



Our children; every choice; every chance

> A MANUAL TO GUIDE THE CONDUCT OF EVALUATION

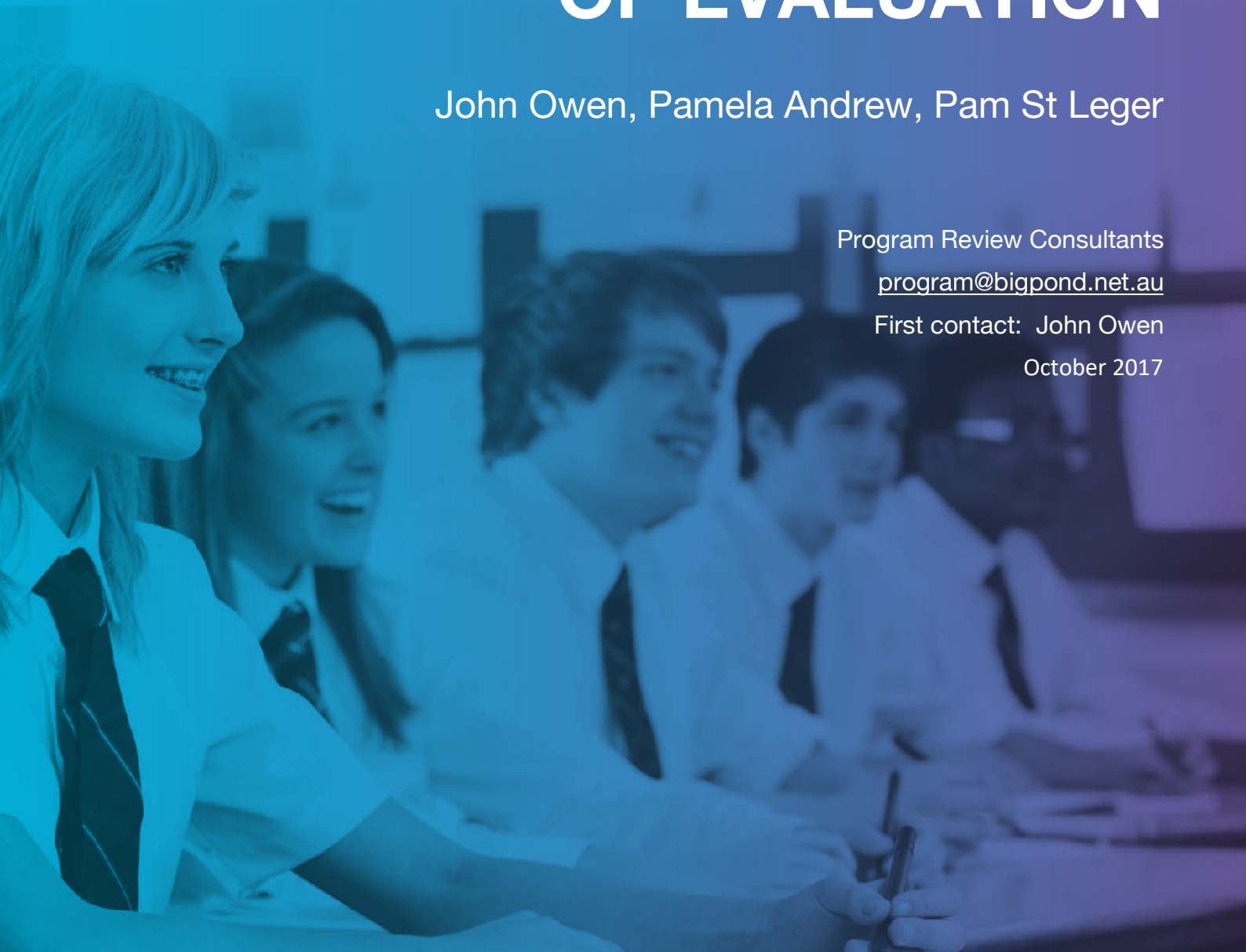
John Owen, Pamela Andrew, Pam St Leger

Program Review Consultants

program@bigpond.net.au

First contact: John Owen

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Summary and Contents

This Evaluation Manual has been written for Beyond the Bell (BtB) to provide a step-by-step guidance for projects that contribute to the achievement of BtB objectives. These projects are likely to have been initiated and supported by Local Action Groups (LAGs) in response to identified needs in a local area or community.

We outline five steps required in order to undertake a sound and useful project evaluation. The steps are as follows:

Step 1. Check the internal coherence of the project.

This step requires the evaluators to clarify the key features of the project under review. Knowing how the project is supposed to work is the basis for finding out how it is actually working. See page 4.

Step 2. Identify the evaluation issues to be addressed.

This step requires the evaluators to identify what we wish to know about the impact of the project. Identification of these issues provides a focus for our study, what to include and what to leave out. See page 8.

Step 3. Decide what data collection instruments that will be used to collect evidence about project effects.

This step requires evaluators to select and use data instruments will be used to collect data relevant to each issue. We also need to decide how we can access relevant data using these instruments. See page 9.

Step 4. Decide how data will be analysed (sorted and organised) to produce findings.

This step requires evaluators to 'make sense' of the collected data through analyses which leads to findings about each key evaluation issue. See page 14.

