Outcomes planning and evaluation using Contribution Analysis

So What? Conference October 2013

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Background

- Outcomes culture
- Universities’ role in assessing research impact
- My own work on CRFR’s impact
- Link with Erica Winbush Health Scotland
Review

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS
Why Contribution Analysis?

- Environment
- Families
- Culture
- Media
- Other policies
- Early Intervention Projects
- Other services
Basic ideas of CA

- Takes a logic model/results chain approach
- Assembles evidence to validate the results chain
- Includes an examination of alternative explanations of change
- Contribution analysis builds a credible case about what difference is being made
Spheres of influence

**WHY?** (State)
Your environment of *indirect influence*
e.g., practice sectors, the public,
communities of interest where you do not
make direct contact

**WHAT do we want by WHOM?**
(Behavioral Change)
Your environment of *direct influence*
e.g., people and groups in direct contact
with your operations, immediate research
users, collaborators and partners

**HOW?** (operational)
Your operational environment
You have *direct control*
over the behaviours within this sphere

**ISSUE, CONTEXT and DRIVERS**

- Socio-economic, political, Technological factors
- Existing policies, practices, beliefs
- Actors, networks in research, policy and practice, power
- Capacity of target groups to respond
- Receptiveness of context
- Organizations, resources, systems, skills

Outside influences increase as we move ‘outward’ along the chain

Adapted from S Montague 2009
Tools

• How do we get from activities to outcomes?
• Planning steps of results chains
• Thinking about risks and assumptions
A Basic Results Chain

**Program (Results) Chain of Events**
*(Theory of Action)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect Influence</th>
<th>Direct Influence</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. End results</td>
<td>6. Practice and behavior change</td>
<td>2. Activities and outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Knowledge, attitude, skill and / or aspirations changes</td>
<td>5. What do people learn? Do we address their needs?</td>
<td>3. Who do we reach? Who uses / participates?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Activities and outputs</td>
<td>2. What do we offer? How do we deliver?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Inputs</td>
<td>1. How much does our program cost? ($, HR etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Key Questions**

- **WHY?**
  - 7. What is our impact on ‘ends’?
  - 6. Do we influence [behavioral] change?
  - 5. What do people learn? Do we address their needs?
  - 4. Are clients satisfied? How do people learn about us?
  - 3. Who do we reach? Who uses / participates?
  - 2. What do we offer? How do we deliver?
  - 1. How much does our program cost? ($, HR etc)

- **WHAT?**
  - 7. End results
  - 6. Practice and behavior change
  - 5. Knowledge, attitude, skill and / or aspirations changes
  - 4. Reactions
  - 3. Engagement / involvement
  - 2. Activities and outputs
  - 1. Inputs

- **WHO?**
  - 7. End results
  - 6. Practice and behavior change
  - 5. Knowledge, attitude, skill and / or aspirations changes
  - 4. Reactions
  - 3. Engagement / involvement
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- **HOW?**
  - 7. End results
  - 6. Practice and behavior change
  - 5. Knowledge, attitude, skill and / or aspirations changes
  - 4. Reactions
  - 3. Engagement / involvement
  - 2. Activities and outputs
  - 1. Inputs

**FINAL IMPACT OR CONTRIBUTION:** the result of these changes was ...impact on ....people or groups

**CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR OR PRACTICE:** these things were done differently or these behaviours were affected

**CAPACITY/KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS:** We intend to address these abilities, skills, gaps in services

**AWARENESS/REACTION:** we hope to address these issues...we expect the clients to react in these ways....

**ENGAGEMENT/INVOLVEMENT** ...we intend to reach...clients in these ways..

**RESOURCES/OUTPUTS:** We plan..... activities/ projects... to be delivered in these ways

**INPUTS:** We have these resources (financial, human, technical) ...

Morton (2012)
Acknowledging complexity

• Many factors influencing change
• Not everything is planned
• More than one strand in a theory
• Need to reflect and learn along the way
• Seek to understand what is working and why
How to create evidence?

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS
Evidencing outcomes

Creating a convincing evidence chain

• Logical approaches - judged on the robustness of logic
• Need to evidence steps in the chain
• Risks and assumptions approach to generate evidence
INPUTS: We have these resources (financial, human, technical) ...

RESOURCES/OUTPUTS: We plan..... activities/projects... to be delivered in these ways

ENGAGEMENT/INVOLVEMENT ...we intend to reach... clients in these ways..

AWARENESS/REACTION: we hope to address these issues...we expect the clients to react in these ways....

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CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR OR PRACTICE: these things were done differently or these behaviours were affected

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What assumptions do you make, what risks are there?

Morton (2012)
• Assessing risks and assumptions
  – What are the other influencing factors?
    • Other policies and services
    • Other factors in children and parents lives (poverty, drug and alcohol misuse, domestic abuse etc)
  – What assumptions do you make to get from one step to the next?
  – What are the risks that these won’t happen as you imagine?
  – How might you mitigate against these risks?
Risks and assumptions 1

Assumptions: we know and can reach the right client groups
Risks: didn’t reach right client group (e.g. easier to reach), families attend initial session but don’t return etc
Indicators: stakeholder and attendance analysis, levels of engagement in activities
Risks and assumptions 2

**CAPACITY/KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS:** parents increase confidence, and have more knowledge about interacting with children, see benefits of interacting with children and understand how it affects their development

**CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR OR PRACTICE:** children and parents have more interaction, more positive interactions

Indicators: feedback from parents and children, observation of families, assessment on exit from programme etc.

Assumptions: parents find sessions useful and relevant, integrate with existing knowledge and practice

Risks: play not prioritised, timing wrong, other family factors affect interaction (e.g. domestic abuse)
Making it real

WHAT IS YOUR EVIDENCE?
Results Chain analysis

- Which links have the weakest evidence?
- Some may be supported by prior research
- Some may be well accepted
- Some may be more tenuous or contested
- Focus efforts on the weakest links
Steps in CA

1. Set out the attribution problem to be addressed
2. Develop your results chain
3. Gather evidence to support this
4. Assemble and assess the contribution story at set intervals
5. Seek out additional evidence
6. Revise and strengthen the contribution story
7. Develop the complex contribution story
Gather evidence

- Results
- Assumptions and risks
- Other influencing factors
- Your own evidence and service monitoring
- Wider research evidence
- Population level data and statistics
Issues to consider

• How are we reviewing progress
• What are the early signs of success?
• What might indicate that our assumptions are wrong?
• What do we already measure?
• What additional things might we need to measure?
• Whose views are included?
• How do we make sure it is measurable?
A measurement plan

1. What can we measure from project data? (e.g. referrals, assessment data, team meetings etc)
2. How are we collecting feedback from parents and children?
3. How are we reviewing and reflecting on overall project progress?
Thank-you!