



aes23



Building a team for evaluation success

Attributes of evaluative thinking and more!

Acknowledgements



These evaluation materials were developed by Dr. Samantha Abbato and her team at Visual Insights People.

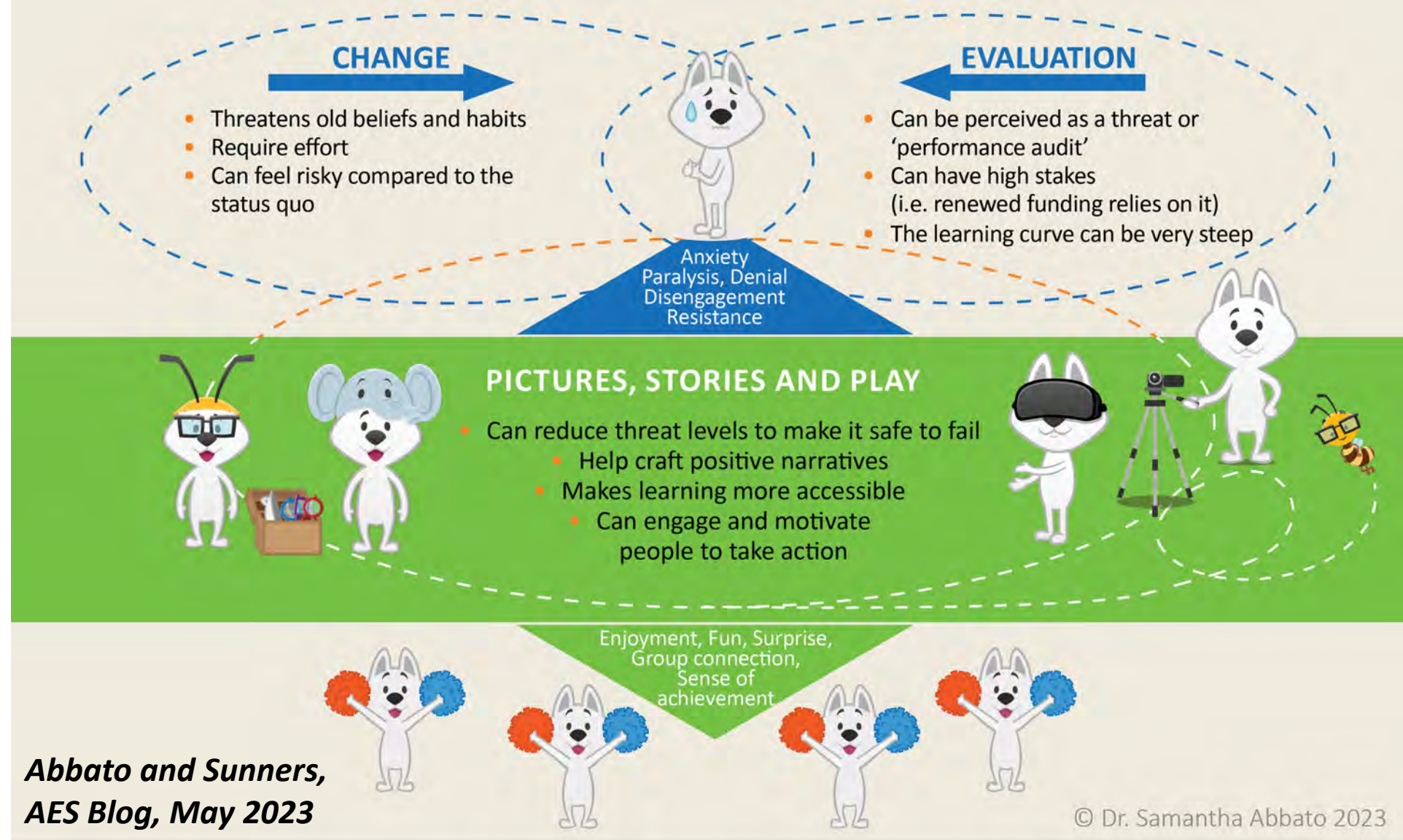
Sam is a senior evaluation consultant and an experienced trainer. She has many years of experience working in the community sector, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



Rob Lee is the Visual Insights' cartoonist who has brought to life Sam's evaluation character concepts and visuals for communicating evaluation concepts, with his exceptional cartooning skills and a bit of magic!

