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### Unit 9

### Formulating Outcome-Based Evaluation of Needs Assessment Report for Stakeholders

Introduction

At the outset of this course, you were introduced to the action learning knowledge base on the public needs assessment and planning processes representing the contextual gap between the present conditions or situation occurring within the community of interest and what ought to have been occurring to ensure the best possible services, programs, or projects for those whose needs-based issues are at stake. Also, you learned that the needs assessment planning process is that measurable instrument used in determining the measurable action that can foster desirable systems changes to bridge or fill that gap. However, without a results-based accountability instrument and performance reporting framework, there can be no way of determining whether that contextual gap has been bridged and its measurable outcomes been attained.

Moreover, as an undergirding centerpiece, you have also learned that in conceptualizing the measurable action, the needs assessment and planning processes provide a comprehensive framework for determining action intervention and service or program use patterns in facilitation of an action-oriented research project. However, crucial to the facilitation of the public needs assessment and planning process that can impact the action-oriented research project is the delineation of the positionality of research facilitator. Also, because the central focus of this course is on the public aspect of needs assessment planning projects, it is important to understand its ethnographic implications.

Moreover, your future participatory action research dissertation study includes you as a member of a team that works to find a solution to a public problem or gaps in service, program, or project use patterns within the public domain. Participatory action research builds on ethnography as one component of the research model. And that is another reason to understand ethnography as a qualitative research methodology. Ethnography has its roots in a number of disciplines, and each adds depth and richness to the research design.

Thus, throughout this course, you have been exploring the various components of public needs assessment and planning processes and have learned a great deal about how gaps in service, program, or project use patterns can be bridged to effect positive systems changes. In bridging those gaps, the components of public needs assessment and planning processes may require any of the following plans: proximate or short-term, ultimate or long-term, and proximate-ultimate or multileveled strategic planning. The outcome-based evaluation (OBE) is the accountability instrument that can provide the framework for determining the impacts of such plans on program or project use patterns.

Even in the previous unit, you also explored how KTA intervention framework or other suitable frameworks can be used in facilitation of your needs-based action learning of program or project planning, implementation, monitoring, and performance evaluation processes. The OBE serves as the program or project inquiry blueprint in ascertaining to what extent the program's implementation has facilitated a successful outcome. In other words, without the OBE, how do you really know the extent to which the public needs assessment and planning processes or perhaps the KTA interventions have been effective or efficient in bridging the gaps in service, program, or project use patterns for the positive systems changes? And without the OBE, how sure are you that all of the relevant needs-based data have even been well collected to give accurate data representation of the SAF?

Also, to what degree of certainty have you really determined this SAF as constituting the needs-based issues? How valid and reliable have the various analytic tools been efficient and effective in helping gather the relevant data in delineating the SAF? Under which condition of certainty is the etiological analysis of the needs assessment planning processes conducted presents a clear delineation of the assumptions that undergird the needs-based SAF? And, how certain is such etiological analysis of the needs assessment planning processes embedded in theory-driven outcomes or theoretical foundations of program use patterns? How have such theory-driven outcomes informed the conceptualization of measurable action plan in shaping the overall goal, outcome objectives, process objectives, program or project hypotheses, and activities? All of the above action learning questions thus echo the uncertainty that may surround the public needs assessment and planning processes.   
  
That is to say that, no public needs assessment and planning processes may run a completely smooth course. In fact, there may be ups and downs, uncertainties, challenges, efficiency or effectiveness issues with service, program or project use patterns, and perhaps successes, or it could be that things just did not go as well planned. The important points are that progress, results-based accountability, and performance reporting, however slow, should continue to be made as the undergirding principles. Sometimes, the progress, results-based accountability, and performance reporting are just not as obvious, which is why methods of evaluating different stages and activities in ways pertinent to the service, program or project use patterns are important. For example, in some situations, it is subjective and not so much measured as could have been observed.

In other cases, we can quantify our planned action goals or create milestones to measure progress. For example, if our planned action goal is to introduce fresh healthy foods to all 78 markets in an area of a city, an interim or short-term goal might be 25 stores in the first year. We can measure our progress against that. An action plan might lay out steps to reduce community crime through better public awareness. A survey taken at certain points in the project timeline could tell us how well our awareness program is being understood by the public. Again, we can take a snapshot in time of our progress. In this unit, we will consider some of the ups and downs, uncertainties, challenges, efficiency or effectiveness issues with service, program or project use patterns, and the ethnographic implications, as well as the OBE methods we can use to assess our public needs assessment and planning project's progress.

