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The Case for Participatory Evaluation

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Participatory evaluation is presented as an extension of the stakeholder-based model with a focus on enhancing evaluation utilization through primary users' increased depth and range of participation in the applied research process. The approach is briefly described and then justified from theoretical and empirical bases. The literature on organizational learning provides theoretical support for participatory evaluation stemming primarily from the view that knowledge is socially constructed and cognitive systems and memories are developed and shared by organization members. Twenty-six recent empirical studies were found to support an organizational learning justification of the model. Studies were classified into one of six emergent categories: conceptions of use; effects of participation on the use of research; effects of participation on the use of disseminated knowledge; effects of research training; school-university partnerships; and internal evaluation. Requirements of organizations and evaluators and an agenda for research are discussed.

Evaluation practice has improved considerably over the past decades, but as Alkin (1991) acknowledged, evaluation theory is not well developed. It has, however, evolved and will continue to do so. Perhaps the most powerful catalyst in this evolution has been research and theory about evaluation utilization. Several points made by Alkin reflecting this view include a distinction between "evaluation" and "research" on the basis of the presence of an intended user; the orientation toward responsive evaluation; the view toward the *engagement* of preconceived critical decision makers; and the "notion of an adapting, reacting evaluator, interacting with and sensitive to the *changing* nature of evaluation concerns" (p. 102). Over the past 2 decades considerable knowledge has accumulated concerning how and why evaluation data are used.

The purpose of this article is to build upon existing knowledge about utilization and propose a "participatory" model of evaluation that we believe has particular value for evaluators in educational settings. Our orientation to this proposition is light on prescription and comparatively heavy on justification, partly because the form of participatory evaluation will depend significantly upon local context and partly because it is our belief that prescription without solid grounding in theory and data is little more than preference. First, we review briefly what is known about evaluation utilization and set the stage for the participatory model. Our description of the model is followed by theoretical justification from the perspective of organizational learning and a review of empirical research to support this theory. We conclude with thoughts about requirements of organizations and evaluators and an agenda for research.

Utilization of Evaluation Results

Educational evaluation is clearly designed to be decision oriented (Sirotnik, 1987). C. H. Weiss (1988a) made the point that evaluators undertake their studies with the intention of helping decision makers make wiser decisions and expect that the evaluation data will feed into the decision-making process and influence the actions that people take. It is sometimes with surprise that they find little change for their efforts. Systematic evaluation of educational programs is rarely a major part of the curriculum process (Slavin, 1989). When evaluations are undertaken, they are often not utilized. Researchers have only recently begun to consider and to develop theoretical frameworks to help explain the variability in evaluation utilization. In their comprehensive review of current empirical research on evaluation use, Cousins and Leithwood (1986) found that 42% of the 65 studies reviewed did not employ such a framework.

There is, however, a growing understanding of the factors that contribute to the utilization of evaluation results (Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979; Cousins & Leithwood, 1986; Leviton & Hughes, 1981; C. H. Weiss, 1977). The factors fall loosely into two categories: factors associated with the organization or the setting within which the evaluation is being conducted and factors linked specifically to the evaluation itself, including characteristics of the evaluator.

Organizational Decision-Making or Policy Context

Whether or not information from an evaluation study is seen as useful depends heavily upon the organizational context or climate. Cousins and Leithwood (1986) identified six characteristics that have been shown to influence the likelihood of utilization: (a) *information needs*, the extent to which the organization has a need to know, the information is congruent with organizational beliefs, and/or the key stakeholders hold similar information needs; (b) *decision context*, the extent to which decisions are seen as important, novel, or controversial; (c) *political/organizational climate*, the internal struggles or liaisons, accountability requirements, and sense of threat; (d) *competing information*, the extent to which the evaluation results are considered and integrated with working knowledge or other sources of information; (e) *personal characteristics*, the role, experience, and leadership style of the decision maker(s); and (f) *commitment or receptiveness*, the decision makers' attitude toward and involvement in the evaluation process.

Characteristics of the Evaluation

Organizational use of evaluation results is not a simple rational process. It requires that the evaluation study becomes part of a complex interplay of informational, personal, political, and organizational variables, all at work simultaneously in ongoing decision making.

Evaluation, as Alkin (1991) reminded us, is distinct from research, which underscores the need to consider characteristics of the evaluation that can influence utilization. Cousins and Leithwood (1986) also identified six factors associated with the evaluation itself: (a) *evaluation quality*, the methodological sophistication, approach, and intensity; (b) *credibility*, the reputation and credentials of the evaluator(s) and confidence in their work; (c) *relevance*, the extent to which the evaluation is geared to the audience and is reflective of the organizational context; (d) *communication*, the nature, amount, and quality of communication about the results; (e) *findings*, the extent to which the findings are in agreement with the expectations; and (f) *timeliness*, the extent to which the completion of the evaluation is congruent with the need for decision making.

Because of the need to be responsive, methods of evaluation continue to change with an increasing emphasis on functional evaluation, on relevance to the organization, and on simple (if not simplistic) communication of results aimed at broad dissemination.

While the category system proposed by Cousins and Leithwood (1986) is reasonably comprehensive, characteristics of alternative schemes are worth mentioning. Alkin et al. (1985) described a third category called "human factors," which comprised evaluator characteristics, including willingness to involve users and rapport with users, as well as

user characteristics. Similarly, Patton described in detail the "personal factor" as it relates to individuals working within the decision setting (Patton et al., 1977) and extended the factor to include attributes associated with the evaluator (Patton, 1986). In order to accommodate these and similar influences such as social processing of data (Louis & Dentler, 1988) and interaction between scientific and political communities (Wingens, 1990), Cousins and Leithwood (in press) expanded their original framework to include a third higher-order dimension called "interactive processes." This change enables the framework to sufficiently account for all factors that have emerged in the empirical literature.

As the field evolves, there has been debate about what makes an evaluation successful. C. H. Weiss (1988a, 1988b), for example, asserted that technical quality ought to be the rightful criterion upon which evaluations are judged since organizations rarely conform to bureaucratic and rationalistic norms. In short, she argued that it is unrealistic for evaluators to be held accountable for the use of data in such settings. Patton (1988), on the other hand, insisted that evaluations ought to be judged according to "*intended use by intended users*" (p. 14). Greene (1990) supported this position, arguing that when the evaluator's purpose is to promote through methodological eclecticism contextual relevance and local utility, responsiveness is key. If we accept, then, that evaluation results have real value for organizations, the question becomes how to make them accessible and important to users and responsive to their needs while maintaining sufficient technical quality.