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Why cartoons and games?



Pictures, stories and play are tools that can help neutralise the perceived negatives of introducing evaluation and change.

Language and concepts

Theory of change

Output? Outcome!

ST outcomes MT outcomes LT outcomes Ultimate outcome

Evaluation language cards

Systematic, Merit, Outcome, To Put, TO BECOME, outPut, outCome

Output versus outcome

Evaluative thinking and change

EVALUATION CAPACITY - BUILDING REQUIRES SUPERPOWERS
21 ATTRIBUTES OF EVALUATIVE THINKING AND SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL TEAMS

EVALUATION SKILLS

1. See like attributes such as multiple eyes, productivity, and being able to look at the landscape from above any search for evaluation thinking.
2. Consider different perspectives and challenge.
3. Create a bank of ideas or solutions.
4. Bring different ideas together to create new solutions.
5. Produce results for use.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

1. Evaluate capacity building requires the strength and endurance of the working dog who is goal focused, team, and clearly communicates to the team.
2. Provide direction with vision and goals.
3. Listen to team, evaluate and communicate.
4. Make decisions for action.
5. Provide encouragement of team members.

TEAM MEMBER QUALITIES

1. Successful evaluation is bottom quality, an openness to new feedback, and doing things differently.
2. Use evaluation to improve.
3. Open to other feedback.
4. Responding without judgement.

TEAM ASSETS

1. Good at evaluation.
2. An openness to new ideas.
3. Motivated to produce quality results.
4. Deliver judgments.
5. Acknowledgment of evaluation quality.
6. Good at listening to others.

4. Makes decisions for

1. Has a growth mindset

6. Thinks creatively

ATTRIBUTES FOR EVALUATION SUCCESS-FOR:

