BRIDGING THE GAP: MAKING EVALUATION MORE USEFUL BY TAKING THE THEORY OUT OF EVALUATION PRACTICES WITH CLIENTS

Wendy Tackett, Ph.D.
wendy@ieval.net

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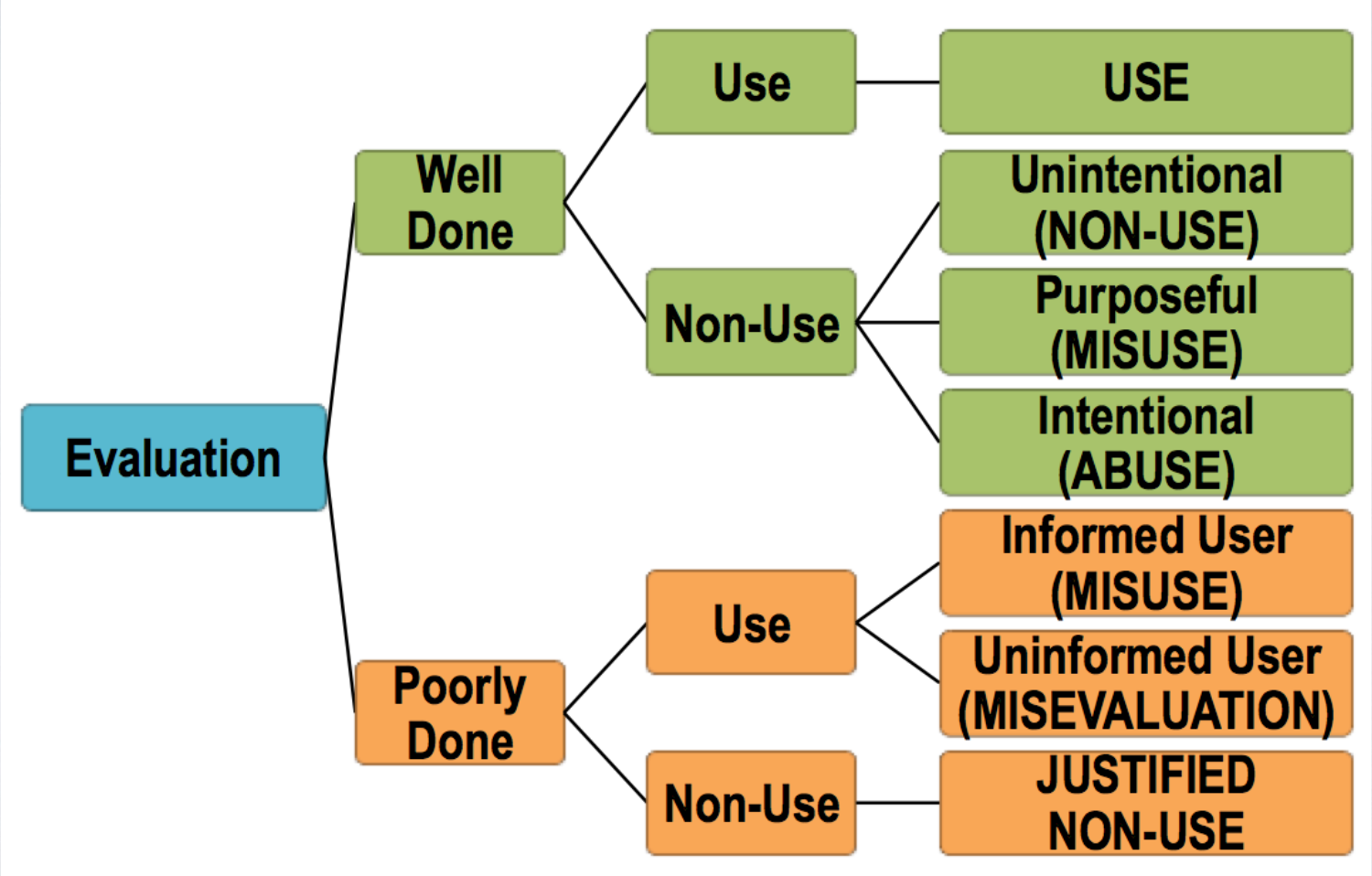
GOALS FOR TODAY

- Understand some of the theoretical basis for evaluation use
- Focus on five practical ways to improve evaluation use, incorporating real world examples

WHEN TO USE EVALUATION RESULTS



Alkin, M. C., & Coyle, K. (1988). Thoughts on evaluation utilization, misutilization, and non-utilization. Studies in Educational Evaluation, 14, 331-340.

