

PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION ESSENTIALS

HISTORY OF EVALUATION

<p>Late 1950's – early 1960's</p>	<p>Evaluation mainly focused on educational assessment , conducted by social science researchers in a small number of universities and organizations.</p>
<p>Mid- 1960's, the Johnson Era</p>	<p>The War on Poverty and the Great Society programs of the 1960's spurred a large investment of resources in social and educational programs. Senator Robert Kennedy, concerned that federal money would be misspent and not used to help disadvantaged children delayed passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) until an evaluation clause was included. The resulting bill required submission of an evaluation plan by local education agencies, and summary reports by state agencies. As a result, evaluation requirements became part of every federal grant. (Early expectations were that <i>evaluation would illuminate the causes of social problems and the clear and specific means with which to fix such problems.</i>)</p>
<p>Mid-1970's</p>	<p>Two US-based professional evaluation associations emerged in 1976: the Evaluation Network -- mostly university professors and school-based evaluators), and the Evaluation Research Society -- primarily government-based and university evaluators. (In 1985 these two organizations merged to form the American Evaluation Association, AEA, www.eval.org, which now has more than 3700 members worldwide.)</p>
<p>Throughout 1970's and 1980's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing concerns voiced about the utility of evaluation findings and the use of experimental and quasi-experimental designs. • Huge cuts in social programs during Regan presidency, resulted in less government involvement, diminished or removed evaluation requirements from federal grants. • Many school districts, universities, private companies, state education departments, the FBI, the FDA and the General Accounting Office (GAO) developed internal evaluation units.
<p>1990's</p>	<p>Increased emphasis on government program accountability and a movement for organizations to be lean, efficient, global and more competitive. Evaluation became commonly used not only as part of government mandates, but also to improve program effectiveness, enhance organizational learning, and inform allocation decisions in a wide variety of both public and private organizations. A number of Foundations created internal evaluation units, provided support for evaluation activities or both.</p>
<p>2000 - Present</p>	<p>Increasing and sustained interest in participatory, collaborative and learning-oriented evaluations. National evaluation associations being established throughout the world.</p>

Preskill and Russ-Eft, 2005