

Assessing and Evaluating Diversity Initiatives



Don B. Yarbrough, Ph.D., Director
University of Iowa
CENTER FOR EVALUATION AND
ASSESSMENT

<http://www.education.uiowa.edu/cea>

d-yarbrough@uiowa.edu

319-335-5567

Today's Goals



1. Allow plenty of time for questions and applications that are meaningful to you
2. Briefly discuss examples of diversity initiatives and identify your examples for application work
3. Define and clarify the roles of assessment and evaluation in diversity initiatives
4. Present and apply a model for *Purpose-Driven Assessment and Evaluation* of diversity initiatives
5. Identify assessment and evaluation principles and guidelines for use with diversity initiatives

What do we mean by “Diversity Initiatives”



- Plans and proposals
- Policies, procedures, practices, and regulations
- Programs, projects, and sub-projects
- Any component or element of the above

...designed to increase, assist, maintain, and further diversity

Which can be assessed and evaluated?



- **Plans, proposals, policies, procedures, practices, programs, projects, and subprojects as unitary interventions**
- **Any combinations, aspects, components, and/or elements of the above**

Diversity Initiative Examples



- Consortium for the Recruitment and Retention of Minorities in Teaching Careers (10 projects)
- Iowa Biosciences Advantage Program
- Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (<http://nsfagep.org/>)
- Teacher Quality Enhancement: English Language Learners

Diversity Initiatives, continued



- **Center for Clinical and Translational Science: Diversity Key Function**
- **Cultural Competency Training for Gerontology Fellows (M.D.s)**
-
- **Diversity Post-Doctoral Scholars Program**
- **Holmes Scholars Program**

Diversity Initiatives, continued



- **College of Education Diversity Committee**
- **U.I. President's Diversity Committee**
- **U.I. Moving Forward Together**

AGEP



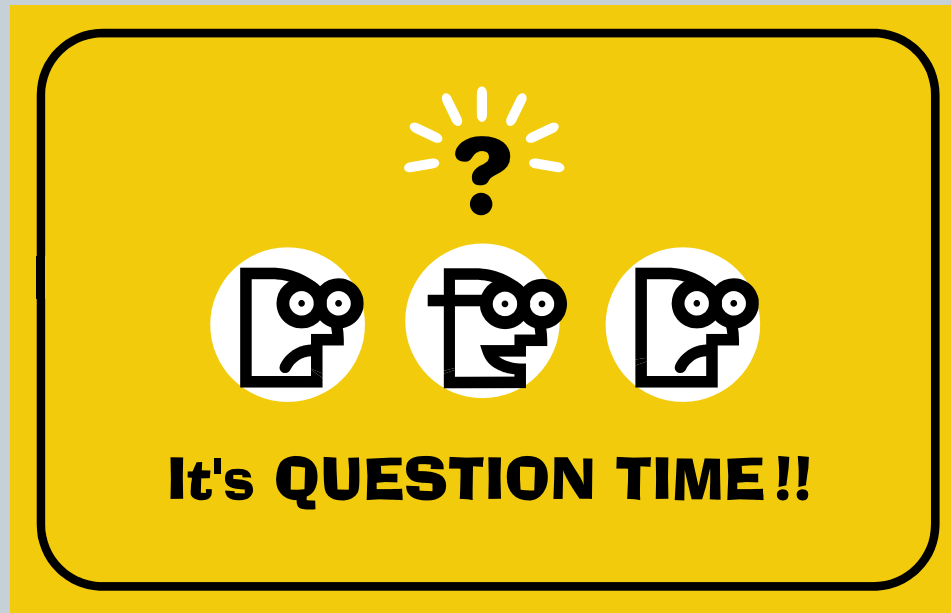
- The National Science Foundation funds the [Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate](#) (AGEP) program. The primary goals of AGEP are to (a) significantly increase the number of underrepresented minorities (i.e., African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders) obtaining graduate degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and (b) enhance the preparation of underrepresented minorities for faculty positions in academia.
- AGEP employs a strategy of supporting alliances of doctoral-granting institutions to accomplish these goals. The alliances, in turn, employ creative administrative strategies, develop infrastructure, and engage in substantive partnerships with nondoctoral-granting institutions (many minority-serving institutions) to enhance recruitment, retention, and advancement. The effectiveness of the AGEP approach can be attributed to a variety of factors, including leveraging of shared resources, thinking creatively to produce more supportive and proactive graduate infrastructure, and committing to attain ambitious goals with respect to increasing minority doctoral degree production.