EVALUATION SKILLS

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

TEAM MEMBER QUALITIES

TEAM ASSETS

EVALUATION MADE EASY: EME-1 ATTRIBUTES OF EVALUATIVE THINKING

USING THIS CHECKLIST

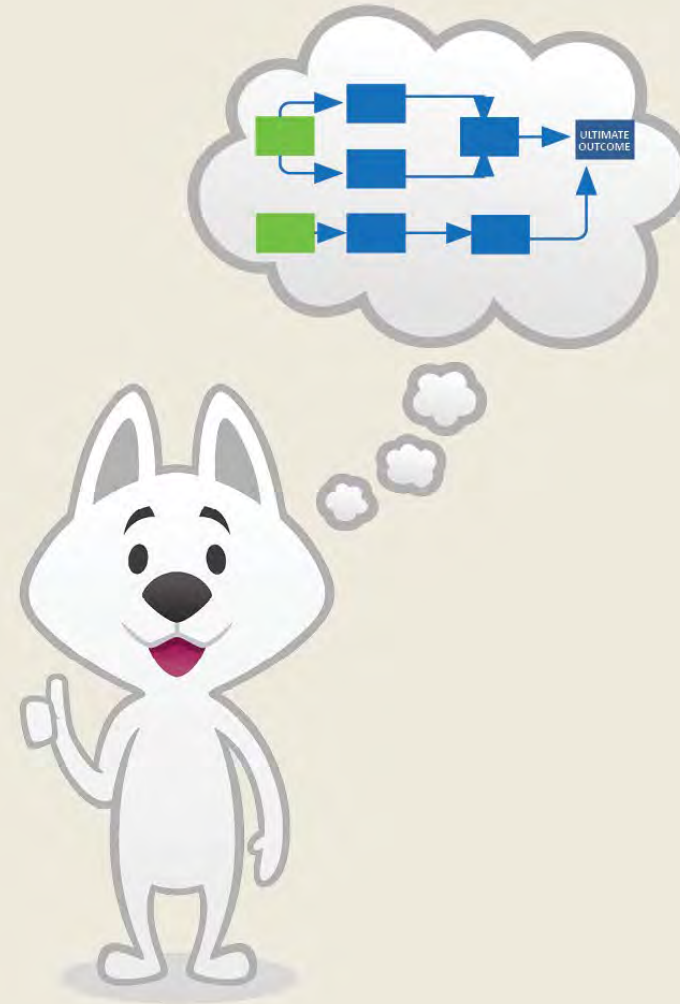
1. ATTRIBUTES FOR EVALUATIVE THINKING - THE EVALUATION PRACTITIONERS

Attribute	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Total Score	
1.1																							
1.2																							
1.3																							
1.4																							
1.5																							
1.6																							
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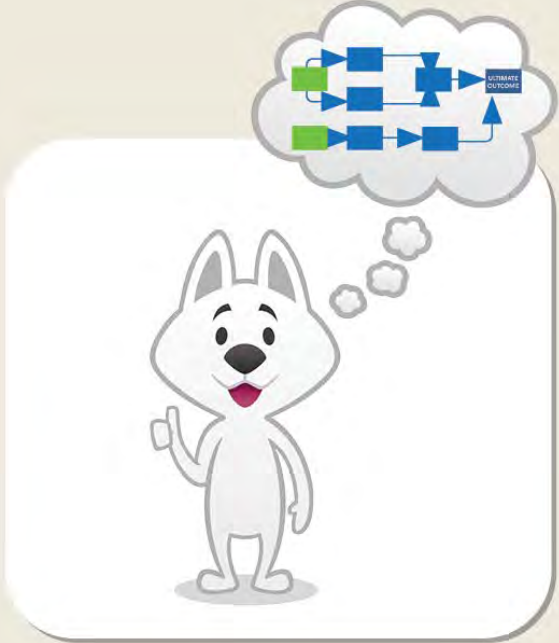
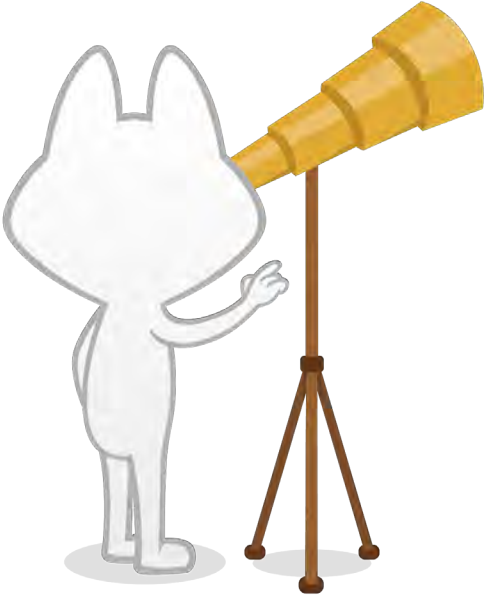
“Evaluation is an activity.
Evaluative thinking is a way of doing business.”



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Building evaluative thinking

Refocusing with a new lens!



1.
Evaluative
thinking



2.
Evaluation
capacity-building



3.
Change
management

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Attributes for evaluation success

Objectives

- Knowledge of team attributes for evaluation **success**
- Ability to use a checklist tool to facilitate team conversations about enablers and barriers to evaluation **success**
- Ability to use a tool within a team to identify actions to increase evaluation **success**



1. What is evaluative thinking?

“**Critical thinking** applied to the context of evaluation motivated by an **attitude of inquisitiveness**, and the **belief in evidence**, that involves **identifying assumptions**, **posing thoughtful questions**, pursuing deeper understanding through **reflection and perspective taking**, and **informing decisions in preparation for action**”

Buckley et al., 2015

*Defining and teaching evaluative thinking: Insights from Research on Critical thinking
American Journal of Evaluation*

Critical

Contextual

Creative

Practical



Reflective

Michael J Cole, EJA, 2023

Where do you get evaluative thinking (ET)?

- Identify attributes and build habits
 - “Your habits shape your identity and your identity shapes your habits”
(James Clear, 2018)
- Build on strengths and overcome challenges
- Set up a system that supports ET habits



Why is evaluative thinking important?

It is a key component of:

- Good evaluation practice
- Evaluation capacity building



2. What is evaluation capacity building?

- Strengthening competency and capability in:
 - Doing
 - Designing
 - Managing
 - Implementing
 - Using

