Program Evaluation for the University of Idaho

Distance Extended Education DEE-101 Course

Stacy Springer

Walden University

Dr. Michael Burke

Program Evaluation (EIDT-6130-2)

December 11, 2016

Contents

Program Analysis

Organization Description

The University of Idaho Distance and Extended Education Division (DEE) is a post-secondary educational program. DEE's mission is to, "…design and create web-based classes for the Blackboard Learn course management system and offers training and workshops for faculty looking to expand their use of online teaching resources." DEE is also, "committed to offering quality, innovative, and student-centered courses and programs in which students and instructors participate in interactive and engaging learning activities that leverage Web-based technologies to achieve program and university learning objectives. (University of Idaho, 2016)"

Program Goals and Objectives

The ***DEE 101-Designing and Building an Online Course (DEE 101)*** in BbLearn is a combined self-paced, and synchronous online training for UIdaho instructors who want to develop and teach online courses effectively using Bblearn. DEE 101 supports new instructors with training independently, or in conjunction with UIdaho's existing Online Program MOU model that currently compensates and supports departments converting face-to-face programs to online web-delivered or hybrid models. The objectives of the DEE 101 course are:

- Reduce the time and resources required to train instructors on the use of BbLearn
- Teach the elements of a learner-centered online course
- Practice facilitation to encourage student learning
- Analyze and apply appropriate BB Learn course tools to facilitate student learning
- Comply with legal requirements of an online course (ADA, FERPA, copyright)
- Jumpstart the course conversion/creation process to facilitate quicker development of new eLearning courses

Program History and Current Perceptions

The DEE 101 program was created in 2014 as a tool to train instructors on the basics of creating distance learning in BbLearn. This course was a direct response to the lack of resources available to conduct one-on-one training with instructors created a backlog of training needs. Additionally, scheduling between trainers and trainees created another layer of difficulty which asynchronous training overcame. No evaluation has been conducted on this course but current perception is that it may need to be enhanced to include additional topics. Support of learners after the completion of the course continues to be time consuming and resource intensive.

Stakeholders

This program has a central core of key stakeholders that have a vested interest in the success of the course. Those stakeholders include funding authorities, DEE staff, U of I Administration, Instructors, students and the State of Idaho Education Board. In the table below is a summary of stakeholders, interests and contextual factors that pertain to this course evaluation.

Stakeholder	Role	Interests & Contextual Factors
Kari Dickinson	DEE Coordinator	Budget authority, DEE administrative support, primary consumer of final report and data.
Cari Saunders	Instructional Designer	SME and primary developer of DEE 101, Liaison with stakeholders. Responsible for implementing evaluation findings to the DEE 100 Course.
Instructors (TBD)	Participants	Primary consumers of DEE 100, interested in course quality, effectiveness and efficiency data.
U of I Students	Learners	End users of courses developed through DEE, interested in cost effectiveness, quality of education of eLearning courses.
U of I Technical Support Services	BbLearn Security	Provides access to U of I documentation, BbLearn Access and other access as needed to the evaluator.

