



PROGRAM EVALUATION IN GIFTED EDUCATION




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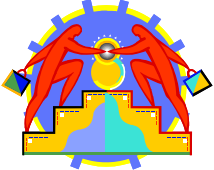


Workshop Agenda

- An Introduction to Gifted Education Program Evaluation
- Planning Gifted Education Program Evaluation
- Developing Evaluation Questions
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Data Reporting and Utilization
- Tips for Best Practices
- Evaluation Approaches and Models



An Introduction to Gifted Education Programming Evaluation



Gifted Program Evaluation

Definition

Evaluation of a gifted program is a systematic process of collecting data from multiple sources to help decision makers at all levels make informed judgments about the effectiveness of the various components of services offered to gifted students.



Types of Evaluations



- **Formative**—on-going. Reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the program
Example: Teachers are not adequately trained in critical thinking techniques.
- **Summative**—after program stabilization. Determining worth or value of the program in order to determine the need for change.
Example: More students enrolling and obtaining a 3 on the AP Exam.
- **Needs Assessment**--annual assessment of programming needs.
Example: Teachers want more training in specific instructional strategies.

Evaluation Designs

1. After Only
2. Retrospective Post
3. Before and After
4. Case Study
5. Mixed-Method



Types of Evaluator

- Outside Consultant
- Local or Internal Review



What are the uses for evaluation information in gifted education?

- Prove
- Improve
- Justify



GT Program Evaluation Purposes

- Documenting the need for the program
- Justifying the case for a particular approach
- Determining program feasibility
- Implementation effectiveness
- Generating information for making program decisions
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses of the program
- Documenting the results of the program
- Documenting the impact of the program



Traits of Effective Program Evaluations

1. Responsiveness
2. Importance
3. Alignment
4. Fairness and Impartiality
5. Respect for All Involved
6. Adequate Funding
7. Timeliness and Relevance



Quality Factors in Program Evaluation

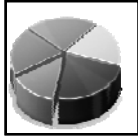
- Utility--usefulness
- Feasibility--practicality
- Propriety--appropriateness
- Accuracy--accuracy

Gifted Program Evaluation Plan




Key Features of GT Programs

1. Philosophy and Objectives
2. Student Identification and Placement
3. Service Options
4. The Curriculum
5. Teaching Staff
6. Program Management



The Evaluation Plan

1. The Evaluation Question
2. Information Requirements
3. Information Sources
4. Instrumentation
5. Information Collection Methodology
6. Information Analysis
7. Information Reporting
8. Information Utilization



Characteristics of an Effective Plan

- Should be specifically and purposefully planned.
- Must be supported with an adequate budget.
- Involve key stakeholders from the very beginning of the process through the stage of planning for implementation of the recommendations. (See Appendix A, on Gifted Education Advisory Committees.)
- Are both formative and summative in design and implementation.
- Must match data collection strategies to the evaluation questions asked.
- Should use multiple data collection methods and sources.
- Must use reliable and valid assessment tools.
- Present findings in oral and written forms that are directed toward the specific interests and needs of the stakeholders in program.
- Take into account the unique issues involved in programming for gifted students.
- Are an open, public, and interactive process.

Guiding Principles of Evaluation

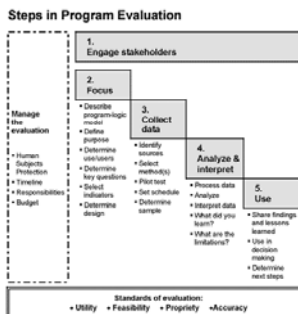
1. The evaluation of a gifted program can be threatening.
 2. Traditional measures of students success (e.g. standardized tests) may not be reliable and valid measures of gifted program goals and outcomes.
 3. Program goals must be operationalized and success. Impact data alone is not enough.
 4. Evaluations are respectful and sensitive to the persons involved.
 5. Data reporting is meaningful, relevant, clear, and concise.
1. Data reporting must be timely.



