The Sustainability of Evaluation Capacity Building Interventions: An Exploratory Study

James Wade
Loyola University Chicago

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THE SUSTAINABILITY OF EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING INTERVENTIONS:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

BY

JAMES W. WADE

CHICAGO, IL

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation capacity building (ECB) is a practice that can help organizations conduct and use evaluations; however, there is little research on the sustainable impact of ECB interventions. This study provides an empirical inquiry into the sustainability of multiple ECB interventions. Ten ECB practitioners, identified through snowball sampling, were interviewed. They identified 16 organizational leaders from non-profits, higher education institutions, and foundations that “bought in” to ECB and were at least six months removed from an ECB contract. Analysis of these interviews resulted in a blended empirical and theoretical model that highlights the developmental process of ECB sustainability. This model highlights ECB strategies that were employed to create sustainable evaluation practices within organizations, and the sustainability factors that developed over time to facilitate these practices. Real-world examples of these ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and sustainability factors are described. New ECB strategies not previously identified in the literature emerged, including modeling data conversations and internal communities of practice. Common sustainable evaluation practices are detailed, most notably, use of evaluation findings and policies and procedures for evaluation. Sustainability factors that developed over time throughout the ECB process to facilitate sustainable evaluation practice are also described, including leadership, communication and understanding the benefits of evaluation. This model can help ECB practitioners understand the developmental process of ECB to set expectations over time, utilize new ECB strategies, and leverage links between practices and factors to facilitate sustainable ECB impact.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB)

In an era of increased accountability, organizations are frequently required to use evaluation data to report their outcomes (Dahler-Larsen, 2011). Conducting evaluations and collecting data requires considerable time, resources and expertise that many organizations do not have (Andrew, Motes, Floyd, Flerz, & Lopez-De Fede, 2006; Chinman et al., 2008; Huffman, Thomas, & Lawrenz, 2006; King, 2002; Miller & Lennie, 2005). As a result, organizations with limited resources struggle with evaluation and reporting to their funders (Carman, 2007). This struggle means that organizations are barely able to gather and report data, much less think about it and use it for program improvements and organizational growth (Ensminger, Kallemeyn, Rempert, Wade, & Polanin, 2015; Wade, Kallemeyn, Ensminger, Baltman, & Rempert, 2016). While external evaluations of programs are common and often necessitated by grant-makers, they do little to address the problem many organizations face—they do not have the resources or expertise to use data effectively for programmatic oversight and decision-making.

One solution to this problem is to increase an organization’s evaluation capacity by increasing their ability to conduct evaluations, report outcomes, and use data. Evaluation capacity building (ECB) is defined as “an intentional process to increase individual motivation, knowledge, and skills, and to enhance a group or organization’s ability to conduct or use
evaluation” (Labin, Duffy, Meyers, Wandersman, & Lesesne, 2012, p. 308). The goal of ECB is to teach organizations the knowledge and skills needed to conduct their own evaluations, so that they can understand their impact, report to funders, and use data to improve their programming. ECB is like the old adage, “Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for life.”

Within the evaluation literature, ECB is a relatively new concept, officially entering the evaluation lexicon in 2002, when New Directions for Evaluation published an issue focused on “The Art, Craft, and Science of Evaluation Capacity Building.” This special issue provided the first deep exploration of ECB and offered initial insight into the theory and practice of ECB. Within the issue, ECB was defined for the first time, the first theoretical model of ECB was introduced, and rich case studies of ECB interventions were detailed. The issue concluded by stating,

….the field is beginning to know the ‘practice wisdom’ and ‘rules of thumb’ of experienced ECB practitioners. To get to the level of documenting and understanding more richly and deeply the necessary “practical knowledge” (Nyiri & Smith, 1998), more case studies and conceptual papers are needed. This is now our collective responsibility—to make a home for ECB practice and scholarship within the family of evaluation practices. (Baizerman, Compton & Stockdill, 2002)

publications on ECB models and empirical ECB work (see Table 1; details of this methodology to be described at length in the next chapter).

Table 1. ECB Research 2002-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ECB Models</th>
<th>Empirical ECB Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-2002</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since ECB’s inauguration in 2002, there was at least one published article on either theoretical ECB models or empirical ECB research every year. The published research indicates a strong and consistent presence of ECB, which demonstrates its ongoing importance within the evaluation community.

Further support for the growth of ECB is the inception of the Organizational Learning and Evaluation Capacity Building Topical Interest Group (TIG) within the American Evaluation Association (AEA). AEA is the most prominent American association for evaluation and the
creation of a TIG indicates that an evaluation topic has matured to be a particular interest and
certainty area across a wide variety of evaluation professionals. The TIGs inaugural year was
2006, and has since seen a large growth in membership: from 494 members in its first year to
961 members in 2016. Together, the TIG and publication data are clear indicators of the growth
and importance of ECB within the evaluation community.

By 2012, ECB research grew large enough to necessitate a meta-synthesis of all of the
theoretical and empirical ECB literature (Labin et al., 2012). Meta-syntheses help categorize,
organize, and make sense of a diverse research strand, documenting research findings and
showing where critical gaps in research exist. This meta-synthesis demonstrated that ECB grew
in importance within the evaluation literature and reached a critical mass of empirical research
which necessitated a large-scale review and synthesis.

**Sustainability and ECB**

The results of Labin et al.’s (2012) meta-synthesis revealed many gaps in the current
ECB literature; however, of particular concern was that there were very few follow-up,
longitudinal studies of ECB. Although the research and practice of ECB gained considerable
attention in the evaluation literature, research on ECB was limited to case examples which
inspected the impact of an ECB intervention on organizational beliefs and practices directly after
the ECB intervention (Labin et al., 2012). A vast majority of ECB literature focused on the
short-term; the sustainability of ECB interventions remain relatively unknown. This concern is
especially important because the sustainability of ECB was an explicit goal of ECB from its
inception. For example, many ECB researchers and publications emphasized the importance of
sustainability (Alaimo, 2008; Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2010) and directly
discussed the importance of building evaluation systems and protocols that can be sustained by organizations. Indeed, in the first *New Directions for Evaluation* that focused on ECB, the editors tied ECB to sustainability, stating that “ECB is a context-dependent, intentional action system of processes and practices for bringing about and *sustaining* a state of affairs in which quality program evaluation and its appropriate uses are ordinary and *ongoing*....and its uses *routine*” (Baizerman et al., 2002; p. 109, emphasis by the author). This quote shows sustainable language woven throughout the purpose and definition of ECB, demonstrating that at the onset a focus on sustainable, ongoing, and routine evaluation practices were at its heart. Given sustainability’s importance to ECB, it is imperative that research begins to understand the complex interplay between ECB and sustainable evaluation practices.

Currently, there is only nascent research into the sustainable impact of ECB interventions. A handful of studies followed up an ECB intervention to inspect sustainability but sustainability was not the focus of any ECB research. The preliminary findings suggest that ECB interventions do have a positive, sustainable impact on organizational evaluation practices; however, in every study with a follow up, sustainability is not a central focus. Rather, the follow-up inquiry was an afterthought of many of these articles, briefly mentioned and not thoroughly discussed. Although the initial findings are positive, focused research is needed to begin to understand the sustainability of ECB interventions. For ECB to move forward as a practice it is critical to understand how it impacts organizations in the long-term and whether the evaluation practices ECB teaches organizations are sustained over time.
Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to use exploratory, qualitative methods to fill this knowledge gap and inspect the phenomenon of ECB from a sustainability lens. Specifically, this research aims to understand how ECB interventions can contribute to the sustainable evaluation practices of organizations, identifying and describing the complex interplay between ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and the sustainability factors that facilitate or impede an organization’s growth in evaluation practice over time. The research questions guiding this study are below:

1. What are the sustainable evaluation practices of an organization that underwent an ECB intervention?
2. How do sustainability factors develop and help facilitate these practices over time?

The goal of this research is to provide a baseline understanding of the sustainable impact of ECB interventions on organizations, and offer a preliminary look into how specific ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and sustainability factors relate to each other. ECB strategies are specific teaching and learning approaches that develop the knowledge, and skills necessary to engage in evaluation practice. Sustainable evaluation practices are policies, processes, resources, and attitudes that sustain evaluation over time within an organization (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). Sustainability factors are organizational contexts, structures, and knowledge that sustain change within an organization and facilitate routine evaluation practice. The hope of the author is that this research provides preliminary insight into the sustainable impact of ECB, how factors contribute or detract from this impact, and begin a larger conversation within the evaluation literature about ECB sustainability.
Overview of Study

This study begins by providing a detailed literature review in the second chapter. The literature review begins by exploring the definitions, practitioner roles, supports, barriers, and outcomes of ECB. Next, it details literature related to sustainability and organizational change, showing common factors across literatures that facilitate sustainability. The literature review then describes common ECB models and approaches, highlighting how they emphasize sustainability. It also provides an in-depth exploration of Preskill and Boyle’s (2008) ECB model, which will serve as a guiding framework for this study. Then, descriptions of the ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices and organizational contexts found in the empirical ECB literature is provided. An integrated model for ECB sustainability is proposed at the end of this chapter.

The third chapter provides a detailed account of this study’s methodology. The chapter begins by describing the research paradigm and study design. Next, it describes the sample and the sampling protocol. The chapter then details the data collection procedures, interview protocols, and plans for data analysis, taking into account important aspects of qualitative studies such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The chapter concludes by outlining the limitations of this study.

The fourth chapter provides a detailed account of the study’s results. Each research question is answered in detail and outlined according to a model for ECB sustainability that was created from this research. This chapter provides thick, rich description of the ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and sustainability factors that the sample described, analyzing
how they are interrelated and developed over time. Factors that helped facilitate or impede these practices are also detailed.

The fifth chapter concludes this study, provides a thorough discussion of the findings, and contextualizes the importance of this research within the current state of the ECB literature. The chapter details the implications for future research and practice. It advocates for more research to confirm, deny, and improve the model of ECB sustainability that was the culminations of this research.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the literature on ECB through the lens of sustainability. The purpose of this chapter is to understand how sustainability is discussed in ECB research, models, approaches and practices, with a focus on how theorists and practitioners conceptualize sustainable evaluation practice and the factors that facilitate these practices. First, this chapter defines ECB and discusses its definitions, outcomes, barriers and the roles of ECB practitioners. Second, sustainability is defined and factors that influence it are explored. Third, models, frameworks and approaches to ECB interventions are discussed, keeping a critical eye towards their focus on sustainability. Fourth, empirical ECB literature is explored, connecting the ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices and organizational contexts of the Preskill and Boyle (2008) ECB model. An integrated model for ECB sustainability is then proposed. Key takeaways from this literature review are:

1. Sustainability is not well conceptualized or explored in the ECB literature. Looking across literatures, factors related to sustainability include leadership, culture, communication, understanding benefits, learning, outside supports and alignment to mission and values.

2. One ECB model (Preskill & Boyle, 2008) explicitly addressed sustainability while also providing a list of sustainable evaluation practices, distinct from ECB strategies. Because this model focuses on sustainability and factors that influence it more than
others, it provides the best framework to understand how ECB and sustainability relate to each other.

3. A review of the empirical ECB literature revealed there is little systematic inquiry into the sustainability of ECB interventions and that these follow-ups are neither deeply explored nor a central focus of the research.

4. There appeared to be connections between ECB strategies, organizational contexts and sustainable evaluation practices; however, there is no research within the ECB literature that explores these connections.

5. There is a need to integrate ECB and sustainability frameworks to create a comprehensive view of ECB sustainability. This is done at the conclusion of this chapter.

**ECB**

**Definitions**

At the 2000 American Evaluation Association conference, Milstein and Cotton (2000) narrowly defined evaluation capacity as “the ability to conduct an effective evaluation.” This definition, given at the very beginning stages of ECB research, was limited in its scope, focusing only on evaluation production. ECB began to receive more nuanced attention in 2002, when a *New Directions for Evaluation* produced a special issue dedicated to ECB. Within this edition, Baizerman et al. (2002) provided one of the first, and widely utilized, definitions of ECB. They described ECB as “… the intentional work to continuously create and sustain overall organizational processes that make quality evaluation and its uses routine” (p. 109). At the
outset, we see researchers linking ECB to sustainable evaluation practice—it is not enough to simply have ECB work to create processes for evaluation but it must sustain them, as well.

Approaching ECB from an organizational learning perspective, Preskill and Boyle (2008) offered a nuanced definition of ECB:

ECB involves the design and implementation of teaching and learning strategies to help individuals, groups, and organizations, learn about what constitutes effective, useful, and professional evaluation practice. The ultimate goal of ECB is sustainable evaluation practice—where members continuously ask questions that matter, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and use evaluation findings for decision-making and action. For evaluation practice to be sustained, participants must be provided with leadership support, incentives, resources, and opportunities to transfer their learning about evaluation to their everyday work. Sustainable evaluation practice also requires the development of systems, processes, policies, and plans that help embed evaluation work into the way the organization accomplishes its mission and strategic goals. (p. 2)

With this definition, we see ECB directly related to sustainable evaluation practice, as well as important contextual factors that may facilitate sustainability such as leadership, incentives and support.

Labin et al. (2012) provided a more succinct definition. They conducted a meta-synthesis of ECB literature and created an integrated definition of ECB based on the previous work and definitions of others: “Evaluation capacity building (ECB) is an intentional process to increase individual motivation, knowledge, and skills, and to enhance a group or organization’s ability to conduct or use evaluation.” This definition focuses on both individual and organizational aspects of ECB but does not explicitly appeal to sustainability.

Although each definition of ECB focuses on different aspects of ECB, it is evident by looking at all three definitions that ECB contains the following aspects: (1) it is an intentional process at both the individual and organization level to (2) conduct and use evaluations.
Although not an explicit focus of all conceptualizations of ECB, researchers do suggest that sustainable evaluation practice is an end-goal of ECB.