Finally, remember that all of the action learning issues covered in this course are intended to introduce you to the process of exploring the needs-based patterns of service, program, or project use gap that may serve as the backbone for your future action research dissertation project in the DPA program. For this, the public needs assessment and planning course is a starting point of exploring possible needs-based patterns of service, program, or project use gap in preparation for your ultimate action research dissertation project.

Currently, because the scientific merit action research template (SMART) form is the research plan that serves as the skeleton for your dissertation proposal in the DPA program, it may be good to get introduced to it. Being introduced early to the SMART form will not only help you better acclimate yourself on what will be expected of you at the dissertation phase, but also you could perhaps start reflecting on the relevant questions noted on some of the sections as lenses to help shape your public needs assessment and planning project.

Objectives

To successfully complete this learning unit, you will be expected to:

* 1. Explore results-based accountability instrument and performance reporting framework used in determining the measurable outcome of systems changes.
  2. Assess methods of performance evaluation and outcomes measurement for public needs assessments.
  3. Compare methods used to evaluate uncertainties, challenges, and efficiency or effectiveness issues with service, program, or project use patterns, success, and progress in a public needs assessment project.
  4. Explore outcome-based evaluation applications and implications on public needs assessment and planning processes, theory-driven outcomes, and action-oriented research projects.

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[**What Is Ethnography?**](javascript:void(open('http://media.capella.edu/CourseMedia/DPA8428/media_ethnography/wrapper.asp',%20'newWin',%20'menubar=0,%20toolbar=0,%20location=0,%20status=0,%20left=0,%20top=0,%20screenX=0,%20screenY=0,%20width=1000,%20height=700,%20resizable=1,%20scrollbars=1'));)

**Readings**

**Note**: Be certain to read the unit introduction, as it may contain important information and references pertaining to this unit's content and activities.

Use your Designing and Managing Programs text to complete the following:

* 1. Read Chapter 9, "Designing Effectiveness-Based Information Systems," pages 161–188.
  2. Read Chapter 11, "Impact Program Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing," pages 203–212.

Use your Conducting Needs Assessments text to read Chapter 10, "Reporting the Findings," pages 171–179.

Use the Capella library to read Coryn, Noakes, Westine, and Schröter's 2011 article, "[A Systematic Review of Theory-Driven Evaluation Practice From 1990 to 2009](http://aje.sagepub.com.library.capella.edu/content/32/2/199)," from American Journal of Evaluation, volume 32, issue 2, pages 199–226.

**Multimedia**

Ethnography is a method of research design that is intended to address a problem in depth and detail. It forms the basis for many of our public needs assessment projects.

Complete the following:

* 1. Click **What is Ethnography?** to understand more about this important research methodology and project process.
  2. Click **Applying What You Have Learned**about how you can leverage the work you have done throughout this course and ways by which the knowledge base acquired and competency developed can enhance your future action research dissertation project.

**Article Search**

In preparation for the discussion in this unit, locate two [peer-reviewed](http://capellauniversity.libguides.com/peerreview) articles that used ethnographic and OBE approaches and can support your public needs assessment project. You can use the [Databases A–Z](http://capellauniversity.libguides.com/az.php) library guide for searching the articles.

You will use this [Scientific Merit Action Research Template (SMART) Form](http://campustools.capella.edu/redirect.aspx?linkid=3611) in a reflective action learning exercise in the discussion later in this unit.

### U9 assignment 1

### Final Paper Submission

In this final paper, you should make sure that you present your argument in a clear, logical, and interesting way. Keep in mind that it is the final paper that those who will make final decisions about whether to approve your proposal will read. As an inclusive component, be aware that you are also serving as action learning facilitator for the project that includes public and government representatives trying to solve a societal problem that impacts a local community. Complete the following for the proposed project:

* 1. Describe the needs-based issue, its scope as implicative of a public problem, and the extent to which resolution of such needs-based issue is realistic to be achieved.
  2. Describe the problem concept and levels of measurement at which the needs-based situation can be defined.
  3. Describe the etiological analysis and SAF of the needs-based issue or problem concept.
  4. Include the identification of the factors that cause (etiology) the problem.
  5. Include an estimation of the numbers affected (target population).
  6. Conduct a force field analysis to evaluate the systemic forces that can impede the change efforts.
  7. Conduct a SWOT analysis to assess the current public needs assessments and A/CB in addressing the complexity of the problems.
  8. Provide an analysis of the theoretical foundations of needs-based program planning processes.
  9. Provide a clearly defined description that outlines the conceptualization of a measurable action plan.
  10. Include a determination of the strategic planning process to the specific community issue.
  11. Evaluate the theories and research methods used in public needs assessment processes.
  12. Provide a rationale that justifies action and the expenditures of resources.
  13. Consider the stakeholders you would reach out to, to make sure there is good community, organization, and government participation on the NAC or NAT.
  14. Determine community needs-based data gathering sources to support the project, which must include quantitative and qualitative data to be gathered and how it will be gathered by designing effective instruments or tools such as survey instruments (at least five questions each for one quantitative survey instrument and one qualitative interview questionnaire required) for use in gathering data sources.
  15. Describe a hybrid framework design for use in the public needs assessment and A/CB processes.
  16. Describe an outcome-based method to evaluate the steps and activities in the action plan to gauge success.

The following headings represent the types of content that need to be covered in your final paper submission. Although the above list has been incorporated into the content description below, you should ensure they are all suitably well addressed:

* 1. **Introduction**. (0.5–1 page): This subsection provides a summary statement of the problem concept and A/CB processes. It identifies an area of interest for your public needs assessment planning process that can support your action-oriented research project. It should not be more than 2–3 paragraphs. It usually is written after the rest of the section is completed. It tells the reader what the problem is, who is affected by the problem, the numbers affected, the geographic area you are targeting, and why the action should be taken.
  2. **Nature of the Problem Concept, Scope, and Measurement Levels**. (1.5– 2 pages): In this subsection, you will be expected to discuss what is already known about the problem and A/CB building needs-based situation. Here, you will include clarifying statements (definitions), needs-based measurement levels (normative, felt or perceived, expressed, and comparative or relative), national, state, and local statistics, incidence and prevalence figures, and trends if they are available and appropriate to your description.
  3. **Hybrid Framework for Etiological Analysis and Situational Analysis Framework**. (3.5–5 pages): In this subsection, you will be expected to apply an etiological analysis approach in explaining how the SAF implicates change management efforts of your action-oriented public needs assessment project. Therefore, it is imperative that in this section, you conduct a force field analysis to evaluate the systemic forces that can impede the change efforts. In addition, application of the variations of the needs-based analytic tools such as SWOT, PEST, PESTLE, STEP, or SLEPT can be used to conduct the etiological analysis.

However, the combined needs-based analytic tools such as the Lovebug analytic diagrammatic framework can rather be used to aid in assessing and gathering relevant data that structure the SAF on the current public needs assessments and A/CB in addressing the complexity of the problems. Whichever needs-based analytic tools are used, they should be described with perhaps a mind-map or concept illustration.

Furthermore, based on the review of the literature searched, be sure to provide a rationale and justification as to which identified problem-solving model is perceived to be appropriate in facilitation of the etiological analysis you would use in tackling the SAF for your public needs assessment project.

* 1. **The Target Population**. (1.5–2 pages): In this sub-section, you will discuss the specific population (demographic characteristics), stakeholders you would reach out to, to make sure there is good community, organization, and government participation on the NAC or NAT, and the geographic area on which you will focus. A/CB data that you will present will help to put your presentation of the problem concept (subsection "Nature of the Problem Concept, Scope, and Measurement Levels") into a local context. At the conclusion of this subsection, you should make a summary statement that allows the reader to know exactly who (stakeholders) you are going to recruit into the program, how many are affected, and where the program will be targeted.
  2. **Theoretical Foundations of Needs-Based Program Planning Processes**. (2.5–3 pages): In this sub-section, you will discuss in some detail what you have learned about the problem from the research literature. Remember that the review of the literature is imperative to aid in identifying the theoretical foundations for designing of the needs-based program planning processes, coupled with the description of the problem-solving model, and their responsive project intervention strategies. After reviewing the research literature, you will focus on the researcher's underlying theoretical understandings of the problem and A/CB building needs-based situation in a way that help the reader to understand etiology as well as the basis for the intervention.

Now, based on the review of the literature, identify and describe at least two levels of theoretical foundations constituting the (a) theory of and (b) theory in that can serve as the backbone of your action-oriented public needs assessment project. Be sure to integrate at the minimum 10 peer-reviewed articles to demonstrate how the two levels of theories are in alignment with their unique planning processes and can support your action-oriented public needs assessment project to bring about systems changes.