Evaluation

Reference

Better Evaluation Rainbow Framework, 2023



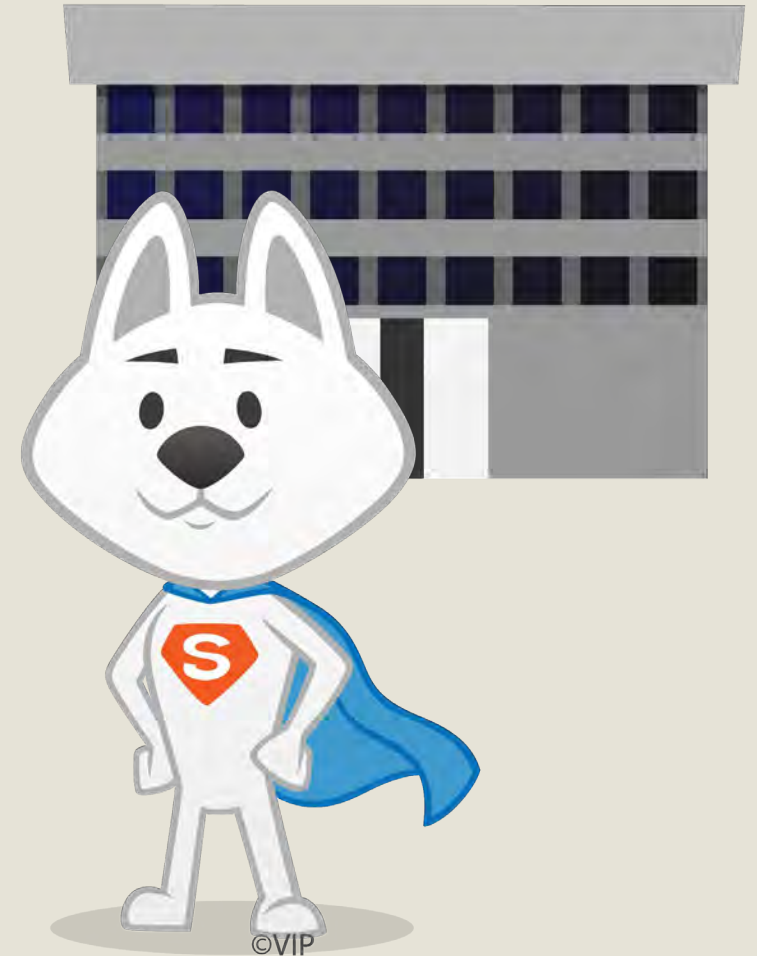
3. What is organisational change management for evaluation?

- A structured process and tools for leading the people side of change.
- Key are
 - Leadership commitment
 - Clear communication of vision
 - Powerful coalition

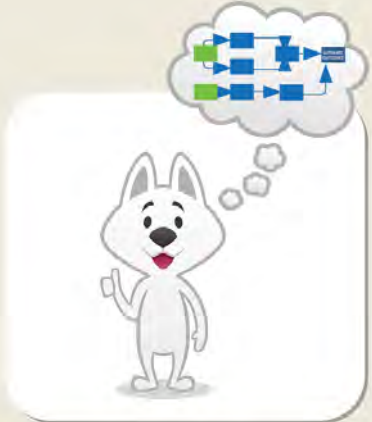
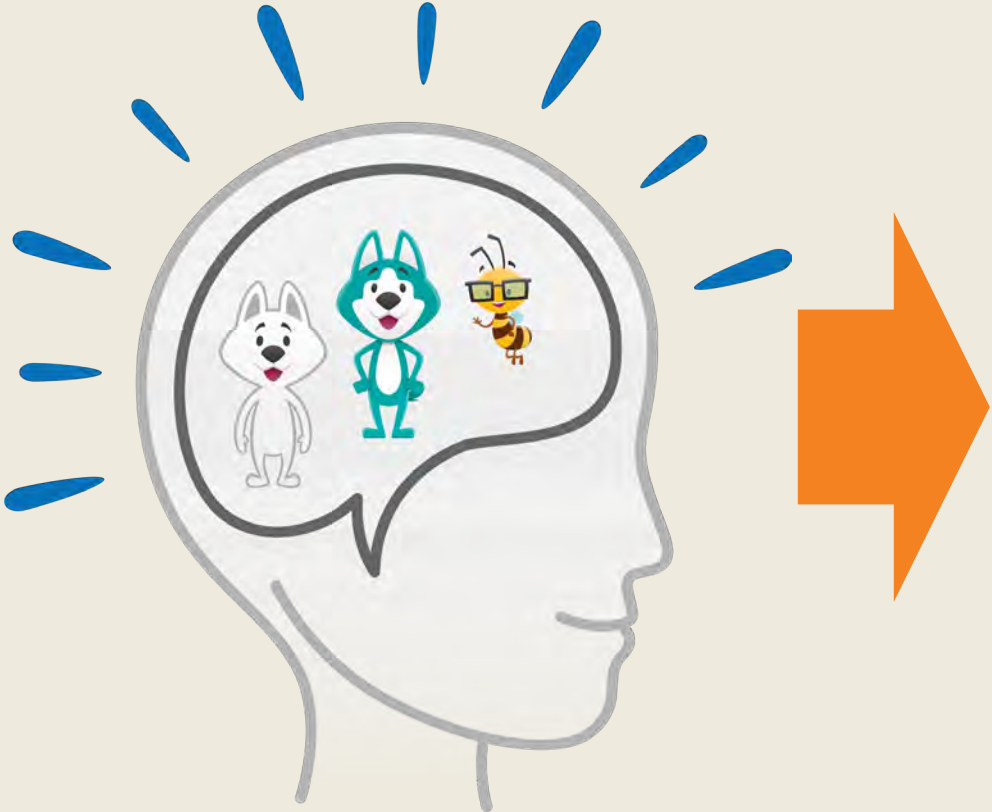
References