**Outcomes and Barriers**

ECB has been linked to numerous individual and organizational outcomes (Labin et al., 2012). Common individual outcomes include changes in attitudes, behavior and motivation to conduct evaluations (Ensminger et al., 2015; Garcia-Iarte, Suarez-Balcazar, Taylor-Ritzler, & Luna, 2010; Lennie, 2005; MacLellan-Wright, Patten, Cruz, & Flaherty, 2007; Preskill & Boyle, 2008). Organizational outcomes include: creating an evaluation culture, mainstreaming evaluation, and routinizing practice and procedures for evaluation use and dissemination (Compton, Glover Kudon, Smith, & Eden Avery, 2002; Hoole & Patterson, 2008; Mackay, 2002; McDonald, Rogers & Kefford, 2003; Milstein, Chapel, Wetterhall, & Cotton, 2002). The goal of ECB is to target individuals to affect change at the organizational level (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005; Labin et al., 2012; Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Taylor-Powell & Boyd, 2008). For many, the end goal of ECB is to help an organization become a learning organization, which uses data and evaluation to learn and improve programming (Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2010; Taylor-Ritzler, Suarez-Balcazar, Garcia-Iriarte, Henry, & Balcazar, 2013). The ultimate goal of ECB, then, is to produce a sustained change within organizations so that evaluation and its use becomes ongoing and routine. While sustainability remains a desired outcome of ECB, just nine of studies followed up with ECB interventions to explore sustainability (Bakken, Núñez & Couture, 2014; Campbell et al., 2004; Carden & Earl, 2007; Katz, Sutherland & Earl, 2002; Lennie, Tacchi, Wilmore, & Koirala, 2015; MacLellan et al., 2007; Nagao, Kuji & Love, 2005; Secret, Jordan & Ford, 1999; Taut, 2007); however, it was not
the central focus of the research and it was lightly discussed. As a result, not much is known about how sustainable evaluation practices are over time.

Barriers are also commonly mentioned in the ECB literature. Typical barriers to ECB include time, resources, and leadership buy-in and support (Ensminger et al., 2015; King, 2002; Labin et al., 2012; Taut, 2007). With such busy schedules, an overburdened staff and organization can have difficulty finding time to think about and do evaluation work, which is often not included in their job descriptions (Carman, 2007). Similarly, for resources, organizational staffs have difficulty finding the funds to properly conduct an evaluation and buy software and invest in technology that would aid evaluation strategies (Labin et al., 2012; Mackay, 2002; Miller, Kobayashi & Noble, 2006; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2010). Finally, gaining leadership support is critical to ECB success, and without it, frontline staff may not understand the need for evaluation (Hoole & Patterson, 2008; McDonald et al., 2003; Taut, 2007).

Practitioner Roles

The role of ECB practitioners is complex and multifaceted—the role moves beyond simply being an evaluator and into roles such as evaluation coaching (Ensminger et al., 2015; Wade et al., 2016), technical assistance provider (Arnold, 2006; Chinman et al., 2008; Huffman et al., 2008; Milstein et al., 2002; Stevenson, Florin, Mills & Andrade, 2002; Tang et al., 2002) and teacher (Brandon & Higa, 2006; Cohen, 2006; Compton et al., 2002; Garcia-Iriarte et al., 2010; King, 2002; Taut, 2007), often all at the same time (Arnold, 2006; Cohen, 2006; Garcia-Iriarte et al., 2010; Huffman et al., 2008; Stevenson et al., 2002; Taut, 2007). An ECB practitioner, then, brings experience and expertise in evaluation, and attempts to diffuse this knowledge via common ECB strategies, such as coaching, technical assistance and teaching (i.e.,
workshop facilitator). Furthermore, an ECB practitioner is responsible for creating evaluation
toolkits and dissemination materials (Chinman et al., 2008; Kirsh, Krupa, Horgan, Kelly, & Carr,
2005; Miller et al., 2006; Wandersman, 2013). Thus, the ECB practitioner role is dynamic and
fluid, wearing many hats and engaging in strategies that move beyond expertise in evaluation
and data analysis.

Sustainability

Definitions

Sustainability has its roots in an environmental context—it was a term coined in forestry,
where it meant never harvesting more than a forest produces in new growth (Wiersum, 1995). It
is defined as “maintaining well-being over a long, perhaps even an indefinite period” (Kuhlman
which survives or persists” (p. 193). Constanza and Patten also argued that defining
sustainability is problematic because it is less a question of definition and more a question of
predicting what will last and achieving consensus on what people want to last. Applying an
evaluation perspective to these definitions, sustainability can be seen as the maintenance of
evaluation that persists over a long period of time. Furthermore, Constanza and Patten would
argue that identifying specific evaluation practices that organizations want to persist over time
and measuring their importance relative to each other, is critical for predicting sustainability.

Within the ECB literature, sustainability has limited conceptualization. Preskill and
Boyle’s (2008) conceptualization of ECB discussed sustainability at length and noted that “the
ultimate goal of ECB is sustainable evaluation practice—where members continuously ask
questions that matter, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and use evaluation findings for
More succinctly, Taylor-Ritzler et al. (2013) defined sustainable evaluation practice as “continuous learning about evaluation and use of evaluation findings, frameworks and processes” (p. 192). Sustainability, then, consists of two specific components: (1) ongoing evaluation practice and (2) evaluation use.

**A Sustainability Factors Framework**

Because the ECB literature offers a limited view of sustainability, it makes sense to explore other literatures to understand how sustainability is conceptualized across contexts. This section explores conceptualizations of sustainability and looks at the factors that influence sustainability from the organizational change, program evaluation and ECB literature (see Table 2 below).

These factors are described below:

- **Leadership/Champion** describes leadership support for the change or an enthusiastic and engaged champion of the change within the organization that helps facilitate and sustain the change.

- **Culture** describes an organizational culture that is open to change and makes changes within the organization so it learns to adopt and adapt to the change in positive and responsive ways. It provides opportunities for inquiry and learning about the change.

- **Mission and values** notes that the changes an organization makes must align and help perpetuate the core mission and values of the organization.
Table 2. Summary of Factors Influencing Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Organizational Change</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>ECB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Boyce (2003); Buchanan et al. (2003); Rogers (1995); Kotter (1995)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preskill &amp; Boyle (2008); Compton et al. (2002); Milstein et al. (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Context</td>
<td>Arcmenakis &amp; Bedian (1999); Buchanan et al., 2005; Ely (1990); Rogers (1995);</td>
<td>Scheirer (2005); Savaya, Spiro &amp; Elran-Barak (2008); Savaya &amp; Spiro (2012)</td>
<td>Preskill &amp; Boyle (2008); Compton et al. (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Supports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compton et al. (2002); Milstein et al. (2002)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Communication** describes how well the change is disseminated to staff within the organization, the expectations around the change, and communication of supports and help that can be offered to facilitate and sustain the changes.

• **Understanding the benefits** notes that staff and an organization must see and understand how the change positively impacts and benefits the organization. Within an evaluation context, this can include the change’s impact on programming and procurement of funding.

• **Learning** notes that an organization must be committed to consistent learning about and from the change (i.e. evaluation).

• **Organizational Context** is a broad term that situates the commitment to ongoing evaluation within the broader organizational context, such as a stable external context (i.e., continuous funding and support from stakeholders) and internal context (i.e., stable leadership).

• **Outside supports** denotes that external support an organization might need to sustain evaluation, such as collaboration with funders, communities of practice with other organizations, or procuring multiple sources of funding for evaluation.

**Factors: Organizational change literature.** The organizational change literature explores how organizations create and sustain change in their practice. One of the first theories of organizational change came from Ely (1990), who first identified that factors outside of the organization can influence change. He created eight conditions for change: (1) dissatisfaction with the status quo, (2) sufficient knowledge and skills to implement the change, (3) availability of resources to implement the change, (4) availability of time to adapt and integrate change, (5)
reward incentives and motivation for change, (6) participation across key stakeholders, (7) commitment and “buy-in,” and (8) leadership support. This theory states that there needs to be a good reason for the organization to change (i.e., there is a need for greater evaluation practice), staff needs to be educated on the change (i.e., ECB intervention), and resources, knowing the benefits, buy-in from staff and leadership commitment are all necessary to integrate the change.

Rogers (1995) identified five key factors that affect change. The first is the perceived attributes of innovation, where an organization must understand the benefits of the change, see it as aligned with the organizational mission, and set up systems within the organization to facilitate ease-of-use of the change. Second, the type of innovation is key, which described whether there is flexibility around the change or if it is rigorously implemented with little adoption. Third, there must be open communication channels to disseminate the change within the organization. Fourth, the organizational structures and contexts to support the change is key, suggesting that “buy-in,” champions, and leadership support of the change are necessary; people must work together to move the change forward. The final component is the extent of the change agent’s promotion, which speaks to the length of the change intervention, leadership support for evaluation, and advocacy/communication around the evaluation.

Kotter (1995) created an eight-step theory for organizational change: (1) establishing a sense of urgency, (2) forming a powerful guiding coalition, (3) creating a vision, (4) communicating the vision, (5) empowering others to act on the vision, (6) planning for and creating short term wins, (7) consolidating improvements and producing still more change, and (8) institutionalizing new approaches. These steps can be summarized more neatly: organizations must recognize a need for the change and leadership and staff need to buy-into the
idea of change within the organization, the organization needs to highlight the benefits of the change, communication and systems to facilitate the change must be implemented, and over time this needs to seep into the culture of the organization so that the change sustains.

Furthermore, Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) conducted a review of theory and research on organizational change. The review found that sustainable change required that the changes in practice reflect the mission and values of the organization. They also identified two key barriers to change: stress caused by the change on staff and change occurring in the midst of multiple, pervasive changes within an organization. This suggests that ECB interventions should try to reduce stress and anxiety of staff and may be more sustainable if undertaken during a time of organizational stability.

Boyce (2003) conducted a review of sustainable change within higher education organizations. She found that sustaining successful institutional change was related to emphasizing inquiry and dialogue about the change, continuously utilizing action learning throughout the change and embedding the change in the systems, structure, and culture of an organization. In addition, Boyce found that “compatibility of the innovation with the values and norms of the institution, as well as innovation profitability are significant factors in sustaining an innovation and incorporating it into the on-going life of an organization” (p. 132). Thus, ECB practices should strive to emphasize dialogue between staff, continuous learning about evaluation, and target ways to help embed evaluation into the routine systems and culture of an organization, linking it to profitability (i.e., funding).

Buchanan et al. (2005) conducted a literature review on sustaining strategic organizational change. They concluded the following: (1) sustainability is a process that unfolds
with time in a manner unique to the context of an organization and it is necessary to understand and manage sustainability within this context, (2) sustainability may be vital but maintaining and improving practice can cause staff fatigue and shifts in context can render the practice obsolete, suggesting sustainability may not be practical or desirable in all contexts, (3) the process of sustaining strategic and large scale change is influenced by a range of issues (e.g., political, emotional, managerial), (4) sustainability is time sensitive and fragile and (5) the significance of different contexts and interactions in regards to sustainability cannot be determined a priori. Buchanan et al. also identified factors which support sustainability: (a) change is perceived as central to organizational effectiveness, (b) there is a stable external context, (c) the timing of changes are carefully phased, (d) there is high commitment from staff, (e) the implementation involves communication, support and commitment and (f) powerful stakeholders see themselves as “winners” from the changes. Furthermore, the article advocates that embedding change within the culture of an organization is imperative for sustainability.

From all of the reviews of organizational change, common factors related to sustainability were identified (see Table 2). First, a majority of reviews suggested that sustainable changes in practice must be rooted in the mission and values of the organization and have support from leadership. Second, reviews suggested that sustaining change is highly contextual and these contextual factors may influence whether or not a change in practice is continued. Reviews also noted that communication, leadership support, organizational culture and understanding the benefits (i.e., “winning”, profitability) are critical factors that influence the sustainability of change. Boyce (2003) also identified learning as an important factor to consider.
Factors: Evaluation literature. Turning back to the evaluation literature, recent discussions of sustainability focused on sustainable programming, which can help inform how ECB researchers can begin to think about and frame sustainability. In a review of empirical studies on sustainable programming, Scheirer (2005) concluded that sustainability is constantly ongoing, as “there is no commonly accepted time point for defining when a program is sustained” (p. 334). Additionally, Sheirer identified five factors related to sustainable programs: (1) flexibility and allowing for modifications over time, (2) a “champion” and advocate for the program, (3) a fit between program and organizational mission and values, (4) the benefits are readily perceived, and (5) stakeholders in other organizations provide support.

Savaya, Spiro and Elran-Barak (2008) inspected sustainable programs and found that common factors of sustained programming included (1) procuring multiple sources of funding, (2) leadership support engrained within the structure of the organization, and (3) the prioritization of programs. In a follow up study, Savaya and Spiro (2011) conducted interviews with program staff to inspect sustainability and results indicated that the three biggest predictors of sustainability were a diversity of funding resources, the commitment and support of organizational management, and involvement of the initial funder.

Looking at the evaluation literature, a few key factors emerge as important to producing sustainable change and practice over time. First, all three articles from the sustainable program literature converge to suggest that sustainability is the result of (1) support in the form of leadership or a “champion” of the change and (2) the support of outsiders (i.e., the initial funder, stakeholders in similar organization). Additionally, the evaluation and organizational change research link up well: common mission and values, leadership support, understanding the
benefits of the change and engraining change into culture are all discussed in both research threads. Communication and organizational context, however, were not explicitly identified within the evaluation literature as key to sustainability.

**Factors: ECB literature.** A review of prominent evaluation journals was conducted to identify ECB articles that focused on sustainability. Four articles explored factors related to sustainability in-depth and are detailed here. This review process will be described in greater detail later in the chapter.

Compton et al. (2002), after undergoing an extensive six-year focus on ECB within the American Cancer Society, recommended several principles for sustaining ECB. The authors recommended seeing with “bifocals” and focusing both on the day-to-day demands of evaluation within the organization while simultaneously considering how evaluation services can become regular practice and “the way things are done around here” (p. 53). They also advocated for an organization adopting and operationalizing an evaluation framework, as well as strategies and practices that are responsive and work within organizational structures and culture. They noted that participation, dialogue and collaboration both within and outside the organization is an important aspect of sustainability. Finally, they suggested that creating a culture of meta-evaluation and a culture of guidance where evaluation is done in collaboration with program staff and not just mandated by an evaluation unit.

Similarly, Milstein et al. (2002) documented a plan to create sustainable evaluation practice at the program and agency level. At the program level, authors recommended creating an evaluation coordinator position to lead evaluation, dedicating resources to evaluation, creating logic models and linking them to information systems, actively conducting evaluations, creating
technical assistance directories and providing incentives for staff to engage with evaluation. At
the agency level, the authors recommended developing an evaluation consultation corps of staff
and external evaluation partners, coordinating evaluation policies and practices, training staff in
evaluation, producing and disseminating materials related to evaluation and sustaining leadership
support and commitment to evaluation.

