

Evaluation Model for Evaluating Transformational Community Development Programs

Frank G. Cookingham, April 2015

Introduction

I have developed a general framework for comparing different approaches to evaluation. The framework is based on seven aspects of an evaluation exercise.

In this paper I describe those seven aspects of a particular approach to evaluating a transformational community development program that I call transformative evaluation (TE). I also contrast the TE description with the analogous aspects found in some other approaches to evaluation. There may be common features between approaches but I emphasize those features that set TE apart from other approaches.

My model for TE is not carved in stone. Each time I prepare it the result can differ in some aspects from previous presentations. But the seven elements of the framework remain constant. In April 2015 my summary of the model is:

Transformative evaluation examines transformational community development programs. The primary focus for TE is to facilitate deeper understanding of what really matters in community development, with emphasis on development programs as a vehicle for facilitating individual and social transformation from within a Christian worldview. Primary stakeholders, including representatives of faith groups in the community, participate with the evaluator in making major decisions throughout the exercise. The evaluation design and implementation are consistent with a constructivist paradigm for inquiry along with principles for thinking and acting holistically.

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Transformational Development (TD)

The evaluand (what is evaluated) in TE is a transformational community development (TD) program. For me the essential features of TD determine essential features of TE. Before discussing the model for TE I need to describe my understanding of TD, which is based primarily on 27 years of evaluation work in World Vision International (2002, 2008) and studying Myers' (2011) comprehensive text. I have read other community development literature, but Myers has had the most influence on my thinking.

I have described the primary features of TD as I see it in several papers (Cookingham, August 15 2013, August 16 2013, February 2014). Briefly the primary features are these.

- The super goal or the overall aim for a TD program is individual and social transformation. Increasing love for God and neighbor within the community is manifestation of moving towards this goal.
- Individual transformation involves releasing the person from whatever bondage is preventing him or her from realizing potential for abundant living instilled by God.
- Social transformation involves healing broken relationships to restore justice in all social institutions while honoring gifts within the culture that promote life over death. Enmity among groups is dissolved.
- A TD program contains sectoral objectives such as improving health of children, improving education for children, increasing access to safe water, working towards food security, etc. The interactions among those who engage in the program, and the interactions between those engaged in the program and community residents not engaged, are more important than the extents to which sectoral objectives are achieved.
- To be effective the development agents need to have a holistic mindset (Cookingham, November 2014). In particular their thinking and acting is grounded in the belief that spiritual realities are inseparably interwoven with day-to-day "ordinary" living. In TD practitioners must think holistically to be influential servants of God for transformation.
- Understanding the local dynamics of sin and grace is central to both planning and implementation of community development. Faith groups are encouraged to participate in community development processes to create opportunities for transformation.
- The kingdom vision is at odds with worldly visions for a better future. Success from a kingdom perspective is steadfast faithfulness to God; it is acting out of Biblical love in every aspect of living.