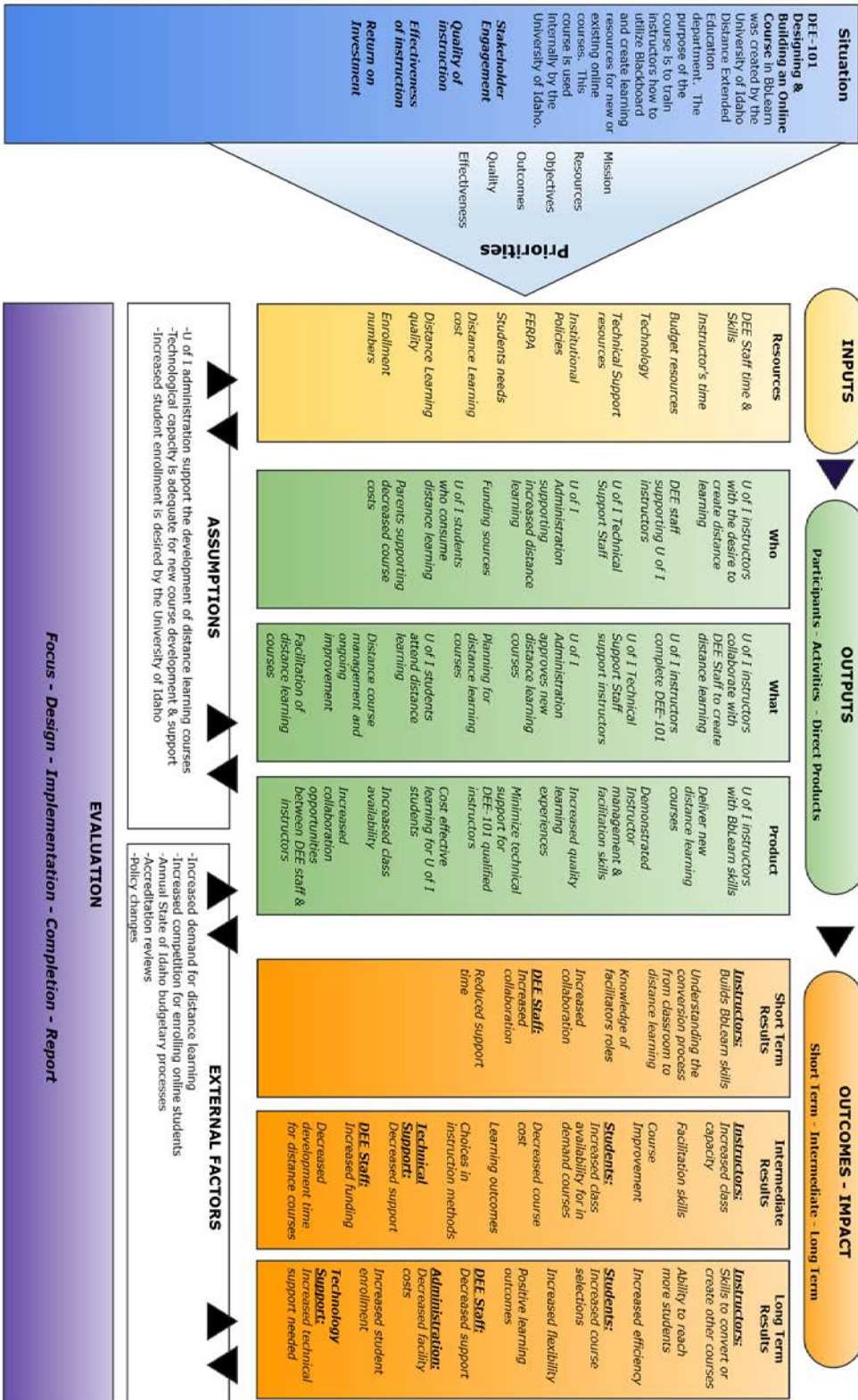| U of I Registrar's Office	FERPA Compliance	Responsible for FERPA Compliance and Reporting.
University of Idaho Administration	Funding Authority, Policy	Most interested in Return on Investment (ROI), cost of course development, course quality.
Idaho State Board of Education	Policy and oversight of Idaho learning institutions.	Quality of education in Idaho. Oversight of Idaho institutions of higher learning.

Contextual Factors

As an internal program evaluator, it will be important that support is garnered from the organization administrators and roles are clearly defined (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011, p. 29). Fortunately, the DEE staff is extremely interested in the evaluation process and any data that can assist the program in improving outcomes. Their focus is on improving the educational value of the course. An efficient course can provide positive outcomes and ease the support needed for instructors as they transform their course from the traditional classroom to a web based format.

Ethical Challenges

Adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) will be necessary to restrict and protect any student's information. The ethical responsibilities of the evaluator will be observed by conducting a systematic, data based evaluation, disclosing any biases on the part of the evaluator, respecting all stakeholders, and being cognizant of the interests and values of the public welfare (American evaluation association, 2016). The evaluator will be cognizant of any personal biases created by existing personal ties to University of Idaho.