Alaimo (2008) provided a model for actions organizational leadership can take to embed
evaluation into an organization’s culture. The model presented a nine-step process in which the
following components were reproduced in a continuous cycle to be embedded with the culture of
an organization: (a) understanding evaluation, (b) linking evaluation to mission, (c) prioritizing,
(d) planning, (e) budgeting, (f) driving, (g) using results, and (h) realizing benefits.

Preskill and Boyle (2008) looked at the organizational change, organizational learning,
evaluation, and ECB literatures to help identify eight components of sustainable evaluation
practice and four contexts which helped support these practices. The four contexts are leadership
support, systems and structures for evaluation, communication, and culture. The eight
components of sustainable evaluation practice are: (a) evaluation policies and procedures, (b)
evaluation frameworks and processes, (c) resources dedicated to evaluation, (d) use of evaluation
findings, (e) shared evaluation beliefs and commitment, (f) integrated knowledge management
evaluation system, (g) strategic plan for evaluation and (h) continuous learning about evaluation.

The ECB literature suggested there are common factors related to sustainable evaluation
practice. A review of these ECB articles showed that culture and communication were critical
factors to the sustainability of evaluation. Additionally, two-thirds of the articles also identified
leadership, learning, organizational contexts and outside supports as key factors. Absent in the
ECB literature was a discussion of linking evaluation to the mission and values of the organization, as well as understanding the benefits of evaluation.

**Summary**

By looking at the (1) organizational change, (2) evaluation and (3) ECB literature, common factors were uncovered and recommended to produce sustainable change and practice (see Table 2). Leadership, culture, understanding the benefits, alignment to missions and values, and learning were identified by all three literatures as critical factors for sustainability, although alignment to mission and values and understanding the benefits are not well explored in the ECB literature. Other factors, such as communication, organizational context, and outside supports were identified by two thirds of the literatures as key sustainability factors (see Table 2 above). Together, all of these factors appear to play an important role in sustainability and will be necessary to consider when researching how ECB interventions can facilitate sustainable evaluation practice. Finally, it is important to note Constanza and Patten’s (1995) argument that defining sustainability is problematic because it is less a question of definition and more a question of predicting what will last and achieving consensus on what we want to last. In all three sections above, sustainability is described through a series of contexts, structures and practices that are the predictors of “what will last.” Measuring and researching sustainability, then, depends on the identification and measurement of these factors, which can help predict the sustainability of organizational practices and change.

**ECB Sustainability: Theory and Practice**

To understand the connection between sustainability and ECB, it is necessary to look at how ECB has been conceptualized over time by looking at ECB models and approaches.
Understanding the theory and practice behind ECB is critical to understanding how ECB functions and how it might be able to produce sustainable change in evaluation practices over time. What follows is an overview of the models of ECB, followed by a section outlining common practical approaches to ECB. The models section highlights common factors found across ECB models, including strategies for ECB interventions and sustainable evaluation practices. The approaches section will similarly highlight ECB strategies and concerns of sustainability.

Although models and approaches to ECB are similar, a distinction can be made between them. ECB models, while influenced by practice, are primarily theoretical in nature and provide overviews of how ECB can be conducted. They are not step-by-step guides as much as large maps, allowing for multiple ways to conduct an ECB intervention. ECB approaches, in contrast, are step-by-step guides and outline a specific set of rules to follow to conduct an ECB intervention. ECB models are large in scope, primarily rooted in theory and allow for multiple ECB intervention strategies. ECB approaches, on the other hand, are based on practical applications of ECB and provide direct guidance for an ECB intervention.

**ECB Models**

Baizerman et al. (2002) proposed the first working model of ECB and presented ECB as an interplay of ECB themes, concepts, knowledge and skills, across process, practice and practitioner levels. These levels, as well as the themes, concepts, knowledge and skills of ECB were vague and unspecific, demonstrating the lack of knowledge about ECB at that time. They noted that their model was a “preliminary framework open to radical questioning and revision”
(p. 112). Indeed, as ECB research moved forward, the conceptualizations of ECB expanded and began to include multiple factors and strategies.

The ECB literature was reviewed via searches of the seven most prominent evaluation journals from 2002 to the present (American Journal of Evaluation, New Directions for Evaluation, Evaluation and Program Planning, Canadian Journal of Evaluation, Evaluation Journal of Australasia, Evaluation and Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation). 2002 was chosen due to New Directions for Evaluation’s unique focus on ECB during that year, which began the early conceptualization and research of ECB. Searches used key words such as “model,” “framework,” “evaluation capacity building,” “capacity building,” and “organizational learning.” Additionally, references to ECB models within articles were identified, located and included. A total of 12 ECB models were identified.

Looking across each model, common factors and structures within the models were identified to understand common conceptualizations of ECB and how those conceptualizations relate to sustainability. See Table 3 for a list of the models and their common factors. This review seeks to highlight each of these ECB factors, describing how they were conceptualized in multiple models. This review will conclude by describing in-depth the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model—the only ECB model that details specific sustainable evaluation practices that can be identified to help measure and understand sustainability.

**Individual factors.** Individual factors of ECB were discussed in seven ECB models. Individual factors of ECB were variable across models and focused on both individuals who were receiving the ECB intervention and, to a lesser extent, the individual ECB practitioner. The Baizerman et al. (2002) model first conceptualized individual ECB factors as “occupational
orientation and practitioner role” stating that individuals needed to understand core ECB themes, basic ECB concepts, relevant ECB knowledge, and ECB skills and competencies. They did not define or elaborate on any of these concepts.

Table 3. Overview of ECB Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>Individual Factors</th>
<th>Organizational Factors</th>
<th>ECB strategies</th>
<th>Sustainability included in model</th>
<th>Sustainable practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaimo, 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Baizerman et al., 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bourgeois &amp; Cousins (2013)</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cousins et al., 2004</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huffman, Thomas &amp; Lawrenz, 2008</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King &amp; Volkov, 2005</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Labin et al., 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nielson, Lemire &amp; Skov (2011)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preskill &amp; Boyle, 2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor-Powell &amp; Boyd, 2008</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tseng, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As ECB became the focus of more research, these concepts, themes, knowledge, skills, and competencies became better outlined. Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2010) noted individual factors to be individual readiness for evaluation, individual competence to produce an evaluation, and
individual cultural competence and contextual awareness. Labin et al. (2012) noted the importance of individual motivation to engage in ECB, attitudes towards ECB, individual assumptions and expectations of ECB, and the individual growth of evaluation knowledge, skills, and behavior. Nielson, Lemire and Skov (2011) called individual factors human capital and focused on practical aspects such as evaluation knowledge, formal education, experience and training. These conceptualizations suggest that individual factors related to ECB may be a two-pronged construct: affective (i.e., motivation, attitudes, assumptions and expectations) and practical (i.e., conducting an evaluation and evaluation skills).

Huffman et al. (2008) presented a model that focuses on the practical side of ECB individual factors. The model promoted individualized technical assistance and evaluation toolkits to help build evaluation skills. They also noted that ECB is a developmental process that moves linearly: “ECB is often conceived as a linear process in which one first develops the ability of individuals, and as individuals develop more skill, they engage in more and more complex evaluation strategies” (p. 360). ECB is like the old adage, “you have to learn to crawl before you walk.” Indeed, learning complex data analysis does not make sense if outcomes have not been identified and collection methods are not in place.

Taylor-Powell and Boyd (2008) presented an ECB logic model that echoed this sentiment. In this model, an ECB intervention (undefined) first enacts individual change at the cognitive, affective, behavioral and psychomotor levels. Then, individual change leads to team changes (i.e., shared understandings, critical inquiry, team ownership of evaluation, team valuing of evaluation and improved evaluation practice), which leads to program changes (i.e., articulated theory of change, embedded evaluation, stronger outcomes, and evaluation
utilization). Together, these individual, team and program changes help spur organizational change (i.e., shared understandings, increased demand for evaluation, evaluation utilization, evaluative thinking within the organization, and improved learning and performance) which leads to social betterment.

Looking at individual factors across models suggested two important findings. First, individual factors appeared to be two-pronged, with both an affective and a practical component. The affective component appeared to describe internal feelings about evaluation such as attitudes and motivation, while the practical component described actions, skills and knowledge needed to conduct an evaluation. Second, two models suggested that ECB is a linear, developmental process, which starts at the individual level and expands towards organizational levels as the affective and practical individual evaluation factors develop over time.

**Organizational factors.** Organizational factors were discussed in 10 ECB models. This is more than the seven models that discussed individual factors, which shows that ECB is conceptualized more often at the organizational rather than individual level. These models suggested that organizational factors were multi-faceted and variable, taking into account the multiple contexts that organizations can occupy. King and Volkov (2005) presented an ECB model that consisted of three organizational factors: organizational context, structures and resources. Organizational context was comprised of two sub-components—external and internal contexts. External context referred to external accountability pressures and an external environment supportive of change (i.e., communities of practice). Internal context had five sub-components, each relating to creating a positive, supportive environment for evaluation: leadership, an evaluation champion, interest and demand for evaluation, internal support for
change, and sufficient input into decision-making. The second category, structures, contained the following sub-components: a purposeful ECB plan, infrastructure to support evaluation and purposeful socialization into the organization’s evaluation process and peer learning structures. The final category, resources, had two sub-components: access to evaluation resources (i.e., formal training, research data bases) and sources of support for program evaluation in the organization (i.e., fiscal, technological, personal).

Cousins, Goh, Clark, and Lee. (2004) stated that organizational factors consisted of three components: organizational support structures, organizational learning capacity and organizational consequences. Organizational support structures consisted of reward systems, communication structures, and professional development. Organizational learning capacity consisted of the organizational mission, knowledge transfer within the organization, leadership, a culture of experimentation, and teamwork. Organizational consequences consisted of questioning basic assumptions, goal attainment, shared representations, problem solving, and decision-making.

Alaimo (2008) provided a model for actions organizational leadership can take to embed evaluation into an organization’s culture based on 42 interviews with non-profit executive directors. The model presented a nine-step process in which the following components were reproduced in a continuous cycle to be embedded with the culture of an organization: (a) understanding evaluation, (b) linking evaluation to mission, (c) prioritizing, (d) planning, (e) budgeting, (f) driving, (g) using results, and (h) realizing benefits. Organizational learning occurred within the final steps of using results and realizing benefits.
Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2010) saw organizational factors as leadership, learning climate, resources, and organizational context and culture. Organizational context and culture included the organization’s history, relationship with the community it serves, and the way the organization and its employees operate. Nielson et al. (2011) discussed the importance of organizational location (i.e., context) and making evaluation a financial priority while Taylor-Powell and Boyd (2008) noted that organizational environment was a key factor of ECB and consists of leadership, demand for ECB, incentives, structures (i.e., communication, learning and data structures) and policies and procedures. Labin et al. (2012) discussed the importance of organizational resources (i.e., time, staff, and money), evaluation expertise and organizational leadership, practices, culture and mainstreaming. Finally, Preskill and Boyle (2008) noted the importance of organizational knowledge, skills and attitudes towards evaluation, as well as the assumptions, motivations and expectations of ECB. They also discussed the importance of leadership, culture, systems and structures and communication within an organization for facilitating ECB.

A review of ECB models revealed that organizational factors were multi-faceted and well explored within the literature. Common components of organizational factors included the following: leadership, culture, support systems and structures, resources and organizational context. Other, less discussed components included, alignment to mission and values, prioritizing evaluation and communication.

**ECB strategies.** ECB strategies (i.e., ECB practices and activities) were discussed in five models. Huffman et al. (2008) presented ECB strategies on a continuum, from individualized help to immersive, collaborative help. Evaluation toolkits and technical assistance lay on the
individual end of the spectrum, workshops, institutes and fellowships lay in the middle, and immersion and collaborative communities lay on the opposite end. The idea was that ECB followed a linear approach—moving from individualized help with tools and technical assistance toward larger professional development and workshops and ultimately to immersive, collaborative approaches. Taylor-Powell and Boyd (2008) detailed professional development as a key component of ECB, noting ECB professional development strategies to include the following: training, technical assistance, collaborative evaluation projects, coaching/mentoring, and communities of practice. Preskill and Boyle (2008) noted the most comprehensive list of ECB strategies: (a) internship, (b) written materials, (c) technology, (d) meetings, (e) appreciative inquiry, (f) communities of practice, (g) training, (h) involvement in evaluation, (i) technical assistance, and (j) coaching. They noted that for these strategies to elicit the wanted ECB goals and outcomes, a transfer of learning must occur, wherein organizations must apply this learning in other contexts and practice.

**Sustainability and sustainable evaluation practices.** Sustainability was discussed as important within ECB models but only three models explicitly attended to sustainability. A good example of the distinction between discussions versus inclusion can be illustrated by the Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2010) ECB model. When describing the model, the authors noted the importance of sustainability and stated that it is the end goal of ECB; however, sustainability is not represented within the model (i.e., the model is not cyclical and does not include separate factors specific to sustainability). In contrast, Alaimo’s (2008) model was a continuous learning cycle that emphasized ongoing organizational learning about program evaluation. Similarly, the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model was also a cyclical model that emphasized the ongoing,
continuous nature of ECB. This model showed that ongoing feedback and evolution of evaluation knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations, expectations, and assumptions about evaluation are facilitated by the ECB strategies and contexts described in the previous section. Many models discussed the need for sustainability; however, only Alaimo (2008) and Preskill and Boyle (2008) created models that consisted of ongoing feedback loops and continuous learning cycles. Additionally, Labin et al.’s (2012) model discussed the outcomes of ECB as both short-term and long-term/ sustainable. Long-term and sustainable outcomes were lumped together and were conceptualized at the individual level (i.e., attitudes knowledge, skills/behaviors), organizational level (i.e., processes, policies and practices, leadership, culture, mainstreaming, resources) and program level (i.e., evaluation development, implementation and results). While not cyclical, the Labin et al. (2012) model specifically attended to sustainability via outcomes, warranting its inclusion.