Step 5. Assemble and report findings to present to stakeholders.

This step requires evaluators to arrange the analyses into formats to allow project stakeholders to grasp the key findings, and to encourage informed decision-making about the project under examination. See page 19.

While we have broken down the evaluation into steps, we hasten to add that these steps are closely linked. So the evaluation process can be thought of in terms of (i) a planning phase, and (ii) an implementation phase. The more up-front planning the more likely the evaluation will succeed.

While this might be seen to be daunting, we are confident that with support from BtB, you can succeed.

Evaluation Basics

Evaluation should not be an end in itself. It should be seen as a tool to support decision-making. Evaluation consumes precious resources. One way to make sure we get value from the use of resources for evaluation is for those asked to carry out evaluative activities to have at least a basic knowledge of key evaluation principles.

We define evaluation as the:

"production of information based on systematic enquiry to assist decision making about a project."

This knowledge can be used to:

- let interested parties know what has been achieved, or
- make changes in the implementation of the project in the future.

Basically, the use of evaluation in project management signifies that stakeholders see evaluation as an important contribution to the effectiveness of the Beyond the Bell initiative.

A mindset of enquiry is motivated by inquisitiveness, for example, wanting to find how and if something works. In practice, this translates into a belief in the value of evidence through posing thoughtful questions, thinking in terms of cause and effect, and engaging in reflective practices. We call this *evaluative thinking*.

A step-by-step approach is one way to encourage evaluative thinking. We have also included examples of techniques from past evaluation in the areas of education, health and community studies. These are designed to show how evaluation principles can be transformed into evaluation action.

Planning and Implementing an Evaluation

Below we provide guidance about how to undertake a project evaluation through a set of logical steps.

These steps are:

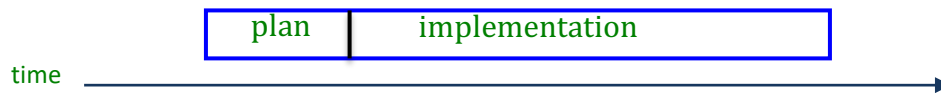
- Step 1. Check the internal coherence of the project.
- Step 2. Identify the evaluation issues to be addressed.
- Step 3. Decide what data collection instruments will be used to collect evidence about project effects.
- Step 4. Decide how data will be analysed (sorted and organised) to produce findings.
- Step 5. Assemble and report findings to present to stakeholders.

We introduce these steps in turn in the rest of the manual, and provide examples that will assist you to develop your own evaluation plans.

Step 1. Check the Internal Coherence of the Project

Social projects usually arise from an urge to help solve a problem that has been formally or informally identified by an organisation or, in the case of BtB, by a Local Action Group (LAG).

We can think of a project as consisting of: (1) a plan; and (2) its implementation, the latter being the translation of what is specified in the plan that occurs over a sufficient period of time to be enacted properly. This is summarised in the diagram below.



We should ensure that a project is sufficiently described so that those involved have a common understanding of what it is intended to achieve and how it will operate.

This includes the following dimensions:

- Platform or Rationale
- Objectives
- Strategies
- Content
- Time or length
- Population for whom the project is intended to influence.

Most of us would be familiar with these descriptors, perhaps with the exception of '*platform*'. *Platform* relates to the beliefs and assumptions accepted as the basis of what is included, and what is left out. Essentially a platform can be thought of as the underlying rationale for what we hope to achieve.

Even if we have engaged in a comprehensive project planning exercise, checking on its internal coherence can be useful before we proceed to Step 2.

Questions we might ask include:

- Does the project respond to an identified need?
- Is it consistent with the broader objectives of BtB?
- Are the assumptions clearly outlined?
- Can the objectives be realistically attained given the resource at our disposal?
- Are our implementation strategies organised into a logical order?
- Do we need to achieve some intermediate outcomes before we can achieve subsequent outcomes?

We recommend that the group involved in the planning and delivery of the project draw up what is called a graphical presentation called a **logic model** as the basis for clarifying how the key features of the project 'fit together' and to identify the platform or rationale that underlies it.

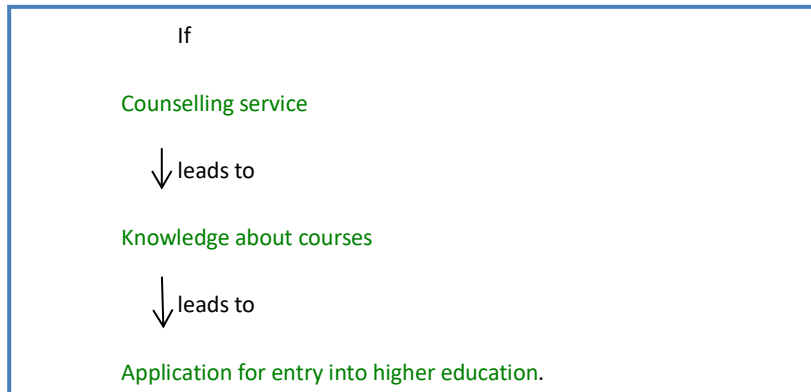
A logic model is a clear way to illustrate the key features and causal links between them. Explanatory prose can be included to complete the description of the logic.

