

# University of New Mexico Evaluation Lab Fellows Skills Survey Analysis from 2017-2018

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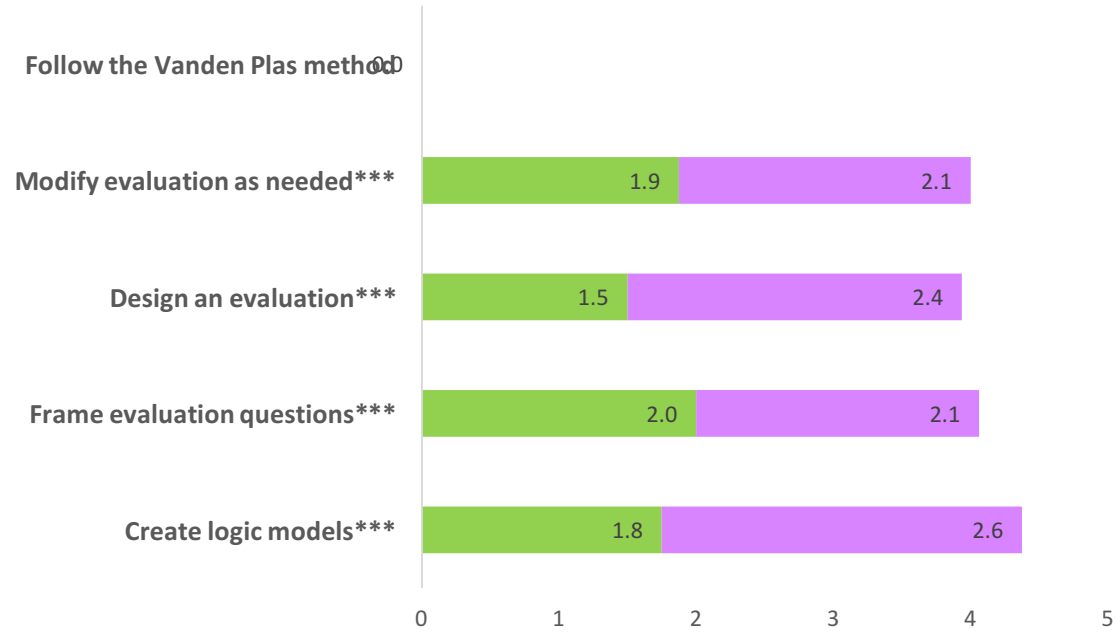
Evaluation Lab Fellows from the 2017-2018 cohort were asked to complete a pre-Evaluation Lab survey on their perceived skill level in numerous areas related to effective evaluations. This survey was completed by all eight fellows from the 2017-2018 cohort at the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester. During the final weeks of the Spring 2018 semester, Fellows were asked to complete a post-Evaluation Lab survey to assess the growth of these same evaluation skills after the completion of the course. The following charts show the average initial skill level of Fellows in green, while the follow-up growth in each skill is shown in purple. A 6-point scale was derived to correspond to the following response choices that students could select (students who selected two responses received an average of the two scores):

- 0 = I don't know what that is
- 1 = Do not feel comfortable doing
- 2 = Can do with a lot of guidance
- 3 = Can do with light supervision
- 4 = Can do on my own
- 5 = Can teach someone else to do it