General Framework of Seven Elements for an Evaluation Model

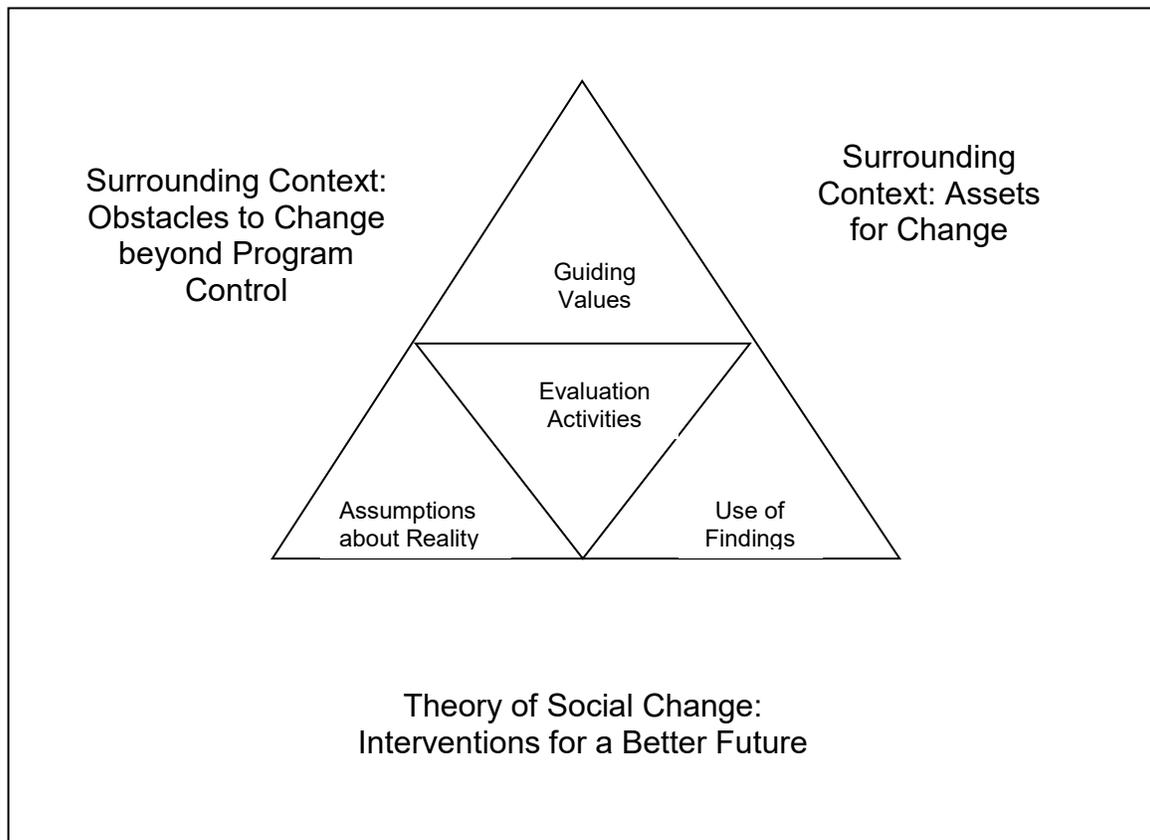
The general framework for any approach to evaluation is represented by four essential aspects of evaluation work and three influential aspects of the context within which the work takes place. My thinking about a framework has been influenced by Shadish, Cook and Leviton (1991). Figure 1 is a chart of those elements.

Figure 1 General Framework Elements

Elements of the Framework for an Approach to Evaluation

Aspects of Evaluation Work	Aspects of Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guiding Values• Evaluation Activities• Use of Evaluation Findings• Assumptions about Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theory of Social Change for the Evaluand*• Primary Obstacles to Change in the Setting• Primary Assets for Change in the Setting

Figure 2 Framework for an Evaluation Model



Application of a program evaluation model is influenced by the theory of social change underlying the program interventions, obstacles to change envisioned in the program that cannot be controlled by program management, and available/affordable assets for change. An evaluator should consider relevant information about these areas early in the planning for any evaluation.

Three groups of propositions determine the activities included in an evaluation model. Describing these groups of propositions is essential for defining the uniqueness of the model.

- Evaluation is not a value-free discipline. Generally evaluation is based on values associated with using sound knowledge to make decisions about the value of program interventions. This is a primary cluster of values. Other clusters of values intertwined with the primary cluster define participatory models, empowerment models, appreciative inquiry models, etc.
- Assumptions about reality determine what an evaluator believes is sound knowledge about reality. Logical positivism is no longer the only credible view of reality. The literature on qualitative approaches to research in the social sciences and humanities is a rich source of alternative views on reality.
- Generally an evaluation is done so that the findings can be used in some fashion. Evaluation activities, including but not limited to reporting, influence the extent to which different audiences will understand the findings, and will see how the findings can serve different purposes.

1. Evaluation Activities

My thinking about TE is influenced a great deal by the fourth generation model of evaluation (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). This model embraces constructivist ontology⁶ rather than physical science ontology. There are a number of terms in this model that

may not be familiar; the superscript “G” indicates that a more complete description of the term or phrase is in the Glossary.

Two sets of essential features of fourth generation evaluation (FGE)

In fourth generation evaluation the claims, concerns, and issues (CC&I) ^G of stakeholders serve as the basis for determining what information should be collected and analyzed. This is the first essential feature.

The second essential feature is that methodologically the exercise is performed within the constructivist inquiry paradigm. The aim is to develop judgmental consensus among stakeholders who earlier held different, perhaps conflicting, emic constructions ^G.

Stakeholder claims, concerns, and issues (CC&I) are used to organize the evaluation.

This is called responsive focusing ^G. There are five compelling arguments for it.

