcomes.

For each outcome, display the relevant data--not raw data, but tabulations, distributions. If you choose to display data concerning a hypothesis, display the data so that the comparison called for by the hypothesis is obvious.

The Evaluation

Report due in my office or mailbox on Wednesday, Mar. 20. Read Patton's Chapters 8 through 12, but especially 11.

Using all the reports from the five sub-groups, write your own evaluation of the OP Program. Don't spend time re-typing the previous reports. If you want to refer to them in your evaluation, just refer. If you do refer, tell the page, table number, or the like so that I can find what you are referring to.

Organize your report by audience. For each audience, tell what you would tell members of that audience about the evaluation your class has made. What should the data mean to them? What can they do now that they couldn't do before? What cautions do you advise in interpreting the data?

Have a good time.