# Self-reported skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

## EVALUATION DESIGN



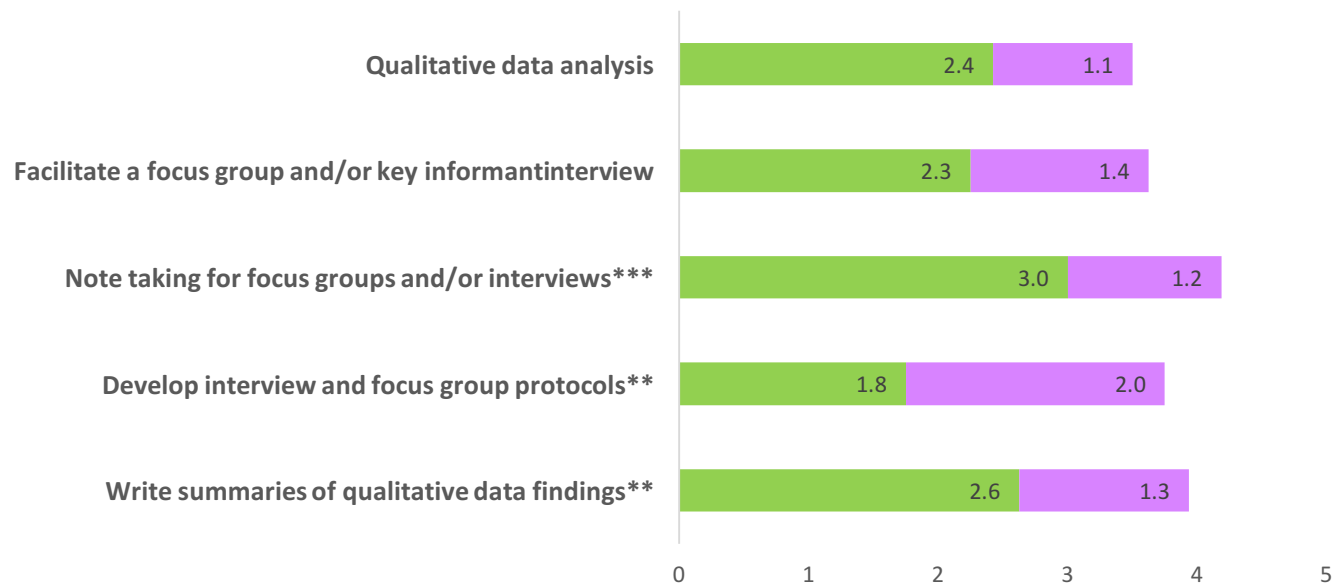
Note: \*\*\* Strongly Statistical Significant at 1%, \*\* Statistical Significant at 5%, \* Marginally Statistically Significant at 10%

Evaluation design is a critical skill in performing a successful evaluation. Upon entering the Evaluation Lab, students felt somewhere between not being comfortable designing an evaluation and being able to do an evaluation design with a lot of guidance. After completing the Evaluation Lab, students on average felt capable of performing an evaluation design on their own, with compelling evidence from match paired t-tests showing strong statistical significance of a change over the time of the fellowship in the four questions of interest.



# Self-reported skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

## QUALITATIVE DATA



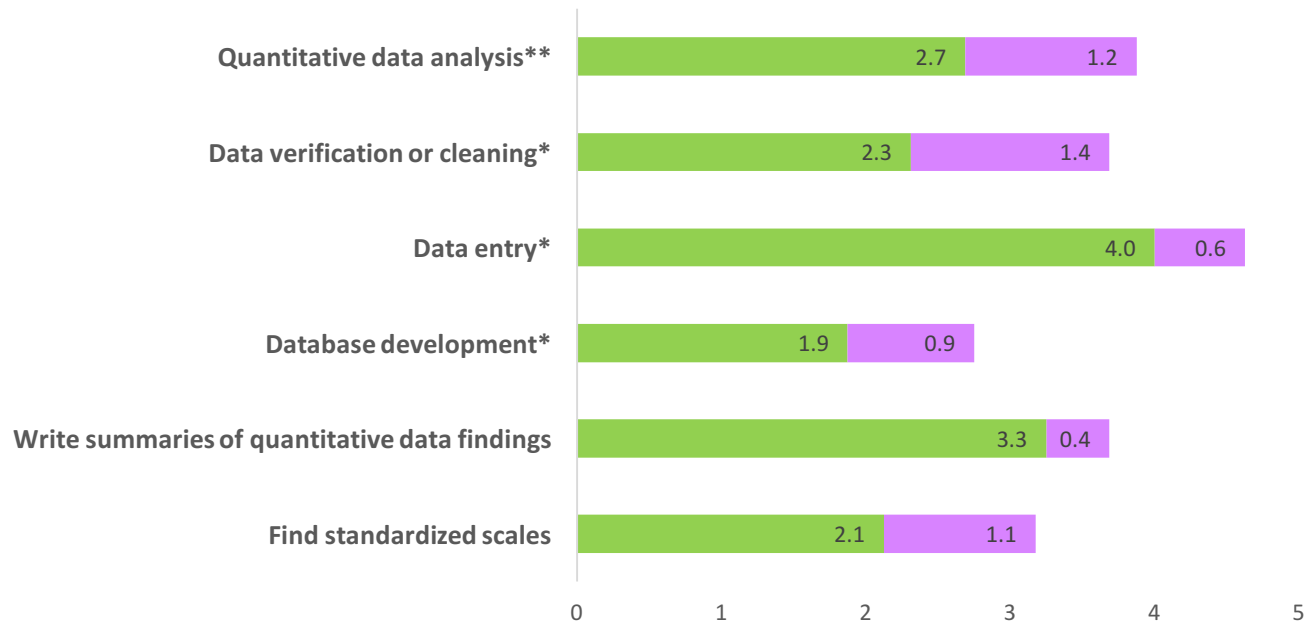
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Fellows showed growth in skills relating to qualitative data over the course of the fellowship. Statistically significant increases occurred in three of the five skills surveyed. Qualitative data in the form of interviews and focus groups are regularly used in the evaluation process and was an evaluation tool used by many of the fellows in the 2017-2018 cohort.



