WICKED Evaluation PROBLEMS

~ the zine

Hello!

Welcome to the volume one, issue two of the Wicked Evaluation Problems zine which focuses on evaluation design.

Sandy has a problem regarding **embedding evaluation at the outset of intervention design.** Read on to hear from our Evaluation Collective members Ev and Col who will provide their thoughts on the problem. Editor Val, then shares some possible next steps.

This zine has additional content and extra resources. By downloading the Adobe Aero app and scanning the QR codes throughout the zine, you can view the content!

I work in a large research-intensive university in England. My team has been running a tutoring programme for schools for the last year and reports from my practitioners and teachers are positive. I've recently talked to my team about evaluation and new requirements to evaluate attainment raising interventions and they seem a bit worried. Now I'm panicking that our evaluation approach isn't good enough.

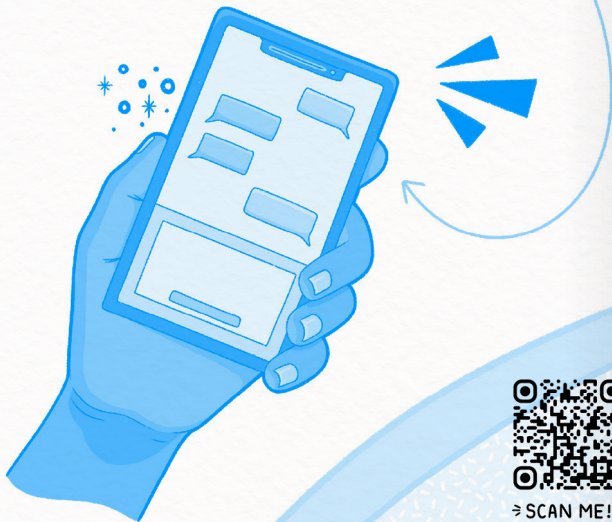**What can I do to make sure evaluation is a priority?**

Sandy, Head of WP & Recruitment

So, let's see what advice the Evaluation Collective have for Sandy...

ev says

Sandy, it's very common to feel daunted by evaluation. Let's think about your role as leader of this team and what you could do to set some direction. Build on positive feedback and momentum to frame reflective activities and explore ways forward. But build your own confidence first; get up to speed with these new requirements and make **external connections** with other Providers – I am sure you are not alone.

Maybe staff development is key. Consider building in meaningful time in team meetings for reflection on evaluation worries. Or consider an **evaluation capabilities and skills audit** or include an evaluation objective within appraisals – but handle sensitively.

Alternatively, you could explore **Appreciative Inquiry (AI)**. This approach could uncover barriers to evaluation planning whilst avoiding a negatively skewed discussion. You can use AI to gather evaluative evidence within interventions in schools, so you model good practice – win, win!

Finally, think about creating spaces for sharing/learning. Facilitate a discussion of assumptions about how change happens to raise attainment in schools. Try an evaluation focused **teambuilding activity (like 'ChangeBusters')** to build team confidence. Ensure these conversations are inclusive and empowering. Routinely leave time in team meetings to discuss evaluation; encourage showcasing of evaluation approaches to boost staff confidence and promote dialogue.

Col says:

Here are some actions I've found helpful which could help those delivering and evaluating interventions:

1. Map your intervention to a **Theory of Change (ToC)** as this will help ensure the intervention addresses intended outcomes. You can do this retrospectively. Return to the ToC at milestones to review aims, outcomes and data gathering.
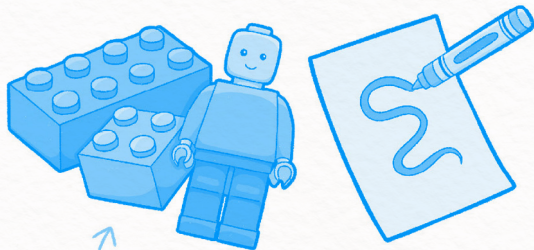
2. Evaluation can be fun for participants (honestly!) – formal surveys or/and focus groups can be unengaging for participants; explore **use of LEGO, online polls, drawing, photovoice and other creative arts-based approaches.**

3. Think about how you can **embed data gathering** in existing activities; if the pupils are going to produce a reflective presentation, could you get consent to use this as evaluative data?
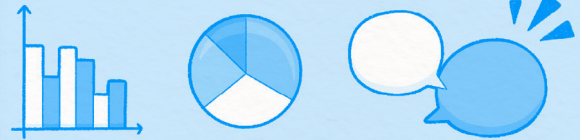
4. Don't discount **data you routinely collect** – this could be mapped to outcomes and save you some time!

5. Do you have **project/intervention planning documents?** For future work, include a section on evaluation to help embed it at the outset of new projects. Crucially, this should include who conducts the evaluation and how this will be resourced.
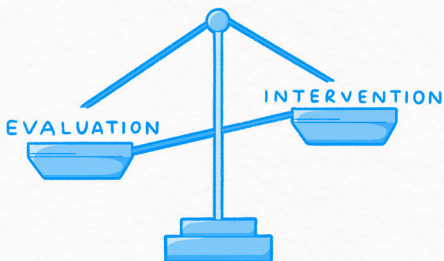
⇒ SCAN ME! ⇐

Val says...

Ev and Col have made some useful suggestions but realistically how many of these will you manage to do?
You have to be proportionate Sandy. Don't make evaluation an industry which takes resources away from delivering the intervention. It is a delicate balance.

EVALUATION

INTERVENTION

Thank you for reading this issue of the Wicked Evaluation Problems zine!

For more information on the contributors to this volume, take a look at the acknowledgements card.

EVALUATION COLLECTIVE

QAA

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