1. Depending on the evaluation findings, stakeholder groups are at risk of losing their stakes in the evaluand. In an open society they deserve to have an authentic opportunity to provide input to the evaluation, and have some control over the exercise including how findings are disseminated and used.
2. Stakeholders are open to exploitation, disempowerment ^G, or disenfranchisement (denial of right to vote on the basis of appropriate knowledge) ^G.
3. Stakeholders use evaluation information. A key reason why much evaluation information is not used is that the scope of the information is limited to what the evaluator and client deemed worth collecting and analyzing, and their preferences regarding what should be reported and how.
4. Stakeholders can broaden the range of evaluative inquiry to the great benefit of the hermeneutic/dialectic ^G process.
5. Stakeholders are mutually educated by the evaluation process. Each must reconstruct his constructions to accommodate or soundly refute points of conflict. Constructions become more informed and sophisticated ^G.

Unresolved issues in conventional methodology ^G are addressed by constructivist paradigm ^G for inquiry

“If knowledge exists essentially in the form of human constructions, then a paradigm that recognizes and accepts that premise from the start is to be preferred (p. 67).” There are five issues that are important.

1. Conventional methodology does not see the need to involve stakeholders or address their CC&Is. The post-positivist ^G assumption is that there is one construction that best

approximates reality. The evaluation is focused around the best relevant knowledge regarding an effective program in this setting.

2. Conventional methodology can adopt a discovery posture regarding CC&Is; this is regarded as outside the purview of scientific inquiry. The only value discovery has for the positivist or post-positivist is if it leads to a question that can be answered scientifically or a hypothesis that can be tested empirically.

3. Conventional methodology does not take account of contextual factors except when they can be controlled. Context obscures how variables of interest actually operate. The problem with this is that programs always take place in a context; context-free knowledge has no application.

4. Conventional methodology does not provide a means for making evaluative assessments on a situation-by-situation basis. The purpose of conventional methodology is to identify assertions free of context and time considerations. (See the description of the nomothetic/ideographic dilemma ^G.)

5. Conventional methodology claims to be value-free. But the goal of evaluation is to judge the value of the evaluand.

The process of FGE in capsule format

The following responsibilities of the FGE practitioner are not necessarily followed in a linear fashion. The overall process is dynamic and responsive to evolving consensus on constructs.

1. Identify the full array of stakeholders ^G related to the proposed evaluation. Note that some stakeholders may become known after the exercise has begun; if possible they should then be included.
2. Elicit from each stakeholder group their constructions ^G related to the evaluand and their CC&I. This must be done in an open-ended way without others influencing the constructions.
- 3, 4. Create a context in which constructions and CC&I can be understood, critiqued, and taken into account.
 - Begin by eliciting constructions within each group, perhaps working individual constructions into group constructions. Decide within the group which CC&I should be pursued. As constructions are discussed examine trustworthiness of information. Generate consensus as much as possible; items for which there is no consensus will be carried forward into the negotiation process.

- In each group share the constructions and C&I from the other groups. Develop as much consensus as possible; carry forward remaining items into the negotiation process.

5. Prepare an agenda for negotiation on items without consensus. Identify information needed; assign priorities to information needs to deal with constraints on time and other resources.

6. Collect and provide the information called for in the agenda. Provide information on trustworthiness of information. If necessary provide training so that information can be handled with an appropriate level of sophistication.

7. Establish and mediate a negotiation forum. Groups should select representatives to participate in the forum.

8. Develop case study reports in the negotiation forum that communicate to each group consensus on constructions and resolutions to issues.

Figure 3 describes examples of constructivist activities for TE and analogous activities for positivist approaches to evaluation. The intent for this Figure and those in the later sections of the paper is simply to provoke thinking about what makes TE different from other approaches. There is some overlap in themes in the different Figures; in a particular evaluation design overlaps would be refined.

Figure 3 Essential Evaluation Activities in Approaches to Evaluation

Transformative Evaluation	Positivist Evaluation Approaches
Facilitate conversations among different groups of stakeholders about what really matters in community development from a transformation perspective.	Review program documentation and state evaluation objectives. Typical emphasis is on achievement of program objectives.
Identify claims, concerns and issues of various stakeholder groups, especially regarding Biblical transformation.	Prepare critical description of program theory.
Describe the joint constructions ^G that emerge from conversations about what really matters in community development.	Plan/design the evaluation activities; stakeholders may or may not participate.
Coordinate data collection to clarify emerging constructions, provide information on trustworthiness of	Coordinate data collection to meet the information needs of primary stakeholders. Provide information on

Transformative Evaluation	Positivist Evaluation Approaches
information used, and resolve conflicts.	reliability and validity of data.
Listen to prevailing stories in the community and the development agency regarding better future.	
Negotiate consensus on primary constructions and describe how each group values them.	Analyze data and prepare feasible recommendations.
As agreed by stakeholder groups disseminate findings in appropriate formats for different audiences. Pay attention to protecting any exploitation, disempowerment or disenfranchisement.	Publish and distribute written report in investigation format.

