Evaluation at work: Using program logic models to understand and improve Persian language programs

Nahal Akbari
University of Maryland, College Park

Western Consortium Middle East Language Program
Evaluation Workshop
July 30, 2011

Please cite as:

Overview

- Understanding logic models
- Using logic models to document the genesis of a MELP: The case of Persian at Maryland
  - Rationale, intended users and audience,
- Developing the models at work: Reflections on the process
- Next steps? (short-term and long-term plans of the project)
- Q & A
What is a logic model?

- **Logic modeling** is an initial thought process in program evaluation that is becoming increasingly popular with program managers, policy makers, and program evaluators.

- A **logic model** sets out how a project, a program, or a policy is understood or intended to produce particular results.

- A Logic models can take the form of a narrative, a chart, or a graph which captures the salient features, processes, and actions, (and their “interconnectedness”) in ways that need to be focused on in program evaluation.
Why use a logic model?

- An excellent way to document what a program intends to do and what it is actually doing.
- An effective way to monitor program activities.
- Serving as a format for clarifying what the program hopes to achieve.
- Helping programs stay on track and plan for the future.
- Helping programs communicate the to people outside in a commonly accepted, concise, and compelling way.

Who benefits from it?

Diagram showing:
- The community/field
- The institution
- The program
Utilization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Documenting what is happening in a program as a basis for formative, utilization-focused evaluation</td>
<td>○ A well-articulated, comprehensive logic model can serve as a sample roadmap for future program building efforts in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Highlighting the role of Learning Outcomes Assessment (LOA) as a major activity for programs: The shift toward evidence-based learning and evidence driven educational practices in academic institutions calls for a better understanding of LOA and its critical role within the program.</td>
<td>○ A valuable source of information for external evaluators and sponsors for accreditation purposes, viability studies, and funding decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

###INPUTS

Program investments

###OUTPUTS

Activities → Participation → Short → Medium → Long-term

###OUTCOMES

What do we invest? What do we do? Who do we reach? What are the results?

![Diagram](attachment:image.png)
Sample logic model for a language program (LINC)

http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/linc/
Program Context

**Persian Studies**

- The academic home of the study of Persian language, literature, and culture.

  **Degree programs:**
  - Major and Minor in Persian Studies
  - Masters of Professional Studies in Persian

**Roshan Center**

- A leading center promoting the appreciation of Persian culture in the US. The center fosters and encourages intercultural communication and ties among heritage and non-heritage communities.

**Persian Flagship**

- The Persian Flagship hosts innovative undergraduate and graduate programs leading to professional proficiency in language and culture, with stateside and overseas components.
Developing a logic model for our Persian Program

• Impetus
  ◦ Mapping out theories underlying the design of the program, meaningful articulation of the various components that are already in place but have not been explicitly stated/documentated in the process of program building.
  ◦ Building a culture of evaluation into the program through active engagement of administrators, faculty, and students in the process of creating the logic models. A systematic evaluation component is missing from our program, and we want to start one from within. This will help us prepare for potential external reviews.

• Intended users/audiences
  ◦ Program participants (stakeholders) including applicants, incoming students, alumni, new faculty and staff members, and the institution.
  ◦ program funders, potential employers, the community and the field.
Developing a logic model for our Persian Program

• Who is developing the model?

  ◦ Collaborative effort, all faculty members of the Persian Department at UMD are actively participating in the process of developing various components of the model.

  ◦ The Foreign Language Program Evaluation Project (UHM NFLRC) provides consultation on the development, implementation, and use of the model.

  ◦ The BYU National Middle East Language Resource Center facilitates the dissemination of evaluation ideas for ME language programs through meetings, workshops, and resources provided on the NMELRC web site.

---

Overall Model

Input

Activities

Outputs

Short-term Outcomes

Long-term Outcomes

Situations

The initial input is shaped by the long-term outcomes
Sample: Activities Component

Curriculum
- Primary component (domain specific LSP courses)
- Secondary component (conversation partners, language house, guest-speakers, field trips, multimedia access in student lounge, research projects)

Instructional Materials
- In-house materials development
- Ongoing revision and update

Assessment
- Pre program and post-program proficiency test (OPI, course exams)
- Ongoing portfolio assessment (oral presentations, writing samples, class assignments, ….)
- Learning outcome assessment
- Simulated versions of tests outside the program (DLPT, FSI, …) on regular intervals
- Self-assessment (linguafolio)

Thank you!