

The professionalization of evaluation practice: definitions, process, and trade-offs

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Are you a professional? Are you a professional evaluator? This is kind of a rhetorical question when asked of an assembly of individuals who took a day off their busy schedule to discuss the professionalization of evaluation. But think about it: why do you think you are a professional or that you are not? What do you base your judgement on?

When I hire a doctor in medicine, a chiropractor, an accountant, I like to see their diploma on the wall.

When I hire an architect, I like to make sure that they are on the roster of their professional order.

When I hire a carpenter, I like to confirm that they are registered with the Building Commission.

When I hire an exterminator, I like to know that they are approved by the Canada Automobile Association (CAA).

When I hire a house cleaner, I like to check the Better Business Bureau ratings.

When I hire an evaluator... I must believe the promotional hype found in their proposal. I have no means of verifying their professionalism.

My name is Benoît Gauthier. I was born in 1956 in Quebec. That makes me a French-speaking male baby boomer with university education; I have two daughters and two grandsons. These socio-demographic traits are surely very significant in who I am, what my values and opinions are, how I form judgement, and how I spend my time.

As an aside, I was Vice-President and then President of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), on the Board of Directors from 2013 to 2018, and I am Vice-President of the Réseau francophone de l'évaluation (RFE) and of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE). I also sit on the Executive Committee of EvalPartners.

I have been active in evaluation since 1984. I started my career as a hardcore quantitative social scientist schooled in political science, systems dynamics, and statistics – at a time when the word “evaluator” did not exist. Somewhere along the way, I became an evaluator and later I developed an understanding of qualitative evidence as well as of the guiding role that I have as an evaluator. My involvement in the CES and in its credentialing initiative also made a profound mark on my path as an evaluator. This is my journey through professionalization; it certainly affects my analysis of the collective issues of professionalization for our community of evaluators and the discipline of evaluation.

What is a profession? What is a professional?

I was asked to talk about the initiatives that the CES has put in place over the years toward the professionalization of evaluation in Canada. But first, wouldn't it be good to describe the boundaries of the concepts of profession and professional? I think that it is important to do so, especially in light of so many people stating that they are “professionals”, including dry-cleaning technicians, insurance sales personnel, and market research interviewers.

Official dictionary definitions of “profession” point to two areas: (1) religion as in “profession

of faith” and (2) occupation or job as in the distinction between amateur or professional. Assuming that this meeting is not about religious commitment, you are probably thinking of profession as something one does more than dabbling in, something that someone gets paid to do. But is that enough to define a profession?

Since the Middle Ages, the word Profession has been used mostly for liberal occupations – especially the clergy, lawyers, and physicians – as distinct from work associated with production or trade. Liberal professions required advanced education (if only in the proper use of bleeding) and some form of clerkship.

Some say that the great age of professionalization occurred in the 19th and early 20th centuries when physicians and lawyers gained significantly in prestige and power, and other groups – like engineers, architects, dentists, teachers, accountants, auditors, nurses – began to fight for similar positions in society.

In the 20th century, Larson suggested that “a profession is a full-time occupation that brings high status and a comfortable income. It is based on formal training in a field of specialized knowledge that is confirmed by some type of certification. The professional provides services to clients, not products to customers, and earns fees or even honoraria rather than wages or a salary. Members of a profession follow a code of professional ethics, policed by associations of professionals rather than the state or some other outside body.” Larson herself suggested that such professional associations also try to constitute and control the market for their members’ services, especially in limiting competition from non-certified practitioners.

Quoting James Albisetti, “Larson’s analysis contains elements of both the benevolent and the conspiratorial [or nefarious] interpretations of professionalization that exist throughout the scholarly literature. On the one hand, the process appears as the victory of expertise, honesty, or even disinterested service over incompetence, fraud, and quackery. On the other, it involves the establishment of monopoly, exclusion of non-professionals, and limitation of choice for the public.”