* 1. **Rationale for Action** (1.5–2 pages): In this subsection, you will make the case that it is worthwhile to expend resources in the facilitation of the change efforts on the proposed needs-based A/CB program. You can do this in a number of ways depending on the nature of the program concept. You might argue that the problem is such that it needs to be dealt with within a framework of justice or fairness. You might choose to make the case that it will be more cost-effective to implement this intervention by preventing a later, more costly intervention (for example, outpatient counseling now versus possible in-patient treatment or incarceration at a later time). Or, you might argue the case in terms of an investment in human capital, enabling the recipients of your services to more fully participate as productive members of the community.
  2. **Description of Conceptualization of Measurable Action Plan: Hybrid Framework for Appropriate Intervention Strategy**. (3.5–5 pages): In this subsection, you will provide a hybrid framework for appropriate intervention strategy in the form of a model for strategic planning similar to what is depicted on page 41 of your Bridging the Gap Between Asset/Capacity Building and Needs Assessment text. Determine strategic planning process to the specific community needs-based issue. Thus, the model for strategic planning combines the essential components of force field analysis and SWOT analysis conducted in subsection "Hybrid Framework for Etiological Analysis and Situational Analysis Framework" into a hybrid framework for appropriate intervention strategy.

In addition, using the assigned readings in this unit and the Unit 7 readings from your Designing and Managing Programs text, you must incorporate the revised design of the conceptualization of measurable action plan you intend on using for your public needs assessment project. Be sure that this includes descriptions of the overall goal, three outcome objectives and three corresponding process objectives, as well as their realistic program or project hypotheses, and their suitable program or project activities. Finally, be sure to include a description of an outcome-based method to evaluate the steps and activities in the action plan to gauge success.

* 1. **Summary or Conclusion**. (About half a page): This section summarizes each of the areas covered in this assignment. Start with a restatement of the purpose statement (verbatim) and tie this to the areas covered. It is a variation of the first section, the Introduction. Remember that in the Introduction your audience has no knowledge of the problem concept or population you intend to address, and by the time you write the Summary, you have walked them through the logic of your proposed public needs assessment program planning intervention. These two sections should reflect these different perspectives.
  2. **References**. (2 pages): This section should list all sources used in the body of the paper adhering to current APA formatting and style. It should be noted that you are expected to communicate effectively in the body of the paper through the appropriate application of grammar, punctuation, spelling, writing mechanics, and professional tone.

**Note**: All page suggestions assume double spacing with 1-inch margins all around and a standard font size as specified.

**Other Requirements**

Your paper should meet the following requirements:

* 1. **Written communication**: Written communication should demonstrate effective academic analysis.
  2. **Resources**: Remember to support your project analysis at each level with peer-reviewed literature in addition to the text. A minimum of 20 peer-reviewed sources should be used to support your analysis.
  3. **APA format**: Be sure to format your paper using current APA style and formatting guidelines.
  4. **Length of paper**: 15–20 pages, excluding the cover page and references list. Table-generated action plan and data gathering instruments can be presented in an appendix and are not included in the page limit.

Submit your final paper as a Word document in the assignment area.

Folder icon**Portfolio Prompt**: You are required to save this learning activity to your ePortfolio, in the Professional Showcase binder.

**Note**: Your instructor may also use the Writing Feedback Tool to provide feedback on your writing. In the tool, click on the linked resources for helpful writing information.

### U9 -1

### Exploring Outcome-Based Evaluation Options

Using the two peer-reviewed articles on ethnographic and OBE approaches you identified in the this unit's study, provide a summary of your reflective action learning assessment on the validity and accuracy of the evaluation methods used in terms of the progress, results-based accountability, and performance reporting.

Be sure to also consider some of the ups and downs, uncertainties, challenges, efficiency, or effectiveness issues with service, program or project use patterns, ethnographic implications, as well as the intended OBE methods to assess your public needs assessment and planning project's progress.

Finally, because the scientific merit action research template (SMART) form is the research plan that serves as the skeleton for your dissertation proposal in the DPA program, perhaps, it may be good to get introduced to it. Being introduced early to the SMART form will not only help you better acclimate yourself on what will be expected of you at the dissertation phase, but also you could perhaps start reflecting on the relevant questions noted on some of the sections as lenses to help shape your public needs assessment and planning project.

