

Survey of New Mexico Evaluation Lab from UNM Evaluation Lab Fellows from 2016-2017

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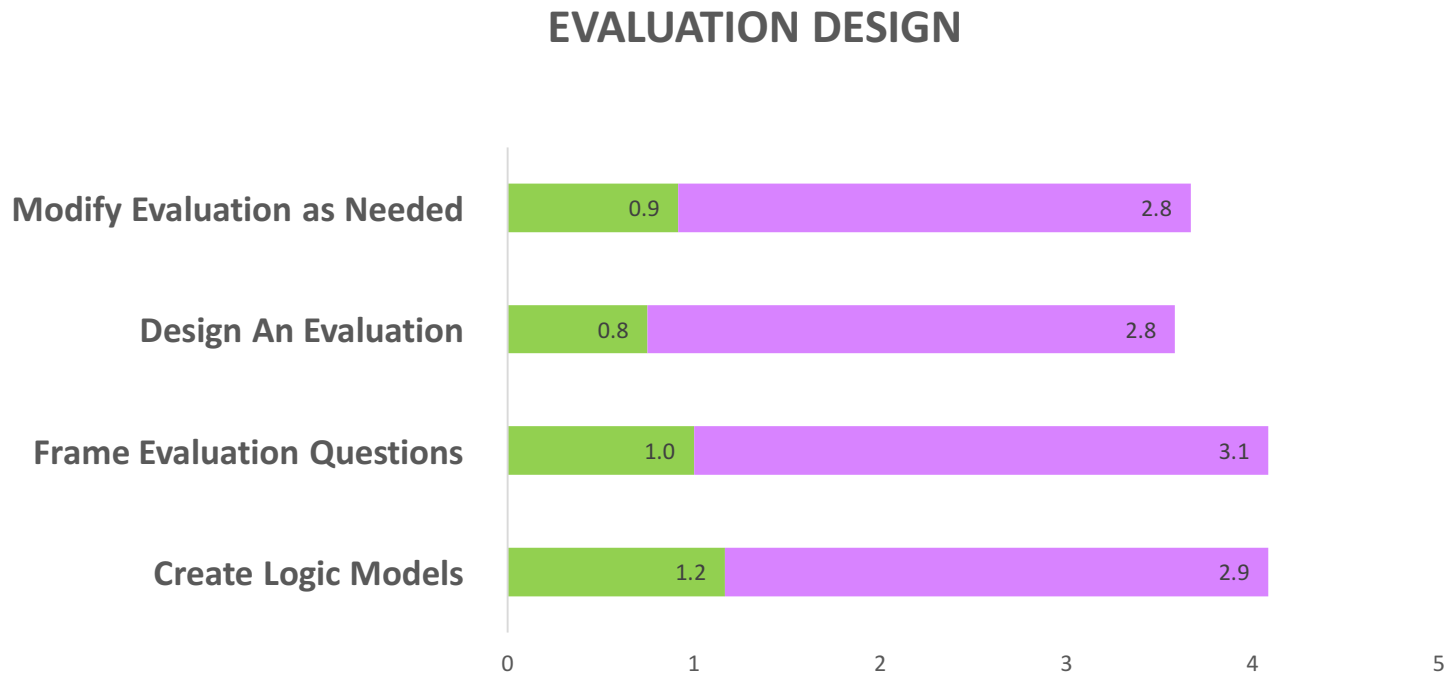
The survey of the Evaluation Lab Fellows at the University of New Mexico, contained items that asked the Fellows to identify their abilities on a variety of evaluation skills prior to their participation in the program and then after completing the NM Evaluation Lab. The first part of the charts in green, shows the average for each skill item before the Evaluation lab, while the second part in purple, shows the average amount of change in perceived ability of the skill after completion of the lab. The 6-point scale the students used to respond is as follows:

- 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



The survey was completed by all 12 Fellows in the 2016-2017 cohort.

