



**EvaluATE**  
EVALUATION RESOURCE CENTER for  
advanced technological education

Evaluation Resource Center for Advanced Technological Education  
Evaluation Report ( August 2012 – July 2013)  
September 2013

The Evaluation Center  
Western Michigan University  
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## Executive Summary

Funded by the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education program, EvaluATE's mission is "to strengthen the program's evaluation knowledge base, expand the use of exemplary evaluation practices, and support the continuous improvement of technician education throughout the nation." With EvaluATE in its second four-year grant cycle since 2008, the center's ultimate objectives are to ensure consistency and rigor of evaluation practice, and that information gleaned from professional evaluation efforts are used to improve projects through evidence-based practices for technician education.

Both the internal and external evaluation efforts are framed by the Kirkpatrick Levels of Evaluation™, which provides a model for collecting data at various levels. For the present situation these levels were operationalized as: *reach & participation, reaction, learning, behavior, and impact*. This model serves to frame the center's evaluation questions, which are: *To what extent has EvaluATE reached its intended audience?; What is the quality of EvaluATE's products?; What are users perceptions of EvaluATE's quality and utility?; To what extent are EvaluATE materials being used?; and, To what extent has EvaluATE's work led to changes in evaluation practice?* It was determined that the second evaluative question, *What is the quality of EvaluATE's products?* would be the focus of the next year's evaluative efforts and received less attention in this report.

For the external evaluation effort, the 2012 Stakeholder Survey was used to gather evidence surrounding these questions. As background, the 2012 Stakeholder Survey was a modified version of the stakeholder survey used in the most recent two years of the external evaluation.

Results from the stakeholder survey suggest that the reach of the intended audience of PIs, Co-PIs, and evaluators, is high. Nearly 90% of individuals who responded to the survey indicated that they had used an EvaluATE resource at least once in the past 12 months.

Additionally, users indicated that EvaluATE's resources are of high quality. Over 60% of the intended audience indicated that they found EvaluATE's resources to be "excellent" or "very good." Less than 2% of respondents found the materials to be "poor" or "fair." Interestingly, perceived quality tended to increase with frequency of use.

While reach and perceptions of quality remain high, overall frequency of use tended to be low. A large percentage of respondents never used a single resource. For instance, recorded webinars, which are the least used resource, were not used by 58% of the intended audience. Newsletters and the website, the most used resource, were not used by 25% of the intended audience.

Individuals overall reported that use of EvaluATE's resources increased their evaluation knowledge. When asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a variety of statements related to changes in their evaluation knowledge because of EvaluATE's resources, an average of over 50% of respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed." Moreover, when provided with an open-ended opportunity to provide examples of EvaluATE's impact on projects and centers, nearly 70% of respondents reported a positive impact.

Evidence suggests that EvaluATE is having an impact. Similar to the question asked about evaluation knowledge, on average over 50% of respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" to statements related to changes in evaluation practice because of EvaluATE's resources. In the open-ended opportunity, close to 40% of individuals provided positive examples of changes in evaluation practice and a fraction of the respondents, about 3%, reported positive impact on project improvements.

Taken together, these findings suggest that EvaluATE is making strong progress towards meeting its goals. In an effort to continue to advance EvaluATE's work, the following four (4) recommendations are provided. First, modify and update previously aired webinars to conserve resources. Second, EvaluATE should fully leverage the interplay its audience as an outreach tool. Third, additional focus should be directed at understanding the role of frequency of use of EvaluATE resources in producing changes in knowledge and practice outcomes. And fourth, EvaluATE should implement content dissemination strategies to reach particular subgroups of the intended audience.

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## Introduction

Funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), EvaluATE is housed at The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University.

The Evaluation Center has a rich history, stretching back nearly five decades, in promulgating professional evaluation practices. In 1999, they solidified their relationship with the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) directorate of NSF through a grant to “assess the impact and effectiveness of the ATE program.” This work included an annual status report of all ATE projects and centers—work that continues into EvaluATE’s current funding cycle.

EvaluATE became a formal, separate entity within The Evaluation Center with the awarding of a \$2M grant in 2008 for a period of four years. EvaluATE received a second grant for a similar amount in 2012.

With 2.7 FTE staffing levels (excluding contract work), EvaluATE harnesses the evaluation expertise of the ATE community to achieve its mission “to strengthen the program’s evaluation knowledge base, expand the use of exemplary evaluation practices, and support the continuous improvement of technician education throughout the nation.”

Towards that end, EvaluATE’s current goals are to:

- Ensure that all ATE PIs and evaluators know the essential elements of a credible and useful evaluation.
- Maintain a comprehensive collection of online resources for ATE evaluation.
- Strengthen and expand the network of ATE evaluation stakeholders.
- Gather, synthesize, and disseminate data about ATE program activities to advance knowledge about ATE/technician education.

The ultimate objective for EvaluATE is twofold: first, ensure consistency and rigor of evaluation practice; and second, ensure that project decision makers regularly use pertinent information gleaned from professional evaluation to improve projects by using evidence-based practices for enhancing technician education. EvaluATE's role is to ensure that "anyone with a question about the conduct or use of grant-level evaluation is no more than one person or one click away from a practical and relevant answer."

## Purpose and Design of the External Evaluation

Because EvaluATE is involved in advancing evaluation practice, the center is intimately involved in the evaluation of its own work, but also recognizes the necessity and value of working with an external evaluator. As such, during the current funding cycle, The Rucks Group, LLC was contracted to provide external evaluation services. The functional distinction in the internal and external evaluation role lies in the level of abstraction. For the internal evaluation, the focus is directed more on "just-in-time" evaluation that can only occur with the center personnel involved in the daily activities. By contrast, the external evaluation offers a broader view and provides a fresh perspective that can only occur with an objective distance from the work.

Both the internal and external evaluation efforts are unified by the following evaluative questions:

- To what extent has EvaluATE reached its intended audience?
- What is the quality of EvaluATE's products?
- What are users' perceptions of EvaluATE's quality and utility?
- To what extent are EvaluATE materials being used?
- To what extent has EvaluATE's work led to improved evaluation knowledge?
- To what extent has EvaluATE's work led to changes in evaluation practice?