Sustainable evaluation practices were included in one ECB model. As discussed in the previous section dedicated to sustainability, factors related to sustainability provide researchers with a way to identify and measure sustainability. Preskill and Boyle (2008) provided the only ECB model that specifically outlined such practices and distinguished sustainable evaluation practices from ECB strategies. The model posited that sustainable evaluation practices are an outcome of ECB and helped build sustainability in organizations. These sustainable evaluation practices are: (a) evaluation policies and procedures, (b) evaluation frameworks and processes, (c) resources dedicated to evaluation, (d) use of evaluation findings, (e) shared evaluation beliefs and commitment, (f) integrated knowledge management evaluation system, (g) a strategic plan for evaluation and (h) continuous learning about evaluation.
The Multidisciplinary Model of Evaluation Capacity Building. Preskill and Boyle’s (2008) Multidisciplinary Model of Evaluation Capacity Building is the only ECB model that attended to sustainability and also identified specific sustainable evaluation practices that directly facilitate it. It this attention to sustainability and focus on sustainable practices (which are unique from ECB strategies) that distinguishes this model from others and warrants further exploration and discussion in this review. There is only nascent conceptualization of sustainability within the ECB literature; therefore, for research on ECB and sustainability to move forward, it makes sense to understand and explore the ECB model that most holistically represents sustainability and the factors that facilitate it. This is not to say this is the best ECB model, only that it is the most helpful model for understanding how ECB may impact the sustainability of an organization’s evaluation practices.

The first half of the model addresses processes of an ECB intervention, which focus on the development of evaluation knowledge, skills and attitudes. Underlying these goals, are the assumptions, motivations and expectations of evaluation within the organization. To facilitate the development of these goals, the model identifies ten common ECB strategies that can be implemented:

1. **Internships** describe participating in a formal program that provides practical evaluation experience for novices.

2. **Written materials** include reading and using written documents about evaluation processes and findings.

3. **Technology** consists of using online resources such as websites and/or e-learning programs to learn from and about evaluation.
4. **Meetings** are an allocation of time and space to discuss evaluation strategies specifically for the purpose of learning from and about evaluation.

5. **Appreciative inquiry (AI)** is using an assets-based, collaborative, narrative approach to learning about evaluation that focuses on strengths within the organization.

6. **Community of practice** is sharing evaluation experiences, practices, information, and readings among staff within the organization and/or between staff at other organizations who have common interests and needs (sometimes called learning circles).

7. **Training** includes attending courses, workshops, and seminars on evaluation.
8. *Involvement in an evaluation process* describes participating in the design and/or implementation of an evaluation.

9. *Technical assistance* is receiving help from an internal or external evaluator on evaluation related work.

10. *Coaching or mentoring* describes building a relationship with an evaluation expert who provides individualized technical and professional support.

For these strategies to elicit the wanted ECB outcomes, a transfer of learning must occur, wherein organizations must apply this learning into other contexts and practices.

The second half of the model identifies eight components of sustainable evaluation practice, which occur when evaluation knowledge, skills and attitudes are transferred to other contexts. These sustainable ECB practices are:

1. *Evaluation Policies and Procedures*

   Organizations develop evaluation policies and procedures that are intended to provide structures, guidelines, and protocols for evaluation that help it become routinized and institutionalized within the organization. This can take many forms such as creating a multitude of internal processes and protocols for embedding evaluation into the daily work practices of employees (i.e., data collection protocols, creation of survey tools). They are distinct from frameworks and processes because policies and procedures deal with specific protocols and practices at the program level; frameworks and processes are at an organizational level and provide guidance for the policies and procedures at the program level.
2. Evaluation Frameworks and Processes

Organization-wide frameworks and processes help guide evaluation practice within an organization. They provide a frame for understanding evaluation within an organization and by doing so help clarify beliefs and expectations about which evaluation approaches and methods may be most appropriate given the specific contexts and purpose for conducting evaluation. Handbooks and manuals can help clarify organizational frameworks for evaluation and outline the practical steps and processes organization members should follow when designing and implementing an evaluation. Guidelines for evaluation practice must be comprehensible and meet the field’s standards for quality evaluation practice, which helps ensure that these frameworks and processes make a long-term, positive impact on the sustainability of evaluation practice within the organization. They are distinct from policies and procedures, which are specific procedures at the program level; frameworks and processes are at an organizational level and provide guidance for the program level procedures.

3. Resources Dedicated to Evaluation

Resources dedicated to evaluation are threefold: financial, personnel and technology. Financial resources include creating a line item for evaluation within budgets or specific strategies for securing evaluation funds from grantors or donors. Evaluation budgets, then, can be used for hiring professional evaluators or others with evaluation expertise, travel costs, memberships to online survey development web sites, refreshments for meetings, or evaluation-related books and materials. Continued funding for ECB should also be included in the budget. Personnel resources include investing in personnel with
evaluation expertise who can champion ongoing evaluation and provide evaluation assistance to staff members. Personnel also need the time and opportunities to engage with and learn from evaluation strategy processes. Third, technology resources are also critical to sustaining evaluation practice. Organizations must be able to provide current, user-friendly, and appropriate technologies for designing and implementing evaluations. Examples of technology resources include computers, printers, software (for document production, data analysis, and communicating and reporting evaluation findings), databases, digital recorders, and cameras.

4. *Use of Evaluation Findings*

For evaluation practice to be sustained, organization members must use evaluation findings for decision-making and action, communicating (both within and outside the organization), and celebrate the uses of their findings. The more that evaluation findings are used to improve programs and make important decisions, the more likely it is that evaluation will become embedded in the organization’s culture.

5. *Shared Evaluation Beliefs and Commitment*

Beliefs and commitment to evaluation must be shared between an organization and its staff. Commitment to evaluation and the belief that it is a useful, necessary practice ensures that evaluation becomes embedded within organizational culture and becomes a part of how an organization accomplishes its goals. As an organization develops an evaluation culture, beliefs should manifest in the ways members talk about evaluation, their ability to ask evaluative questions, their interest in using data for decision-making, and their overall commitment to conducting meaningful, timely, and useful evaluations.
Ongoing conversation about evaluation is critical to keep developing and implementing evaluation strategies, processes, structures, and systems that sustain high-quality evaluation practice. As a result, organizations should be in a better position to respond to the everyday challenges of organizational life that may otherwise interfere with ECB efforts (e.g., employee turnover, competing work demands, limited resources, and external requirements).

6. *Integrated Knowledge Management Systems*

To sustain evaluation, an organization must have the ability to create, capture, store, and disseminate evaluation-related data and documents (e.g., data, data-collection tools, and evaluation reports) as well as processes, procedures, and lessons learned from evaluation efforts. Having a system ensures that what is learned from one evaluation can be of benefit to future evaluations. Data and findings are readily available to help judge the impact of changes made as a result of an evaluation. And help plan for future program planning. An integrated knowledge-management system should ensure that the evaluation system is aligned with the organization’s other data collection systems (e.g., marketing, quality, human resources). It is an organization-wide system of data collection and storage that is easily accessible and utilized by staff.

7. *Strategic Plan for Evaluation*

A strategic evaluation plan describes how, when, by whom, and to what extent programs, services, processes, or policies will be evaluated. Decisions on when to evaluate may depend on many factors, such as the length of time the program has been in operation, how the findings will be used and how often the program is offered. A strategic
evaluation plan also helps organizations be proactive about its evaluation processes and resources. Sustainable evaluation practice is enhanced when there is a clear vision and understanding about why evaluations are needed at any given time.

8. Continuous Learning about Evaluation

For evaluation practice to be sustained, organizations must provide ongoing learning opportunities for members to learn from and about evaluation practice. Continuous learning should help combat common organizational problems such as staff turnover. This means that ECB needs to be supported at a cultural level (i.e., communicated by leadership, a strategic plan for evaluation, and in the ways employees talk about and discuss evaluation). Continuous learning about evaluation can take many forms such as professional development workshops, conferences, and formal and informal evaluation education.

This model also emphasizes the importance of understanding the organizational learning capacity of the organization in which the ECB intervention is occurring. The model identifies four important contextual factors: (a) leadership valuing learning and evaluation, (b) an organizational culture of inquiry, (c) systems and structures in place for engaging in evaluation practice, and (d) communication channels and opportunities to disseminate and engage with evaluation information. They elaborate:

The extent to which and the ways in which the organization’s leadership values learning and evaluation, creates a culture of inquiry, has the necessary systems and structures for engaging in evaluation practice, and provides communication channels and opportunities to access and disseminate evaluation information will significantly affect not only if and how people learn about evaluation but also the extent to which evaluation practice becomes sustained. (p. 3, emphasis in the original)
Finally, good ECB practice does not culminate in sustainable evaluation practice but also requires diffusion, in which an organization shares their knowledge, experiences and learning with others (e.g., funders, similar organizations). With this model, we get a comprehensive look at ECB strategies and ECB contexts that influence sustainable evaluation practices, such as leadership, culture, systems and structures and communication.

**Summary**

The 12 ECB models explored in this section are multifaceted and focus on a multitude of ECB factors. The most common factors included individual and organizational factors, which were made up of multiple components. Individual factors appeared to be two-pronged, with both an affective and a practical component. Second, two models suggested that ECB is a linear, developmental process, which starts at the individual level and expands towards organizational levels as evaluation skills develop; however, this differs from some organizational models which discussed ECB as cyclical and ongoing. This suggested that ECB may move linearly from the individual level to the organization level, where it then becomes an ongoing process. Common organizational factors included leadership, culture, support systems and structures, resources and organizational context. Additionally, five models discussed specific strategies for implementing ECB while three also discussed sustainability. Only the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model discussed ECB strategies, contextual influencers of sustainability and sustainable evaluation practices. As a result, the Preskill & Boyle (2008) model is the best guide for researchers interested in understanding how ECB may affect sustainability.
ECB Approaches

The ECB approaches discussed here are primarily based on practice rather than theory and offer specific strategies and steps for practicing ECB. This is in contrast to ECB models, which are theory-based and provide overviews and multiple strategies and perspectives, rather than direct guidance. This review will detail multiple approaches to ECB, which were identified in the evaluation literature by the same methods described in the review of ECB models.

Empowerment evaluation (Fetterman, 1994a, 1996) is a common evaluation approach that includes building evaluation capacity as a central tenant of its practice. It is defined as an evaluation approach that aims to increase the probability of achieving program success by (1) providing program stakeholders with tools for assessing the planning, implementation and self-evaluation of their program and (2) mainstreaming evaluation as part of the planning and management of the program/organization. (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005, p. 28)

It is distinct from other evaluation approaches because, “In traditional evaluation, most of the evaluation work is conducted by independent evaluators. However, in empowerment evaluation, program staff members, collaborating with outside evaluators, perform a self-assessment” (Tang et al., 2002, p. 40). The empowerment evaluation approach contains 10 core principles: (a) program improvement, (b) community ownership, (c) inclusion, (d) democratic participation, (e) social justice, (f) community knowledge, (g) evidence-based strategies, (h) capacity building, (i) organizational learning, and (j) accountability. Capacity building is an explicit goal of empowerment evaluation and an empirical review of 47 empowerment evaluation studies showed that 56% of the documented empowerment evaluation literature enacted the principal of capacity building and 35% of evaluation practices were routinized after the project (i.e., sustainability) (Miller & Campbell, 2006).
Researchers also suggested less comprehensive, more focused ideas of ECB practice. Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2010) suggested ECB take a “catalyst-for-change” approach. This approach focuses the ECB intervention on a singular key leader within an organization because “a leader has the power to influence the use of resources to change the organization’s evaluation practices and to provide the needed infrastructure for program evaluation to become central to the organization’s routine activities” (p. 170). This is different from traditional ECB approaches that typically target multiple staff members or an entire organization. Results from this approach showed that a catalyst-for-change method helped the change agent to mainstream evaluation practice and serve as an evaluation advocate within her own organization, which diffused the knowledge and skills learned from the ECB facilitators. Sustainability is not explicitly named in this approach; however, the goal is to “routinize” evaluation practices via leadership’s commitment and support for evaluation.

Miller et al. (2006) argued that insourcing is best practice for sustaining program evaluation. Insourcing is an offshoot of ECB wherein community-based organizations pool their resources to hire an evaluator who works with program staff to develop logic models and meets regularly to create an evaluation toolkit (i.e., a common set of measurement instruments) and data collection protocols. The evaluator then works with each organization to develop a personalized evaluation plan. This approach may be more conducive to sustainability because it allows for pooled resources and evaluation consultation, which can overcome common barriers to ECB such as lack of resources and staff turnover.

Huffman et al. (2008) proposed the collaborative immersion approach to ECB. Typical ECB interventions use a linear approach, developing individual knowledge and skills as they
engage in more complex evaluation practices. The collaborative immersion approach, however, turns this upside down by building evaluation capacity via starting with complex, real world, hands-on evaluation strategies. Thus, participants become immersed in a complex evaluation at the onset, learning as they go, being coached by ECB practitioners along the way. The authors argue this is like language immersion programs: “by pushing participants out of their comfort zone, one can create cognitive dissonance and help participants grow and develop new understandings” (p. 366). Sustainability is not addressed in this model.

**Summary**

The approaches listed in this section show the diversity of ECB—from empowerment evaluation to insourcing, there are multiple ways to build evaluation capacity. Only empowerment evaluation researched its approach in regards to sustainability; the other approaches have not conducted research into the sustainability of their practices, nor have much empirical literature beyond the initial publication to substantiate the approach.

**Empirical ECB Studies**

To understand how well ECB practice affects outcomes, researchers published multiple empirical studies of ECB interventions. In the most holistic review of the current literature, Labin et al. (2012) conducted a meta-synthesis of the ECB empirical literature (n=61 ECB interventions) in order to summarize the methods, strategies, focus, and outcomes of published ECB work. Methodologically, more than half of the reviewed studies were in-depth, descriptive case studies, while only two mentioned comparison or control groups; a third of studies did not report any specific data collection methods. One study mentioned measurement tools and 40% of the ECB interventions lasted more than two years. Most ECB interventions used multiple
ECB strategies (see Preskill & Boyle’s (2008) model), most commonly training, coaching, technical assistance and involvement in evaluation. A vast majority of ECB interventions focused on collecting data rather than analyzing it.

Labin et al.’s (2012) article also explored individual and organizational outcomes related to ECB. Individual outcomes were increased positive attitudes, knowledge and behaviors. Organizational outcomes commonly included practices, policies and procedures, leadership, culture, mainstreaming and resources. Overall, the strategies and outcomes of ECB were well-matched to the theoretical literature and ECB models. Results of this meta-synthesis, though, also showed gaps in the ECB literature: (a) there were few experimental designs and quantitative measures used to assess ECB, (b) there were few meta-evaluations of ECB practice, (c) analyzing data was not a heavy focus of ECB practices, despite reports of organizational difficulty in analysis, (d) leadership was the least reported organizational outcome, and (e) there was not synthesis of longitudinal follow-ups to ECB inspecting sustainable evaluation practices and organizational change. Of particular note is the lack of research that looked at sustainability. In the wide-ranging meta-synthesis, multiple aspects of ECB reported in scholarly work were inspected; however, the synthesis’ lack of formal inspection into sustainability shows that methodological and empirical research on sustainability is not routinely conducted.