# Self-reported skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

## QUANTITATIVE DATA



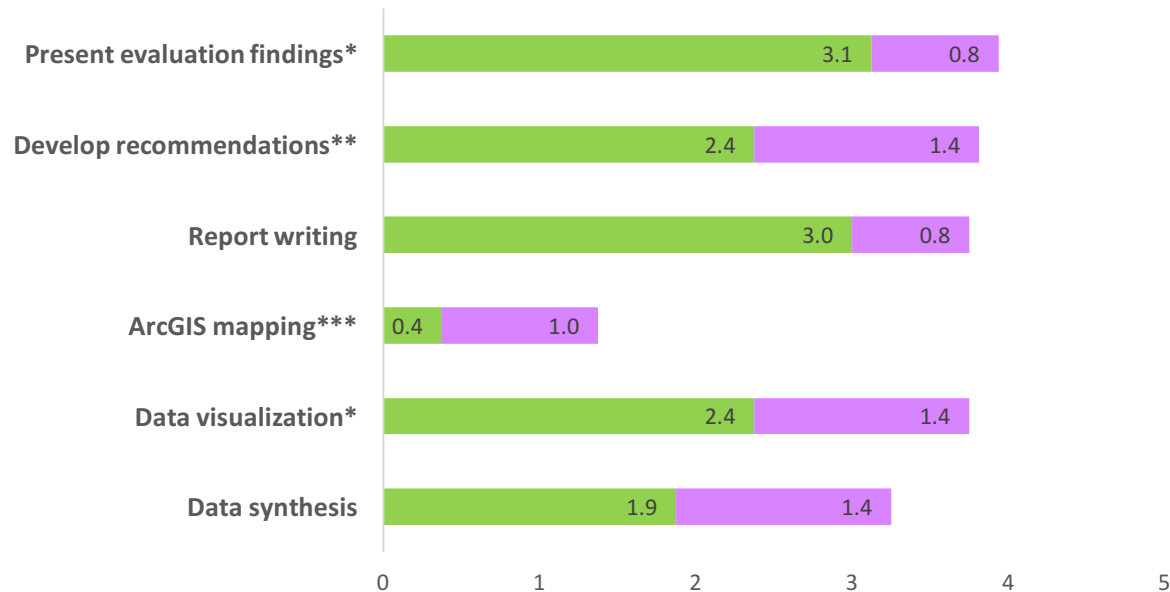
Note: \*\*\* Strongly Statistical Significant at 1%, \*\* Statistical Significant at 5%, \* Marginally Statistically Significant at 10%

Fellows appeared comfortable with many skill areas in the quantitative data category before completing the Evaluation Lab fellowship; but each skill still showed signs of development over the course of the fellowship. Four of the six skill areas had at least marginal statistically significant changes; but it cannot be ruled out that students also developed these skills while completing other academic coursework in their respective graduate programs.