For the current report, all of the evaluation questions are addressed except for the second question, *What is the quality of EvaluATE's products?* The current evaluation was not designed to directly address this question. It was determined that developing an appropriate approach for answering the question would be the focus of next year's evaluation report.

The EvaluATE Stakeholder Survey administered by The Rucks Group served as the primary basis for the external evaluation. An in-depth review of the results of the survey were discussed with the EvaluATE team and their National Visiting Committee, and the larger themes that emerged are described in this report.

Additionally, where appropriate, the internal evaluation results provided by EvaluATE are woven throughout this report to create linkages between the internal and external evaluation.

### **Stakeholder Survey**

The 2012 EvaluATE Stakeholder Survey questionnaire is a nine-item instrument that was a modified version of the previously used (see Appendix A for the complete survey). The original questionnaire, which were used as the Stakeholder Survey in 2010 and 2011, was developed collaboratively by EvaluATE, the external evaluator, and selected members of the ATE community.

While there are several minor variations between the previous survey and the current one, such as the ordering of questions and names used for the role of individuals within the ATE community, the major difference between the two surveys is that the current version attempted to map onto the Kirkpatrick™ Four Levels of Evaluation (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006; kirkpatrickpartners.com). According to this model outcome data may be gathered along a continuum which in the present context includes, *reach and participation, reaction, learning, behavior, and impact*. *Reach and participation*, reflects the extent to which respondents have used EvaluATE. *Reaction*, reflects the users' satisfaction with EvaluATE. The perceived knowledge acquisition is included in the *learning* dimension. *Behavior* encompasses the respondents' actions that are the result of EvaluATE. Finally, *impact* is the difference on a project made because of EvaluATE. The current questionnaire included additional open-ended question items to attempt to gather additional evidence of these levels of evaluation.



## Findings

The 2012 Stakeholder Survey was the primary vehicle for gathering evidence towards addressing the evaluative questions. The survey was sent to 777 individuals. Non-responders were contacted via several mass and personal follow-up emails, as well as phone calls. With these efforts, 60% of recipients agreed to participate, with an actual completion rate of 48%.

Among those who completed the survey, approximately 70% were currently active with an ATE grant. The majority of respondents were PIs (54%), while grant evaluators made up 18.8% of respondents. Other categories of respondents were co-principal investigators (Co-PIs; 11.5%), grant writers (6.9%), other program staff (6.5%), and administrators (2.3%). Of those not involved with an ATE grant, about two-thirds did plan on submitting a grant proposal in the near future.

### **To what extent has EvaluATE reached its intended audience?**

While there are many users of evaluation and even more stakeholders relying on it, in order to target a manageable audience, EvaluATE narrowed the larger audience to its “intended audience,” which includes individuals associated with an NSF ATE project. Specifically, the intended audience includes principal investigators (PIs), co-principal investigators (Co-PIs), evaluators, grant writers, other program staff such as project managers/coordinators, and administrators.

Interestingly, the demographics of EvaluATE’s intended audience appears to be changing as reflected in the changing percentages of the intended audience who completed the stakeholder survey. Since the survey was introduced in 2010, the percentage of respondents drawn from the intended audience has decreased (see Figure 1).

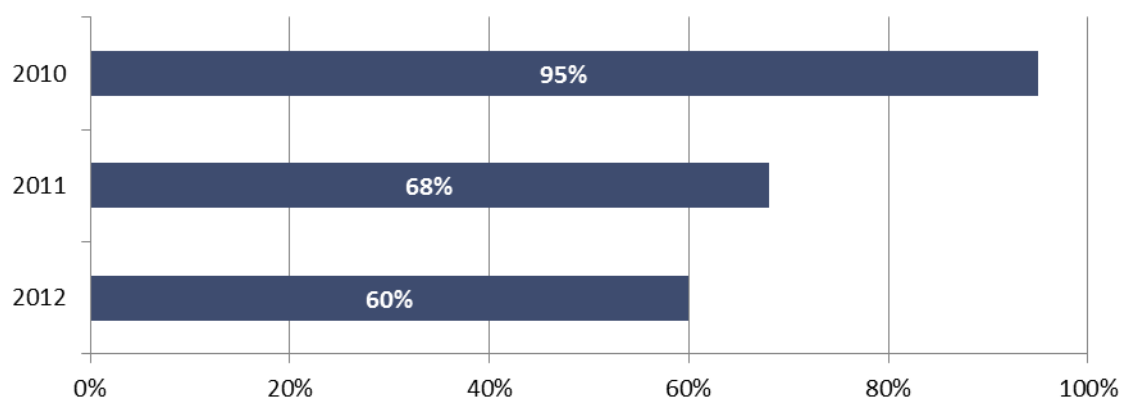


Figure 1. Percent of the intended audience who have participated in the annual survey for the past three years.

As such, a measure of reach that is immune from growth of other segments would be ideal. One such measure is examining how many within the intended audience have used at least one resource within the past 12 months. With this measure in mind, the use of EvaluATE’s materials by the intended audience appears to be strong.

Results from the survey suggest that within a 12-month period, approximately 89% of their target audience used at least one resource. Importantly, evaluators used resources slightly more (93%) and Co-PIs used resources slightly less (83%) than PIs (89%). Usage of other project staff and The concept of reach as it is distinguished from dose (or frequency) is discussed later in the report.

### What are users' perceptions of EvaluATE's quality?

Overall, users within the target audience perceived the quality and utility<sup>1</sup> of EvaluATE's resources as high. When asked to rate the overall quality of the EvaluATE resource that they had accessed in the past 12 months, the majority of respondents rated the resources as "Good," "Very Good," or "Excellent" (see Figure 2). That is, consistently across the four resources identified, the responses were "Good" or above, with the modal response being "Very Good."