Positivist evaluation approaches may be used in TE to evaluate achievement of sectoral objectives for education, health, food security, clean water and sanitation, etc. But a constructivist approach is necessary for evaluating relationships between stakeholder expectations for transformation and the status of the target community.

2. Guiding Values

There are two broad categories of values that guide evaluation work; professional principles and prized ideals about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable.

Professional Principles

The American Evaluation Association (2004) has five principles to guide professional evaluation work. TE should conform to those principles to be considered a legitimate approach to evaluation.

- Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries about whatever is being evaluated. [Evaluators tell the empirical truth about aspects of the evaluand included in the scope of the evaluation.]
- Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders ⁶.
- Evaluators ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process. [Evaluators describe honestly and thoroughly the methodology so that outsiders can make reasonable judgments about the trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis procedures.]
- Evaluators respect the security, dignity and self-worth of the respondents, program participants, clients, and other stakeholders with whom they interact.
- Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of interests and values that may be related to the general and public welfare.

Prized Ideals

Figure 4 includes an illustrative cluster of values that sets TE apart from many approaches. Each prized ideal may be included in other approaches to evaluation. The right column provides examples of what non-TE evaluators might say about the TE values.

Figure 4 Guiding Values for Approaches to Evaluation

Transformative Evaluation	Positivist Evaluation Approaches
Every stakeholder has a valuable contribution to make as the evaluation is planned and implemented.	The evaluator has the expertise to plan and implement the evaluation that stakeholders should accept.
Holistic ways of knowing are at least as important as empirical ways in determining the data to be collected and how it will be processed.	Empirical ways of knowing are the only legitimate ways to guide data collection and analysis.
Biblical transformation of individuals and society is sustained by kingdom-of-God values. Therefore, the evaluation should document constructions ⁶ among stakeholders regarding kingdom-of-God values and how they influence living in the community.	Reliable valid empirical evidence cannot be obtained for the role of values in community development. Therefore, this is not a legitimate topic for evaluation.
True vocation is rooted in loving and just relationships. Therefore, the evaluation should explore how people value themselves, others in the community, the community as it nurtures its citizens, God, and the environment.	Empirical effects of values expressed through relationships are outside the scope of legitimate evaluation.
[Other values can be added to this chart.]	

Note. It is assumed that a transformative evaluator abides by the AEA Five Guiding Principles.

3. Use of Evaluation Findings

In TE evaluation findings are used to deepen understanding about what really matters in transformational community development, and how to facilitate individual and social transformation more faithfully.

Patton’s (1986) work on utilization-focused evaluation is instructive. The utilization evaluator involves stakeholders that will use evaluation findings as much as possible throughout the exercise. The TE evaluator also emphasizes stakeholder participation.

The utilization evaluator assists stakeholders initiate program improvements as findings emerge. Likewise, the TE evaluator prays with stakeholders throughout the exercise regarding changes that may facilitate transformation.

A major potential difference between TE and another approach that relies on utilization principles is that the utilization approach works with information needs as stated by primary users of the findings, while TE works with information needs focused on deepening understanding of TD. The TE evaluator encourages this program focus, while the utilization evaluator avoids suggesting such a particular focus.

The following figure describes a few differences in utilization emphasis between TE and other evaluation approaches.

Figure 5 Uses of Evaluation Findings

Transformative Evaluation	Positivist Evaluation Approaches
Generate provocative propositions* among stakeholder groups about what really matters in community development.	Improve program implementation or the design of future programs.
Become better informed and sophisticated in understanding the complexities of community development that enable or hinder transformation.	Increase the ability to predict and control achievement of program goals and objectives.
Discern gaps in holistic thinking and acting in program planning and implementation.	Reduce uncertainty regarding program operations and effects.
Improve relationships within the sphere of influence for each stakeholder regarding a lifestyle centered on Christ-like love.	Empower people to manage community development more effectively.
Etc.	

