

# Participatory evaluation design and sense-making: Making meaning through co-constructed lenses

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## A relational approach

Working collaboratively with clients and stakeholders to co-construct evaluation frameworks and make sense of evidence

to **value for money** is

Systematically determining whether a program or policy is good use of resources

**positive** and **possible**

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## Academic Controversy exercise

The steps:

1. In pairs, appoint one 'agree' and one 'disagree' representative.
2. The topic is: **A relational approach to value for money is positive and possible.**
3. Consider your agree and disagree arguments (depending on which side you're on) (1 min)
4. Present your arguments to the other person in the pair (1 min each).
5. Then change sides, and present the opposite perspective (1 min each)
6. Decide whether you agree or disagree with the proposition.

Tony Ryan

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## Context

- 2 projects
- One focused on school leadership, the other on teacher professional learning
- Both wanted to understand the value of the initiative
- Both saw limitations of CBA
- Both were open to exploring a different approach

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## What did this approach look like?

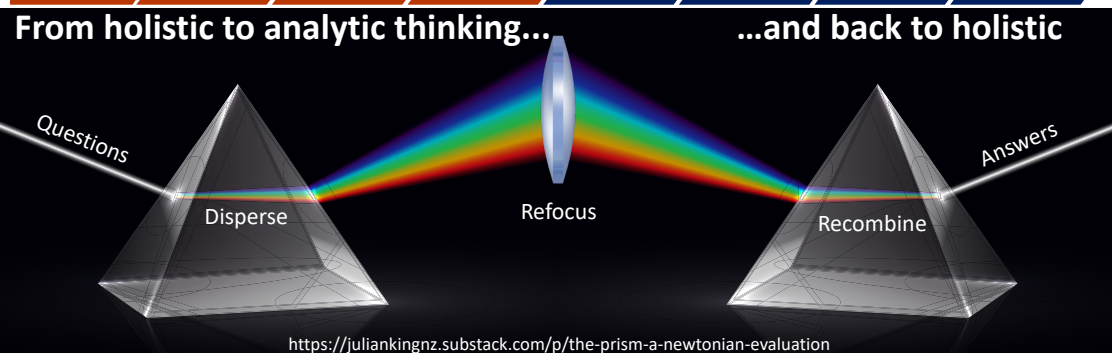


- Bringing the right people into the evaluation tent
- Balancing voices at the stakeholder table
- Working collaboratively
- Relationships and trust
- All parties deeply understand and own the evaluation
- Clients and stakeholders become savvy evaluation buyers and participants
- Viewed as a genuine partnership

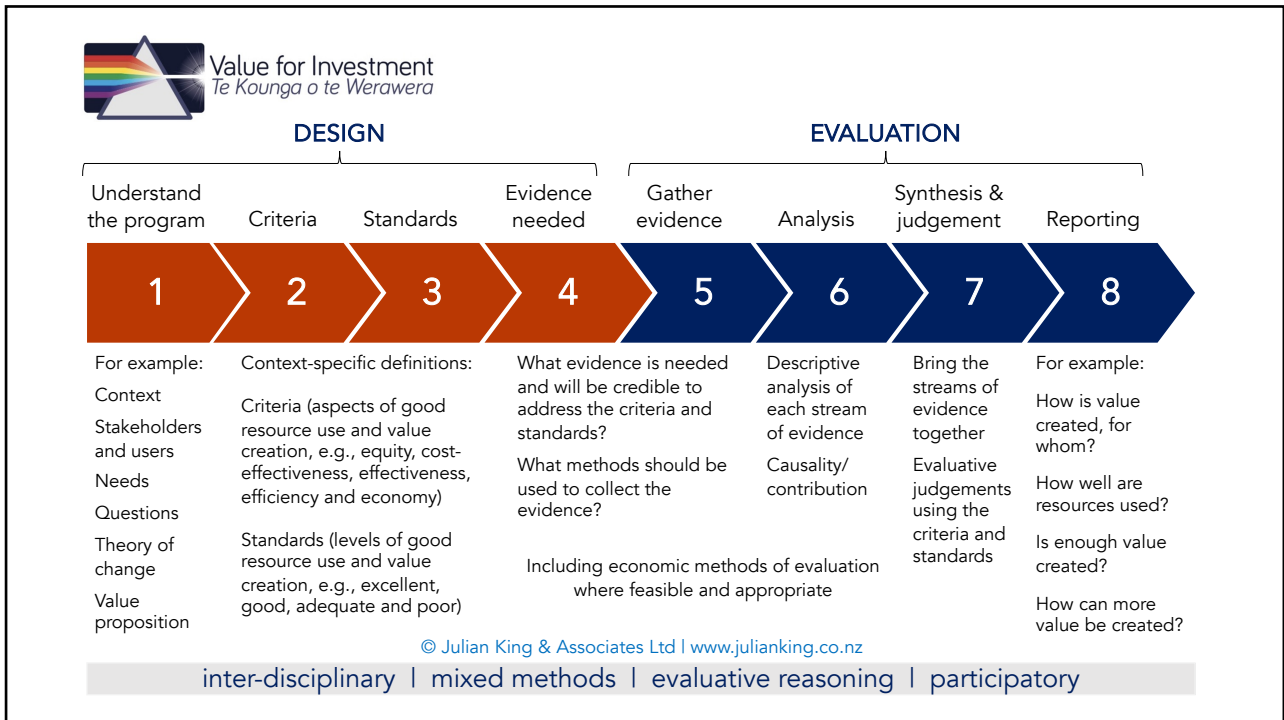
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## A guiding process