Perceptions of skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

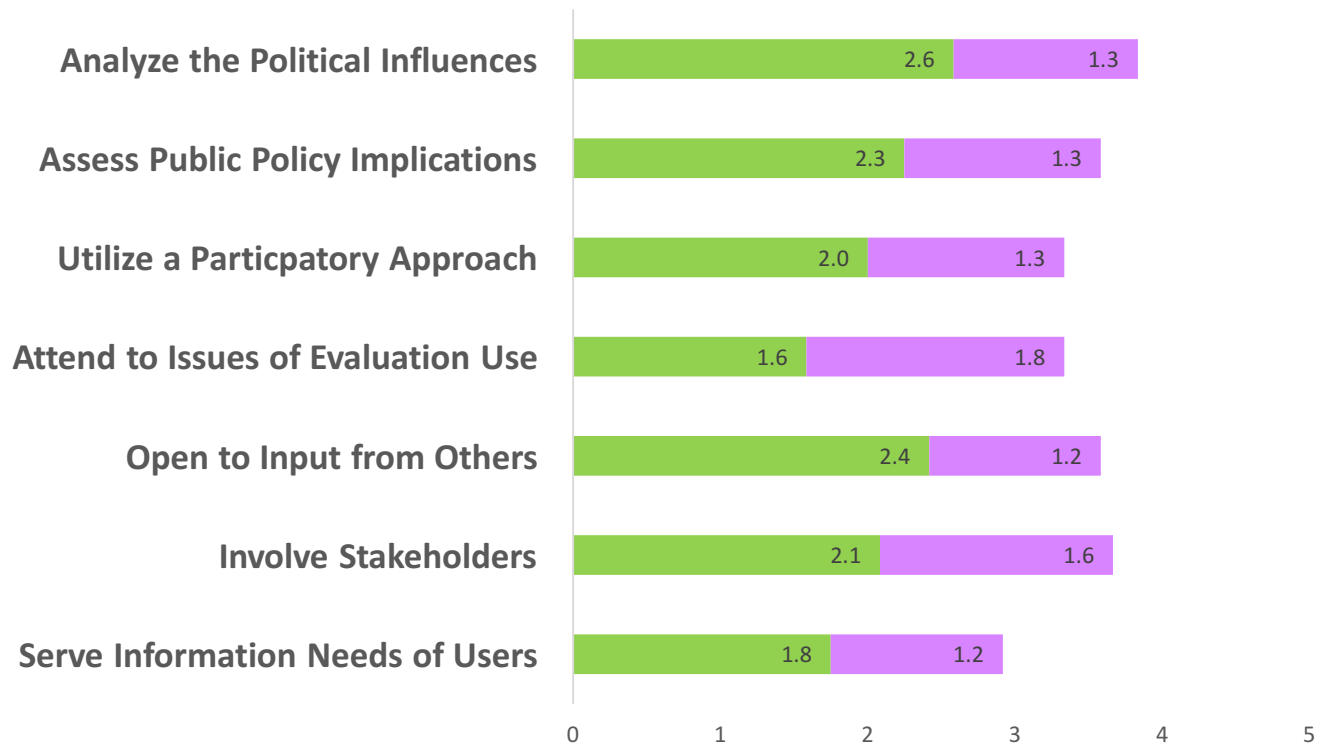


Evaluation design is the basic starting point for any successful evaluation. As seen, there was impressive growth in the area of evaluation design from a low starting point, with the biggest growth seen in the skill of framing evaluation questions as well as in notable increase in logic model creation skills.