WHAT IS EVALUATION USE?

Use typically refers to the direct and immediate application of evaluation findings for program improvement, decision making, and influencing thinking

1. TALK ABOUT USE AT THE BEGINNING

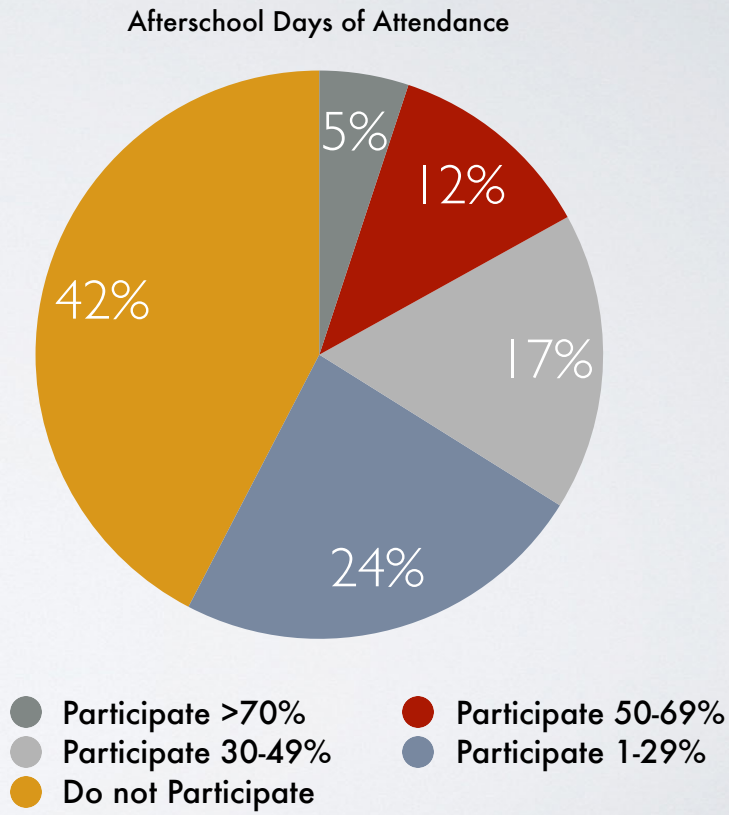
- **WHO** will be involved in using the evaluation findings?
- **WHAT** is actually being evaluated? What questions will be answered as part of the evaluation?
- **HOW** will the evaluation findings be used? For program improvement, decisions, judgments, policy-making, etc.?
- **WHY** is the evaluation being done to begin with? To meet funder requirements, client needs, pure research?
- **PUT IT IN WRITING**

KEY ELEMENTS FOR EVALUATION AGREEMENT

- Evaluation charge or **purpose**
- **Audience** for reading and using the evaluation
- Evaluation **questions**
- Evaluation **activities** (e.g., methods, analyses, reporting, timeline) to answer the questions
- Involvement by **stakeholders**
- **Resources** to support the evaluation (e.g., funding, staff time, interpretation and use responsibilities)
- Data **access** and **rights** of human subjects
- **Signatures** by fiscal agent, project director, and lead evaluator

EXAMPLES

Change in GPA
3.6
2.7
1.8
0.9
0.0
Math
Reading
Rest of Students
Afterschool Participants


Afterschool Days of Attendance
5%
12%
17%
24%
42%
Participate >70%
Participate 50-69%
Participate 30-49%
Participate 1-29%
Do not Participate

2. TEACH ABOUT EVALUATION

Educating clients and stakeholders about evaluation processes, needs, and purposes

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alleviates apprehension about evaluation

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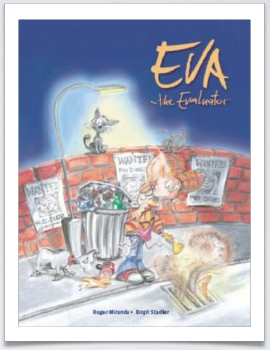
because clients and stakeholders are more fully informed

EVA THE EVALUATOR AND THE COOKIE ACTIVITY



- **Eva the Evaluator**, by Roger Miranda, is a children's book that explains what evaluators do in a FUN way!