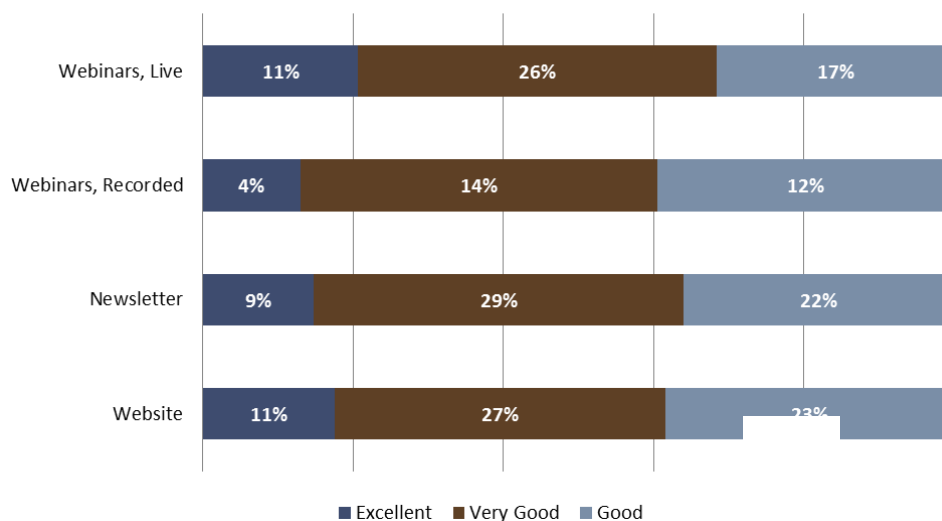


Figure 2. Percent of intended audience's rating that provided a "Good", "Very Good", or "Excellent" rating of EvaluATE's resources.

When asked to respond to open-ended questions, the majority of respondents indicated that EvaluATE was doing things well and also provided feedback on opportunities for improvement. A content analysis was conducted, which revealed 11 categories of responses. The top five categories of responses regarding "what EvaluATE is doing well" are represented in Figure 3. These categories are: *educational forum*, webinars and face-to-face workshops; *resources*, the actual tools, templates and evaluation education materials that may be obtained through a variety of mediums; *community of practice*, the sharing of best practices within the ATE community;

<sup>1</sup> As background, in previous iterations of the stakeholder survey quality and utility were presented as distinct constructs. Because of the conceptual overlap between these two constructs, in the current iteration of the survey, only quality was directly assessed.

*general comments*, feedback that relates to the EvaluATE overall; and *website*, comments related to accessing resources through the internet.

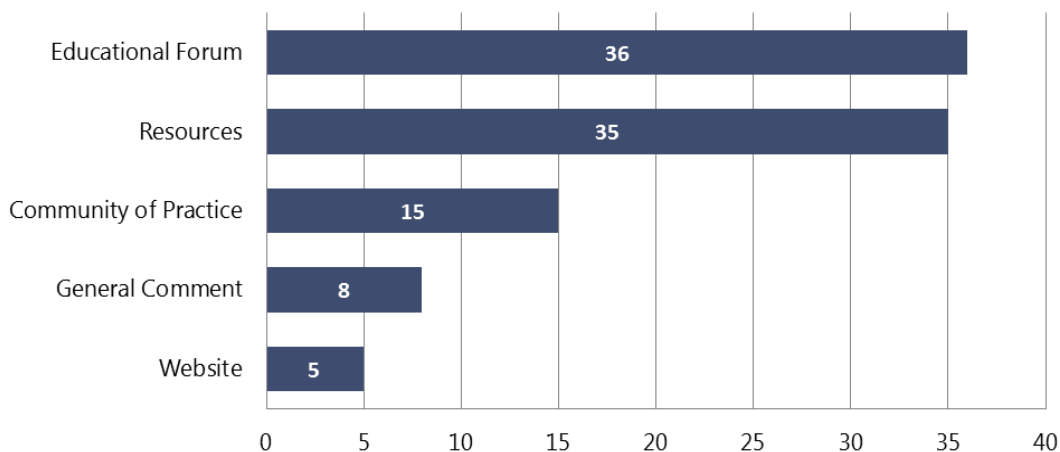


Figure 3. Number of responses for the top 5 categories of responses to the open-ended question *What is EvaluATE doing especially well?*

The following are examples of the responses provided.<sup>2</sup>

- (Educational Forum) *"I find the webinars very effective. I am disappointed I can't make them all, however, I appreciate having access to past webinars."*
- (Resources) *"Really good at pushing out information — the frequency is appropriate: not too much; not too little. The quality of the information is also very high."*
- (Community of Practice) *"Attending EvaluATE training helped me find competent evaluators."*
- (General Comment) *"A centralized resource for focus on ATE evaluation is extremely important."*
- (Website) *"The website is my favorite toll that has been developed and is used quite frequently for reference."*

<sup>2</sup> Because of the extensive responses to the open-ended questions, they are not attached to this document. If you are interested in receiving a version of them, please contact The Rucks Group, LLC at [info@therucksgroup.com](mailto:info@therucksgroup.com).

When providing comments on opportunities for improvement, three of the categories were the same as previously mentioned. These are: resources, educational forum, and website. The categories of *marketing*, communicating EvaluATE’s value, products, and services as well as *utility*, the usefulness of the resource or information to an individual’s project, rounded off the top five suggestions for improvement (see Figure 4).

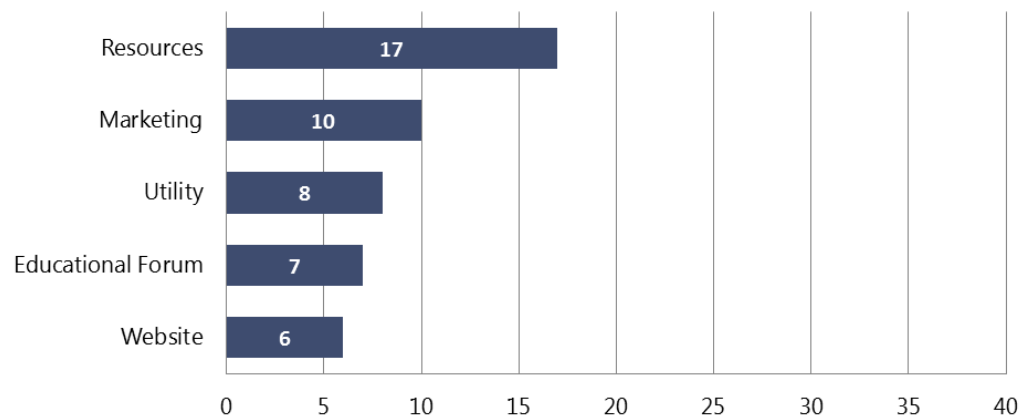


Figure 4. Number of responses for the top 5 categories of responses to the open-ended question *What does EvaluATE need to improve?*

The following are examples of the responses provided.