* Provocative propositions is a concept in appreciate inquiry. A provocative proposition describes what the development agency would look like if it were designed to maximize the best practices, the peak experiences, in a sustainable way. The focus is on the ethos of the agency rather than the quality of the programs, it being assumed that sustaining

peak experiences of development agents would nourish improved program design and implementation. (See Cookingham, January 2015.)

4. Assumptions about Reality

TE for me is influenced greatly by constructivist views on reality (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 84). My evaluation training was based on positivist or realist views of reality, with emphasis on identifying cause-effect relationships among variables. The constructivist view of causality^G is called Mutual Simultaneous Shaping^G (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, pp. 97-98). This label better fits the belief system centered on social construction of multiple realities.

A common misconception about knowledge is that true knowledge is based on facts, or statements about real relationships among things, while theory is based on statements about hypothetical relationships among things. Scientists in various fields agree, however, that fact^G and theory are intertwined. The attempt to develop separate languages for factual observation and theory is doomed to fail. Facts are facts only within a specific theory. More than one theory can account for a particular set of facts.

Another common misconception is that facts are not influenced by values. Since observers have values, they must disregard them, somehow set them aside, if they want to observe the facts in a situation. This is not possible. Deeper understanding evolves as values are acknowledged and taken into account when describing facts.

The Knower, the person seeking knowledge about something, interacts with that something in different ways. Subject-object duality has been abandoned in the physical sciences. Different interactions between the Knower and something of interest lead to different inquiry findings.

These problems mean that all constructions are indeterminate, unsettled and ambiguous. The question for science is not: Which construction (theory/concept/interpretation) is right? The question is: Which construction seems to take best account of the knowledge constructed to date – itself changeable – in the most sophisticated way? (p. 70) The more important imperative for inquirers must be to seek out constructions that challenge the one(s) that currently hold the spotlight. Do everything that you can to prove yourself in error.

In spite of the difficulties, constructions are shared extensively. Science is one way of formulating a disciplined construction. Two factors primarily determine the features of a particular construction:

- The scope of information available to the constructor
- The constructor's sophistication in dealing with that information

The following figure shows basic contrasts between these two approaches to the nature of reality.

Figure 6 Assumptions about Reality in Approaches to Evaluation

Transformative Evaluation Constructivist Ontology	Typical Evaluation Realist Ontology
There exist multiple realities ungoverned by natural laws of any type.	There exists a single reality. This reality is independent [in no way affected by] any observer’s interest in it. This reality operates according to immutable [unchangeable] natural laws.
These multiple realities are socially constructed [as the constructors seek to make sense of their experience]. This is called mutual simultaneous shaping [of constructions].	Many of these laws have the form of cause-effect. Desirable results are caused by acting appropriately within specific conditions.
Truth is the best informed (amount and quality of information) and most sophisticated (power with which the information is understood and used) construction(s) on which there is consensus.	Truth is the set of statements that is isomorphic to [corresponding point by point to form and structure] reality.

Clarifying what is real and what is the nature of truth is essential for the Christian that chooses to do TE. Transformation in the Biblical sense is an aspect of reality that cannot be studied meaningfully by someone that believes there is one right/true understanding of transformation, and that there is a manageable set of causes that can be used to effect transformation. A fundamental aspect of a Christian worldview is that God “controls” transformation, but God can work through faithful believers to facilitate transformation.

Prayer and discernment; reflection, meditation and contemplation; other spirit disciplines are critical processes for understanding transformation and making sound judgments about how a program may be facilitating or hindering transformation. And that is what TE is all about.

5. Theory of Social Change for the Program

The theory of social change that undergirds program design and implementation often is more implicit than explicit. In TE the theory of social change is the theory of

transformational development. Figure 7 shows some key elements in that theory, along with analogous program theory elements that may be relevant in other evaluation work.