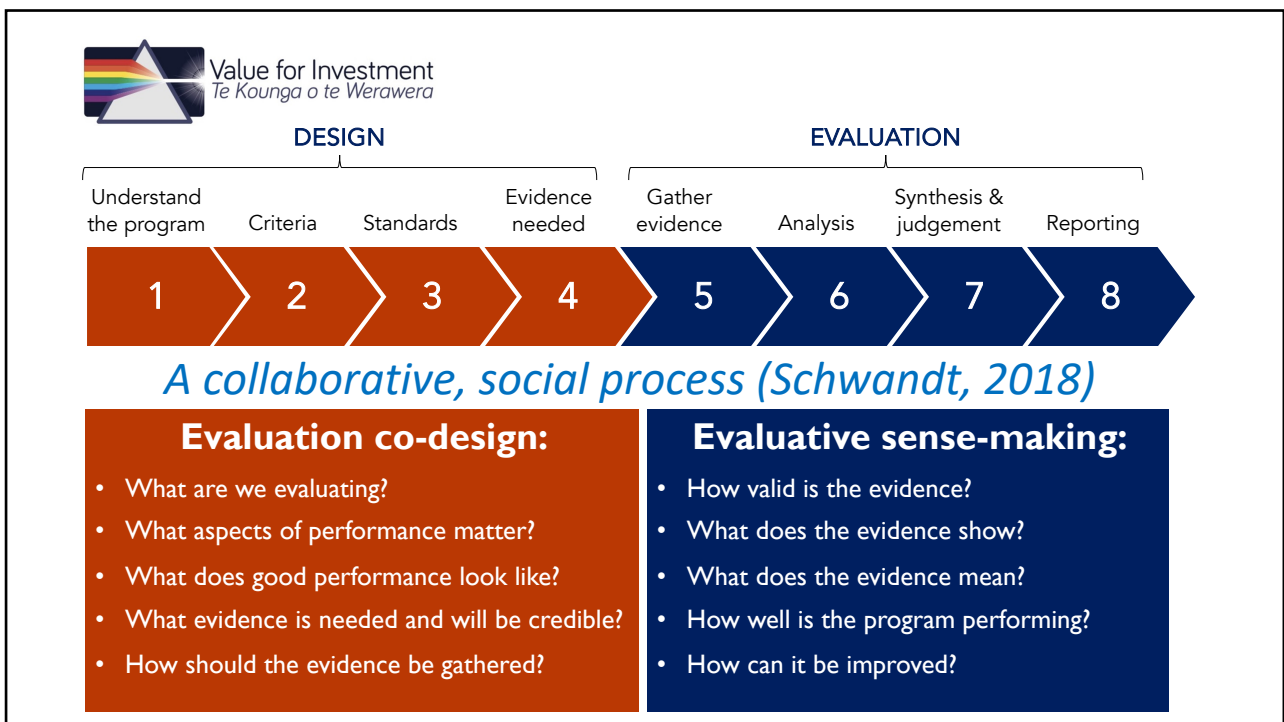
Understand the program    Criteria    Standards    Evidence needed    Gather evidence    Analysis    Synthesis & judgement    Reporting



