Self-Study Plan: Integrated, Creative, and Participatory Evaluation Approaches (Intermediate)

If you know the general rules and purposes of evaluation, you might be ready to think more creatively about methods and approaches. This self-study guide focuses on integrated, creative, and participatory approaches to evaluation. Go ahead and skip over or review anything you've already done in this syllabus.

Objectives of this Self-Study Plan:

- Describe the benefits of using participatory approaches to evaluation.

- Identify several creative approaches to making evaluation more relevant or accessible to given target audiences.

- Develop a plan for using one of the new methods you learned or for integrating more participatory options into your evaluation work.

☐ **STEP ONE: Learn about youth participatory evaluation practice.**

Title: Putting Youth Participatory Evaluation into Action (Richards-Schuster, 2015)

Time: One hour

Notes: This talk by Katie Richards-Schuster covers the basics of participatory evaluation with young people and includes several diverse examples of youth participatory evaluation from around the country.

 The remainder of this study plan introduces you to interactive methods you can introduce into your evaluation practice with any population.

☐ **STEP TWO: Read about using adhesive formats for data collection.**

Title: Adhesive Formats for Data Collection: Practice and Validity of Dots, Stickers, and Labels (Paleo, 2012)

Time: 30 minutes to one hour

Notes: This document outlines key issues in using adhesive formats for data collection.

☐ **STEP THREE: Learn about Rich Pictures.**

Title: Read the basics from BetterEvaluation (Stevens, 2016) and then watch a short webinar on Rich Pictures and Evaluation (Oakden, 2015)

Time: 45 minutes

Notes: Rich Pictures is a creative method that can be used in evaluation and needs assessment work.

☐ STEP FOUR: Learn about Photovoice.

Title: Check out this webinar, Learning Lab 16: Photovoice (Vaughan, 2013), and/or read the Community Toolbox section Implementing Photovoice in Your Community (University of Kansas, n.d.) and watch this short NSVRC Mapping Evaluation podcast with Cierra Olivia Thomas-Williams on using Photovoice to evaluate sexual violence prevention work (NSVRC, 2018).

Time: 55 minutes for the webinar; 15 - 20 minutes for the website; 15 minutes for podcast

Notes: Photovoice is a participatory methodology that invites participants to take still images in response to a prompt or theme. These resources will help you understand the methodology and see examples of its use.

☐ STEP FIVE: Read up on Most Significant Change and/or watch a video about it.

Title: The 'Most Significan Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use (Davies & Dart, 2005) (guidebook) Most Significant Change (Jones, 2015) (Video)

Time: One - two hours

Notes: Most Significant Change is a participatory methodology that engages program participants in telling stories about the impact of an intervention. Stakeholders then select stories that seem like the "most significant change." This process is especially useful for interventions that have multiple sites coordinated by a central agency but can be modified for smaller scale efforts, too.

☐ STEP SIX: Reflect on and integrate your learning.

Title: Self-Study Plan Worksheet: Creative Methods

Time: 30 minutes

Notes: Complete this worksheet to begin thinking about how what you have learned about evaluation applies to your work. If you need help thinking through your answers or want to discuss your next steps, send an email to prevention@nsvrc.org.

In-Person Training Opportunities

The following conferences/institutes usually offer extensive training in evaluation methods and approaches, including innovative and up-and-coming ones.

Evaluator's Institute: Claremont Graduate University hosts one or two institutes per year to equip evaluators with cutting-edge information and foundational skills alike. Some of the greatest minds in evaluation teach full-day or multi-day workshops here, so it is a perfect opportunity to dig deep.

AEA Annual Conference and Professional Development Workshops: The American Evaluation Association hosts a seven-day conference every year that begins and ends with in-depth professional development workshops ranging from a half day to two full days each.

Topics and trainers often overlap with those at the Evaluator's Institute named above, but the cost of attending the professional development workshops at AEA is substantially less.

AEA Summer Evaluation Institute: In addition to their large annual conference, the American Evaluation Association hosts a summer institute that also includes both a conference format and pre-conference workshops. The entire event spans four days, including the full day of workshops prior to the conference. Since this institute is smaller than the annual conference, it also does not cover as many topics in as much depth.

References

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Oakden, J. (2015, April 8). *Soft systems methodology: The use of rich pictures from evaluation* [Video]. Center on Collaborative Governance. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7CTREXtFuk

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Vaughan, C. (2013, March 21). *Learning lab 16: Photovoice* [Video]. Strive Channel. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x03xC3I8B78