

Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Evaluation

Developing Thought Leaders in Evaluation

New Mentoring Program for IDPE Students

Beginning in 2009, all incoming IDPE students will be assigned a peer mentor. New IDPE students will be paired with more experienced students to provide social and educational support, obtain information, promote confidence building, provide good examples, advise newcomers as they begin their doctoral studies in evaluation, and assure progress toward degree completion. Students in the spring 2009 EVAL 6010: Interdisciplinary Seminar in Evaluation will play a major role in designing, implementing, and evaluating the program.

Quarterly Newsletter
of the
Interdisciplinary Ph.D.
in Evaluation



From the director...

It was a great honor to be a corecipient of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) Marcia Guttentag Award—presented to a promising new evaluator for early career contributions and whose work is consistent with the AEA *Guiding Principles for Evaluators*—at this year's annual AEA conference. I am the second director of the IDPE and the third Western Michigan University (WMU) faculty member to receive this award. Dr. E. Jane Davidson—the first director of the IDPE—received the award in 2005 and former WMU Evaluation, Measurement, and Evaluation (EMR) professor Dr. Liliana Rodriguez-Campos received the award in 2007.

The IDPE program has several other accomplishments to celebrate as well. Our program coordinator, Mary Ramlow, received one of the 2008 WMU Make-A-Difference Awards. IDPE student P. Cristian Gugiu received a WMU 2008 Gwen Frostic Doctoral Fellowship and IDPE student Stephanie D. H. Evergreen received the 2008 Daniel L. Stuffelbeam Travel Scholarship. Look for more details

on these and other accomplishments of our students and faculty throughout this issue of the newsletter.

As you may have noticed, the format and layout of our quarterly newsletter has changed substantially with this issue. We hope these changes and the newsletter's contents accurately reflect the wide array of endeavors in which the IDPE, its students, and its faculty are currently engaged.

My thanks to IDPE student Amy M. Gullickson for helping prepare this newsletter.

—Dr. Chris L. S. Coryn

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What new evaluators really need to know...

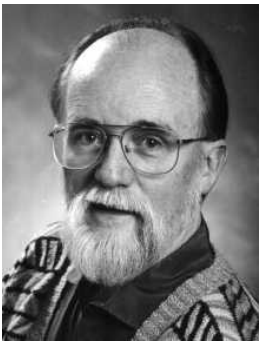
We asked three leading scholars what things they believe new evaluators really need to know



In 1994, William Shadish¹ proposed the idea that good evaluation “responds to important social needs” (p. 347). He also wrote that “The idea seems reasonable enough. But if it is accepted, it challenges some popular notions...it challenges the idea that evaluation is applied social science methodology, or that evaluation is judging merit or worth...these ideas are too narrow...Evaluation is far more than these because it responds to important social needs that extend beyond methods or valuing” (p. 347). Shadish concluded by stating that “Put simply, both the notion of evaluation as valuing, and the notion of evaluation as applied social science methodology, share the same problem. Both are insufficient...if we train students to rely on such notions as their primary resource, they will not be able to do the full job that society asks them to do. Both society and the profession of evaluation will be worse off as a result” (p. 351).

We asked three leading evaluation scholars (Drs. Michael Q. Patton, Michael Scriven, and Daniel L. Stufflebeam) to name the top three things they believe new evaluators and students of evaluation “need to know” to conduct high quality, professional evaluation. Our selection of scholars was one of convenience, intended to represent a variety of perspectives. Their verbatim responses appear below.

Michael Q. Patton



Michael Q. Patton, author of *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* and *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, among many other works, provided us with four things that he believes are essential knowledge for new evaluators and students of evaluation:

1. *How to enhance use:* The primary factors that affect evaluation use and how to attend to those factors at every stage in an evaluation.
2. *Situation analysis:* How to analyze the evaluation situation so as to focus an evaluation by *appropriately matching* the design, methods, measures, processes, time line, resources, and stakeholder interactions to the situation. Situation analysis includes what you, the evaluator, know and don't know, given the situation. It's important to know what you know, *what you don't know*, and what can't be known.
3. *Recognizing and managing competing demands:* How to recognize and manage tensions between competing goods like learning versus accountability, improvement needs versus summative judgment demands, collaboration versus independence, research criteria versus evaluation standards, critical thinking versus creative thinking, huge expectations versus limited resources and time, and things that make you insane versus those that keep you sane.
4. *Professional integrity:* How to take responsibility for and be accountable for the conclusions that you reach and the judgments you render.