In 1994, in a very influential article about evaluation, Worthen proposed nine characteristics that a fully developed profession must have:

1. A need for evaluation specialists.
2. Content (knowledge and skills) unique to evaluation.
3. Preparation programs for evaluators.
4. Stable career opportunities in evaluation.
5. Certification or licensure of evaluators.
6. Appropriate professional associations for evaluators.
7. Exclusion of unqualified persons from those associations.
8. Influence of evaluators’ associations on preservice preparation programs for evaluators.
9. Standards for the practice of evaluation.

Worthen concluded that evaluation fit six of the nine characteristics. Those not achieved were certification, exclusion of unqualified persons, and influence on training programs. In much of the US and Canadian discussions of the mid-90s, this analysis was very influential and led to many concluding that “evaluation is not a profession”. I read this differently: I read this as a program toward being a profession or as a list of characteristics that need to be developed or

reinforced to ensure that evaluation acquires the stature of a profession. To me, that is the process of professionalization.

Along similar lines but much more recently (2011), Robert Picciotto identified the most frequently mentioned characteristics of a profession¹ and listed the following criteria for the assessment of the professionalism of a distinct occupational group:

1. Prestige and status (high and rising demand for services; substantial monetary rewards; respectability and a recognized place in the upper regions of the occupational ladder);
2. Ethical dispositions (orientation towards the public interest, loyalty to the occupational group; commitment to a lifelong career, collegial behavior, occupational solidarity; responsibility for the quality of one's work);
3. Expertise (high quality education; exposure to practice, theoretical knowledge, specialized skills, sound judgment, mastery of techniques);
4. Professional autonomy (controls on recruitment, training, professional guidelines, ethical standards, administrative rules, quality assurance; disciplinary processes);
5. Credentials (degree from accredited tertiary education establishment; professional designation; tested performance; membership in professional associations).

¹ Possession of a skill based on theoretical knowledge; provision of training and education; testing of competence of members; professional organization; adherence to a code of conduct; and altruistic service.

Authors like Worthen and Picciotto have addressed whether evaluation was a profession and used sets of criteria to support this assessment. I am more interested in what we need to do to make evaluation a profession. This takes us to the notion of professionalization or what needs to be done to build a professional status.

What is professionalization?

Concerning the emergence of professions (or the process of professionalization), Neal and Morgan suggest that the United Kingdom and Germany represent two entirely different approaches. In the United Kingdom, professionalization was established from the bottom up, from professional associations towards professional status. In Germany, professionalization happened from the top down: a strong public administration allies with its jurisprudence giving the state control over the definition of professions. I can affirm that, in Canada, professionalization has occurred, in evaluation and elsewhere, according to the UK model. You are in a better position than I am to analyze the situation in Switzerland: is the professionalization impetus bottom up (from practitioners) or top down (from regulators)?

Professionalism is a converge of knowledge, values, attitudes, and behaviour. A professional is person displaying the attributes of professionalism. **What is professionalization? t is a roadmap; it is a journey; it is a collective plan**

to provide special stature and recognition to an activity (here, evaluation) in order to contribute to superior performance of this activity and to the protection of the public who is not equipped to judge the quality of that performance. Professionalism is a state; professionalization is a process.

What are the ingredients of professionalization?

Are you a professional? How do you know that?

Over the past six years that this has been on my radar screen, I have observed that discussions of professionalization have tended to focus on only one aspect: the mechanisms or the tools of professionalization. I want to propose that there are in fact at least five classes of ingredients on this journey of professionalization: ecosystem conditions, mechanisms, change process, resources, and a grounded plan. Here we go.

Evaluation ecosystem conditions

The first class of ingredients on the professionalization journey is the national evaluation ecosystem. This is the set of circumstances that define the current situation and determines whether or not some level of professionalization is advisable and feasible. The key ingredients here are:

- the need for the expertise: is there a demand for quality work in the area considered for professionalization? Without a demand, there is no need for further work.
- the existence of the expertise: is there an identifiable cadre of individuals who practice the expertise in question? There is no point in

attempting to professionalize an activity that is not practiced by individuals who can be found and grouped.