The stakeholder-based model was an initial attempt to move in this direction. In the mid-1970s, the National Institute of Education (NIE) developed and supported the use of stakeholder-based evaluation as a way to enhance the use of data at the local level (Bryk, 1983). The distinctive feature of this approach was to enhance relevance and reduce political interference by introducing all possible interested parties to the evaluation early and engaging them in the planning of the evaluation. Typically stakeholders are involved in such evaluation activities as deciding what kinds of questions should be answered and what kinds of data should be provided. The original impetus for the model derives from the fundamental purpose of reconciling varied political perspectives through interactive processes and the incorporation of multiple viewpoints into the design and conduct of the evaluation (Bryk, 1983; C. H. Weiss, 1983). Stakeholder evaluation showed much promise for enhancing use by neutralizing the impact of the "political factor" as a determinant of impact (Brickell, 1976; Patton et al., 1977; C. H. Weiss, 1983), but initial accounts of its impact were less than optimistic (see, e.g., reflective accounts edited by Bryk, 1983). With similar concerns, Alkin (1991) called into question the utility of attempting to please multiple audiences at once. He distinguished between stakeholders who are "primary users" (i.e., those who assume responsibility for program implementation or those who are vitally interested in the program) and other stakeholders who form additional audiences for the evaluation.

> I am guided in my views on evaluation by the evidence that where there is an interested potential user (or limited number of users) who wants the evaluation information and is in a position to do something about it, use will occur. Thus, since *all* stakeholders are not necessarily the primary potential users of the evaluation, their role in my view is diminished. (p. 101)

We have grounds, then, for a natural evolution of the stakeholder-based approach that loosely restricts evaluators' interaction to an approach that focuses on stakeholders who are primary users. The participatory model we propose adopts this perspective. Two additional features of the model will distinguish it from the conventional stakeholder-based paradigm: depth of participation and the range of evaluation activities in which primary users participate.

Participatory Evaluation

By participatory evaluation we mean applied social research that involves a partnership between trained evaluation personnel *and* practice-based decision makers, organization members with program responsibility,

or people with a vital interest in the program—in Alkin's terms, primary users. Participatory evaluation is distinct from other forms of social scientific inquiry, such as participatory action research, which are "explicitly normative and ideological in form and function" (J. C. Greene, personal communication, July 10, 1992). In parallel with participatory or participative decision making (Conway, 1984; Imber, Neidt, & Reyes, 1990; Smylie, 1992), participatory evaluation is intended to connote the provision of opportunity for practice-based personnel to share in the research process. Participatory evaluation is best suited to formative evaluation projects and may be differentiated from the conventional stakeholder-based model on the following grounds:

1. The stakeholder model attempts to engage a large number of potentially interested members of the organization in order to create support. The participatory model involves a relatively small number of primary users.
2. The stakeholder model involves organization members in a consultative way to clarify domains and establish the evaluation questions. The participatory model engages the primary users in the "nuts and bolts" of the problem formulation, instrument design or selection, data collection, analysis, interpretation, recommendations, and reporting.
3. In the stakeholder model the evaluator is the principal investigator, who translates the institutional requirements into a study and conducts that study. In the participatory model the evaluator is the coordinator of the project with responsibility for technical support, training, and quality control, but conducting the study is a joint responsibility.

In participatory evaluation, the evaluator is able to coordinate with key organizational personnel training activities for the technical skills vital to the successful completion of the research project. Essentially, practitioners "learn on the job" under the relatively close supervision of the expert evaluator. Such learning is crucial to the participatory model. Its prominence will be discussed later in the article.

The evaluator's role may evolve into a posture of support and consultation as time elapses and local skills are developed and refined. In the ideal, key organization members develop sufficient technical knowledge and research skills to take on the coordinating role on continuing and new projects, with the evaluator available for consultation about technical issues and tasks such as statistical analysis, instrument design, and technical reporting.

Participatory evaluation is likely to satisfy the need for responsiveness in evaluation while maintaining sufficient technical rigor so as to satisfy the probable local critics. In essence, this approach is likely to enhance intended use by intended users within the local context. We shall now turn to justifications of these claims from both theoretical and empirical bases.

Organizational Learning: Theoretical Justification for Participatory Evaluation

Why a participatory model? What are the benefits for organizations? For what reasons should organizations invest significant fiscal and human resources in this approach to applied research? In this section we examine theoretical concepts fundamental to this distinct reformulation of the stakeholder-based model.

In addition to characteristics of the evaluation and of the setting described earlier, evaluation theorists have recently begun to consider a third set of factors predictive of utilization; such factors are associated with the "linkage mechanisms" connecting the research and practice-based communities (e.g., Holdaway, 1986; Huberman, 1987, 1990; Larsen, 1981; Mathisen, 1990). Linkage mechanisms include communication links, direct contacts between personnel from both communities, and collaborative participation on projects. Empirical support (reviewed below) for this theoretical development has been mounting steadily. Stakeholder-based models of evaluation are grounded in the linkage concept. The participatory model is also based on the linkage thesis but is less concerned with reconciling differences than with enhancing utilization in the context of organizational learning.

Organizational learning is a theoretical orientation that seems particularly well suited to

discourse about participation in evaluation. Fundamental to this orientation is the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed (Bandura, 1977, 1986). People act upon their images of reality, not necessarily upon the information they process. In this respect, symbolic systems are useful since knowledge is represented as abstracted similarities and shared meaning rather than, for example, the details of discrete events (Bandura, 1986). In organizations, important processes, events, and perspectives are stored as images and maps in theories of action (Argyris & Schön, 1978) or mental models (Senge, 1990). The salience of new information depends upon the value placed on its source in addition to consensual interpretations. Images and maps of the organization as a dynamic entity may be scattered among its members, creating limited learning environments or "organizational learning disabilities" (Senge, 1990).

Organizational learning occurs when actions within the organization are improved through better understanding. Although individual members of the organization are the agents of organizational learning, such consequences are not merely the sum of learning at the individual level (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Hedberg, 1981; Senge, 1990). Organizational learning is distinct from adaptation and from unreflective change. It occurs when cognitive systems and memories are developed and shared by members of the organization. Daft and Weick (1984) differentiate organizational cognition development from behavior development. The former implies the interpretation of events while the latter connotes new responses or organizational actions as a consequence of interpretations. Such distinctions parallel the use of knowledge for conceptual versus instrumental purposes.

Organizational learning is learning through integrating new constructs into existing cognitive structures. According to Hedberg (1981), it "can only take place in the language of the learners, and on their terms" (p. 5). Organizational learning can be relatively low level or single loop, involving only minor adjustments and fine tuning of existing organizational images and maps. Conversely, it can be reflected in the alteration of existing norms, assumptions, and values that govern action. Such learning is referred to as high-level (Fiol & Lyles, 1985) or double-loop (Argyris & Schön, 1978) learning.