This literature review will attempt to fill this gap by inspecting aspects of sustainability among all of the 61 ECB interventions (n=69 articles) in Labin’s (2012) meta-synthesis. A search of databases and libraries yielded 52 articles from Labin’s synthesis. Additionally, using the methods described in Labin et al., the table of contents of seven prominent evaluation journals (American Journal of Evaluation, New Directions for Evaluation, Evaluation,
Evaluation and Program Planning, Canadian Journal of Evaluation, Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Evaluation Journal of Australasia) were reviewed from 2009 to the present (the Labin synthesis included all articles up to 2008). This process identified 23 additional articles, for a total of 75 empirical ECB articles.

These articles were then screened for key sustainability terms (Savaya et al., 2008): sustain (-able, -ability), continue (-s, -ed) integrate (-tion), incorporate (-tion), routine (-ization, -ize), maintain and maintenance. Based on this screening, 25 articles (33%) were excluded from further analysis. The remaining articles were read and coded according to Preskill and Boyle’s (2008) contextual factors (e.g., leadership, systems and structures, communication, culture) and sustainable ECB practices: (a) evaluation policies and procedures, (b) evaluation frameworks and processes, (c) resources dedicated to evaluation, (d) use of evaluation findings, (e) shared evaluation beliefs and commitment, (f) integrated knowledge management evaluation system, (g) strategic plan for evaluation and (h) continuous learning about evaluation. The Preskill and Boyle model was chosen because, as discussed previously, it represents the most holistic view of ECB from a sustainability perspective. In total, 50 articles were coded.

If an article discussed any of these practices in a manner related to sustainability, even anecdotally, the practice was coded as a “present.” In practice, this was a messy process. There was a lot of inference involved in the coding process--sustainability was not the main focus of any ECB article and sustainable practices were almost never explicitly addressed. This messiness was mostly due to a lack of formal investigation of sustainability, or any long-term follow-ups to ECB interventions. This lack of clarity and lack of formal systematic inquiry into
sustainability are possibly the two most important findings from this review—empirical research into ECB is not attending to sustainability in a systematic way, which shows a glaring gap in ECB research and knowledge. Thus, studies were also coded if there was a systematic follow-up of sustainability (i.e., a six-month or one-year follow up after the ECB intervention); however, even this was difficult, as the line between systematic inquiry and anecdotal evidence was tenuous at best due to sustainability being an afterthought, even within the articles that addressed it.

The results presented below, then, represent the author’s best attempt to tease out contexts, sustainable practices, and inquiry into sustainability within the nebulous ECB literature. All results should be interpreted with caution. The rest of this review will look at each aspect of ECB sustainability and inspect how it is discussed within the literature, looking for common factors that may contribute to ongoing sustainable evaluation practice and identifying gaps in the literature for future research. The results demonstrate that all aspects of sustainability appear to be discussed; however, the frequency and depth of each aspect has considerable variation. (See Table 4 below for a summary and see Appendix C for a full list of articles).

**Sustainability Follow-up**

Only nine interventions (18%) followed up the ECB intervention to ask about sustainability. Of those nine, four utilized systematic inquiry (i.e., survey, interview methods), while the rest provided anecdotal evidence. In all nine instances, the follow-up appeared to be an after-thought of each article—briefly discussed and not explored in depth. This has two implications: (1) there is a gap and need in the literature for systematic inquiry into sustainable ECB practices and (2) the sustainability results discussed below should be interpreted with
extreme caution due to the lack of formal investigation or emphasis on sustainability within the empirical ECB literature. These nine articles, though, did provide encouraging results. All nine articles suggested that evaluation strategies and practices were sustained and that ECB interventions produced changes in evaluation practice that were sustained up to six months or a year after the initial intervention.

Table 4. Sustainable ECB Practices in the Empirical ECB Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECB Contexts</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability Follow-up</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems &amp; Structures</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainable Evaluation Practices</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Policies &amp; Procedures</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Evaluation Findings</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Dedicated to Evaluation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Frameworks &amp; Processes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Evaluation Beliefs &amp; Commitment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Learning About Evaluation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Knowledge Management Evaluation System</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan for Evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contextual Factors**

**Culture.** Culture was the most frequently cited contextual factor that influenced sustainability (19 articles, 38%), as the ECB process helped create or build on an evaluation culture among organizations and programs. This culture took many forms and was facilitated through various means (e.g., empowerment evaluation principals, communities of practice, leadership buy-in, evaluation protocols); however, the underlying sentiment was the same—staff
reported that evaluation was embedded within organizational culture, leading to the ongoing use of evaluation procedures and findings. In a telling example, McDonald et al. (2003) detailed how an ECB project facilitated sustained evaluation culture because there was “no fear” of negative evaluation findings. Instead, these findings were used as a time to reflect and learn, which created a culture where staff were free to experiment with evaluation without fear of retribution. Cohen (2006) discussed how communities of practice, dubbed “evaluation learning circles,” were valued by staff as a time to reflect and learn about evaluation, which eventually seeped into the organizational culture and continued after the ECB intervention. Communities of practice, in fact, emerged as a potentially strong indicator of evaluation culture--three articles explicitly discussed how communities of practice meetings about evaluation helped facilitate an ongoing and sustainable evaluation culture (Carden & Earl, 2007; Cohen 2006; Lennie, 2005). Other facilitators of culture included leadership buy-in, learning to think evaluatively, and being a higher resourced organization with more technology.

**Systems and structures.** Systems and structures were the second most discussed contextual aspects of sustainability (17 articles, 34%). Many ECB projects focused on building evaluation frameworks and protocols within organizations—many of which became embedded within organizational practices and led to a sustained system of data collection and analysis. Myrick, Lemelle, Aoki, Truax, and Lemp (2005) provided an impressive example of embedding an evaluation system within a community-based organization. At the behest of the Center for Disease Control, which itself underwent an ECB transformation (Milstein et al., 2002), organizations were required to create a systematized process of data collection and reporting of client-level data across all organization sites which created a “substantial and ongoing
infrastructure for the [organization’s] collection and tracking of process data in support of prevention evaluation” (p. 402). The system in Myrick et al. (2005) reflected a monitoring and process evaluation focus, which was mirrored in other sustainable systems (Diaz-Puente, Yague, & Afonso, 2008; Naccarella et al., 2007). The systems and structures then, appeared to be divided by their purpose—while some ECB projects focused on a continual learning loop via process evaluations, others strove to create a systematic data-collection and self-evaluation system in organizations to look at impact and outcomes. Unlike culture and leadership, sustainable systems and structures appeared in the literature to be less reflective of outside factors and more a direct result of ECB’s focus on carrying out and conducting an evaluation—teaching organizations “to fish.”

**Leadership.** Leadership was noted to be a key ingredient to ECB success. While 13 articles (26%) addressed leadership, many indicated that leadership support was key to ECB sustainability. In the articles that addressed leadership, most of them (7/8) tied leadership to facilitating a culture of evaluation within the organization. Leadership that was committed to evaluation, expected evaluations to be used for data-based decision making and program improvement, and helped create a learning culture within their respective organizations. King (2002) suggested four key leadership factors which influenced ECB sustainability: (1) time to collaborate on evaluation, (2) incentives for participation, (3) opportunities to reflect, and (4) effective communication. In a majority of discussions about leadership, many authors indicated that leadership needed to “buy-in” to the process, suggesting that their support was not immediate, and that key events helped facilitate this buy-in. For example, Hoole and Patterson (2008) described how evaluation helped secure more funding for the organization, which led
leadership to understand the importance of evaluation, suggesting a link between leadership and understanding benefits of evaluation. Likewise, Cohen (2006) also described how leadership saw evaluation as a means to gain more funding, leading to sustained organizational commitment to evaluation. Other examples, such as Katz et al. (2002), showed that even using evaluation data as a means to reflect on annual goals was enough to sustain leadership commitment to evaluation. Sustainability, then, can be tied to leadership support, which is facilitated by key events that show the value and merit of conducting evaluations.

Communication. Communication was noted in 13 articles (26%). All articles that discussed the sustainability of communities of practice also discussed sustainable communication, a hallmark of the ECB strategy. In fact, communication appeared to be tied, more than other contextual factors, to a theoretical approach to ECB. All articles marked as creating sustainable communication emphasized collaborative, participatory or communities of practice approaches to ECB. Communication was two-fold in the articles, both communication between staff within an organization and collaboration among staff at other organizations. In some instances, communication was noted as both types—internal communication within an organization and external communication between organizations (Brown, Luna, Ramirez, Vail, & Williams, 2005). Results of this synthesis, then, suggested a two-pronged communication context—internal communication and external communication, as well as a tie to specific theoretical approaches to evaluation (i.e., participatory evaluation) and ECB strategies (i.e., communities of practice).
**Sustainable ECB Practices**

**Evaluation policies and procedures.** The sustainability of evaluation policies and procedures was the most discussed aspect of ECB, appearing in 18 articles (36%). This is perhaps not surprising, as many ECB interventions target practices and procedures for conducting an evaluation. Thus, the ECB literature on sustainable evaluation policies and procedures is variable, reflecting the diversity of ECB approaches. For example, Carden and Earl (2007) detailed an ECB project which focused on helping an organization produce rolling Project Completion Reports (rPCRs). A one-year follow up showed that no backsliding occurred and the policies and procedures they created to produce rPCRs was ongoing and sustained. Similarly, Katz et al. (2002) detailed case studies where they tried to develop an evaluation “habit of mind” by facilitating reflection meetings with school data. After the intervention, a follow up with principals revealed that many schools still engaged in these reflection meetings by discussing annual evaluation reports. The other studies continued this pattern—sustained evaluation policies and procedures were tied to the targeted help of the ECB intervention. These policies and procedures, though, were variable and contextually dependent on the evaluation needs of the organization.

**Use of evaluation findings.** The use of evaluation findings was noted in 16 articles (32%). One third of these articles linked use of evaluation findings to securing more program and/or organizational funding, suggesting a link between using evaluations and funding. This link is not often discussed in the ECB literature but may offer a critical new way to frame the importance of evaluation and evaluation use. Indeed, “Understanding benefits” is a key concept within the sustainability literature that has not been explored within an ECB context (see Table...
2. Unlike other practices and contexts, the examples of evaluation use were explicit and straightforward. For example, “All programs had made changes to their policies and procedures…based on the results of their evaluation findings” (Campbell et al., 2004) and

We know from a survey of key stakeholders, for example, that the findings of the local evaluation and our own meta-evaluation work have been put to instrumental use by Divisional staff (who have used the findings to modify approaches to their service delivery) and by policy-makers responsible for shaping and funding the overall program. (Naccarella et al., 2007, pp. 234-235)

Evaluation use, then, provided a concrete example of how evaluation can help change programming and influence funding resources and may play a key role in creating sustainability.

**Resources dedicated to evaluation.** Resources dedicated to evaluation were discussed in 13 articles (26%), and overlapped with articles that discussed sustainable evaluation cultures. The term “resources” is vague and the ECB literature reflects this—national notions of dedicated resources ranged from technology (Andrews et al., 2006; Hoole & Patterson, 2008; King, 2002) to creating evaluation internships (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2003) and even whole evaluation departments (Compton et al., 2002). Often, resources appeared to be a by-product of other evaluation practices. Organizations did not invest in technology or evaluation departments and personnel without first seeing its value and utility within the organization.

**Evaluation frameworks and processes.** Evaluation frameworks and processes were mentioned in 11 articles (22%). Discussion of frameworks and processes were variable and included the following: (a) manuals and training materials about evaluation (Campbell et al., 2004); (b) organizational mandates about evaluation and assessment (Carden & Earl, 2007; McDonald et al., 2003; Milstein et al., 2002); (c) theoretical approaches to evaluation, such as participatory evaluation (Katz et al., 2002) and (d) training models and processes continued after
ECB interventions (Arnold, 2006; Secret et al., 1999). In all cases, these approaches and materials helped to guide evaluation practice at an organizational level and gave staff a working model of evaluation to follow and use at the program level. Often, these frameworks were mandated and a direct result of the ECB intervention.

**Shared evaluation beliefs and commitment.** Shared evaluation beliefs and commitment were discussed in 11 articles (22%), 10 of which also described sustainable evaluation cultures. In about half of the articles, these shared beliefs and commitments to evaluation were discussed as shared beliefs and commitments from leadership positions within the organization, rather than front-line staff (Compton et al., 2002; King, 2002; Milstein et al., 2002). When front-line staff was discussed, it was from articles that focused on communities of practice or participatory approaches, which were inclusive and aimed at empowering staff to understand and believe in the merits of evaluation (Diaz-Puente et al., 2005; Lennie, 2005; MacLellan et al., 2007). The articles that discussed leadership commitment would make anecdotal references to staff commitment and values; however, these articles focused on the organizational-level rather than the individual-level, making the connection between leadership commitment and staff commitment unclear. Research is needed to understand the interplay between leadership and staff beliefs and commitment to evaluation and how they may impact the sustainability of evaluation.

**Continuous learning about evaluation.** Continuous learning about evaluation was discussed in 10 articles (20%). Sustainable learning about evaluation took many forms: evaluation training and workshops (Beere, 2005; Milstein et al., 2002) as well as formal learning
forums (Carden & Earl, 2005) and seeking out manuals and evaluation texts (Campbell et al., 2004).

**Integrated knowledge management evaluation system.** An integrated-knowledge management evaluation system was discussed in four articles (8%), making it one of the least discussed sustainable ECB practices. Interestingly, every article that discussed a management system also discussed use of evaluation findings, which suggests a link between the two. Less surprising, every article that discussed a sustainably integrated evaluation system also had a sustainable evaluation system and structure. Preskill and Boyle (2008) defined an integrated management system as one that can “disseminate evaluation related documents as well as all processes, procedures and lessons learned from evaluation” (p. 13). This review suggests that this is correct—all management systems are linked to sustainable use of evaluation findings within the empirical ECB literature. These systems, though, are not uniform across the literature, but variable. Hoole and Patterson (2008) detailed expensive technology and software, which served as a management system, while others detailed a system of outcomes reporting that was engrained in the culture (Carden & Earl, 2007) or a process evaluation and monitoring system (Myrick et al., 2005; Naccarella et al., 2007). Thus, it appears that while a sustainable integrated knowledge management system was related to evaluation use and a system and structure for evaluation, it can take many forms depending on the need and context of an organization.