Logic Model

Situation

DEE-101 Designing & Building an Online Course in BbLearn was created by the University of Idaho Distance Extended Education department. The purpose of the course is to train instructors how to utilize Blackboard and create learning resources for new or existing online courses. This course is used internally by the University of Idaho.

Priorities

- Mission
- Resources
- Objectives
- Outcomes
- Stakeholder Engagement
  - Quality
- Quality of instruction
  - Effectiveness
- Effectiveness of instruction
- Return on Investment

INPUTS

Resources
- DEE Staff time & Skills
- Instructor's time
- Budget resources
- Technology
- Technical Support resources
- Institutional Policies
- FERPA
- Students needs
- Distance Learning cost
- Distance Learning quality
- Enrollment numbers

OUTPUTS
Participants – Activities – Direct Products

Who
- U of I instructors with the desire to create distance learning
- DEE staff supporting U of I instructors
- U of I Technical Support Staff
- U of I Administration supporting distance learning
- Funding sources
- U of I students who consume distance learning
- Parents supporting decreased course costs

What
- U of I instructors collaborate with DEE Staff to create distance learning
- U of I instructors complete DEE-101
- U of I Technical Support staff support instructors
- U of I Administration approves new distance learning courses
- Planning for distance learning courses
- U of I students attend distance learning
- Distance course management and ongoing improvement
- Facilitation of distance learning courses

Product
- U of I instructors with BbLearn skills
- Deliver new distance learning courses
- Demonstrated Instructor management & facilitation skills
- Increased quality learning experiences
- Minimize technical support for DEE-101 qualified instructors
- Cost effective learning for U of I students
- Increased class availability
- Increased collaboration opportunities between DEE staff & instructors

OUTCOMES – IMPACT
Short Term – Intermediate – Long Term

Short Term Results
- *Instructors:* Builds BbLearn skills
- Increased class capacity
- Understanding the conversion process from classroom to distance learning
- Knowledge of facilitators roles
- Increased collaboration
- *DEE Staff:* Increased collaboration
- Reduced support time

Intermediate Results
- *Instructors:* Facilitation skills
- Course Improvement
- *Students:* Increased class availability for in demand courses
- Decreased course cost
- Learning outcomes
- Choices in instruction methods
- *Technical Support:* Decreased support
- *DEE Staff:* Increased funding

Long Term Results
- *Instructors:* Skills to convert or create other courses
- Ability to reach more students
- Increased efficiency
- *Students:* Increased course selections
- Increased flexibility
- Positive learning outcomes
- *DEE Staff:* Decreased support
- *Administration:* Decreased facility costs
- Increased student enrollment
- *Technology Support:* Increased technical support needed

ASSUMPTIONS
- U of I administration support the development of distance learning courses
- Technological capacity is adequate for new course development & support
- Increased student enrollment is desired by the University of Idaho

EXTERNAL FACTORS
- Increased demand for distance learning
- Increased competition for enrolling online students
- Annual State of Idaho budgetary processes
- Accreditation reviews
- Policy changes

EVALUATION
Focus - Design - Implementation - Completion - Report

Evaluation Model

Evaluation Model	Advantages	Disadvantages
EXPERTISE AND CONSUMER-ORIENTED APPROACHES	***Expertise-Oriented Approach*** • Applicable to many areas (ease of implementation and timing) • Evaluations conducted by experts in the relevant fields • Based on set standards ***Consumer-Oriented Approach*** • Focused on consumer information requirements • Used for developing checklists • May be influenced by product developers • Focused on cost effectiveness and utility	***Expertise-Oriented Approach*** • Hard to replicate • Reliability issues (who or what standards are used?) • Susceptible to personal bias • Lack of supportable documentation • Open to conflict of interest ***Consumer-Oriented Approach*** • Not open to debate • Limited sponsors and funders • Lack of expertise in evaluators
PROGRAM-ORIENTED EVALUATION APPROACHES	***Objectives-Oriented Approach*** • Focused on outcomes • Premise is simple • Implementation is easy ***Theory-Based Approach*** • Based on the program model • Defines the reasoning behind the program	***Objectives-Oriented Approach*** • Maybe too research focused • Less about stakeholders • Possible hyper-focus on outcomes • Program context is irrelevant to the evaluation ***Theory-Based Approach*** • May oversimplify program complexity and context • Focused on theory rather than outcomes • May ignore difficulty of meeting objectives
	Decision-Oriented Approach	***Decision-Oriented Approach***

