Mentoring for program evaluation sounds promising but how well does it work?

Reflections on practice

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Outline

1. A developing interest in building capacity for evaluation
2. Using mentoring for ECB
3. Approach to ECB and mentoring in DIAC
4. Two case studies of mentoring
5. Lessons and future directions

A developing interest in ECB

The art, craft and science of evaluation capacity building. Compton, D. W., Baizerman, M., & Stockdill, S. H. (2002). NDE 93, 47–61.
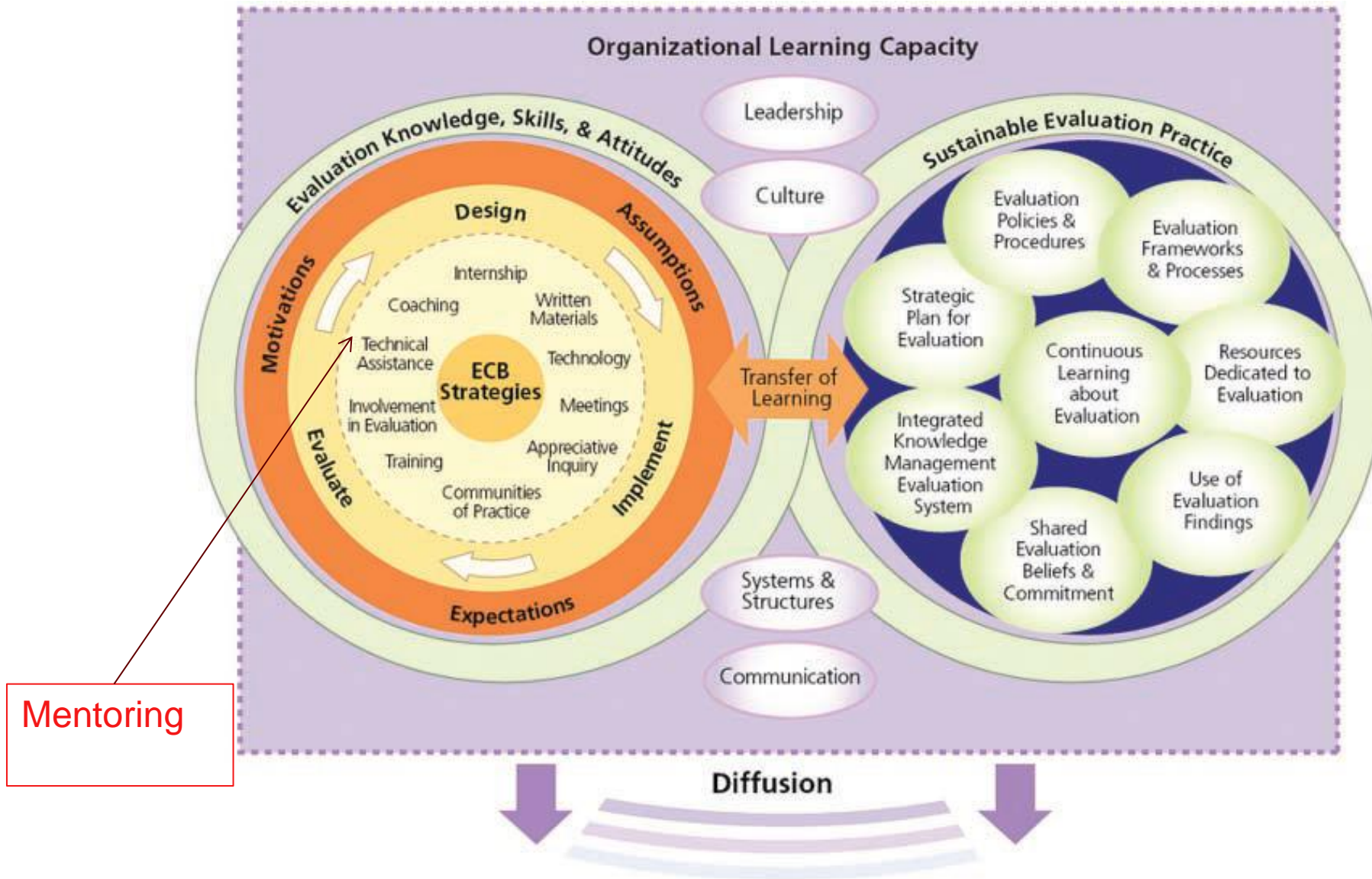
Issue