- the perception of a problem: is there an issue in the national evaluation ecosystem that would translate into a need for change? It is my personal conviction that collectives (as opposed to individuals who behave differently) support change only when something hurts. The path through professionalization of evaluation practice is much less likely to take root if the evaluator community is satisfied with its situation, that of the trade, and that of the service to the evaluation client. No pain, no change. So, what's the pain?
- the level of consensus on this problem: is there a relatively high level of agreement on the definition of the problem, its dynamics, and the possible remedies? The more agreement there is, the more likely the evaluation community is to shape a successful professionalization plan.
- the stakeholder groups: are there key stakeholder groups who have clear and strong interests in favour or against professionalization of evaluation? Are they strong? Are they organized?
- the enabling environment: is the environment of evaluation practice supportive of professionalization? Analyzing the environment, you would be interested in institutional structures that have an evaluation mandate, of legislation, policies or regulations that support or hinder evaluation, of academic programs in evaluation, etc.

In my view, it is important to have a good grasp of these ecosystem components so as to answer at least three questions:

1. Is there a need for professionalization?
2. Is it clear and agreed upon within the evaluation community?
3. Are the forces outside of the evaluation community generally supportive of a professionalized evaluation practice?

Mechanisms of professionalization

The second class of ingredients on the professionalization journey is the most commonly talked about one: that of mechanisms.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES – Because a key aspect of professionalism is the protection of the public – rather than the protection of the professional – ethics play an important part in the professionalization process. The development of ethical guidelines is typically an early marker of a will to professionalize a practice. Indeed, several national evaluation societies have developed ethical guidelines. I was not able to find a SEVAL code of ethics.

STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION – The second most common mechanism is the development of a set of standards for evaluation practice. Standards talk to the characteristics of quality work. They are typically stated at the level of principles rather than down into the specifics. Because they provide a framework for the performance of quality work and given the diversity of types of evaluation practice and approaches to evaluation, they can be more difficult to establish than ethical guidelines. SEVAL has adopted (and updated) evaluation standards which appear generally based on the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) that the CES has adopted integrally.

COMPETENCY SCHEME – Then comes the development of a competency scheme as a mechanism of professionalization. Competency frameworks identify the competencies that are required for a professional, competent practice of evaluation. These competencies are not all specific to evaluation in the same way that competencies for other professions are not specific to them: a lawyer ought to be competent at formal writing; the same is true of an evaluator. It is not because a competency is not specific to a profession that it is not important to professional service in that profession. A dozen or so competency frameworks for evaluation practice have been developed over the past 10 or 15 years. SEVAL adopted its own in 2012.

PROMOTION – These are basic building blocks: ethical guidelines, standards of practice, and competency frameworks. But they are meaningless if they are not promoted, known, and used. Thus, communication and training is another mechanism to give life to the building blocks. More generally, professional development as well as academic training are key mechanisms to help practicing evaluators improve their skill set, in all domains of competency, to discover new tools, frameworks, methods, and approaches. Here, the national association (or Voluntary Organization for Professional Evaluation, VOPE) has a clear role in supporting short training events, learned publications, learning circles, research on evaluation, curriculum development, and postgraduate training.

RECOGNITION SYSTEM – Based on the previous four mechanisms, the professionalization process is already in gear. But it is missing a key component: a way to recognize professional conduct of the practice. In recent years, recognition systems have been equated with the

two options that have been tested the most extensively in our evaluation world: peer-reviewing as proposed by the EES and the UKES, and credentialing as offered by the CES. In work that I recently completed for UNEG, I proposed a typology of recognition systems comprising seven categories.

1. Training attendance which may not qualify as a recognition scheme as it entails the simple confirmation that one has attended training.
2. Training completion where assessment of learning and gauging against a set standard is added to simple attendance.
3. Peer-valuing where one's peers pass judgement on a person's competence; it may involve a fair dose of self-assessment as well. The UKES and the EES Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review programs are of this nature.
4. Credentialing is founded on the assessment of one's competence against established competency statements as demonstrated by training, experience, performance of work, etc. Demonstration of competence is typically portfolio- and experience-based.
5. Certification is a more stringent form of verification of competence. Typically, it is exam-based and assessed by a board of recognized authorities.
6. Academic degrees delivered by colleges and universities have an established market in recognizing the level of competence of individuals.
7. Licensing is framed in Law; typically, professional bodies are given legal authority over the recognition of professionals who can practice a certain trade. That recognition can be based on graduation, exams, practicums, internships, etc.