- (Resources) *“Provide more of a variety of information on evaluations (i.e., measurements, assessments, report writing, etc.)”*
- (Marketing) *“The webinars are very good, but I would like to get more email notifications about when recorded webinars are available. More reminders, not just a link on the next webinar invitation.”*
- (Utility) *“I have had a little trouble figuring out how your resources can help my particular project — primarily because it is (or seems anyway) so different from the typical ATE project.”*
- (Education Forum) *“I would like to have an “evaluation for dummies” training for ATE project personnel.”*
- (Website) *“Might be good to make it easier to find information provided during the webinars on your actual website (sometimes hard to navigate).”*

A challenging theme that arose in the comments was that some individuals reported that the materials were too “introductory,” while others reported that the materials were too “advanced.” For example:

- *“Webinars are very good — but more needs to be done for those of us who are not yet “experts”*
- *“... I have lots of training in program and project evaluation. [EvaluATE’s] materials are excellent and have been a good refresher for me.”*

Perhaps what these disparate comments reflect is the diverging needs of various members of the intended audience. Indeed, one respondent made the following comment:

- *“I think EvaluATE struggles with how to serve multiple audiences — PIs with limited background on evaluation and professional evaluators. In some ways I think they would be more effective if they specialized some of their materials and webinars for each audience.”*

Also of note is that perceptions of the resources also varied by frequency of use.<sup>3</sup> Frequent users rated the quality of resources higher than infrequent users. As the frequency of use increases, users report higher perceptions of quality (see Figure 5). Interestingly, differences in perceptions emerged on the closed-ended, Likert scale questions but not on the open-ended questions.

<sup>3</sup> Frequency of use was used by creating an aggregate score of overall use and dividing the respondents into tertile groups.



Figure 5. Intended audience's rating of EvaluATE's resources by frequency of use. The percentages reflect the combined responses of "Excellent", "Very Good", and "Good."

### To what extent are EvaluATE materials being used?

It is useful to make a distinction between reach, which was addressed in a previous evaluation question and the current evaluative question. Reach refers to the extent to which EvaluATE has "touched" their intended audience. However, frequency of use refers to how often are the materials being used. In essence, reach is a discrete measure of use, that is "used/not used," whereas frequency, at least conceptually, is more of a continuous measure of use.

While reach is high, as mentioned earlier at nearly 90%, frequency of use is lower (see Figure 6). This finding is most pronounced for recorded webinars in that it is the least used resource, while the website and newsletter are used the most by the intended audience. These findings are consistent with results of previous iterations of the survey.

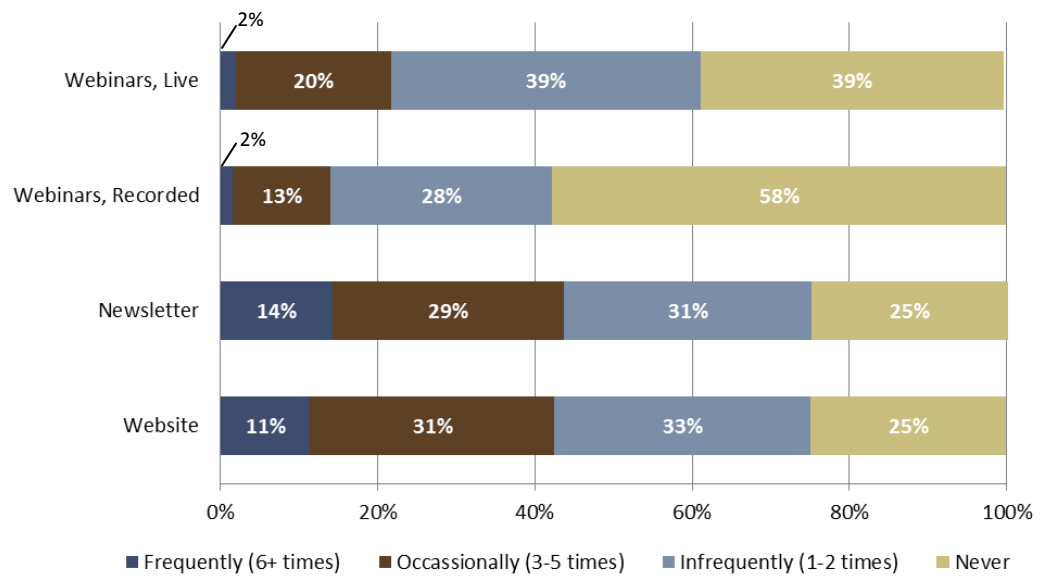


Figure 6. Reported frequency of use of live webinars, recorded webinars, newsletters and the website in the last 12 months by the intended audience.

Attempting to reconcile these findings with the perceptions of quality can be achieved by examining the open-ended comments. A common thread among infrequent and occasional users centered around lack of time and difficulty finding resources.

For instance:

- *"...I rarely make time to visit the site. I haven't seen or realized the value yet. However, I have referred back to information and notes I gained from the workshop I attended at ATE that covered evaluation."*
- *"The webinars provided I am sure would be very helpful. I have not, however, taken the time to participate."*
- *Without knowing that the EvaluATE web address actually is, it is difficult to*



- *“Very good at developing a public-facing presence. Need to figure out how to provide more depth than a 1-hour webinar, while maintaining an audience.”*
- *“As a user, I feel I don’t know exactly where to start when searching for something regarding evaluation.”*

Another component driving these findings relates to the role individuals have within the ATE community. For instance, when focusing on the roles that are traditionally directly involved in evaluation, PIs use the resources least and evaluators use the resources most, with Co-PIs’ usage in the middle. The trend of the data from this year’s stakeholder survey, as well as previous years, suggests that live webinars are the resource most used by evaluators, while the newsletter is the PIs most used resource. For all roles, recorded webinars were the least used (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. Percent of PIs, Co-PIs, and Evaluators who have used the identified EvaluATE resource at least one time in the past 12 months.