DECISION-ORIENTED EVALUATION APPROACHES	• Potentially comprehensive • Concentrated on leadership information needs • Systematic approach • Uses evaluation during the process of program development	• Assumes order exists • Focuses on rationality in decision making processes • Concentrated on the concerns of management
PARTICIPANT-ORIENTED EVALUATION APPROACHES	*Participant-Oriented Approach* • Multifaceted • Focus on description and judgement • Emphasis on understanding and use • Identification and pursuit of different types of use • Includes group and individual learning • Emphasis on program features	*Participant-Oriented Approach* • Can be labor and cost intensive • Loss of focus due to unknowledgeable stakeholders • Replication could be difficult • May not be generalized

(Fitzpatrick et al., 2010, pp. 249-251)

Explanation

This evaluation program will measure the effectiveness of an in-house distance learning program whose purpose is to train instructors on how to setup and use the Blackboard environment. For this evaluation approach, I will use a mixed method approach using pieces from the Participant-Oriented approach, Decision-Oriented approach as well as the Objectives-Oriented Approach. The P-PE methodology is "…designed to encourage organizational learning and change. Although the immediate goal is practical, increasing the usefulness and actual use of the current evaluation, the long-term goal is creating a learning organization that makes use of evaluation information for planning and improvement. (Fitzpatrick et al., 2008, p. 207)" If the

Participant-Oriented approach is combined with elements of the Objectives-Oriented approach it can provide a link between the program activities and the outcomes. "The key role for the evaluator in an Objectives-Oriented evaluation is to determine whether some or all of the program objectives are achieved and, if so, how well they are achieved. In education, the objectives may be concerned with the purposes of a single lesson or training program or the knowledge students should attain during an entire year. (Fitzpatrick et al., 2008, p. 154)" The limitation of the Objective-Oriented approach is that the emphasis is on objectives rather than stakeholders, but adding the Participants-Oriented approach will balance that limitation. By adding components from the Decision-oriented approach or more specifically the CIPP approach, the data will inform management decisions on the effectiveness of the course and further enhancements to the overall DEE program. The CIPP model focuses on "…serving decisions, judging merit and worth, the four stages of a program, reflecting the importance of context in considering evaluation questions, and an emphasis on standards and use. (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010, p. 176)" By utilizing the mixed method approach to this evaluation the advantages of the selected approaches can be maximized while minimizing the disadvantages over using one single approach.

Evaluative Criteria

Criteria is "the aspects, qualities, or dimensions that distinguish a more meritorious or valuable evaluand [the object being evaluated] from the one that is less meritorious or valuable. (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010, p. 332)" For this evaluation, data collected during this evaluation process will answer five main questions geared towards improving training and quality of the DEE program:

Question	Approach
1. Is there evidence that the learners can achieve the objectives/learning outcomes of the course?	Objective-Oriented
2. After completing the course is there a reduction in development time for course conversion to the distance learning format?	Decision-Oriented
3. Are there areas of concern that the DEE-101 Course does not address that is critical to the skill needed when creating a new BbLearn course?	Participant-Oriented
4. Does the instructor's experience working with DEE Staff lead to a positive outcome?	Participant-Oriented
5. When implementing the DEE-101 Course is there a measurable reduction in support time required by the DEE staff when converting a traditional class to the distance learning format?	Decision-Oriented
6. Is the DEE Program approach effective in increasing the quality and number of distance learning programs at the University of Idaho?	Program-Oriented

The selected questions are based on the evaluation mixed method that encompasses the Objective-Oriented, Participant-Oriented, and Decision-Oriented approaches. The data generated by these approaches will examine the learning outcomes of the DEE-101 Course. The evaluation will also review participant satisfaction with the course and recommendations for future improvement of the DEE-101 Course. Finally, the evaluation questions will and inform management decision regarding the improvement and expansion of the DEE Staff and distance learning at the University of Idaho.