Organizations that exhibit organizational learning are inquiry focused (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Senge, 1990), with interpretive frameworks (Louis & Simsek, 1991) or perceptual lenses (Hedberg, 1981) installed to simplify complexity and to manage information impinging upon the organization from the environment. According to Levitt and March (1988), "what is learned appears to be less influenced by history than by frames applied to that history" (p. 324). The installation of learning systems is the key to maintaining learning within the organization. Organizations need to increase the flow of opportunities for social interpretation of information through the design of their interpretive systems and to develop dense interpersonal networks for sharing and discussing information (Louis & Simsek, 1991). Organizations will become effective at learning when they use learning systems routinely (Levitt & March, 1988).

A learning system designed to foster local applied research is likely to enhance organizational learning. We see participatory evaluation as a powerful learning system designed to foster local applied research and thereby enhance social discourse about relevant organizational issues. The requirement of direct involvement in the research process and learning about technical research knowledge will heighten opportunities for staff to discuss process and outcome data, to rethink their conceptions and challenge basic assumptions in ways not previously available. Making explicit underlying assumptions about practice is a necessary precursor to individual and group learning (Senge, 1990). Participatory evaluation will also develop within staff their propensity to be consumers of local applied research conducted by colleagues or others. Organization members will find themselves in contexts where social processing of relevant data is necessary in order to function. Versions fashioned to ensure partial turnover in personnel from project to project will naturally engage more and

more organization members in the process and increase the likelihood and the potential for organizational learning.

Organizational Learning as a Rationale for Participatory Evaluation: Empirical Support

Empirical support for an organizational learning theoretical framework has accrued for about 3 decades (see reviews by Fiol & Lyles, 1985, and Levitt & March, 1988), but the literature is not large and is almost exclusively embedded within studies of business and industry and public sector organizations outside of education. While this literature supports a social systems interactive conception of organizational learning, little direct empirical support emerges from the educational milieu. However, increasing indirect evidence is accumulating from studies of evaluation, research, and knowledge utilization. The purpose of the present review of empirical literature is to provide support for organizational learning as a theoretical basis for participatory evaluation in educational settings.

To this end, we searched Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) data bases for the past 5 years and used bibliographic follow-up methods to identify studies that met the following criteria: (a) original empirical data was provided; (b) the use of information for individual, group, or organizational purposes was a significant focus for research; and (c) sufficient evidence was available concerning the impact of research-practice linkages on the use of evaluation data. Our search identified 26 independent studies although some authors (i.e., Greene 1987, 1988a, 1988b; Huberman, 1987, 1990; Kennedy, 1983b, 1984; King & Pechman, 1982, 1984) reported on different aspects of the same data yielding an additional 5 reports for a total of 31. One study (Pechman & King, 1986) drew from previously reported data, but included sufficient new data to warrant its treatment as an independent study. Methodological and descriptive characteristics of the studies are reported in Table 1.

The studies were conducted predominantly in educational settings and contexts, although there was considerable variation within that field (e.g., schools, school systems, educational research units, etc.). Studies by Greene (1987), Johnson (1980), and Weiss and Bucuvalas (1980) were in the domain of social- or health-program delivery. Slightly more than half of the studies were retrospective while the others were longitudinal in design. Although a variety of research methods were used, a majority could be classified as qualitative research methods relying heavily on interview and observation techniques. Dependent variables ranged from the use of knowledge for school improvement (e.g., Cousins & Leithwood, in press; Hart, 1990; Louis & Dentler, 1988) to the use of social science research (e.g., Huberman, 1990; Weiss & Bucuvalas, 1980) to the use of program evaluation data (e.g., Greene, 1987; King & Pechman, 1984). Cousins (1988) studied the use of performance appraisal data, while King, Schleisman, and Binko (1991) looked at the costs and benefits of interorganizational collaboration. The range of independent variables was wide and varied in the extent to which linkages between research and practice were made explicit and in the number and types of other factors that surfaced. Our analysis of these study findings could be captured by six specific categories of interest. These emergent categories provide an organizing framework for the ensuing discussion of empirical support for a theory of organizational learning and researcher-practitioner linkage as a vehicle for enhancing utilization of evaluation results. They are (a) conceptions of use, (b) effects of participation/linkage on the use of research, (c) effects of participation/linkage on the use of disseminated and other knowledge, (d) effects of training in research, (e) school-university partnerships, and (f) internal evaluation.

Conceptions of Use

As was mentioned earlier, the use of information from evaluations is a complex process that involves both the organization and the evaluators. Perhaps among the more interesting conclusions drawn by Weiss and Bucuvalas (1980) was the disconnectedness of the researcher and practitioner communities. The authors found limited use of social

TABLE 1
Descriptive Characteristics of Empirical Studies

Study	N	Sample	Design	Instruments	Dependent variables	Independent variables
Alkin & Stecher (1983)	22	Elementary schools: principals, program coordinators, resource personnel	Retrospective: multiple case study (22)	Topic-centered interview format	Strength and weakness identification, support for school decision	Involvement, competing information, decision type, decision phase, organizational role
Cousins (1988)	4	Elementary schools: 31 superintendents, principals, teachers, and parents	Retrospective: multiple case study (4)	Interview guides, archival data	Principals' use of performance appraisal data concerning own performances	Appraisal process, context, appraiser-principal dynamics
Cousins & Leithwood (in press)	233 155	Elementary principals, school district superintendents, coordinators	Retrospective: survey	Questionnaire, open-ended responses	Use of knowledge from report summary, conferences, local inservice, etc.	Source of help, school improvement context, interactive processes
Cousins, Ross, & Maynes (in press)	3	Exemplary schools: teachers, resource personnel, administrators	Retrospective: multiple case study (3)	Interview guides	Instrumental, conceptual and affective consequences of teachers' joint work.	Implementation processes, depth of collaboration
Butler & Alberg (1991)	1444	Educators from elementary (20), junior high (6), and high (11) schools	Longitudinal: pre-post design	School-climate scales, observation	School climate change, use of research, collegial relations, time lag in application of findings	University-school collaboration
Dawson & D'Amico (1985)	1	Evaluation of elementary and secondary school effectiveness programs	Longitudinal: single case study	Participant observation	Program improvement, learning re: program needs	Involvement of program staff in evaluation
Earl & West (1991)	25	Secondary school improvement projects: administrators, teachers	Retrospective: field study	Interview protocol	Engagement with school improvement process; change in teaching strategies, methods, etc.	Release time, competing initiatives, system partners, staff development, flexibility, time available, teacher resistance
Goodlad & Soder (1992)	14	Evaluations of school-university projects	Longitudinal: multiple case study (14)	Nonparticipant observation, site visits, telephone interviews	Program impact, operation, success	Agendas, budget control, project director, multilevel participation