Similarly, usage of a resource varied by role for individuals less directly involved in the evaluation such as project staff, grant personnel, and other personnel (e.g., department chairs, deans, vice-presidents; see Figure 8). With a less clear pattern of usage among this group, it's important to remember that individuals within this group were identified primarily because they had attended a webinar.



Figure 8. Percent of Project Staff, Grant Personnel, and Other Personnel who have used the identified EvaluATE resource at least one time in the past 12 months.

### To what extent has EvaluATE's work led to improved evaluation knowledge?

Consistent with EvaluATE's logic model, it is posited that a result of their work is increased evaluation knowledge. Because of the historic measures of outcomes, evidence surrounding this particular claim, as well as the claim concerning increased evaluation practice discussed in the next session, has not traditionally been as compelling as the evidence surrounding other claims. As such, we made a concerted effort to more directly assess evaluation knowledge as well as evaluation practice.

A major motivator for individuals coming to EvaluATE appears to be to improve their evaluation knowledge and evaluation practice. When asked *What questions or issues have prompted you to use EvaluATE?*, 24% of individuals said they wanted to improve knowledge.

It should therefore be encouraging that a majority of those within the intended audience reported an increase in knowledge as a consequence of EvaluATE’s resources. Overall, members of the intended audience indicated that use of EvaluATE resources improved their understanding and knowledge of evaluation-related concepts (see Figure 9).

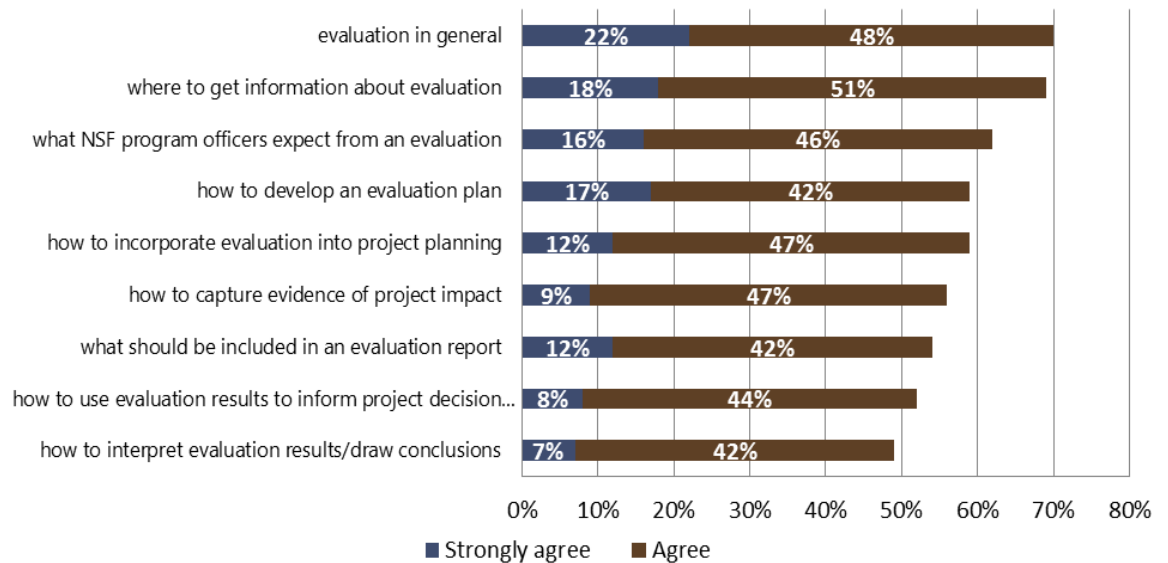


Figure 9. Reported extent of agreement with statements related to increases in evaluation knowledge by the intended audience.

As with perceptions of quality, frequency of use moderated these findings such that those who were more frequent users, as compared to less frequent users, tended to “agree” and “strongly agree” with these statements.

Moreover, when individuals were asked to provide a description of how information was used an EvaluATE resource and its subsequent impact on their work, 14% provided an positive example of how the resource increased their knowledge.<sup>4</sup> For example:

- *"It is the go-to place to start finding information about ATE evaluation. The new help identifying potential evaluators is a good idea. Many (most) of the important evaluation decisions are made in the proposal development stage. There could be more outreach to those preparing proposals."*
- *"EvaluATE webinars have given me ideas about how to take evaluation into account from the beginning point on working up grant applications. I discuss project goals and evaluation very early with key stakeholders."*
- *"I have used resources from EvaluATE to inform myself, my staff and my evaluator about best practices in evaluation. I have also connected my outside evaluator to EvaluATE and that has been helpful to our evaluation practices also."*
- *"As a new PI I have found the resources useful in understanding how to focus on continuous improvement by taking time to evaluate what is going well and what could be improved."*
- *"One important knowledge I gained is what kind of evidence is NSF looking for to measure the effectiveness of an ATE project. The project team is working on carrying out internal assessments in addition to the external assessment to provide such evidence."*

<sup>4</sup> Approximately 2% of respondents reported a neutral impact on knowledge and no one reported a negative impact.

### To what extent has EvaluATE’s work led to changes in evaluation practice?

As discussed with the previous evaluative question, nearly 24% of individuals come to EvaluATE to increase knowledge. From the same question, it was also found that 31% of users come to EvaluATE to improve evaluation practice.<sup>5</sup> Similar, to increases in evaluation knowledge, results from the survey support that users of EvaluATE resources are indeed making changes in evaluation practice (see Figure 10).

