HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE EVALUATION EXCHANGE:

Emerging Strategies in Evaluating Child and Family Services

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From the Director's Desk

Heather B. Weiss
Director, HFRP

The notions of "learning organizations" and "organizational learning" are very popular these days. Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, who first discussed organizational learning in the 1970s, promote the idea of double-loop learning. This learning results in changes in organizational values and promotes a fundamental transformation of the organization such that it is more successful and productive.[1] Peter Senge, who has popularized organizational learning with his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, describes five characteristics of learning organizations: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning.[2]

As we struggle to face the large-scale changes affecting our work — accountability, devolution, information technology, a new century — the dynamism, flexibility, and opportunity implied by an organizational learning approach is compelling. But what does it take for organizations that serve children and families to become "learning organizations"? What constraints do they face? How do they actually do it? Who needs to be involved?

This issue of *The Evaluation Exchange* is the first of two which examine these questions. We have brought together a variety of perspectives that we hope will stimulate thinking and discussion on this important topic. Our Theory and Practice section summarizes a paper that William Morrill and I authored on how to develop and promote useful learning in public programs. The article suggests that organizational learning in the policy arena must involve the creation of a "learning community" of policymakers, researchers, evaluators, and practitioners and sets forth for discussion a model for implementing a learning approach in the public sector. In our Promising Practices section, we include two articles about approaches for creating a public policy learning community that actively involves citizens. William Novelli of the

[1] Argyris, Chris & Schön, Donald A. (1996). *Organizational learning II: Theory, method, and practice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing.

[2] Senge, Peter M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday.

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IN THIS ISSUE:

LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids writes about implementing an information campaign to inform citizens and policymakers about children's health. HFRP researcher Serene Fang writes about the Citizens Research process, a technique to better inform and engage citizens in understanding and influencing the policy-making process. Our Questions and Answers section presents a conversation with Patricia McGinnis of The Council for Excellence in Government about how accountability and organizational learning in the public sector come together. As interest in and experimentation with learning endeavors grow, being able to evaluate their effectiveness will be important. In our Evaluations to Watch section, Andy Mott of the Center for Community Change and Vicki Creed of Learning Partners discuss an approach they used to evaluate learning through the National Learning Initiative of the Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities Project. In one of our Spotlight sections, Lisa Plimpton of the Center for Law and Social Policy discusses work that CLASP is doing to document state policies on welfare reform. In another Spotlight article, Michael Quinn Patton of The Union Institute and Ricardo A. Millett of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation look at criteria that distinguish casual/informal notions of lessons learned from "high quality" lessons learned. In our Beyond Basic Training section, Robert Kirchner of the U.S. Department of Justice discusses work that his agency has been doing to strengthen evaluation capacity at the state and local levels. Finally, in our New and Noteworthy and Electronic Mailbox sections, we provide information on current resources to assist those interested in learning organizations.

Organizations are increasingly asked to undertake many challenges with fewer resources and under greater scrutiny. Organizational learning theory and practice may help us to better understand and implement productive and relevant ways in which to do so. ✦

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Theory and Practice

Useful Learning for Public Action

As America struggles with globalization and devolution, allocation of scarce resources, and growing public demand for accountable and cost-effective services, the demand for and the use of information to guide decision-making should be at an all-time high. They are not. Despite substantial investment that has been made in knowledge development over the years, experience shows that information about public programs has often not been used for policy formation, program design, or the high performance management of existing services (Darman, 1997; Levitan, 1992).

> Now is an opportune time to begin working to make our knowledge development investments, including evaluation, more useful in the country's efforts to solve its basic problems.

Now is an opportune time to begin working to make our knowledge development investments, including evaluation, more useful in the country's efforts to solve its basic problems. To a great extent, the conditions, experience, and ingredients necessary to generate and use knowledge are largely in place. The pervasive, multi-level push for greater accountability has resulted in a new demand for a wide array of high-quality information to support policymakers and program managers as well as growing practical experience with indicators. There is also growing knowledge about how to build the capacity of public managers, community groups, and non-profit organizations to use performance and other data from management information systems in an ongoing way to improve performance and outcomes (Usher, 1993; Gray and Associates, 1998). Additionally, domestic policy initiatives, such as standards-driven educational reform, managed care, and the privatization of human services, are forcing a critical examination of how best to invest limited research and evaluation dollars. The evaluation field itself has also changed, moving from a focus on single, large-scale experiments to more flexible, participatory, and community-based studies. Finally, the recent devolution of responsibility for welfare programs to the state and local levels (and the flexibility and governance changes implied by this shift) provides an unparalleled opportunity to develop the multi-level capacity to generate and use information to improve outcomes for our nation's people significantly.

To move to a truly relevant system of information, we must strive to institutionalize knowledge development and use so that programs can continuously improve and be more accountable. Private-sector experience suggests that we must create "learning organizations." A learning organization is able to create, acquire, and transfer knowledge as well as modify its own behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights (Garvin, 1993). To be successful "learners," organizations must be willing and have the capacity to use data on a regular basis, assess implications, and make changes accordingly.

Experience with past information building endeavors points to eight lessons that can guide the creation of public sector learning organizations:

1) Investing in knowledge building should be strategic in concept, targeted to maximize impact.

2) Learning must consider the incremental and iterative nature of the policy and decision-making process and

thus should be structured to flow as continuously as possible at all levels.

3) Collaboration among the research/evaluation, the policy, and the practitioner communities is necessary.

4) An improved learning system must make reasonable judgments about the content and timing of expectations for learning activities and the consequences that flow from results. It needs to emphasize low-risk learning, especially at the outset.

5) Selection of learning methodologies must be judicious, both in terms of learning objectives and timing.

6) Investment in a variety of data collection strategies, including an integrative MIS in support of operations, needs to be considered.

7) Efforts will require strong federal leadership and support and should build on information and indicator work already underway.

8) More integrated funding of evaluations and programs will be important in developing continuous learning systems that improve outcomes.

The first step in building a learning system is developing the common ground that unites the three communities relevant to the development of public sector learning organizations: the knowledge-building community, the policy and managerial community, and the professional services ("doing") community. This common ground includes:

- ***Development of a Collaborative Learning Agenda***. Multiple forces push agencies to develop learning agendas, including the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and the congressional reauthorization process. A learning agenda should be built around a learning process that emphasizes sequential learning, iterative and participatory processes, use of the full range of learning methodologies, and attendance to means whereby learning will be communicated for both policy and program improvement purposes. A longer-range objective of building the research agenda and the evaluation strategy should be the creation of learning organizations.

- ***Performance Goals and Measures***. Given the explosion of interest in performance indicators and standards due to the accountability movement, both the policy and the learning communities have an opportunity and interest in coming together for a discussion about what goals are being sought and what measures will be used to judge how well they are being achieved.

- ***Allocation of Resources***. Financial support will be necessary to implement the research agenda and the new learning approaches. All parties will want to move sequentially with more resources and then assess the results.

- ***Accountability Consequences***. All stakeholders must have reasonable expectations for and promises about their collective efforts. There should also be clarity and agreement about the consequences of the learning process from the outset.