- **Cookie Activity**:
  - Get into groups of 3-4 people
  - Each group take one of each cookie
  - Task: Determine which is the BEST cookie and defend your decision

3. INVOLVE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

SCOPE OF INVOLVEMENT

- Assist with document review
- Participate in program observations
- Conduct secondary analysis of data
- Present findings

DO NOT DO THESE WITH STAKEHOLDERS

- **Waste their time**
  - Instead, make any involvement meaningful to both the stakeholders and the evaluation process
- **Create bias through stakeholder involvement**
  - For example, do not use stakeholders to help conduct interviews or focus groups

4. SHARE RESULTS OFTEN & IN DIFFERENT WAYS

- Data and analyses should be shared when they are available - do not wait until the end of the project
- Mid-project changes from evaluation results may skew scientifically-based evaluation results, but they help create a better program overall
- The more visual, the better

INTERNAL DASHBOARDS

ECC Data Dashboard: June 1, 2013 – May 31, 2014

TOTAL WELCOME BABY BASKET VISITS	June 1, 2013 – May 31, 2014	
	BORN	Not Born
Total Referrals	699	
Referrals by end of timeframe	666	33
Referrals unable to connect with (moved to inactive)	101	
Total Welcome Baby Basket Visits	493	
Total babies awaiting visits	72	
Total: out of 666 possible visits, 493 were visited = 74%		

WELCOME BABY BASKET REFERRALS[1]	June 1, 2013 – May 31, 2014
CACC	16
EC Connections Home Visits/Playgroups/Car Seat Delivery	80
Health – Bronson Battle Creek Hospital	285
Health – Bronson Kalamazoo Hospital	43
Health – Connect Health Services	178
Individuals	16

DEMOGRAPHICS		June 1, 2013 – May 31, 2014			
		WBB Visits (n=493)	Home Visits (n=283)	Playgroups (n=362)	HV + PG (n=194)
Age of Mother	Teens	12%	11%	8%	8%
	20s	63%	60%	57%	60%
	30s	24%	28%	30%	28%
	40s	<1%	2%	2%	2%
	Unknown	-	1%	3%	2%
Race/Ethnicity of Child	African American	24%	10%	8%	8%
	Asian (including Burmese)	10%	32%	40%	42%
	Caucasian	41%	28%	27%	21%
	Hispanic/Latino	8%	21%	18%	22%
	Multi-racial	17%	9%	7%	7%
Married	Yes	98%	80%	78%	81%
	No	62%	19%	17%	17%
	Unknown	-	1%	5%	2%
WIC Eligible (in poverty)	Yes	90%	52%	40%	53%
	No	10%	45%	53%	44%
	Unknown	-	3%	7%	3%
School Districts Where Families Reside	Battle Creek	72%	77%	77%	79%
	Harper Creek	7%	4%	3%	3%
	Lakeview	16%	14%	13%	13%
	Pennfield	5%	5%	4%	5%
	Other	-	<1%	3%	-

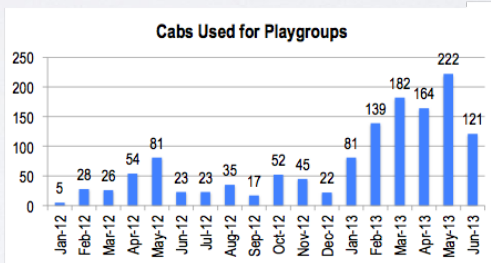
IMAGINATION LIBRARY	June 1, 2013 – May 31, 2014
Welcome baby basket visits (already enrolled)	62
Welcome baby basket visits (ECC enrolled)	456
Welcome baby basket visits (ECC shared information)	42
Home visits (ECC enrolled)	198
Playgroups (ECC enrolled)	5

[1] Most common referral sources, at least 10 referrals made from each.

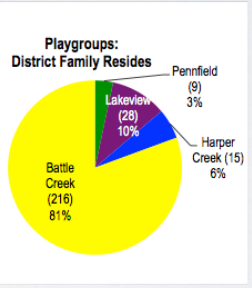
June 13, 2014

DATA DASHBOARD: July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2013

Playgroups	Total	1 playgroup	2-3 playgroups	4-6 playgroups	7-9 playgroups	10-19 playgroups	20 or more playgroups
Number of children attending (Jan 2013 – present)	358	43	63	55	43	59	95
Number of children attending (prior to 2013)	360	148	75	59	15	63	-
Playgroups + home visits	174 unduplicated children participating in both home visits and playgroups						



