

D. Russ-Eft & H. Preskill. (2009). *Evaluation in Organizations: A Systematic Approach to Enhancing Learning, Performance and Change* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Basic Books. 552 pages.

*Reviewed by Ivana Pavic*

“The word evaluation means many things to many people” (p. 1). So begins *Evaluation in Organizations* (2nd ed.) by Darlene Russ-Eft and Haillie Preskill, first published in 2001 and re-released in September 2009. The book is divided into three parts, much like a logic model (inputs, processes, and outputs), and has three main objectives: to explore how evaluation practice contributes to decision-making in organizations for issues surrounding learning, performance, and change; to provide knowledge to conduct useful, high-quality, and meaningful evaluations within organizations; and to help practitioners become more effective evaluators.

Part I (Inputs) investigates the background and context of evaluation, answers the question about where evaluation comes from, and provides an understanding of the models of evaluation. The chapters have a logical flow, beginning with the definition of the term *evaluation* and moving to the different approaches that can be applied in an evaluation. More discussion is warranted to illustrate the differences in the multiple definitions of evaluation, and a summary table of the different evaluation definitions, with an emphasis placed on key terms, would have been useful.

In terms of differences between the first and second editions, the chapters follow the same order and the main ideas are articulated in the same fashion. However, the authors expand on the emerging topic of evaluation capacity building. Examples and references have also been updated. Models added include Strengths and Asset-Based Approaches and Cross-Culturally Competent Evaluation.

Part II (Processes) focuses on evaluation question generation, evaluation design, and the various methods employed in data collection. Each chapter begins with a scenario on training, and is followed by illustrative examples throughout. Most chapters include lists of

advantages and disadvantages, illustrative diagrams and checklists, and many useful tables that are easy to refer to, such as sample observation recording forms. In my opinion, the best and most detailed chapter was Chapter 10, "Surveys and Questionnaires," as it provides multiple diagrams and examples for use as models in real-life evaluations. Chapter 13 concludes Part II and helps guide the evaluator in making design decisions and determining which methods are most appropriate in a given situation.

One difference between the first edition and the second edition is the splitting of the original chapter "Archival Data and Observation" into two separate chapters. The authors in the original chapter pay little attention to the development of a logic model and identifying key stakeholder interests, but this is given central attention in the second edition.

Part III (Outputs) endeavours to help the evaluator make meaning out of the data collected by providing the information required for the evaluator to communicate and report evaluation findings, evaluate the evaluation, and bring evaluation into the organization.

The main differences between the first edition and the second edition are significant. Chapter 14, "Communicating and Reporting Evaluation Activities and Findings," has been updated to respond to advancement in technology, such as synchronous electronic communications and electronic discussion groups. Chapter 15, "Planning, Managing, and Budgeting the Evaluation," adds a new step in the evaluation process and highlights the central role of planning in an evaluation. The most significant change was found in the final chapter of the book, "Strategies for Implementing the Evaluation in Organizations." This chapter includes the addition of a section on building evaluation capacity, which replaces the section on using participatory and collaborative approaches.

Overall, this is a fine book. The only suggestion I would make would be to include a discussion of the differences in conducting evaluations in nonprofit organizations/government and for-profit organizations, as these different contexts can make a difference both to the type of evaluation selected and to outcomes.

Should you purchase the second edition, if you already own the first edition? Much is still the same, but *Evaluation in Organizations* (2nd ed.) has made some important additions to reflect the current

state and discussions in evaluation. The book has brought forward the increased consciousness of the role of cross-cultural impact on evaluations, the use of the logic model, stakeholder interests, and new evaluation models. As a quick reference guide, the first edition is still stable enough for use. However, if you wish to stay up to date and use the references and models, the second edition may be worth the purchase.