- ***Education and Communication***. The three communities must work together on an education and ongoing communications component. Actors who have been talking at and sometimes past each other need to communicate clearly with each other, and the groups included in the dialogue should be broadened. More attention needs to be paid to the creation of a dissemination strategy in order to maximize the many potential payoffs from research and evaluation.

In order to begin the discussion about how to improve knowledge development and learning in the public sector, we propose a model for a continuous learning system. This model seeks to create continuous opportunities for the development and use of relevant information; for encouraging corrective actions, risk taking, and participation; and for recognition and rewards for performance improvement. It is intended to stimulate thinking about a learning system and will be revised based on comment and through examination of efforts to implement systems like it at the federal, state, and local levels. The model envisions a continuous, five-stage learning process:

The first step in building a learning system is developing common ground…

1) Engage key stakeholders in strategic planning and set learning agenda and performance goals and standards. Activities in this step include obtaining resources and commitment to learning, specifying performance goals, identifying research and evaluation questions and gaps, and designing an overall learning agenda.

2) Learn from experience and relevant research and incorporate lessons into program/policy design. Activities here include assembling resources, specifying outcome and process measures and data to support them, networking to share successful innovations and identify common problems, and identifying technical assistance needs and providers.

3) Engage in innovation, monitoring, and evaluation. Activities include continuously testing new ideas and approaches, designing evaluation, and monitoring and assessing process and progress with performance measures, evaluation, and data.

4) Learn from evaluation and comparisons with others and make course corrections. Activities include using monitoring and evaluation information for corrections and improvement, using benchmarking to examine progress of the program and/or field of practice/policy, and assessing and applying knowledge from relevant basic and applied research.

5) Transfer lessons for program respecification and identify knowledge gaps for further research and experimentation. Activities here include identifying gaps for further research and

transferring knowledge for continuous improvement across the network and service/policy field.

There are examples of organizations that have worked to apply such a learning model. They suggest the feasibility of such learning models and offer cases to use to see if such approaches appeal to *both* the policy and learning communities. Over the next few years, as devolution and accountability are further implemented, there will no doubt be more experiences and opportunities to implement a learning model such as this. At the same time, a series of related and supporting actions could be taken to better connect knowledge, policy, and practice. These include:

- Systematic learning agendas could be added to the strategic planning, annual performance plans, and performance measures now incorporated at the federal level in GPRA and similar GPRA-like requirements at the state level.

- Similar learning agendas could be continued as newly added to reauthorization legislation.

- Public sponsors could offer increased regulatory flexibility in return for clear outcome accountability to provide incentives for innovation.

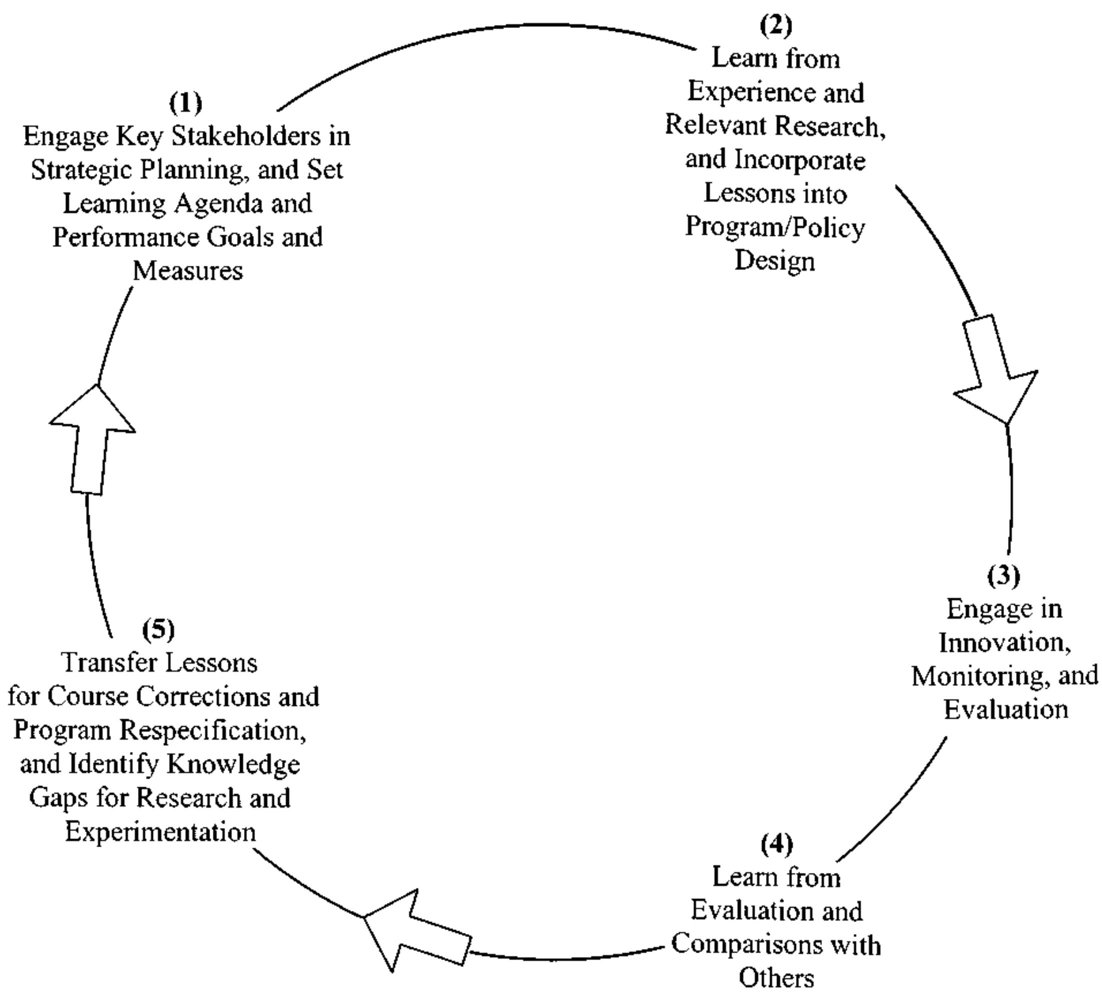
- Foundations and corporate philanthropy could make a significant contribution to the development of institutional capacity for learning at the grassroots level.

- While retaining their own identities, public agencies and private foundations could be far more effective in the aggregate by being considerably more open with each other and specific about their individual learning agendas.

- Public and private agencies could invest more systematically in the development of knowledge about what works.

The framework presented here has many of the key features that we believe are necessary for a new learning and knowledge-building strategy that
Continued on page 14

Continuous Learning System



Making the Case for Children

Too often, the political rhetoric surrounding efforts to improve children's health and welfare does not accurately reflect the actions taken to carry out these goals. Local and state governments are often limited by inadequate federal policies or budgets in what they can do to help families. That is why grassroots activists are so important if we are substantially to improve the results for children and families. Doing so, however, will require that advocates learn how to "make the case for children" more effectively; they must motivate activists to help stimulate coverage of children's issues in the mass media (thereby raising the profile of these issues and increasing pressure for social change), and raise the stakes for elected representatives and government officials.