IBA



- **Iowa Biosciences Advantage**
- **Directors:** Sarah K. England (Molecular Physiology and Biophysics), Vincent G.J. Rodgers (Physics and Astronomy)
Web site: <http://oge.grad.uiowa.edu/iba/> Iowa Biosciences Advantage (IBA) is a highly competitive undergraduate research and academic enrichment program funded by the National Institutes of Health. The program identifies academically talented undergraduate, underrepresented minority students who aspire to research careers and gives them first-rate training that facilitates entry into doctoral programs in biomedical, behavioral, and biophysical sciences.
- Iowa Biosciences Advantage students have opportunities to work in research laboratories with faculty mentors during the course of their undergraduate careers. The program's faculty represents a broad range of disciplines in the basic and biomedical sciences. IBA students also benefit from specialized course work, career workshops, and academic advising for biomedical and bioscience careers.
- Students selected for IBA must maintain good standing in academics and research. Good academic standing requires a g.p.a. of at least 3.00 and is evaluated at the end of each semester. Good research standing is determined by each student's research mentor.
- Students work with their mentors throughout the academic year and summer. They present their research in August at the Annual IBA Scholar Research Symposium.
- Students are admitted directly from high school and from their first year of college

Questions?



What initiatives are you involved in?



- **Business and industry**
- **Government**
- **Faith-based**
- **Community organizations**
- **K-12**
- **Higher Education**
- **Other**

What is Assessment?



- **Learner, client, and personnel assessment is the definition, characterization, and documentation of**
 - aptitudes
 - motivations, personality factors, & dispositions
 - abilities, skills, & performance samples
 - other types of achievement
 - other cognitive and affective outcomes, attitudes, or beliefs

What is assessment, continued:



- **Tools for learner, client, and personnel assessment include**
 - performance and product documentation,
 - standardized tests, inventories, batteries
 - surveys and interviews,
 - documents and portfolios
 - performance sampling and observational data
 - other formal documents or data
 - expert (clinical) perceptions

What is assessment, continued:



Assessments of Diversity Initiatives, *in addition to learner, client, and personnel assessment*, also include the definition and documentation of

- organizational and individual needs, problems, & areas for growth
- beliefs, theories, and understandings about the initiative (change models)
- resources available and used
- activity, process, output and outcome goals (action models)
- actual implemented activities, processes, and products
- actual outputs, outcomes, and impacts

What is assessment, continued:



Typical assessment tools for diversity initiatives include

- observations
- surveys
- interviews
- document and materials reviews
- portfolio, product, or performance analyses
- other formal documents or data
- expert perceptions and analyses

What is Diversity Initiative Evaluation?



Diversity initiative evaluations are subprojects that help stakeholders make better judgments and specific decisions based on systematic and accurate investigations and assessments of selected aspects of diversity initiatives and/or their contexts.

Purposes of Evaluation: General



- **Improve formative decisions:**
 - maintenance and improvement related
- **Improve summative decisions:**
 - accountability
 - selection, retention, adoption
 - participation related
 - funding related

Purposes of Evaluation: Specific



- Describing and monitoring the initiative
- Investigating causality
- Determining merit
- Determining worth and return on investment
- Determining significance
- Improving organizational decisions, including transportability
- Contributing to knowledge

Prerequisites for Conducting Effective Assessment and Evaluation



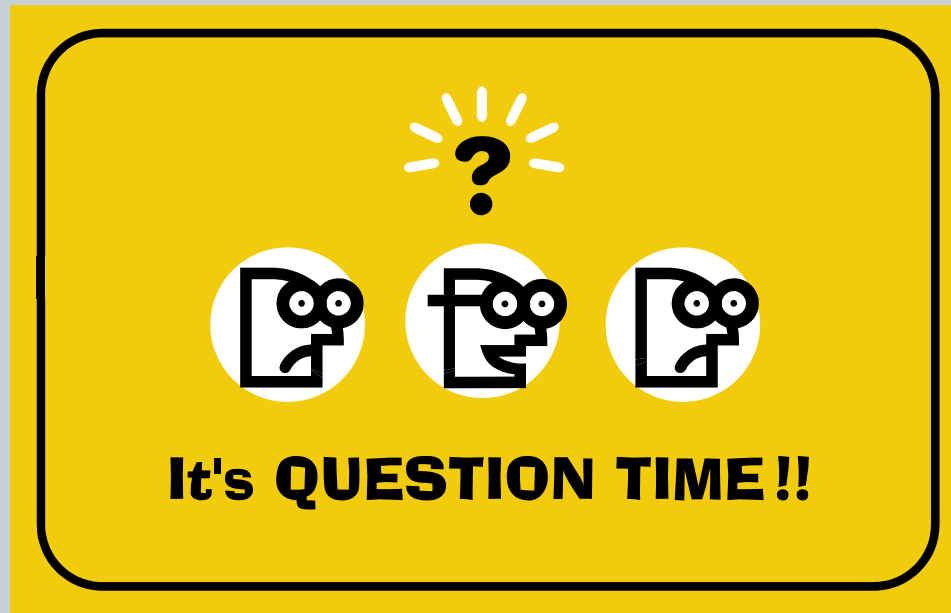
- When there are feasible, proper and useful purposes that can be served
- When additional assessment and evaluation processes and information are needed
- When the “policy space” invites assessment information as a basis for decisions and judgments
- When it is contractually or legally required
- When the resources are available and the benefits are greater than the costs

When do we NOT assess and evaluate?