**Strategic plan for evaluation.** A strategic plan for evaluation was the least discussed sustainable evaluation practice, mentioned in three articles (6%). A strategic plan appeared to be linked to leadership—all articles that discussed a strategic plan for evaluation also detailed strong leadership support for evaluation. This makes conceptual sense—leaders are setting the
course and agenda of their organizations; therefore, they would be the ones implementing a strategic plan for their organizations. In each instance, a strategic plan for evaluation was not well described, but rather mentioned as supporting evidence for leadership commitment to evaluation.

Summary

This review of the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model within the empirical ECB literature showed that its practices were variable and occurred in multiple contexts. The variation within these sustainable practices and contexts suggested that there are subcomponents of each practice/context which future research will need to clarify. There also appeared to be connections between contexts that support sustainability, sustainable evaluation practices, and ECB strategies. For example, the communities of practice ECB strategy appeared to influence the communication context, and policies and procedures for evaluation were a direct reflection of ECB interventions. Similarly, there appeared to be connections between contexts and practices (e.g., leadership and a strategic plan for evaluation) contexts and other contexts (e.g., leadership and culture) and practices on other practices (e.g., integrated management systems and evaluation use). The connections between contexts, practices and ECB strategies are critical to understanding how sustainability functions. Future research on sustainability should focus on the links and casual mechanisms between them.

Perhaps more important than the results was the finding that so few ECB articles conducted follow-ups to their ECB interventions and that the sustainability of these interventions is not often discussed or explored. ECB as a practice needs to demonstrate that interventions are not one-off outcomes but that they produce meaningful and sustained change of organizational
evaluation practices. As ECB research moves forward, systematic inquiry into sustainability needs to be emphasized.

**Toward an Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability**

In this chapter, ECB research was represented through the lens of sustainability in three distinct ways. First, the literature related to sustainability and organizational change was explored to define sustainability and look at important factors that help to facilitate it. A framework of factors related to sustainability across multiple literatures was created. Second, a holistic review of ECB models and approaches was conducted to identify how each talk about sustainability. Within this review, Preskill and Boyle’s (2008) model was identified as informative because it was the only model to articulate specific sustainable evaluation practices and the complex interplay of these practices with ECB strategies and organizational contexts. Third, a review of the empirical ECB literature was conducted to explore how sustainable evaluation practices, ECB strategies, and organizational contexts were described. This review found that there is a dearth of inquiry into the sustainability of ECB. The ultimate goal of this chapter was to (1) show that there is a gap in ECB literature that necessitates empirical inquiry into ECB sustainability and (2) provide a set of frameworks to help guide that inquiry.

These identified frameworks, however, need to be integrated together into a coherent model. A set of sustainability factors was identified that listed a set of influences across myriad literatures (see Table 2) and one model of ECB (Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Figure 1) was identified that captured the interplay of ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and organizational contexts. These two frameworks are helpful starting points, but to be useful they need to be cohesively integrated.
Table 5 below displays the two frameworks side by side, which shows that there are many overlapping terms and conflicting labels. ECB strategies are absent in the table because the sustainability framework does not overlap with these strategies.

Table 5. Sustainability and the Preskill and Boyle (2008) Frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preskill &amp; Boyle (2008)</th>
<th>ECB Contexts</th>
<th>Sustainability Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Evaluation Practices</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership/Champion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Policies &amp; Procedures</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Frameworks &amp; Processes</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Dedicated to Evaluation</td>
<td>Systems &amp; Structures</td>
<td>Understanding the Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Evaluation Findings</td>
<td>Shared Evaluation Beliefs &amp; Commitment</td>
<td>Alignment to Mission &amp; Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Evaluation Beliefs &amp; Commitment</td>
<td>Integrated Knowledge Management Evaluation System</td>
<td>Organizational Contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan for Evaluation</td>
<td>Outside Supports</td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Learning About Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bolded in the table above are overlapping terms from the two frameworks. One sustainable evaluation practice, continuous learning about evaluation, overlaps with the sustainability factor of learning. Additionally, three out of the four organizational contexts identified by Preskill and Boyle (2008) were also identified in the sustainability framework: leadership, culture, and communication. Systems and structures for evaluation was not identified in the sustainability literature.

Preskill and Boyle (2008) stated that all four contexts “…affect… the extent to which evaluation practice becomes sustained” (p. 3). Thus, the Preskill and Boyle organizational contexts are also defined by their relationship to sustainability, which relates them to the
sustainability framework. The definitions are also similar. For all terms in the table above, the definitions from the sustainability and Preskill and Boyle model will be used (see above sections for definitions of these terms). For the overlapping terms, the definitions will be combined:

- **Leadership** describes leaders that value learning and evaluation; leadership can be an enthusiastic champion of evaluation or supportive of it, both of which help facilitate and sustain evaluation.

- **Culture** describes an organizational culture that is supportive of evaluation, values it, and facilitates evaluation practice, inquiry and learning. This is developed over time and adopted and adapted responsively within the organization.

- **Communication** describes how channels and opportunities to disseminate and discuss evaluation, expectations around evaluation, and supports for evaluation are created within an organization.

There was also an overlap between one sustainable evaluation practice, and continuous learning about evaluation, with the sustainability factor of learning. Preskill and Boyle (2008) defined continuous learning about evaluation:

> For evaluation practice to be sustained, organizations must provide ongoing learning opportunities for members to learn from and about evaluation practice. Continuous learning should help combat common organizational problems such as staff turnover. This means that ECB needs to be supported at a cultural level (i.e., communicated by leadership, a strategic plan for evaluation, and in the ways employees talk about and discuss evaluation). Continuous learning about evaluation can take many forms such as professional development workshops, conferences, and formal and informal evaluation education. (p.14)

The organizational change and program evaluation literature described learning more simply: an organization’s commitment to consistent learning about and from evaluation (Boyce, 2003;
Savaya & Spiro, 2012). This idea of valuing was captured in the idea of an evaluation culture, both in the Preskill and Boyle (2008) and the sustainability framework. Preskill and Boyle described culture as consisting of valuing inquiry and learning, while the sustainability framework likewise described a culture that valued learning about and from the organizational change. Learning is even captured in the above definition of culture, which values “inquiry and learning.” Thus, the idea of learning as a sustainability factor appears to be subsumed by the factor of culture and is a component of it. A culture that values learning is different from actively engaging in continuous learning, which Preskill and Boyle note as a sustainable evaluation practice. As a result, continuous learning about evaluation will be considered a sustainable evaluation practice because it is active engagement with evaluation and valuing learning is already described in the sustainability factor of culture.

With the overlapping terms defined, these frameworks can now combined into an integrated model of ECB sustainability (see Figure 2 below). The Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability represented below incorporates the Preskill and Boyle (2008) and sustainability frameworks into three components: ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and sustainability factors. The model is cyclical in nature, meant to represent the ongoing nature of the evaluation cycle within an organization. The sustainable evaluation practices are influenced by ECB strategies and the sustainability factors that surround evaluation practice within an organization; they are a result of the interplay of all of these components. Sustainability factors are a constant influence; they facilitate the efficacy of the ECB strategies and the resulting sustainable evaluation practices. Simultaneously, these factors are also being influenced by these components; sustainability factors can be developed as a result of ECB strategies and sustainable
evaluation practices. Sustainability in this model is the ongoing and continuous use of sustainable evaluation practices, represented by the arrows around the model. Sustainability is not a destination itself but a continuous process of engaging in evaluation practice. The result is a model that demonstrates the dynamic and complex nature of ECB sustainability.

**Figure 2. The Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability**
The ECB strategies of this model are those noted, identified and defined in the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model. They are the drivers of the ECB intervention and have a direct influence on the sustainable evaluation practices and sustainability factors.

The sustainable evaluation practices are represented and defined by those of the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model. Because the sustainable evaluation practices of ECB have not been empirically investigated and no prior models of ECB theorized about them, these practices represent ECB’s only window into sustainable evaluation practice. As more research is conducted, there is room for emerging outcomes within this component, as well an expanded typology of these practices.

The sustainability factors in this model are represented by the factors identified in the sustainability framework, as well as Preskill and Boyle’s (2008) organizational contexts. Due to scant empirical research on ECB sustainability factors, new factors may emerge from future data and research.

The purpose of Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability is to serve as a sense-making tool to compliment the above literature review and frame the inquiry that follows. It is meant to be a starting point for a larger discussion about the sustainable evaluation practices related to ECB and the factors that can facilitate or impede them. As empirical evidence is added, this framework will be shaped and changed accordingly.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the qualitative methodology used for this exploratory, phenomenological research study. First, this chapter explicates the study design and research questions. Next, it details the sampling protocol and study sample, followed by the data collection and interview protocols. The data analysis procedure is then described, paying special attention to the unique issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability that are critical to qualitative research methods. The chapter concludes by describing the methodological limitations.

**Study Design and Research Questions**

This dissertation is an exploratory, phenomenological study that utilized qualitative interview methodology. A qualitative study is one that aims to understand the meaning of human action that uses non-numerical data to describe and elaborate on concepts for the purposes of understanding the subjective experiences of people, organizations and/or cultures (Schwandt, 2007). A type of qualitative study is phenomenology, which is the study of “everyday experience from the point of view of the subject….and aims to identify and describe the subjective experiences” of those who are engaging with the phenomenon under study, in this case, an organization’s sustainable evaluation practices after an ECB intervention (p. 226). Groenewald (2004) elaborated, “To arrive at certainty, anything outside immediate experience must be ignored, and in this way the external world is reduced to the contents of personal
consciousness. Realities are thus treated as pure ‘phenomena.’” (p. 43). Thus, the goal of phenomenology is to provide thick, rich description of a phenomenon as it is lived and experienced (Finlay, 2012).

Phenomenology is rooted in a constructivist research paradigm (Flood, 2010). The constructivist paradigm states that knowledge is constructed through our lived experiences and through interactions with other members of society… we are shaped by our lived experiences and these will always come out in the knowledge we generate as researchers and in the data generated by our subjects. (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011, pp. 103-104)

Constructivism posits that there is not one true reality but that reality is constructed by the lived experiences of humans. As people grow, learn and engage with the world, they begin to construct meaning out of these experiences. The researcher’s task is to analyze and make sense of how people construct meaning after experiencing a phenomenon. For this research, the author attempted to understand how organizational leaders perceived the sustainability of evaluation practices after an ECB intervention.

There are two ways to conduct phenomenological research—descriptive phenomenology and hermeneutical phenomenology. This study utilized hermeneutical phenomenology (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), which focuses on describing the meanings of an individual’s experience and how these meanings influence the choices they make. Hermeneutical phenomenology also emphasizes the importance of the researcher’s expertise. This is the main difference between descriptive and hermeneutical phenomenology: descriptive does not place value in the background knowledge and expertise of the researcher, only the lived experience of the subject is important. Hermeneutical phenomenology sees background knowledge and expertise as
valuable in guiding the inquiry. For example, the author’s knowledge of ECB is considered valuable in interpreting and making meaning out of the experiences of the interview subjects. Hermeneutical phenomenology also posits that meaning is co-created via dialogue between the researcher and the interviewee and that interpretation is a blend of articulation between both parties (Flood, 2010). Thus, understanding of the phenomenon is based on the intersection of researcher knowledge and the interviewees’ perceptions and experiences.

This study is also exploratory. An exploratory study is one that explores new concepts or understandings and it is common in qualitative, phenomenological studies. As discussed in the previous chapter, there is no current study within the ECB literature whose central purpose was to follow up with ECB interventions and inquire about the sustainability of an organization’s evaluation practices. When there is nascent research on a topic, exploratory, qualitative research approaches are the most appropriate means for inspecting a new phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

In more concrete terms, this study utilized interview methods to understand the experiences of organizations that underwent an ECB intervention and how organizational leaders perceived the sustainable evaluation practices that resulted from the ECB intervention. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) noted that interviews are the most method approach for phenomenological studies. The research questions, also provided and detailed in the first chapter, are below:

1. What are the sustainable evaluation practices of an organization that underwent an ECB intervention?

2. How do sustainability factors develop and help facilitate these practices over time?
Sampling Rationale

This study consisted of two different samples—a sample of ECB practitioners (ECBPs), and a sample of organizational leaders (OLs) who experienced and “bought in” to an ECB intervention. First, this section details the sampling rationale for selecting and interviewing ECBPs. Next, it details the sampling rationale for organizational leaders, including a description of each organization’s background, service, and budget. See Figure 3 below for a graphical representation of the sampling protocol.

Figure 3. Sampling Protocol
**ECB practitioner sample.** ECB practitioners (ECBPs) are those who conduct and facilitate ECB interventions. ECB interventions are defined as interventions with the purpose of building an organization’s capacity to conduct and use an evaluation. Snowball sampling was utilized to identify and recruit ECBPs. This is a non-probability sampling technique in which study subjects are asked to identify additional people who meet certain characteristics (i.e., ECBP) who may be willing to participate in the research (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). This sampling technique is used when a group under study is difficult to access. Because ECBPs are a small and geographically diverse population, snowball sampling provided the best way to find and engage ECBPs across America and Canada.

ECBPs were sampled from three distinct threads: local ECBPs in the Chicago area, ECBPs presenting at the 2016 American Evaluation Association (AEA) conference, and prominent ECB researchers. These threads were not necessarily independent—one can be both a local ECB practitioner, ECB researcher and AEA presenter; however, these threads represent distinct categories of ECBPs that the researcher tapped into to identify and contact ECBPs. ECBPs from each thread were asked to identify colleagues who may be willing to participate in the research. The purpose of contacting and snowball sampling ECBPs was to gain access to organizational leaders that could be interviewed about how ECB interventions affected sustainable evaluation practices within their organizations. These ECBPs were asked to identify one to three leaders from organizations that “bought in” to their ECB intervention(s) and were at least six months removed from the initial ECB contract. Six months is a typical time frame for following up on ECB interventions, as identified in the ECB literature (MacLellan et al., 2007; Taut, 2007). Care was taken to not oversample from a particular ECBP thread (e.g.,
Chicagoland, researchers and AEA presenters) so that the organizational leader sample was as unbiased as possible.