So, how can we do a better job of making this case? First, we must recognize that change must be broad in order to be deep. That is, we must strive simultaneously for *environmental* change (through public policy and agenda setting); for change at the *community* level (by affecting norms, expectations, and public support); and for changes in *individual behavior* (through skill teaching, positive reinforcement, and rewards). Accomplishing broad-based change requires communication at both the mass media and interpersonal levels in order to extend the reach and frequency — or *pervasiveness* — of key messages. It also necessitates galvanizing many change agents to create the critical mass needed to bring about substantive movement.

Prochaska and DiClemente's model of individual behavior change provides clues about how to spur individuals toward greater involvement. The model includes four stages:

- *Pre-contemplation*. In this first stage, which includes most people, individuals don't see the relevance of getting involved. They are either unaware of an issue (for example, new legislation on children's health insurance), or do not see how it applies to them (they may be childless, or assume that children have access to health care if the parents truly want it).

- *Contemplation*. During this phase, individuals will consider greater involvement in an issue, such as seeking more information.

- *Action*. In order to move from contemplation to concrete action, people must see the benefits of the activity to themselves and/or to society. It is important that the "costs" of involvement be kept to a minimum, as even the slightest barriers may act as deterrents. Increased social pressure can also help to move individuals from contemplation to action.

> So, how can we do a better job of making this case? We must recognize that change must be broad in order to be deep.

- *Maintenance*. Once people do get involved in an issue, it is important to remind them that they are helping to make progress, and to recognize their efforts. This stage of social advocacy is too often neglected, and activists can be lost through this lapse of attention. Progress reports, report cards, rewards, and reminders for activists are critical for helping to maintain their involvement.

Children's advocates need to determine exactly what they want the public to do to help solve a particular problem, then look for ways to move individuals along this type of continuum. With research, analysis, and strategic thinking, the framework can be filled in.

Our *Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids* did this when building our National Action Network (NAN), a growing database of some 14,000 individuals from around the country who have expressed willingness to be involved in the issue of reducing the tobacco industry's powerful hold on children. We keep NAN members engaged by providing useful information on key Congressional votes, tobacco money in politics, initiatives to protect kids, and activities and contacts in their local areas. NAN members are asked to write to their elected representatives, write letters to the editor, speak out at local meetings, and take other action, as appropriate.

Before creating this network, we conducted substantial research to find out more about people who are, or are likely to become, consumer activists: specifically, what motivates them to get involved, whether they care about the issue of children and tobacco, and how we might encourage them to take on a more active role. We knew from polling data that there was interest in protecting children from tobacco, but we had to turn public opinion into citizen action.

We began by analyzing a large marketing database (Simmons) that reports on all manner of product usage, media habits, and other consumer behaviors. This database also profiled what it defined as consumer activists, and estimated this group to be approximately 20 percent of the adult U.S. population. Consumer activists were defined as adults who had, in the past year, contacted a radio or TV station, magazine or newspaper editor, or elected official; met personally with an elected official; actively participated in a local civic issue and/or volunteered for an environmental or conservation group; or addressed a public meeting.

We then conducted a phone survey to confirm the profile and assess levels of concern about our own issue and the likelihood of people getting involved in it. Finally, using a qualitative research technique, one-on-one interviews with individuals who fit the consumer activist profile, we probed to find what information and ideas were most appealing, and gained comprehension and reaction to a number of message concepts. We found that activists are most likely to get involved when an issue affects them personally; when they perceive a blatant wrong, untruth, or injustice; or when they observe a threatening situation. Our research also showed that activists prefer to work within an existing organization or effort, rather than initiating action themselves. Many are driven to action by personal appeals from people they know.

In testing message concepts with consumer activists to see how they would respond, we found that we had to be careful when presenting messages that Congress was beholden to the tobacco industry and might act in the industry's favor. This is because activists are most motivated to act when they think their actions will make a difference, and a feeling of hopelessness (Congress is in the industry's pocket) worked against this motivation. We also found that activists did not respond positively to general messages about the health of children or saving lives, but preferred messages with a specific call to action. Interestingly, in testing messages that assailed specific individuals from the tobacco industry (e.g., a woman who is the senior vice president for external affairs for Philip Morris), we found that respondents were not comfortable with such personal attacks, despite their contempt for the industry as a whole.

…activists are most motivated to act when they think their actions will make a difference.

Overall, our research taught us the following:

- Localize the issue to motivate activists, who respond to issues that directly affect their families and communities.

- Focus on kids in order to engage activists (smoking among adults is not as emotionally engaging).

- Engage activists emotionally by making them perceive a threat, or by generating anger and/or moral outrage.

- Portray the fight as winnable; let them know that others are involved and are succeeding.

- Time messages and calls to specific actions at intervals when these actions will have the greatest impact.

- Provide factual information, especially on the scope of the problem and threats from Congress.

- Encourage activists to personally approach others, since other potential activists react favorably to this.

Clearly, it is important to know your audience. In the case of children's health, key audiences includes policymakers, "influentials" (who vary depending upon the subject area), activists, and the general public. In the case of youth smoking, youth advocacy is an important strategy for us, and young activists play a particularly critical role in capturing the attention of policymakers and the public. Children often make the strongest advocates for issues that directly affect them, because they have first-hand experience with the problems they face (and are therefore credible spokespeople), and because they elicit an emotional response from those in a position to effect change.

At the same time, it is critical not to overplay the "child card" when advocating for children. These images are in danger of being overworked, so all messages pertaining to children must be believable and real in order to maintain their effectiveness.

One helpful tool is to put a face on the problem by focusing on a "villain." In the case of youth smoking, highlighting the tobacco industry's unethical behavior in targeting children in its marketing campaigns has been extremely effective. Not only does it draw an emotional response from the public and policymakers, but the media are oriented toward stories with built-in controversy, and this one has a clear villain that guarantees heated debate.

These tools and lessons can be adapted to any children's issue. It is important is to keep in mind that many agents of change are needed to achieve significant results and improve the lives of children. Do not rely on mass media alone. Do your research, identify your target audiences, and engage the activists who are most likely to help you achieve your goals. ✦

William D. Novelli
President
National Center for
Tobacco-Free Kids

THE EVALUATOR'S INSTITUTE

The fourth Evaluator's Institute will be held in Washington, DC from July 19-24, 1999. The Institute brings together internationally recognized leaders in the practice of evaluation to plan and teach courses on evaluation issues. This year's offerings include courses on basic program evaluation; sampling; implementation analysis; cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis; evaluating community collaborations and building their capacity; developing program theory; using qualitative methods; learning from data; needs assessment; graphical displays; evaluating social programs and policies; efficient and effective data gathering; and reducing and managing evaluation anxiety. Courses range in price from $375 to $995; past participant and institutional discounts are available. The deadline for course registration and payment is July 1, 1999. Those interested should contact the Institute at (703) 448-8324. Additional information about the Institute is available through the Institute's Web site: http://www.erols.com/cwisler

Civic Participation and the Citizens Research Method

Before his now-famous 1995 essay, *Bowling Alone*, political scientist Robert Putnam published a book titled *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, in which he compared local Italian governments in the North to those in the South after Italy transferred power and responsibility for many of its services from a centralized government to newly-created regional governments. Putnam contended that local governments in the North tended to be more successful and efficient than local governments in the South because citizens in the North possessed a long historical and cultural tradition of participating in associational life that citizens in the South lacked.

