

2. A project evaluation framework

- 2.1 Project evaluation
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- 2.3 Other foci

2.1 Project evaluation

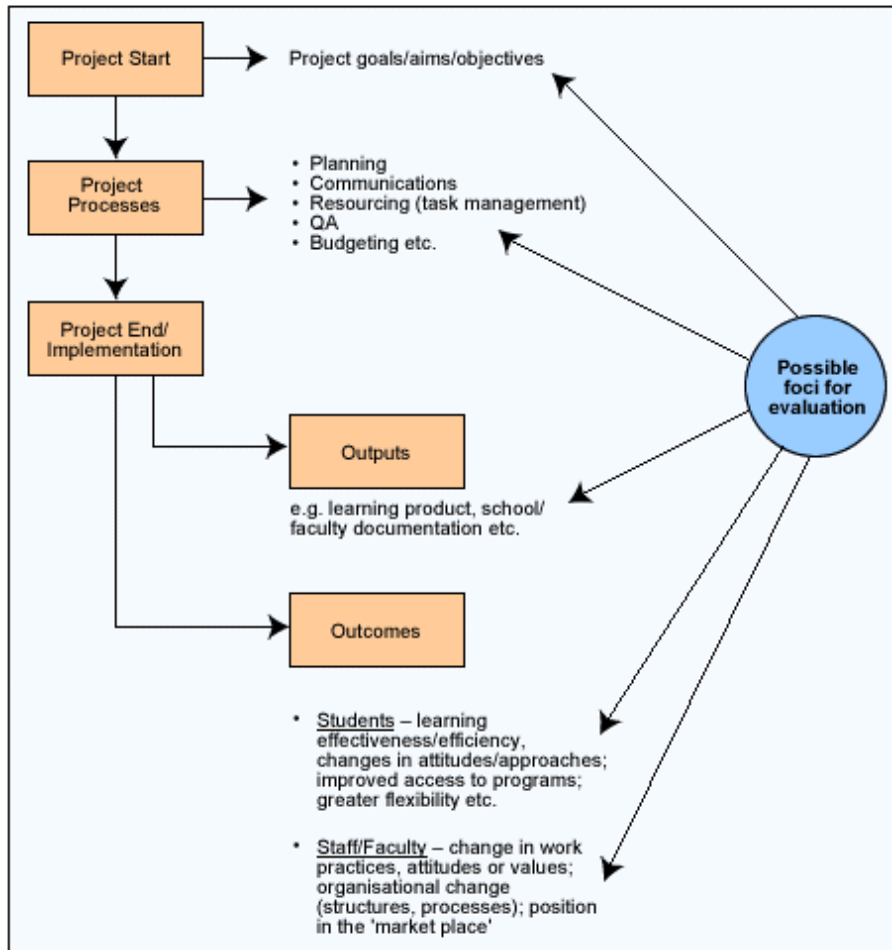
By definition, a project has:

- a clearly defined beginning and end, with identifiable stages between; and
- specified outputs and outcomes that are reflected in the stated goals/aims and objectives of the project.

In a nutshell, evaluation is about making judgements of ‘worth’. In the context of educational projects then, this means judgements about how well the project’s objectives have been achieved (in terms of outputs and educational outcomes), and how well the project has run as an enterprise.

These facets, or aspects, of a project can serve as the key foci or framework for evaluation – see Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1 Project evaluation framework



Evaluation beyond the life of the project

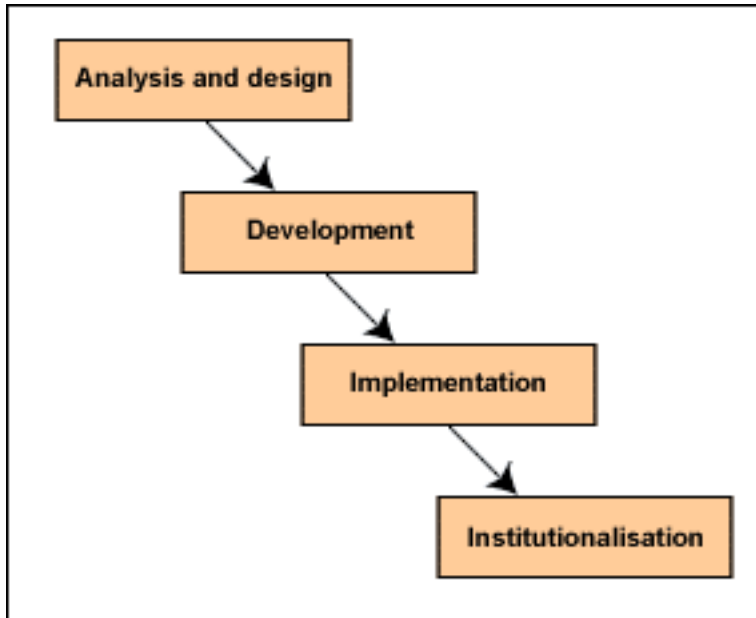
Whilst projects, by definition, have an ending and defined outputs, the outcomes may take time to manifest themselves (e.g. as improved performance on assessment tasks, better retention rates etc.) Furthermore, educational projects may not cease upon production of the 'outputs' – they may not end with a neat 'handover' and sign off (as in say the commissioning of a building) but rather continue in some form, over a number of semesters. For both these reasons, evaluation will continue into implementation and beyond.

2.2 A focus on educational evaluation

Teaching and learning projects are ultimately primarily concerned with student outcomes; i.e. on educational outcomes, and the bulk of this toolkit is thus to do with educational evaluation. An integrated framework for educational evaluation is shown in Table 2.1.

Features of the integrated educational project evaluation framework

- Four phases are evident in an educational project
 1. Analysis and design
 2. Development
 3. Implementation
 4. Institutionalisation



- Each phase provides a focus or number of foci for evaluation. It's important to include each phase in the overall evaluation of the project.
- There is a clear purpose, and set of evaluation questions for each focal point. The questions are student/learner-centred.
- The questions asked shape the type of evidence, and evidence gathering techniques.

2.3 Other foci

Project processes

Although the main focus of this toolkit is on learner-centred evaluation, Section 7 of the kit deals with evaluation of project processes – planning, communications, management etc. in Figure 2.1. See Section 7: Evaluation project processes.

Program evaluation

For more general project or program evaluation approaches and methodologies see, for example:

Brinkerhoff, R. O., Brethower, D. M., Hluchyj, T. and Nowakowski, J. R. (1983). *Program evaluation : a practitioner's guide for trainers and educators* : Boston : Kluwer-Nijhoff.

Owen, J. M. (1999). *Program evaluation: forms and approaches*. 2nd ed. St Leonards, N.S.W. : Allen & Unwin.

Payne, D. A. (1994). *Designing educational project and program evaluations*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Worthen, B. R., Sanders, J. R. and Fitzpatrick, J. L. (1997). *Program evaluation: alternative approaches and practical guidelines*. 2nd ed. New York : Longman.

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