

Encyclopedia of Evaluation

Description

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Book Title: Encyclopedia of Evaluation
Chapter Title: "Description"
Pub. Date: 2005
Access Date: January 14, 2014
Publishing Company: Sage Publications, Inc.
City: Thousand Oaks
Print ISBN: 9780761926092
Online ISBN: 9781412950558
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412950558.n144>
Print page: 115

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412950558.n144>

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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<http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412950558.n144>