

NM Evaluation Lab @ UNM 2017
Annual Workshop Review

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Overview

The NM Evaluation Lab @ UNM held its second annual workshop at the end of the 2016-2017 school year for nonprofit community organizations to come together to learn how community member organizations worked with the Lab to design better data collection processes, document program models, and assess client outcomes. The workshop also included sessions on managing data and creating internal evaluation systems.

The workshop was held on April 21st, 2017 from 12pm-4pm at UNM in Hodgins Hall Alumni Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Participants included members from the nonprofit community, organizations that worked with the Evaluation Lab, and UNM Evaluation Lab students, former students, faculty and staff. Students and former students presented evaluation projects in a poster session and helped to facilitate the workshop. Evaluation coordinators from the participating organizations served as panelists.

The mission of the NM Evaluation lab is to build community-based evaluation capacity in New Mexico's nonprofit sector. Participating organizations advance social justice in the areas of social services, legal advice, reproductive and behavioral health, economic security, and early childhood education. The Lab forms "evaluation teams" of UNM students who hold Evaluation Lab Fellowships, Senior Fellows (who previously completed the Fellowship), UNM faculty, community evaluators, and organization staff to develop evaluation plans and undertake specific evaluation projects.

This report summarizes feedback from the 2017 workshop and provides suggestions for improving the workshop for the following year. The data consist of survey responses collected at the end of the workshop. Responses were transcribed, grouped, and then coded for similar themes. Additional data analysis came from reflection sections at the end of each breakout session during the workshop in which attendees were encouraged to raise their hand and say what they found useful, while Fellows wrote down the responses on poster paper.

The 2017 Workshop had a total attendance of 55 people. 31 were from community organizations, 2 were non-affiliated community members, and 22 were UNM Fellows, Senior Fellows, former students, mentors and staff. 30 attendees completed the feedback survey: of these 20 were community organization representatives, 1 was a non-affiliated community member and 9 were Evaluation Lab Fellows, mentors or staff.



Workshop Feedback Survey

The first question asked respondents to state what aspects of the workshop they found most useful. Three main themes stood out for all participants in what was most useful: community building, the poster sessions, and data information. All participants found the poster presentations from the Fellows informative and useful in conceptualizing the different forms that evaluation can take as well as the different stages that each evaluation project was at. Another important part of the workshop for all, was the community building and connecting that was able to happen due to the array of workshop participants that included organizations that all focus on differing social issues. Many of the organizations were able to see how others formatted their data and evaluation systems and ideas were exchanged for both practices. The organization representatives and students also found the data breakout sessions and conversations around data systems illuminating. Being able to learn how other non-profits collected data also useful as most organizations expressed similar frustrations when trying to manage their data.

“Breakout sessions, hearing from organizations on their experiences with data systems, lessons learned and best practices. Opportunity to network with other organizations, provided learning and ability to think about collaborations.”

“Data session-information regarding different data systems yet common development difficulties.”

“As a new attendee I really appreciated the presentation of projects from students. I liked there was time for questions at the workshops for people to share and ask questions. The break was good and location and food!”

Almost every suggestion for improvement, elicited in the second survey question, included needing more space. This was the first year that the workshop was held in Hodgins hall. Although a beautiful venue, feedback overwhelmingly suggested that much more space is needed to successfully move about, see presentations, and to clearly hear presentations and ask questions without having to strain or shout. Suggestions also included having the Fellows present to the whole workshop one time as well as including a brief overview of the non-profit client they worked for and what type of services they provided. Non-profit representatives suggested it would be beneficial to have the opportunity to attend both of the breakout workshops. But, it was also stated that the workshop felt slightly too long and scaling back the length would be beneficial for participants to stay fully engaged for the duration of the whole workshop.

Respondents were also asked what topics they would like to see at next year's workshop. Although this question received the fewest responses on the survey, a two common topics suggested were data (collection, systems, programs) and possible collaboration between non-profits, like holding meetings to discuss the best way to present data to CYFD or to discuss best data collection systems. A call for additional discussion around the challenges that evaluation can present was also repeated. The Fellows called specifically for more discussion around data collection and programs like STATA and Tableau, with an emphasis on the importance of demonstrations and workshops. They also suggested collaboration between non-profits, like sharing common goals or struggles that organizations may have would be useful not only for the organizations but for the Fellows as well. Organization representatives also called for data dissemination and application workshops. There was also a strong theme of the organizations wanting to hear more about the challenges that Fellows faced when working with the non-profits and on the evaluations, as well as follow up with past organizations that have worked with the Evaluation lab before and where they are now. There were also specific requests for clarifications on some of the evaluation projects that students did, perhaps hinting at the need for more question and answer time after the student presentations.

“Follow up with org's UNM Eval Labs worked with in the past. How are they doing? Have they been able to maintain the changes?”

“Any challenges working with organizations that students had to overcome.”

“Data application! Maybe a Tableau or Google Analytics workshop?”