The Evaluation Process



Program Evaluation Steps



A Stage Model for Evaluating Gifted Programs to Enhance Utilization (JVTB, 2003)

Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV
Analyze purpose and use(s) of the evaluation	Design the evaluation based on the purposes/key questions	Collect, analyze and interpret data	Disseminate findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine primary intended users - Negotiate a process to involve primary intended users in evaluation planning decisions - Finalize the primary purposes and intended uses of the evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sampling and instrumentation decisions - Involve users in judging, sampling and instrumentation appropriateness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect data - Analyze data - Organize data to be understandable to users - Actively involve users in interpreting findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disseminate findings to potential users - Facilitate 3-5 year plan development based on recommendations - Evaluate the utilization after six months

Developing Evaluation Questions

Types of Evaluation Questions

- Descriptive Questions**
These questions refer to "What's going on" and do not deal with value judgments.
- Evaluation Questions**
This type of question involves an interpretation of information in order to make a value judgment about the program or some aspects of the program.

Evaluation Questions (purposes)

- Planning Questions
- Implementation Questions
- Outcome Questions
- Impact Questions



Sample GT Evaluation Questions

- Do the teachers for our program have enough training in the model selected to make instruction effective? **(planning)**
- Do the teachers ask questions at a level likely to challenge students to engage in critical thinking and creative thinking? **(implementation)**
- Do teachers have increasingly supportive attitudes toward giftedness and gifted children? **(impact)**

Components of an Evaluation Question

1. The content or construct under investigation.
2. Descriptive information that helps focus on an aspect of the construct under investigation.
3. The method used to measure the construct under investigation.
4. Specification of a criterion level.



Content of Questions

- Align with different components of NAGC standards
- Align with program goals and objectives
- Derive information from preliminary visits
- Review the literature

Data Collection



Data Collection Sources

- Administrators
- School Board
- Parents
- Teachers
- Students
- Community

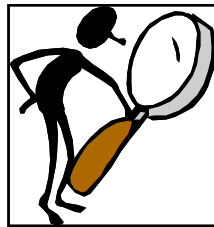


Data Collection Methods

- Focus Groups Interviews
- Interview Protocols
- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Student Impact Data
- Document Review
- Observations



Data Analysis




Types of Data Analysis



- Quantitative**—analyses apply to those data interpretation circumstances in which the measurements are numerical in nature. Data are typically reported in descriptive and inferential statistics. “How much” is answered. The importance is in interpretation and value judgment.
- Qualitative**---analyses that describe the nature of what was under study. “What is it” is answered. The importance is in replication of effective practice.

Instrumentation Issues in Gifted Education Program Evaluation

- Reliability and Validity
- Triangulation of Data
- Ceiling Problems



Sample Findings Across Data Sources: Outcome and Process of Triangulation

- There is a lack of equity and consistency in programs and services across buildings within one district as well as across districts within the state.
FG, I, DR, CO
- The gifted identification process is not known by some student and adult stakeholders. It also relies too heavily on high achievement scores and teacher recommendations. No separate approach to identification is employed beyond elementary school in most districts.
FG, DR
- The identification process focuses on multiple categories in the majority of districts, but program services do not match up with the process.
I, DR, S
- The identification process does not focus sufficiently on strategies to identify under-represented groups, including minority students (especially Hispanic), twice exceptional, ESL, and underachievers. Special program opportunities are not in place for these learners either.
DR, I, S
- Gifted students are under-identified in the majority of school districts, given the national incidence rates (5-15%).
DR, I, FG
- There appears to be an under-utilization of flexible grouping approaches, with regular classroom placement and pull-out programs dominating.
FG, S, I

*DR=Document Review, I=Interview, FG=Focus Group, CO=Classroom Observation, S=Survey data

An Example of Triangulation of Focus Group Data

Themes Derived	Group Representation*	N (percentage)**
The identification has been improved, where a larger population was identified as gifted students.	S, RT, A, GT, A, P	5 (100%)
The identification procedure is problematic in that certain populations are disadvantaged, including students who are not good test-takers but are very bright, ESL students, twice-exceptional students.	S, RT, A, P	4 (80%)
The broader inclusion of a diverse range of students makes the differentiation difficult, resulting in a mismatch between the students identified and the services provided.	RT, GT, A	3 (60%)


*Stakeholder codes: S=Student; RT=Regular Classroom Teacher; A=Administrator; GT=Teachers of Gifted Students; P=Parents
 **In a focus group design with five stakeholder groups, the consensus of at least three groups is needed for extracting a theme, following a minimum of 50% consensus rule.