Perceptions of skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

EVALUATION APPROACH

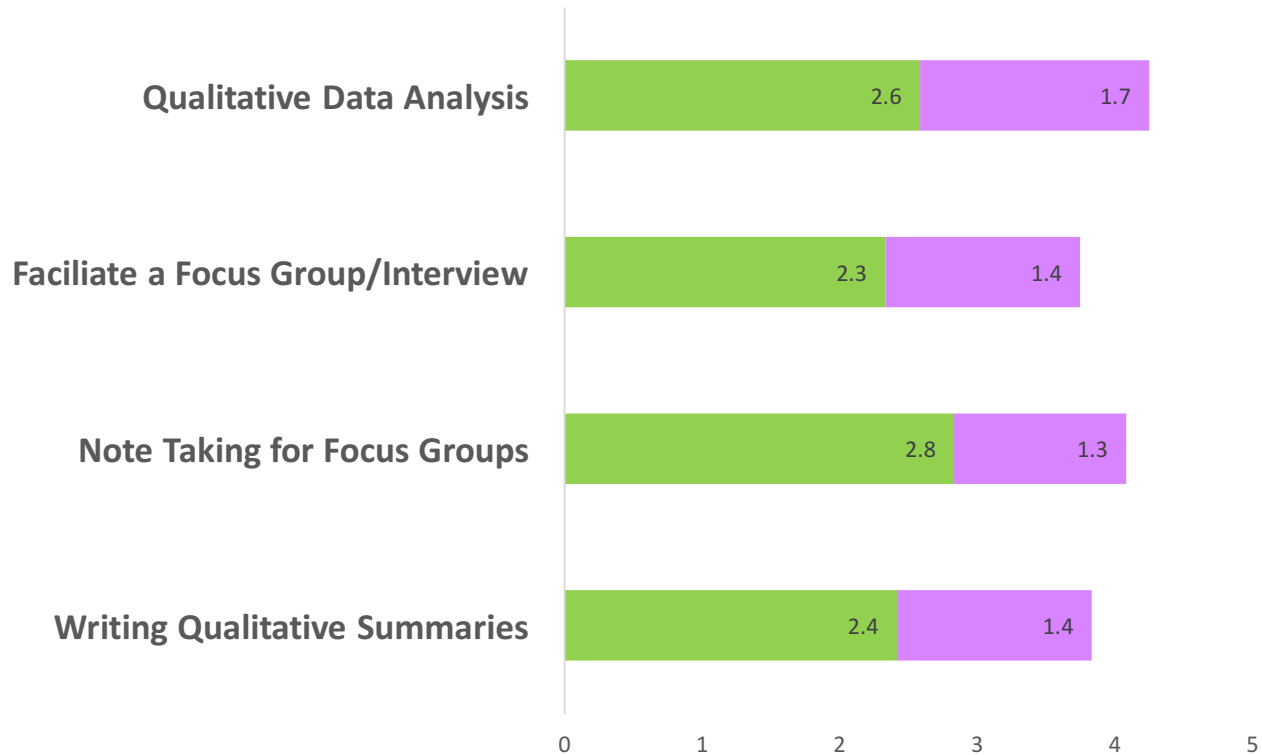


The largest growth in the area of evaluation approach is seen in that of attending to and addressing issues of evaluation issues. Also prominent is the development in the learning of involving the stakeholders in the evaluation. Two areas that need improvement is that of the assessing public policy implications as well as analyzing political influences relating to the evaluation. A suggestion to increase these skill is to have a brief class on public policy and/or how political climates influence funding and the success of non-profits.



Perceptions of skill competencies before NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent growth