The use of group techniques to do this has been found to be a useful activity for those responsible for project delivery to develop a common view about how the project is meant to operate, as well as for structuring the evaluation of projects.

Examples of simple logic models are provided below.

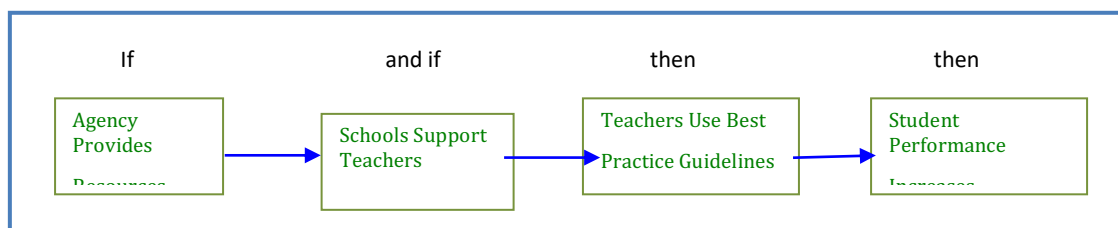
Example 1.1. This simple example summarises the logic for a school counselling service. The arrows indicate how the service should operate to provide knowledge to students that they will then use to apply for higher education courses.

School Counselling



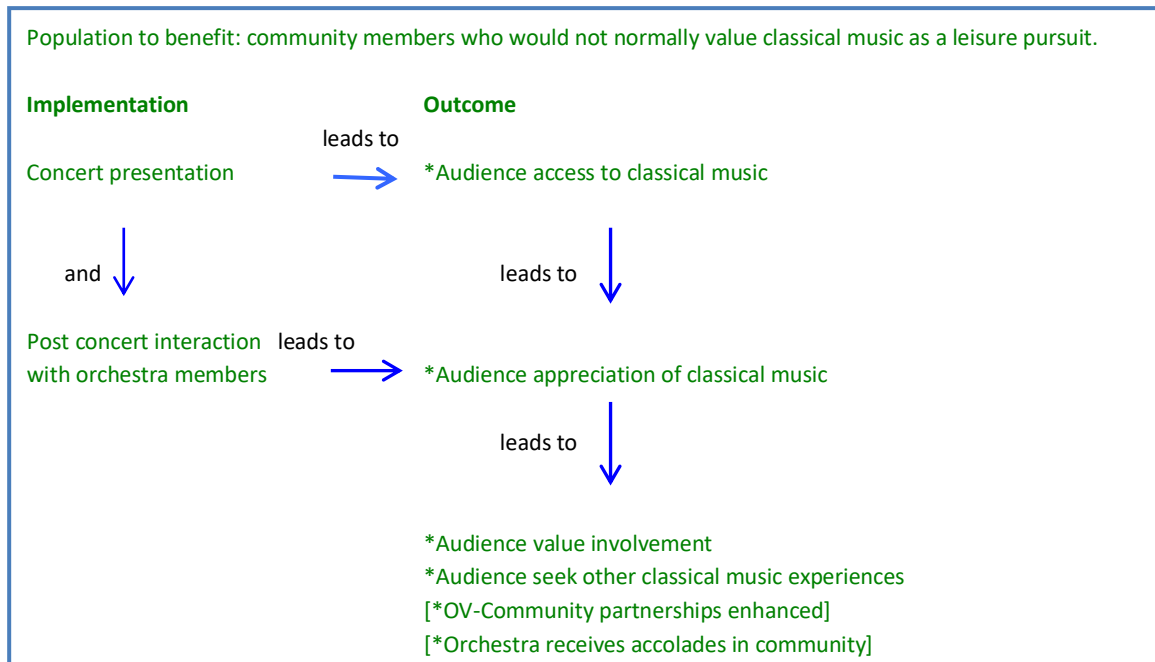
Example 1.2. A logic model might also use a graphical style like this one, which was used in the evaluation of a professional development program developed by an external agency. The program was designed to increase student performance by providing teachers with effective literacy and numeracy teaching skills.

Professional Development



Example 1.3. A slightly more complicated logic used to describe Orchestra Victoria’s community education program is shown below. In this case the logic links outcomes to implementation via several paths.

Orchestra Presentation



These examples show that there are no hard and fast rules about the format of a logic model. However, a model should be presented in a linear rather than a circular fashion. A key aspect of logic models is the use of arrows to indicate the cause and effect chain between key activities and outcomes inherent in the project plan.

The development of a logic has advantages in planning Steps 2-5 because the model presents in simple form how the project is meant to work.

However, if your project is very simple, for example, having one activity and one outcome, a program logic development may not be needed.

Now, let us assume that your project is up and running. Implementation is happening, perhaps some outcomes are already apparent. Then, a call for an evaluation of your project emerges; how would you respond? Or what would you want from an outsider who is called in to undertake the study?

