Unit 3 Module 4
DECISION ORIENTED APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

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Note. Links to documents or websites are highlighted in yellow and are only accessible online.
INTRODUCTION

Objectives

By the end of this module, you should be able to...

- Describe the purposes of decision-oriented approaches.
- Explain when the CIPP model or aspects of it should be applied in an evaluation.
- List and describe the four stages of the CIPP model.
- Describe the role of stakeholders in the CIPP model.
- Describe activities the evaluator and stakeholders engage in during each stage of the CIPP model as provided in Stufflebeam’s (2007) CIPP checklist.
- Describe the role of stakeholders in the UFE model.
- Explain the difference in the involvement of stakeholders in the CIPP model and UFE approach to evaluation.
- Identify the strengths and limitations of decision-oriented approaches.
- Evaluate how decision-oriented approaches are similar and different from objective-oriented, consumer-oriented, and participatory-oriented approaches to educational evaluation.
- Analyze the application of the CIPP model in an authentic evaluation scenario.

Assigned Readings

Chapter 7 (Fitzpatrick)

Additional Resources Used in this Module


Stop and reflect on the organization you work in or worked in the past. Identify a problem existing in the organization. Below is a list of examples of problems that might exist in an organization such as a K-12 setting.

- Low student achievement in a specific subject
- Declining student attendance rate
- Ineffectiveness of a program in place
- Low teacher performance ratings
- Lack of community involvement with the schools
- Ineffective use of technology in the classrooms
- Lack of diversity the district’s revenue stream in the operating budget

If you can’t think of a problem existing, think of a decision your organization is facing requiring information such as whether to adopt, continue implementing, expand, or discontinue a program or policy in place for students or teachers.

Who are the key decision-makers regarding this existing problem to be addressed or decision to be made?

What information will these decision-makers need to inform their decision?

What will influence their decisions?

Do you think an evaluation could guide them in making these decisions?

A Decision-Oriented Approach Can be Applied When:

- An organization is facing a problem
- There is a decision to be made within the organization
- An information-need exists within an organization
- An evaluation is needed within the organization for the purpose of improving service or the decision-making process.
- Leadership exists within the organization. Because this approach focuses on working with and serving decision-makers, organizations or programs that lack leadership are not likely to benefit from this approach.

Internal evaluators might conduct the evaluation or the organization will conduct a self-evaluator or contract an external evaluator.
Who are Considered Decision-Makers?

Decision-makers are anyone who has the power to make some sort of decision or change in an organization. Different decision-makers have varying degrees of power.

Example decision-makers:
- Superintendents
- School principals
- School board members
- Directors of services
- Policy board members
- Program or project staffs
- Accreditation officials
- Evaluation specialists
- Teachers
- Counselors
- Intervention Specialists

But Don’t All Evaluations Serve Decision-Makers?

You might be asking at this point and after your readings, “Shouldn’t all evaluations serve decision-makers in some way?” The answer to your question is that, yes, in many instances evaluations serve decision-makers and serve to improve and inform the decision-making process.

The distinction here is that it is the decision that must be made or information need that is at the forefront or is the main focus of the evaluation. The evaluator(s) approach the evaluation plan by starting with considering the decision, problem, or information need, and key decision-makers and end-users of the evaluation results rather than the objectives.

This problem, decision, or information need then drives the evaluation purpose, questions, and plan with a focus on improving the program or organization through improving decision-making. In objective-oriented approaches, the objectives and intended outcomes drive the evaluation. In other approaches, things such as empowering people drive the evaluation.

Types of Decision-Making Approaches

There are a number of types of decision-making approaches that you should be familiar with from the assigned readings. In this module, we will focus in on the CIPP model and Utilization-Focused Evaluation model as these are widely applied
today in educational evaluation within organizations. *Evaluability assessment* is another type of decision-oriented approach previously discussed in Unit 1 Module 4.

**CIPP MODEL (Context, Input, Process, Product)**

CIPP is a *systems-oriented approach* also referred to as a *management-oriented approach*. This approach was developed by Stufflebeam in the early 1970s and has since undergone five revisions.

As you recall from the readings, the CIPP model outlines **four stages** in the evaluation used to inform the decision-making process. Each stage represents a major decision to be made during the evaluation, with several sub-parts to each stage.