For this, also provide a summary of how the action learning activities and knowledge base on public needs assessment and planning, can be helpful when it is time to complete sections of the SMART form for your dissertation proposal in the DPA program. For this discussion, you are not required to complete the SMART form itself now. However, to acclimate yourself on what will be expected of you at the dissertation phase, just indicate how knowledge developed in this course can be translated to help address specific sections of the form.

| Final Paper Submission Scoring Guide Grading Rubric | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Non-performance** | **Basic** | **Proficient** | **Distinguished** |
| **Provide introduction applying stakeholder identification and process planning to a specific community issue. 5%** | Does not provide introduction applying stakeholder identification and process planning to a specific community issue. | Provides introduction applying stakeholder identification but not process planning to a specific community issue. | Provides introduction applying stakeholder identification and process planning to a specific community issue. | Provides introduction and examines the application of stakeholder identification and process planning to a specific community issue, providing rationale for stakeholder identification and process planning decisions. |
| **Plan all stages of an effective public needs assessment and target population for possible future implementation. 5%** | Does not plan all stages of an effective public needs assessment and target population for possible future implementation. | Plans stages of an effective public needs assessment and target population for possible future implementation but does not account for all stages of the plan. | Plans all stages of an effective public needs assessment and target population for possible future implementation. | Plans all stages of an effective public needs assessment and target population for possible future implementation, providing support for plans from the literature and comparative examples. |
| **Describe hybrid framework of etiological analysis to explain situational analysis framework and rationale supporting the problem-solving model of public needs assessment project. 5%** | Does not describe hybrid framework of etiological analysis to explain situational analysis framework and rationale supporting the problem-solving model of public needs assessment project. | Describes hybrid framework but applies non-validated etiological analysis to explain situational analysis framework and rationale supporting the problem-solving model of public needs assessment project. | Describes hybrid framework and applies validated etiological analysis to explain situational analysis framework and rationale supporting the problem-solving model of public needs assessment project. | Synthesizes and describes hybrid framework, applying validated etiological analysis to explain situational analysis framework and rationale supporting the problem-solving model of public needs assessment project. |
| **Use variations of needs-based analytic tools to assess potential systemic forces of public needs assessment project planning. 5%** | Does not use variations of needs-based analytic tools to assess potential systemic forces of public needs assessment project planning. | Uses variations of needs-based analytic tools but does not assess potential systemic forces of public needs assessment project planning. | Uses effective variations of needs-based analytic tools to assess potential systemic forces of public needs assessment project planning. | Uses effective combined variations of needs-based analytic tools to assess potential systemic forces of public needs assessment project planning, and provides support for the arguments. |
| **Define methods of assuring appropriate public involvement and enhanced public value in the needs assessment project. 5%** | Does not identify methods of assuring appropriate public involvement and enhanced public value in the needs assessment project. | Identifies but does not define methods of assuring appropriate public involvement and enhanced public value in the needs assessment project. | Defines methods of assuring appropriate public involvement and enhanced public value in the needs assessment project. | Evaluates and defines methods of assuring appropriate public involvement and enhanced public value in the needs assessment project, and provides support for the arguments. |
| **Develop theoretical constructs from the scholarly literature and research methods used to support the needs assessment project. 10%** | Does not develop theoretical constructs from the scholarly literature and research methods used to support the needs assessment project. | Develops theoretical constructs and research methods used that is not supported by scholarly literature to support the needs assessment project. | Develops theoretical constructs from the scholarly literature and research methods used to support the needs assessment project. | Analyzes, synthesizes, and compares theoretical constructs from scholarly literature and research methods used to support the needs assessment project. |
| **Design an effective survey instrument to gather information necessary to inform the needs assessment project. 10%** | Designs an ineffective survey instrument that does not gather information necessary to inform the needs assessment project. | Designs a partially effective survey instrument that does not appear to gather all information necessary to inform the needs assessment project. | Designs an effective survey instrument to gather information necessary to inform the needs assessment project. | Designs an effective survey instrument that gathers information that is not yet obvious as necessary to inform the needs assessment project. |
| **Analyze qualitative processes and design interview questionnaire used in gathering data that support public needs assessment projects. 10%** | Does not analyze qualitative processes and design interview questionnaire used in gathering data that support public needs assessment projects. | Identifies but does not analyze qualitative processes and design interview questionnaire used in gathering data that support public needs assessment projects, missing some key components. | Analyzes qualitative processes and designs effective interview questionnaire used in gathering data that support public needs assessment projects. | Analyzes, synthesizes, and applies qualitative processes and designs effective interview questionnaire used in gathering data that not yet obvious as necessary to inform public needs assessment projects. |
| **Assess asset/capacity building needs-based situation, problem concept definition, scope prioritization, and measurement levels, reflecting diverse public values in public needs assessments. 10%** | Does not assess asset/capacity building needs-based situation, problem concept definition, scope prioritization, and measurement levels, reflecting diverse public values in public needs assessments. | Identifies but does not assess asset/capacity building needs-based situation, problem concept definition, scope prioritization, and measurement levels, reflecting diverse public values in public needs assessments. | Assesses asset/capacity building needs-based situation, problem concept definition, scope prioritization, and measurement levels, reflecting diverse public values in public needs assessments. | Assesses asset/capacity building needs-based situation, problem concept definition, scope prioritization, and measurement levels, reflecting diverse public values in public needs assessments, and provides researched support for the stance. |
| **Design measurable action plans and hybrid intervention strategy that reflect public values and input into stakeholder decision making. 10%** | Does not design measurable action plans and hybrid intervention strategy that reflect public values and input into stakeholder decision making. | Designs measurable action plans and hybrid intervention strategy that reflect public values and input into stakeholder decision making, but misses key components. | Designs measurable action plans and hybrid intervention strategy that reflect public values and input into stakeholder decision making. | Designs and applies implementable measurable action plans and hybrid intervention strategy that reflect public values and input into stakeholder decision making. |
| **Assess methods of performance evaluation and outcomes measurement for public needs assessments. 15%** | Does not identify methods of performance evaluation and outcomes measurement for public needs assessments. | Identifies but does not assess methods of performance evaluation and outcomes measurement for public needs assessments. | Assesses methods of performance evaluation and outcomes measurement for public needs assessments. | Analyzes methods of performance evaluation and outcomes measurement for public needs assessments with direct application to the selected project. |
| **Demonstrate an academic writing style coupled with effective conclusion and supportive references. 10%** | Does not demonstrate an academic writing style, and the writing contains countless grammatical errors and incomplete arguments, and it lacks effective conclusion. | Partially demonstrates effective academic analysis through writing coupled with conclusion; however, some arguments are incomplete or lack effective support. | Demonstrates effective academic analysis through writing style coupled with effective conclusion. | Demonstrates an academic writing style coupled with effective conclusion and less than one grammatical or APA style error per page. |