> …our engagement with our communities, and indeed, with democracy itself, is no longer what it should be.

At a time when our own government is engaged in a "devolution revolution," passing down many of its social welfare functions from the federal to state and local levels, Putnam now makes the case that Americans are behaving less like Northern Italians and more like the civically-isolated Southern Italians. He argues that Americans' participation in conventional voluntary associations (the PTA, Elks Clubs, bowling leagues) has been declining for the last 40 years, and that this trend has contributed to an overall weakening of the civic engagement and social capital of local communities. The widespread interest in his theory may be an indication of how others have also noted that our engagement with our communities, and indeed, with democracy itself, is no longer what it should be.

The Harvard Family Research Project has been exploring methods for addressing citizen engagement in policies that affect local communities. One such method is the Citizens Research process. Citizens Research is a variation of the Citizens Jury process developed by Ned Crosby at the Jefferson Center in Minnesota. Both share characteristics of other recently developed processes such as Richard Sclove's Citizens' Panel, Michael Briand's Community Convention, and the Danish Consensus Conference. All of these techniques seek to increase the opportunity for deliberative democracy to have an effect on the policy-making process, especially for policy-making done at the local level. Specifically, these methods share the following characteristics:

- Citizens from a community are selected through a random survey and arrayed in a group that is representative of the community in terms of demographic characteristics and relevant attitudes.
- The group is charged with a specific task regarding an issue or policy problem
- Over a series of meetings, the group is educated about the issue by experts and witnesses representing a range of views.

For Further Reading:

Briand, Michael K. *Building deliberative communities*. A report prepared for the Pew Partnership for Civic Change.

Crosby, Ned. (April 1996). *Creating an authentic voice of the people*. Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association, April 1996.

Lemann, Nicholas. (1996). Kicking in groups. *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 277, no. 4.

Putnam, Robert D. (1996). The strange disappearance of civic America. *The American Prospect*, no. 24.

Putnam, Robert D. (1995). Bowling alone. *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 6, no. 1.

Sclove, Richard E. (1994). *Technology, society, and democracy: New problems and opportunities*. A report prepared for the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

For Additional Information:

The Citizens Jury Method
The Jefferson Center
7101 York Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55435
Tel: (612) 926-3292
Fax: (612) 926-3199
http://www.usinternet.com/users/jcenter

The Citizens Research Method
The Citizens Research Group
1650 Franklynn Dr.
Furlong, PA 18925
Tel: (215) 794-5475
Fax: (215) 794-5477
Twstclaire@aol.com

The Citizens' Panel Method
The Loka Institute
P.O. Box 355
Amherst, MA 01004
Tel: (413) 582-5860
Fax: (413) 582-5811
http://www.amherst.edu/~loka

The Community Convention Method
The Community Self-Leadership Project
Campus Box 308
Trinidad State Junior College
Tel: (719) 846-5240
Contact: Michael Briand

The Civic Practices Network (http://www.cpn.org/sections/tools/models/deliberative_democracy) maintains a Web site on deliberative democracy which provides an introduction to basic concepts, links to additional sources, and a suggested reading list.

- The group is given adequate time to debate and deliberate together after which they are asked to make a collective recommendation.

- Recommendations are shared with the public.

A key source of legitimacy for this method lies in the extent to which the group represents the larger community. In Crosby's words, the selection process creates "an authentic voice of the people" for the community that is selected. Another key strength lies in the citizens' experience of informed and collective deliberation.

For evaluation purposes, this method focuses attention on an important aspect of program assessment. While other methods may be employed to answer the question of whether goals are being attained in a program's design, implementation, and effectiveness (and if not, why not), this method provides information as to whether the program itself reflects the public will of the community in which it is situated.

Some people have argued that big government contributed to the weakening of American civic engagement because it fostered the perception that a large and professionalized bureaucracy takes away the opportunity, perhaps even the need, for civic initiative. The Citizens Research or Citizens Jury process can serve as a bridge for engaging a community with few other forums for public discussion, in issues that will increasingly be decided not at the level of federal government, but at the theoretically more responsive level of local government. ✦

Serene Fang
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Have You…
Completed our reader survey?

If you were not able to complete the reader survey we included in our last issue, please take a few minutes to do so now. Your responses will help us to better address your needs for evaluation information. The survey is also available on our Web site: http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~hfrp.

Questions and Answers

Interview with Patricia McGinnis

Substantial changes have taken place in the public sector recently. One of the most important has been the focus on results-based accountability. At the federal level, accountability has been codified in the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, which requires federal agencies to develop strategic plans and report annually on their performance. At the same time that accountability systems are being firmly set in place, interest in the notion of "organizational learning" in the public sector has grown. Learning organizations seek to improve outcomes through a dynamic process that enables them to collect, utilize, and act on data in an organizational climate that supports and fosters change. Organizational learning, like accountability, has the potential to improve policy and program decision making. We asked Patricia McGinnis, President and CEO of The Council for Excellence in Government, to discuss the potential of and constraints to public sector organizational learning in the current climate of accountability.

> Organizational learning, like accountability, has the potential to improve policy and program decision making.

1) What does organizational learning mean in the context of public organizations?

The concept of organizational learning is not terribly different in the public and private sectors. It means building upon what works and exhibiting a willingness to change, probably continuously, in order to be more effective. Operationally, organizational learning in both sectors has the same components, although the components may look a little different, but there is, to some extent, a greater complexity in the public sector in the area of measurement and even in the area of setting goals. For organizational learning to occur, the organization needs to have very clear goals, priorities, and measures. You need to have an alignment of goals and measures for people, for budgeting and financial management, and for assessing organizational results. You also need — and this is tremendously important — clear communication among people working in the organization and with stakeholders, partners, and customers. In the case of the public sector, this means not just customers, but the citizens you are serving, whether they are direct customers or not.

Alignment of goals is extremely important. In many public organizations, I've noticed that the personnel system, the budget system, the financial management system, and now the GPRA strategic planning system, are operating on separate tracks. There is no consistency among the goals and measures for each of these systems, and alignment of these is essential for organizational success. For example, people in teams need to have specific goals and measures that are consistent with the larger organizational goals and strategic planning; their role in meeting an organization's ultimate goals needs to be very clear.

When it is very clear what you are trying to accomplish, then people can be very smart and creative about how to organize themselves to accomplish well-understood goals. This means more than just the work of teams within an organizational structure; it means thinking about how to reach out to those outside the organization and make them part of the team. In this sense, the public is very important. The public is not involved enough now, and we see the consequences of that in the lack of public confidence and trust in government. I think there is a communications gap between the government and the broader public. It is hard for organizations to deal with the public; it is easier for them to work with their direct stakeholders, those organizations really interested in what they are doing and the customers they are directly serving. But if organizations look at what the public is saying about the things they care about, they can learn and perhaps reach out to involve the public more effectively. This year in the Innovations in American Government awards, we saw several examples of organizations that were really engaging the public in setting priorities and implementing their programs. Their work was improved because of this, and I think they were getting more support from the public and legislatures.

