This session took place via Zoom on April 24, 2022. A recording of the session along with relevant resources is available at https://njhumanities.org/programs/in-the-weeds/. These notes provide a summary of topics discussed in the session.

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What are evaluations designed to do?
- Evaluations designed to gauge whether your program is achieving what it is intended to. Like a roadmap to show where the program is and where it needs to go.
- Evaluation Process
    - Make a plan
    - Collect data
    - Analyze and interpret
    - Report
    - Do it again!
- Evaluation myths
    - Evaluations are not designed to tell you that you are a failure.
    - Evaluations are not designed to take away funding. Quite the opposite!
- How to effectively leverage evaluation
    - If done correctly and timely, evaluations can be used to help guide your program from start to finish.
    - Evaluations provide a roadmap that can be used to make decisions throughout the program creation and implementation.

The power of logic models
- Logic models are hypothesized descriptions of the chain of causes and effects leading to an outcome of interest.
- Usually take form in a graphical depiction of the "if-then" relationships between the various elements leading to the outcome. (See graphic)
    - Inputs:
    - Outputs: Things that you do – activities/participation
    - Outcomes: What happens from the things that you do – short term (immediate) / medium term (6 mos-1 year) /long term (1+ year)
        - All of these are valuable! Near term is valuable as well as long term.
        - Amount of time considered under an evaluation will depend on what is being evaluated and how.
- Logic model is not the only evaluation planning tool, but it's a good one and one we are focusing on today.
- Logic models can provide a blueprint for project development and planning.
    - Establishing goals.
    - Keeping you focused on outcomes you are trying to achieve.
    - Identifying signs of success and failure in reaching these outcomes.
- Make sure you do some planning before you jump into evaluation methods (surveys, focus groups, etc.).
    - Without planning, evaluation quickly becomes unwieldy and unhelpful.
    - Planning assures that you are always evaluating based on impact goals established when you are developing the program.

Step by step through a logic model
- Define the situation.
- Establish priorities.

- Inputs: What the organization put into the work
  - People resources – time
  - Monetary resources
  - Equipment, supplies
  - Partnerships
- Outputs: What we do and who we reach
  - Activities
  - Participation
  - When thinking about outputs, important to consider assumptions.
  - Use participation outputs to specifically identify who your project plans to address and how you plan to attract this audience.
    - Be as specific as possible.
    - Consider nuances within populations.
    - Being specific does not mean that others are necessarily excluded, just that you are clear on where priorities are for impact.
- Outcomes: Impact
  - Impacts can come in many forms, including learning, actions, and conditions.
  - Impacts come at different times and measuring them at different intervals can be particularly insightful. Appropriate intervals will depend on what you're evaluating, but rough estimates for example:
    - Short-term (immediate-1 year)
    - Medium-term (1-3 years)
    - Long-term (3-5 years or more)
- Note: sometimes it is helpful to work backwards through a logic model, particularly early in program development. Start at desired impact and work back.
- Evaluation is an iterative process. You can and should adjust along the way as you learn.

Meet with Us!

If you wish to schedule a 1:1 session with facilitator Montrell Sanders to talk through evaluation needs or review materials, times are available through July 31, 2022. Email msanders@njhumanities.org to schedule.