

# Encyclopedia of Evaluation

## Phenomenology

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Human beings create their views of the world through the accumulation of sense experiences (also called data). Further, they revisit and report these experiences when completing questionnaires and interviews designed to gather attitudes, observations, and judgments. Phenomenology is relevant to evaluation because it problematizes the interpretation of reported experiences, as in, “Was that a blink or a wink?” or “I saw a blink, but you saw a wink.” Phenomenology's ultimate source is the distinction pioneered by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant that sense experiences could be registered as phenomena, but “things in themselves,” also known as *noumena*, are inaccessible.

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