The focus of the evaluation is on the skills gained by instructors enrolled in the DEE-101 Course and the impact on the development time and experiences of the instructors working with DEE Staff. This evaluation will not review content of the DEE-101 Course and will only focus on the overall learning outcomes of the course. This evaluation also will not focus on the

University of Idaho students who will eventually be the end users of any distance learning courses created by a DEE Staff and instructor collaboration.

Standards are the "…level of performance expected on each criterion. (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010, p. 332)" The standards used during this evaluation are based on a matrix of absolute standards. The standards were developed based the on DEE-101 Course learning objectives and a combination of survey, interviews, focus groups and other evaluation tools. Additional research was conducted for evaluation standards pertaining to post-secondary distance learning courses. Stakeholder input will be vital to setting the final evaluation standards as they will be the final consumers of the evaluation data.

"Involving stakeholders in describing the program, setting program boundaries, identifying evaluation questions, and making recommendations about the data collection, analysis, and interpretation adds to the validity of the evaluation because stakeholders are program experts. (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010, p. 317)" Key stakeholders from the DEE Management and DEE staff will be key in identifying evaluation questions by leveraging their knowledge and experience with the development process. Specifically, the DEE manager, DEE lead instructional designer, Dean of Education, and the University of Idaho Helpdesk manager will be instrumental in developing evaluation questions. By involving key stakeholders, the evaluation questions can be leveraged to answer key questions that will feed future management decisions.

Data Collection Design and Sampling Strategy
Insert audio here!

Evaluation Reporting Strategy

Stakeholder	Reporting Strategy	Implications	Stakeholder Involvement
Kari Dickinson, DEE Coordinator	Weekly reports will be provided via emails and when necessary face-to-face meetings. Written reports will be created at program milestones and program conclusion.	This evaluation outcome will impact the future of the DEE-101 course and the amount of resources needed to support it. It will also indicate whether the DEE program will be expanded to increase distance learning development.	Funding source for the evaluation process and owner of the final report and data. Assist in evaluation planning and identifying focus of evaluation questions.
Cari Saunders, DEE Instructional Designer	Weekly reports will be provided via emails. Weekly face-to-face meetings will be scheduled for planning, scheduling, and data analysis. Weekly face-to-face progress meetings will occur with the evaluator.	The evaluation outcome and reporting will assist in identifying improvements that should be made to the DEE-101 course and what impact those changes will have on development.	Primary liaison for the DEE Program. Assist in evaluation planning and identifying focus of evaluation questions. Assist in identifying individual stakeholders and data sources. Intimate knowledge of the DEE-101 course and will arrange access to the course documents and data. Involved in the analysis of the evaluation data process.
DEE Support Staff	Summarized weekly updates will be provided via email weekly and posted to the DEE secured Intranet Website. Email will be used to coordinate interview schedules.	This evaluation will have impact on the day to day function of the DEE program. Involving the DEE staff in the planning and data analysis will negate some of the anxiety of staff and assist in focusing the	Assist in evaluation planning and identifying focus of evaluation questions. Assist in identifying individual stakeholders and data sources. Intimate knowledge of the DEE-101 course and DEE program. Day to

		evaluation to answer key questions.	day interactions with instructors. Staff will participate in face-to-face interviews regarding the DEE program and observations on the effectiveness of the DEE-101 course based on instructor interactions.
U of I Instructors (course students past & present)	Instructors will receive notification of scheduling of interviews via email, text and reminder automated phone calls. Online questionnaires links will be provided via email.	The evaluation outcome will result in changes and possible improvements to the DEE-101 Course. This will impact the amount of support that future instructors require when converting or creating new distance learning courses and therefore give more autonomy to the instructors.	Interview data and follow-up information regarding the current DEE-101 Course. Identify skills not included in DEE-101 but required during the development process.
U of I Technical Support Services (TSS)	Initial meeting to discuss overall evaluation plan. Face-to-Face interviews will be scheduled via emails and phone calls with text reminders.	The evaluation outcome will impact funding and resources garnered from the DEE program. A reduction in the amount of technical support will reduce the budget gained from the DEE program.	Provides statistics for number of support hours and personnel to assist distance learning instructors, Blackboard administration and helpdesk functions.
U of I Registrar's Office	Initial meeting to discuss overall evaluation plan. Emails to coordinate documents and existing data requests as needed.	The impact of the evaluation will dictate the number of distance learning courses developed each year. This will give students	Provides documents and statistics regarding distance learning courses, student success in distance learning courses and overall