There are pros and cons to each option. My point is that professionalization requires some form of

recognition of individual practitioners to offer value to the world outside evaluation circles. Without a recognition system, the public is left with no method to distinguish trustworthy practitioners and potential frauds.

The ultimate mechanism beyond the recognition system is the discipline board: the logic is that if recognition is extended to a practitioner, it also ought to be possible to take it away. Most if not all licensing-based recognition systems are accompanied by some type of discipline board. In parallel to this policing function, a discipline board could also be given a mediation role – a function that some of you will be discussing this afternoon. This is an interesting idea but one fraught with difficulty in opinion. Here is why. Think of the discipline board first. I suppose that you would admit that the job of a discipline board would be difficult: establishing whether an evaluator has behaved in accordance to the ethical guidelines and practice standards is tough. But it only concerns one side of the relationship – only the evaluator's side. In comparison, a mediation body would have to consider two sides of the relationship (and maybe more) to analyze if all parties have behaved optimally – the evaluator in rendering evaluation services but also the commissioner in defining the assignment and the evaluation manager in overseeing the process and stakeholders in providing information, etc. Because of this complication and unless the purpose of mediation is very soft and constrained with therefore limited utility, I see it as a potential dead end. Also, what problem is mediation supposed to fix? It is not clear to me and it is not clear in my experience dealing on both sides of the evaluation process.

Change process

The third class of ingredients on the professionalization journey is the change process. Professionalizing means changing – from informal to structured, from unorganized to organized, from undefined to explicit – and can therefore be cast within a change management framework. Fortunately, there is a lot of literature and documentation on change management. From it comes the following list of steps that should be considered:

1. Preliminary analysis and context: this involves a description of the current situation; perceptions of stakeholders; problems, issues, concerns, as discussed earlier. Also included are the establishment of a list of stakeholders, their interests, and their positions.
2. Enablers and obstacles: in any change strategy, it is crucial to determine the enablers and obstacles that make the current situation what it is and those that could be reinforced or minimized. This leads to an analysis of the sources of resistance to change and the identification of countermeasures.
3. Planning the actions: based on accessible enablers and obstacles, one plans the actions that will move the force fields in the direction of professionalization, including the mechanisms listed earlier.
4. Monitoring: we know to keep a close eye on a small set of indicators of change including outputs (e.g., dialogue with stakeholders, new competency framework) and outcomes (e.g., number of individuals trained, number of evaluations produced).
5. Reacting: plans require adjustments in pace, sequencing, and even in content based on

the reactions of the stakeholders and the monitoring data.

The change strategy must be commensurate to the capacity to implement it. There is no point in developing a formidable plan if resources (of all types) are not available. That said, developing an open, inclusive, and ambitious (but realistic) plan is also a way to help adjoining partners in the change and professionalization strategy.

Key elements of success in change management are transparency and communication. Secrecy and underhandedness are recipes for disaster in the short or medium term. With transparency and communication, the dynamics of the situation become rapidly clear and can be readily addressed. Another key is the involvement of all parties to a change and the identification of benefits for all that are in excess of the costs associated with any change.

Resources

The fourth class of ingredients on the professionalization journey is resources. To make this simple, you can think of this as money and people time. If it was not clear yet, let me state it: engaging in the professionalization journey requires significant volunteer time and significant money. Of course, how much is needed depends of the completeness of the professionalization path. But just recall how much was required for SEVAL to produce its original and revised standards, and then its practitioner and manager competency frameworks. I don't know how much was required but someone must know and be able to project beyond the current situation down the path that SEVAL and any other national association will take.

Grounded plan

This analysis of the national context and careful change management should lead to a grounded solution or a grounded professionalization plan, one that suits the national context, that reflects the forces at play, and that is commensurate to the resources available. Ideally, in my view, this grounded plan should lead to the deployment of a complete set of the professional characteristics identified by Piciotto and others.