Let’s review the stages of the CIPP model demonstrated in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1. Summary of Stages in the CIPP Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context (Systems Analysis)</th>
<th>What needs to be done to address the decision, information-need, or problem?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Study the context of the organization and work with decision-makers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Scrutinize the context and organization to determine the current state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Conduct needs assessment if necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input (Planning)</th>
<th>How Should it be Done?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Work with decision-makers to determine how to go about the decision-making process, addressing the needs, or resolving the problem identified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Compare alternative strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process (Oversight &amp; Compliance)</th>
<th>Is it being done?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Formative evaluation of the fidelity of implementation of program, policy, or decision-making process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Conduct formative evaluation if the interim objectives met, intended outcomes observed, and any unintended outcomes observed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Use to inform decision concerns on modifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product (Outcome Assessment)</th>
<th>To what degree did it succeed? Is it sustainable? Is it transportable?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Assess the impact, effectiveness, sustainability, and transportability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Determine the next steps: What should happen next in the organization or with the program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Context Evaluation Stage

The first stage is similar to that in all approaches to evaluation: Assess the current state of the program or organization for the purpose of informing the evaluation purpose, questions, and plan. In this stage, the evaluator works with the key decision-makers rather than a wide-range of stakeholders.

Some of the goals of this stage include assessing the following regarding the program, organization, or policy:

- Existing logic model of the program or organization
- Needs in the program or organization
- Assets of the program
- Problems existing in the program or organization
- Gap between needs and desired outcomes
- Decisions to be made
- Additional information-needs

If these are not apparent, the evaluator might need to conduct a needs assessment during this stage.

At the end of this stage, the evaluator should be able to answer: What needs to be done to address the decision, information-need, or problem?

Input Evaluation Stage

This stage focuses on assessing the existing strategies, logic model, or policy in place compared to alternatives in terms of a number of factors such as:

- Costs (including time and budget)
- Benefits
- Logic model
- Alignment of logic model with program or organization's identified needs
- Degree of responsiveness to needs identified or problems to resolve

At the end of this stage, the evaluator should be able to answer: How should it be done?

Process Evaluation Stage

This stage can be thought of as the oversight and compliance stage where the evaluator assesses the fidelity of the program. The goal of this stage is to document and assess the implementation of the program, strategy, policy, or whatever the
thing implemented to address the identified need(s) or problem(s). Another goal of this stage is to inform if the progress toward the intended outcomes and whether any unintended outcomes are resulting.

The data collected are used to inform the oversight and compliance, but also how the implementation can be modified or improved.

At the end of this stage, the evaluator should be able to answer: *Is it being done?*

**Product Evaluation Stage**

This stage can be thought of as the outcome assessment of the evaluation. In the last revision of the CIPP model, Stufflebeam (2007) extended this stage to include four sub-stages or sub-parts:

- **Impact Evaluation**
  Assessment of whether the thing implemented reached the targeted audience(s) including the intended beneficiaries of the program, policy, service, etc.

- **Effectiveness Evaluation**
  Assessment of the degree to which the needs were reduced or met or problem was resolved by assessing the intended and unintended outcomes.

- **Sustainability Evaluation**
  Use of multiple resources to inform to what degree the implementation is being sustained or should be sustained over time.

- **Transportability Evaluation**
  Assessment of whether the thing implemented is or could potentially be applied to another context or organization.

☞ As you recall from prior modules, transportability, transferability, or generalizability is not necessarily a concern in evaluation studies. Typically, evaluations are concerned with how well the program, product, strategy, or policy works in that organization or similar organizations. However, if a decision to be made relates to whether the thing being implemented can be transferred to another environment, then this sub-stage is necessary.

At the end of this stage, the evaluator should be able to answer: *To what degree did it succeed? Is it sustainable? Should it be sustainable? Could it be transported to other environments or organizations? Based on these answers, what are the recommendations to decision-makers?*
The Role of the Evaluator and Stakeholders Across the Four Stages

Stufflebeam (2007) published an open-access CIPP model checklist that summarizes the stages of the evaluation process when applying the CIPP model. This document also provides a checklist of the common actions taken by the evaluator and stakeholders within each stage. Please review these actions in this checklist.

Drawing a Parallel Between CIPP and the Process of Teaching

Stop and thinking about how the CIPP model is similar to the process of teaching. Teachers are faced with a number of decisions to make regarding their students’ needs and how to resolve problems in the classroom related to students’ learning, instruction, behavior, and so forth. Let’s look at how this process might be similar to the CIPP approach to evaluation:

**Context:** The teacher studies the classroom context to identify the current state of affairs to determine if any needs or problems exist. She might even conduct a self-assessment of her practices and whether she is meeting her goals and student learning objectives.

