



The Evaluative Inquiry: Engaging research evaluation analytically and strategically

Austrian EU Council Presidency Conference

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29 November 2018



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Outline

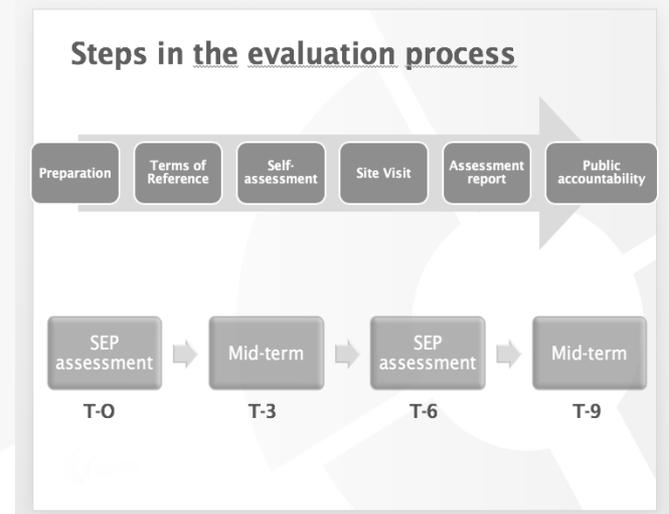
- The evaluation research literature
- The Dutch context
- Three issues within the current evaluation protocol
- The evaluative inquiry in practice
- Discussion

Fit with mainstream evaluation literature

- Growing focus on
 - ... mixed methods and triangulation
 - ... complex systems with room for organisational learning
 - ... involving stakeholders
 - ... developing an intervention logic

The Dutch context

- Evaluation results have no direct implications for funding (“weak evaluation system” according to Whitley (2007))
- Improvement use of evaluation results (as opposed to a distribute or controlling use (Molas-Gallart, 2012))
- National evaluation of all research units every 6 years (peer review combining personal site visits, interviews, qualitative and quantitative assessment of output)
- Regular self-assessment half-way between national evaluation rounds



The Dutch context

- Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) stipulates that institutions provide: Formal documentation of output and “performance indicators”, a description of the financing of a given research unit, a qualitative narrative summarizing the results and societal relevance of the research
- The 2015 iteration of the SEP introduces a stronger emphasis on “societal relevance” of research, i.e. engagement with non-academic audiences and partners

Description of unit's organisational structure	Most important (and relevant) performance indicators
Description of unit's financing	Results research and societal relevance past 6 years (latter in a narrative)
Strategy past 6 years	link results to SEP criteria (quality, relevance, viability)
Targets past 6 years (research, societal relevance)	Strategy and targets next 5-10 years
Relevant environmental factors and developments past six years	PhD Program(s)
SWOT analysis and benchmarking	Research Integrity

Three issues within the current evaluation protocol

- The academic excellence vs societal relevance divide
- The quantitative vs qualitative way of assessing academic quality
- The detached analyst vs engaged analytical collaborator

The Evaluative Inquiry at CWTS

- Rethinking research excellence and academic quality.
- Research quality is not just an academic issue, but relevant to policy, professional networks and societal domains.
- Metric analyses offer particular understanding of academic quality. A portfolio of different methodologies offers additional perspectives.
- Evaluations are often used as accountability tools. As such they don't prompt organizational learning. The evaluative inquiry aspires to both.

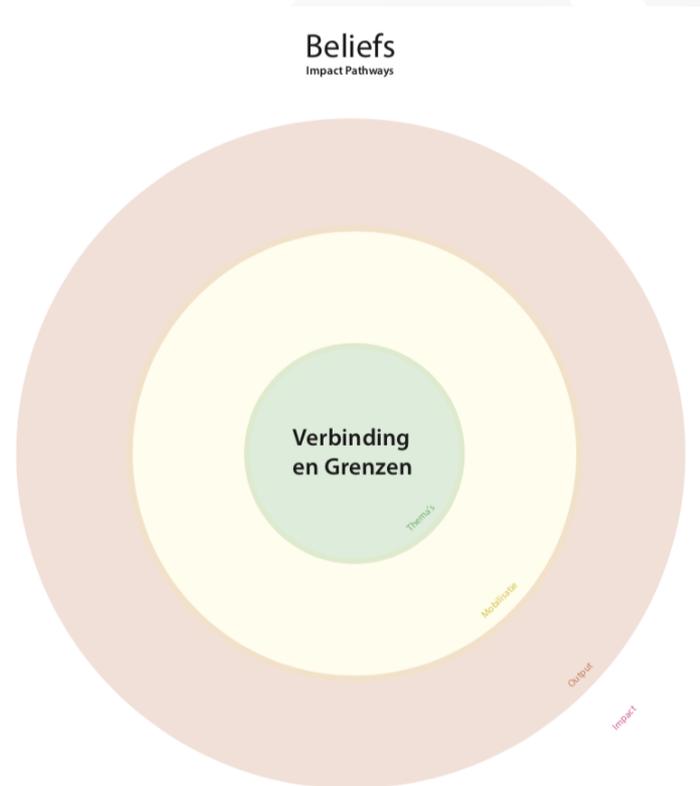
Exploration

- What are the central issues and questions of the project?
Document analysis and conversations with client.
- Design of research approach and specification of combination of methods.

Data collection and analysis

- Contextual Response Analysis (Prins, n.d.); contextual scientometrics (Waltman & van Eck, 2016); bibliographic coupling; co-citation analyses; Area Based Connectedness (Noyons, 2018)
- Impact pathway analysis; Interviews with researchers and stakeholders about institutional organization, academic themes, output and impact.
- Workshops – data collection for SWOT analysis and/or testing of hypotheses.

Impact pathways: lively themes connecting academic and societal domains



Thema's

Bekering
Transgender
Ontmoetingen tussen islam en Christendom
Wetenschap & religie (in West-Afrika)
Church in "The Borderland"

Mobilisatie

Partners (wetenschappelijk, maatschappelijk, kerkelijk, professioneel, lokaal en internationaal)
Geldtroom (NWO, kerkelijke fondsen, H2020)
Stalleden (alleen, met collega's PThU)

Output

Academisch
Professioneel
Populariserend
Hybride
Platforms (wetenschappelijke conferenties, discussies in kranten, praatprogramma's RTV, tentoonstellingen, kerkdiensten, blogs, internetfora)

Impact

Blijken van gebruik (wetenschappelijk, maatschappelijk, kerkelijk, professioneel, lokaal en internationaal)
Erkenning

Reporting

- Analysis of institutional organization as well as the relations between academic themes, output and impact. SWOT. Suggestions for self-assessment.
- Report is point of departure for conversation about ambitions and the organization of quality, internally and externally. Workshop can be additional tool.

Discussion

The evaluative inquiry is an approach to rethink academic value analytically and strategically. What do you think?