

tools of the trade

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Standards and Guidelines

Standards for Evaluations of Educational Programs, Projects, and Materials. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981. 148 pp. \$8.95.

The "Standards" comprise 30 widely held principles of what makes sound evaluations of programs, projects, or educational materials. They were written, reviewed, and field tested by more than 200 evaluators over a 5-year developmental period. Those who participated came from all levels and roles in management and field services.

The "Standards" serve as an organized collection of knowledge about good evaluation practice, drawn from experience, theory, and published professional literature on evaluation. This book is an important tool for evaluating evaluation plans, activities, and reports. The "Standards" is an authoritative reference on which the evaluator can base evaluation decisions with confidence.

Each standard is written with an overview that provides definitions and a rationale for the standard, a list of guidelines to help achieve the standard, lists of pitfalls and caveats to help avoid common problem areas related to the standard, and a case study showing how the standard can be applied. They're categorized by the important functions of utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy.

Eight standards make up utility. Some of these standards are: audience identification, evaluator credibility, information scope and selection, determining value, and reporting.

Feasibility is covered by three standards: procedural practicality, political viability, and cost effectiveness.

Eight standards are included under propriety; conflict of interest, full and frank disclosure, rights of human subjects, and balanced reporting are part of this section. The final category, accuracy, has 11 standards, such as describing the object, describing the evaluation, selecting information sources, valid and reliable measurements, analysis of quantitative and qualitative information, and justified conclusions.

An annotated bibliography (ERIC/TM Report 81) to accompany this book was compiled in 1981 by Barbara M. Wildemuth and prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on tests, measurement, and evaluation, located at the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey 08541.

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