“More bite-sized presentations on evaluation: types of change indicators (attitudes, behavior, awareness etc.), subjective assessment instruments/strategies. Any specific guidance on presenting data, how to synthesize results from a literature review, what is meta-data and how can it be used?”

The closing question on the survey allowed participants to give open suggestions and comments or share anything else. Overall all participants were very positive. The Fellows wrote copious “thank yous” and noted that they were proud to be a part of the event. The organization members also provided ample thanks and predominantly said they enjoyed working with the evaluation lab. They felt inspired by the Fellows and the amazing projects, and called for more work like it as well as expressed interest in participating in the program. Further suggestions called for organizations with more experience to give presentations on bridging theory and practice.

“This is a really cool event, I am very proud to have been a part of it.”

“I feel so inspired by all the presentations.”

“I want to participate in the program!”

“To know about the work of the organization is amazing. Thanks to the UNM Eval lab, Melissa, Sonia, and the students. Great support.”

Take-Aways from Breakout Sessions

In addition to the workshop feedback surveys, data was also collected at the end of each breakout session. The two breakout sessions were “DIY Evaluation” which focused on organization experiences with embedded low-tech evaluation systems and “Data Systems for Evaluation” which focused on organization experiences with packaged data systems.

The “DIY Evaluation” takeaways included an appreciation for both the quantitative and qualitative tips that were provided for a DIY evaluation, and a sharing about how collecting data can be done through participant letters and pre/post-tests. The “Data Systems for Evaluation” breakout session had more direct feedback from the participants. They learned that adopting a data management system can be very difficult and a bumpy process to start. Another main point learned was that it needs to be an organization wide effort, with clarity and appropriate trainings necessary to work with differing types of data. The data visualization program, Tableau was also widely appreciated as many participants did not have prior to knowledge and appreciated the demonstration.

End of Workshop Spoken Reflection

The end of the workshop reflection called for participants to speak about what stood out to them, what they learned, and what it was like to see the results of the different evaluations. In many ways it echoed the written survey. Overwhelmingly, the enthusiasm and professionalism of the evaluation lab Fellows stood out to those present, as well as the diversity of evaluation projects and the myriad of ways to perform evaluation. The workshop participants enjoyed learning about all the different tools that are available and were interested in seeing the long-term impact. They also said it was beneficial to see the vulnerability that organizations expose themselves to when engaging in evaluation. And lastly, they said it was critical that they learned to empower their staff to value evaluation so that they can all be a part of it.

The spoken reflection also revealed that participants felt that seeing the results of the evaluations was empowering, energizing, confidence boosting, and provided clarity. A common focus from the reflection was also that having students engage with these organizations is beneficial to the communities.

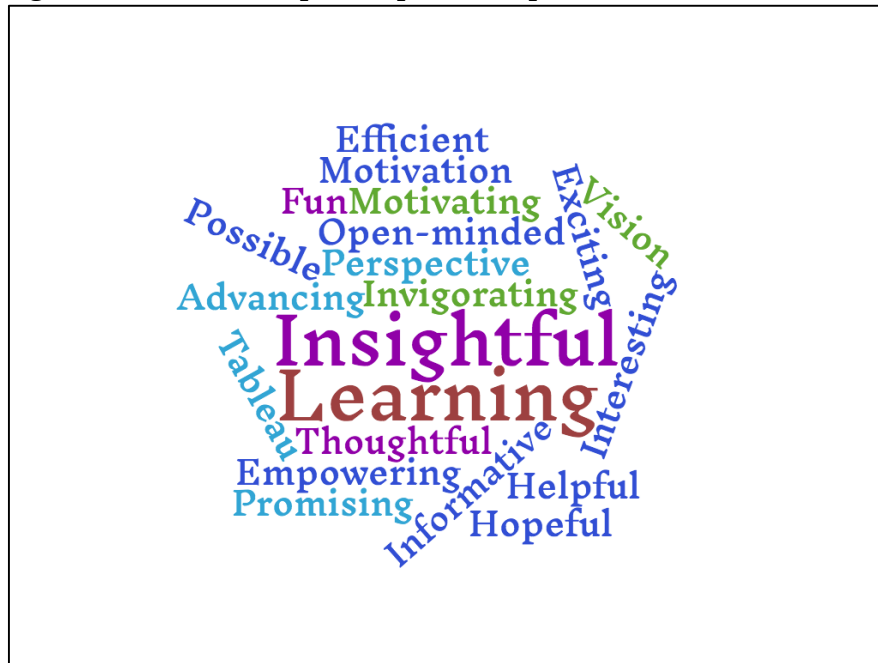
“Interesting to see what's happening in the community, energizing to see that there's real movement in our community.”

“How close I feel as an organization to the university.”

“Empowering to go through the process.”

To close, the facilitator asked participants to share one word that captured their experience at the Workshop. A Wordle¹ created the following representation of their responses. (See Figure 1.) The words for this Wordle was taken from the closing activity in which every participant said a single word that described their experience of the workshop.

