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# The User-Oriented Evaluator's Role in Formulating a Program Theory: Using a Theory-Driven Approach

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## ABSTRACT

Program theory plays a prominent role in many evaluations, not only in theory-driven evaluations. This paper presents a case study of the process of developing and refining a program's theory within a user-oriented evaluation. In user-oriented (or utilization-focused) evaluations, primary users can play a role in defining their own program theory. This is different, however, from the typical process by which a program theory is developed when using theory-driven evaluation framework. This case study concerns a university's academic outreach program with three local school districts. The program's objective is to increase the number of University of California eligible and specifically University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) admissible students from targeted local public schools. The authors helped develop and refine outreach staff's program theory. The evaluation procedures are described and results of the theory building process presented.

## INTRODUCTION

Almost four years ago we took on the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) academic outreach program evaluation. We were asked to do so after the outreach executive committee received from another evaluator a year-end report that proved to be virtually useless to the committee and program management and staff. The limited impact of the report was seen largely as a result of the evaluation's focus, which was not centered on stakeholders' informational needs.

Before agreeing to the job, we explained the theoretical approach we use to guide our evaluation work. This approach, commonly known as user-oriented evaluation, emphasizes stakeholder involvement in various phases of the evaluation, starting with the identification

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of pertinent issues for study. Moreover, we are committed to engaging in procedures that are likely to increase the probability of evaluation utilization. In other words, we wanted to convey that we intended to conduct an evaluation along the lines of *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* (Patton, 1997). The committee appeared to be enthusiastic about our approach, agreed to our conditions, and our work began.

Our evaluation team spent the first month learning about the program and talking with the various stakeholders (e.g., program director, staff, students) about their information needs. This is a typical course of action when conducting a utilization-focused evaluation. After several in-depth conversations it became particularly evident that the program was lacking a clear program theory, that is, “an explicit theory or model of how the program causes the intended or observed outcomes” (Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner, & Hacs, 2000). This was confusing and difficult for stakeholders to articulate, however, because they felt that their work was being guided by a program theory. Upon examination of their program theory, it became clear to us that what was believed to be a program theory was instead a theory explaining the conditions of a school where the desired outcome (i.e., an increased number of students eligible and admissible to the University of California) was being achieved. Rather, what stakeholders wanted and needed was a model indicating the relationship by which program activities are understood to lead to the desired goals—which the existing theory did not provide. An evaluation that is designed to develop a program theory, which in turn is used to guide the program evaluation, is known in the evaluation theory literature as a *Theory-Driven Evaluation* (TDE). Thus, our first activity as utilization-focused evaluators was to facilitate the development of a program theory as one would in a TDE.

This paper describes how we combined important aspects of theory-driven and utilization-focused evaluation, namely the development of a program theory as the first user request. We recognize that, to some, involving stakeholders in program theory formulation in the context of a TDE and developing a program theory as part of a UFE may not seem terribly out of the ordinary. However, identifying the shared notions of practice that different theoretical models rely upon, in addition to explanations of how one might employ the notions of one theory within the context of another, is noteworthy and not widely recognized in the literature. Moreover, there are few examples in the literature of evaluations that intentionally integrate these two (or other) theoretical approaches. We argue that while in the field, theory integration is more common than not, and that it is important to provide examples of such work, describing how, why, and under what conditions theory integration has been successful.

In this paper we first briefly explain the purpose of the programs described in the case study. Next, we summarize utilization-focused and theory-driven evaluation. Then, we illustrate how theory-driven evaluation can be used within the context of utilization-focused evaluation by describing the method by which we developed a program theory. Finally, we offer a commentary on the relationship between evaluation theory and practice derived from our case example.

### **UCLA’s Outreach Programs**

In 1996, the state of California passed Proposition 209, abolishing the state’s affirmative action policy. From the Fall of 1997 to the Fall of 1998, UCLA saw large declines in the admissions of underrepresented students; Native American freshman enrollment declined by 43.2%, African American by 42.6%, and Latino by 33.1%. In an effort to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students admitted to the university, UCLA developed and instituted a vast network of activities with local school districts centered on

educational reform. These efforts can be seen as having two objectives: (1) to foster systemic change related to college readiness (school-centered programs) and (2) to implement and sustain programs that assist prospective students in becoming UC eligible (student-centered programs).