2) Are accountability and organizational learning at odds?

They are very compatible, but not the same. Accountability can be seen as measuring results against clearly stated goals. Organizational learning involves goals and measurements, but as you look at what is happening, you are open to changing the goals and priorities and adjusting them, based on what you are learning and the information you are seeing. Hopefully, accountability encompasses organizational learning but I do not think, at this point, that the flexibility implied by organizational learning is often included in the concept of accountability.

It is very important in a system like GPRA to create a greater understanding and trust between managers in the government agencies and in the Congress so that there is an interest in learning about both what is working and what is not working and to avoid a "gotcha" mentality. We need to build upon what works and try to adapt or change what is not working. I think this is happening in some cases, such as in the transportation area. The Department of Transportation is using the strategic planning process to try to bring the various transportation modes together and to focus on specific goals and measures. The authorizing committee is working very constructively with the Department to learn from this information and to use it to improve the design of these programs. This process has worked because of leadership and trust between the Department and the Congressional committee. But it is also important to recognize that in transportation, safety is a very clear goal for which there are some fairly good measures, even though measurement can still be improved. It is also a goal that is very compelling to the public. Thus, transportation has the ingredients to be successful. In some organizations, where the outcomes are not so easily measured and not so clear or compelling, it is a little more difficult. It is useful, however, to have models that do work, and we should focus on agencies like the Department of Transportation to get the process right and learn from that.

> To do this right requires more than just smart planning; it requires creating a team spirit around priorities and goals.

To do this right requires more than just smart planning; it requires creating a team spirit around priorities and goals. Right now, a lot of agencies are worried that Congress will punish them in the appropriations process, so they are not necessarily willing to put everything out on the table in the way that they would if there were a real partnership. I think we have a long way to go on that, and I am not sure how it is going to work out in GPRA, but it has the right components and the right players, with the Congress having a major role. The opportunity is there.

3) What is necessary for public organizations to be accountable and to be learning organizations?

I think that in terms of organizational dynamics, there must be teamwork, communication, and trust. People are coming from different perspectives, and they need to build a certain trust that they are working on the same agenda. You need clear goals. A lot of goals that I see are not clear; they are very process oriented. You need goals that focus on the end results and on the results that are important to the public interest. Then, you need measures that really do measure effectiveness.

You need leadership that communicates and motivates. When you see a successful organization, you generally see that kind of leadership. In terms of information management, you need to give managers and teams data about what is working, in a very useable and accessible way. Technology, particularly the Internet, is making that easier. It is also making what is going on a lot more transparent, not only to managers but also to the people being served and others.

It is very important to recognize and celebrate success, particularly of teams and whole organizations. I tend to think that a strong focus on individual incentives, in terms of bonuses and other financial incentives, can be counterproductive. It is best not to focus on an individual who is trying to show that he or she has done something spectacular. You want individuals who work effectively as members of teams and whose goals are not individual goals but organizational ones.

I believe that if you have a good system of measurement and have defined the right results, you can trade flexibility for accountability using those measures. It is important not to micromanage and not to second guess how teams are operating, but rather to allow them to be creative. In fact, it is important to encourage them to take some risks — and even to fail, and to learn from their failure.

It is really encouraging that this subject is being discussed so widely and is becoming a fundamental part of the process of planning and management. I am very encouraged by the passage of GPRA, even though we do not yet know how well it will work. There is a lot of potential, and the fact that the public is really demanding results helps. If legislators, managers, and frontline deliverers of services can all focus on results, then I think we will see much greater value given to organizational learning. ✦

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Building State and Local Evaluation Capacity: The U.S. Department of Justice's Evaluation Strategy

In response to Attorney General Janet Reno's call to "find out what works and spread the word," the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), a component of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), U.S. Department of Justice, is implementing a comprehensive, multi-tiered program evaluation strategy. This strategy is designed to disseminate findings of locally produced evaluations of BJA-funded projects; stimulate program evaluations at the state and local levels through evaluation capacity building, grant programs, and technical assistance; strengthen BJA's partnership with state Administrative Agencies (SAAs), practitioners, and researchers; and build a cooperative framework for interagency coordination.

The Initiative has six components:

Effective Programs Initiative: Under this initiative, begun in FY 1997, BJA publishes a series highlighting innovative programs which have undergone intensive evaluation at the state and/or local levels. It publishes these results in an *Effective Programs Monograph* series. The first of these, on improving the nation's criminal justice system, was published in December 1997. The second in the series will focus on creating a new criminal justice system for the 21st century.

Tools for the Criminal Justice Community: Launched in August 1998, this initiative provides an "Electronic Roadmap for Evaluation," an automated version of a comprehensive evaluation handbook (*Assessment and Evaluation Handbook Series*) for planners, researchers and evaluators, and local practitioners. The Evaluation Technical Assistance Web site, which is part of BJA's Homepage (www.bja.evaluationwebsite.org), provides extensive new evaluation resources and materials, and is the first of its kind developed by a public agency for general use.

Enhancing State and Local Assessment and Evaluation Capabilities: Through a federal, state, and local partnership, assessment and evaluation have been increasingly institutionalized. There has been an increase in the professional staff assigned exclusively to evaluation duties (34 states now have such staff), yearly funds allocated to evaluation have increased over time, and the number of states funding external, independent evaluation grows each year.

The State Evaluation Development (SED) Program: Through this Program, BJA provides technical assistance to jurisdictions needing direct help with capacity building. Evaluation technical assistance and training for state and local practitioners, usually focused on specific program areas, is delivered in regional workshops, single-state settings, and multi-state workshops. Through the establishment of a state-to-state exchange program, BJA has supported evaluation capacity building initiatives by enabling experts from one jurisdiction to visit and provide technical assistance to another jurisdiction or by sending practitioners to other offices to learn its practices. SED also produced a series of nine publications, *Innovative State and Local Programs*, focusing on state and local strategies to improve the ability to obtain, publish, and disseminate documentation of promising practices. The publications were the result of nine working meetings that led to the documentation of 191 programs. Notably, those participating in the process have applied and institutionalized what they have learned in their own jurisdictions. As a separate activity to capture high quality programmatic information on strategy implementation across programs within specific program areas, BJA, in conjunction with state planners and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), has produced a series, *Highlighted State and Local Programs*. Almost 550 programs in three major program areas have been documented, and the reports are available on BJA's Web site.

The Byrne Evaluation Partnership Program: To increase the quality and use of evaluations conducted by state and local agencies, BJA created the evaluation partnership program as part of its Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Enforcement Assistance Program. The evaluation partnership program seeks to enhance collaborative evaluation among SAAs and creates a mechanism for enhancing the design, implementation, measurement, evaluation, and dissemination of information in high-priority program areas. Under this program, SAAs have principal responsibility for evaluation in coordination with funded program managers and evaluators at universities or other research organizations. SAAs apply to the program either individually or as coapplicants with other state and local agencies involved in planning, coordinating, administering, and/or evaluating criminal justice programs funded under the Byrne Formula Grant Program.