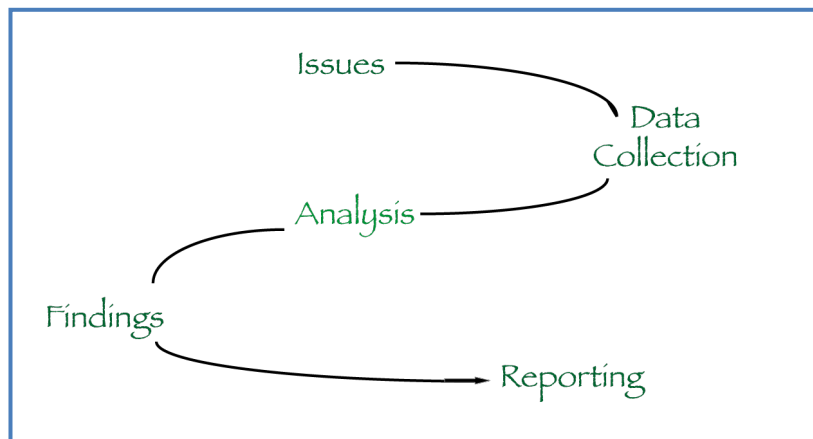
We need now to consider Steps 2-5.

You should now be concerned with the development of an Evaluation Design, which addresses the following interlinked Steps:

- Step 2. Identify the evaluation issues to be addressed.
- Step 3. Decide what data collection instruments will be used to collect evidence about project effects.

- Step 4. Decide how data will be analysed (sorted and organised) to produce findings.
Step 5. Assemble and report findings to present to stakeholders.

Implementation of the Design represents the 'field work' of the evaluation, the *action* stage of the study.



These are the steps you should use when planning and doing your evaluation.

In the discussion below we use examples from a range of evaluations that could be used or copied to provide practical guidance for evaluations to be undertaken by LAGs and other groups supported by BtB.

Step 2. Identify the Evaluation Issues to be Addressed

A small set of evaluation issues should be chosen to focus the evaluation. These are designed to respond to the question: '*what do we want to know and why?*'.

In choosing these issues, the opinion of those involved in the project should be taken into account. This would normally be the group in the regions that has been formed to conduct the project.

It could also be that factors external to the project might influence the choice of Issues. For example, the mission or strategic objectives of BtB might figure in the decision about which issues are to be addressed in a given project evaluation.

Now you should decide the overall purpose of your evaluation. Two major purposes are:

- to find out if the project works in terms of its effects on the participants, this is known as a *summative* evaluation, or
- to provide information to contribute to the improvement of the project, this is known as a *formative* evaluation.

The following is an example of the issues for a *summative* study.

Example 2.1. Key Issues

An evaluation examining the impact of a program (which we will call STAY) designed to improve transition from school to higher education by students who would not normally remain at school to Year12 was based on the following key evaluation issues:

- Are the selected students staying at school to the end of Year12?
- Have the STAY practices led to this retention?
- Are there unexpected outcomes, those that could not be foreseen by STAY program planners?
- Does STAY affect students' decisions to transit from school to further education?

Our experience shows that deliverers, in their enthusiasm, may decide on too many issues. Even in well-funded studies we recommend that fewer rather than more issues should be asked. A rule of thumb is to pose no more than four key issues to structure your evaluation.

Once we have our issues, the next step is to decide what *instruments* will be used to collect data about these issues, as shown in the Example below.

Example 2.2. Linking Key Issues and Instruments

In an evaluation of the use of Student Well-Being (SWB) in school XY, the following instruments were used to collect evidence on the Key Issues:

What is current best SWB practice?

- Review relevant current literature, discussions with experts in SWB theory.

What is the existing state of provision of SWB at School XY?

- Analyse documentation, interview key senior staff, survey a sample of teachers.

What needs to be done at School XY to move the provision of SWB that would reflect best practice?

- Interview and/or survey principal and senior staff.

Generally, we think it is best to link one or more instruments to each issue that has been identified. It is important that we choose instruments that respond to the particular Issue rather than the other way around. It is also important to choose instruments that can be managed within your resource limitations.

Step 3. Decide what Data Collection Instruments will be used to Collect Evidence about Project Effects

Now we can turn to what is sometimes called 'field work' to signify that we need to get some evidence (or data) to find answers to the key issues that have been identified in Step 2.

Assembly of evidence has three parts. We have to think about:

(i) *Sources of evidence*, the actual location of data, such as an existing file, documents, or individuals who possess the information required. This also involves the selection, where necessary, of data sources in instances where all relevant sources will not be consulted.

Example 3.1.

In a study of an innovative staff development program we set up a panel of 'experts', those with lots of experience in training, to provide opinions on the worth of a new approach that was being trialled in a region of the State. The key was to locate these experts and get their agreement to participate. The panel was brought together to participate in a group interview created by the evaluators.

At this stage we must also think about sampling. If a project is being delivered at several locations or sites, do we include them all, or do we select just some of them. Evaluation resources might determine how many you sample. Also there may be sites that are more important to include in the sample, for example sites where the project has been underway for longer and therefore should be included because there is a greater chance that key outcomes would have been achieved.

(ii) *Gaining access to evidence, that is*, the means by which data can be extracted. This involves making contact with data sources and gaining agreement to consult with individuals, deciding where and when data can be collected, and ensuring that ethical considerations are being observed.

Example 3.2.

In a study which involved interviewing school students, it was necessary to seek permission from the Education Department and then agreement from the school Principal. We needed to arrange suitable times for the interviews around the school timetable, to ensure that the information that was collected would not identify either individual students or the school.

(iii) *Collecting data* - this involves the development of techniques, to assemble information from the field.