- **When results will not be used**
- **When results will be misused**
- **When the required assessment and evaluation procedures are not feasible**
- **When the assessment or evaluation would violate the law or major ethical principles or human rights**
- **When there are inadequate resources or other prerequisites to conduct sufficiently useful, proper, feasible and accurate assessment and evaluation**

Questions?



Specific-Purpose-Focused Evaluation



Key Considerations:

- 1. When should we put all of our resources into diversity initiative outcomes assessment and when not?**
 - Which elements and/or components are most in need of attention?
 - Who needs which specific information for which specific purposes?
 - Which evaluation questions are most pressing?
- 2. How can we fully describe diversity initiatives and their contexts in order to answer question 1?**

The Expanded Diversity Initiative Model for Assessment and Evaluation Decision-Making



Four Key Focuses for Evaluation Questions:

- **The Pre-Initiative Situation:** context and background, needs and opportunities, opportunity costs, potential participants, beneficiaries, and “losers”
- **Goals and Plans:** proposed resources, processes, activities, participation, products, outcomes and impacts
- **Implementation:** what actually happens
- **The Post-Initiative Situation:** conditions in the post-context, actual outcomes, and impacts

Expanded Diversity Initiative Model



Prior Situation & Context for the Diversity Initiative



1. Context, setting & environment for the diversity initiative

2.1. Purposes that the diversity initiative might serve, including needs, problems, growth areas
2.2. Opportunity costs

3. Targeted beneficiaries, participants, clients, potential “losers”

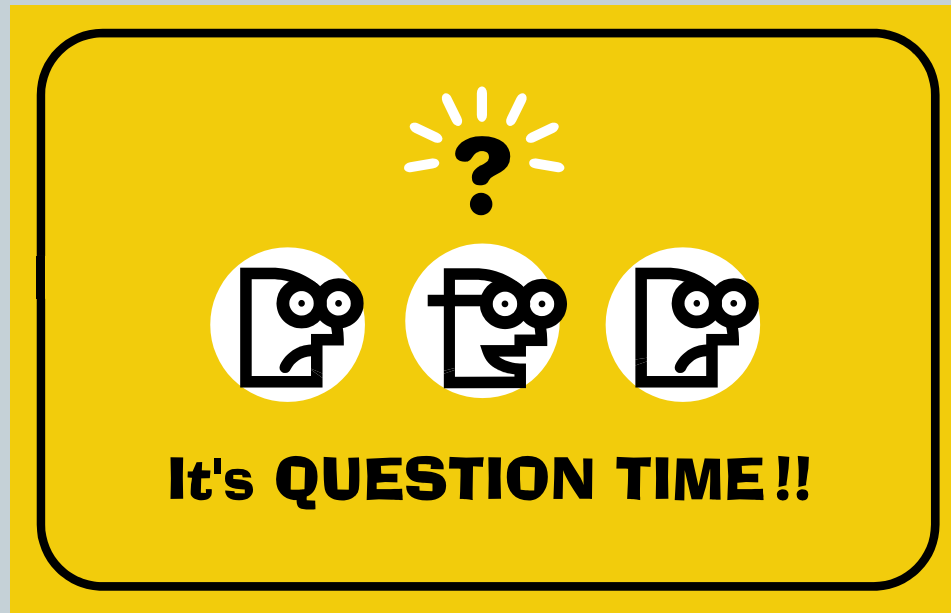
4. Change theory informing how the problem and needs that the initiative will address are defined and diagnosed. This theory resides in/with those who design, manage and implement the initiative.

Illustrative Pre-Initiative Evaluation Questions



- Did we accurately identify the needs and opportunities for growth? Did we define these accurately? Would people from other backgrounds or cultures (for example the beneficiaries) construct these differently?
- Did we overlook more important growth opportunities?
- Is anyone in the context hostile to solving these problems or addressing these growth opportunities?
- Are there other initiatives in this context that are in competition for resources, have compatible or inimical goals and purposes, or would otherwise interact with this initiative?
- Have we identified the most important opportunity costs?
- Have we identified the most important beneficiaries as well as those who might be negatively affected?
- What supports our change model and what argues against it? How sound is it?

Questions?