ECB is different from yet shows resemblance to program evaluation

Definition

ECB is the intentional work to continuously create and sustain overall organisational processes that make quality evaluation and its use routine

Multidisciplinary model of ECB

A multidisciplinary model of evaluation capacity building Preskill, H., & Boyle, S. (2008). AJE, 29, 443–459.

Hot off the press- measuring EC

- *Understanding and Measuring Evaluation Capacity : A Model and Instrument Validation Study* Tina Taylor-Ritzler, Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, Edurne Garcia-Iriarte, David B. Henry and Fabricio E. Balcazar (2013) AJE 2013 34: 190

- *Moving From Science to Practice in Evaluation Capacity Building* Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar and Tina Taylor-Ritzler (2013) AJE online August 15, 2013

- *Understanding Dimensions of Organizational Evaluation Capacity* Isabelle Bourgeois and J. Bradley Cousins (2013) AJE 2013 34: 299 online 2 May 2013

Organisations' ability to do and use evaluation

Research with Canadian federal government organizations on

- the essential dimensions of evaluation capacity, and
- levels of capacity – low; developing, intermediate capacity and exemplary

Capacity to do			Capacity to use		
Human resources	**Organisational resources**	**Evaluation planning & activities**	**Organisational decision making**	**Evaluation literacy**	**Learning benefits**
Staffed Evaluation Unit Evaluation logic & technical skills Communication & interpersonal skills Professional development Leadership	Budget Ongoing data collection Organisational infrastructure	5 year plan Balanced use of consultants Information sharing External supports Organisational linkages	Management processes Decision support	Involvement in evaluation Results-management orientation	Instrumental /conceptual use Process use

Mentoring

Bourgeois and Cousins (2013)

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For example ...

**Table 4.** Capacity to Use Evaluation, Dimension 4: Evaluation Literacy.

Level	Involvement in evaluation	Results-management orientation
Exemplary capacity	Organizational staff members generally understand the purpose of evaluation and how it supports the organizational mandate (e.g., staff members understand results-based management principles and practices) Program managers and other staff members are closely involved at key points in the evaluation process (e.g., review identified issues and provide feedback, facilitate data collection opportunities, review draft evaluation reports)	Senior managers promote a results-management orientation for the entire organization and make it a priority by providing time and resources Organizational members share clear ideas about organizational purpose and goals through formal and informal mechanisms (e.g., strategic planning sessions, retreats, regular meetings, brown bag lunch sessions) All programs have a clear results chain (i.e., logic model) Program managers take the lead for the development and implementation of performance measurement strategies; evaluators provide technical expertise when needed

Mentoring

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Some implications

- New approaches to modelling and evaluating ECB

- a theory of change for ECB (Bourgeois and Cousins)
- research suggests government and NGOs differ in capacity to conduct and use evaluation
  - ✓ government has higher capacity to **do** evaluation
  - ✓ but NGOs more likely to **use** evaluation