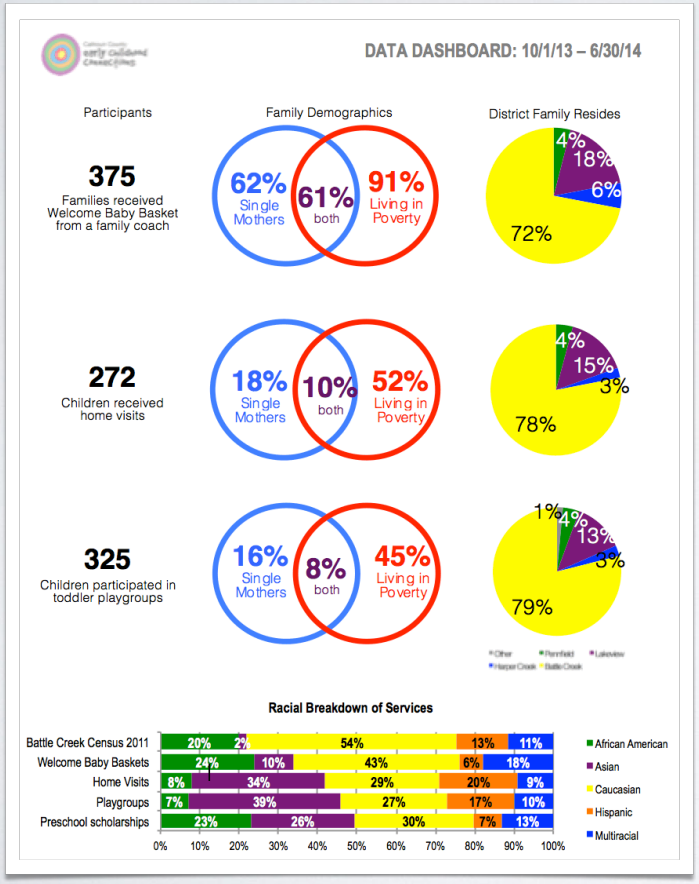
*There were also 11 buses used for field trips in summer 2012 and 1 bus in December 2012. Sept 2012 playgroups started on Sept. 17 and Dec 2012 playgroups ended Dec. 12.

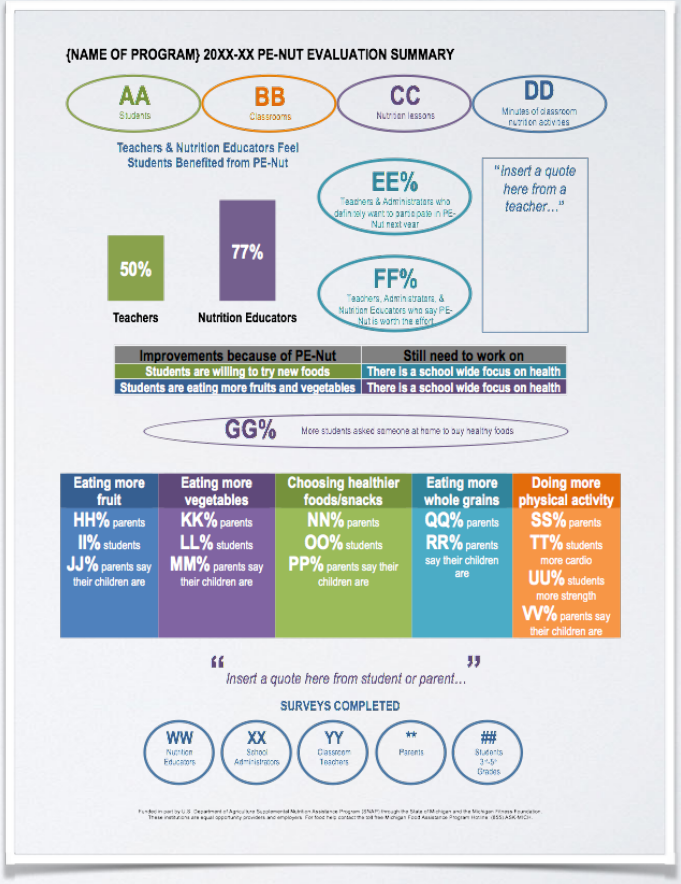


Most common referral sources to EC Connections programming: Health organizations (e.g., Bronson Battle Creek, Bronson Kalamazoo, Connect Health Services); ECC visits, playgroups, & events; Events (e.g., Miranda's Park Party, school open houses); and CBOs (e.g., Charitable Union, Voces).

July 19, 2013

EXTERNAL DASHBOARDS





USE EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo seeks to be the unifying force that ensures all children in the county will be ready for school, post-secondary education, a career, and the world. The work over the past 12 months has focused on developing the accountability structure and piloting two innovative early childhood initiatives: Lift Up Through Literacy and Kalamazoo County Ready 4s. The report is broken down into the following sections, with the high level findings reported here:

Pre-Conditions for Collective Impact: The Learning Network has all of the elements necessary in the collective impact model: executive level influential champions, adequate financial resources for infrastructure and action-oriented projects, and an organizational urgency for change. In order to move forward with community transformation, it is necessary to focus on community engagement, including clear communication, transparency at all levels, and grassroots champions.