**Input:** The teacher considers how she should address this need or problem. She considers how alternative strategies might be used to do this.

**Process:** The teacher uses formative assessment of the students and perhaps herself to determine the fidelity of the strategy being implemented. She assesses to what degree the intended learning outcomes are being met by way of collecting and analyzing multiple assessments (i.e., data sources) and the results.

**Product:** The teacher assesses the impact, effectiveness, and sustainability of the strategy. She considers if this strategy worked over time or if it is likely to work over time. The teacher might also consider if the strategy will transport to her other classes or to other teachers’ classes in the school.

In this essence, the CIPP model is similar to what we call data-driven decision-making in education. The teacher uses data in each stage to inform:

| Stage 1 | What needs or problems exist |
| Stage 2 | What might be the best strategy to implement and what the inputs should be to reach the desired outcomes |
| Stage 3 | The fidelity of the process and how to make modifications and improvements |
| Stage 4 | Should she adopt, discontinue, or further modify this strategy? Should she consider using it in the long-term? Should she or perhaps others consider applying it with other students or classes? |
Applying the CIPP model in Formative Evaluations

The CIPP model can be applied in different phases of the evaluation including formative evaluations. In formative evaluation, the CIPP model could be applied to:

- Identify a needed intervention and the program logic model (Context)
- Guide choosing a program or product or development of a policy among a number of alternatives to address the need or problem (Input)
- Guide implementation of the plan through monitoring and judging the fidelity of program activities (Process), and
- Guide if the organization should adopt or continue, modify, or discontinue the existing effort based on if the outcomes (Product).

(UFE) Utilization-focused Evaluation

- The CIPP model is a utilization type of evaluation approach but not to the same degree as the utilization-focused evaluation approach. I find the UFE provides for a more bottom-up approach to evaluation, whereas the CIPP model is more of a top-down approach where the key decision-makers and evaluators are in control. Thus, those who are not in administrative or what we might think of as high-level leadership positions in the K-20 education system will likely find this approach attractive.

- Rather than focusing on the primary decision-makers, this approach begins by identifying the primary end-users of the evaluation results.

- The evaluator works closely with these groups to identify the needs, problems, and decisions to be made. The evaluation involves the identified end-users at the pre, active, and post evaluation stages to increase the likelihood that the utilization of the results.

- The theory behind this approach is that the more these groups are involved in each stage of the evaluation, the more they will be more likely to utilize the results and consider the recommendation that come out of the evaluation. Here, the evaluation is planned with a greater focus on the primary end-users rather than the decision-makers.

Let me share a real situation that demonstrates this latter point:

A practicing teacher shared with me that the district administrators collaborated with an external evaluator to develop a new standardized rubric system for their district. The evaluator and administrators worked together to identify the districts needs and current problems in their collection of student performance data used to make decisions about curricula, programming, merit pay, distribution of resources, and so forth.
Based on this needs assessment, the administrators and evaluator collaborated on developing a standardized rubric system for teachers to implement across schools in the district at all grade levels as a piece of a new system aimed at addressing the gaps identified in the organization’s data collection system. The evaluation plan is now entering what we would consider the “active” phase.

The teachers were asked to attend a workshop to learn about this rubric. To this teacher’s surprise, she was handed a huge manual consisting of the rubric and how to apply it in practice. This illustrates a top-down approach.

The teacher expressed frustration that she and her fellow teachers in the district were not asked for their input throughout the development stages of the process. They were not asked to be involved in the process of identifying the needs and problems existing in their organization or practice and were certainly not involved in the development of the rubric system.

Let’s rewind this scenario. In a UFE approach, the evaluator would identify the teachers as key end-users and involve them in the process from the beginning. Had the teachers been more involved in the process, they would probably be more receptive to using the new system. Further, the system would probably increase in quality with their valuable input.