SCHOLARSHIP IDPE Student Receives Frostic Fellowship

The WMU Gwen Frostic Doctoral Fellowship is a competitive award given to doctoral students on the basis of the quality and significance of their dissertation research and faculty recommendations.

This year, three WMU doctoral students received the Fellowship, including IDPE student P. Cristian Gugiu to support his dissertation work on summative confidence. In his dissertation, Cristian integrates statistical, measurement, and evaluation theories to calculate confidence limits for summative evaluation conclusions.

¹Shadish, W. R. (1994). Needs-based evaluation theory: What do you need to know to do good evaluation? *Evaluation Practice*, 15(3), 347-358.

What new evaluators really need to know...

PRODUCTIVITY IDPE Publications

IDPE student Krysten Martens recently had her review of the book *Youth Participatory Evaluation: Strategies for Engaging Young People* published in the *American Journal of Evaluation (AJE)*. IDPE alumnus and WMU adjunct instructor, Dr. Wes Martz, had his review of *The Handbook of Leadership Development Evaluation* published in *AJE*. IDPE faculty—Dr. Paul Clements—and two IDPE alumni—Drs. Thomaz Chianca and Ryoh Sasaki—had their paper titled “Reducing World Poverty by Improving Evaluation of Development Aid” published in *AJE*. IDPE student P. Cristian Gugiu and IDPE faculty, Drs. Chris Coryn and E. Brooks Applegate, had their paper titled “Structure and Measurement Properties of the Patient Assessment of Chronic Illness Care (PACIC) Instrument” accepted for publication in the *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*.

Daniel Stufflebeam



Daniel L. Stufflebeam, author of numerous books, including *Evaluation Theory, Models, & Applications*, provided six things that evaluators need to know in order to conduct high quality, professional evaluation:

1. Working knowledge of all 30 standards in *The Program Evaluation Standards*.
2. The meanings of formative and summative evaluation.
3. Principles and methods of statistics, measurement, and research design.
4. Ability to conceptualize and write.
5. Ability to interview, listen, and communicate.
6. Ability to plan, manage, and complete projects.

Michael Scriven, author of the *Evaluation Thesaurus*, sent four items that he believes new evaluators and students of evaluation need to know:

1. That knowing how to do evaluation does not just mean *knowing how to validate empirical claims* (especially causal claims); an equally important part is *knowing how to validate values* (especially claims about needs, fairness, and legality).

2. That competence in quantitative methods does not just mean *knowing how to use and analyze serious statistics*, it's equally important to be able to *do serious cost analysis*.

3. That since professional evaluation is, in essence, systematic, localized, technically refined, critical thinking, a paramount duty of the evaluator is to *find and scrutinize the most fundamental assumptions* of the evaluand's advocates (usually including your clients) and detractors. For example, in curriculum evaluation, don't accept the common assumption that technology is applied science—even though the Oxford American Dictionary, and others, define it that way—and hence needs no separate coverage of its methodology or nature. Technology clearly emerged at least a million years before science, and many of its greatest contributors were, and continue to be, entirely lacking in scientific

Michael Scriven



qualifications (e.g., microcomputers, spreadsheets, Google); its holy grail is an ingenious and useful *device*, not a novel cognition (e.g., fact, generalization, explanation, prediction, or classification).

4. That (i) program evaluation is a recent branch of professional evaluation, reaching that level long after product evaluation, performance evaluation, personnel evaluation, intradisciplinary evaluation, and portfolio evaluation had done so; and that (ii) all of these branches, and four or five named others, are based on the same distinctive logic of evaluation; and that (iii) they also overlap substantially in content. Hence understanding the logic of evaluation and something about each of these areas tends to improve performance in any one of them, often substantially (e.g., by avoiding reinventing the wheel).