The systemic change effort, *school-centered program*, supports a longer-term solution to increasing the number of students from Los Angeles area school districts who are UC admissible. This is to be achieved by establishing school-university partnerships (SUPs), aiming to reform schools so that they are in a position to better prepare students for the educational opportunities of the university. This effort includes, but is not limited to, teacher and administrator professional development programs and parent education programs. All schools that participate in the school-centered program also have a *student-centered program*.<sup>1</sup> Student-centered outreach focuses on working intensely with a select group of promising students in order to increase their likelihood of becoming competitive for UC admissions. This is accomplished through UCLA's Early Academic Outreach Programs (EAOP).

UCLA's academic outreach work is framed by a conceptual model identifying six conditions that UCLA faculty, using current educational research (see Oakes, 2001), established as essential for achieving long-term systemic change. These six conditions are: (1) college-going culture; (2) rigorous academic curriculum; (3) high quality teaching; (4) intensive academic and college-going support; (5) a multicultural, college-going identity; and (6) parent community relations regarding college-going and academics. It was this model that served as the proxy for a program theory prior to the evaluation.

## UTILIZATION-FOCUSED AND THEORY-DRIVEN EVALUATION

Evaluation theories are models for evaluation practice. They are intended to *guide* practice (rather than explain phenomena) and they are prescriptions for the ideal. Theories address the focus and role of the evaluation, the specific evaluation questions to be studied, the evaluation design and implementation, and the use of evaluation results. They emphasize, prioritize, and combine a range of evaluation techniques.

Our evaluation theoretical approach is best described as user-oriented (Alkin, 1991), or as Patton (1997) describes it, utilization-focused evaluation (UFE). The goal of UFE is to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be used, that is, will have an impact, by identifying and involving a small group of stakeholders, often referred to as primary users, who are in a position to use the evaluation findings. Primary users are identified from the larger pool of potential stakeholders, which can be vast, and so the primary user group can be understood to be a small sub-set of the larger stakeholder group. Thus, we differentiate between stakeholders, who have a stake—a vested interest—in the evaluation, and primary users (Patton, 1997). Primary users are the stakeholders who have a principal role in decision making and in turn are in the position to utilize results. Primary user involvement is intended to increase the utilization of evaluation results.

*Theory-Driven Evaluation* utilizes the underlying program theory to guide the evaluation. Program theory is defined as “a specification of what must be done to achieve the program's desired goals, the important impact that may be anticipated, and how these goals and their impact would be generated” (Chen, 1990, p. 43). The evaluator uses this theory to guide the evaluation activities and as the benchmark for determining program effectiveness. Theory-driven evaluation “requires evaluators to construct a program theory underlying a program and it is

this theory that guides the evaluation activities” (Chen & Rossi, 1992, p. 4). This is often done using extant social science theories.

A program theory as described in the evaluation theory literature is “a process through which program components are presumed to affect outcomes and the conditions under which these processes are believed to operate” (Donaldson, 2002). This was the type of theory the primary users in our evaluation desired. Thus, we determined that developing and testing the program theory was the primary users’ key information need and therefore it is where our evaluation began.

### **How UFE and TDE Shared Characteristics Can Differ**

For the evaluator who starts with a UFE framework, it is not the program theory that drives the evaluation process, but the primary users’ needs. It is also true that for the evaluator who starts with a TDE framework, key stakeholders’ needs do not drive the evaluation process, developing and testing a program theory does. Nevertheless, the two primary characteristics that UFE and TDE share are program theory development and stakeholder involvement. That is, both UFE and TDE—to varying degrees and processes—promote program theory development and stakeholder involvement. Here we describe the similarities and differences of the theoretical models with respect to these two dimensions.