Abbato and Sunners, AES Blog, May 2023

Abbato, AJE, Feb, 2023



So, what attributes do we need to bring for evaluation success?





Attributes for evaluation success



Val
Evaluation
Practitioner



Scout
Evaluation
Leader



Avery
Team
member

Val the evaluation practitioner

1 Critical thinker



2 Provides perspective – a view from above



3 Brings a toolkit full of evaluation tools



4 Brings different ways of seeing



5 Productive – provides results for use



1 Critical thinker



“Actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.”

Scriven and Paul, 1987

Scout the evaluation leader

1 Provides direction with vision and goals



2 Poses thoughtful questions



3 Listens!



4 Good at making decisions for action



5 Effective communication



Avery team member

1 Has a growth mindset



2 Uses evidence for improvement



3 Good at asking questions



4 Regularly reflects on practice



5 Open to critical feedback



Team assets

1 Belief that evaluation will help



2 Open to new ideas



3 Motivated by an attitude of curiosity



4 Delays judgement



5 Acknowledges evaluation anxiety



'A lifetime's worth of wisdom'
Steven D. Levitt, co-author of *Freakonomics*

The International
Bestseller

Thinking,
Fast and Slow



Daniel Kahneman

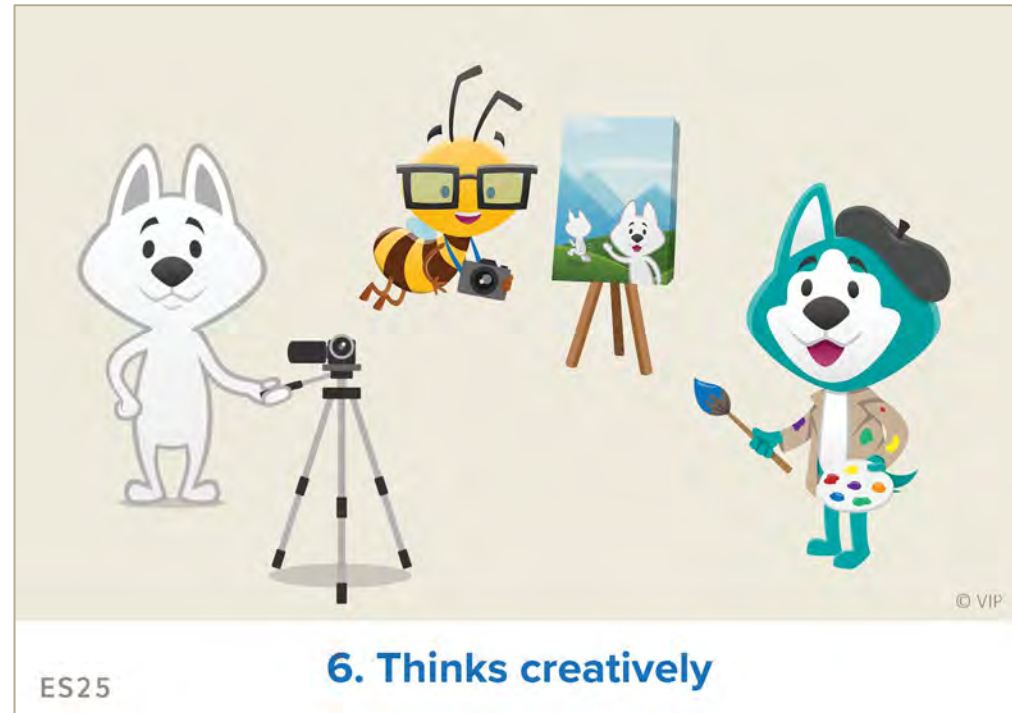
Winner of the Nobel Prize



Delaying judgement by using “System 2” thinking

- **System 1** = Operates automatically, intuitively, involuntary and effortlessly
E.g. when we drive, recall our age
- **System 2** = Requires slowing down, deliberating, solving problems, reasoning
E.g. complicated math problem, analysing and looking for meaning in data, determining the strength of evidence (i.e. a lot of evaluation work!)
- **Evaluation example**
System 1, I know what the evaluation question is and the evidence we are looking for, I will interview the stakeholder now.
System 2, I will invite the stakeholder to an evaluation interview and I will interview them once I have clarified the evaluation questions, developed a plan and created a semi-structured interview guide.

And number 21!



References

- *Abbato and Sunners, AES Blog, May 2023*
- *Abbato, AJE, Feb, 2023*
- *Cole, MJ, EJA, 2023*

Introducing a checklist of 21 attributes for evaluation success



Visual Insights CHECKLIST
EVALUATION MADE EASY: EME-1
ATTRIBUTES OF EVALUATIVE THINKING

USING this checklist
 This checklist is designed to support individuals and teams to identify and assess attributes for evaluative thinking. It has a focus on Visual Insights' three evaluation characters (the evaluation practitioner, the evaluation leader, and the evaluation team member). Give yourself a score between 1 and 5 for each attribute. 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Very good, 5 = Excellent
