

Evaluation Books

Frank G. Cookingham, November 2014, April 2015

This brief list of evaluation books shows the variety of approaches to program evaluation. (There are five other types of evaluation that are not included in this list.) I recommend reading the latest revision for each; the years in this list are not necessarily for the latest revision.

There are two evaluation books that I consider most relevant for transformative evaluators that have a good understanding of the general principles of program evaluation.

Fourth Generation Evaluation (1989), by Egon G. Guba and Yvonne S. Lincoln, is a comprehensive description of constructivist evaluation. This approach, which is an alternative to evaluation approaches that are based on a scientific epistemology, provides the framework for designing and implementing transformative evaluation.

Transformative Research and Evaluation (2009), by Donna M. Mertens, describes evaluation as a means to promote social justice. This is a primary component of transformative evaluation.

Preparing for learning about Transformative Evaluation (TE)

These five books will help you work with your worldview in general so that you can identify worldview propositions embedded in any approach to evaluation. I have listed the books in the order I suggest you read them. Read as directed through prayer.

Myers, Bryant L. (2011). *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. (Revised and expanded edition). Maryknoll, New York USA: Orbis Books.

This is a comprehensive discussion of community development principles and practices situated within a Christian worldview. It provides a variety of perspectives to use in planning any evaluation of a transformational development program.

Moreland, J. P. (1997). *Love your God with All Your Mind: the Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul*. Colorado Springs, Colorado USA: NavPress.

Sound reasoning is at the core of program evaluation. Reasoning as a Christian is at the core of spiritual formation. Thinking as a Christian while doing evaluation work is essential for understanding transformational development outcomes. This book will help you do that.

Moreland, J. P., and Craig, William Lane. (2003). *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove, Illinois USA: IVP Academic, InterVarsity Press.

This is not easy reading. In my view it is essential reading. "Enlightenment naturalism and postmodern antirealism are arrayed in an unholy alliance against a broadly theistic and specifically Christian worldview. Christians cannot afford to be indifferent to the

outcome of this struggle. ... The gospel is never heard in isolation. It is always heard against the background of the cultural milieu in which one lives. ... False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the receptions of the gospel" (pp. 1-2). The material in this text will help you identify false ideas and counter them with sound ideas from a Christian perspective.

Moreland, J. P. (1989). *Christianity and the Nature of Science*. Grand Rapids, Michigan USA: Baker Book House.

Evaluation texts on theory and practice are embedded in various science worldviews. Clarifying the relationship between science and theology is critical to figuring out how to think as a Christian while doing sound evaluation work. This text will help you do this.

Fournier, Deborah M. (Ed.). (1995). Reasoning in Evaluation: Inferential Links and Leaps. *New directions for evaluation*, No. 68. San Francisco, California USA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

This brief volume has seven articles on reasoning as an evaluator that will introduce you to concepts and a body of literature for continuing to improve your reasoning skills throughout your career.

Evaluation books

Adams, Jerry, and Garbutt. May 2008. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in Practice: Lessons Learnt from Central Asia. Praxis Paper 21. INTRAC (International NGO Training and Research Centre). Download free at <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/420/Praxis-Paper-21-PME-in-Practice.pdf>

This paper describes the challenges of actually implementing participatory monitoring and evaluation. See also the paper by Parks et al.

Bamberger, Michael, Rugh, Jim, and Mabry Linda. 2006. *RealWorld Evaluation: Working Under Budget, Time, Data and Political Constraints*. Sage.

If your interest is evaluation of projects or programs within a positivist worldview, and you have money for only one text, this is the one I recommend. All three authors are experienced in different approaches to evaluation, and have compiled an excellent reference textbook.

Davidson, E. Jane. 2013. *Actionable Evaluation Basics: Getting Succinct Answers to the Most Important Questions*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Davidson focuses attention on getting solid answers to important values questions. Social science methods are helpful but insufficient. She and Michael Scriven are developing methodologies that are specific to evaluation that will dramatically change typical evaluation practice. This is the second book that you should purchase.

Fetterman, David M. 2001. *Foundations of Empowerment Evaluation*. Sage.

In this approach evaluation work is used to foster social improvement through self-determination. The evaluator is a coach for people as they themselves do evaluation and reflection to improve their programs.

Guba, Egon G. and Lincoln, Yvonna S. 1981. *Effective Evaluation: Improving the Usefulness of Evaluation Results through Responsive and Naturalistic Approaches*. Jossey-Bass. Guba and Lincoln strongly challenged the positivist (cause-effect relationships are primary focus, program can be evaluated without influencing any aspect of the program) approach. Anyone that evaluates social programs needs to understand the content of this text.

Madaus, George F., Scriven, Michael S., and Stufflebeam, Daniel L. 1983. *Evaluation Models: Viewpoints on Educational and Human Services Evaluation*. Kluwer-Nijhoff. This text includes many articles on different approaches to evaluation. There is a later edition; read both editions if you are interested in the history of evaluation as an emerging field of inquiry.

Mark, Melvin M., Henry, Gary T., and Julnes, George. 2000. *Evaluation: An Integrated Framework for Understanding, Guiding, and Improving Policies and Programs*. Jossey-Bass.

The authors believe that the primary role of evaluation is to assist those involved in making society better to make sense of what they do and the consequences of what they do. Commonsense realism is the underpinning philosophy.

Parks, Will with Denise Gray-Felder, Jim Hunt and Ailish Byrne. 2005. Who Measures Change: An Introduction to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication for Social Change. Communication for Social Change Consortium. Download free from INTRAC at http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/177/who_measures_change.pdf

This paper includes excellent material on participatory monitoring and evaluation beyond the application to communication strategies for social issues. Comprehensive footnotes for other excellent resources.

Patton, Michael Quinn. 1981. *Creative Evaluation*. Sage.

Reading this book will convince you that there is no cookbook for doing evaluation.

Underlying premises of the book are

- Use of evaluation findings should drive every evaluation
- Every evaluator should be a good trainer
- Situational responsiveness is imperative for effective and moral practice
- Good evaluators are willing to take risks outside the box

Patton, Michael Quinn. 1986. *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* (second edition). Sage.

Classic text for evaluators that want decision makers to use evaluation findings to the utmost. There are later editions.

Patton, Michael Quinn. 2011. *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. Guilford Press.

Essential text for evaluators that believe evaluation practice should enhance social change beyond simply documenting program results.

Preskill, Hallie, and Catsambas, Tessie Tzavaras. 2006. *Reframing Evaluation through Appreciative Inquiry*. Sage

This text is important for evaluators who are involved in organizational development.

Rossi, Peter H., Freeman, Howard E., and Lipsey, Mark W. 1999. *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (sixth edition). Sage.

Classic comprehensive text for quantitative approaches to evaluating social programs.

Ryan, Katherine E., Schwandt, Thomas A. (Eds.) 2002. *Exploring Evaluator Role and Identity*. Information Age Publishing.

Ten articles on various aspects of being an evaluator in different contexts.

Scriven, Michael. 1991. *Evaluation Thesaurus* (fourth edition). Sage.

Scriven is regarded by many evaluators as the premier expert in evaluation. This text is his compilation of definitions of evaluation terms. Highly recommended.

Shadish Jr., William R., Cook, Thomas D., Leviton, Laura C. 1991. *Foundations of Program Evaluation: Theories of Practice*. Sage.

Presents a detailed framework of five dimensions for examining any approach to program evaluation. This text needs to be understood by any evaluator scholar.