

Readiness: The key to positioning and achieving utilization-focused evaluation



Wednesday May 12th 11:00 am - noon

Ricardo Ramirez & Dal Brodhead

DECI Project & New Economy Development Group

Expert Tutorial



Land & culture acknowledgement

As an evaluation Team, we acknowledge our responsibility to the Indigenous peoples of these lands, including adherence to their cultural protocols. We have both had the privilege of working with Indigenous groups and organizations.



Ricardo Ramírez lives in Guelph - the land of historical and modern traditions of the Anishnaabe, the Attawandaron, the Haudenosaunee and the Métis as well as the the Mississaugas of the Credit, treaty signatories of the Between the Lakes Purchase (Treaty 3).



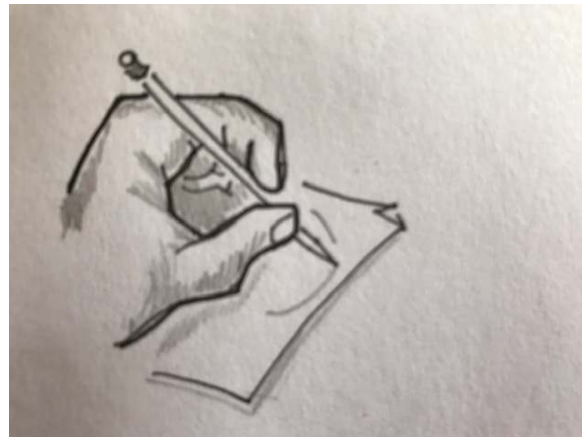
Dal Brodhead in Ottawa – lives and works on the unceded, un-surrendered Territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation whose presence here reaches back to time immemorial.

Our action-research context

- DECI: Designing Evaluation and Communication for Impact – a learning lab
- Over 10 years of evaluation capacity building for research projects globally
- Our goal is to support partners' adaptive management and increase impact
- We provide capacity building via 'just-in-time' mentoring

Readiness defined

The extent to which a partner organization is able, willing and committed to utilization-focused evaluation.



We seek to confirm readiness from the start (it is often not explicit).

1 Senior management buy-in to work as a learning partner



2 Designation of staff persons/team available for mentoring in evaluation



3 Allocation of a budget to cover evaluation plan development



4 Commitment of time by relevant staff to learning and/or strengthening evaluation capacity



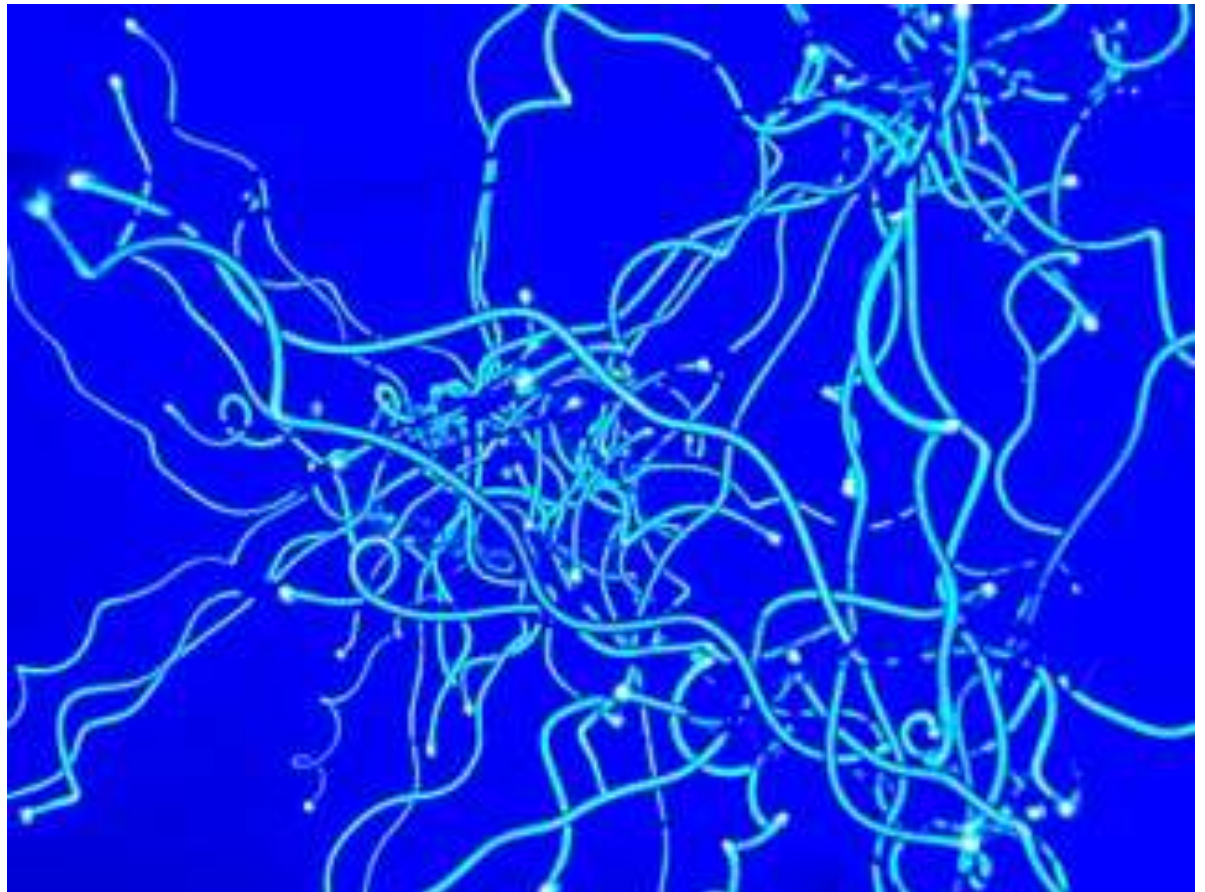
5 Openness of staff & management to adaptation of structures, strategies and Theory of Change