TABLE 1 *continues*

Study	N	Sample	Design	Instruments	Dependent variables	Independent variables
Green & Kvidahl (1990)	441	Elementary and secondary school teachers	Retrospective: survey	Survey questionnaire	Use of (review, conduct, presentation) and opinion about research	Education (bachelor, advanced), research coursework
Greene (1987, 1988a, 1988b)	2	Social programs: 39 representatives of stakeholder groups	Longitudinal: multiple case study (2)	Participant observation, field notes, interviews	Stakeholder perceptions about evaluation use	Participation in evaluation design, interpretation and communication activities
Geva-May & Peretz (1991)	1	Stakeholder-based evaluation study	Retrospective: single case study	Participant observation	Stakeholder perceptions about and use of evaluation data	Closeness of stakeholder to results, personal involvement, risk, immediacy of profit, dependency
Hargreaves (1984)	1	Middle school staff	Longitudinal: single case study	Nonparticipant observation, meeting transcripts, interviews	Teachers' discourse and curriculum decision making	Control structures, nature of teachers' work and culture
Hart (1990)	2	Junior high schools: 164+ teachers, assistant principals, principals	Longitudinal: multiple case study (2)	Nonparticipant observation, field notes, structured and unstructured interviews	Teachers' thoughts and actions concerning appeal and usefulness of new work structures	Social interaction, norms, beliefs, values
Huberman (1987, 1990)	11	Vocational education programs: 199 researchers, users, intermediaries, administrators	Longitudinal: multiple case tracer study (11)	Interview schedules, rating scales	Uses of research data: Instrumental, conceptual, strategic, distortion, durability, linkage	Linkages between research and practice, dissemination efforts, local predictors
Johnson (1980)	75	Social service decision makers	Retrospective: field study	Interview schedule, questionnaire	Index based on conceptual and instrumental use of research data	Linkage roles, information brokers, contact and involvement, etc.
Kennedy (1983b, 1984)	16	School districts: policy developers, principals, teachers	Retrospective: multiple case study (16)	Interview and observation schedules	Reported use plus individual and group information processing	Working knowledge, shared knowledge, information needs

King & Pechman (1982, 1984)	1	Research and evaluation unit in district education office	Longitudinal: single case study	Naturalistic observation	Instrumental and conceptual use, nonuse of evaluation data	Funding requests, personal gain, organizational constraints, findings, etc.
King, Schleisman, & Binko (1991)	1	Collaborative research project: participation by government, university, and practitioners	Longitudinal: single case study	Naturalistic observation	Benefits and costs of collaboration to each participant group	Collaborative research process
Leinhardt & Grover (1990)	1	Math knowledge dissemination project: teachers (8), AFT staff and researchers; 2 years	Longitudinal: single case time series study	Videotape observation; final product of work teams	Patterns of discourse during workshops; document quality: synthesis of ideas, readability	Type of workshop sessions, workshop atmosphere and design, teacher selection
Louis & Dentler (1988)	12	Dissemination projects: 566 disseminators and primary and secondary information recipients	Retrospective: multisite, multimethod study	Structured telephone survey/ interview, field interviews	Personal and organizational use of school improvement information and gain	Personal and organizational incentives, social processing, knowledge properties, diffusion strategies
McColskey, Altshuld, & Lawton (1985)	153	Secondary school principals	Retrospective: survey	Questionnaire	Reliance on formal and informal sources for directing and reporting	Open-mindedness, perceived leadership orientation and autonomy, research training
Pechman & King (1986)	1	Research and evaluation unit in district education office	Longitudinal: single case study	Naturalistic observation; Level of Use chart	Structure of school evaluation use	Collaboration, training, Level of Use of evaluation by practitioners
Tamir (1991)	20	Student teachers in biology	Retrospective: survey	Unspecified	Perspective on classroom practice, appreciation of instructional technology and research	Research training and participation
Vivian (1989)	1	Academy for excellence	Retrospective: single case study	Anecdotal participant observation	Local decision support; new strategies, new alliances	School-university partnership
Weiss & Bucuvalas (1980)	250	Mental health agencies; review committees, social sciences	Retrospective: survey, field study	Structured interviews	Instrumental and conceptual uses of data	Methodological quality, relevance, challenge to status quo and to personal perceptions
Ziegahn (1989)	1	Developing distance teaching center in Africa	Retrospective: single case study	Naturalistic observation and reflection	Perceptions about evaluation	Linkages between evaluation and program units, communication, structure

science data by mental health agencies and review committees. "Researchers apparently have a simplistic view of the decision making process inside large organizations, and because they conceptualize decision making as a series of discrete problem solving choices they fail to appreciate the variegated contributions that research can make" (p. 260). It was suggested that the central issue is not to increase the use of research but to better understand the decision-making context so as to provide a more realistic opportunity for research to contribute to the wisdom of decision making. Social sciences and public policy, it was concluded, interact in multiple and iterative ways.

King and Pechman, in their naturalistic study (1982, 1984) of the impact of a school system-based research unit, developed a comprehensive conceptualization of the utilization process. The key concepts of their grounded model included signaling (symbolic use), charged use (instrumental and persuasive impact), and conceptual use (learning). The authors acknowledged, as did Weiss and Bucuvalas (1980), the legitimacy of nonuse of data under appropriate circumstances. King and Pechman described the evaluation process as involving multiple audiences and stakeholders who interact in an ongoing and continuous way. The dynamics of the process were said to change constantly, with earlier activities influencing the conduct and outcome of later ones. In their follow-up study (Pechman & King, 1986), the authors applied Hall and Loucks' (1975) Levels of Use (LoU) framework having conceptualized evaluation as an innovation. The LoU instrument they developed described deeper levels of interaction among users and evaluators at higher levels of implementation (refinement, integration, renewal). Pechman and King found, however, that the majority of program personnel were operating at lower levels of use (preparation) as they struggled to integrate evaluative activities into their operations.

Kennedy (1983b, 1984) studied the information-processing characteristics of users of "evidence" more closely. She applied a distinction between factual knowledge and normative meaning, suggesting that the latter was ambiguous and involved interpretation and judgment. Kennedy concluded that it is interpretations, not facts, that become integrated with "working knowledge." More germane to the present inquiry, however, is how participants "meld disparate bodies of working knowledge into a body of shared knowledge." Processes of informing, persuading, supervising, and responding were said to alter shared perceptions and behaviors. "Perhaps groups develop shared views through negotiation or informal conversations" (1984, p. 218). Kennedy observed that the more descriptive, or devoid of substantiated interpretation, a study is, the less likely it is to bring about agreed-upon interpretation. Also, she conjectured that the disparity among parent and educator groups in their lack of shared experiences, beliefs, and interests is likely to inhibit the rise of shared meaning of evidence.