IDPE Spotlight

Alumna: Dr. Nadini Persaud



Shortly after defending her dissertation, "Conceptual and Practical Analysis of Costs and Benefits in Evaluation: Developing a Cost Analysis Tool for Practical Program Evaluation," Dr. Nadini Persaud recommenced employment with the Department of Management Studies, University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill Campus, Barbados.

UWI is the regional university for the Caribbean, which has three campus locations (Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica). The

Department of Management Studies is the largest department on the Cave Hill Campus. It offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs.

As lecturer in Project Evaluation, Nadini teaches and/or serves as an examiner for three graduate level courses in the M.Sc. Project Management and Evaluation program. She also is a Practicum superior for students in this program.

In addition, Dr. Persaud teaches and/or serves as an examiner for several undergraduate courses and proposed a course on "program evaluation." If approved, it will be the first undergraduate offering in evaluation at the university. She also prepared a handbook on stress management and effective study techniques for new students.

Nadini served as the conference cochair for the Department of Management Studies 3rd International Management Conference in 2008, at which Dr. Michael Scriven, her doctoral dissertation chair, was a featured speaker.

A former Fulbright/LASPAU scholar, Nadini is now the vice-president of the recently launched Fulbright Alumni Association of Barbados. She assisted the U.S. Embassy, Bridgetown, with interviews for the Fulbright program and served as their college fair ambassador in Barbados.

Nadini also takes an active role in the American Evaluation Association. She presented at the 2008 conference and will serve as 2009 program chair for the "Costs, Effectiveness, Benefits, and Economics" Topical Interest Group.

PLACEMENTS

Eight students have completed the IDPE program and received their doctorates from WMU. These graduates are employed in a variety of sectors including higher education, government, nonprofit, business, and consulting.

The most recent placement is Dr. Daniela Schröter, who became the Director of Research at The Evaluation Center on December 1, 2009.

IDPE ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. Gary Wegenke, dean of WMU's College of Education, will retire this spring. He has served as chair of the IDPE advisory board for the past two years. In that capacity, he chaired the search committee for the IDPE director in 2007 and 2008. The advisory board will appoint a new chair this spring. Thank you for your service, Dr. Wegenke!

Staff: Mary Ramlow, IDPE Coordinator

IDPE program coordinator, Mary Ramlow, was a recipient of the 2008 WMU Make-A-Difference award. The award recognizes WMU staff who meet and exceed their job expectations and who demonstrate exceptional service. Mary's record of service is exemplified by more than 20 years of employment at WMU and, more specifically, by the contributions that she has made to WMU, The Evaluation Center (EC), and the IDPE. Mary's nomination included more than a dozen recommendations for the award, including letters from IDPE students, EC staff, and WMU faculty and emeritus

professors. As one nominator noted: "Her overall job performance is excellent, and she wears many hats: office coordinator, program coordinator, supervisor, and backup to the IT person. Many terms describe her: capable, common sense, considerate, dedicated (to WMU and our office), friendly, kind, likeable, smart, soft-hearted, willing."



FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Sue Poppink was promoted to associate professor in the department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology.

Dr. Matthew S. Mingus was promoted to full professor in the department of Public Affairs and Administration.

Dr. Jennifer Palthe, associate professor of management, received the WMU Distinguished Teaching Award.

EXCELLENCE IDPE Student Receives Stufflebeam Scholarship

IDPE student Stephanie Evergreen was the recipient of the Daniel L. Stufflebeam Travel Scholarship for outstanding performance in her coursework during her first year of doctoral work. Stephanie received \$1,000 to support her travel to the 2008 American Evaluation Association conference in Denver.

Faculty: Dr. Matthew Mingus

Dr. Matthew S. Mingus, Professor of Governance at Western Michigan University and 2005-2006 Fulbright Research Chair in Public Policy, Governance, and Public Administration at the University of Ottawa, will be spending a year in Iraq as a governance advisor for the U.S. Department of State.