6 Interest in sustaining organizational engagement with the evaluation mentors




7 Willingness to learn, share, document and report



Readiness self-assessment tool

Organizational Capacity/Readiness (DECI-3 Project)

Readiness	Current Organizational Capacity/Readiness				
1. Senior management buy-in to work with DECI as a learning partner	Comments				
	1 low	2	3	4	5 high
2. Designation of staff persons/team available for mentoring in evaluation and research communication	Comments				
	1	2	3	4	5
3. Allocation of a budget to cover evaluation and communication plan development	Comments				
	1	2	3	4	5
4. Commitment of time by relevant staff to learning and/or strengthening evaluation and communication capacity	Comments				
	1	2	3	4	5
5. Openness of staff & management to adaptation of structures, strategies and Theory of Change	Comments				
	1	2	3	4	5
6. Interest in sustaining organizational engagement with DECI Team	Comments				
	1	2	3	4	5
7. Willingness to learn, share, document and report with DECI	Comments				
	1	2	3	4	5



Challenges to readiness

- Actual use of evaluations is valued by many but some will not commit to the UFE process or findings
- Participation in UFE takes time and money
- Evaluation still intimidates many project teams
- Loss of, or shared control, concerns some funders
- Readiness needs constant support

Take home messages

- **THE POWER TO DESIGN**

CREATING THE SPACE FOR A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS OF LEARNING

- **THE COMMITMENT TO LEARN**

IT IS ABOUT TAKING OWNERSHIP OF THE PROCESS – NOT JUST ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

- **THE EMPHASIS UPON BUILDING AN EVALUATION CULTURE**

IT IS ABOUT LEARNING BY DOING AND USING THE FINDINGS & THE PROCESS

Readiness in Evaluation: Three Prompts for Evaluators

Ricardo Ramírez, Dal Brodhead, and Wendy Quarry

DECI-2

Abstract: *The notion of readiness in evaluation is often tacit: it can be hidden in the Request for Proposals by a granting agency calling for an evaluation; or, at best, it is hinted at in the winning consultant's bid. We are practitioners committed to learning-oriented, practical evaluations. However, we have found that the extent to which the client is ready for a collaborative, utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) that enhances organizational learning is often taken for granted. We have learned to address "readiness" early on, as it is a lynchpin that shapes every subsequent step of the process. We bring attention to examples from our practice to highlight three dimensions of readiness: the power to design, the commitment to learn, and building an evaluation culture.*

Ramirez, R.; Brodhead D. & Quarry, W. (2018). Readiness in evaluation: Three prompts for evaluators. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 33(2): 258-267.

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