Notice that, so far, I have situated by analysis within the national context. It is indeed easier to analyze, plan, and act within a more homogeneous ensemble than it is to do the same in a highly heterogeneous environment. Thus, a national level of intervention appears appropriate. At least at first.

Now, is it conceivable that there be a path to professionalization on a global scale? Others have done it. From personal experience, I can speak of management consultants (CMCs). The CMC title is recognized worldwide even though it is managed locally or nationally based on criteria and processes that are approved globally. You may have other examples in mind.

IDEAS, the International Development Evaluation Association which is a global association of individual evaluators, has produced a “Code of Ethics” and “Competencies for Development Evaluation Evaluators, Managers, and Commissioners”. These are documents (mechanisms) of international scope. In a sense, the United National Evaluation Group competency framework is also of global reach. Moreover, it is remarkable that all evaluation-related codes of ethics share many considerations. The standards that have been

adopted by some evaluation societies are inspired by the JCSEE work. And existing competency frameworks have significantly influenced each other. In recent work that I completed for UNEG, I compared the UNEG competency framework with four competency frameworks that were issued after UNEG’s and found that, at the micro level of each competency, some 50% of competencies were the same across four or five of these frameworks.

Forging a global professionalization path would not be a small feat but, even if imperfect by lack of firm grounding in a simple context, it would constitute a significant inspiration for national efforts.

What are the benefits, risks and trade-offs of professionalization?

Are you a professional? How do you know that?

Jacob and Boisvert (2010), Piciotto (2011), Evetts (2018) and others have provided useful accounts of benefits and risks of professionalization. Let’s review these quickly.

Benefits

- The construction of a shared identity through common definitions, terminology, references, models, theories, etc.
- The promotion of a positive image with clients and customers who typically prefer to deal with a professional than with an amateur.
- Enhanced evaluation training and knowledge base among evaluators consequent to an invigorated self-realization of gaps and requirements for improvements.

- Post-graduate training influenced by practice and competencies so that emerging professional can more readily find a place in the profession.
- More homogeneous practice of evaluation – which is seen by some as a risk but construed as a benefit in that it allows for better understanding of what evaluators do.
- Improved evaluation quality consequent to enhanced self-awareness and improved training.
- Enhanced utilization of evaluation evidence as a consequence of better managed evaluation processes and more relevant evaluation studies.
- Increased prestige of evaluators who can now refer to a specific set of competencies and capabilities to present their trade.
- Reduced incidence of problematic behavior through improved training and better adherence to standards and guidelines.
- Protection of the public flowing from better framing of evaluators' activity and improved professional capacity.

Risks

- The glorification of the views of a few instead of a consensual perspective if the professionalization process is handled badly and the positions of a small group dominates the conversation.
- Restricted methodological diversity if standards are restrictive and do not allow for innovation.
- Narrowed field again if innovation is not properly valued.
- Rigidly standardized training again if standards are too strict and don't leave room for novel ideas.

- The exclusion of talented practitioners if the professionalization process places barriers to entry that are excessive.
- Putting the interests of evaluators ahead over those of its clients if corporatism takes precedence over the quest for quality.

It seems to me (and to some of the authors I have cited who opined on the topic) that these risks are manageable with an open, transparent, and democratic discussion process.

Trade-offs

As part of a discussion of the need for the professionalization of cybersecurity specialists, the US National Research Council (2013) articulated some trade-offs they saw in professionalizing that may be relevant for our discussion.

1. *Quality versus quantity.* There is a possibility that improvements in quality come at the price of access restrictions resulting from barriers to entry. This is much more likely the case if the professionalization path includes mandatory steps like a requirement for specific training or certification. The CES experience with its credentialing program has rather been that it has acted as a magnet for new practitioners who could now see a professional path to and through evaluation rather than a filter or funnel.
2. *Standardization versus dynamism.* Common curricula or certifications provide a certain level of standardization that help define the field. The tradeoff could be reduced dynamism or innovation in a context of rapid change. We have not observed this negative effect in the Canadian context. The CES competency framework was revised 10 years

after its initial setup. It now includes considerations around inclusion, shared power, and human rights that it did not clarify early on.

