

Ideas to Consider

A Scale for Describing Levels of Confirmation/Replication in Evaluation

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In order to support both the validity and credibility of claims about program or product merit or worth, we often turn to evaluation. There are various ways in which evaluation can be conducted or managed, which themselves have differing levels of validity and credibility. The following scale can be used descriptively to indicate these levels, following the usual view of scientific method which identifies confirmation by others as a major criterion of validity. The higher numbers are not necessarily more valid, though they are generally more credible. Keep your sense of humor when reading this; it's not only meant to be serious!

Level 00 Self-evaluation based on personal judgment only. Don't feel too bad about this level when you use it. It is, after all, divine--God considered his work after the creation and thought it was good. After all, who else could he ask?

Level 0 Self-evaluation done systematically and professionally.

Level 0+ Self-evaluation done by empowered program staff under David Fetterman's supervision.

Level 1 Internal evaluation

Level 1² (one to the power of two) Internal evaluation confirmed by another internal evaluator

Level 1+ Internal-external evaluation i.e., done by an evaluation division of the same agency, e.g., the Inspector-General's office.

Level 2 External evaluation

Level 2² External evaluation done by two independent external evaluators i.e. replicated

Level 3 Meta-evaluation, etc.