

Collaborative Evaluations: Step-by-Step by Liliana Rodríguez-Campos and Rigoberto Rincones-Gómez. (2013). 2nd ed. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. \$35.00

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Collaborative Evaluations: Step-by-Step by Liliana Rodríguez-Campos and Rigoberto Rincones-Gómez presents a comprehensive and practical approach to conduct collaborative evaluations with emphasis on building collaborative relationships. The authors clearly articulate the importance of stakeholder involvement as well. This second edition of Collaborative Evaluations draws on the extensive experience of the authors conducting collaborative evaluations in different sectors giving meaning to the content presented throughout the book. The step-by-step format makes the information accessible, facilitates its application, and helps to understand the fundamental structure of the model for collaborative evaluations (MCE). This easy-to-follow book guides those interested in conducting evaluations through the entire evaluation process.

Once again, the authors present the six components of the MCE and the steps for each of the subcomponents. The checklists included in the appendix are particularly helpful making the subcomponents easily accessible. However, the contributions of this edition go beyond that. This expanded version provides novel resources to better understand the model and how to effectively conduct collaborative evaluations. The vignettes throughout the book are a wonderful addition, as they illustrate real life situations and practical applications of each of the subcomponents. The intent of the authors with these literary sketches or descriptive snapshots is to depict the essence of

the MCE providing particular insights about specific aspects or situations that can occur in a collaborative evaluation.

The structure of the book's content is similar to the first edition in terms of the sections, containing an introduction and six chapters. Though, a great addition to the introduction is an overview on collaborative evaluations as one of the stakeholder approaches to evaluation, putting this approach into perspective. One asset of this section is the group of definitions the authors provide, giving readers consistency and clarity of terminology that are fundamental, throughout all of the chapters. The authors also introduce the MCE by offering a description about its characteristics and a figure illustrating the components and subcomponents of the model. By looking at the figure of the model, it is noticeable the new features and changes it has compared to the model presented in the first edition. The updated version includes a representation of the evaluation process in the center of the model and modifications to the content of certain components, that better represent the relationship between people when collaboration prevails. Each of the chapters that follow the introduction portrays the components and subcomponents of the MCE. At the beginning of each chapter, the reader will find a brief discussion of the component presented that lay the foundation for the description of the subcomponents.

The first chapter, on identify the situation, provides one of the most valuable discussions in the book. It includes important elements that an evaluator should take into consideration when determining the conditions that can influence an evaluation. The authors begin this chapter by explaining how to identify stakeholders and collaboration members which is fundamental to establish an effective collaborative relationship. In addition, emphasis is given to the development of evaluation questions to determine the scope of the evaluation. In this chapter, the authors also make use of effective illustrations showing comprehensive examples of logic model elements and project management strategies that support, among others, the scheduling of critical evaluation activities.

The second chapter, on clarify the expectations, offers the reader an excellent explanation of the reasons why the responsibilities of the evaluator and the collaboration members need to be clearly delineated early in the evaluation. It also illustrates different types of criteria and standards useful to make value judgments during the evaluation. To address the need of, particularly, novice evaluators, the authors present a valuable expansion of the phases of the evaluation process including planning, executing, and reporting. Two relevant pieces in this chapter are the examples of the sections identified as desirable constituents in an evaluation plan and evaluation report. In this chapter, the authors also do a great job presenting a clear description of the elements that should be present in an evaluation budget.

The third chapter, on establish a collective commitment, is effective in providing tools and procedures necessary to make collaboration a success within the evaluation. It is worth noting the idea of having an evaluation vision to keep people focused throughout the whole process. The authors present as well suggestions to promote positive actions, handle conflicts and anger that can occur during an evaluation, and recognize people contributions to the evaluation. This is something that is not commonly found in an evaluation-focused book and is really appreciated. The discussion about reward options is particularly enjoyable, in the sense that, the authors make it personal telling the reader how they reward people at the end of an evaluation. One additional asset in this chapter is the detailed discussion about procedures for decision making and the description of various decision-making styles.

The fourth chapter, on ensure open communication, delivers a detailed description of

a range of strategies that goes above and beyond that just simply of communication. The authors emphasize the need of these strategies in supporting collaboration between the evaluator and the collaboration members. The need of active involvement is clear for the other strategies to happen. The strategies presented are about people contributing, interacting, sharing information, carefully listening to each other, and determining when changes are necessary to make the evaluation possible. Even though open communication is essential for the success of any evaluation process, it is easily overlooked in many evaluations books. Therefore, the discussions in this chapter are a remarkable contribution to the content of the book.

The fifth chapter, on encourage effective practices, is devoted to those procedures or activities that help to generate a desired effect throughout the collaborative evaluation. The authors aim is to emphasize the personal characteristics that may influence the evaluation. They succeed in communicating their message, by presenting an extensive discussion about individual characteristics that explain why people react differently to events or situations as well as the importance of understanding these characteristics to benefit the evaluation. This chapter also delineates relevant procedures including benchmarking, to provide a highly successful point of reference for comparison, and ways in which teaching by example can occur to facilitate learning, as means to strengthen the collaborative effort.

The final chapter, on follow specific guidelines, complements the content of the other chapters presenting a comprehensive discussion of the American Evaluation Association's guiding principles and the evaluation standards published by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. What makes this chapter unique is an additional set of principles, the collaboration guiding principles. The principles were developed by the authors based on their experiences conducting collaborative evaluations. These worthwhile principles represent the fundamental elements that support collaboration throughout the evaluation. The description of these principles is right on target providing information and examples that are easy to understand, giving a positive closing to the chapter.

Collaborative Evaluations: Step-by-Step as described by Michael Scriven in his advance praise for the book "is the best way to get that essential understanding of collaborative evaluation...it's well-organized, clearly written, interesting, and

comprehensive—really earning the title of a handbook.” This book is definitely a thoughtful guide for those who want to undertake evaluations using this approach. Its accessible format and information serves the needs of practitioners. With the step-by-step activities and the practical applications through real life stories, the authors make conducting collaborative evaluations clear and to the point. This book, once again, provides a state-of-the-art perspective on what collaborative evaluation is, representing a valuable contribution to the evaluation field.