		more choices in class selection.	enrollment numbers of distance learning students at the University of Idaho.
University of Idaho Administration	Major program milestones will be reported via email and a copy of the final report will be sent to the representative of the administration.	The evaluation outcome may dictate planning for increased numbers of distance learning students as compared to traditional students. This will impact overall funding for this state funded university.	None

Values, Standards, and Criteria: This evaluation will measure the gap between required skills to create BbLearn effective courses and the skills provided by the DEE-101 course. It will also measure the support time required for new course development before, during and after completion of the DEE-101 course. This evaluation will be conducted without bias and according to current industry guidelines and standards developed according to best practices. Appropriate stakeholders will be involved in the planning of the evaluation and analysis of evaluation data to develop the focus the evaluation. The data collected for this evaluation program will leverage data from multiple sources in order to affect a triangulation of sources. Triangulation of data sources will contribute to the integrity and reliability of the data.

Potential ethical issues: Bias can never be completely removed from a program evaluation. Each stakeholder we interact with has their own biases. "Numerous sources of bias can affect the conclusions drawn from the evaluation and undermine its credibility. Awareness of biases will improve an evaluator's changes of determining whether changes in the project or program were due to their administration or other influences. (Vassallo, 2004, p. 400)" This evaluator is a graduate from the University of Idaho and as such holds the institution in high regard. To avoid any personal bias the evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the standards of the American Evaluation Association. Per Fitzpatrick et al. (2010), using a systematically maintained documentation system or audit trail during an evaluation can illuminate the process and the decisions made during the evaluation.

"The evaluator may choose to use the notes for self-reflection and consideration of how values and experiences may be introducing bias. (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010, p. 99)" The evaluator will employ portions of this process such as daily progress notes to share communications with stakeholders can also increase transparency and reduce bias. The evaluation outcome may impact the funding and future resources for the University of Idaho Distance Extended Education Program (DEE). Evaluation analysis will be conducted in conjunction with the DEE Staff to ensure the unbiased review of data and the evaluation focus is maintained.

References

American evaluation association (2016) *Guiding principles for Evaluators*. Available at: http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=51.

American Library Association (2016) *Bias in the workplace*. Available at: http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity/workplace/bias.

Bledsoe, K. L., & Graham, J. A. (2005). The use of multiple evaluation approaches in program evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *26*(3), 302-319.

Burton, P. (2008) *Measuring success: Evaluation strategies for distance education*. Available at: http://hre49012008610002.pbworks.com/w/page/19641145/Measuring%20Success%3A%20%20Evaluation%20Strategies%20for%20Distance%20Education.

Dickenson, C. (2014) *DEE 101 Instructional Design Plan*. Moscow, ID: University of Idaho Distance & Extended Education.

Fitzpatrick, J., Sanders, J., & Worthen, B. (2010). *Program evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Morris, M. (1998). The design. *American Journal of Evaluation, 19*(3), 383–384.

Powell, R. R. (2006, Summer). Evaluation research: An overview. Library Trends, 55(1), 102-120.

University of Idaho (2016) *Distance & extended education*. Available at: https://dee.uidaho.edu/.

Vassallo, P. (2004). Getting started with evaluation reports: Answering the questions. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics, 61*(2), 277–286.

Vassallo, P. (2004). Getting started with evaluation reports: Creating the structure. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics, 61*(3), 398–403.

Weiss, C.H. (1993) 'Where politics and evaluation research meet', *Evaluation Practice*, 14(1), pp. 93–106. doi: 10.1016/0886-1633(93)90046-r.