**Program theory development.** UFE is concerned with the individual primary users and their evaluation needs. These needs, however, are often quite amorphous and require structuring and development. Patton reiterates this when he says, “What makes the user-focused approach challenging is that practitioners are seldom aware of their theory of action” (1997, p. 221).

Theories of action, as Patton describes, “refers specifically to how to produce desired results in general, in contrast to theories in general which explain why some phenomenon of interest occurs” (p. 221). Theories of action can be either espoused theories, that is, what people say or believe is their theory, or theories-in-use, that is, the bases on which people act (Patton, 1997). The user-focused approach to developing a theory of action requires “working with intended users to extract and specify their implicit theory of action” (1997, p. 219). Thus, the evaluator works with the primary intended users so to understand the relationship between what the program is actually doing, how what is being done will have an impact, and how that impact relates to the intended program outcomes. This kind of program theory building differs, however, from the program theory development as it typically transpires in a TDE.

Although Chen (1990) describes a stakeholder approach to formulating a program theory, he maintains that under most circumstances it is more desirable for the TDE evaluator to formulate a program theory using a social science approach. Chen and Rossi (1983) explicitly advocate deriving program theories from existing social science theory and knowledge and, in fact, caution against using key stakeholders’ values to construct program theory since their views can be biased and subjective. However, as long as social science theory serves as the foundation for formulating the program theory, TDE theorists do not object to the inclusion of key stakeholders’ views in formulating the program theory (Chen & Rossi, 1980, 1983). Yet, Chen and Rossi (1983) do maintain that whenever possible the theory-driven evaluator should construct a program theory drawing upon “existing stocks of theory and knowledge to the extent relevant,” of program inputs, mediating processes, and outputs (p. 300). The evaluator then tests each of the parts of the program theory, develops measures (or uses existing validated

measures), and collects and analyzes data. Thus, it is the program theory, ideally formulated using a social science approach, that serves as the foundation for the TDE.

We engaged in program theory development in a manner that is more similar to the way that [Chen \(1990\)](#) and [Chen and Rossi \(1983\)](#) describe for TDE. What distinguished our work from that of the TDE evaluator was the extent to which the program theory guided the conduct of the evaluation. We did not employ the program theory as a structure for the conduct of the evaluation as per [Chen \(1990\)](#), [Chen and Rossi \(1983\)](#), or [Weiss \(1998\)](#). Rather, we used the program theory development process with primary users as a means to assist them in refining their questions and anticipated areas of study.

**Stakeholder involvement.** Patton's UFE is built upon the premise that stakeholders, very specifically primary users, should ideally be involved in every aspect of the evaluation process. Patton maintains that it is this very participation that increases primary users buy-in into the evaluation which, in turn, increases utilization. Thus, stakeholder involvement serves as the foundation for this theoretical perspective.

Although [Chen \(1990\)](#) warns of the potential impact of building a program theory based on the views of key stakeholders, he does emphasize meeting stakeholders informational needs when determining the type of evaluation to be conducted. [Chen \(1990\)](#) maintains that TDEs should be "responsive" and he states that "evaluations are rarely, if ever, done out of pure academic curiosity; they are done to provide useful information to program stakeholders in order to improve program operations and ultimately to improve society" (1990, p. 61). He advocates an "evenness" approach to stakeholder involvement. This approach "argues for taking the powerful groups' interests seriously . . . [and] enhances justice in the sense that it attempts to raise disadvantaged groups' interests to a similar level of others" (p. 62). Thus, it is accurate to say that TDE supports the inclusion of key stakeholder views in the evaluation process in order to provide information that will improve programs. However, the level and extent of participation in the evaluation process is not emphasized as a key determinant of the success of the evaluation as it is with a UFE. The bottom line is that the success of a UFE is judged by the extent to which the evaluation is utilized and this is not the case for the TDE.

## USING TDE IN THE CONTEXT OF A UFE: HOW IT WORKED

Upon accepting the outreach evaluation, we identified our primary users. We determined that the outreach executive committee (all faculty members) was in the best position to use our evaluation information for decision making. As UFE evaluators, our next step was to determine the informational needs of our primary users. The initial evaluation request was to help establish the relationship between the activities that outreach staff were engaging in and their impact on the six conditions.