Kalamazoo County Ready 4s: In 2012, this pilot program served 135 families with tuition assistance, (50% of the families live in poverty, 25% of the families represent single parent households, and 48% of the families are minorities), attending pre-K programs at nine high quality providers throughout Kalamazoo County. Twenty-two providers received mentoring support and/or participated in professional development opportunities, with the majority of providers within the boundaries of Kalamazoo Public Schools. Because of this program, children are receiving referrals for early interventions including hearing, speech, and language.

Lift Up Through Literacy: In 2012, this pilot program conducted four 8-10 week literacy series and one mini-session, providing 692 class meetings and 1,021 hours of class time, and serving 395 families. Of families served, at least 88% live in poverty, 52% represent single parent households, and 75% are minorities. All families reside within the Kalamazoo Public Schools district. Because of the literacy series, parents reported reading more to their children, increasing the availability of books in the home, and using the library more often.

The Learning Network Accountability Structure: The infrastructure to support the work of The Learning Network is in place with the Community Transformation Team, the Executive Team, three Action Networks (Kindergarten Readiness, College and Career Readiness, Adult Learning), and the Backbone Team. Collaboration around the developmental outcomes covered by the three Action Networks has dramatically increased, ranging from a 76-127% increase in member participation. Each Action Network is in the process of creating a charter and operationalizing their goals through an action plan, which will then be integrated into the Community Scorecard.

Overall Barriers and Lessons: The primary barriers in the beginning implementation of the collective impact model and educational programs focused on literacy include lack of communication, transparency of allocation of resources, development of community measures, lack of community engagement, and clear understanding of collective impact. The Executive Team and Backbone Team are currently working on plans to address each of these issues, making them priorities in 2013.

FitKids
Evaluation Report

July 2013

Key Findings

Based on the K-2nd grade group interviews and 3rd-5th grade *That's Me: My Choices* survey, below are the key findings:

1. The students overwhelming enjoyed having the FitKids lessons in their classrooms.
2. Vegetable consumption as a snack is not as popular among the students compared to fruits.
3. Students are eating more healthy foods, trying new foods, and drinking more water.
4. The majority of the students reported washing their hands before their meals.
5. Most students do not eat whole grains or drink lowfat milk at home.
6. Approximately two-thirds of the students interviewed do some type of physical activity at home or after school.
7. Less than one-half of all students bring healthy snacks for classroom events.
8. Students do not frequently share information learned from the FitKids program at home.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

USE OF THIS REPORT

The context on community transformation is important in understanding, interpreting, and using the analyses of the collaborative action process. The report is organized in the following sections, from broad to specific:

1. **Overview of community transformation** (page 3) – explanation of the phases of community transformation
2. **Kalamazoo's framework for community transformation** (page 5) – review of local perspective on community transformation, with this report focusing on action networks
3. **The collaborative action process** (page 6) – explanation of StriveTogether's collaborative action process, which will be the basis for analyzing the work of the action networks
4. **The evolution of The Learning Network action networks** (page 7) – origins, timeline, structure, successes, challenges, and cross-over primarily from the perspective of the network conveners
5. **The evolution of The W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded programs** (page 10) – origins, timeline, structure, successes, challenges, and cross-over primarily from the perspective of the program leaders
6. **The evolution of The Learning Network supportive initiatives** (page 13) – origins, timeline, structure, successes, challenges, and cross-over primarily from the perspective of the program leaders
7. **Analyses of the collaborative action process** (page 15)
    a. **Process observations** (page 16) – iEval's explanation of where each of the nine groups are in the collaborative action process, what steps were skipped and why, what the impact of skipping steps has been, and where the group is in relation to the ecocycle graphic on page 3
    b. **Lessons learned** (page 20) – iEval's analyses of the successes and challenges related to the collaborative process and how lessons learned may inform The Learning Network
8. **Overall findings** (page 22) – serves as a summary of the main findings from analyzing the data in this report