# Self-reported skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS



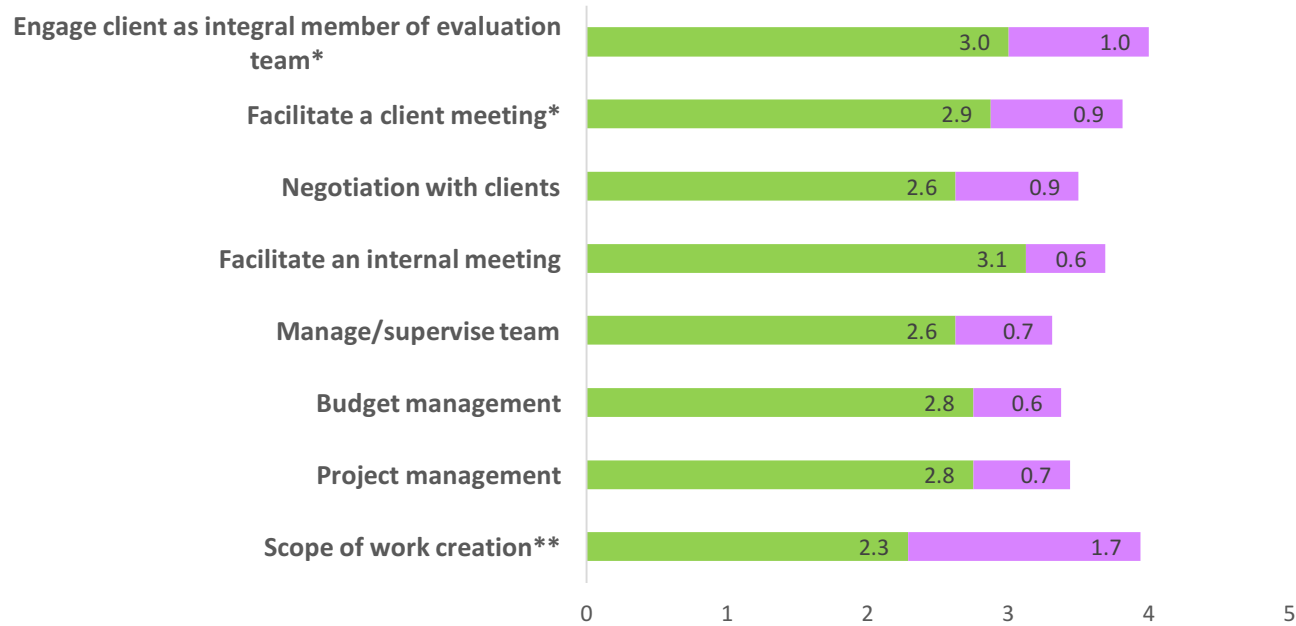
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Fellows showed development in each area of the Presentation of Results category, with four of the six questions having statistically significant changes. Throughout the course students regularly spoke in front of the class, and presented project updates to Senior Fellows, Team Leads, and Organizations. It is also important to note that most students did not appear to know anything about ArcGIS mapping before the course, and were introduced to the tool through their experiences with the Evaluation Lab.