So what are the options for collecting data? The answer is that there are many and selection of which option to use will depend on several factors, for example:

- the budget
- the issues to be explored
- the available expertise that you might have or to which you have access.

Instruments and Items. Some useful instruments are summarised below. Within an instrument we need to develop *items or scales*, which, taken together can be thought of as the data needed to answer the key issues that focus our evaluation.

A. Individual Interviews. This involves a one-on-one conversation between two people, one of whom is seeking information, the other providing it. An interview can be structured or semi-structured, or open-ended. Features of good interviewing are to decide on the questions to be asked in advance and to ensure that the interviewee provides thoughtful answers to each item. A prepared sheet on which to jot down

responses is important, as is the need to summarise these responses as soon as possible after the interview is over while the information is still fresh in the interviewer's memory.

Example 3.2.

Below is part of an individual interview schedule used to obtain information about the use of teaching modules (POD) used in community nurse education.

4a. As of now, how many POD modules you have studied? _____

4b. Thinking about these POD modules as a whole, how would you rate them in terms of their contribution to your professional knowledge?

x. little or none at all: POD has made very little contribution to my knowledge
y. to some extent: POD has made a partial contribution to my knowledge
z. to a great extent: POD has made a major contribution to my knowledge

x |-----| y |-----| z

4c. Please add a comment to explain your response to question 4b.
<8 lines>

4d. Are there characteristics of POD that encourage you to use the modules to satisfy your professional development needs?
<4 lines>

4e. Are there characteristics of POD that discourage you from using the modules to satisfy your professional development needs?
<4 lines>

5. Finally, thinking about modes of professional development which of the following applies to you.

x. I would much rather get my professional development through interactive settings, classes, etc.
y. I have no marked preference for interactive learning or online learning
z. I would much rather undertake my professional development through online learning.

x |-----| y |-----| z

<THANK THE RESPONDENT FOR PARTICIPATION>

You can see that this interview contains both open and closed items.

B. Group Interviews. All we have said about Individual Interviews also applies to Group Interviews, but in addition there is an added complication of managing more than one individual. A general rule is to limit a

group to 10 or less. There is always a risk is that one or more people may dominate the meeting, therefore a key skill of the interviewer is to elicit responses from quieter people. Also it is more difficult to summarise the data collection, for example four questions to nine people provides 36 pieces of information!! It is often useful to have a data recorder so that the interview leader can concentrate on managing the dynamics of the group. There are various approaches to group interview, with Focus Group being a popular and well-known example. However, a Focus Group has a particular objective, and that is to come to agreement about a particular topic. Sometimes this is not consistent with the need to get information about the impact of a project. A structured interview as in the example above, is a more appropriate approach.

C. Case Study/Story Telling. This technique involves respondents providing longer accounts of the impact of their project. The interviewer provides a single prompt to start the process. Data collection could involve a single respondent or several respondents. For some BtB projects, this might involve obtaining information directly from the project deliverers, if access to participants is limited for some reason or another. The findings are written up in prose style which allows a reader to understand cause and effect factors in a particular context. Case studies can be thought of as a means of providing 'rich' data to readers and may be used not only to illustrate findings that emerge from across a range of project sites, but also to allow common findings to be drawn across cases.

Example 3.3.

An evaluation determined the impact of a program to introduce children to productions at a performing Arts Centre. This case study, based on an interview with a Principal at one school, was part of a larger report that drew together some common findings across cases.

Before we go, we spend time on introducing the children to what a theatre is, what they will be seeing, and how to behave as an audience. These children by and large have never been to a theatre. They don't know what to expect, and what our expectations are.

When we come back to school we use the play or whatever they have seen opportunistically. We might talk about it. We'll use anything that captures their imagination. We try to extend the arts side of things through drawing or mime or music. Our children are not exposed to the arts very much in their lives so we try to extend the Arts Centre experience as much as we can.

We build it into the curriculum if possible. Continuity with the curriculum is good. We try to make the most of the experience by making any links that are possible. However, it is really the experience that matters. We tend to do our curriculum planning in the previous year. If we could lock in the visit earlier, we could get more direct linkages with the curriculum.

Although the Arts Centre would be pretty intimidating as a place for the students individually (and my guess it would be for their parents as well), going as a group gives the children some confidence. They just love the place and the experience.

If we had to think how the program could be improved, earlier notification would be helpful, as I have mentioned. Of course I'm selfish for our school, but the greater the subsidy, the greater the value for the students. We would love to link the visit to the Arts Centre with a visit to an Art Gallery. We might think of doing that if we apply again. Our application in the past has been the result of a direct approach from the Arts Centre. This made it so much easier to apply for because we are all very busy doing our normal work

D. Questionnaire and Surveys. A questionnaire is a series of questions designed to be answered either in paper or electronic format. Questionnaires are usually directed at larger populations via a survey, and assume that the project developers are clear and certain about what they want to know. The rate of response depends on the quality of questionnaire design; using clearly written items and an attractive layout. It is useful to trial questionnaires with a few typical respondents to make sure that the intention of each question is clear. In summary questionnaires should be: useful, easy and quick to complete, and interesting.

Example 3.4

A questionnaire was used to evaluate a conference designed to inform consultants about effective organisational change strategies. Below is an example of the format used to collect options about the effectiveness of aspects of this conference.