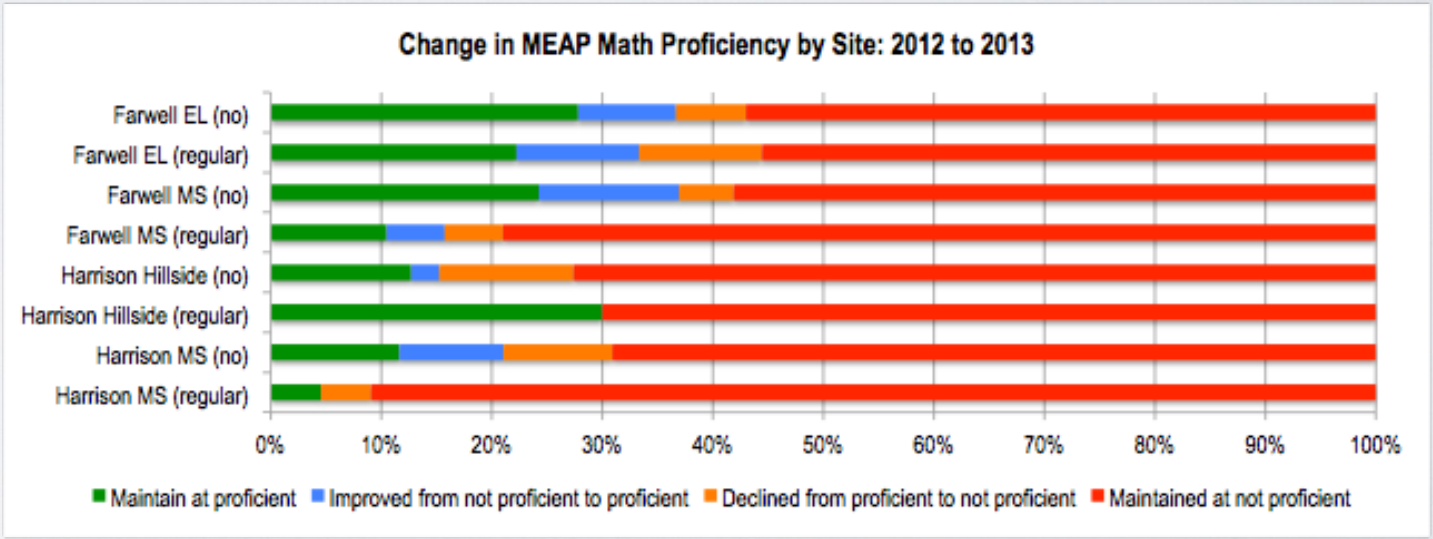
Some recommendations for how this report can be used by various groups is shown in the table below:

Group	Potential Report Use
Kalamazoo Community Foundation Board	• Inform other projects they're invested in (i.e., apply learning from successes and roadblocks) • Demonstrate the progress and stages of the various components of The Learning Network
Backbone Team & Leadership Table	• Help energize groups around goal-setting, decision-making, facilitation, data use, etc. • Understand challenges that have been encountered by current networks and groups to plan for the development of future networks at different points on the continuum • Understand the status of groups in their work cycles and what kind of support may be needed
Action Networks, Groups, and Supporting Initiatives	• Dig deeper into the group's progression through the ecocycle and what phase of the cycle to expect next • Reflect on the past and current phases of the work to help determine next steps • Develop understanding of the overall work so cross-network/group/initiative work that could be explored