Data Reporting




Data Reporting

1. Present evaluation information in small chunks or segments.
2. Consider alternatives to written reports (meetings, presentations, graphics, videos, etc.).
3. Present data in figurative, graphic, and other alternatives to verbal formats.
4. Try to present findings and recommendations in a positive yet honest tone.



Evaluation Stakeholders

- School Administrators
- Program Staff
- Other Decision-Makers
- Other School Personnel
- Parents of Gifted Students
- Parents of Other Students
- Students in the Program
- Other Community Members




Dissemination and Utilization Map

Group	Immediate Use	Future Use
Public groups (community, participants, parents)	Press releases	Suggestions for how to improve programs used as a planning tool
Policy makers (school board)	Abstract of findings for all publics	Suggestions for change incorporated into action plan
Practitioners (teachers)	Report of major findings for relevant audiences	Use evaluation to build a case for future funding
Program administrators (coordinators of gifted programs, specialists)		
Other administrators (principals, curriculum coordinators)		
Other (researchers)		

Tips for Effective Evaluation Reporting

1. Consider the needs of your target audience(s) even before you begin your evaluation.
2. Give your audience important details of the evaluation.
3. Use caution in reporting findings and drawing conclusions.
4. Have others read or listen to your report and give you feedback before you create the final version.

Best Practices and Tips



Tips for Practice

- Include classroom observations for service documentation and comparison to stakeholder perceptions.
- Use classroom observation results as a needs assessment measure for professional development.
- Develop focus group questions consistent with questionnaire or survey content.
- Use triangulation of data across sources and data collection methods.

Tips for Practice (continued)

- Collect annual assessment data.
- Develop a 3-5 year action plan based on evaluation reporting.
- Align instrument questions with best practice standards.
- Use a Sound Sampling Plan
- Include demographic questions on questionnaires or surveys for subanalysis.
- Use surveys across multiple stakeholder groups (although language and phrasing may differ).

Best Practice Benchmarks

- Research (evidence-based practices)
- NAGC K-12 Programming Standards
- Checklists and Protocols



Online Resources

- Instruments and Evaluation Designs Used in Gifted Programs
(<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/reports/rm95132/rm95132.pdf>)
- Program Evaluation Quick Tips
(<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/index.html>)
- NAGC Pre-K-12 Gifted Programming Standards
(<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=546>)

Online Resources (continued)

- Designing Evaluations for Education Projects
(<http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu/use/documents/NOAAEvalmanualFINAL.pdf>)
- Using Graphics to Report Evaluation Findings
(<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/G3658-13.pdf>)
- My Way Expression Style Survey
(<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/sem/pdf/myway.pdf>)

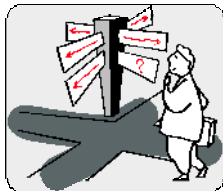
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Recommended Practices for GT Program Evaluation

1. Use out-of-level tests to combat low-ceiling effect.
2. Develop and use common criteria for examining student products and portfolios, and establish inter-rater reliability.
3. Consider use of carefully matched comparison groups between schools, one receiving the intervention being assessed and one not doing so.
4. Avoid reliance on traditional standardized measures that offer little promise of reflecting academic growth in gifted students.

Gifted Program Evaluation Approaches



Examples of Gifted Program Evaluations

- Benchmarks for Success---Using the NAGC pre-K-12 Gifted Programming Standards as
- Outcome and Impact Data---The Catalyst Program Evaluation
- Input-Output or Logic Model---Developing a Plan