SESSION 5: IDEAS FORUM AND REGIONAL MEETINGS

5.1 Thinking about the IDEAS FORUM. To what extent did the ideas forum meet your needs for specific information on an issue/idea related to your work?

not at all a little some a lot a great deal

5.2 Add a comment on any aspect relating to the impact of this session on you if you wish.

.....

.....

.....

5.3 Thinking about the REGIONAL MEETING. To what extent did it meet your needs for planning the use of new information gathered at the conference?

not at all a little some a lot a great deal

5.4 Add a comment on any aspect relating to the impact of this session on you if you wish.

.....

.....

.....

Feedback showed that this questionnaire was highly regarded by the respondents. Features of the style and administration of this questionnaire included:

- Grouping items into related areas, in this case sessions at the conference.
- The use of a common scale to elicit responses from a range of items.
- Using a common format across questions.
- Spaces for respondents to add clarifying comments.
- Using a dedicated time-slot at the end of the conference to allow participants to complete the questionnaire, with a resulting high response rate.
- Sequencing questions to capture the interest of respondents. Experience suggests that personal questions are best allocated to the end of the instrument.

E. Observation

Translation of project objectives into action is essential for these objectives to be achieved. Hence observation is a powerful approach to checking this consistency.

Observation involves the evaluator visiting sites, such as a health centre or a community, to gather data on what is happening, how the project is being delivered, and how those designed to benefit from the project

are reacting to its implementation.

The observer might also be looking for factors that seem to affect project success, that relate to the physical surroundings or to the influence of management.

As with other data collection methods, a clear identification of what to look for is important. If the evaluator plans to visit the site several times, a diary is a useful way to organise data.

Observation approaches vary from being totally passive to participative, where the evaluator takes part in project implementation. Being a participative observer implies feedback to implementers about what has been discovered and is consistent with an action research approach to evaluation.

As a method, observation is expensive in terms of the time required to set up and collect data, especially if the project is being implemented across a number of sites. However as most BtB projects are small in scale, the method should be seriously considered.

Example 3.5.

The STAY program mentioned earlier in this document was implemented across 12 schools in two educational regions. STAY was innovative in that it required teachers to use new methods of teaching based on the use of computer technology. It also required schools to be linked to a local university so that students would be encouraged to apply for university places on completing year 12.

The evaluation of STAY included visits to schools to assess the take-up in classrooms. Among the schools about one third failed to implement the program in ways that were faithful to the program's objectives. Among the factors that affected this outcome was the lack of enthusiasm of the coordinating teacher to embrace new ways of teaching.

F. Computer Based and Paper Records

Usually there is a range of documents that are relevant to a given project and which are relevant to an evaluation issue. These include: correspondence between developers and deliverers, lists of project attenders, project records and statistics on spread sheets, students' performance, reports, meeting agendas etc.

These sources provide opportunities for a researcher to pursue relevant data to an issue that has been identified as key to the project evaluation. This method could be used in conjunction with observation to develop a comprehensive picture of the response of an agency to a project, and might be reported as a case study.

Example 3.6.

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a nationwide indicator system in early childhood development consisting of five domains. The website is designed to be used widely, including parents, schools and evaluators (the site says researchers!). Data on this site would be useful to track changes if a project was aimed at outcomes in a given domain over time.

G. Indicators

Indicators of performance are well known as bases for organising the collection of data to measure performance. Ideally an indicator should be based on project objectives, but can also measure project processes. An indicator should describe the aspect of the project that is to be measured.

Example 3.7.

In an evaluation of the Go Goldfields Collective Impact Program, some of the indicators were:

1. Talking, Rhyming and Playing with Children
2. Speech Pathology Designed and Implemented
3. Reading and Language Stimulation Activities Embedded in Practice
4. Literacy Activities Embedded in Library and Early Years Settings
5. Language Readiness for Literacy

An important feature in this evaluation was that a range of instruments was used to collect data that allowed an estimate of success in achieving these outcomes.

Step 4. Decide how Data will be Analysed (Sorted and Organised) to Produce Findings

Analysis of data leads to findings about the effects of our Project. By findings we usually mean conclusions but it could also mean the development of recommendations about what to do next. It is also possible for analysis to help us make a judgment about the worth of a project. For example, is this project making a worthy contribution to the achievement of an organisational policy.

Put simply, analysis involves making sense of the data we have collected. If we decide to collect data from 40 clients of a project by questionnaire, we would not merely present them un-examined. We need to adopt processes which reduce the raw data to something more meaningful.

We can think of analysis as consisting of:

- data display
- data reduction, and
- conclusion drawing.

Data Display is an organised assembly of information that helps us draw conclusions from the data.

Data Reduction is the process of selecting, transforming, simplifying and abstracting the raw data that we collect 'in the field'. These practices apply to both quantitative and qualitative data. Data reduction helps us to sort and organise data such that conclusions can be drawn.

Imagine we wanted to make conclusions about the average height and weight of the players in a football or netball team. We would expect that there would be a range of heights (and weights).

If it was a football team we could plot the heights of all 22 players on a graph to show this range. There may be some players with the same height. This is an example of a *Data Display*. This allows us to know about the range of heights in the team.