Mentoring and coaching
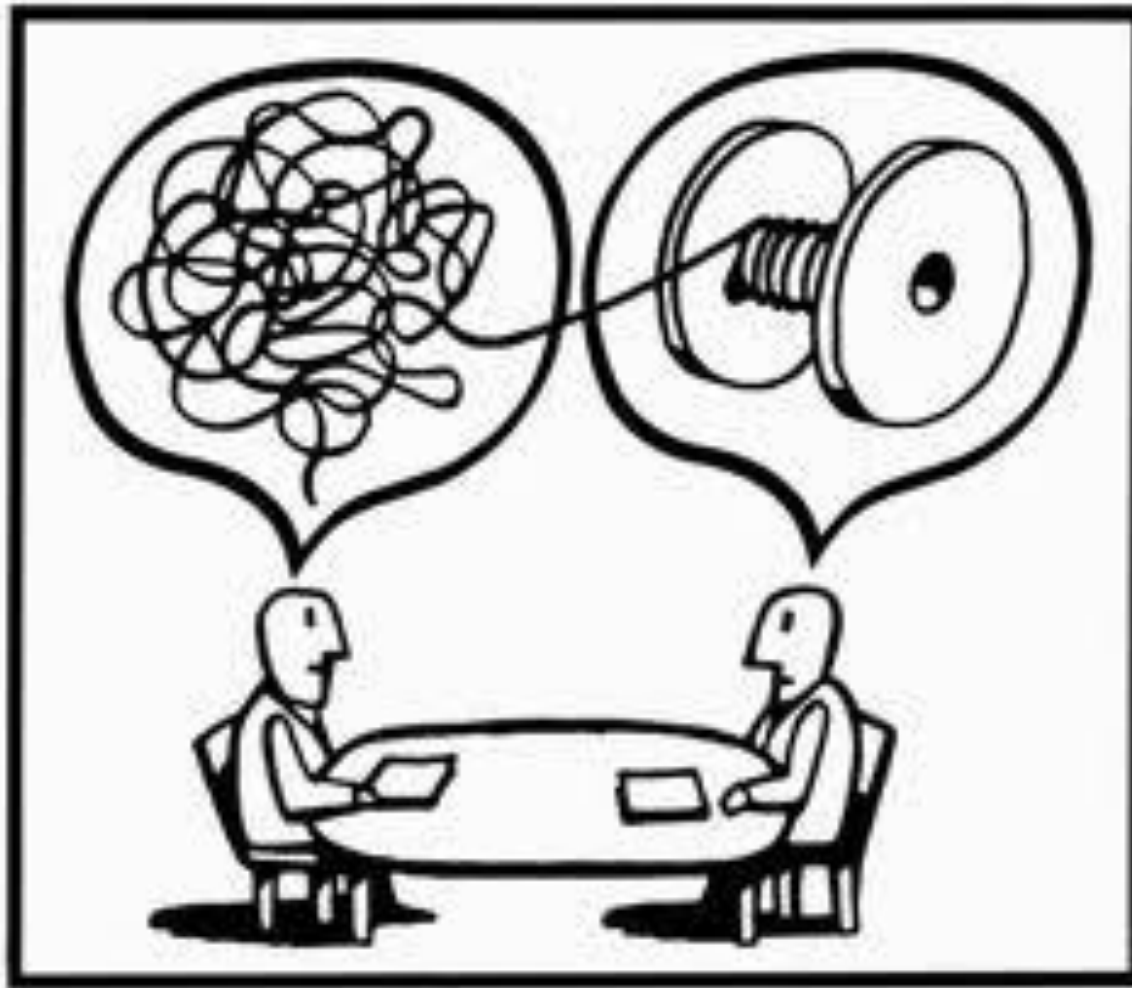
Mentoring and coaching

Some definitions:

- Coaching and mentoring are two ways in which people with vast experience help those who have less experience. Coaching usually deals with specific skills and tactics, while mentoring often is a long-term process and a more personal relationship is formed. In both coaching and mentoring the goal is to help people to reach their full potential.

- Coaching is building a relationship with an evaluation expert who provides individualized technical and professional support

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What the literature says about mentoring and coaching for ECB

- Mentoring is one of many strategies for ECB– focuses on personal skills

- Most literature about building capacity of funded community organisations to do evaluation

- Common notion of improving capacity by participating in the process with expert help

- Draws on concepts from participatory, empowerment evaluation literature

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Systematic review in 2012

- 61cases
- Consistent strategies; multiple modes used
- Training is most common
- <2% only use coaching or mentoring alone
- Collaborative processes and programmatic outcomes
- Multiple evaluation competencies targeted
- Strategies directed at the individual level (learning and behaviour change), and at the organizational level.

A research synthesis of the evaluation capacity building literature. Labin, S., Duffy, J., Meyers, D. C., Wandersman, A., & Lesesne, C. A. (2012). American Journal of Evaluation, 33, 307–338.