Self-reported skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT**



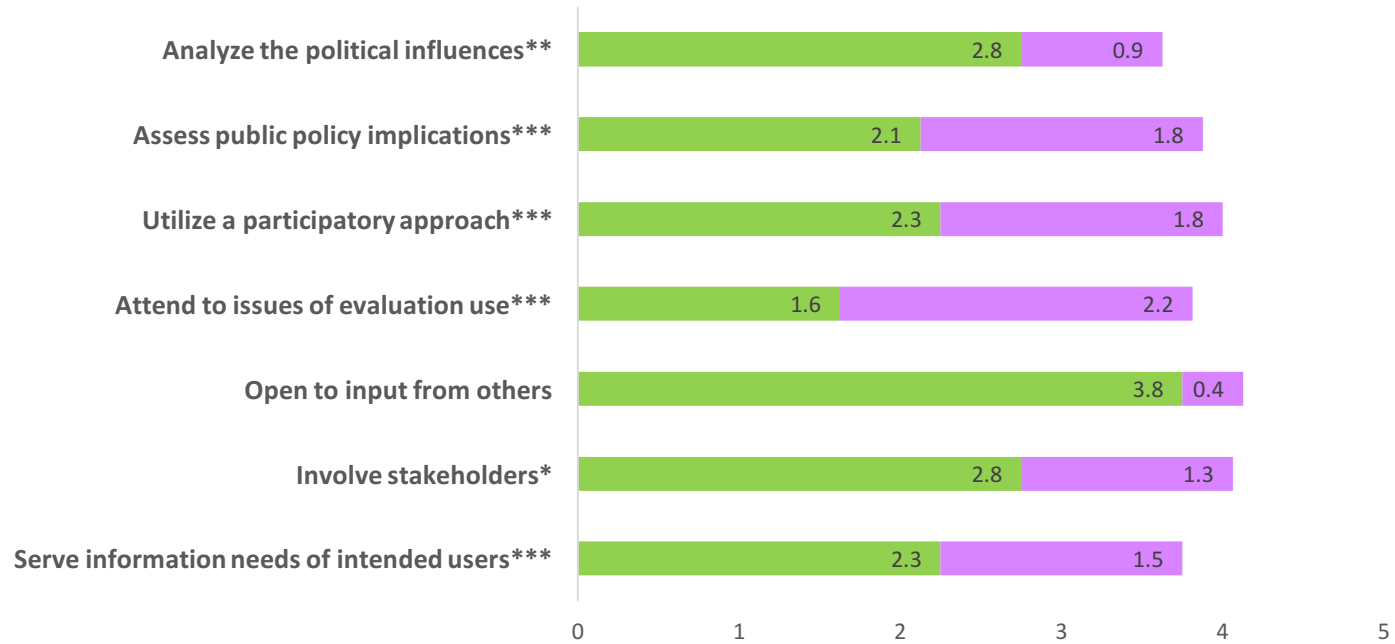
Note: \*\*\* Strongly Statistical Significant at 1%, \*\* Statistical Significant at 5%, \* Marginally Statistically Significant at 10%

Project management is an important skill within any career field; but it is of particular importance when conducting evaluations. Fellows appeared comfortable in many areas of project management before completing the fellowship, but still showed signs of development in each skill area after completing the fellowship. Students showed the greatest development in “Scope of work creation”, going from being able to complete the skill with a lot of guidance to being able to do it on their own (on average). Scope of work creation is one of the principle components of project management, and great evidence of Fellows’ skill development in this area.



Self-reported skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

**EVALUATION APPROACH**



Note: \*\*\* Strongly Statistical Significant at 1%, \*\* Statistical Significant at 5%, \* Marginally Statistically Significant at 10%

Evaluation Lab Fellows showed some of the strongest evidence of development in their Evaluation Approach skills. Four of the seven questions in this category showed strong statistical significance of change, while two more questions also showed statistically significant changes to a lesser degree. The one question that did not show statistically significant change was most likely due to the high level of Fellows’ willingness to receive input from others before the fellowship began (students on average were nearly able to do it on their own on the Fall Skills Survey).



Self-reported skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

**RELATIONSHIPS**



Note: \*\*\* Strongly Statistical Significant at 1%, \*\* Statistical Significant at 5%, \* Marginally Statistically Significant at 10%

Evaluation Lab Fellows reported high skill levels in each area of the Relationships category upon entering the fellowship in the fall semester. Some evidence shows that students further developed these skills during the course of the fellowship, but no question shows statistically significant changes. One question showed a small decrease over the course of the fellowship (question: “Acknowledge and take steps to address position and power”), but the decrease would be considered economically and statistically insignificant (decrease of less than one tenth of a point).