Now we could also use well-known numerical methods to calculate the average height of the team. We substitute 22 pieces of raw data to produce one measure (or maybe two as we could also use a numerical method to calculate the range).

Together we have produced information that leads to a finding (*a conclusion*) about the height of our football team. We might want to use this finding to make a recommendation that we need to decrease the height distribution in a coming match as we will be up against a team with smaller, faster players.

This is a simple case. But these ideas can be extrapolated to the evaluation studies we want to undertake.

Example 4.1

50 responses to an item in Example 3.4.

The following is the *data display element* for the item.

Thinking about the IDEAS FORUM, to what extent did the Forum meet your needs for specific information on an issue/idea related to your work?

Not at all (1)	a little (2)	some (3)	a lot (4)	a great deal (5)
8	9	11	21	1

The display shows us that there was a middling reaction to the Forum. Now we can make an estimation of the overall level of this forum by assigning weights to each of the points along the scale, for example 3 to 'some'. There are 11 of these and 9 to 'a little'. So the average score is the sum of the weighted responses divided by 50, which is 2.96. The average score for this item is 2.99, the respondents as a group have decided that the ideas forum met their needs to some extent.

This is the *data reduction* element for the item.

The *conclusion* for this item is that while the Ideas Forum met the needs of the group to some extent, there were more respondents who did not gain much from the session.

If we conducted similar analyses to all items on the survey, we would be able to make conclusions about the conference as a whole. An evaluation report would outline the results of these analyses and these taken together would provide the basis of a report about the effectiveness of the conference.

We can apply the same principles of *data reduction* and *data display* to qualitative data as in the examples below.

Example 4.2.

School Change Program: Data Display

This example is a summary of interviews of School Principals to the external school change program (called PLN) introduced in Example 1.3. Laying these summaries out on a single page in matrix form enabled conclusions about the impact of the program across schools to be identified

School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6
Principal felt that the project had helped him keep abreast of current practice/current programs and understandings. He also found the leadership conferences helpful and very worthwhile. The choice of literacy and numeracy were ideal for the school and met their needs well. He pointed out that had this not been so they would not be supportive of the externally driven model of change!	Very helpful to have externally driven model for change. Couldn't have done this without that because funding/ resources not available in the school. Felt it removed the "personal" element, staff felt accountable to NF & ISV and improved accountability. Found attending PD in 2 nd year very helpful as she understood the program being used and expectations on teachers and was able to assist staff and work more valuably with NF. This was not so in 1 st year which she found difficult, increased workload in dealing with staff stress etc. Opportunity to upgrade to current PAT tests and extend expectation re data analysis is a positive. School will continue to use PATR and PAT Maths.	Principal felt that involvement in PLN has helped clarify his direction and vision for the school. The external model has "given us confidence and opened our eyes, it has helped to develop a clear picture of where we want to go." Assessment and the use of assessment to inform teaching is now a priority across the school. Differentiation of the curriculum and meeting individual needs. PLANN has given them exposure to new resources, and different ways of teaching and given confidence to introduce change e.g.; in 2011 the school will encourage and support teachers to use assessment data to drive planning and teaching rather than the use of a standard Maths text in each classroom.	PLN has provided an important stimulus and school has valued the opportunity to be involved. The Leadership seminars were valuable and the quality of the speakers often inspiring, content was practical and supportive. The external model of change is favoured because it broadens their horizon and exposes them to much wider opportunities. The internal model of curriculum change is more limited as they feel that they tend to focus on what they already know. The Internal model of change was also felt to be much more difficult to manage.	Principal felt that the project was well structured and supported and that he could let it run under the direction of the team leader. Weekly meetings were allocated to the team. The principal's response to the question about the external model of change was interesting...he acknowledged that the autocrat in him says "give me the money" whereas he pragmatist says it was good to have the change imposed because they were well supported and able to drive it in the direction they wanted to go.	Principal preference is for the external model of change for this school. This brings exposure to new ideas and new challenges and helps to broaden curriculum approach. This is important in communities like his where the focus is often narrow and set. The principal also feels that the externally driven model provides stimulus for internal change. He was unable to attend the Leadership Conferences as was reluctant to be out of the school for the 2 days it would require.

Example 4.3.

Studies of Asia. The display, called a data matrix, shows a data display about the take-up of Studies of Asia across schools across Australia.

Case	implementation success	whole school implementation	resources used	professional development provided
A	++++	the school has a number of Asian students in the school. the school uses the S&E area as a springboard for addressing issues of diversity and the whole school celebrates this through Asia week each year. there is a strong LOTE long running program in Indonesian. the school made the S&E a key element of its strategic plan for 2003. as an access Asia school, there has been wide ranging school level support for PD and resource acquisition and development.	resources for the implementation of studies of Asia and this unit were allocated in the school budget.	the school has been strongly involved in PD through access Asia WA. generally, PD has been invaluable for increasing the knowledge of staff, planning and resource development. collaborative planning time with a like minded colleague, which led to the development of the unit was a major factor in its development.
B	+++++	since 1997, studies of Asia have had a special focus within the school's strategic plan. under the headings of multicultural, LOTE and the arts. all classes are encouraged to integrated studies of Asia into the curriculum.	the school has purchased multiple copies of novels and picture books with an Asian theme for guided reading. BIG books, travel brochures, and other resources including CD roms and the internet are also available. the resource manager is responsible for updating staff and student resources	most staff have attended training sessions at flinders university.
C	+	school is monocultural, student exposure to other countries limited, and motivation difficult. no whole school approach except that school must have compulsory LOTE. for 10years school has had an exchange program with a Japanese school. there is a long standing sister city arrangement with sugito in japan. in 2002, school encouraged links between LOTE and SAE classes but not maintained.	general tone of response is one of limited support from school as a whole. maybe a school in the early stages of implementing Asian studies.	pd seems to be external and limited to HOD. no discussion of internal formal PD for other staff, consistent with Asian studies being marginal in the curriculum