Figure 1. Wordle of participants' experience of the workshop



¹ A wordle is a visual depiction of words contained in a piece of text, as exemplified within the figure above. www.wordle.net

Recommendations and Conclusion

The Evaluation should consider the following points raised in the feedback survey:

- A larger space for the workshop as a whole.
- More time for Fellow's poster presentations to include an introduction of the organization and Q&A at the end.
- Additional time dedicated to data discussion/dissemination.
- Walkthroughs of data programs like STATA and Tableau.
- A shorter workshop as a whole.

Over all, the 2017 NM Evaluation Lab @ UNM Workshop was highly successful with Fellows feeling proud of the work they did, community members wanting to become more involved, and the participating organizations feeling connected to the evaluations and the university. A strong feeling of community was built between the Evaluation Lab Fellows as well as between the organizations. New knowledge regarding data systems and the evaluation process was also gained during the workshop and the event proved to be a satisfying way to end the 2016-2017 Evaluation Lab.

**NM Evaluation Lab @ UNM
Annual Workshop**

**April 21, 2017
noon-4:00 pm**

AGENDA

noon – 12:45pm Lunch, Welcome & Overview of the Evaluation Lab

Maria Wolfe, Sr. Alumni Relations Officer

Dr. Sonia Bettez, Associate Director of the Evaluation Lab

Melissa Binder, Associate Professor of Economics and Director of the Evaluation Lab

12:45 – 2:15pm Poster session: 2016 – 2017 Evaluation Lab Collaborations

2:15 – 2:25pm Break

2:30 – 3:45pm Panels

Data systems for Evaluation

Organization experiences with packaged data systems: Brooke Tafoya, New Day; Juliann Salinas, Enlace Comunitario. Evaluation Lab data analysis and data visualization: Chris Erwin, Evaluation Lab.

Facilitator: Sofia Locklear

Timekeeper: Cheyenne Trujillo

Tech support: Jared Clay

Note taker: Frejdyn Jarrett

DIY Evaluation

Organization experiences with embedded low-tech evaluation systems: Ana López, Enlace Comunitario. Constructing a simple and robust evaluation system: Melissa Binder, Evaluation Lab.

Facilitator: Amy Hawkins

Timekeeper: Alexandria Lyons

Tech support: Ranjavola Andriamanana

Note taker: Hayley Tvede

3:45 – 4:00pm Closing Remarks and Takeaways

Sonia Bettez and Tara Kane Prendergast

4:00pm Optional tour of Hodgkin Hall

Poster Session

A-Client Experiences and Impact

Enlace Comunitario: Fellow Jaen Ugalde, Sr. Fellow Charla Henley, Mentor Sonia Bettez, Enlace Evaluation Coordinator Juliann Salinas, Enlace Evaluation Team Members Ana Lopez, Sandro Anguiano, Esteban Machado, Enlace Executive Director Antoinette Sedillo Lopez.

New Day Youth & Family Services: Fellows Sofia Locklear & Alexandria Lyons, Mentor Ranjana Damle, New Day Operations Director Brooke Tafoya

B-Organization data I

Centro Savila: Fellows Ozlem Barin & Hayley Tvede, Mentor Claudia Díaz Fuentes, Centro Sávila Executive Director, Bill Wagner

CLNKids: Fellow Gavin Leach, Sr. Fellow Matthew Crockett, Mentor Julian Baca, CLNKids Executive Director Tammy Hanks

C-Organization data II

Las Cumbres Community Services: Fellows Ranjavola Andriamanana & Jared Clay, Mentor Amanda Bissell, LCCS Evaluation Coordinator Robyn Covelli, LCCS Chief Operations Officer Megan Delano, LCCS Executive Director Rex Davidson

New Mexico Immigrant Law Center (NMILC): Fellow Cheyenne Trujillo, Mentors Sonia Bettez & Melissa Binder, NMILC Evaluation Coordinator Anna Nassiff, NMILC Executive Director Jennifer Landau

D-Evaluation planning

Breath of My Heart Birthplace: Fellow Tara Kane Prendergast, Mentor Amanda Bissell, BMH Director Jessica Frechette-Gutfreund, BMH Advisor Micaela Cadena

La Red del Río Abajo: Fellow Amy Hawkins, Mentor Julian Baca, La Red Evaluation Coordinator and Facilitator Juan Abeyta

PB&J Family Services: Fellow Frejdyn Jarrett, Sr. Fellow Lucas Pedraza, Mentor Melissa Binder, PB&J Evaluation Coordinator Anita Harwood, PB&J Executive Director Susannah Burke



2017 EVALUATION LAB WORKSHOP

Friday, April 21, 2017

12:00 noon – 4:00 PM

UNM Hodgin Hall Alumni Center

For non-profit community organizations

Learn how the UNM Evaluation Lab can help your organization document its impact.

See how member organizations worked with the Lab to design better data collection processes, document program models, and assess client outcomes.

Get technical assistance on collecting relevant data and developing and implementing useful program evaluations.



Make evaluation work for your organization!

\$30 per person; free for member organizations

Includes lunch and parking!

Advance registration required

To register, click on **WORKSHOP** at evallab.unm.edu

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