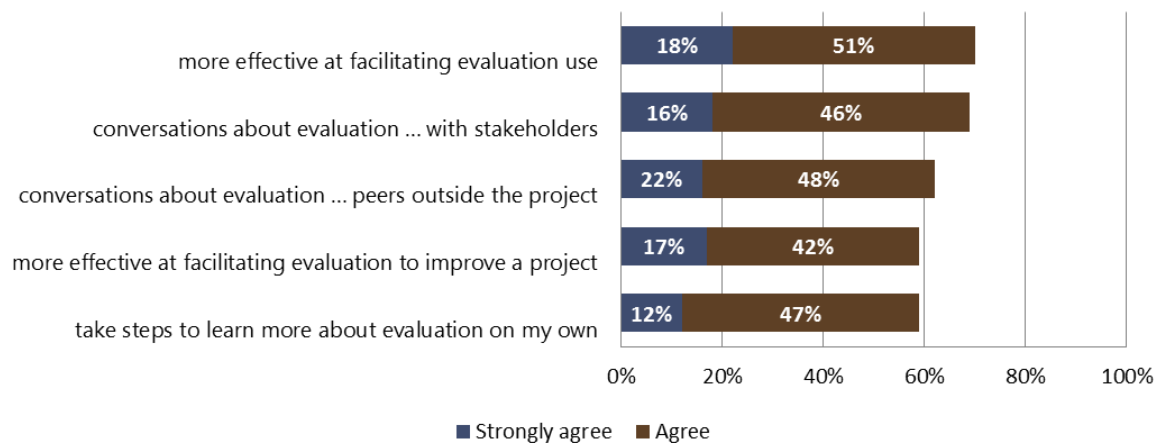


Figure 10. Reported extent of agreement with statements related to increases in evaluation practice by the intended audience.

The pattern established previously with more frequent users reporting more changes in evaluation practice relative to less frequent users also emerged for this set of items.

In the open-ended question discussed with the previous evaluative question, when asked to provide a short description of how an EvaluATE resource impacted on their work, 37% of respondents reported a positive impact on evaluation practice.<sup>5</sup> Examples of practice include:

- *“We have used information to assist with creating logic models for our project.”*

<sup>5</sup> Approximately 9% of respondents reported a neutral impact on practice and no one reported a negative impact.

- *“The webinars are a good review for me as an evaluator. The one on writing the evaluation section of grant proposals was particularly helpful and I have incorporated that information when I write my portion of a proposal. It has improved my submissions.”*
- *“Changed my organizational reporting structure to better capture information from my grant partners. More work, but more productive work. I have more information in a more organized fashion to report.”*

While 70% of survey respondents reported an overall positive impact because of EvaluATE’s resources, 3% respondents specifically reported project improvement, which is a positive impact on a project. Examples of project improvement include:

- *“I’ve used EvaluATE material resources as examples to modify for a new proposal and future aspects of my current project. I’ve used EvaluATE human resources to develop new relationships and collaborate on both current and future activities with my project. My project has received positive recognition both internally and externally which has led to additional opportunities to expand our vision and goals. The EvaluATE resources provide a sound support mechanism that helps us enable our successes.”*
- *“We consistently use the resources to evaluate our work upon which we revise (tweak) our delivery of curriculum and overall project learning processes. It has been a learning process on our part and the EvaluATE resource help immensely.”*

It is curious that overall a single resource has a relative infrequent use while individuals report positive changes in knowledge and practice. One possible explanation is that individuals have high usage of a particular resource. In essence, they have a “favorite” and use that resource repeatedly. Another possibility could concern timing. The questions regarding frequency of use had a time frame associated with it, while the impact questions on knowledge and practice did not. Therefore, individuals could be reporting the changes in knowledge and practice that did not occur within the same

timeframe associated with the reported frequency of use. For instance some respondents indicated that they used the resources during the planning of their projects and not do not use them as frequently now that they are executing the project.

Comments included:

- *“Great examples of best practices in ATE evaluation, refinement of existing evaluation practices (e.g., logic models integration, etc.); impact has been positive in better tools to qualify and quantify key metrics for grant impacts.”*
- *“I used the webinars during the first year of my project and this helped me learn more about evaluation processes. My project is in the third year so I have not used EvaluATE resources recently.”*

The converse has occurred as well, in which individuals report that it is too soon within the project cycle to give extensive attention to evaluation issues. For example:

- *“Project just started ... require more time to receive information and evaluate.”*
- *“Our project has begun, we have an evaluation plan (required in the proposal) and have discussed specifics among the key people and the external evaluator ... we have looked briefly at your resources, but have not needed any specific information yet.”*

## Recommendations

There are many strong areas of EvaluATE's work: the high reach among the intended audience, the perceived quality of EvaluATE's resources, and the reported improvement in knowledge and evaluation practice. Moreover, there is some indication of direct project improvement as a result of using EvaluATE resources. Taken together, these findings are consistent with EvaluATE's goal to improve technician education.

To continue to leverage the strengths of the center, the following recommendations are made: 1) repackage previously aired webinars; 2) leverage the interplay of the categories of the audience; 3) gain a deeper understanding of the role of frequency use of EvaluATE resources; and 4) develop content dissemination strategies around the different audiences.

### **Modify and update previously aired webinars to conserve resources**

It is striking that nearly 60% of the intended audience did not use recorded webinars within the past 12 months. This finding coupled with the fact that nearly 40% of individuals did not use the live webinar suggests there is much content to which the intended audience has not been exposed. Considering the extensive resources to develop webinars which generally occur from the ground up, the EvaluATE team should consider repackaging existing webinars. Doing this is likely not to negatively impact on attendance. For instance, the webinar on writing an evaluation section for a proposal is one of the most well attended webinars and this webinar is offered annually. An advantage of modifying and updating previously aired webinars would be to conserve resources in this arena and redirect resources to other strategic priorities.

### **Leverage the interplay of the audience**

EvaluATE's audience can be conceptually divided into four (4) categories: Target Audience, Influencers, Potential Target Audience, and General Users. The "target audience" includes PIs, Co-PIs, and evaluators, while the influencers" consist of individuals integrally associated with the grant, such as program officers, grant writers, project staff administrators, or other administrators. While the target audience has the most direct responsibility for evaluation, evaluation does not occur within a



vacuum, and thus the influencers also have a strong effect on the evaluation. Feedback suggests that the “potential target audience” should not be ignored, which is the pool of individuals who could potentially become part of the intended audience if their grant proposal is accepted. These individuals are important because the “tipping point” or the timeframe in which decisions are made about the evaluation, such as those related to the budget and the evaluation plan, occurs during prior to awarding of a grant, as noted earlier in this report. And finally, the conceptualization of “general users” is where the broader impacts would emerge. When examining EvaluATE’s markets, it is important to think of these entities not as completely separate categories as shown below on the left of Figure 11, rather to consider the important interplay among the ATE audiences, as shown on the right of Figure 11.