ECB modes used

Mode	% any used	% used exclusively
Training	77%	16%
Coaching	62%	1.6%
Involvement in evaluation	67%	8%
Face to face only	47%	
Face to face + other	44%	
No face to face	1.6%	

Labin et al (2012)

ECB competencies targeted

Competency	% any used	% used exclusively
Evaluation planning	82%	3.3%
How to do evaluation	72%	1.6%
Logic models	53%	1.6%
Interpretation and use of data	53%	0%
Terms, approaches, methods	38%	0%
Attitudes	23%	0%

Labin et al (2012)

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DIAC and ECB

- Department of Immigration and Citizenship is a large organisation with many recent changes, high public profile, relatively new to evaluation

- Strategy for building evaluation capacity 2010-2013 - to conduct effective evaluations, support program management and inform decision making

- 5 broad areas of focus:

Organisation	Culture	Capability	Support	Quality
Coordination Meet business needs	shared understanding of what evaluation offers	Staff skills, knowledge to undertake or manage evaluation	Resources, tools, advice	Better program management and decisions thru evaluation

Mentoring

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Approach to mentoring

- DIAC chose mentoring/ coaching as one key element of ECB
- Two goals – more quality evaluations, done internally; build staff capability

- Selected experienced evaluation consultants
- Selected programs – pre workshop in program logic
- Workshop decisions about evaluation scope, focus
- DIAC program staff led the evaluations
- Mentor to assist staff at key points in designing, collecting and reporting for the evaluation
- 2012 trial for concept testing

Case 1- Refugee Youth Support Pilot

Evaluation of pilot - process and outcomes

Approach – coaching + involvement of staff in evaluation + contracted qualitative data collection from refugee youth to independent researchers with expertise

Results

- sensitivities well handled (ethics, interviews)
- a comprehensive evaluation report of the pilot

Case study 1 - Multiple competencies

Shared and clarified motivations, assumptions, and expectations

Reviewed information about programs

Gave advice and reflected on evaluation products

- Evaluation design, methods and planning
- Commented on data collection instruments –surveys, audit tool and interview guides
- Technical issues, who and how to analysis data collected by Department
- Interpretation of patterns and meanings from data –reflective process
- Report structure and draft report

Case 1 - Success factors and challenges

Success factors

- High motivation - pilot and evaluation to inform
- Dedicated resources –a DIAC staff member + consultancy days
- Manager interested and involved in coaching sessions
- ARTD available whenever asked and provided quick feedback

Challenges

- Long time period for evaluation
- Change of coaches mid-stream, no face to face meeting for new coach

Case 2- Visa provisions

Mature and complex "program"

Focus of evaluation on appropriateness with policy, consistency of application, efficiency/work load

Evaluation plan had multiple methods – admin data analysis, review of lit, document analysis, on-line survey of onshore and overseas offices

Program staff led evaluation + staff tasks + mentor + contracted on-line survey

Results

- Complexities addressed (program logic; evaluation questions)
- Survey completed but not analysis (now analysis contracted)
- Evaluation not finalised after 12 months

Case 2 – Issues and challenges

- Difficult policy issue to solve across multiple program areas
- No dedicated internal resources –evaluation tasks added to staff's existing work
- No initial provision for technical support – esp on-line survey and analysis – led to contracting
- Unclear responsibility for completion of evaluation – mentor or program or … ?
- Long delays so momentum lost

Issues from concept testing of mentoring

- How to balance the goals of **getting quality evaluations done** with **building staff capability**?

- How to have staff remain available on evaluation tasks?

- Uncertainty over critical role – who progresses the evaluation?

- Good value from prior program logic workshops with internal stakeholders

- Is it mentoring or coaching?

- How to source skills for technical tasks?

- How to draw on new ECP developments in DIAC - introductory workshops in evaluation; on-line training course; community of practice ?

Future directions

- Lessons - expand but do it differently
- Use internal **or** external mentors
- Programs nominate for evaluation (growing interest)
- Add internal research manager from the Evaluation Branch as third party
- Require staff to have prior evaluation training
- Process to "match" programs and mentors – two step procurement including program interviews and selects potential mentor