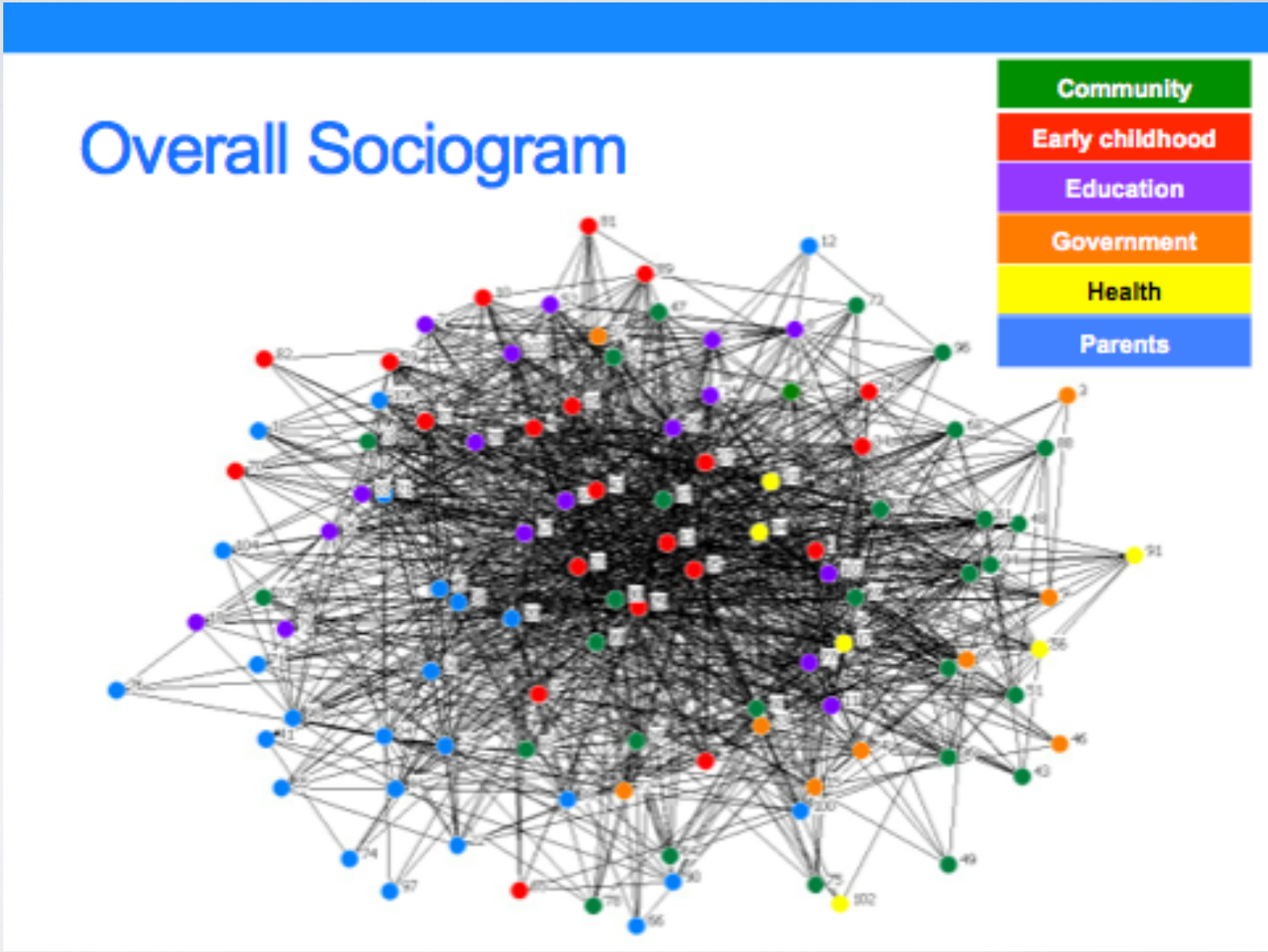
BITE-SIZED REPORTS

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT by Site: MEAP (Mathematics)