Annual Criminal Justice Research and Evaluation Conference: BJA and NIJ, along with other OJP offices, sponsors an annual conference on research and evaluation in the criminal justice area. Through plenary sessions, panels and training workshops, criminal justice evaluators, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers come together to share experiences and knowledge. ✦

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Studying Learning Initiatives: The Experience of the Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities National Learning Initiative

The Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC) Program, established by the Clinton Administration in 1993, is the most comprehensive federal program in recent years aimed at relieving severe stress in rural and urban areas. The Learning Initiative, developed in 1995 and based at the Community Partnership Center (CPC) of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, was a project designed to pilot a participatory evaluation process in 10 of the 33 rural Empowerment Zones and Enterprise communities. This project was part of an overall movement toward community-based monitoring, which we have termed Community-based Monitoring, Learning, and Action (CMLA). CMLA helps people understand the views and values they share, work through their differences with others, develop longer-term strategies, and take carefully researched and planned actions that fit their contexts, priorities, and styles of operating. It is based in the traditions of community organizing, citizen monitoring, participatory action research, and popular education.

> CMLA helps people understand the views and values they share, work through their differences with others, develop longer-term strategies, and take carefully researched and planned actions that fit their contexts, priorities, and styles of operating.

The Learning Initiative was radically different from traditional evaluations that rely on outside experts and that often examine and report on the success or failure of a program very late in its implementation or after its completion. The foundation of the Learning Initiative was composed of Learning Teams comprising between 8 and 20 local volunteers located in each site. Each of these Teams also had a part-time paid coordinator as well as access to the Regional Researcher. These teams were responsible for:

- meeting with Regional Researchers and staff to discuss the most appropriate ways to evaluate the progress and success of the EZ/EC program;
- gathering information locally to help in assessing progress made toward meeting the program's goals in the community and in identifying successes and obstacles to success;
- identifying lessons from the community's experience that should be shared with others;
- participating in workshops to share those lessons with other communities and with program leaders;
- sharing the findings with others in their own community through follow-up learning and educational activities.

Team members decided which of the EZ/EC's program's local goals were most important to them and, using a flexible evaluation tool called a "Learning Wheel" (see diagram, next page), each did its own monitoring, analysis, and reporting. The Learning Teams were expected to work with and share their findings with local EZ/EC boards, while maintaining sufficient autonomy to evaluate and discuss their findings freely and openly.

The Learning Initiative had three broad goals:

- capacity-building through development of skills and leadership of local participants in rural EZ/EC communities;
- continuous improvement of the program, through strengthened citizen participation, feedback, and accountability; and
- research and evaluation development through local documentation and learning.

CPC conducted a documentation of the pilot phase of the project (January 1996 - June 1997). This documentation included findings related to the early implementation of the EZ/EC program based on citizen monitoring and assessment of selected goals in the pilot communities, and findings related to the Learning Initiative approach.

To understand the Learning Initiative, researchers examined the extent to which the three broad goals were addressed. Learning Teams were asked to address the following questions:

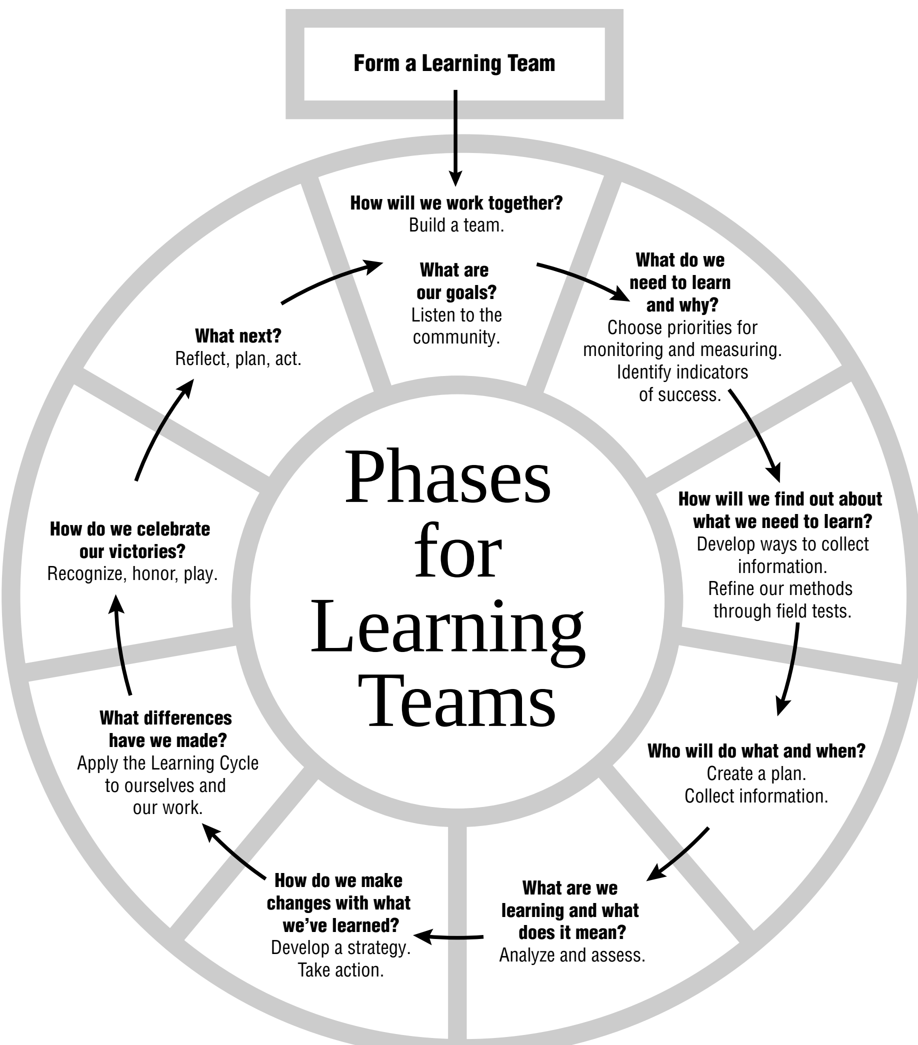
1) How have you grown personally as a result of involvement with the Learning Initiative?

2) What have you learned through this process related to the Citizen Learning Team Model? What works and what doesn't? What have you learned "about" or "how to do" while working with the Learning Team in your community?

3) What have been the key findings of your Citizen Learning Team about the EZ/EC program? How did you reach these findings? To whom did you communicate them? What has been the response? What difference has it made so far? From the Citizens Learning Team perspective, what are the major successes and weaknesses of the EZ/EC program in your community?

4) What would you recommend to federal, state, and local governments about the EZ/EC program? What would you recommend to state and local governments about the Citizen Learning Team Model? What would you recommend to someone else who wished to start a Learning Team in their community? What would you recommend to the University about the Citizen Learning Team Model for Phase II?