 Then add up your score for each of the evaluation characters.
 For scores of 3 or below, use the "Action Notes" column to identify strategies to increase your score.

1 ATTRIBUTES FOR EVALUATIVE THINKING - VAL (EVALUATION PRACTITIONER)

#	ATTRIBUTE	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION NOTES
1.1	A systematic, critical, data-based thinker.						
1.2	Provides perspective (e.g., a view from above).						
1.3	Uses tools from an evaluation toolkit (e.g., uses program models such as theory of change and program logic).						
1.4	Brings different ways of seeing.						
1.5	Productive. Constantly providing results for use based on sound data collection.						
ADD SCORES HERE							Total score

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VISUAL INSIGHTS CHECKLIST - ATTRIBUTES FOR EVALUATIVE THINKING

2 ATTRIBUTES FOR EVALUATIVE THINKING - SCOUT (EVALUATION LEADER)

#	ATTRIBUTE	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION NOTES
2.1	Provides direction to the team with a clear vision and goals.						
2.2	Poses thoughtful questions.						
2.3	Believes in the value of evidence.						
2.4	Good at making decisions for action.						
2.5	Supports a system and culture of questioning, reflecting, learning and modifying.						
ADD SCORES HERE							Total score

3 ATTRIBUTES FOR EVALUATIVE THINKING - AVERY (TEAM MEMBER)

#	ATTRIBUTE	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION NOTES
3.1	Motivated by an attitude of inquisitiveness.						
3.2	Ability to set aside beliefs, with an openness to new ideas.						
3.3	Good at asking questions.						
3.4	Regularly reflects on practice.						
3.5	Open to critical feedback.						
ADD SCORES HERE							Total score

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VISUAL INSIGHTS CHECKLIST - ATTRIBUTES FOR EVALUATIVE THINKING

4 ATTRIBUTES FOR EVALUATIVE THINKING - SHARED BY ALL THREE CHARACTERS

#	ATTRIBUTE	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION NOTES
4.1	The belief that evaluation will improve what you do and the difference you make.						
4.2	A growth mindset. A belief in one's own and team members' ability and potential to grow.						
4.3	Consistently using evidence for decision-making.						
4.4	Delays judgement.						
4.5	Acknowledges evaluation anxiety in self and others.						
ADD SCORES HERE							

CHECKING the attributes that you most align with
 Once you have added up your scores in 1,2,3 above, place the totals in the boxes below to see which fictional evaluation character you most align with. Identify ways you can increase your score for the attributes of the character for whom you had the lowest score.