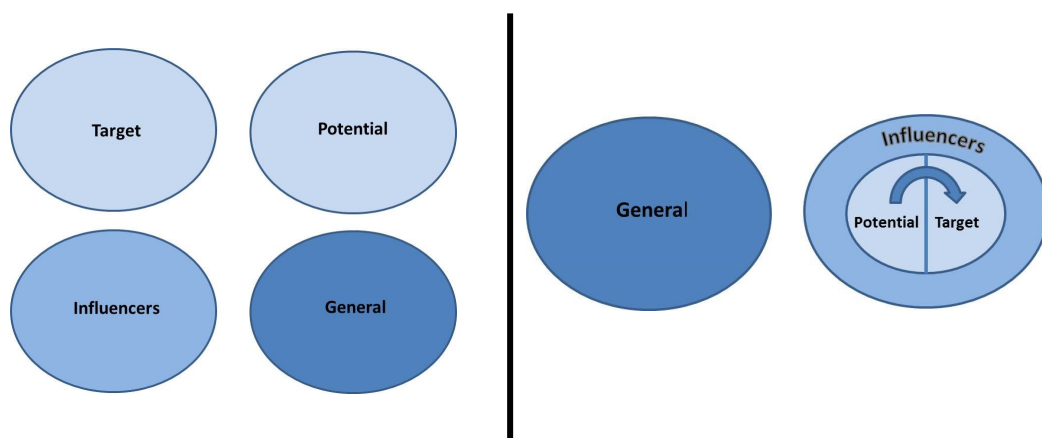


Figure 11. The image on the right represents EvaluATE’s overall audience. The image on the right is proposed conceptualization of the interplay of EvaluATE’s audience.

Leveraging the influencers could enhance outreach efforts. For instance, if the outreach efforts are directed to program officers and the program officers champion evaluation to PIs, this could reduce some of the marketing outreach efforts because there are fewer program officers than PIs. While the EvaluATE team has to balance its efforts directed to influencers against other strategic priorities, there are opportunities to open up additional resources as discussed previously.

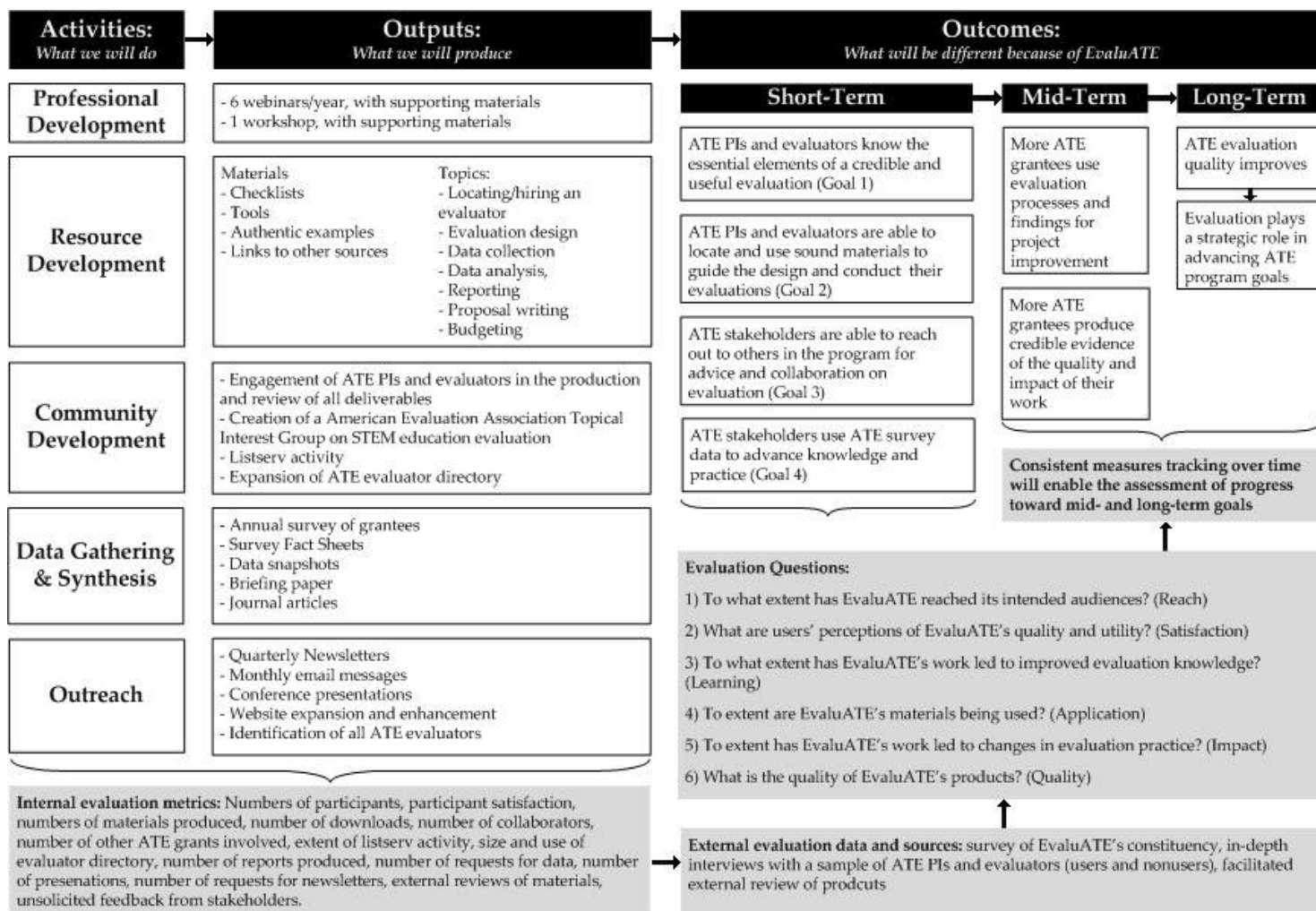
### **Gaining a deeper understanding of frequency**

