

Encyclopedia of Evaluation

Description

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Description uses ordinary vocabulary to convey deep and rich meanings about people, places, and programs and is a device that is expected particularly in evaluations that use case studies, participant observation, and other qualitative approaches. Description is needed by evaluators to portray what is happening, what a setting looks like, and what the people involved are thinking and doing. Providing such description can help to evoke emotions and to convey implicit values and judgments so that an audience can be persuaded by the arguments presented. It is also important to recognize that description is the basis for more abstract interpretations of data, and without it, coding, categorization, theory, and hypothesis development could not occur.

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