Outreach program faculty had conducted extensive reviews of the school reform research and theory literature, and noted six "conditions" necessary for schools if they are to be preparing students to be competitively eligible for university admission. These six conditions were derived from and grounded in current school reform literature. The literature review process is a fundamental step in developing a program theory ([Chen, 1991](#)).

If, prior to our evaluation, the outreach faculty had not embarked on the task of identifying the conditions, the evaluation team would have engaged in this process. Instead, we reviewed

the literature to ensure breadth, depth, and valid interpretation. The six conditions, as program staff understood them to be, were:

- (1) **CULTURE**—*college-going culture*—where adults and peers see college-going as expected and attainable, and where they see the effort and persistence that preparation for college requires as normal (identity development);
- (2) **IDENTITY**—*a multicultural college-going identity*—confidence and skills to negotiate college without sacrificing one's own identity and connections with one's home community (bridging students' multiple worlds);
- (3) **CURRICULUM**—*rigorous academic curriculum*—A-G courses,<sup>2</sup> honors/Advanced Placement courses, engagement with significant subject matter (access to knowledge);
- (4) **TEACHING**—*high quality teaching*—well-qualified teachers, instruction that engages students in work of high intellectual quality (opportunity to learn);
- (5) **SUPPORT**—*intensive academic and college-going support*—academic tutoring, SAT prep, coaching about college admissions, financial aid, etc. (support beyond the classroom and access to the "hidden curriculum" of the college track); and
- (6) **CONNECTIONS**—*parent/community connections re: college-going and academics*—parent seminars on curriculum, teaching, and college-going (access to knowledge about college preparation and to college-savvy social networks).

The six conditions, as listed, were taken by the program staff to be the "program theory." However, as evaluators, we understood this to be only a component of a more complex program theory, one that was more explicit and detailed, and which necessarily included describing the relationship between activities and their impact on the conditions. The six conditions were actually mediators to program success.

In order to develop an "evaluatable" program theory that depicted what activities contributed to the establishment of the six conditions that presumably mediate program success, we first had to determine the activities in which staff were engaging. This was accomplished by interviewing all SUP and EAOP program field staff (32 individuals). We presumed that because the purposes of the programs differed, the activities of the two groups would also differ. Thus, two group interviews were conducted with each program (two with EAOP staff and two with SUP staff). It was determined from the interviews that EAOP staff reportedly engaged in 13 activities and SUP staff in 24 activities.

Once we established the list of activities that staff reported engaging in, we set out to measure staff beliefs about how each activity related to each of the six conditions. We did this by asking staff about their perceptions of the impact of each activity on each of the six conditions. We were interested in staffs' perceptions about the impact of each activity for two reasons: first, so that we could determine the extent to which individual staff members were engaging in each activity (if they were not engaging in the activity they were instructed to say so); and, second, to develop a preliminary measure of impact. We understood that individual staff perceptions of the impact of their own work was not necessarily the most valid measure of impact. Nonetheless, we felt it was a starting point for gaining a better understanding of the impact of each activity on each condition, and we also felt that the aggregated data would help us gain a more global understanding of the relationships. We were aware that, in order to gain a more definitive understanding of how each activity related to each of the six conditions, additional, more objective measures would be necessary.

To accomplish our initial task of determining the extent to which staff were engaging in each activity and to obtain a preliminary measure of the impact of activities on conditions, the

Delphi technique was used. This method attempts to determine group consensus without the use of group meetings. Since outreach is a very political and sensitive topic, findings from group meetings might not have accurately assessed group consensus because of undue influence of individuals or the “bandwagon” effect. By eliminating group interaction, we hoped to gather more accurate data on the impact of EAOP student-centered activities on the six conditions specified as necessary for systemic change.

The Delphi method maintains the anonymity of respondents by eliminating round-table discussions, allows for participation of all respondents without fear of punitive action, and reduces the gathering of irrelevant information by controlling and focusing feedback (Adelson, Alkin, Carey, & Helmer, 1967; Dalkey, Rourke, Lewis, & Snyder, 1972). Delphi study participants privately fill out questionnaires. Since all responses are kept anonymous, it is impossible for participants to know how any of the other participants answered, thereby eliminating the possibility of retribution based on responses.

