



7th Annual OPEN Conference

Friday, September 16, 2005
Oregon Convention Center, D Meeting Rooms
777 NE MLK Jr Blvd
Portland, Oregon

8:30 – 9:00

Check-in and Registration

9:00 – 10:30

Keynote Address

Evidence and Evaluation: A Bundle of Possibilities (Mel Mark, Pennsylvania State University)

In this talk, Dr. Mel Mark will address several topics related to the conference theme of Evaluation and Evidence. Drawing on his experiences as President-Elect of AEA and Past Editor of the American Journal of Evaluation, Dr. Mark will focus on things we can do in evaluation to:

- (1) Enhance the value of the evidence that evaluation can provide and,
- (2) Increase the evidence base about evaluation and its consequences.

Mel Mark, PhD, is Professor of Psychology and Senior Scientist at the Institute for Policy Research and Evaluation at the Pennsylvania State University. He has conducted federally funded evaluations in the areas of prevention programs for at-risk youth, federal personnel policies, and industrial modernization, and has been involved in evaluations of state and local programs. An award-winning teacher, he has published numerous papers and chapters on the theory and design of evaluations.

10:30 – 10:45

Break

10:45 – Noon

Session 1.1

What Works When: Looking Under the Couch (Mel Mark, Pennsylvania State University)

Evaluators have at their disposal methods that are reasonably good for assessing whether a program, policy or practice makes a difference. But most programs often are not equally effective for different kinds of clients, or under varying circumstances. Furthermore, available theories often are not good enough to tell us where to look for evidence. One response to this quandary – unfettered data snooping – can itself create serious problems: Paraphrasing Stigler, if you torture your data enough, they'll confess to something, even when they're not guilty. So, what's an evaluator to do? That's what we'll talk about in this session.

Session 1.2

Introduction to Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in Evaluation (Kevin Martin & John Chase, Cascadia Geospatial, Inc)

This workshop will be a brief introduction to the use of geographic information systems (GIS) for evaluation. Specific topics will include: techniques and tips for organizing your data spatially, how to bring data into a GIS, how to map and visualize your geographic data, how to integrate your data with other spatially referenced datasets (such as census data), and how GIS datasets can be analyzed spatially. Specific examples will be presented for each of these topics as part of a live software demo. There will also be a designated question and answer session at the end of the workshop.

Session 1.3: Diversity Strand

Practice-Based Evidence: A New Perspective on the Evidence-Based Practice Movement (John Spence, Consultant, and Caroline Cruz)

Building on the questions raised by the Evidence-Based Practice movement and “what we know”, this session will explore culturally responsive approaches to generating evidence in a way that honors traditional practices and Native American perspectives on evaluative activities.

Noon – 1:15

Lunch & Informal Networking

1:15 – 2:30

Session 2.1

Protecting Human Subjects in Evaluation: Applying the Guiding Principles for Evaluators to Institutional Review Boards and Health Programs (Molly Engle, Oregon State University)

The AEA Guiding Principles are just that: principles to guide evaluators in their work. It is important to explain what they are not, as well as what they are. As a member of the Oregon

State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as an evaluator of health promotion programs in the broadest sense, I continually must ask how these principles are being addressed in IRB applications, in evaluation conducted by faculty on which I consult, and in evaluations I conduct. I will discuss specific examples of the challenges of applying the Guiding Principles for Evaluators in practice, in terms of evaluation design and as the Principles relate to the review of grant applications.

Session 2.2

Translating Research Into Legislation: Evidence-Based Policy Formation (Oregon Health Research and Evaluation Collaborative (OHREC) Panel)

A series of recent studies conducted through the Oregon Health Research and Evaluation Collaborative have assessed the impact of Oregon Health Plan Changes on Medicaid beneficiaries. This presentation describes the findings of these studies, how they were communicated to state policy makers, and how the information was used to craft legislation designed to alleviate the negative impacts of OHP Changes on low income adults in Oregon.

Session 2.3 Diversity Strand

A Multi-cultural Perspective of Evaluation: Voices from the Community – Part I (Ellen Konrad, Consultant, and Jane Grover, RMC Research Corporation)

The purpose of these sessions is to hear multi-cultural perspectives on the meaning of evidence, worth or value, and effectiveness. Panelists will consist of two to four duos: evaluators and their minority culture clients who have engaged in evaluation or participated in a research or evaluation study with the evaluator, and have a leadership role (i.e., are in respected positions) in their community. Examples of clients would be program managers, health officials, school administrators or teachers, tribal or religious leaders, community activists/advocates. The first hour will consist of a facilitated dialogue with the panelists. The panelists will sit in an inner circle, and the audience will be seated in a circle around them. For Part II, see Session 3.3.

2:30 – 2:45

Break

2:45 – 4:00

Session 3.1

Using the Success Case Method to Evaluate Change Initiatives (Jeff Knudsen, RMC Research Corporation)

The Success Case Method, developed by Robert Brinkerhoff, focuses on cases where people have been successful in a change initiative, and performs in-depth case study like interviews to determine: what worked, what didn't, how much success the person had, the impact on the person's practice, and qualities of person and the context that contributed to the success. Similar

interviews are also conducted with people who were not successful in the initiative to determine what went wrong, and to identify barriers. Successes and non-successes are determined by a survey completed at the end of the initiative. The method relies heavily on storytelling, but success stories must be backed up by corroboration and evidence, otherwise they are not considered successes. Interestingly, this methodology overlooks the average participant, instead focusing on the high and low ends of the continuum to distill indicators of success and non-success.

The methodology allows evaluators to: (1) quickly and easily discover what is working and what is not with the new changes and initiatives; (2) illustrate results and accomplishments in a way that is interesting and compelling; (3) identify best practices and increase the knowledge base of an organization; (4) provide model and examples to motivate and guide others; and (5) meet demands, quickly and practically, to evaluate the success or failure of a new initiative. The session will focus on the basics of the method, the proposed benefits, and potential limitations.

Session 3.2

Lessons Learned: Online Surveys (Vicky Ragan, Puget Sound Center)

Have you ever experienced the joys (and/or trials) of posting an online survey? If your answer is “yes” or “no” this session might be for you! We will deal with practical issues and benefits related to the use of online surveys from building surveys, creating invitations to exporting respondent data. Lessons learned from stumbling through a variety of experiences with online survey applications, mistakes made (and learned from...), successes, and other considerations evaluators should think about when deciding to use online surveys will be shared. Functionality and features to look for in online survey applications will also be covered as well as useful tips for creating your own online surveys.

Session 3.3 Diversity Strand

A Multi-cultural Perspective of Evaluation: Voices from the Community – Part II (Ellen Konrad, Consultant, and Jane Grover, RMC Research Corporation)

The purpose of these sessions is to hear multi-cultural perspectives on the meaning of evidence, worth or value, and effectiveness. This second session will consist of 2 parts: audience break-outs into approximately 4 groups to discuss a case scenario with selected panelists; then the groups will reconvene into a single circle for a facilitated “report out” from each group and a discussion of the scenarios, and/or continued discussion of questions or issues raised during the first hour.

4:00 – 4:15

Closing Remarks & Raffle