QUALITATIVE DATA SKILLS

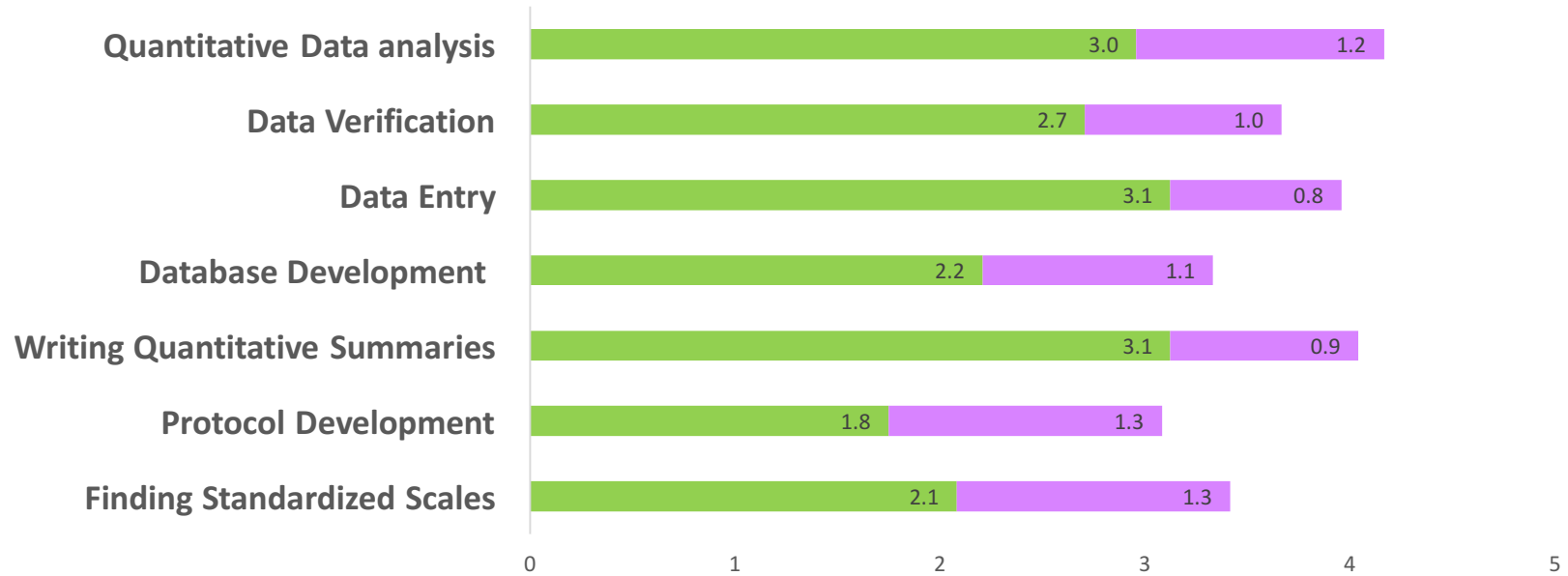


The qualitative skills from the Fellows saw a significant jump in their qualitative data analysis skill as well as focus group facilitation, a needed expertise in the field of evaluation. Conducting a mock focus group before the evaluation projects began would be a great resource for Fellows to increase their note taking skills for focus groups, and in return also increasing their skill writing of summaries of qualitative research.



