Understanding Evaluation: Concepts, Tools, and Processes

The Afterschool Experience—Taking it to the Streets
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Goals for Today:

- How can programs use information that they collect in evaluation?

- What are some ways that you can involve stakeholders, including youth, in evaluation (and what are some potential problems)?
Your beliefs about how and why desired changes will occur
For:
PLANNING
EVALUATION
Theory of Change

- Academic achievement
  - Students actively engaged in learning activities
  - Students participate in educational enrichment
  - School has organizational capacity
  - School-community integration

- Students have strong psycho-social development
  - High quality classroom environment
  - Positive school environment
  - Family involvement

- Students are positive community members
  - Students are healthy
  - Follow the crazy arrows!

Follow the crazy arrows!
Some Key Concepts:

- **Outcome** – ultimate effects of a program, e.g. students read at grade level, students enjoy school (outcomes don’t happen all at once; there are preconditions)

- **Output** – immediate measure of what the program did, e.g. 100 youth attended

- **Indicator** – evidence that shows the outcome has been reached, e.g. test scores, school engagement scales

- **Research Question** – what do you want to learn?
Some Sources of Data:

- *NYSAN’s Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool* – quantitative & qualitative data

- *Data management systems* – e.g., level of program attendance relates to increases on state reading & math levels, participation in different activities leads to …

- *Focus groups* – in-depth qualitative data on one group’s experiences

- *Youth projects* – action research, skits, mapping
How Can Youth Participate?

- How would a student define success? (theory-driven evaluation)
- Allow youth to define and understand the problem and methods
- Use creative and appropriate methods
- Develop relationships among adults, youth, and subgroups of youth
Some questions…

- Who is currently involved in evaluating and reporting, how are they involved?
- What information do you already gather that you can use to answer your research questions?
- What are the realities (relations, resources, politics)?