3. *Broad versus niche needs.* The National Research Council suggested that professionalization may be warranted in a particular subfield but not in a whole area of practice. This may have been true of cybersecurity but the Canadian experience shows that evaluation can be treated as a whole in professionalization efforts.
4. *Better information for employers versus false certainty.* Official recognition mechanisms offer some ability to gauge job candidates or consultants, but over-reliance on them may screen out some of the most talented and suitable individuals. This is no different than reliance on academic degrees; they tell only part of the story. Employers and commissioners in the Canadian context now routinely make reference to the CES CE designation as an asset or an advantage.
5. *Worker capabilities versus job requirements.* Generic competency-related capabilities do not necessarily match with specific job requirements. For example, an evaluator specialized in qualitative analysis and credentialed may not fit the requirements of a hard-core quantitative outcome evaluation. I contend, however, that professionalization mechanisms don't exist to ensure such match. One ethical guideline of the CES reads "Evaluators should accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge."
6. *Stimulation versus restriction of supply.* Professionalization may increase supply over time as it helps increase awareness and desirability of a profession but it may narrow the pipeline of future candidates if the requirements are dated or excessive.

What has been the CES experience with professionalization?

Timeline

So, given this long premise, what is been the CES experience with professionalization? Here is a timeline of the CES implementation of mechanisms of professionalization. I have to admit that the seemingly strategic evolution of these activities has not always been fully thought through: sometimes, one seizes the moment even if prior analysis did not take you in that direction.

- The CES was founded in 1980.
- Since then, it has held 40 annual conferences which are a key moment of professional exchange and networking.
- It has published the Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation 90 times over 34 years thereby contributing to the diffusion of knowledge in our discipline. The CJPE is now open access as a contribution to the profession around the world.
- The CES and its charitable foundation the CESEF have run the Student Case Competition for 23 years thereby contributing to the initiation to evaluation of more than 1,000 students.
- The CES has created a 4-day introductory seminar that is has been running a dozen times a year in the past 20 years or so. It has also created other short-term professional development activities.
- The CES has maintained an active website since 2001.
- For some five years, the CES has been running an online mentoring system.

- In 1994, the CES adopted the JCSEE standards as its own; the CES sits on the standard management board.
- Ethical guidelines were established and adopted in 1995. They are under revision now.
- In 2005, a survey of members documented the appetite for some professional recognition system.
- In 2008, the CES adopted a set of 49 competencies required for the practice of evaluation in Canada (we are not imperialistic about them) after a long consultative process. Several universities members of the Consortium of Universities for Evaluation Education (founded in 2008) have used the CES competency framework to design their graduate programs in evaluation.
- In 2010, the Credentialing program was launched.
- In 2014, the CES finally adopted a definition of evaluation.
- An evaluation of the CE program was conducted in 2015 which led to the reconsideration of some program building blocks.
- In 2017, the CES launched an online training institute to support professional development for members located all over the large geography of Canada.
- The 2008 competencies were revised in 2018 and reduced to 36 with tighter language and new notions incorporated.
- Since 2006 when the decision to develop the credentialing program was made by the

Board of Directors, the CES has used the CE as a basis for much of its strategic planning.

Credentialing program

What sets the CES apart in its professionalization path is the Credentialed Evaluator (CE) program. It is the only one of its kind in the world and it has been in operations for almost 10 years.² It differs in focus from the EES/UK Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review process which is centered on a self-assessment. Here are the key parameters of the CES CE program.

- It is a voluntary program. There is no legal or regulatory requirement to obtain the CE designation in order to practice evaluation.
- As of August 2019, 441 had been given the CE designation.
- The program aims to promote ethical, quality, and competent evaluation in Canada.
- The requirements are two full-time equivalent years of evaluation experience, a post-graduate degree in any discipline or a post-graduate diploma in evaluation, and a dossier demonstrating how the applicant's experience and training demonstrates their competence in the 36 evaluation competencies of the CES.
- The dossier is reviewed by two members of the Credentialing Board who are seasoned evaluators recognized by their peers.
- The CE holder must accumulate 40 hours of learning relevant to their professional path as

² The Japanese Evaluation Society has a "Certified Professional Evaluator" 6-day training program leading to an exam; 585 certified as of September 2018. It also has a "Certified Advanced

Evaluator" portfolio-based program; 16 certified as of September 2017.

an evaluator over three years and report on them.

