

Embedding Evaluation

You can save time, conserve funds, and improve the quality of evaluation findings by embedding evaluation in the processes of planning, implementing, and reporting on the program. Following are some guidelines for embedding evaluation.

Develop an evaluation plan.

Develop an evaluation plan that identifies key opportunities for data collection and analysis. Use the *Evaluation Matrix Template*.

Collect data at every opportunity.

You will certainly want to collect traditional categories of data such as student assessment results and survey returns. However, data may also include observation notes, meeting agendas and minutes, plans, and curricula. Time for completing brief surveys can be built into most meetings. Moreover, discussions at meetings can be recorded and transcribed as informal focus groups.

Document your program activities.

Document important program activities through video and photography. You can never predict when such documentation may provide useful evaluation evidence, as well as material for marketing and promotion.

Organize data collection.

Develop a filing system for convenient retrieval of documentation and artifacts.

Involve program participants.

Involve program participants in evaluation design and data analysis. You can build in opportunities for participants to help develop evaluation questions and to reflect and comment on evaluation findings. Use existing meetings and work sessions to incorporate reflection on evaluation processes and findings.