Perceptions of skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

QUANTITATIVE DATA SKILLS

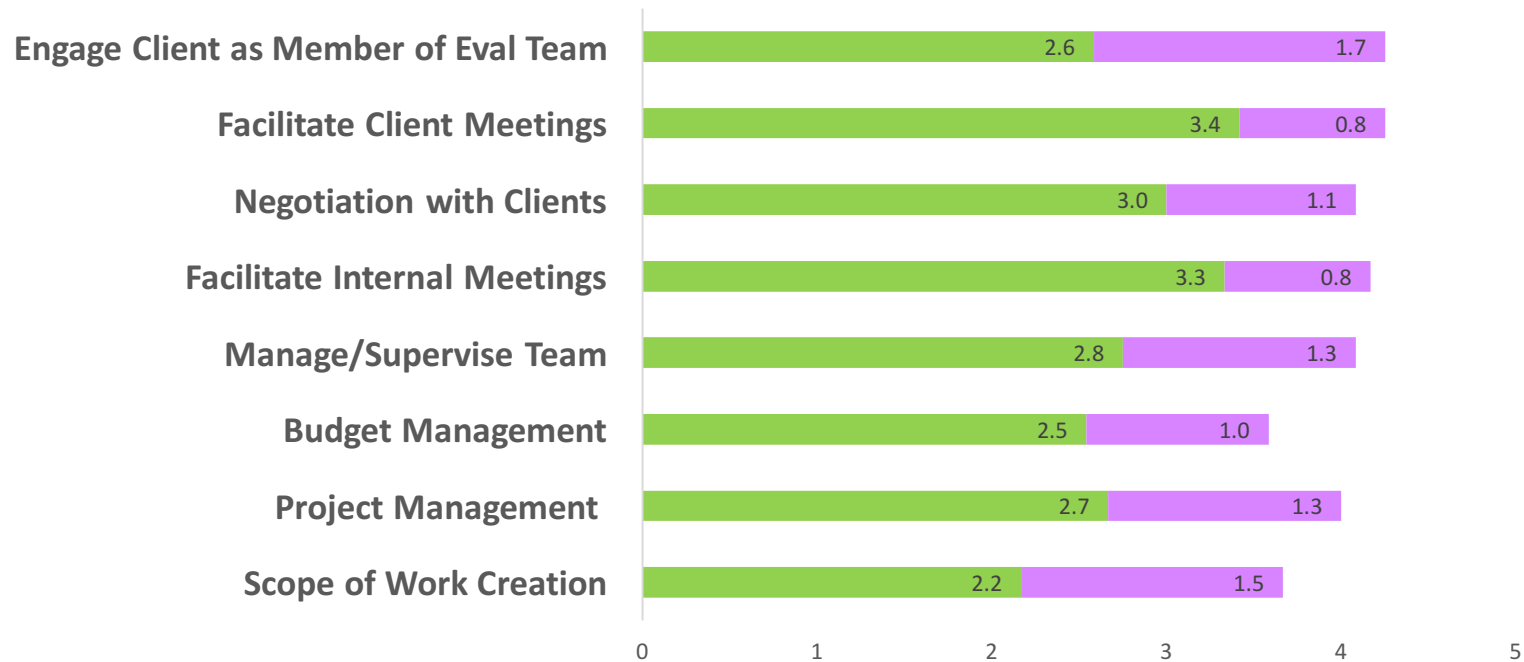


Quantitative data skills can often be a struggle for many, yet there was growth in all of the specific areas, with the largest being in the finding of standardized scales and protocol development. Yet, there is still room for improvement in many of these quantitative skill areas such as data entry, data verification, and the writing of quantitative summaries. Fellows may benefit from being paired up with a partner who has quantitative experience to share with them as peer learning is found to highly effective.



Perceptions of skill competencies before NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent growth