The findings cited in this report consistently revealed that frequency of use plays a role in a variety of outcomes important to EvaluATE, such as perception of quality, increase in knowledge, and increase in evaluation practice. While it appears that it plays a role, the nature of that role remains unclear. For instance, is frequency of use an indicator of another variable that drives use of the resources such as evaluation engagement or time within the grant cycle, or is frequency actually a moderator of these findings such that the more frequently an individual uses the resource the more likely they are to experience the observed outcomes reported? This distinction is not a merely an academic consideration; in fact, understanding what role frequency plays directs a different course of action. If the former situation is accurate, then frequency can be an indicator of another variable at play. If the later situation is accurate, then increasing frequency of use should be a strategic priority of EvaluATE. Understanding the difference would have impact on EvaluATE's strategic decisions.

### **Develop content dissemination strategies**

EvaluATE is tasked with reaching out to a diverse audience when it comes to evaluation expertise. While some survey respondents indicated that information was too basic, other survey respondents indicated that it was too complex. One way to approach crafting resources at the appropriate level for the particular user is by mapping the nature of the content on to the resource. For instance, evaluators use live webinars more than PIs or Co-PIs. Therefore, content that is directly intended for evaluators or developed for the evaluator level of expertise would be appropriate. PIs and Co-PIs, on the other hand, primarily receive information from the newsletter. Content that is written at the level for the PI and Co-PIs would be more appropriate. It should be noted that even though evaluators use this resource, it appears that evaluators in general use more of EvaluATE resources than any of other of the other groups. It is unlikely that targeting the newsletter to PIs or Co-PIs would lose readership by evaluators. And even if that did occur, it would not be problematic because they have other resources that are targeted to them.

# EvaluATE's Logic Model



## EvaluATE 2012 Stakeholder Survey

The purpose of the Stakeholder Survey you are receiving is to gather evidence of EvaluATE's quality and effectiveness. This survey is distributed by The Rucks Group, LLC as the external evaluator for EvaluATE, the National Science Foundation (NSF) funded Evaluation Resource Center for Advanced Technological Education (ATE).

It takes less than 15 minutes to complete.

The link is unique to each email recipient; therefore, you cannot forward the link to another individual. If there is someone who you believe should participate in this survey, please forward their name and email address to: [lanarucks@therucksgroup.com](mailto:lanarucks@therucksgroup.com).

All responses will be kept confidential. No one outside of The Rucks Group will have information that will identify individual respondents. The Rucks Group will share findings from the survey with EvaluATE to help the Center assess and improve its work. A public report will be made available on EvaluATE's website.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Dr. Lana Rucks by phone at 937-242-7024 or by email at [lanarucks@therucksgroup.com](mailto:lanarucks@therucksgroup.com).

Thank you for your time.

Are you currently working in anyway on an ATE grant funded project?

- Yes
- No

1a1. (If yes) What is your primary role with an ATE grant? (Choose only one) Please note, if you work with multiple ATE grants, then consider the ATE grant on which you spend the most amount of time.)

- Principal Investigator
- Co-PI
- Evaluator
- Project Manager/Coordinator/other grant staff
- Grant Writer/Grant Management/Institutional Development Officer
- Intutional Researcher
- Department Chair/Associate Dean/Dean/Vice-President/President
- Other, please specify

1b1. (If no) are you planning to submit an ATE proposal in the future?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

## EvaluATE 2012 Stakeholder Survey, continued

2. About how often have you obtained information from each of the following EvaluATE resources in the last 12 months?

<b>Webinars, live</b>	<b>Webinars, recorded</b>	<b>Newsletter (Conduit)</b>	<b>Website</b>
Never	Never	Never	Never
1 time	Infrequently (1-2 times)	Infrequently (1-2 times)	Infrequently (1-2 times)
2 times	Occasionally (3-5 times)	Occasionally (3-5 times)	Occasionally (3-5 times)
3 times	Frequently (6-10 times)	Frequently (6-10 times)	Frequently (6-10 times)
4 times	Very Frequently (11+ times)	Very Frequently (11+ times)	Very Frequently (11+ times)
5 times			
6 times			

3. Rate the overall quality of the EvaluATE resources you accessed in the past 12 months. For those resources you have not yet accessed, please select "N/A."

	N/A	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
<b>Webinars, live</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Webinars, recorded</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Newsletter (Conduit)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Website</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## EvaluATE 2012 Stakeholder Survey, continued

4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<i>The information I obtained from EvaluATE resources has improved my understanding of:</i>	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
where to get information about evaluation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
what NSF program officers expect from an evaluation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
evaluation in general (e.g., terms, concepts, purposes).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how to develop an evaluation plan (e.g., logic models, evaluation questions, data collection methods, design).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how to incorporate evaluation into project planning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how to capture evidence of project impact.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how to use evaluation results to inform project decision making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
what should be included in an evaluation report.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how to interpret evaluation results/draw conclusions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## EvaluATE 2012 Stakeholder Survey, continued

5. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<i>The information I obtained from EvaluATE resources has helped me ...</i>	N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
have more frequent conversations about evaluation issues with project stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
have more frequent conversations about evaluation issues with peers outside my project.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
be more effective at facilitating evaluation use among project stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
be more effective in using evaluation results to improve a project.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
take steps to learn more about evaluation on my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## EvaluATE 2012 Stakeholder Survey, continued

6. Please provide a short description of (1) how you have used information from an EvaluATE resource; and (2) how it impacted your work.

7. What questions or issues have prompted you to use EvaluATE?

8. What is EvaluATE doing especially well? What does EvaluATE need to improve?

9. Would you be willing to provide further feedback to a member of The Rucks Group?





**This mosaic was chosen for as the design for this report as a visual representation of EvaluATE's work.  
A mosaic is the synthesis of many different elements that work together, just as  
EvaluATE's work is the synthesis of all the various resources they offer.**

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**The Rucks Group is an organizational development research firm that focuses on evaluation and metrics.  
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