**What is Ethnography?**

**Introduction**

When we conduct public needs assessment and planning projects, we are part of the project. Whether our official role is that of a representative of a constituent group, another type of stakeholder, or a government representative, we may be called upon to facilitate the project. Natural leaders arise and you don’t need to have the title of chair to be called upon to take a research position!

**You as an Action Researcher**

Your future participatory action research dissertation study includes you as a member of a team that works to find a solution to a public problem. Participatory action research builds on ethnography as one component of the research model. That’s one reason to understand ethnography as a qualitative research methodology. Ethnography has its roots in a number of disciplines, and each adds depth and richness to the research design. Let’s look at some of the aspects of this lived research experience.

**Anthropology**

Ethnography has its roots in anthropology, the science of human beings. Specifically, the field of anthropology contributes the study of people’s nature, their characteristics, and how these influence their activities. Think about this as the individual’s perspective in a needs assessment project or research study setting.

**Sociology**

A second field that contributes to ethnography is sociology, the science that studies societies, their institutions and relationships. It examines the collective behaviors of organized groups of people. This fits well within what we already know about the organizational impacts on a project or study.

**Human Ecology**

The third branch of science that has a lesser but still profound impact on ethnography is human ecology, which studies the interrelationships and patterns of humans’ response to their environment. It contributes a systems theory approach to ethnography. When we consider our world and its influences in its broadest sense, there are many variables and externalities that impact how a project or study may proceed.

**Individuals**

Humans operate within societies, represented by the intersection between anthropology and sociology.

**Organizations**

Organizations operate within a world that changes how they may approach a problem, noted as the intersection of sociology and human ecology.

**Society and the World**

Similarly, actions of individuals may change based on their place within the world and their personal environment. The intersection of anthropology and human ecology provide this evidence.

**Ethnography!**

At the core, ethnography considers all three levels of influence, individuals, organizations, and society, in relation to the problem being studied.

**Conclusion**

As you think about a public needs assessment project for this course or your future participatory action research, consider the ethnographic implications that may direct the outcome in one way or another. You can then plan to overcome problems and be proactive in your project or study design!

**Credits**

Subject Matter Expert:

Yvonne Kochanowski

Interactive Design:

Mark Bune, Justine Lee

Instructional Designer:

Brian Powers

Project Manager:

Karen Dodd