Is Your Program Working?

We might love a program, but is it working? Where is the evidence to support that claim? Does your program identify what its goals are? Is it measuring outcomes that support those goals?

Scarce resources and budget cuts pose increasing challenges as schools, non-profit agencies and institutions struggle to keep their most promising programs afloat. More and more, policy makers and program managers have faced tough choices about continuing programs that they believe are valuable, but have no data affirming that success.

Program evaluation helps move us in positive directions and prevents us from taking actions that may cost money, time, and resources. Evidence based decision making and program evaluation are necessary in any field.

Evidence Based Program Evaluation

Educators need good information about the relative effectiveness of their programs. Which programs are working well? Which poorly? What are the programs’ relative costs and benefits? Are some parts of the program working better than others? What can be done to improve those parts of the program that are not contributing to success? Is more planning needed? How can the program be changed to make it more effective?

The purpose of evaluation is to provide an evidence base for decision-making. In other words, to contribute information toward informed action, rather than taking action based on habitual performance or speculation. Program evaluation assesses the effectiveness of your program at accomplishing measurable outcomes, the quality with which your program is implemented, and it identifies ways the program can be improved.
Why PEAR?

Researchers have pointed to the lack of evaluative evidence as a major cause for pendulum swings from one educational panacea to the next, resulting in disillusionment about school reform and a large credibility gap between educators and consumers. Evaluative research makes educational change a more rational process, with the ultimate goal being the gradual improvement of educational systems.

PEAR focuses on rigorous evaluation and assessment expertise to fuel data-driven decisions. As a partnership, we draw upon a community of experts for various projects, thus providing the most flexible, tailored response to each evaluation request.

The pear tree symbolizes longevity. With evaluation and assessment, the goal is to build partnerships and data-driven programs that are sustainable and effective over the long term.

Our Mission:

To provide to the St. Louis metropolitan community and beyond:

- A service of rigorous, thoughtful evaluation to assess program effectiveness and/or impact in order to facilitate sound, data-driven decisions and inform evidence-based policy.
- A portal to facilitate collaboration between academics, schools, school districts, industry, entrepreneurs, practice, and the community.

Our Vision:

That the St. Louis metropolitan community embraces the integration of evaluation into every level of educational practice, and implements evidence-based programs, resulting in high quality education for all children. We want to partner with the Saint Louis metropolitan community to develop leading models for the nation.

Our Values:

Interdisciplinary collaboration, integrity, quality, innovation, inclusion, communication, relevance, scholarship, entrepreneurship.

Innovative Education… Engaged Educators

Housed in the University of Missouri-St. Louis’ College of Education, PEAR offers a network of academic resources and scholars who are experts in the field of education from a variety of disciplines. Our stakeholders include students, teachers, parents, administrators, policy makers, researchers, alumni, community members, not for profit organizations, foundations, entrepreneurs, and school systems.

The College of Education at UMSL offers authentic, in-depth learning experiences to prepare current and future education professionals for transformative roles in their communities and careers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about PEAR including requests for program evaluation, contact:

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Meet the Director:

Julie Kapp is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, Research and Evaluation, and Director of Evaluation in the College of Education at UMSL. She holds bachelor’s degrees in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Missouri, Columbia (MU), and master’s and doctoral degrees in Public Health from Saint Louis University. Her current scholarly focus is on evidence-based decision making, evaluation, planning, and assessment.

Kapp is a member of the American Evaluation Association and the American Educational Research Association.