These studies help to clarify and enrich our understanding of knowledge as a socially constructed phenomenon (Bandura, 1986). They help to frame discourse concerning the impact of the participatory model of evaluation and to remind us of the complexity of settings in which information use is to occur. The need to isolate the conditions and factors that enhance the information-processing capabilities of individuals and organizations remains an important priority. Further research using more powerful methods are needed to examine the impact and generalizibility of participatory evaluation activities.

Effects of Participation/Linkage on the Use of Research

Participation in the research process by practitioners is a relatively recent phenomenon for study. Participation in research has commonly been loosely defined. It has ranged from contacts with research personnel, to participation in design and communication aspects of the research process to a more direct level of participation involving learning and carrying out the research function. Two sets of data (Greene, 1987, 1988a, 1988b; Huberman, 1987, 1990) have been particularly illuminating concerning the dynamics and interrelationships of participa-

tory involvement in research. Several other studies have also provided relevant findings.

Huberman conducted a multisite "tracer study" (1987, 1990) designed to follow a variety of major research-dissemination activities within the domain of vocational education. Data were collected over a period of 18 months specifically to examine the dynamics and effects of linkages between researcher and practitioner communities. Huberman's study was based on the conviction that "whether or not research findings find their way into practitioner organizations depends heavily on the number, variety, and mutuality of contacts between researchers and practitioners" (1990, p. 364). Linkages (contacts) were found to predict both instrumental and conceptual uses of the data. In addition, a secondary effect of such contact was the establishment of stronger linkages between organizations. Twenty-three sites were categorized according to their links with research agencies. Among the 23, a significant number fell into one of two emergent categories: reciprocal engagement, where initial weak links became stronger and benefits of participation were shared by researcher and practitioner communities, and synergy, where collaborative devices (linkages) already in place were activated with the advent of a new research project. Huberman concluded that ongoing interim feedback concerning research findings was essential, that interactions over time create the appropriate climate for interorganizational sharing, and that contacts oblige both sides to think more about the meaning of findings.

Greene selected as a focus for study the holistic dynamics of stakeholder participation in social service program-evaluation activities. She looked specifically at participation in design and planning activities (1987) and communication/interpretation stages (1988a) in an effort to better understand the connection between participation and the evaluation utilization phenomenon (1988b). Levels of participation within both of her case sites were found to vary over stakeholders, and higher levels of participation were associated with greater cognitive, affective, and political consequences. In particular, multiple opportunities for discussion and reflection and the creative analysis of substantive program issues were coupled with active ongoing assimilation of information. Additionally, the personal contact with the researcher and other participants evoked a variety of "feelings" regarding program issues and, to a less clear extent, regarding perceptions of self-worth within the organization. Finally, Greene identified political benefits such as working through diverse views held by stakeholders and the provision of "voice" to those with less power within the organization. Greene concluded that learning about the technology of evaluation was helpful in fostering learning about the program and that the research process came to be viewed as credible and legitimate. Listening skills, responsiveness, and technical competence of the evaluator in addition to practitioner willingness to participate were recognized as factors that enhanced the use of evaluation.

Other researchers have added to our knowledge of participatory activities as well. Alkin and Stecher (1983) randomly sampled 22 Title I elementary schools and interviewed three informants within each school to examine patterns of decision support from evaluation data. They found that only a limited number of decision types, such as problem recognition, appeared to be supported by such data and that needs assessment data seemed to provide the most useful support. Among the most salient features of their data was the importance of "local involvement and familiarity in the evaluation utilization process" (p. 30). Staff were said to have a personal investment in needs assessment information because they were actively involved in its collection. The result was increased attention to data generated locally.

Using a single-case-study method, Dawson and D'Amico (1985) examined user participation in the evaluation of a secondary school development program over a 2½-year period. In each year of the project one staff member had direct responsibility for evaluation activities while other staff participated in data collection, debriefing, and interpretation of findings. The benefits of participation included increased utilization, defined in terms of formative effects on program development, improved communications, height-

ened credibility of evaluation, user commitment and advocacy, and improved evaluation quality. From a path-modeling methodological approach, Johnson (1980) found that frequency of contact and involvement between researchers and program decision makers was a bridge between linkage roles and evaluation use. "Information brokers" created the conditions resulting in the stimulation of contact, involvement, and the transfer of evaluative knowledge.

Cousins (1988) found that principals' use of performance appraisal data for personal professional development was enhanced with participation in data-gathering and processing aspects of the appraisal process. Willingness to share information with the appraiser, ongoing interaction, and the dynamics of the relationship between principal and appraiser were other interactive factors noted. Within the context of teacher training, Tamir (1990) found that student teachers' perceptions of students and views about instructional techniques were favorably affected by their implementation of action research in their student teaching activities.

Earl and West (1991) used participatory evaluation to examine a curriculum development, implementation, and review process in secondary schools in a large urban school district. Principals, vice-principals, and central office staff worked with the researchers to identify issues and prepare instruments. They conducted the interviews, interpreted the results, wrote recommendations, provided feedback to schools, and implemented changes in their own schools. These participants became the primary users in a very real way and, ultimately, responsible for the data, the conclusions, and the necessary action.

Finally, Geva-May and Peretz (1991) conducted a single case study of an instructional evaluation that had limited and varying degrees of involvement of different stakeholder groups. They examined the use of diagnostic test information and found that utilization depended upon the closeness of the stakeholder group to the test results. Personal involvement led to a motivated effort to understand and use the data, whereas other factors such as competing information impeded use when personal involvement was not close.

Empirical investigations concerning the participatory process are limited in number but have provided rich and encouraging data in support of participatory evaluation. We need to know a lot more, however, about the conditions within which participation is sensible and feasible. Also needed is further research sensitive to unintended effects, such as the consequences of time away from one's primary organizational function. While studies have shown rather powerful effects on evaluation use at the local level, questions concerning change in organizational norms toward the "learning organization" remain largely unaddressed.

Effects of Participation/Linkage on the Use of Disseminated and Other Knowledge

Further support for positive benefits of interactive processes and social participation comes from research inquiring into the more broadly defined domain of knowledge utilization. In addition to the data provided by Kennedy (1983b, 1984; reported above), which examined the use of various sorts of evidence, some of which transcends the bounds of research-based knowledge, we located a few studies that examined the use of disseminated knowledge and knowledge generated internally within the organization for the purposes of school improvement. These studies provide further evidence bearing upon the importance of ongoing dialogue and interaction in effecting change.