In assessing the capacity-building activities of the Learning Initiative, researchers looked at skills that had been developed among team members; new and expanded networks that had been created; the extent to which team members had broader and more critical awareness of the political dynamics and culture of their communities; how confidence among members had been built; and changes in the ability of members to take on new roles. To understand the impact that the Learning Teams were having (much of this was too early to assess), researchers documented early policy changes, the role of Learning Teams in maintaining citizen participation and public accountability, the effectiveness of different structures, and the Learning Initiatives's contribution to continuous learning and improvement at the national level. Finally, to assess the influence on research and evaluation, researchers documented noteworthy team accomplishments and innovations in research, lessons on research design and approaches to measuring and monitoring, and linkages with the Regional Researchers.



Researchers used a variety of data sources to understand the Learning Initiative. These included documents, interviews, and participant observation. The main source of data for the analysis of the capacity-building component of the Learning Initiative were the Learning Teams themselves. Learning Teams produced and presented reports during the third cross-site meeting, which included answers to the questions given earlier in this article. In addition, Regional Researchers worked with the Learning Teams to develop qualitative case studies that provided in-depth accounts of the early implementation and progress of the EZ/EC program and the Learning Initiative. Two national cross-site sessions were held in which participants heard and analyzed case study presentations from each site and worked together to identify key themes, findings, and recommendations. Participants included Learning Team coordinators and team members from each community, Regional Researchers, Ford Foundation staff, USDA Policy and Planning staff, consultants, and CPC Learning Initiative staff.

Although the EZ/EC Learning Initiative pilot project has been completed, the Learning Teams have continued on a voluntary basis in some communities. As poor people feel the pinch of policy changes and budget cuts, their desire to learn what can be done opens many doors for enlarging community based constituencies engaged in participatory learning and education. Understanding how activities such as the EZ/EC Learning Initiative can help develop such capacity is critical to ensuring that voice is given to those traditionally excluded from the policy process. ✦

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Executive Director
Center for Community Change

Vicki Creed
Learning Partners

John Gaventa, Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, was the founder and initial director of the Learning Initiative. Vicki Creed followed John Gaventa as director of the Learning Initiative; she also has her own consultant practice, Learning Partners, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

State Policy Documentation Project: Data Collection and Dissemination

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) undertook the State Policy Documentation Project (SPDP) in 1997 to document and analyze policy choices made by the states in their TANF cash assistance, food stamp, and Medicaid programs. Enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, particularly the creation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, significantly altered the relationship between the federal and state governments in providing assistance to needy families. The federal legislation both offers substantial new discretion for states and imposes new requirements. The goal of the SPDP is to provide a detailed and accurate source of state policy information on these programs for advocates, policymakers, and researchers. The project will collect and disseminate data on written policy (statute, regulation, and policy manual), rather than on how policy is implemented or its impacts.

In the project's first year, staff and CLASP and CBPP developed five surveys, three on TANF policies, one on Medicaid, and one on food stamps, with a total of more than 1,000 questions. Most questions were framed with multiple choice or yes/no answers to facilitate comparison of policies across states. The surveys also include open-ended questions to allow for full explanation of state policies. The survey instruments contain substantial explanatory text to ensure that all respondents fully understand the questions. The SPDP provides more detail than other sources of information on state policy choices, because initial "threshold" questions are followed by a series of follow-up questions. For example, in addition to listing the circumstances under which a state extends cash assistance to families that have reached a time limit, the SPDP survey asks whether the duration and renewability of extensions vary by circumstance, and if there are any circumstances under which families can be disqualified from receiving extensions.

The topics in the TANF survey include application issues, categorical eligibility, financial eligibility, time limits, work activities and requirements, sanction provisions, child care, child support, program administration, entitlement, housing assistance interaction, and behavioral requirements. There is a separate survey on TANF policies with implications for reproductive health and teen parents, such as family caps, minor living arrangements, rules, family planning, abstinence education, and teen school and training requirements.

The food stamps survey topics include application procedures, financial and categorical eligibility, immigrants' eligibility, sanctions for non-compliance with work requirements, collections of over issuances, the three-month time limit, and employment and training activities. The Medicaid survey topics are the new eligibility category for families with children, family composition rules, transitional Medicaid assistance, sanctions, time limits, effects of TANF procedures on Medicaid, Medicaid for SSI children, and Medicaid for immigrants.

The volume of data SPDP is collecting is large. For example, the survey section on TANF applications contains subsections on policies on availability and processing of applications; the extent to which Medicaid, food stamps, and other benefits' applications are linked with cash assistance applications; requirements imposed on applicants; rules on personal responsibility contracts and employability plans applicants must sign; programs that divert applicants from cash assistance with one-time payments or other services; and the availability of emergency assistance.

In order to collect the data, SPDP contracted with "reporters," technically and substantively proficient policy analysts, in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Each reporter completes the surveys; SPDP then compiles and cleans the data, and sends reports on the survey answers to state officials at the TANF, Medicaid, or food stamps agency for confirmation. The final step is to resolve any discrepancies in interpretation of written policy between the survey respondents and state officials. In these cases, the written policy is the final authority. SPDP data are stored in databases, and an interface was developed that allows reporters to enter survey answers directly into the databases via the Internet.

Information on these state policies is in high demand. The scope of issue areas covered and the level of the detail of the information from the SPDP surveys are not available from other sources. For example, state-level advocates and policymakers learn about innovative policies being proposed and implemented in other states and are able to see how their policies compare to those across the nation. Researchers evaluating welfare related programs, particularly those looking at sites in different states, will use the policy information to inform their evaluation findings. Members of the media at both the national and state levels frequently request information from SPDP for stories on welfare reform policy trends. To further disseminate its information, SPDP is developing a Web site. SPDP reports will be advertised as they become available through networks of state reporters and partner organizations, through mailings to state officials, and by posting notices to electronic listservs for state and federal policymakers, researchers, policy analysts, and advocates.

SPDP is designing database reports for individual state summaries of the policies in each of the survey areas; state reports will be posted to the Web site individually as data are verified. Eventually, 50-state tables will be produced to allow for comparison of policies around the country. While making the data available will allow others to do state-specific, regional, and national analyses, SPDP staff will write and distribute issue-specific summaries based on the full range of issues covered by the five surveys. ✦

Lisa Plimpton
Research Associate
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SPOTLIGHT

Lessons Learned

The ill-defined, trivial, and overgeneralized ways in which the phrase "lessons learned" has come to be used challenges evaluators to distinguish between casual/informal notions of lessons learned and what we call "high quality" lessons learned.

High-quality lessons learned contain knowledge that can be applied to future action and can be derived from screening according to specific criteria:

1) practice wisdom and experience of practitioners;
2) experience from program participants/clients/intended beneficiaries;
3) evaluation findings – patterns across programs;
4) basic and applied research;
5) expert opinion;
6) cross-disciplinary connections and patterns;
7) assessment of the importance of the lesson learned; and
8) strength of the connection to outcome attainment.

