Program Evaluation for Public Health Professionals

COURSE DURATION
Materials for this digital course will be available from June 1-30, 2017.

INSTRUCTOR
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
Program evaluation is the systematic collection of data about program characteristics, outcomes and impacts to document the merit or worth of a specific program, and is a fundamental component of program planning, implementation, and improvement. The growing demand for programmatic efficiency and accountability has increased the need for public health professionals skilled in program evaluation. This course introduces the concepts and functions of program evaluation, and will provide practical experience in translating concepts into application for actual programs. Course materials, examples and exercises will draw on programs implemented in resource-rich and resource-limited settings.

PREREQUISITES
Participants are required to have a computer with an internet browser and high speed internet access.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
By the end of the course, participants will be able to:
1. Describe the relationship between program theory and logic models, and their role in designing program evaluations
2. Identify the different types of evaluations used throughout the program cycle
3. Distinguish between various designs used in outcome evaluations, and understand how these influence internal and external validity of evaluation findings
4. Appreciate analytic approaches used in outcome evaluations
5. Identify frameworks used for process evaluation, and define important components of those frameworks
6. Critically assess the quality of published literature evaluating health programs and policies

COURSE READINGS AND RESOURCES
Readings are listed by week in the schedule below. Participants interested in investing in textbooks for future reference should consider the following:

There are also many additional resources available online, including:
• [http://tei.gwu.edu/](http://tei.gwu.edu/)
• [http://www.povertyactionlab.org/about-j-pal](http://www.povertyactionlab.org/about-j-pal)
• [http://betterevaluation.org/](http://betterevaluation.org/)
• [http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure](http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure)

Also, those based in New York City should consider joining the New York Consortium of Evaluators (NYCE) which hosts monthly happy hours and evaluation-related talks: [https://sites.google.com/site/newyorkconsortiumofevaluators/home](https://sites.google.com/site/newyorkconsortiumofevaluators/home)

**COURSE STRUCTURE**
This is a month-long digital course, equivalent to approximately 20 hours of classroom preparation, instruction and interaction. The course uses a highly self-directed learning approach that provides course participants with flexibility to complete the course objectives at the times and pace most conducive to their respective schedules. The class will be entirely “asynchronous” – it will not have an assigned day/time, but will consist of a variety of online recorded lectures, exchanges and exercises, as well as readings each week for the entire month of June. The course is divided into 5 sessions and you should allow approximately 4 hours/session. Materials for sessions 1-3 will be posted prior to June 1, and materials for the sessions 4-5 will be posted in mid-June.

Most exercises will be based on published articles, case studies or programmatic documents that the Instructor supplies. However, students are strongly encouraged to use and share programmatic documents from their own work. For example, you will be asked to develop a logic model for a program described in a published paper, but you can also develop a logic model for a program you are involved in, share it online, and receive feedback from the Instructor and other course participants.

**GETTING STARTED**
This course utilizes two free learning management software programs: Canvas ([https://canvas.instructure.com](https://canvas.instructure.com)) and Voicethread ([https://voicethread.com](https://voicethread.com)). All course participants will receive an e-mail inviting them to join the course on Canvas, where the readings, exercises and links to the lectures will be posted. Upon receiving the e-mail, participants should follow the instructions to sign up for a free Canvas account and click on the *Pages* link on the left-hand side of the screen, and then proceed to the page for *Course Introduction and Session 1* which will have
everything that is needed to get started. If you want to engage intimately with the course materials, you can also set up a free Voicethread account which is the software used to record the lectures. This is not required to complete the course but will allow you to insert comments or questions on specific slides in each lecture. The Instructor will review and respond to comments or questions in the lectures every few days.

**QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION**

Participants can email the Instructor with questions, post them on the Discussion Board on Canvas, or in the Voicethread lectures directly. Similarly, participants who choose to apply the exercises to their own work and would like feedback can email them directly to the Instructor or post them on the Discussion Board in which case other participants will be able to provide feedback as well.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Session 1 – Key Language and Concepts in Program Evaluation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Objectives:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Distinguish between program evaluation, routine program monitoring/continuous quality improvement, surveillance and research</td>
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<td>2. Describe the role of stakeholders in program evaluation</td>
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<td>3. Summarize different types of program evaluation</td>
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<td>4. Recognize the key steps in conducting a program evaluation</td>
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<td>5. Explain the importance of a program theory and construct a logic model</td>
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**Readings (select one of the 2 readings if you’re short on time):**


**Exercises:**

1. Design logic model for AIM 4 Teen Moms or the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme
2. Mexico City sexual and reproductive health case study
3. Design logic model for your own program and get feedback (optional)

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<th>Session 2 – Outcome Evaluation Design, Part I</th>
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<td><strong>Learning Objectives:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Understand the importance of threats to internal and external validity for outcome evaluations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Compare and contrast strengths and limitations of experimental and quasi-experimental designs in outcome evaluation</td>
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**Readings (select one of the first 2 readings if you’re short on time):**


Exercises:
1. Calculating program effects

### Session 3 – Outcome Evaluation Design, Part II

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the importance of threats to internal and external validity for outcome evaluations
2. Compare and contrast strengths and limitations of experimental and quasi-experimental designs in outcome evaluation

**Readings (select one of the first 2 readings if you’re short on time):**


**Exercises:**

1. Identify threats to validity in quasi-experimental evaluations

### Session 4 – A. Primer on analytic approaches for impact evaluation

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Appreciate analytic approaches used in experimental and quasi-experimental designs.

**Readings:**


**Exercises:**
1. Get out the Vote: Identifying evaluation designs, counterfactuals and threats
2. Design an outcome evaluation for your program and get feedback (optional)

**Session 5 – A: Process evaluation**

**B. Conclusion**

Learning Objectives:
1. Articulate key questions addressed in process evaluations
2. Recall approaches to process evaluation
3. Articulate pitfalls in the design, implementation and dissemination of program evaluations

**Readings (select one of the first 2 readings if you’re short on time):**


**Exercises (choose 1):**
1. Design a process evaluation for the Engage4Health cluster-randomized evaluation
2. Design a process evaluation for your own program and get feedback (optional)