The ECBPs identified organizational leaders for interviews and were also subjected to a quick 20-30 minutes interview (see Appendix A for the ECBP interview protocol). Once ECBPs identified organizations that fit the qualifications for an interview (qualifications are described in the next section), a brief interview was conducted with the practitioner to gain an understanding of the ECB intervention they conducted and the ECB strategies they utilized during the intervention. The reason for the brief interview was twofold: (1) to gain a baseline understanding of the ECB intervention and (2) to understand the specific ECB strategies that the ECBP utilized. Gaining a baseline understanding of the ECB intervention and the strategies used was critical in contextualizing and understanding the interviews with the organizational leaders. While organizational leaders might have provided these answers themselves, some may not have been aware of the theory, strategies, and logic of the ECB intervention; therefore, interviewing ECBPs before the organizational leaders was necessary to fully comprehend the ECB intervention. Seidman (2013) notes that the interview must develop from a point of providing context of the situated experience. These ECBP interviews helped provide the necessary background and context from which to interpret the following organizational leader interviews.

The initial goal was to interview six to nine ECBPs, spread evenly across all three ECBP threads.

**Organizational leader sample.** Organizational leaders (OLs) selected for interviews were those identified by ECBPs (see Appendix B for the OL interview protocol). An OL was anyone holding a manager or director role over a program or organization. There were three criteria for OLs to be selected for interviews:
1. They must come from organizations that “bought in” and engaged the ECB process.

2. They must be at least 6 months removed from the initial ECB contract.

3. The interviewee must have worked at the organization during the ECB intervention.

Buy-in was a critical factor because this research aimed to understand the sustainable evaluation practices that resulted from an ECB intervention in organizations that actually engaged and utilized the process for organizational benefits. That is, this study utilized purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher specifies the characteristics of a population of interest and then locates those individuals for research (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). In this case, the researcher was interested in organizations that were enthusiastic and participatory in the ECB process, as they can offer insight into what type of sustainable evaluation practices are possible as a result of ECB participation and buy-in. The second criterion, being at least six months removed from the initial ECB contract, was in line with follow-up inquiry within the ECB literature (MacLellan et al., 2007; Taut, 2007). The final stipulation was that the OL must have worked at the organization during the ECB intervention. While turnover is a well-known barrier to evaluation and ECB practice (Ensminger et al., 2015; Taut, 2007), it was necessary that the OL was present during the intervention so they could contextualize the impact of the intervention. The goal was to interview around 12 or more OLs. Creswell (1998, pp. 65 & 113) recommended long “interviews with up to 10 people” for a phenomenological study to reach saturation, which is when the data no longer yields new insights and information. This study aimed a bit higher with 12 or more interviews, until saturation was reached. If saturation had not been reached with these estimates, more ECBPs and OLs would have been contacted for interviews.
**Sampling Description**

Initial e-mails were sent out over the course of four months to 10 prominent ECB researchers identified via the literature review conducted for this dissertation, seven local ECBPs identified by the Chicagoland Evaluation Association and personal contacts, and 13 AEA contacts identified by ECB-focused AEA presentations for the 2016 AEA conference. From these initial e-mails, eight referrals were also contacted. In total, 38 ECBPs were contacted for an interview.

Of these 38 initial emails, eight (8%) did not respond to my inquiry. Of the 30 that did respond, a majority (n=18) were not interviewed because they were either (a) too busy with other projects, (b) had not conducted ECB with organizations that fit my criteria, or (c) their organization did not allow them to disclose client information and no follow up organizational interview would be possible. A total of 12 ECBP interviews were conducted; two were not included in the final sample because the author was unable to follow up with the organizational leaders for interviews. The final ECBP sample, and the organizational leader sample that resulted, is discussed in the following sections.

**ECB practitioner sample.** A total of 10 ECBPs were included in the final sample of ECBP interviews (see Table 6 below). There was approximately equal representation from each proposed ECBP sampling thread: two from AEA, two locals, and two researchers. In addition, there were two snowball referrals from researchers, and one snowball referral each from both local practitioners and AEA presenters.
Table 6. ECBP Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECBP #</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Thread</th>
<th>Years of Practice</th>
<th>Philosophy of Service</th>
<th>Organization Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #1</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>&quot;Meet them where they are at&quot;; start with the end in mind&quot;; practical orientation</td>
<td>Independent consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #2</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>AEA</td>
<td>40+</td>
<td>Supporting learning and growth through a systems approach to evaluation</td>
<td>Independent consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #3</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Participatory, empowerment evaluation, ECB</td>
<td>Higher Education; Assessment Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #4</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>AEA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Utilization focus</td>
<td>Independent consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #5</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Utilization focus; grounded in reality of organization; focus on all voices</td>
<td>Independent consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #6</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>30+</td>
<td>Evaluation as learning</td>
<td>Higher Education; Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #7</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Utility focused, collaborative, and value driven by client; evaluation individualized according to need</td>
<td>Independent consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #8</td>
<td>MSW; MPP</td>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Evaluation as learning</td>
<td>Independent consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #9</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Culturally responsive evaluation; community development</td>
<td>Independent consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #10</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Getting to Outcomes; ECB; empowerment evaluation</td>
<td>Higher Education; Center for Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One interview was conducted with two ECBPs at the same time because they were consultancy partners; while there were two people within this interview, they were considered
one ECBP because they represented a unified ECB approach and worked in tandem with the
organization they referred (ECBP #8). The sample was all female and had a range of experience
from four to 40 or more years practicing evaluation. A majority 90% (n=9) obtained a PhD in a
field related to evaluation; the other ECBP was the group consultancy with a Masters in Public
Policy (MPP) and a Masters in Social Work (MSW), who had been conducting evaluations for
over 10 years as a team. In addition, 70% (n=7) of the sample operated their own independent
consultancy and 30% (n=3) worked in higher education as either a faculty member (n=1), an
assessment specialist (n=1), or a director of a center for evaluation and research (n=1).

Philosophically, the ECBP sample was variable. All ECBPs were asked about their
philosophy of service; however, ECBPs responded to this question differently. Some gave
quotes that summed up their evaluation approach (e.g., “Start with the end in mind”), others gave
theoretical evaluation approaches (e.g., Utilization-focused evaluation, participatory evaluation,
Getting to Outcomes), and while others described how they viewed evaluation (e.g., evaluation
as learning). While the philosophical approaches were variable, no ECBPs took a
methodological approach to evaluation, and a majority of them used phrases associated with the
use and values branches of the evaluation theory tree (Alkin, 2004).

Within this sample, all ECBPs were able to connect the author to an organizational leader
that they worked with in the past or were currently working with on an ECB project. Twice,
ECBPs were able to connect me to more than one ECBP project and OL, ECBP #2 and ECBP
#7. Other ECBPs tried to reach out to multiple organizations; however, the author was unable to
connect with them.
Organizational leader sample. Sixteen OLs were interviewed and included in this sample, representing a total of 12 distinct ECB interventions. On three occasions, two people from the same organization, who also participated in the ECB intervention, were interviewed to get a more holistic representation of the impact of the intervention. On one occasion, OL# 5.1, the organizational leader was no longer with the organization that experienced the ECB intervention but was a great example of evaluation diffusion, as she took her skills from one organization and applied them to her new organization. There is no background on her organization detailed here because her organization did not undergo an ECB intervention and therefore did not fit the parameters for inclusion in the study. Her inclusion in this table was meant to help readers understand that she was interviewed, due to her example of evaluation diffusion, which is discussed in in the next chapter. See Table 7 below for a summary of the OL sample.

The organizational sample consisted of higher education institutions (n=3), state and national non-profit coalitions (n=3), community foundations or community foundations/non-profit hybrids (n=3), cultural institutions (n=2) and a community non-profit (n=1). OLs were Executive Directors, Program Directors, or Program Managers/Program Officers. All of the OL sample could be described as “evaluation champions” who bought into evaluation as a result of the ECB process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization Size*</th>
<th>Population Served</th>
<th>ECB Duration (Years)</th>
<th>Years since ECB</th>
<th>Ongoing Contact</th>
<th>ECB Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OL #1</td>
<td>Cultural Institution</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
<td>2-3 FTEs</td>
<td>200-300 Latino/a students in high poverty neighborhood</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No; some informal contact</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #1.1</td>
<td>Cultural Institution</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>6FTEs, 3 PTEs; 1/3 of organization budget</td>
<td>200-300 Latino/a students in high poverty neighborhood</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No; some informal contact</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #2</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>Evaluation Director</td>
<td>Large state /territory University</td>
<td>School of Medicine faculty and students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No; probable ECB reinvestment in future</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #3</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>Associate Vice Chancellor</td>
<td>Large state /territory University</td>
<td>20,000+ community college students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unknown; multiple years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Externally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #4</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>Assessment Specialist</td>
<td>Large state /territory University</td>
<td>238 University department programs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Currently ongoing</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #4.1</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>University Department</td>
<td>Students within department and program</td>
<td>.75 (9 months)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #5</td>
<td>Non-profit state coalition</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>35 FTEs</td>
<td>Adults and children experiencing sexual trauma; middle schools, high schools, and college prevention programming</td>
<td>2-3 from initial contract</td>
<td>2-3 from initial contract</td>
<td>Yes; renewed contract</td>
<td>Externally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #5.1</td>
<td>Non-profit state coalition</td>
<td>Capacity Manager</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Non profits</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #6</td>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>Program Officer</td>
<td>11 FTEs</td>
<td>Evanston community; local non profits</td>
<td>3 years from initial contract</td>
<td>3 years from initial contract</td>
<td>Yes; renewed contract</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #7</td>
<td>Foundation/Non-profit</td>
<td>Director of Programs</td>
<td>24 FTEs</td>
<td>Arts and humanities programs and institutions</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No; some informal contact</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #7.1</td>
<td>Foundation/Non-profit</td>
<td>Intern</td>
<td>24 FTEs</td>
<td>Arts and humanities programs and institutions</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No; some informal contact</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #8</td>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>Associate Executive Director</td>
<td>7-8 FTEs</td>
<td>People of color and veterans programs/organizations</td>
<td>3 from initial contract</td>
<td>3 from initial contract</td>
<td>Yes; renewed contract</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL#9</td>
<td>Community Non-profit</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>7 FTEs; 60 PTEs</td>
<td>Community children ages, 6-24</td>
<td>0.5 – 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No; some informal contact</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #10</td>
<td>Non-profit state coalition</td>
<td>Program Coordinator</td>
<td>7 FTEs</td>
<td>Sexual violence victims</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #11</td>
<td>Cultural Institution</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>13 FTEs, 20 PTEs,</td>
<td>Exhibit attendees and local schools/school districts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Internally driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL #12</td>
<td>Non-profit, national coalition</td>
<td>Prevention Director</td>
<td>50 FTEs</td>
<td>State and US territory coalitions</td>
<td>4 from initial contract</td>
<td>4 from initial contract</td>
<td>Yes; renewed contract</td>
<td>Externally driven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*FTE= full time equivalent, PTE= part-time equivalent*
Organizational size was variable: some organizations were large institutions, such as a state university or university system, while other organizations consisted of six to seven full time equivalents. These organizations also had a breadth of populations served and missions. Higher education institutions served both their faculty and staff, state and national coalitions served the organizations housed within their states and territories that were aligned to their mission, while foundations, non-profits, and foundation/non-profit hybrids were focused on serving their communities via education and the arts.

A total of 75% of the organizations (n=8) had no formal contract with their ECBP and the ECB intervention was considered finished, although some of them still had informal contact with them via email and phone check-ins. The other 25% of the organizations (n=4) had an ongoing contract with their ECBP, which was a renewal of the initial contract(s). Also, a majority of ECB contracts (n=9) were internally driven, which means that the organizations were looking to conduct an evaluation and/or build their evaluation capacity; they were not mandated by a funder to seek out evaluation services. A total of three organizations had externally driven ECB services; these organizations were mandated by their funders to seek out evaluation services.

The time since the ECB intervention was variable. For many OLs, these years represented their best guess, as time eroded their ability to articulate the exact timeframe. Additionally, those with informal, ongoing relationships with their ECBP made this a nebulous estimate, as the winding down of the formal ECB intervention, coupled with the still informal, ongoing nature of their relationship, made it difficult to pinpoint an exact cutoff point. For other organizations that renewed their contracts, the estimates were more precise, as the formal ongoing nature of the work made it easier to be exacting. The organizations that no longer had a
formal ongoing contract with their ECBP had a time range since the ECB intervention of two to seven years. For those with ongoing contracts, time since the initial contract ranged from two to four years. The length of ECB intervention duration ranged from six months to 11 years; a majority of the interventions lasted between two to four years. One higher education institution took an ECB approach to their assessment department, and has utilized ECB for 12 years; they have no plans to stop using this model. For this institution, typical work with department leaders in evaluation lasts nine months to a year.

**Sampling ideal.** This researcher aimed to interview two to three ECBPs and four to seven organizational leaders per thread (e.g., Local, AEA, Researchers). The objective was a balanced sample across all threads; an even distribution across each thread was sought after because it would reduce bias and ensure variability in the sample. The goal was to find at least six to nine ECBPs for participation, which would result in 12 or more OL interviews. The actual sample approximated this ideal (see Table 8 below).

Table 8. Sampling Ideal and Sampling Reality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread</th>
<th>Ideal Interviews</th>
<th>Actual Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>2-3 ECBPs</td>
<td>2 ECBPs, 1 referral from Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-7 OLs</td>
<td>4 OLs across 3 different interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEA</td>
<td>2-3 ECBPs</td>
<td>2 ECBPs, 1 referral from AEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-7 OLs</td>
<td>6 OLs across 5 different interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>2-3 ECBPs</td>
<td>2 ECBPs; 2 snowball referrals from Researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-7 OLs</td>
<td>6 OLs across 4 different interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6-9 ECBPs</td>
<td>10 ECBPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12+ OLs</td>
<td>16 OLs across 12 different interventions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were two ECBPs from each thread, with a relatively even number of referrals from each thread, as well. There were four to six OLs interviewed from each thread, from three to
five different ECB interventions. Thus, the sample approximately matched the ideal and even exceeded the total target numbers of ECBPs and OLs. Creswell (1998) recommended long “interviews with up to 10 people” for a phenomenological study (pp. 65, 113). This sample matched this ideal and was adequate for reaching saturation.

Data Analysis

An Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability

The Integrated Framework for ECB Sustainability, detailed in the second chapter, was the framework utilized for coding and understanding the data (see Figure 2). This framework was an integration of the sustainability framework and the Preskill and Boyle (2008) ECB model, both of which were identified in the literature review as frameworks best representing (a) factors related to sustainability and (b) an initial look at sustainable evaluation practices associated with ECB, as well as ECB strategies. The Integrated Model combined these frameworks in a holistic manner, categorizing constructs as ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and sustainability factors. The result was a model that demonstrated the dynamic and complex nature of ECB sustainability. The Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability’s purpose was to serve as a sense-making tool to compliment the literature review and frame the inquiry of this research.