Hargreaves (1984) illuminated several issues and processes associated with teachers' "talk" within the school in a single case study. Hargreaves' data showed clearly the dominance of classroom-based rhetoric in teachers' talk, to the exclusion of more broad issues of administration, educational politics, and educational theory. He offered various interpretations of the data, including teachers' staying within their zone of control (i.e., the classroom) and their propensity to debunk research as a "cultural strategy of neutralizing threats to and criticisms of teachers' existing routines" (p. 252). Hargreaves' data are consistent with the view that organizational structures within schools inhibit (or even preclude) the effective contribution of teachers to discourse on schoolwide matters. On the

other hand, Cousins, Ross, and Maynes (in press) examined three "exemplary schools" where teachers felt unrestricted in engaging in discourse about schoolwide matters and decisions that affected the school as a whole. Their participation and propensity to work collaboratively with their peers were tied to their heightened understanding of specific innovations, improved technical performance, and insights into the behaviors and motives of some students.

Three studies offer insights into the impact of social interaction within educational organizations concerning externally disseminated educational change and school improvement efforts. Louis and Dentler (1988) inquired into the effects on use of knowledge at personal and organizational levels from 12 dissemination events. A key factor impacting upon organizational gains in particular was "social processing" of the information by the respondents. Such interaction was useful in assessing and analyzing how and whether information was relevant to the work context, transforming the information by customizing it for local use, engaging local educators in adoption and development, and affirming commitment to information use. Cousins and Leithwood (in press) examined the use of information by principals and district staff from a variety of sources of help (e.g., report summary, local inservice, conferences). Strong indications emerged from the data which suggested that interactive processes enhanced conceptual and instrumental uses of the information. Such processes included social processing, engagement, follow-up, and involvement. Hart (1990) focused on the dynamics of work redesign employing a social systems theory. Her study was premised on the belief that "the salience of the information exchanged and interpreted at each school, then, should be largely influenced by the value people place on its source and the consensual interpretations that develop among members of a group" (p. 507). Hart reported that the impact of the school as a social unit on teachers' thoughts and actions was compelling and that the evolution of work values depended upon information exchange and processing.

Finally, Leinhardt and Grover (1990) studied the implementation of a summer mathematics knowledge dissemination project sponsored by the American Federation of Teachers. In the second summer of the project, they altered the teacher selection process and designed researcher-teacher interactions to be less formal and more accepting of teachers' practical knowledge. Data suggested that all parties increased their engagement with the substantive information and that the final product was superior to its predecessor.

While these studies do not provide direct support for the participation of practitioners in local applied research, they underscore the salience of the social learning theory and the view that knowledge is socially constructed. This research body is somewhat limited in volume and mostly restricted to qualitative research methods. The Louis and Dentler (1988) and Cousins and Leithwood (in press) studies employed multisite, multimethod approaches that strengthened their conclusions. More research with a more variable set of methods is needed in order to add further insights into the dynamics of social participation.

Effects of Training in Research

We located only two studies that specifically dealt with the issue of whether training in social science research methods increases practitioner propensity to use research. In both studies conclusions were affirmative. Green and Kvidahl (1990) studied research use by teachers and found that it was generally low on average. Teachers were commonly not involved in research activities nor did they engage in reviews of research. However, their attitudes toward research methods were positive and they indicated a desire to develop their skills. The most significant finding of the study was that the use, conduct, and review of research by teachers and their opinions about research could be predicted by their level of training in research methods.

In a second study, McColsky, Altshuld, and Lawton (1985) examined secondary school principals' use of both formal (e.g., test scores, evaluations, surveys, records) and informal (e.g., observations, meetings, conversations) sources of information. They

found that principals' level of training in social science research methods was positively related to both formal and informal uses of information. Other predictors included instructional leadership, autonomy, and open-mindedness.

There is a distinct paucity of research-based knowledge concerning the effects of training in research methods on participation and utilization of research. The limited evidence that exists demonstrates positive effects. Much further research is needed in this area. For example, we need to know more about the sorts of training that are likely to be effective. Need preparation be restricted to university settings or can adequate training take place in the field through inservice and staff-development opportunities? Will the acquisition of evaluation skills on site suffice? Variation in research methods is also necessary. Softer, qualitative methods may serve to enrich our understanding of the interrelationships of research training with many other factors that impinge upon participation in research and, ultimately, its use. For example, what are the dimensions of performance critical to growth in research skills? Which dimensions of performance are likely to have greatest impact? The LoU instrument developed by Pechman and King (1986) provides one plausible approach to assessing involvement and participation in research. Other related technologies, such as "innovation profiles" (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1987), may provide useful alternatives. Harder evidence from quasi-experimental designs will help to establish the appropriateness of various approaches to training and their generalizability to wider and varied contexts.

School-University Partnerships

A relatively recent and growing phenomenon is school-university partnerships. While collaboration among K–12 educational settings and universities is not new (e.g., The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Field Centers in Canada; Regional Educational Laboratories in the United States), many new relationships have emerged involving consortia of schools and school districts, university-based centers for excellence, state education agencies, and faculties of education. The agendas for these partnerships are locally determined but are intended to be mutually appealing. There is a burgeoning literature describing and promoting school-university partnerships, but as noted by Goodlad and Soder (1992), "many of these articles tend toward adulation, uncritical acceptance, or reportage; few are based on critical conceptual frameworks and data" (p. 3). We located four studies providing data germane to the impact of school-university partnerships. Two of these were "loosely empirical" and had relatively broad interpretations of partnership activities. The remaining two were more directly connected to partnership-based research activities.

Goodlad and Soder (1992) reflected on a 3-year meta-evaluation project concerning 14 school-university partnerships. Their commentaries were, in a sense, cautiously positive. Early assessments indicated that the appraisal was of "nearly nonevents," but later in the process, the team began to recognize the great promise of the partnerships albeit in the face of some rather enormous difficulties. They concluded that the rhetoric of school-university partnerships far outruns the data but that successful ones appeared to have a common agenda, a jointly controlled budget and secretariats, an executive director, and multilevel participation (from all professional roles within the organizations). In successful partnerships, single-sided issues tended to evolve into mutually attractive foci. Vivian (1989) described in detail a single case study of a school-university partnership. An academy of excellence was established initially as a communication link and conduit for making the resources of the university more accessible to and usable by school-based personnel. Subsequently, interest grew in inquiring into the effective schools literature in order to inform school improvement efforts. The collaboration resulted in the academy's acceptance by the school and in teachers' engaging in school visitations, reviewing research, participating in workshops and conferences, and forming new strategies and alliances.