The researcher determines consensus, item by item, based on the responses. For those items where consensus is not reached, the researcher solicits feedback from respondents representing the extreme positions of the dissensus. These views are typically collected through interviews. A second questionnaire is given with descriptive statistics and feedback statements, anonymously presented, only for those items where consensus was not reached. This is intended to give respondents more information to consider when they rethink their responses. If some items still lack consensus, a third questionnaire reporting second-round results is given. These iterations continue until there is consensus on virtually all items or until dissensus has been clarified.

By way of example, we will describe the process we engaged in for the EAOP program Delphi study. The first-round questionnaire was mailed to all 19 of UCLA's EAOP staff, including the program director who serves on the outreach executive committee. Fifteen questionnaires were returned. The first-round questionnaire asked the respondents to rate each of the 13 outreach activities in terms of their impact on each of the six conditions (see [Appendix A](#) for a full description of the activities). Respondents were to indicate whether the activity had: (a) Little or No Impact; (b) Some Impact; (c) Great Impact; or was (d) Not Applicable for each condition. For example, the respondents were asked to rate the impact of Saturday Academies on the conditions, Culture, Identity, Curriculum, Teaching, Support, and Connections. Because there were 13 activities that respondents needed to consider, the first-round EAOP Delphi questionnaire consisted of 78 items ( $13 \times 6$ ).

If a majority of respondents answered that an activity had a particular impact on a specific condition, we determined that to be consensus. With the five-choice response scale, our view was that to obtain a majority on any single item constituted substantial agreement. After the first round, 29 of 78 items did not reach consensus, that is, fewer than 50% of respondents had agreed on the impact of those activities on those specific conditions. We determined that there were enough unresolved items for a second-round questionnaire.

For the EAOP second-round questionnaire, we gathered feedback for the extremes of each item from the first-round respondents to obtain the statements justifying their points of view. The second-round questionnaire consisted of the feedback for each extreme and the mean and mode ratings for each of the 29 items. Fourteen of the first-round respondents completed the second-round questionnaire. Upon completion of the second-round, only two items still lacked consensus so we decided that there was no need for an additional iteration.



**TABLE 1.**  
**Perceived Relationship Between the EAOP Activities and the Six Conditions**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Curriculum</i>	<i>Teaching</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Connections</i>
Academic Advising/Planning	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	No Consensus	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>
Saturday Academies	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	Little or No	<b>Great</b>	Some
Study Skills/Learning System	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	Some	<b>Great</b>	Some
College is Affordable/Financial Support	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	Little or No	Little or No	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>
Concurrent Enrollment	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>
Informational Outreach	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	Little or No	Little or No	Some	<b>Great</b>
Motivational/Mentoring Activities	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	Some	Little or No	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>
Summer Academic Bootcamps	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>
Service Learning	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Test Prep	<b>Great</b>	Some	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	Some
Family/Parent Involvement	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	Little or No	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>
Tutorial Assistance/Referral	Some	Some	Some	No Consensus	<b>Great</b>	<b>Some</b>
School Site Workshops	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>	Little or No	<b>Great</b>	<b>Great</b>

This process resulted in a draft program theory, indicating the anticipated relationships between the 13 EAOP activities and the six conditions. The conditions, in turn, were presumed to be related to the desired goals of the program. This theory model is presented in [Table 1](#). [Table 1](#) can be thought of as a summary of the graphical representation that is a common way of showing program theories. For example, imagine that a figure presented only the relationships where activities were perceived to have a strong positive (great) impact on the conditions. Each of the 13 activities, except Service Learning and Tutorial Assistance/Referral, would have an arrow pointing to the Culture condition (see the first column of [Table 1](#)). The set of arrows to Identity would be the same, except that Test Prep would not have an arrow (see the second column). Given the visual complexity of a figure that captured all the perceived linkages, we present a table instead.