IDENTIFYING strengths and challenges
 Reviewing your scores for the 20 questions, identify three areas of strengths and three areas of challenge to evaluative thinking. Consider actions for building on your strengths and addressing your challenges.

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Reference
Abbato (2023) Checklist of Attributes for Evaluation Success

Tools to support building the attributes for evaluation success

EVALUATION CAPACITY-BUILDING REQUIRES SUPERPOWERS
21 ATTRIBUTES OF EVALUATIVE THINKING AND SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL TEAMS

EVALUATION SKILLS
Bee-like attributes such as multiple eyes, productivity, and being able to look at the landscape from above are assets for evaluation thinking.

1. Critical thinking requires questioning and challenging.
2. Contextual thinking - A view from above.
3. Uses a toolkit of practical evaluation tools.
4. Brings different ways of seeing - New perspectives.
5. Productive - provides results for use.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS
Evaluation capacity building requires the strength and endurance of the working dog who is goal focused, listens, and clearly communicates to the team.

1. Provides direction with vision and goals.
2. Poses thoughtful questions.
3. Listens to team, evaluation and stakeholders.
4. Makes decisions for action.
5. Effective communicator of key messages.

TEAM MEMBER QUALITIES
Successful evaluation is bolstered by team qualities, an openness to new ideas and feedback, and doing things differently.

1. A growth mindset.
2. Uses evidence for program improvement.
3. Good at asking questions.

TEAM ASSETS

1. Belief in evaluation.
2. An openness to new ideas.
3. Motivated by an attitude of curiosity.
4. Delays judgment.
5. Acknowledges evaluation.

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ATTRIBUTES FOR EVALUATION SUCCESS FOR:

EVALUATION SKILLS	LEADERSHIP SKILLS	TEAM MEMBER QUALITIES
TEAM ASSETS		

VISUALINSIGHTS

ES6 **5. Productive – Providing results for use**

About this attribute:
The 'utility' evaluation standard (American Evaluation Association (AEA)) and 'accountability principle' (Australian Evaluation Society (AES)) asserts that evaluators produce findings that can be acted on by intended evaluation users.

Demonstrated by:

- Determination of the priority use and users of an evaluation.
- Effective communication and collaboration with those intended to use evaluation results.
- Consideration of the dissemination of evaluation findings.
- Supporting the acting on of evaluation results by intended users.

5. Val – Productive, providing results for use

ES11 **4. Makes decisions for action**

About this attribute:
An evaluation requires making numerous decisions about evaluation questions, users, use, design and methods. Effective use of evaluation relies on decisions about the application of evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

Demonstrated by:

- Observing challenges and solutions and incorporating different viewpoints when making decisions about planning and conducting evaluation activities.
- Translating evaluation findings and recommendations into actionable decisions.
- Applying evaluation findings to incorporate changes to practice.

4. Scout – Makes decisions for action

ES14 **1. Has a growth mindset**

About this attribute:
Team members believing talents can be developed (by hard work, good strategies, and input from others) have a growth mindset (Carol Dweck, Growth Mindset, 2006). They worry less about looking clever and are more focused on learning. Facing challenges, they can become insecure or defensive, triggering a 'fixed mindset', where talent is seen as innate and fixed.

Demonstrated by:

- Recognising when their 'fixed mindset' persona is triggered.
- Using problem-solving skills.
- Being committed to upskilling and life-long learning.
- Being willing to step outside their comfort zone.

1. Avery – Has a growth mindset

ES25 **6. Thinks creatively**

About this attribute:
Creative thinking is identified as an important element of evaluative thinking. Novel methods can engage team members, participants and other stakeholders in evaluation. Thinking creatively provides opportunities for new discoveries.

Demonstrated by:

- Use of innovative data collection techniques such as photo-voice, digital evaluation story and art.
- Development of creative processes to increase engagement in evaluation processes.
- Flexibility in thinking.

6. Team – Thinks creatively

Enquiries
Admin@visualinsights.com.au

References

Abbato S and Sunners K (2023) AES Blog, May 1, 2023 <https://www.aes.asn.au/aes-blog/pictures-storytelling-play-tools-for-evaluation-capacity-building-and-change-management>.

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Thank you

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