Figure 7 Evaluation Implications: Theory of Chance through Community Development

Transformative Evaluation	Positivist Evaluation Approaches
As Christians focus on following Jesus while they facilitate development activities, people around them will become more open to focusing on loving God and neighbor. Since this is the overall aim of TD the evaluation should focus on the lifestyle of the development agents and what people believe about them.	Applying participatory techniques, relevant knowledge, appropriate technology and adult learning theory will enable program participants to achieve program objectives. Evaluate the training methods and results in the program against these theory elements.
The extent to which development agents and community residents believe that God, working through people, has the power to bring about a more just society influences the types of transformation that occur or do not occur. The evaluation should explore what stakeholders believe about how God works in the world.	Achieving justice in society does not depend on what people believe about God. Enabling people to have a better quality of life is the overall aim of community development; this should be the overall focus for evaluation.
Holistic thinking should guide program planning and implementation. Prayer and discernment to guide building relationships are as important as logical thinking for transformation.	Program planning should be guided by some form of managing to achieve specific program results (e.g., Logical Framework Analysis). Logical thinking based on cause-effect relations is the key to effective change.
Etc.	

6. Primary Obstacles to Change

There can be innumerable obstacles to desired change in a given cluster of communities. I am focused on the relatively few that are associated with creating opportunities for transformation. The following chart describes them briefly.

Figure 8 Evaluation Implications: Obstacles to Change

Transformative Evaluation	Positivist Evaluation Approaches
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Transformative Evaluation	Positivist Evaluation Approaches
Web of lies believed by the poor that convinces them there is no better future for them.	Disconnected activities that are inconsistent or contrary to the literature on cause-effect relationships in community development.
Web of lies believed by the non-poor that prevent them from supporting community development from a holistic perspective.	Insufficient resources provided to implement the program for a reasonable time period.
Weak faith groups in the community that do not understand the critical role they must play in community development.	Service providers that do not value citizen empowerment.
Reluctance to confront sin at work creating deception, distortions, and distractions in the community.	Reluctance to confront unjust practices in institutions that have power in the community.
Etc.	

7. Primary Assets for Change

In TE the primary assets for change conducive to transformation are development agents living in the communities where the program is being implemented. The post, 'Frame for Thinking about TE', shows examples of evaluation design elements related to this.

Figure 9 Evaluation Implications: Role of Assets for Change

Transformative Evaluation	Positivist Evaluation Approaches
Examine the lifestyles of development agents.	Examine the quality of social services in the communities.
Examine the ways in which faith groups participate in and advocate for community development.	Examine how service institutions empower community residents.
Examine the extent to which development agents and community leaders exhibit holistic thinking.	Examine the extent to which principles of causality and attribution are followed.
Etc.	

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Glossary for Fourth Generation Evaluation

Page numbers refer to Guba and Lincoln's text (1989) unless otherwise specified.

Causality, cause-effect relationship (p. 96-97)

In general factor A is said to cause factor B if:

- Whenever A occurs B also occurs immediately afterwards

- B does not occur when A is not present

There are many fascinating philosophical issues that arise when this general idea is applied to different types of situations. Instead of a single factor being a cause, a cluster of factors in some particular combination may be a cause. Or statistical probability may be a necessary condition. Identifying cause-effect relations that can be used to predict results is very difficult; it is even more difficult when investigating social change programs.

CC&I (claims, concerns and issues) (p. 40)

Claims are statements that are favorable to the evaluand. For example: "This program is very effective in achieving its objectives."

Concerns are statements that are not favorable to the evaluand. For example: "We have not seen any significant changes in attitudes or behavior in the people that participated in the program."

Issues are statements that describe any state of affairs about which reasonable persons may disagree. For example: "Since participants perceive the program as valuable, it should be continued until the objectives are achieved fully."

Construction, Emic construction

Particular information configured into some integrated, systematic, "sense-making" formulation whose character depends on the level or scope of information and sophistication⁶ of the constructor in dealing with that information. Constructions come about as the constructor interacts with information, contexts, settings, situations and other constructors. This interaction is rooted in previous experience, belief systems, values, fears, prejudices, hopes, disappointments, and achievements of the constructor (p. 143). The quality of a construction is determined by using criteria that are appropriate to the constructor's operating paradigm.

Emic refers to a construction held by an individual stakeholder prior to the evaluation. (p. 185)

Disempowerment (p. 52-53)

Reduced power [especially due to inadequate or misleading information about some aspect of an evaluation that puts you at some risk]. Disenfranchisement can lead to disempowerment.

Disenfranchisement (p. 52-53)

Denial of the right to vote based on having appropriate knowledge [especially on an aspect of an evaluation that puts you at some risk].

Fact (p. 63)

An assertion that is accepted as true. Within positivism a fact is a description of nature's status undistorted by observers.