The program was developed between 2006 and 2008 following a large-scale survey of evaluators and commissioners conducted in 2005 which showed an appetite for some way to identify themselves as professional evaluators and to identify professional evaluators for hiring and contracting. From the point of view of the CES, the objectives of the credentialing program went beyond this market response as it was seen as a way to better define the profession, to structure the activities of the CES itself, and to influence the quality of practice.

The independent evaluation conducted by the Claremont Evaluation Centre (affiliated with the California Claremont Graduate University) in 2015 generally confirmed that the CES CE program was moving toward the achievement of its objectives. It also identified some risks to progress and recommended various actions as countermeasures. The CES expects to commission another evaluation between 2020 and 2022. Some in Canada support that, based on the success of the CE program that is aimed at relatively new evaluators, we should create an advanced Certified Professional Evaluator program; that was identified as a next step as early as 2006 but it has not taken shape yet.

In 2015, Jean A. King wondered why the CE program was the success that it seemed to be. She identified five “specific considerations”:

1. the exercise of caution when using evaluator competencies to structure a credentialing program;
2. the importance of a perceived need for or value of a credential;
3. skillful attention to milieu;

4. finding qualified and committed people to develop and manage the program;
5. ensuring that all stakeholders, including those outside the profession, are involved.

In my view, the CES CE program has been a success so far but certain obstacles were met along the way. Here are seven:

1. The initial idea of the credentialing program was received with mixed reviews (Dumaine, 2015): a majority was non-committal, many were favourable, but a sizeable and loud minority was critical. A slow process of listening and planning was implemented from 2006 to 2008 to address the critics. In 2015, the evaluators of the CE program had a hard time finding vocal critics that I insisted they talk to as President of the CES at the time.
2. It is difficult to ensure that sufficient and varied training is available to support professionals in attempting to obtain their credentials and to maintain their competencies.
3. The accreditation model chosen by CES suits beginner professionals, but experts should be recognized through certification rather than accreditation, a step which has not yet been undertaken by CES.
4. Certain organizational sub-cultures are sufficiently strong to become self-sufficient or, at the very least, to reduce the need for professional titles. In Canada, this is currently the case in the federal public service.
5. A circular dynamic exists where the interest of evaluators for professional designation is fed by the professional recognition of the profession by its users (employers, ordering parties) but that this recognition requires sufficient critical numbers of credentialed professionals. I think that we now have

reached a sufficient critical mass but it has taken several years to achieve this.

6. Established professionals are less likely to feel the need for formal professional accreditation but their participation is necessary.
7. CES has created and implemented a professionalization strategy thanks, mostly, to the volunteering efforts of a large number of its members. This type of model is constrained because volunteer energy is limited.

Toward the internationalization of the evaluation profession?

By now, you may have gathered that I am a proponent of the internationalization of the evaluation profession. It is true that there are many evaluation approaches and that the purpose of evaluations can freely navigate the waters of accountability, learning, and criticism. But we nonetheless all aim for the development of credible, reproducible, independent, and useful (in varying degrees of insistence) evidence which helps the assessment of initiatives in support of social progress in one form or another.

I have attempted to demonstrate that national plans toward professionalization are the building blocks of the enterprise. But I also think that international tools and mechanisms would be welcome if only in support of national endeavours. So, in addition to the questions that you will debate today as regards SEVAL and Switzerland, I will leave you with the following questions:

- Should we entrust IOCE and EvalPartners with the next stages of JCSEE work given that JCSEE appears a little out of breadth and that

it would be good to have “evaluation” standards rather than “education evaluation” standards?

- Should we entrust IDEAS with the development and revision of minimum competencies that would take into account the work done by several VOPEs and UNEG?
- Should we adopt the CES CE as an international marker of individual professionalization given that it is the only open and functioning model that we have?

Are you a professional? How do you know that?

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