

*Collaborative evaluation:
Examining a partnership
between UniSA and
Minda Incorporated*



*Richard McGrath, University of South Australia
Gary Crilley, University of South Australia
Michael Taylor, Minda Incorporated*

Introduction



Evaluation in the field of human services has been ongoing since 1960's

Continuous debate and discussion regarding techniques, methods, tools and instruments

Particularly within the disability services field

Very little literature in regard to the role of the evaluator

Introduction

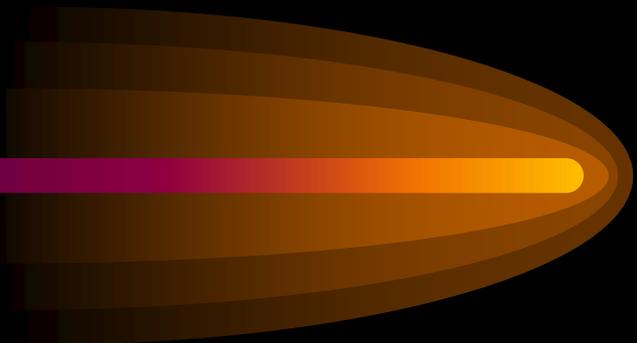


Role of evaluator

- Internal
 - Referred to as ‘in-house’
 - Can be used to promote organisational learning
 - Requires support and resources from organisational leaders
 - Tends to use process-orientated techniques

(Davey 1990, Owen & Rogers 1999)

Introduction

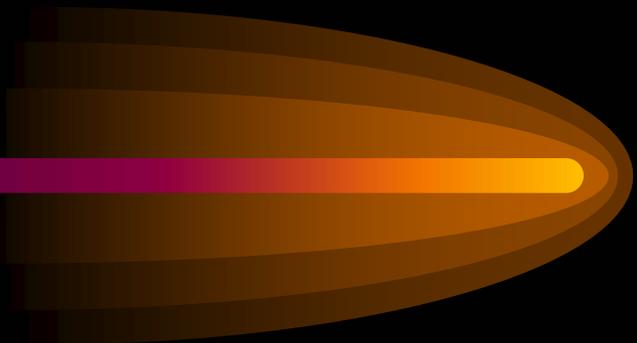


Role of evaluator

- Internal
 - Cost effective
 - Assist with the flexibility of evaluation process
 - Evaluator knows organisational culture
 - Credibility, commitment and promotion of improvement through findings can be established

(Cummings 1988)

Introduction

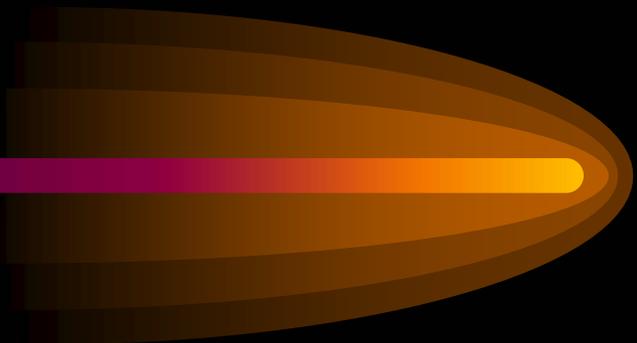


Role of evaluator

- Internal
 - Extra burden for staff involved
 - Cynicism and frustration concerning findings
 - Organisational policies/value system may compromise or affect objectivity of evaluator

(Owen & Rogers 1999)

Introduction



Role of evaluator

- External
 - Requirement of specific knowledge or expertise
 - Need for evaluation process and findings to be seen as objective and unbiased
 - Mistrust by staff can occur, hampering evaluation process
 - Unaware of organisational culture
 - Costly

(Owen & Rogers 1999)

Collaborative evaluation



Examine a collaborative evaluation using a case study approach

Collaboration between Minda Incorporated (Minda)
and the University of South Australia (UniSA)
from 2002-2004

Highlight a number of outcomes achieved

Background



Minda opened in 1898 as a home for children with an intellectual disability

Financial through the assistance of government grants, state and federal, donations and other monies raised.

Staff required to evaluate programs to satisfy Federal and State legislation as well as organisational objectives

Background



Minda currently provides support and services for over 1,100 people both on-site and in the community

Provides recreation and leisure opportunities including:

- Social activities (discos, rock n' roll club, luncheons)
- Sporting activities (athletics, bowling, cricket)
- Fitness activities (walking, Supercircuit, Corporate Cup)
- Artistic programs (choir, art group)
- Recreation activities such as shopping, fishing or movies

Client Satisfaction Survey

Evaluation project formulated following positive involvement of Minda recreation staff and client sample with a research project conducted by CERM at UniSA in 2001

(Edgecombe & Crilley 2002)

Key mission of Minda to empower clients as full citizens

(Minda Incorporated 2002)

Decision to include clients in evaluation process

Client Satisfaction Survey



Inclusion of information from people with an intellectual disability is necessary as it provides 'a singular perspective on their experiences that is only available through direct questioning' (Wyngaarden, M. cited in Davey and Pitfield-Smith 1990)

Client Satisfaction Survey



Structured questionnaire designed following:

- Consultation with staff
- Focus group of clients
- Trial of draft questionnaire

Students from UniSA co-opted to act as interviewers

Client Satisfaction Survey



Focus of induction session included:

- Minda purpose and aims,
- Organizational issues and activities
- Need to evaluate services provided to clients.

Students were informed of procedural issues pertaining to interviewing clients. Issues such as:

- Acquiescence and communication were highlighted
- Ethical aspects of interviewing such as confidentiality and anonymity, respecting the right of clients to refuse to participate or discontinue interview session

Client Satisfaction Survey

	Student	Clients
2002	58	45
2003	62	90
2004	TBA	TBA

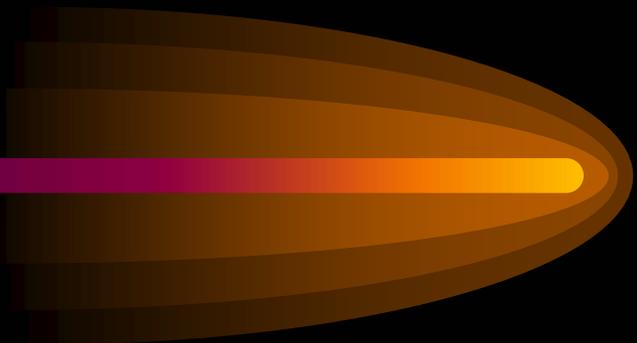
Outcomes



Minda recreation staff

- Direct outcomes
 - Cost effective
 - Time effective
 - Fulfilment of organisational requirements
 - Reliable data
- Indirect outcomes
 - Expanding awareness of Minda, its clients and services to university students in a practical manner
 - Clients provided the opportunity to meet a variety of 'other' people

Outcomes



University staff

- Direct outcomes
 - Establishment/strengthening of industry link
 - Provide experiential learning opportunity
 - Link theory to practice
 - Research data accumulation

Outcomes



Students

- Personal outcomes
 - Opportunity to improve interviewing skills
 - Apply theory to practice
 - Awareness of issues concerning people with disabilities
 - Challenged preconceived views
 - Self-fulfillment

Conclusion



Collaborative approach to evaluation of human services could be viewed as an alternative to the internal/external dichotomy

Case study of evaluation partnership between Minda and UniSA highlights win-win outcomes

References



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