Hermeneutic [interpretive] Dialectic [moving toward a higher-level synthesis] Process (p. 149)

Process participants seek to connect constructions by surfacing views that can be compared and contrasted with the aim of reaching consensus on a higher-level synthesis. The implication is that each participant, by exploring the constructions of others, will reconstruct his or her original constructions. The process is both educational and empowering; the outcome is more sophisticated interpretations.

Methodology (p. 84, 158)

Overall guiding strategy for an inquiry.

- Interventionist methodology strips context of contaminating or confounding influences to converge on truth and explain nature as it really is and really works. This can lead to prediction and control.
- Hermeneutic methodology is a continuing dialectic of spiraling iteration, analysis, critique. This leads to a joint construction of a case.

Mutual simultaneous shaping (p. 97+)

Alternative concept for causality.

- All elements in the situation are in mutual and continual interaction.
- Each element is activated in its own way through the configuration of all other elements at that time and in that place.
- Judgments about which subset of elements is most plausibly implicated in explaining or managing whatever the investigator is focused on is a matter of the existing circumstances and the investigator's purpose.
- The particular pattern of circumstances may never occur again in the exact same way. Thus explanations and management actions do not imply predictability or control.
- Explanations at best represent a snapshot of a dynamic process that at any moments can present a very different aspect of the situation.

Nomothetic/ideographic dilemma (p. 61)

Nomothetic statements are generalizations. Ideographic application refers to a particular set of circumstances. A program that has general merit may not have any worth in a particular or specific setting.

Paradigm (p. 80-82)

Basic belief system, or set of assumptions that are accepted. A paradigm guides thinking and doing.

- Basic beliefs are arbitrary. They may be assumed for any reason.
- Basic beliefs are not self-evidently true.
- Different belief systems have different utilities when applied to different phenomena. These utilities are determined by the interactions between the beliefs and the characteristics of the phenomena in the particular application.
- The decision about which belief system to use in a particular case is determined by testing the fit between the alternative systems and the case.

There are three basic questions answered by a belief system (p. 83).

- Ontological question: What is the nature of reality; What is there that can be known? Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that deals with these issues.
- Epistemological question: What is the relationship of the knower to the known/knowable; How can we be sure that we know what we know?
- Methodological question: What are the ways of finding out knowledge; What can we do to find out things? This is the area of philosophy that deals with methods, systems and rules for doing inquiry.

Positivism, Positivist Paradigm, Conventional Paradigm (Guba, 1990, p. 19-20)

The ontological assumption is that there is a knowable reality out there, driven by immutable natural laws. The business of science is to converge on the "true" reality. The ultimate aim of science is to predict and control natural phenomena; discover cause-effect relationships. Knowledge is expressed in generalizations not restricted by time period or context.

The inquirer puts questions directly to nature, and observes nature's answers to those questions, without altering nature in any way. The inquirer and object of inquiry are independent. The inquirer deliberately seeks to be distant, noninteractive, with the subject of inquiry. Inquiry takes place as through a one-way mirror, where the process of observation does not influence either the object or the observer. Replicable findings are true.

Methodology has two objectives: (a) control observer bias, (b) untangle nature's propensity to confound any observer. State propositions in advance, based on accumulated knowledge, to control bias. Manipulate conditions carefully to verify propositions. Observe nature at work in relation to propositions under controlled conditions, control threats to validity.

Responsive focusing (p. 12, 40, 184)

Using the claims (assertions that are favorable to the evaluand), concerns (assertions that are unfavorable to the evaluand) and issues (any state of affairs about which reasonable persons may disagree) of all stakeholders as the

organizing elements of the evaluation. This is in contrast to the evaluator and the client deciding the evaluation elements.

Ontology (p. 12-13; 84)

Analysis of the nature of being, existence, reality.

- Science ontology assumes that there is an objective reality with immutable laws.
- Constructivist ontology assumes that realities are constructed by people. There are a variety of social and cultural factors that lead to shared constructions.

Sophisticated inquiry (p. 143)

- Inquiry that involves advanced ability to appreciate, understand, and apply information.
- [Inquiry becomes more sophisticated as the inquirers become aware of greater complexity to be considered, and as they become more skilled in critical thinking and apply those skills in their inquiry. FGC]

Stakeholders (p. 40, 201)

Persons or groups put at risk by the evaluation. Examples of stakeholders include agents (planners, implementers, various types of supporters, client, etc.), direct and indirect beneficiaries, and victims.