**The general process followed is outlined below:**

- Identify intended users
- Guide them in identifying needs for evaluation and have these users become more involved in the intention of the evaluation during design phase of the program and evaluation plan
- Involve stakeholders in conducting the evaluation study. Recognize the end-users question and concerns throughout this process
- Involve the end-users interpreting the results and decisions about overall judgments and recommendations

**How is this different from participatory-oriented approaches?**

The UFE involves stakeholders to a high degree similar to participatory-oriented approaches, which we will learn about in a later module. The difference here is that the main focus or lens through which the evaluation is conducted is through those who will use the results, have the power in the organization to facilitate the use of the results or make decisions about the use of the results, and how those results will be used. Participatory-oriented approaches are more oriented to empower stakeholders who might be otherwise not be empowered, which we will learn more about in the next module.
Advantages to Decision-Oriented Approaches

- Evaluation results and recommendations more likely to be used since key decision-makers are involved in the process
- In-depth consideration of a key stakeholder group (decision-makers and end-users)
- All decision-making approaches are utility oriented to a certain degree, which aligns well with the utility standard of the Joint Committee Standards for Educational evaluation
- Evaluator mainly in control during the evaluation

Limitations to Decision-Oriented Approaches

- Unintended outcomes might go unnoticed similar to objective-oriented approaches
- Lacks input of broad stakeholder groups being considered in the evaluation process. A more narrow group of stakeholders involved in the evaluation process (these would be the key decision-makers and/or key end-users)
- Partiality and power is given mainly to top decision-makers or management. As a result, stakeholders with less power might not be considered in the evaluation process.
- Turnover of primary decision-makers and intended end-users of the evaluation results might occur
- Assumes decisions to be made can be determined in advance – sometimes this not the case and the decisions, needs, or problems emerge from a needs assessment or during the evaluation process

Examples

Example 1: CIPP Model Applied in Curriculum Development
This is an example of the CIPP model used as a framework for evaluating the curriculum development process. Key questions and decisions relevant to curriculum development are presented under each stage.

http://www.cglrc.cgiar.org/icraf/toolkit/The_CIPP_evaluation_model.htm

Example 2: Applying Data-Driven Decision Making in Out-of-School Time Programs
This example is a supplemental report prepared out of a program called Child Trends that studies child development. The report is focused on what are called decision-support data systems, which are mechanisms used to collect data for the purpose of informing and providing for evidence-based decisions. I like this briefing because the important role of using data to inform decision-making is well articulated. Attend to the following in this example:

- The sources of data identified as important to inform decision-making
• Importance of involving stakeholders in the data-driven decision-making process
• Recommendations for using decision-support data systems

Example 3: CIPP Model Applied in Counseling
This example illustrates how the CIPP model was used in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the suicide prevention strategies at a suicide prevention center Taiwan. Attend to how the authors describe how they used each stage of the CIPP model in their evaluation as summarized on page 542 and outlined on pages 544-549.

Example 4: CIPP Model Applied in Policy Decision-Making in Public Education
Proceed to the Extend portion of this module for this example

EXTEND
Please stop and read the following 13-page journal article entitled Evaluating the Role of Waivers in Systemic School Reform (Hodge & Jones, 2000). The authors of this article communicate the importance of using systematic decision-oriented approaches such as the CIPP model to evaluate in state policy making and implementation. The author’s report on their evaluation of the quality of a waiver-review data process used by the school districts in the state of Florida to apply for exemption from state rules and regulations. At the conclusions of their report, the authors advocate for the use of decision-making evaluation approaches. While the authors do not mention that they apply aspects of the CIPP model in their evaluation study, aspects this model is clearly implemented here.

As you read the article, reflect on the 6 questions below related to this module:

(1) What is being evaluated in this evaluation scenario?

(2) What stage of the CIPP model do you think the evaluators, Hodge and Jones, are implementing/illustrating in this evaluation study? In what ways?

(3) What are at least 2 problems the evaluators identified that could threaten the merit, value, and worth of the current decision-making process of which school districts are granted a waiver?

(4) What are at least 3 needs the evaluators identified based on their study?

(5) How can the information from this study be used to inform the decision-making process?

(6) What do you think would be the next step based on the findings?
Check Your Understanding Here!

EXPLORE AND EVALUATE

Task 1
Throughout Unit 3, we will continue learning about different approaches to educational evaluation. One of your assignments in this course is to create an “Approaches to Evaluation Matrix or Illustration” of your choosing. Continue this assignment by outlining the information related to decision-oriented approaches required in the matrix as described in the assignment instructions.

Task 2
Using your knowledge of the different approaches to educational evaluation thus far, begin brainstorming for Discussion Board Posting 4.