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

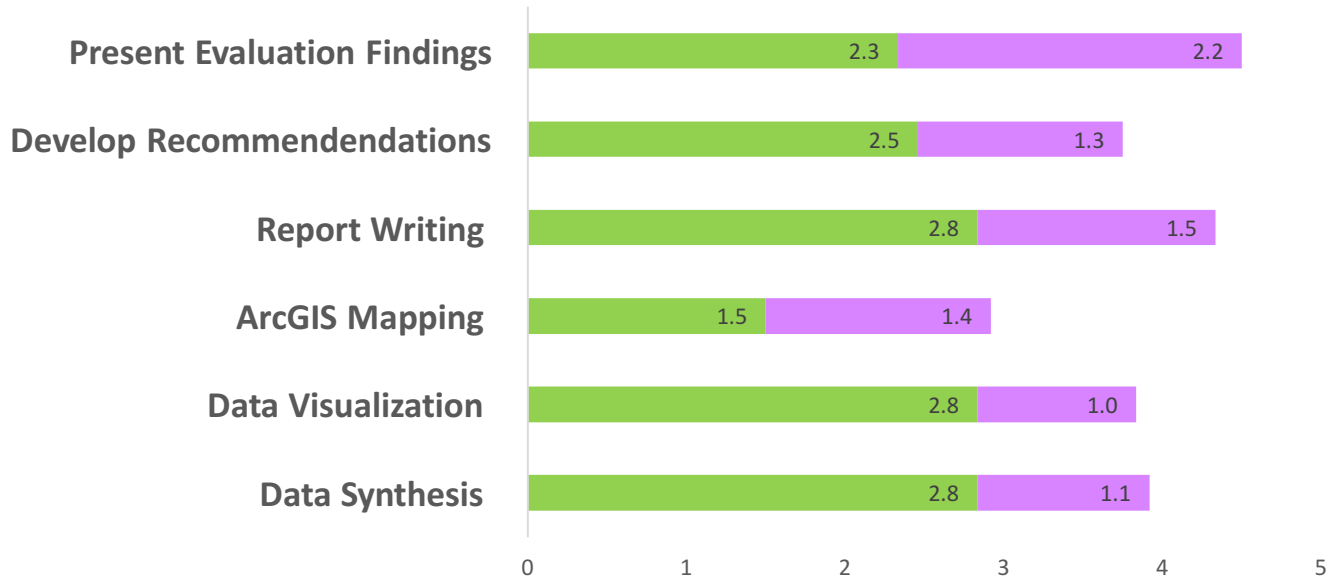


Being able to manage a project on one’s own is essential, making it exciting that improvement was seen in all areas of project management, with the largest growth in engaging the client as a part of the evaluation team as well as having a improved scope of work creation. Relatively less growth was reported in facilitating meetings, a skill that students felt they brought with them to the Lab.



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PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