Butler and Alberg (1991) also looked at the impact of university collaboration with schools regarding the implementation of a

school audit mechanism. While evidence showed that not all school personnel were cognizant of the process or its impact, learning environments were said to become more positive, and teachers' value of diverse instructional methods and learning styles developed. Factors identified as being influential were timeliness, leadership, the availability of technical expertise, and the relevance of the audits to local needs. Also observed were effects on university personnel in developing their reporting, planning, and training expertise. Finally, King et al. (1991) identified cognitive and affective benefits of practitioner-university collaboration in school-based research. Improved practice and a sense of satisfaction from being involved in "cutting edge" collaborative activities were cited. The authors also provided evidence concerning some of the obstacles to effective participation. Particular concerns included the time required of practitioners, complexity of questions, too many participants, and the risk of documenting bad practice. Some participants wondered about the wisdom of investing significant time and energy in something (research) that previously had little direct value.

In sum, studies of school-university partnerships offer an alternative perspective on the question of the value of participation in local research activities. While many of these partnerships are concerned with agendas that are not directly linked to evaluation, a significant proportion do involve either the collaborative conduct of research or strategies designed to foster greater access to technical and research-based knowledge by educators. Perhaps of greater significance concerning partnerships, however, is the inherent link of the practical setting to the university infrastructure and its abundant research resources. Regardless, research on the nature, antecedents, and consequences of effective partnerships is in its infancy, which suggests a need to adopt qualitative, exploratory research strategies, at least in the short run. Although partnership settings may provide abundant opportunities for the study of practitioner participation in research, hard evidence is not likely to be forthcoming, at least not in the near term.

Internal Evaluation

Mathison (1991b) reported that the prevalence of externally funded evaluation contracts has declined over the past 2 decades in favor of "internal evaluation" involving in-house research units and personnel. This trend is consonant with an increasing emphasis on the formative mode of evaluation and on a recognition that evaluators must understand and be understood by the host organization. Despite this trend and a recently burgeoning literature concerning internal evaluation (e.g., Kennedy, 1983a; Love, 1983, 1991; Mathison, 1991a), we were able to locate only a few empirical studies of the impact of internal evaluation.

The studies reported by King and Pechman (1982, 1984; Pechman & King, 1986) addressed evaluation use within the context of an internal school system research unit, but the focus for these studies (reported above) was more on conceptualizing the utilization of data than on the impact of the internal unit. A study by Ziegahn (1989) looked more directly at the latter issue. She studied internal evaluation activities connected to a developing, externally funded distance education center located in a third-world country. Ziegahn analyzed the case to determine why the impact of the monitoring activities was so limited. She concluded that physical and structural separation of the program and its evaluation limited communication and that extra-organizational factors impeded the establishment of formal and informal communication networks among evaluators, programmers, and managers. These data support the hypothesis that limits on social processing of data will impede the utilization process.

Internal evaluation contexts offer much promise for participatory evaluation given the emphasis on formative activity and proximity to program issues and matters. Data concerning the impact of internal evaluation are badly needed, however. It seems likely that research in this vein will continue given the trend cited by Mathison (1991b).

Discussion and Conclusions

We believe that participatory evaluation offers a powerful approach to the improvement of educational organizations by creat-

ing learning systems that enhance organizational learning and, consequently, lead to better informed decisions. This approach, however, requires a number of predispositions and adjustments on the part of both the organization and the evaluators working with them.

Organizational Requirements

For participatory evaluation to become viable, certain organizational realities must be taken into account. We have identified five requirements that seem especially important. First, and perhaps most key, evaluation must be valued by the organization. There is considerable evidence that suggests that organizational decisions are made in nonrational, haphazard, politically sensitive ways and that evaluation, which assumes a rationalistic model of organizations, will necessarily have limited impact (C. H. Weiss, 1988a, 1988b; Weiss & Bucuvalas, 1980). Yet evaluation activities appear to be flourishing. In Ontario, for example, many school systems are operating on a review, development, and implementation cycle (Fullan, Anderson, & Newton, 1986; Leithwood, 1987), which identifies an integral role for evaluation. Argyris and Schön (1978) refer to a similar cycle of discovery-invention-production-generalization in their description of requirements for effective organizational learning systems. Such patterns suggest that organizations, though not entirely rational, want to use evaluation information and strive to systematize their assessment of information (through review or discovery). While routine use of data may not currently be within the organizational culture, there is reason to suspect that change in this direction is both desirable and possible.

Second, the organization must provide the time and resources required. This requirement is somewhat, although not exclusively, dependent upon the first. The level of involvement of primary users in the research process will necessarily be substantial. Anyone who has participated in a serious applied research project from start to finish will have a clear understanding of this verity. But primary users will, in most cases, be extremely busy with their own role. In education, for example, teachers are continually being asked to do more in less time (Sarason, 1990). It is vital, then, that organizations sufficiently free up primary users from their routine tasks for them to meaningfully participate in the research.

Third, and also dependent upon the first requirement, organizations need to be committed to organizational learning as a route toward improvement. This implies a need to establish *organizational memory* concerning the applied research process. The participatory evaluation process is highly technical and somewhat foreign to primary users, whose role has probably limited them to the consumption of research-based knowledge at best. Participatory evaluation works toward developing within organizations the capacity to carry out and gain an intimate understanding of these complex tasks. Unless organizational memory is enhanced through, for example, assigning key personnel to subsequent projects in a cascade approach, or explicitly documenting procedures and processes to be followed, such development is unlikely to occur. To use the obvious clichés, continually starting from scratch or reinventing the wheel is likely to derail the effort before it makes an appreciable gain.

Fourth, primary users participating in evaluation activities must be motivated to do so. These people are likely to be faced with significant challenges and relatively tight timelines. Are they fully cognizant of the scope of the endeavor before agreeing to participate? Can they afford to be away from their organizational function to the extent that would be demanded by the evaluation? Freeing up personnel from their routine duties may be a source of resentment for some, the consequences of which ought not to be taken lightly. What are the personal benefits to be accumulated? What are the assurances that a useful contribution can be made? What will be the consequences of participation for relationships with others within the organization (i.e., subordinates, peers, superordinates)?

Finally, it is necessary to assume that organization members likely to participate in evaluation activities do not have sufficient research experience and knowledge to carry

out the task but that they have the ability to learn given appropriate training. In educational contexts, for example, it is well documented that teacher training involves, at best, only cursory exposure to measurement principles or evaluation techniques (Schafer & Lissitz, 1987). Given the nature of teachers' work, it is unlikely that they would have substantial access to technical research knowledge in their normal routines. Since the initial role of primary users is likely to be apprentice, and since only some would continue on subsequent research tasks, it is not necessary to have all participants meet this requirement. However, it is pivotal that at least some primary users have the potential to develop their research skills quickly and have the leadership skills to aid in carrying out subsequent coordinator roles.