This program theory helped to frame further utilization-focused evaluation activities. That is, the program theory development process served as a way to assist primary users in refining their evaluation questions and direct areas of further study. Take for example the Service Learning component. Results from the Delphi study determined that this activity was not applicable, meaning that it did not relate to any of the six conditions. Yet, this was a major part of the EAOP program. Thus, the evaluation activity we engaged in immediately following the development of the program theory focused on examining the Service Learning component.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR EVALUATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

Differing theoretical perspectives result from theorists' distinct opinions about the *role* of evaluation. That is, theoretical models are based on what theories believe to be the primary job of the evaluator. For example, for [Patton \(1997\)](#) the role of evaluation is to provide useful information to primary users, while for [Chen \(1990\)](#) the primary goal of evaluation is to determine which program components are effective and under what conditions. Nevertheless, all evaluation theories are prescriptions for the ideal. Many theories provide a set of principles for conducting evaluations that naturally cannot (and may not even set out to) address the range of challenges an evaluator may confront when in the field. Thus, as many have suggested ([Datta, 2001](#); [Mark, 2001, 2002](#); [Patton, 1997](#); [Stufflebeam, 2000](#)), in order to develop a deeper understanding of how evaluation theories are best applied in practice, it is important to describe cases where evaluation theories have been used in practice.

Given this, the case example presented in this paper highlights a noteworthy issue, that is, that theories are rarely, if ever, flawlessly translated into practice. It is exceptional, at best, that even the theorist can conduct an evaluation following his/her theory to the word ([Christie, 2003](#)). Evaluators face complicated political and social conditions and constraints (such as lack of time and money) that may significantly restrict their ability to conduct an evaluation following a particular theory, step by step. Additionally, because social and educational programs are confounded by the complexities of political contexts, it is virtually impossible to replicate, precisely, an evaluation across settings. So, each time an evaluator embarks upon a new program evaluation, even when employing the same theoretical approach, he or she will be faced with having to create a unique evaluation design, to be conducted in an ever-changing environment. Moreover, we argue, each evaluation situation is unique, and so evaluators should be prepared to conduct the best evaluation possible given

the issues and context. Thus, it is imperative that evaluators be trained to apply a variety of theoretical models and choose the model that best fits the needs, purpose, and goals of the evaluation.

The evaluation described in this paper specifically illustrates the fluidity of evaluation theories when applied in practice. By fluidity we mean the blending (or merging) of theoretical evaluation models so as to best meet the evaluation goals. Evaluations that begin with the premise of being responsive, that is, where "one picks up whatever turns up and deals with it as seems appropriate, in the light of past and unfolding interests of the various audiences and program staff" (Scriven, 1991, p. 315) are, by their very character, amenable to integration with other theoretical approaches. Evaluations guided by UFE are responsive in nature. That is, they are designed to respond to a specific information need of an identified person(s). Thus, the UFE evaluator uses the informational needs of primary users to guide the evaluation design. Evaluators, as described by Patton (1997), are:

... active in deliberately and calculatedly identifying intended users and focusing useful questions. They are reactive in listening to intended users and responding to what they learn about the particular situation... evaluators don't impose cookbook designs... They are genuinely immersed in the challenges of each new setting and authentically responsive to the intended users of each new evaluation (p. 135).

Given Patton's description of the evaluator's role, it is evident that a committed UFE evaluator must be prepared to implement an array of evaluation designs. And, for the UFE evaluator, it is the needs of the primary users that dictate which design is most appropriate. So, as in the case described in this paper, the UFE evaluator may be called to conduct an evaluation that is best guided by a design that is more narrowly associated with another theoretical model. Let us briefly mention an additional hypothetical situation to support this point. It may be that a particular set of primary users highly value the use of experimental or quasi-experimental designs. If the evaluation questions lend themselves to the implementation of such a design, it is likely that, because the primary users value the design, results from a study that was conducted using such a design are more likely to be utilized than results from a study that used a design that users did not regard as highly.