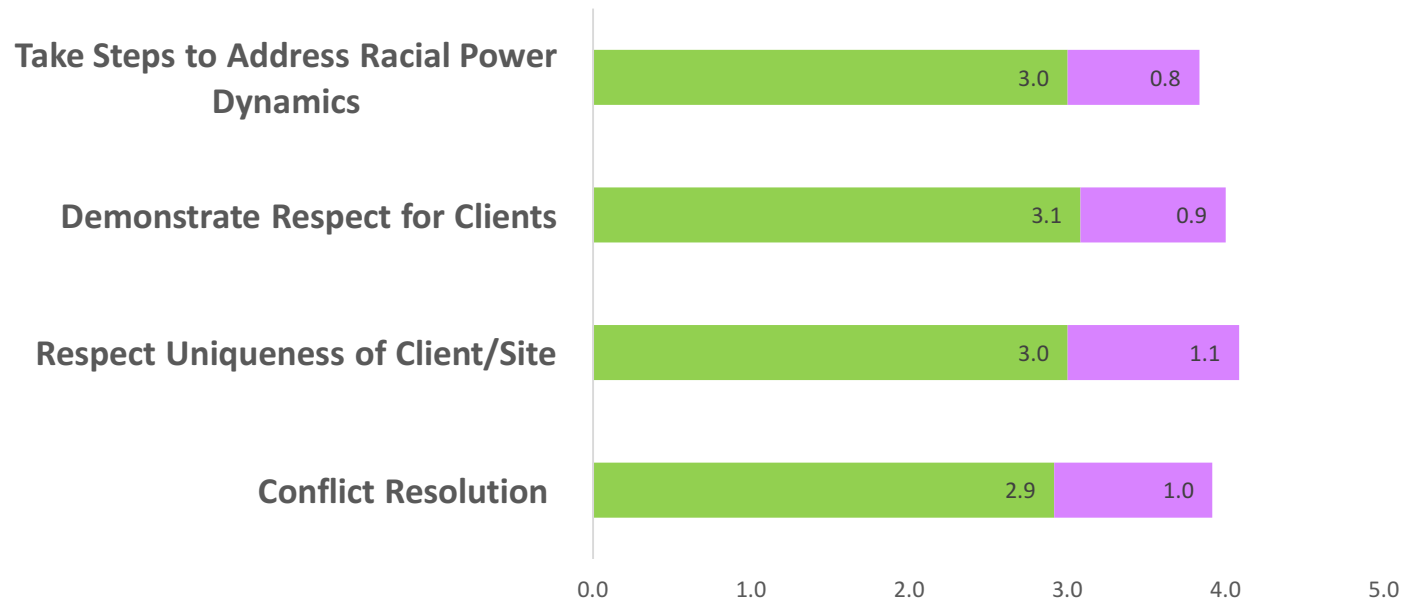


What good is an evaluation if it can't be presented to the clients in a straightforward and understandable manner? In this area, some of the largest growth in the whole survey is observed, with a 2.2 average growth in the skill of presenting evaluation findings. The area of data visualization as well as data synthesis had the lowest growth in this skill set, perhaps calling for all Fellows regardless of what type of data they have for the project, to create a visual with it, if not simply for an exercise. This also may call for more autonomy of the Fellows on the data synthesis section, so that more practice is gained, and the mentors role can be more of a guide and follow up for corrections.



Perceptions of skill competencies **before** NM Evaluation Lab and subsequent **growth**

RELATIONSHIPS



The New Mexico Evaluation Lab works with many non-profits who serve marginalized communities. Due to this, sensitivity to these issues and differing experiences is essential. This graph demonstrates that the Fellows not only started with a fair understanding of the needed finesse, but also improved in all areas, with the largest being in their respect of the uniqueness of the non-profit and the physical site. Taking steps to address racial power dynamics saw the smallest amount of growth, to address that, the curriculum could include more sociological as well as racial/social justice literature and speakers.



Open Ended Survey Questions

Were there other skills that should be included in this survey? If so, please describe them and assess your skill level BEFORE and AFTER the Fellowship.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship building with community and students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation Report organization and writing. Skill before: could do it with supervision. Skill after: could do it on my own
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This doesn't necessarily apply to me because I did not have a partner fellow. However, I think some skills related to working in a team on a professional project could be useful.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Importance of team meetings, even if it is a brief meeting. I found most meetings unproductive before.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professionalization skills. High before, high after.

What advice would you give to a future Fellow?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do your best and always ask for help!
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure you can work with your mentor and that you guys aren't fighting over little things. Always put the organization first no matter what. The work you are doing is important and must be done.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hang in there, the first 1/2 is the hardest (as Melissa told us this would happen).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The evaluation seems daunting at the beginning, but it is a process. The end result does not reflect the uncertainty at the start of the process. The development of the evaluation plan is probably the most difficult part of the evaluation, because you are learning the organization as you're trying to figure out the evaluation questions and focus.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Step up. Take initiative and show interest that you want to learn.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be open and ask lots of questions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation can be done in various ways, so don't assume there is 'one way' and you need to learn what that is. It is more of understanding of the process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tenacity is key to happiness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask ahead of due dates if you have questions for your team. Plan weeks ahead and have open lines of communication, always.

Additional Comments

- Thank you for this amazing opportunity. It is a privilege to be a part of this fellowship and the professor Melissa Binder and Sonia Betez have been wonderful. They are a blessing to UNM and to the students. Thank you for offering your experience, time and expertise and for loving what you do. You are amazing mentors, scholar activist and beautiful people.
- I really enjoyed being a part of this Fellowship. I learned a lot, made some great friends, and hope I get to work with Melissa and Sonia again! Also, I never had a mentor relationship before, it was a little rocky at first (had a lot to do with my self-identified insecurities because Julian is intensely smart...) but as the relationship developed I became more and more grateful for it. Now I am proud to call Julian my friend. Also, I truly appreciate Sonia's ability to bring logical questions and comments to the table and she is always so smartly dressed! And, Melissa's ability to bring an unlikely group of students together to work together, build individual relationships, and have professional pieces of work, in the end, is pretty incredible.
- This course was incredible; thank you for the opportunity!
- Thank you for your support and patience, Dr. Binder