Requirements of Evaluators

The role of the trained evaluator in participatory evaluation is a significant departure from more traditional views of the role. We have identified six requirements of the evaluator that must be met in order for the organizational benefits of participatory evaluation to be realized. First, the evaluator must have the necessary training and expertise concerning technical research skills. Since the 1960s, evaluation as a legitimate enterprise has flourished as evidenced in the establishment of consulting firms, the development of undergraduate and graduate instructional programs, the availability of training workshops, the installation of internal research units within organizations, and the founding of professional associations such as the Canadian Evaluation Society and the American Evaluation Association (formerly Evaluation Research Society and Evaluation Network). The availability of evaluation expertise has become increasingly significant over the past 30 years.

A second requirement is that evaluators are accessible to organizations for participatory activities. Whether internally or externally located, significant demands upon the evaluator's time will be generated by the participatory model. Furthermore, time will be required for both parties to collectively develop a shared language. Collaborative encounters with practice-based personnel, however, should be viewed not as an "add-on" enterprise but rather as an integral aspect of the process.

Third, resources necessary to the research process (e.g., access to support services, budget for incurred costs) must be available. This assumption is not specific only to participatory evaluation and, of course, is inextricably tied to organizational needs. Again needs will vary depending upon the organizational location (i.e., internal versus external) of the evaluator.

A fourth requirement is a pedagogical role for evaluators in the participatory process. Although the conception of "evaluator as teacher" is not new (Anderson & Weiss, 1983; J. Weiss, 1983, 1989; Wise, 1980), we refer here to teaching *about* evaluation rather than teaching *through* evaluation. The latter implies that "the utilization task is to see that various audiences have opportunities to learn about the program and to draw out implications for the future of the program and their place in it" (Wise, 1980, p. 17). In the participatory context, evaluators must be capable of training practice-based staff in the skills of systematic inquiry; through participation, utilization is likely to be enhanced. An important consideration is that the circumstances under which such training would occur will probably be less than ideal from an instructional standpoint (e.g., interruptions, time pressures, competing priorities). Evaluators must be sensitive to principles of adult learning and ought to have the appropriate interpersonal and communication skills. Since a significant portion of the training is likely to take place as the project unfolds, the exercise will probably be grounded within a familiar and meaningful context.

Fifth, evaluators must be motivated to participate. The goal of empowering primary users with the technical knowledge and skill to conduct useful applied research is vital and needs to be explicitly acknowledged and accepted by all. Evaluators who are able to transcend an edict of expert-novice professional relationships and who are willing to share and instruct about their technical expertise will be more likely to experience success.

Finally, and also related to the foregoing discussion, evaluators ought to have significant tolerance for imperfection. The training task, as a rule, will be a significant challenge particularly where organization members not grounded in prior research experience or training are concerned. Evaluators must acknowledge that errors and mistakes are likely to be common throughout the process. It is incumbent upon the evaluator to identify potential mistakes and to sufficiently engage in countervailing activities so as to maintain integrity and necessary standards of technical quality for the research process.

An Agenda for Research

Participatory evaluation, at first blush, has a bright future. It holds the promise espoused by advocates of collegial work; it is likely to provide a practical and cost-effective alternative, and it appears to offer a distinct approach for organizations wishing to move toward a more fully developed image of organizational learning. But the current bank of empirical data is much too thin to warrant unreflective change in this direction. Our review of the literature has ended with many more questions than answers. These questions, in our view, define an agenda for research, the fruits of which may bear the seeds of significant and sustained change for evaluation within the organizational culture. We recommend continued work in five general directions.

First, we need to continue to examine closely the complexities and dynamics of the evaluation utilization process within the context of participatory evaluation. The study of utilization has evolved considerably, and criteria for defining use have expanded to include not just cognitive but political and even affective considerations. But few studies have addressed utilization under participatory conditions in depth. A related concern has to do with secondary effects of utilization. What happens if the local use of data increases? What happens when bad practice is documented? What are the implications for practice? What are the implications for continued participation in research?

A second focus for inquiry concerns the depth of participation of practitioners in the research process. Previous participant roles have been loosely defined and generally restricted to design and planning issues or interpretation and dissemination matters. Relatively little is known about the active involvement of participants in data collection and analysis. Participation of this sort is likely to foster the development of local networks and opportunities for open discussion about the data, if not the process. It is also likely to be significantly demanding and time consuming. What are the added benefits, if any? Is it worth the extra time and effort?

A closer examination of the conditions under which participation is likely to pay off is a third area for inquiry. We identified a set of requirements for meaningful participatory evaluation. Is it necessary to meet the entire set? Is an organization not predisposed to organizational learning or systematic inquiry unsuitable for participatory evaluation? Which requirements concerning evaluators are especially crucial?

Further data on the effects of training constitutes a fourth direction for research. Current studies have shown positive effects of training but they have been few in number. Many questions remain. For example, what are reasonable alternative modes of training that might be attractive to organizations? Which will prove to be most cost effective, and by what criteria? Under what circumstances will the attractiveness of alternatives vary? There is a need to define growth schemes that document important dimensions of needed research skills (e.g., conceptualizing, coordinating, disseminating) and participation skills (e.g., division of labor, joint work). Such a scheme would range from adequate to effective practice and could be expected to aid training interventions by making explicit expectations for growth as well as providing an implicit method of assessment.

Finally, what will be the impact of participation on evaluators? Available evidence suggests that heightened understanding of the meaning of data is a primary outcome for researchers involved in collaborative projects. But many other questions remain unanswered. For instance, will participation motivate evaluators to develop new skills (e.g., instructional, communication, inter-

personal)? Will the technical quality of research work change? If so, what will be the nature of the changes? How are appropriate levels of participation to be defined? Upon what criteria do evaluators base their decisions to decrease their direct involvement? Can all evaluators adapt to a participatory evaluation role? What characteristics of evaluators are likely to predict success in this new role?

Examination of theoretical and empirical bases for participation in research at the local level lend support for the continuation of such practice. Although many questions remain, participation derives additional backing amid current waves of educational and organizational restructuring. A significant thrust of educational restructuring, for example, calls for the empowerment of teachers through the professionalization of their work and the development of collaborative work cultures (Elmore, 1990). Similarly, decentralization strategies aim to enhance "localness" (Senge, 1990) in schools and other organizations. The success of such ripostes is likely to depend upon the extent to which organization members endeavor to develop skills of systematic inquiry and learning systems that transform locally generated knowledge into action. Participatory evaluation is congruent with growth toward the learning organization.

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