

CLOSING REMARKS

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This two-day meeting has raised more questions than it answered. However, it did clarify the questions to be asked and sharpen our focus. As a result, I can list several potential activities that would respond to the discussion and recommendations emanating from the Workshop.

Directorate actions will begin with the compilation of the proceedings of the workshop. This document, which will include the papers and presentations as well as summaries of the discussions and recommendations, will serve as a reference and blueprint for designing a strategy to respond to participant concerns regarding capacity-building and NSF's role in evaluator training and education. To date, EHR capacity-building activities have been primarily ad hoc and none have focused specifically on the issue surrounding culturally relevant evaluation. These have been relatively small efforts suggested by the field, and informal feedback suggests they were successful. We recognize that a specific rationale and framework should guide future efforts. Additionally, any proposed efforts should be defined as part of a more comprehensive approach.

Before we can develop the framework we need additional information in several areas. First, we need a comprehensive picture of NSF-supported training opportunities. To this end we are supporting a project to provide a detailed description of our funded efforts and their success. We are also exploring other formal evaluation training approaches and related efforts that can be adapted for our needs. This is being accomplished through a broad-based literature review to identify other evaluation models and potential models, i.e., from disciplines other than mathematics and science education.

Second, we need to determine the demographics of the current population of "evaluators," including minority evaluators. Two manpower surveys are under consideration. One would survey graduates of formal evaluation training programs, i.e., university-based efforts. The second survey would target practicing evaluators without formal training in evaluation methodology. The first task will be to define the two populations and there probably will be some overlap. Both would include a special effort to identify minority evaluators.

At some point we will need feedback from our stakeholders. We will utilize the recommendations offered by workshop participants regarding evaluator training and updating NSF evaluation publications to include a focus on the multicultural context of evaluation. We also plan to talk with representatives of national evaluation associations. For example, we could hold discussions with officials of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) regarding their efforts to diversify the pool of evaluation professions. Another issue to consider is how to attract more of the minority social science graduates into the field of evaluation.

These steps, when completed, should prepare us to set goals and priorities and define the parameters of future NSF efforts. The framework developed must be flexible enough to accommodate new practices and new Federal mandates regarding accountability stemming from the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). The question to be answered is what does the directorate want to accomplish in addressing the need for culturally relevant evaluation within the GPRA and diversity contexts.