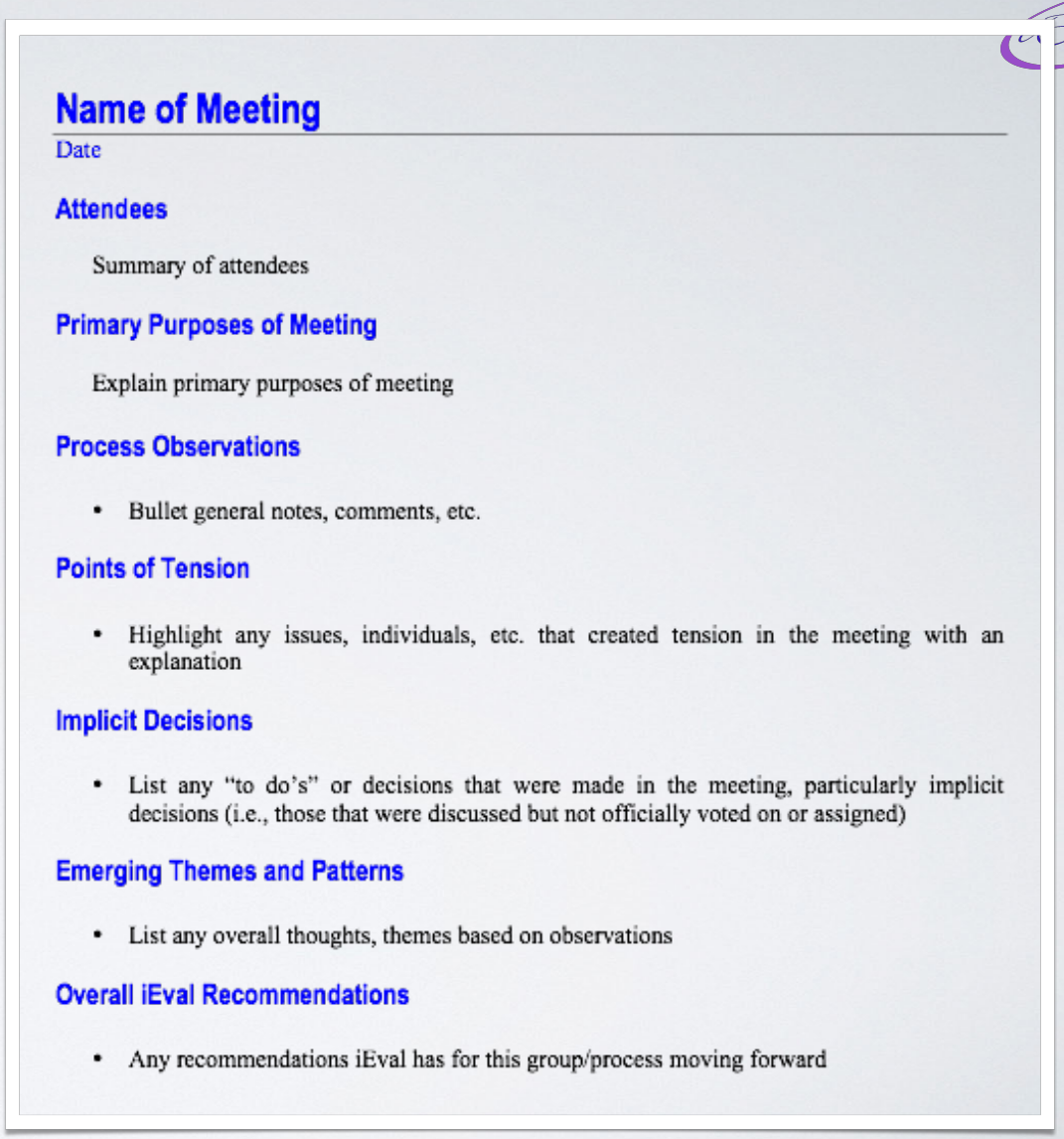
Because the MEAP test is given at the beginning of the year, the previous year's participation in the 21st CCLC program is used to measure change. Therefore, regular participants in 2012-13 are compared with non-participants on their fall 2013 MEAP scores. Only those students with two years of MEAP data to measure change (i.e., 3rd and 9th grade students are not included), and only grade levels with more than ten students per subgroup are included, with Farwell Elementary being an exception with nine 21st CCLC participants. Overall, red (on the right) and green (left) are used to indicate targeting (you want more red students in your program, knowing you're targeting those most in need of help) and blue and orange are used to indicate growth (you want more blue indicating participation in 21st CCLC may have a positive impact on students). At Farwell MS and Harrison MS, the percentage of regular participants that maintained at not proficient (red) in Math is higher than non-participants, indicating good targeting. Farwell EL has a slightly higher percentage of students in blue, indicating improvement. There were no statistically significant differences ($p<.05$) between regular participants and non-participants change in Math at any schools.



USE CLEAR VISUALS



MEETING SUMMARIES



Name of Meeting

Date

Attendees

Summary of attendees

Primary Purposes of Meeting

Explain primary purposes of meeting

Process Observations

- Bullet general notes, comments, etc.

Points of Tension

- Highlight any issues, individuals, etc. that created tension in the meeting with an explanation

Implicit Decisions

- List any "to do's" or decisions that were made in the meeting, particularly implicit decisions (i.e., those that were discussed but not officially voted on or assigned)

Emerging Themes and Patterns

- List any overall thoughts, themes based on observations

Overall iEval Recommendations

- Any recommendations iEval has for this group/process moving forward

5. MAKE EVALUATION FUN

Founding members of the excited evaluators TIG

freshspectrum.com

CONDUCT FUN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AROUND EVALUATION

HAVE FUN SHARING RESULTS

I inserted folded statements of findings from the evaluation, rather than fortunes. Each cookie held a different statement so that the audience was encouraged to open (and eat) them all.

http://stephanieevergreen.com/findings-cookies/

REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Talk about evaluation use** at the beginning - Who, What, How, Why - and put it in writing
- **Teach about evaluation** as you are conducting the evaluation
- **Involve key stakeholders** in meaningful ways
- **Share results** often and in different ways
- **Make evaluation fun** - if you have fun with it, then the likelihood of use increases

Sign up for iEval's blog on evaluation use:

Carpe Diem: Make Your Evaluations Useful

(go do the Carpe Diem Blog tab, then scroll to the bottom to sign up)

Download this presentation:

(go to the Information tab, then click on Presentations)

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