## Open Ended Survey Questions

Students were asked at the beginning of the Fall Skills Survey, and again at the end of that survey, “What one word best describes how you are feeling about the Evaluation Lab Fellowship right now?”. Fellows were then asked the same question again on the Spring Skills Survey.

**Fall Semester (Before Skills Survey)**

**Fall Semester (After Skills Survey)**

**Spring Semester**

Excited Excited  
Excited Curious  
Excited Excited  
Excited  
Intrigued



Excited  
Exciteder  
Excited  
Intrigued  
Curious Excited  
Excited  
Underprepared



Enlightening  
Satisfied  
Relieved  
Completed  
Grateful  
Satisfied  
Accomplished  
Relieved

Fellows generally report excitement and interest in the Evaluation Lab fellowship at the beginning of the Fall semester. This excitement and interest remains after completing the skills survey, but with at least one fellow questioning if they are ready for evaluation after being exposed to some of skills they'll be developing in the course. After completing their evaluations and the course, Fellows report satisfaction and relief. There is no evidence of negative feelings or emotions from Fellows in the Spring semester responses to this question.



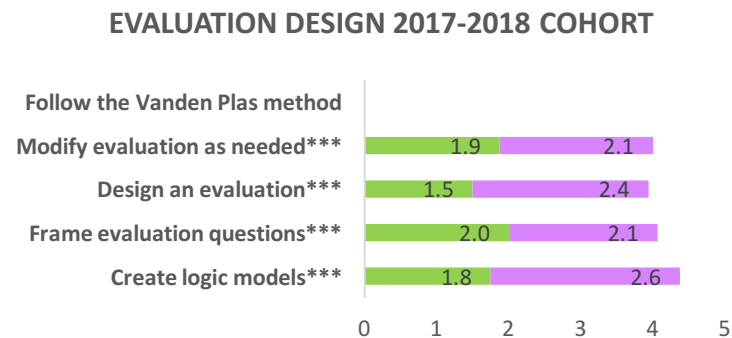
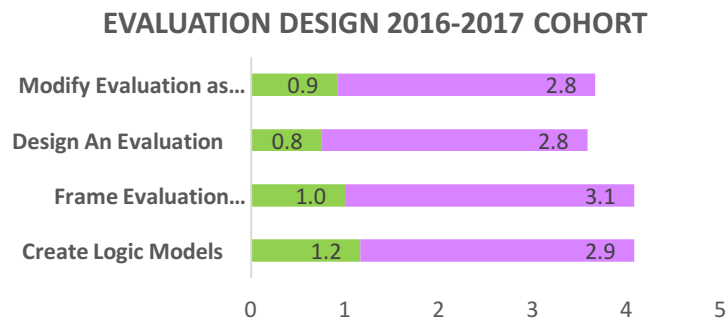
## Comparison to 2016-2017 Fellows

Students in the 2016-2017 cohort of Evaluation Lab Fellows completed a similar skills survey after completion of their fellowships. While their answers were retrospective, some interesting differences arise when comparing the two cohorts.