Theory-driven evaluation also provides us with a good example of a theoretical approach that has at its core a component that lends itself quite nicely to blending with other theoretical approaches. Program theory development is regularly a part of many quality evaluations. Often the evaluator is called upon to introduce more substantive theory about programs and interventions into evaluations. Designing studies that promote an understanding of *how* programs work, not just *whether* they work, is an appropriate and common evaluation request. Consequently, the notions put forth by theory-driven evaluation theorists should be incorporated into evaluations that may not necessarily be employing a strict theory-driven approach, but are formulating a program theory as one of the evaluation processes.

In conclusion, we offer in this paper insight into how theoretical approaches can be implemented in concert when an evaluator is called to practice. Our case analysis is just one illustration of how two rather distinct theories, utilization-focused and theory-driven evaluation, can be implemented rather seamlessly and effortlessly in order to meet the particular evaluation needs of program clients. What we also hope to offer is an opportunity for others to begin to think more broadly about evaluation theories and the various ways in which they can be blended to promote better evaluation practice.

## APPENDIX. EAOP ACTIVITIES

<i>EAOP Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. Academic Advising/Planning	Site Teams guide students and their families in creating a competitive academic and extracurricular portfolio. This is done through individual and small group academic planning sessions held at the school sites and via UC Gateways. <sup>3</sup>
2. Saturday Academies	Students actively participate in a series of intensive academic classes in math, English, history, and science designed to increase critical thinking, reading, writing, and problem-solving skills. Classes are held on the UCLA campus.
3. Study Skills/Learning System	<i>Students are instructed by CBOP Teachers and Fellows as well as site teams on Personalized Academic Learning System, PALS, a comprehensive and interrelated network of methods, procedures, tactics, and strategies that are grounded in a set of principles and beliefs.</i>
4. College is Affordable/Financial Support	Through workshops held at school sites and on campus, families understand the realities and affordability of college. These workshops when given with concrete information help dispel myths about college costs.
5. Concurrent Enrollment	This is a strategy by which middle and high school students take college/university level classes in order to become UC competitive. This process allows students to raise their perception of what is possible for them.
6. Informational Outreach	The mission is to instill in middle school students the attitude and the expectations of “I can, want and should go to college,” while providing them with the necessary college preparatory information that includes academic advising on how to achieve it.
7. Motivational/Mentoring Activities	Activities are provided to students that encourage and inspire them to pursue and persist in preparing for college and academic excellence, by providing motivational talks with UCLA undergraduates from similar backgrounds, career workshops, and special campus visits.
8. Summer Academic Bootcamps	Students are invited to participate in summer residential programs that provide students with an intensive academic experience in various areas of academic concentration. Students experience college life as well as learn about the educational opportunities.
9. Service Learning	High school scholars go to the feeder middle schools to teach the jr. scholars the PALS system and the learning tools necessary to survive high school and college. Students learn by teaching.

**APPENDIX.** *(Continued)*

<i>EAOP Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>
10. Test Prep	As part of creating a UC competitive pool, test preparation workshops are offered to 9th, 10th and 11th graders in an effort to increase exams scores, enhance familiarity with the exams, and build test-taking confidence in students.
11. Family/Parent Involvement	Family is the key by which EAOP can succeed in its mission of helping students become UC competitive. EAOP provides a series of Parent/Family events that offer resources for families and help parents support their children through the college preparatory process.
12. Tutorial Assistance/Referral	Provide tutoring assistance, information and/or referral to students to assist them in strengthening academic areas so that they can become academically competitive.
13. School Site Workshops	School Site Workshops are offered to students on Positive Assertion, Writing Tips, Time Management, Test-Taking Strategies, The 4 Systems of Higher Education, UC A-G Requirements, College Entrance Exams, How to Choose a College, Writing the Personal Essay, etc.

## NOTES

1. The student-centered program is also implemented at schools that are not a part of the school-centered reform program.
2. A-G courses connote those high school courses that are required in order for students to be eligible for admission to the University of California.
3. UC Gateways is a web-based program where high school students and UC staff can keep track of students' demographic information, academic progress, and test scores. It is also used to track student participation in EAOP (and other) activities. The student enters all data.

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