



# **Evaluation: An Integrated Framework for Understanding, Guiding, and Improving Policies and Programs**

*Melvin M. Mark, Gary T. Henry, George Julnes*

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"This is one of the most coherent and comprehensive theories of evaluation yet formulated and one that makes a most valuable contribution. The authors are pioneering in important new directions."

--Ernest R. House, author of *Professional Evaluation and Evaluating with Validity*

"This book is the best I've ever read detailing a practical theory of evaluation. It is comprehensive, beautifully written, and makes sense of the evaluation enterprise. It does so by emphasizing the major function of evaluation as sense-making about policies and programs."

--Thomas D. Cook, professor, sociology, psychology, education, and public policy, Northwestern University

Programs that serve the needs of the public continually face changes brought by social, political, and economic forces. To survive these changes, organizations must evaluate their programs wisely and realistically. This book offers a new approach to evaluation, one that will encourage all kinds of organizations and agencies to improve their contributions to social betterment. The authors draw from three decades of evaluation practice and theory to present their own framework for conceptualizing evaluation and for pragmatically assessing social policies and programs.

They analyze four purposes of evaluation:

- \* To review the merit of programs and their value to society
- \* To improve the organization and its services
- \* To ensure program compliance with mandates
- \* To build knowledge and expertise for future programs

For the practitioner, these purposes help define the approach and methods for an evaluation. The authors also enrich their discussion with four possible modes of inquiry: description, classification, causal analysis, and values inquiry. Filled with tables, charts, and figures, this resource invites organizations to make the most appropriate programming decisions based on thoughtful and systematic methods. *Evaluation: An Integrated Framework for Understanding, Guiding, and Improving Policies and Programs* is a tool that scholars can use to rejuvenate their view of evaluation and that practitioners can use to integrate the best techniques with a contemporary understanding of social policy and change.

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