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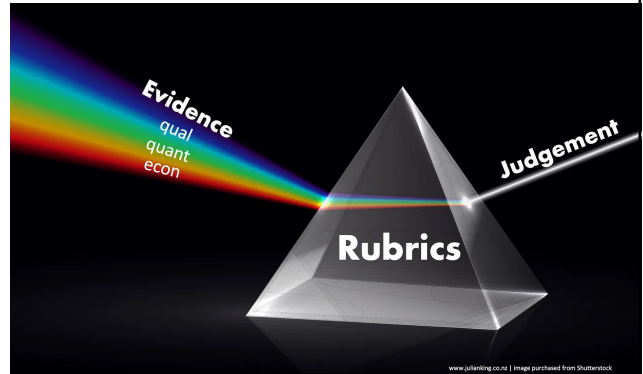


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# Principles:

- 1. **Inter-disciplinary** (evaluation & economics)
- 2. **Evaluative reasoning** (rubrics & evidence)
- 3. **Mixed methods** (qual & quant)
- 4. **Participatory** (co-design & sense-making)



<https://open.substack.com/pub/juliankingnz/p/better-value-for-money-assessment>

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## Partnership approach



Source: client

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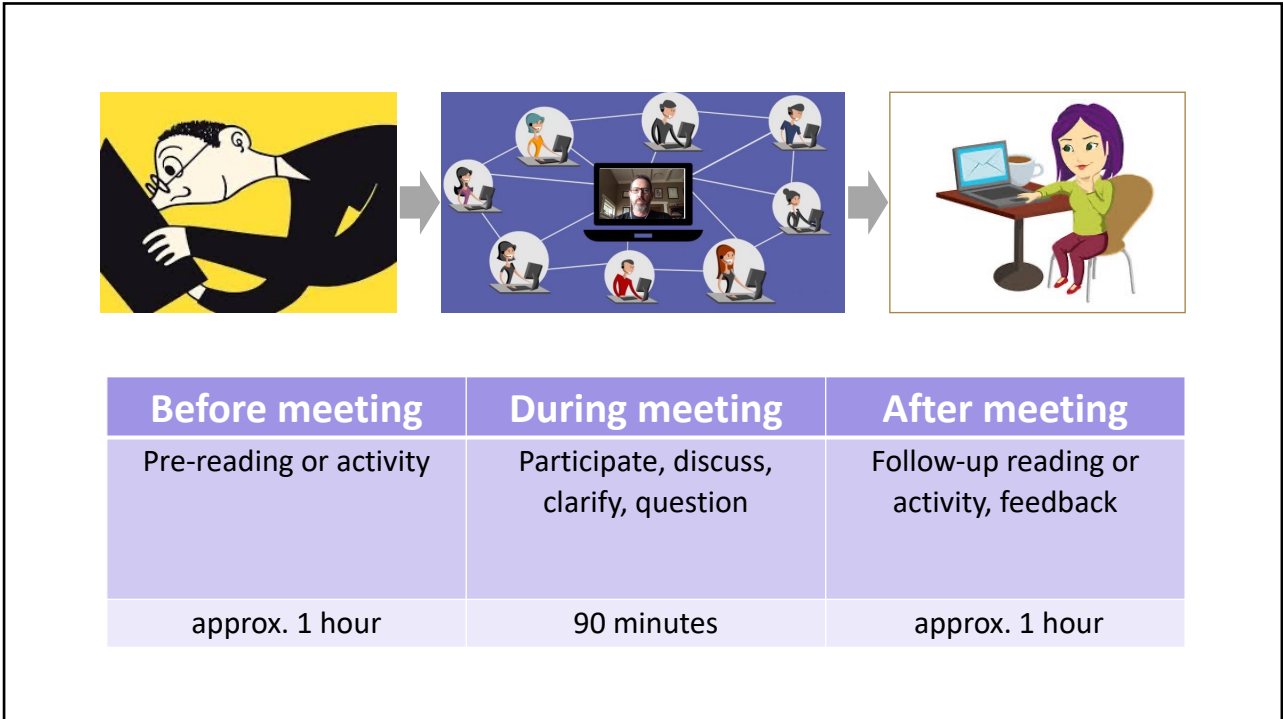
## Approaches include

- Engagement & investment in the work
- Protocols for working together
- Ongoing valuing of stakeholder inputs
- Continuous interrogation of what 'good' looks like

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## What is SES?