His position will involve working with the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) based at Camp Taji, Iraq. Mingus stated, "I am looking forward to a break from academia and

particularly the chance to put some of my ideas from research on democratic reform to the real-world test."

Mingus will be part of a 13-15 member team that includes career Foreign Service Officers and specialists in political affairs, governance, agricultural and economic development, education, and the rule of law.

As a team their purpose is to help develop a strong sense of local control, including the development of local civil



society organizations and infrastructure.

The team will cover the areas in the Province of Baghdad that are north and west of the city of Baghdad.

Student: Lindsay Akers Noakes

Lindsay Akers Noakes began the IDPE program in summer 2008, after 8 years of teaching in the Battle Creek area. She is one of seven students awarded a full time associateship through the National Science Foundation's Assessment for Learning (AfL) project. AfL is a \$1.3 million dollar effort led by three centers at WMU: The Center for the Study of Mathematics Curriculum, The Evaluation Center, and the Mallinson Institute for Science Education.

With a BA in math and education from WMU, and a master's in math from Eastern Michigan University, Lindsay could have chosen to pursue her PhD through the College of Arts and Sciences or the College of Education. Instead, she chose the IDPE. With interdisciplinary evaluation, she said, "I get to combine everything I care about:



education, math, statistics and working with people." Her primary areas of interest are evaluation of teachers and classroom assessment.

Lindsay is currently involved in the AfL benchmarking project, developing a tool kit to help organizations train teachers to use the Student Evaluation Standards. The end product will be a handbook designed to help teachers become better evaluators of their students. Next semester, the work will be pilot tested with preservice teachers at WMU. Ms. Noakes also will serve as one of two guest editors for the upcoming special edition of the *Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation* on Assessment for Learning.

In addition to her work with WMU and AfL, Lindsay serves as the project manager for a family literacy program through the Grand Rapids Public Schools. The project involves the Literacy Center of West Michigan; and is funded by the United Way.

Upcoming...

Workshop: Cost Analysis with Dr. Brian Yates

Tuesday, March 10, 2009
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
The Evaluation Center

Programs don't just have outputs, outcomes, and impacts; programs also require resources. Time, space, equipment, supplies, communications services, administrative, and more are the necessary "ingredients" of any program.

The value of these resources is the true cost of the program and needs to be evaluated as much as do the outputs, outcomes, and impacts. In addition, programs sometimes yield outcomes that have monetary value, such as savings in emergency room visits and other health care expenditures. These program benefits are distinct from program costs and also need evaluation.

Dr. Brian Yates, from the Department of Psychology at American University, Washington, D.C., will demonstrate how to include program costs and program benefits in evaluations, for formative as well as summative purposes.

Workshop: Logic Modeling with Dr. Jonny Morell

Friday, May 1, 2009
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
The Evaluation Center

Dr. Jonny Morell will present on three broad topics regarding logic modeling: (1) an expanded view of forms, (2) epistemological issues, and (3) processes for cooperative development. Attendees will learn:

- the essential nature of a "model," including its strengths and weaknesses;

- uses of logic models across the entire evaluation life cycle
- the value of using multiple forms and scales of the same logic model for the same evaluation
- principles of good graphic design for logic models, and the relationship between design and information density;
- evaluation conditions under which logic models are, and are not, useful
- the relationship between logic models, measurement, and methodology
- how to work with stakeholders and advisors in developing a logic model

Dr. Jonny Morell is a senior policy analyst at TechTeam Government Solutions and editor-in-chief of the international journal *Evaluation and Program Planning*.

MISSION

The Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Evaluation Program's (IDPE) mission is to develop thought leaders in evaluation who have (1) deep knowledge of evaluation theory, methodology, and practice; (2) superior skills in practical and critical thinking; and (3) a knack for seeing opportunities for innovation and improvement.

To accomplish this mission, the IDPE is based on the concept that the best way to learn evaluation is by doing it and the best way to develop thought leaders in a discipline is by exposing them to the best and brightest minds available.

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