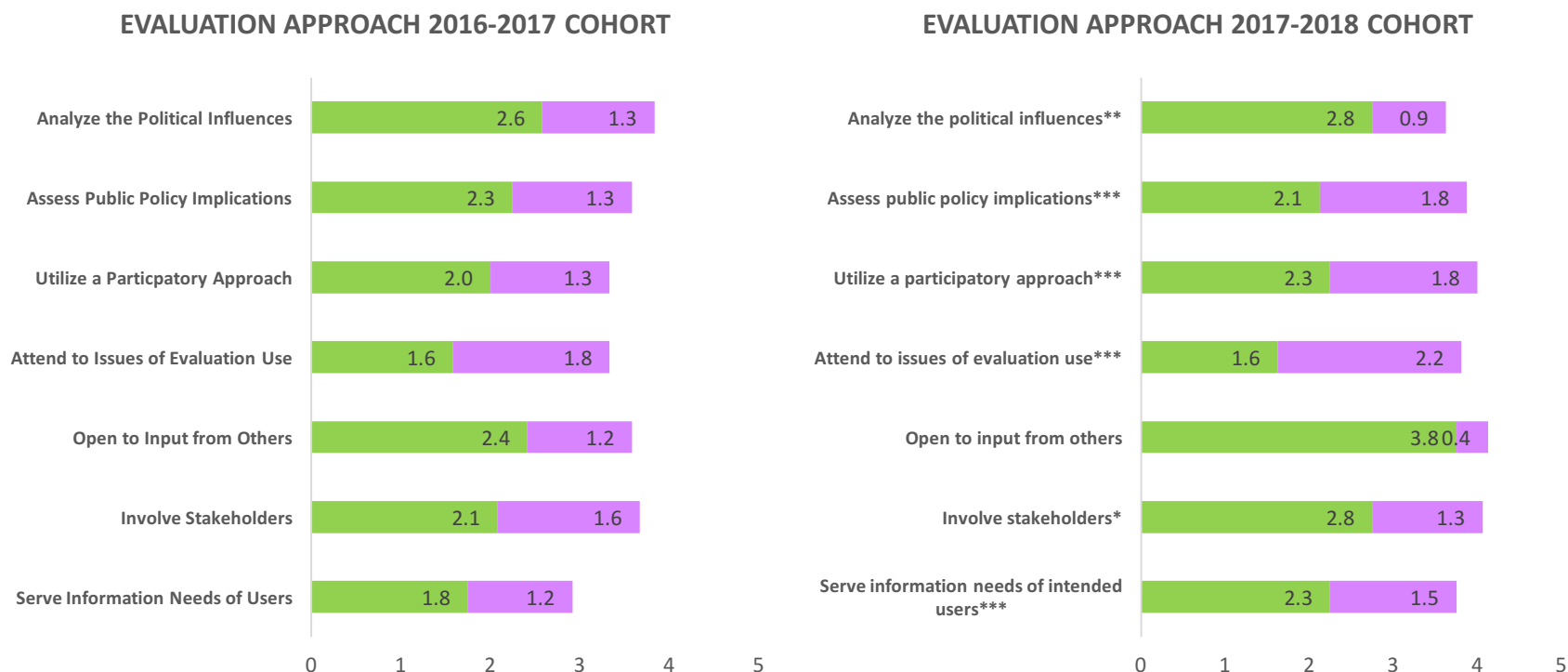
The 2017-2018 fellows reported higher initial skill levels in most categories than the 2016-2017 fellows reported, which can be explained by two factors:

1. Evaluation Lab fellows from the 2016-2017 cohort contained undergraduate students, whereas the 2017-2018 cohort consisted entirely of graduate students. Graduate students tend to be older than undergraduate students, with many graduate students working full-time for a number of years before coming back to school for their graduate studies.
2. Retrospective responses to questions pertaining to skills or knowledge tend to be lower than responses taken before an intervention, showing that many respondents tend to either over-estimate the effects of an intervention (thinking they started at a lower skill level) or over-estimate their own skills before an intervention.

For example, consider the Evaluation Design results from each cohort:



Fellows in the 2017-2018 cohort also reported having slightly higher skill levels at the end of the fellowship in some categories. For example, consider responses from each cohort on Evaluation Approach questions:

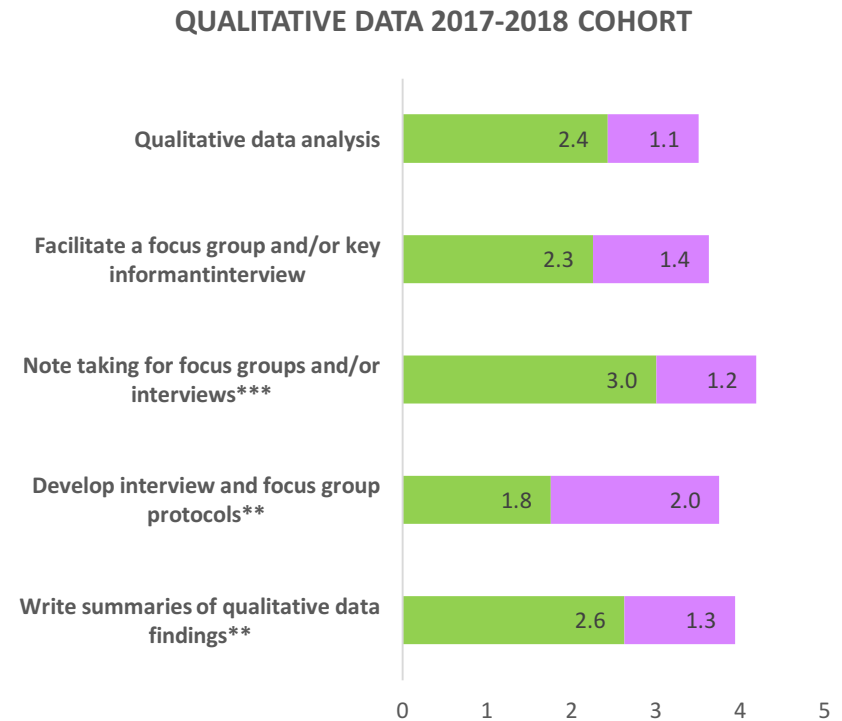
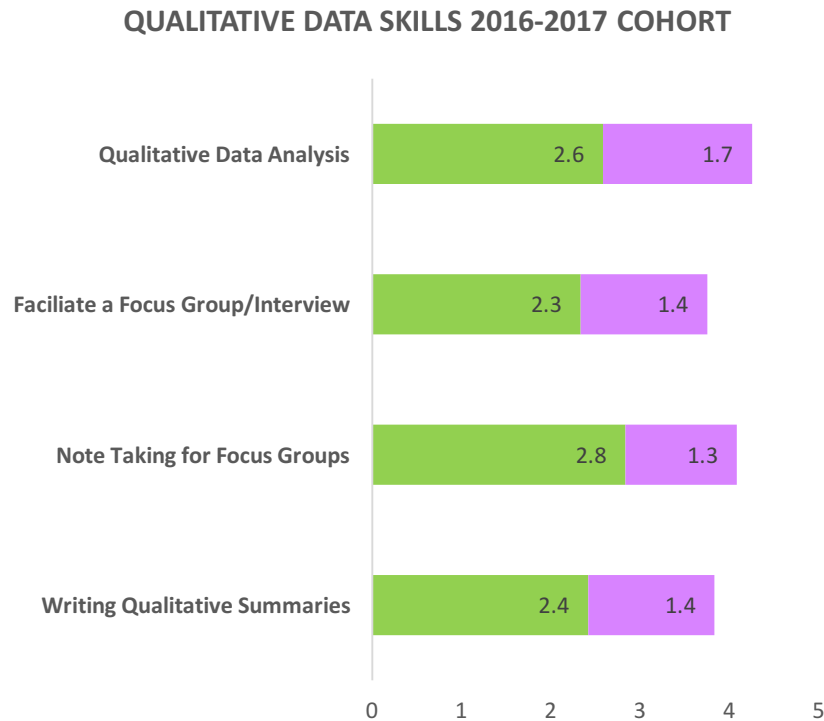


Explanations for these slightly higher skill levels include:

1. Adjustments to course curriculum based off of the 2016-2017 cohort’s suggestions.
2. The same explanation as for why initial skills were higher for the 2017-2018 cohort, that fellows for 2017-2018 were graduate students who tended to be older and more experienced.



The 2016-2017 cohort did appear to be more comfortable than the 2017-2018 cohort in some skill areas though, for instance qualitative data skills:



Class composition and evaluation focus could explain the differences seen in these skill areas. With an enrollment of students with diverse backgrounds (educational leadership programs, non-profits, statistics, economics, etc.) it is expected that student initial skills will vary from year to year. Also important to note, three of the eight students in the 2017-2018 cohort conducted evaluations focused on quantitative data, providing less opportunity to develop qualitative skills.