- Success | Evidence | Strategies
- An exercise developed to support critical reflection
- Used to help unpack:
  - What success is
  - How we will know if it's achieved
  - What strategies are used to get there

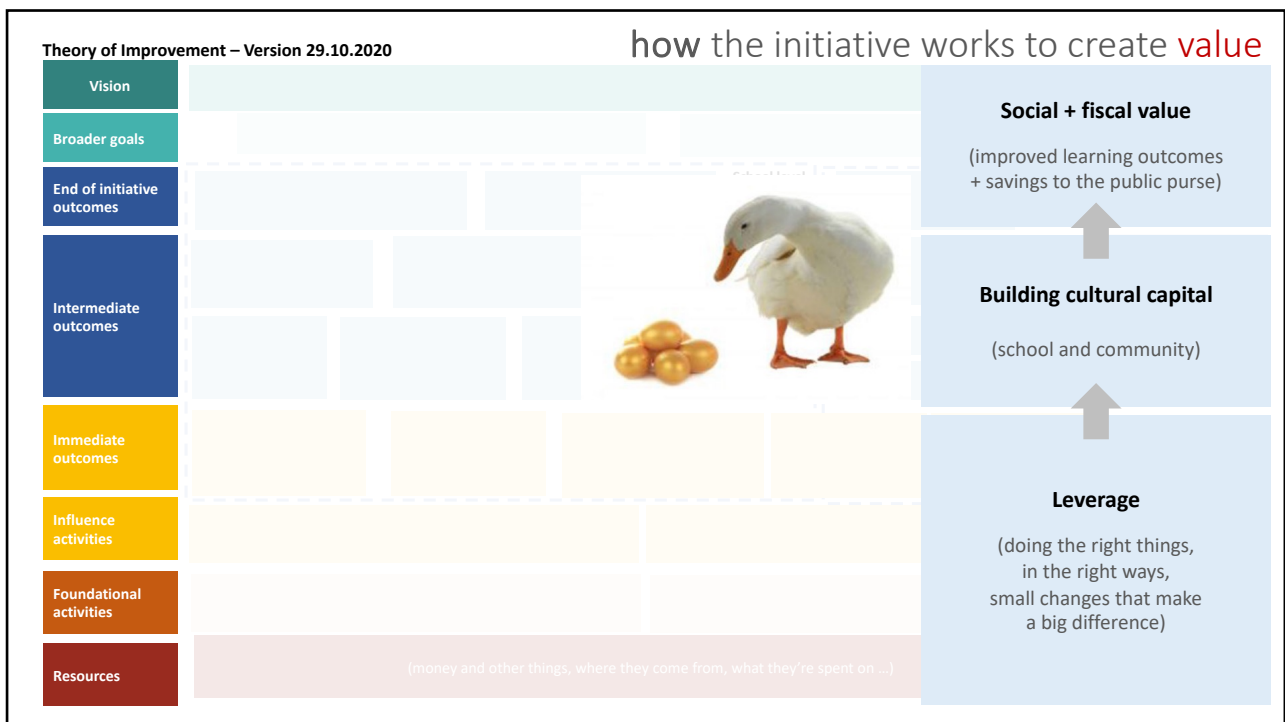
Kataraina Pipi

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## Steps – identify:

1. A success/achievement of the initiative (actual or potential)
  - Big or small
  - Matters to you
  
2. Evidence of success of the initiative
  - How do you know / how would you know?
  - What would you see as concrete evidence of success?
  - What would you hear yourselves saying, or others saying about it?
  
3. Strategies critical to success
  - Not just the 'what' but the 'how'
  - e.g. relationships, systems, structures, ways of working, etc...

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	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor
<p><b>Social + fiscal value</b> (improved learning outcomes + savings to the public purse)</p> <p>↑</p>				
<p><b>Building cultural capital</b> (school and community)</p> <p>↑</p>				
<p><b>Leverage</b> (doing the right things, in the right ways)</p>				

**VFI rubric** – aid to determining:

- **how well** the initiative works to create value
- how the initiative might create **more value**

Clarity about:

- What good VFI looks like
- What evidence to collect
- How to interpret the evidence


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## Challenges ...

- Takes time to build relationships
- Political pressures
- Everyone’s busy
- Takes patience and persistence

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## Benefits

- Participatory evaluation supports validity, credibility, and use
- Re-framing VfM as a question demanding evaluative reasoning, stakeholder participation, mixed methods
- Shifting the lens from accountability to collaboration and learning
- Reflecting diverse perspectives
- Empowering those affected by the interventions
- Experiencing evaluation as a journey of discovery, learning and growth


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For a blog post based on this presentation, see:  
<https://juliankingnz.substack.com/p/making-meaning-through-co-constructed>


**A relational approach  
to value for money is  
positive and possible**



### Thank you

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