Expanded Diversity Initiative Model, Continued



Intervention Focus →

Planning

Implementation

5. Possible strategies, interventions, & solutions for the needs and growth areas

6. Specific process & activity goals

7. Specific output, outcome and impact goals & objectives

8. Specific resources & inputs actually used

9. Specific activities, methods, & procedures actually used

10. Specific participation, materials, products, & outputs

11. Change theory informing the underlying impact model

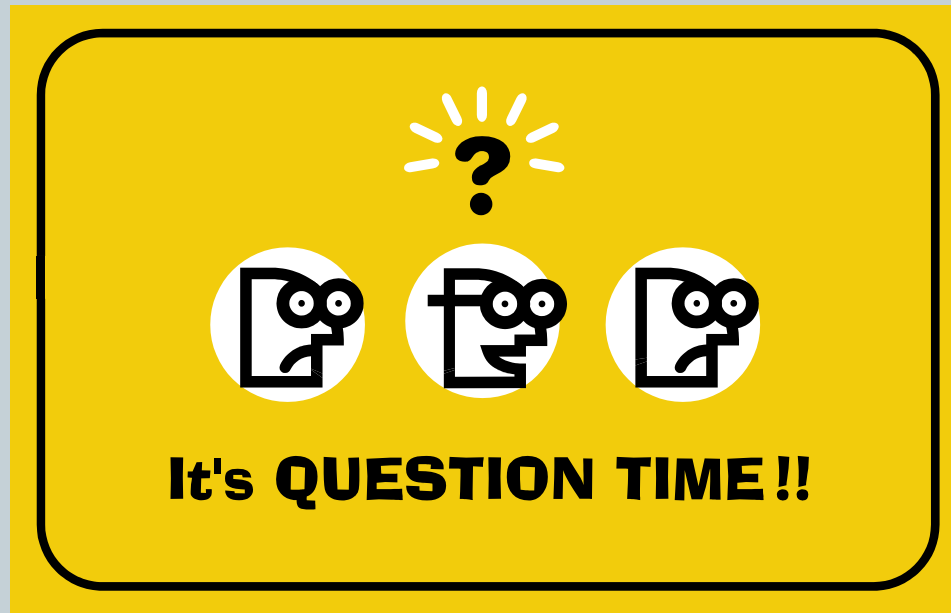
12. Action theory guiding the service delivery, administration & management

Illustrative Intervention-Focused Evaluation Questions



- Did we choose the soundest solutions or approaches to facilitating growth or addressing our identified problems?
- Which stakeholders are supportive of these approaches? Which not?
- Are our process goals sound and supported by sound change models? Are our process, output, and outcome goals logically linked to one another?
- How do experts and stakeholders evaluate our change and action models? Are our change model and action models logically consistent?
- Did we implement using our resources/inputs as proposed? What is and is not going according to plan? What positive and negative innovations in the plan/proposal took place?
- Are there any unexpected events or procedural consequences during the intervention?
- How engaged are participants and beneficiaries in the processes and activities?
- How is the context, setting, and environment affecting the implementation of the initiative?

Questions?



Expanded Diversity Initiative Model, Continued



Post Implementation Situation & Results Focus



13. Post-initiative context and environment

14. Gross and net outcomes of the initiative

15. Impacts of the initiative

16. Costs, efficiencies, benefits, and return on investment

17. Post implementation change and action models with any revisions as a result of the assessment and evaluation

Illustrative Post-Initiative Evaluation Questions



- What changes took place in the context, setting and environment during implementation?
- How did the context, setting and environment affect the initiative?
- What expected or unexpected, positive or negative effects did the initiative have on factors in the context, setting, and environment?
- What gross, net, intended, unintended, positive, negative, short-, mid-, and/or long-term outcomes did the initiative produce?
- If we are arguing for causal effects of the initiative, what is/are the chosen causal models and what are plausible threats to our causal conclusions? Do others from other cultures or backgrounds have other competing causal explanations for documented results?
- What quality of return on investment did the initiative produce? How could it have been made more efficient and effective?

Questions?



It's QUESTION TIME !!

Guidelines and Principles for Evaluation and Assessment



- **GAO Performance Standards**
- **AEA Guiding Principles**
- **JCSEE: Program Evaluation Standards**

Guiding Principles for Evaluators



American Evaluation Association, <http://www.eval.org/>)

- Systematic inquiry
- Competence
- Integrity/honesty
- Respect for people
- Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare

Program Evaluation Standards



Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluations, 1994, in press;

<http://www.jcsee.org>

<http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc>

- Utility, 8 standards
- Feasibility, 4 standards
- Propriety, 7 standards
- Accuracy, 8 standards
- Evaluation Accountability, 3 standards

Managing Assessment & Evaluation Sub-Projects



- **Integration**
- **Scope**
- **Time, costs & human resources**
- **Procurement**
- **Quality**
- **Communications**
- **Risk**

Questions?