The idea is that the greater the number of supporting sources for a lesson learned, the more rigorous the supporting evidence, and the greater the triangulation of supporting sources, the more confidence one has in the significance and meaningfulness of a lesson learned. Lessons learned with only one type of supporting evidence would be considered a "lessons learned hypothesis." Nested within and cross-referenced to lessons learned will be the actual cases from which practice wisdom and evaluation findings have been drawn. A critical principle here is to maintain the contextual frame for lessons learned, that is, to keep lessons learned grounded in their context. For ongoing learning, the trick is to follow future supposed applications of lessons learned to test their wisdom in action.

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Utilization-Focused Evaluation

Ricardo A. Millett
Director of Evaluation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

JOB OPENING:

The Harvard Family Research Project, located at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, anticipates a job opening for a full-time Research Analyst starting in July/August 1999. This is an excellent opportunity for a professional interested in contributing to the field of evaluation and after-school programs.

Responsibilities: Work on several evaluation-related research projects, including projects focused on after-school programs and results-based accountability among non-profits. May also work on national evaluation newsletter, the *Evaluation Exchange*. Conduct research and collect/analyze data using qualitative and quantitative methods. Conduct extensive interviews with national and community-based organizations, advocacy and research organizations, state and local policymakers, foundation representatives, and other stakeholders. Analyze documents and assist with development of interview protocols and coding schemes. Write reports, journal articles, analytic documents, and meeting presentations. Conduct literature reviews. Participate in proposal development; assist with other special projects. Occasional travel required.

Requirements: Master's degree, 3+ years related research/evaluation experience. Knowledge of/experience with current evaluation theory/practice, public policy, and/or education required. Knowledge of after-school programs preferred. Excellent writing and verbal communication skills, and ability to work independently essential.

To Apply: Send a cover letter and resume to: Tacy Corson, Associate Director for Administration, Harvard Family Research Project, 38 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Note: This position is contingent on grant funding.

Harvard University is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Continued from page 4

will better inform and guide public action: collaborative buy-in; a transparent and public system of performance measurement and accountability; opportunity for innovation, rigorous experimentation, and program and policy redesign; and processes and mechanisms to share lessons and learning. This approach has the potential to produce information that is more likely to be used for public policy decisions and resource allocation as well as to improve program and policy outcomes than the current system of episodic evaluation and experimentation now does. In the era of accountability, we believe that this approach has the potential to engage all the necessary players from the national to the community level in the learning process — and thereby create a learning community. ✦

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New and Noteworthy

We regret that we cannot provide copies of the materials listed below. Please contact the publisher or authoring organization directly.

Argyris, Chris. (1993*). Knowledge for action: A guide to overcoming barriers to organizational change.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. This book helps readers understand why individuals and organizations are unable to learn from their action, and presents the steps that must be taken to create change. Part One discusses how to uncover the roadblocks to improvement; Part Two suggests ways to diagnose and intervene to create learning; and Part Three discusses how to use key learnings to solve problem situations. *Tel: (415) 433-1740. http://www.josseybass.com/catalog*

Argyris, Chris & Schön, Donald A. (1996*). Organizational learning II: Theory, method, and practice.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. This book expands on the ideas and concepts of the authors' ground-breaking first book, *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective* (1978). The authors address four principal questions that cut across the field of organizational learning: Why is an organization a learning venue; are real-world organizations capable of learning; what kinds of learning are desirable; and how can organizations develop their capacity for desirable kinds of learning? *Tel: (800) 447-2226. http://www.awl.com*

Greenwood, Davydd J. & Levin, Morten. (1998). *Introduction to action research: Democratizing the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. This publication provides both new and experienced researchers and practitioners with the information and skills necessary to conduct action research. It begins with a brief presentation of two cases of action research and continues with a discussion of the history, philosophy, social change agenda, methodologies, ethical arguments for, and fieldwork tools of action research. *Tel: (805) 499-9774. http://www.sagepub.com*

Hess, Peg M. & Mullen, Edward J. (Eds.) (1995). *Practitioner-researcher partnerships: Building knowledge from, in, and for practice*. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers Press. The authors in this publication discuss ways to forge more successful and effective partnerships between the worlds of social work practice and social work research. Using diverse examples, they discuss the crucial characteristics that contribute to the survival and enhancement of collaborative relationships as well as key issues and obstacles. The book captures and reflects the complexities of actual partnerships in research and practice. *Tel: (800) 227-3590. http://www.naswpress.org/publications.*

Senge, Peter M. *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. (1990). New York: Doubleday. Senge describes the five disciplines that are necessary for a learning organization: systems thinking; personal mastery; mental models; building shared vision; and team learning. Using examples, Senge discusses how to transform organizations into learning organizations.

Senge, Peter, Kleiner, Art, Roberts, Charlotte, Ross, Richard B., & Smith, Bryan J. (1994). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. New York: Doubleday. The authors provide the viewpoints for implementation and development of the ideas presented in the *Fifth discipline*. Included are exercises that promote the development of each of the five disciplines. *http://www.fieldbook.com* ✦

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ANNOUNCING: RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY PUBLICATIONS FROM HFRP

Results-Based Accountability Case Studies
New evidence from recent studies by HFRP shows that RBA can be a powerful tool to initiate and enhance systems of continuous improvement and learning. These case studies describe RBA efforts in eight states: Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Vermont. Each case study identifies the process of designing and implementing RBA systems. Every report includes a description of state and local RBA efforts, their history, the development process, the uses of the RBA systems, and the lessons learned. The unique experiences of the eight states in the studies can provide valuable insights to those responsible for RBA efforts elsewhere in the nation.

Aiming for Accountability: Lessons Learned from Eight States
This report highlights some of the important lessons in designing and developing RBA based on the insights gained from the studies of eight states. Included is information about how these states have overcome some of the challenges in developing effective RBA systems, and what the characteristics of promising RBA efforts are. The executive summary of this report is a new addition to our collection of *Reaching Results Briefs*, and discusses the potential and limitations of RBA systems based on HFRP's eight case studies.

Each of the state reports is $5.00 plus shipping and handling, and *Lessons Learned from Eight States* is $7.00 plus shipping and handling. A special discount is available if ordering all eight of the state reports or all nine in the series. To obtain these publications, please contact the HFRP publications department at (617) 496-4304 or look at our Web site for an order form. You may also e-mail your order: hfrp_gse@harvard.edu

ELECTRONIC MAILBOX

The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook
http://www.fieldbook.com
This site offers strategies, tools, and connections for building a learning organization. Visitors can learn more about the Fieldbook and download or read unpublished material or segments from future Fieldbooks. The site also provides information on study groups, Internet links, and events and talks related to learning organizations.

Stanford Learning Organization Web (SLOW)
http://www.stanford.edu/group/SLOW
SLOW is an informal network of individuals interested in the nature and development of learning organizations. This site offers connections to other Web sites, information about articles, books, videos, and papers related to learning organizations.

Learning Organization Mailing List and Archive
http://world.std.com/~lo/LOinfo.html
This international electronic discussion group brings together those working to build learning organizations. To subscribe, send e-mail to majordomo@world.std.com. Ignore the subject line and begin the message with two lines:
subscribe learning-org
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The Learning Organizations Homepage
http://www.albany.edu/~k17686/learnorg.html
This site provides information on learning organization strategies for innovation, change, and growth as well as online articles and information about resources.

Karen Horsch
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