For simplicity we have limited three schools A, B and C in the rows. There are four columns, reading from the right hand side:

- *professional development; support for teachers to implement Studies of Asia curriculum
- *resources: relevant materials made available for teachers
- *level of whole school implementation
- *rating success.

In the first three of these columns there is a written summary of the data collected. The fourth column includes a rating of implementation success based on the data in the other columns. This rating (using a five-point scale indicated by the ++++ was made by the evaluators.

In addition to showing how qualitative information can be used in an analysis, this example shows that other more creative findings can be used to summarise the impact of a project or program.

We encourage you to experiment with data analyses techniques, and/or to look up resources that help you decide on how to proceed for a given evaluation. One word of warning here: Those new to evaluation often underestimate the time needed to do sound analyses. In the enthusiasm to design the data collection for an evaluation study, the need to reserve resources for the accompanying analyses is often overlooked. We estimate that for every quantum of resource devoted to data collection, twice as much is needed for the analysis.

Step 5. Assemble and Report Findings to Present to Stakeholders

As we discussed earlier, evaluation is undertaken to serve the following purposes, to

- let stakeholders know about what has been achieved, or
- make changes in the implementation of the project in the future.

We should make sure that, after the effort in identifying issues, collecting and analysing information, that the findings we have assembled are taken into consideration when decisions about the project are being made.

Stakeholders. So we need to devise methods of engaging our stakeholders or audience(s) with the findings. Stakeholders for a BtB project evaluation could include:

- the BtB Board, who are acting in a coordinating role across BtB activities.
- members of our local LAG and others who have an interest and/or took part in the specific project under review and may be located in the shire in which the project was conducted, and
- agencies external to BtB, such as funders or those with a coordinating role in government across the region, such as a shire council.

It is helpful to identify stakeholders when the evaluation study is being planned, because different audiences may respond to different styles of reporting. A report to the local community might involve a shire meeting and an informal approach to the presentation, for example, a poster display or a short written report organised around findings as dot-points. However, a report that is meant for an external funding agent is likely to require a formal written report.

While it was once the norm to produce a major end-of-study written document as the major style of reporting, concerns about the lack of impact of this strategy has led to an examination of alternative forms of communication. Creative approaches to reporting should be encouraged by the BtB Board.

The content of a report would normally include a brief description of the project, the evaluation procedures, key issues and the findings. By findings we mean:

- conclusions - the meanings those made through the steps we have discussed in this document. All evaluation involves arriving at conclusions.
- judgments - in which values are placed on the conclusions; the project might be classified as 'good', or 'bad', or that the results are 'positive', 'in the direction desired', or 'below expectations'.
- recommendations - suggested courses of action, or issues for consideration about what to do in the light of the evidence and conclusions.

Whether findings include judgments should be settled during the planning stage. The same is true for recommendations which are different from other types of findings, in that they relate to what needs to be done in the future. If an evaluation is improvement oriented, this should be reflected in the key issues and include opportunities during the data collecting stage for respondents to make suggestions about how the project can be improved.

Strategies. Timely dissemination is critical, as decision makers must have the information when it is required. *There is little point in executing an elegant evaluation design if the findings are too late to influence decisions about the project.*

However, it is not always possible to anticipate the timing of the information needs of audiences. In some cases information must be released in response to audience requests before final analyses are complete. In this case we must make sure that the information is the 'best available' at that time. It is good practice to build in to the evaluation plan, strategies which will allow dissemination in instalments rather than as a single end-of-evaluation tome.

Most audiences like information in a series of smaller chunks rather than in monolithic reports. An audience is more likely to read smaller reports and to absorb the essential messages. Serial reporting also allows for the release of information that may be required at different times.

There is also an advantage in that smaller reports spread the workload for document preparation. On the other hand, a disadvantage is that findings of the study may appear more fragmented if reported over time, and it is sometimes necessary to prepare some form of overview document.

Interspersing 'courses of action', or 'issues for consideration', within the text of an evaluation report provides the link some readers need to establish the credibility of the findings. It is common for 'issues for consideration' to form the basis of an executive summary at the beginning of a report.

The logical end of a successful evaluation is that findings affect action. If the quality of BtB projects is the goal, then evaluation should be a prime source of information to maintain, improve or discard projects that are being offered.

Final Note

Increasingly, agencies such as BtB that have adopted a learning organisation focus support evaluation through providing evaluation guidelines and encouragement to use findings.

This document is designed to provide these guidelines by which project deliverers can come to grips with evaluation fundamentals. A commitment to training based on these guidelines is likely to increase the chances that sound project evaluation can be successfully undertaken.