Analysis Procedures

The data were analyzed in a deductive approach that allows for emergent coding. The Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability was used for coding and understanding the data. Themes that emerged from the data that were unrelated to the previously identified codes were also coded. During this coding process, the researcher kept a reflexive journal of any biases and
assumptions being made with the data and documented the thought process for code categorizations as themes emerged from the data.

A “critical friend” was brought in during analysis to look over the interview data and help to code the interviews. This critical friend was another doctoral student in the Research Methodology program who was familiar with evaluation and evaluation research but was not focused on ECB. This critical friend, then, had baseline knowledge of the content area of evaluation; however, the new exposure to ECB allowed for questioning and discussion between the author and the critical friend that elucidated the coding process to arrive at consensus agreement. Both the author and the critical friend coded the first two interviews and met to discuss their coding. When divergence of coding existed, the researcher and the critical friend engaged in dialogue and discussion about their codes to ensure consistency of the results. After the first round of coding, there was considerable agreement between the author and the critical friend; however, the critical friend encouraged the author to be more specific with the codes and document the nuances that existed within the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability. The author then went back to the interviews to identify subcomponents within the model and continued this practice as more interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

Once all the data were collected and analyzed, the author randomly selected two interviews to review with the critical friend. Again, there was considerable agreement between the author and the critical friend. Where disagreement existed, discussion ensued so that the author and the critical friend arrived at consensus understanding. The author then went back and re-coded the interviews according to their discussion. NVivo software was used for data analysis.
A hermeneutical approach (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) was used to interpret the interviews. This approach does not have a step-by-step method, but rather is a set of guiding principles for analysis. Central to this analysis procedure is the hermeneutical circle, which refers to a back and forth between parts and the whole. For example, the author considered the interpretation of an interview quote in relation to the whole interview. Additionally, interview transcripts were interpreted in relation to all of the interview transcripts. After transcribing the interviews, the author and the critical friend (reading the sample of interviews) read through the interviews multiple times, engaging in self-understanding (i.e., understanding what the subjects themselves meant) and critical commonsense understanding (i.e., going beyond the participant’s meaning to be critical of what was said and consider the context in which it was said, which involved asking questions).

The purpose of this coding process was threefold. The first goal of analysis was to identify and understand what sustainable evaluation practices emerged from ECB interventions. Giving description and enumeration of these practices helped clarify how organizations perceived and experienced the impact of ECB. Second, coding looked to identify how sustainability factors developed over time to facilitate sustainable evaluation practices. These codes were enumerated and given rich description of how they contributed to the development of sustainable evaluation practices. Third, the coding process helped identify potential links between ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and sustainability factors. As discussed in the previous chapter, the empirical ECB literature suggested that there were links between these three components. By enumerating and cross-referencing them, research can begin to understand the common linkages and think about how ECB strategies should be employed.
Ensuring Trustworthiness

When analyzing qualitative data, the common concepts of reliability and validity shift to discussions about the trustworthiness of data. Guba and Lincoln (1985) identified methods for establishing trustworthy data depending on four criteria:

1. Credibility
2. Transferability
3. Dependability
4. Confirmability

Credibility deals with how accurately the research findings match reality (Merriam, 2009). Guba and Lincoln (1985) noted that for qualitative data, a better question is not to talk about reliability but rather understand how the findings are credible given the data that was generated. Credibility can be ensured by methods such as peer debriefing, and member checking. Peer debriefing is the process of exposing a peer with the data in order to explore aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain implicit with the researcher. The “critical friend” of the researcher was used for peer debriefing to uncover hidden biases or assumptions in the analysis and to arrive at consensus agreement of the codes. Member checking is a process wherein an interviewer will check with the interviewee to make sure they are interpreting their explanations correctly. The researcher engaged in constant member checking process throughout all of the interviews.

Transferability is the extent to which the findings of the research can be transferred or applied to other situations. The purpose of this study was to understand whether and how ECB interventions contributed to sustainable evaluation practice. Because this study hoped the
findings could be applied to plan and inform ECB interventions in the future, transferability was an important matter. The best way to ensure transferability is to provide rich description. The interview data provided a thorough description of the organization contexts, ECB strategies, and sustainable evaluation practices that resulted from ECB efforts; it also provided informative quotes, which encompassed main themes of the data. This thick description of data and the organizations allowed for transferability of the findings to similar contexts.

Dependability is the extent to which the data matches the conclusions and interpretations of the researcher. An external audit was used to ensure dependability. An external audit is a process where person or persons reviews the data to make sure the conclusions and interpretations make sense. A critical friend, as described earlier, reviewed the interview data to ensure dependability.

Finally, confirmability is the extent to which the findings can be confirmed by the process and methods of other researchers. Confirmability was established by the detailed description of the methods and documenting researcher reflexivity. Reflexivity is the process of a researcher naming their biases and reflecting on the research process in order to uncover any hidden biases or implicit assumptions that may weaken the conclusions made from the data. Because the author is an ECB practitioner and a believer in its positive impact, the author was mindful of minimizing this bias by trying to remain neutral in analysis and striving to understand the experience and impact from the point of view of the organizational leader. To do this, the researcher kept a reflexivity journal of memos so that the assumptions, biases, and feelings of the researcher were transparent.
Limitations

The methods employed for this research study have several limitations. First and foremost, the sampling protocol and qualitative methodology used limited the generalizations that can be made from the data. While qualitative methods are more interested in “transferability” rather than generalizability, the small, non-random and purposive sample from which the data was generated means that even transferability is limited. Care was taken to provide thick and rich description of the data to enhance transferability; however, the sampling procedures inhibited broad transfer of the findings to organizations that did not “buy-in” to ECB. Second, by selecting organizations that “bought in” to the process, the results did not paint the full picture of ECB impact. Many types and kinds of organizations undergo ECB interventions; however, not all of them are ready or able to engage and participate in the process. By interviewing leaders from organizations who engaged the process, the research was unable to provide a description of ECB impact at medium or low levels of ECB engagement. Many organizations fall into these categories, limiting the scope of the findings. Third, it was difficult to understand the causal mechanisms at play between ECB strategies, contexts and sustainable evaluation practices. Qualitative methods are not designed to determine causality, and without random selection, random assignment, and quantifiable ECB measures, causality is difficult to attribute. Furthermore, the longitudinal nature of the study exacerbated issues of causality, as the ever-changing contexts of an organization helped facilitate or prevent sustainable evaluation practice, independent of the enthusiasm of the organization or the quality of the ECB intervention.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter presents findings related to the following research questions:

1. What are the sustainable evaluation practices of an organization that underwent an ECB intervention?

2. How do sustainability factors develop and help facilitate these practices over time?

First, changes to the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability, based on the findings, are described. A detailed analysis of the results related to each research question is then provided in the sections that follow.

**Empirical Changes to the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability**

This research revealed the frequency of ECB strategies and sustainable evaluation practices; it also provided initial evidence for the development of sustainability factors over time. As a result, changes to the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability were made, which will help guide understanding of the results that follow. Three major changes were made to this model.

ECB strategies are ordered by their frequency. Four ECB strategies emerged from the data and were added to the model: (1) promotion, (2) modeling data conversations, (3) internal communities of practice, and (4) evaluation reports. These are detailed in first research question section.

Sustainable evaluation practices are also ordered by frequency. Use of evaluation findings was the most common sustainable evaluation practice, while an integrated knowledge
management system and a strategic plan for evaluation were the least common. Emerging practices are no longer listed; only subcomponents of previously identified practices emerged from the data. No new practices were revealed. These subcomponents are now included in the model and are highlighted in the first research question section.

The sustainability factors surrounding the sustainable evaluation practices are now ordered, clockwise, by how they developed over time to help sustain evaluation practice. For example, leadership is listed at the top of the model because the data showed that leadership helped sustain evaluation practices at the start of the ECB process. Meanwhile, culture took many years to develop and is therefore listed toward the end of the cycle. Specific subcomponents of sustainability factors were revealed and they are now included in the model. Evaluator rapport emerged from the data as an important sustainability factor and is now included in the model. These changes are explored in the second research question section. See Figure 4 below for the new model.
Figure 4. Updated: The Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability
Research Question #1: What are the sustainable evaluation practices of an organization that underwent an ECB intervention?

This section describes the sustainable evaluation practices that resulted from ECB interventions. The Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability identified eight sustainable evaluation practices: (1) use of evaluation findings, (2) evaluation policies and procedures, (3) shared beliefs and commitment to evaluation, (4) resources dedicated to evaluation, (5) evaluation frameworks and processes, (6) continuous learning about evaluation, (7) an information management system, and (8) a strategic plan for evaluation. This section describes the frequency and typology of these practices and their emerging subcomponents. For all analyses, the results are aggregated from both the OL and ECBP interviews. In most cases, the OL perspective is presented because it provides more detail and description. In the vast majority of cases, the ECBP interviews corroborated the practices reported by the organizations; in no instances were practices or details reported by both parties in conflict. Across all 12 organizations, there was an average of 5.5 practices per organization (see Table 9 below).

The table shows that there was a range of sustainable evaluation practices across organizations. Most organizations experienced six or more sustainable evaluation practices as a result of ECB efforts, but there were three instances of organizations experiencing three to five practices over time.

The sections that follow describe these practices in detail. First, the relationship between ECB strategies and sustainable evaluation practices is explored. Next, the frequency and typology of each sustainable evaluation practice is described. A final note on the sustainability of these practices is explored at the end of this section.
Table 9. Sustainable Evaluation Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECBP</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>P&amp;P</th>
<th>B&amp;C</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>F&amp;P</th>
<th>CL</th>
<th>Info</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>Total # Practices</th>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 12 11 11 10 6 6 5 5 Avg= 5.5


**ECB Strategies: Links to Sustainable Evaluation Practices**

There did not appear to be a strong link between specific ECB strategies and sustainable evaluation practices. See Table 9 above and Table 10 below for a comparison.
Table 10. ECB Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECBP #</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Involve</th>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Meet</th>
<th>TA</th>
<th>Train</th>
<th>Tech</th>
<th>CoP</th>
<th>WM</th>
<th>Intern</th>
<th>MDC</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>CoPI</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>AI</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total**: 12 10 10 8 8 6 5 5 3 3 3 2 1 0

* Involve=Involvement in Evaluation, Coach=Coaching, Meet=Meetings, TA=Technical Assistance, Train=Training, CoP=Communities of Practice, WM=Written Materials, Intern=Internship, MDC=Modeling Data Conversation, P=Promotion, CoPI=Communicates of Practice, ER=Evaluation Report, AI=Appreciative inquiry

^Average =6.3, Range = 4-8
Typically, ECBPs utilized multiple ECB strategies to elicit sustainable evaluation practices; however, no one approach appeared to be more useful than others. Because ECBPs utilized multiple ECB strategies during their intervention, it was difficult to tease out which specific strategies might have affected certain practices. Evidence from this sample suggests that multiple ECB strategies did appear to elicit multiple practices, and it may be that utilizing fewer ECB strategies produces fewer sustainable evaluation practices. Unfortunately, because all the interventions sampled utilized multiple ECB strategies, this link could not be inspected. There were a few organizations that were identified by ECBPs that experienced minimal ECB strategies (e.g., participated in a few workshops and trainings) but they did not respond to requests for an interview.

While there did not appear to be any robust links between strategies and sustainable evaluation practices within the data, a new typology of ECB strategies did emerge. The Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability identified ten specific ECB strategies, based on the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model. These identified strategies were utilized by the ECBPs, with the exception of appreciative inquiry. New ECB strategies also emerged from the data: (1) promotion, (2) modeling data conversations, (3) internal communities of practice, and (4) evaluation reports. Promotion involved ECBPs that would actively promote ECB and evaluation within the organization to those in leadership positions that were not involved in the ECB effort. Promotion involved ECBPs promoting ECB to the organization’s Board, or making concerted efforts to advocate for the necessity of ECB to other leaders in the organization. Modeling data conversations described how ECBPs used evaluation data to model how to reflect, think, and use evaluation data. ECBPs would hold meetings with staff and modeled how they might read,
interpret, and think about the data. Internal communities of practice involved ECBPs creating workgroups made up of diverse stakeholders within the organization such as program staff, administration and Board members. These workgroups led specific evaluation efforts in the organization. Evaluation reports, which occurred just once, involved ECBPs bringing in other evaluation reports to the organization. The ECBP had staff talk about and reflect on the methods, data, and the utility of the report to educate them on different methods and processes of evaluation. These emerging strategies were not linked to any sustainable evaluation practices or sustainability factors.

Overall, no direct links between ECB strategies and sustainable evaluation practices could be drawn from the data. There were also no direct links between ECB duration and internal or external motivation for ECB and sustainable evaluation practices. An expanded typology of ECB strategies, however, did emerge from the data, which provides a greater arsenal of ECB strategies for the ECBP toolkit.

**Sustainable Evaluation Practices**

**Use of evaluating findings.** All 12 organizations reported consistent use of findings. There were three categories of use described: (1) use for feedback and program improvement, which described how evaluation data was used to create conversation and reflection around the data and to make tweaks to the program; (2) use for development purposes, which detailed how evaluation data was used to report to funders and apply for new funding; and (3) evaluation artifacts, which were substantial, permanent changes made to a program due to evaluation that persisted over time (see Table 11 below).
Use for feedback and program improvement fit into three sub-categories: (1) general discussions to feed data to program stakeholders that was used for program improvement, (2) specific examples of how data was used to improve a program or policy, and (3) feedback that created the context for use. The first sub-component, general discussions, involved organizations sharing data with staff/stakeholders for reflection and discussion. A total of 10 organizations reported this type of use. For example, “…but then bringing them in and together working with the data to say what we are we learning from this?” (OL #6) and “I think it was a good way to generate, get conversations going, and then from there looking at the data and finding themes from the conversations that was reflected in the data and what wasn’t” (OL# 7.2). In these examples, and many others, organizations used data to reflect and think about how to make program improvements.
A total of eight organizations were then able to provide specific examples of how evaluation created a change in their programs. For example, one organization described how they used data to provide feedback to their clients and map out next steps:

“We collect that data typically annually…we compile it; we convert it to social marketing campaign that promotes the positive behavior of the students to further encourage the positive behavior. We share that back with faculty and staff. We, at the same schools, do the community readiness assessment models with the schools and then share the rating back and say here are strategies that you should use.” (OL #5)

Other organizations spoke about how feedback loops helped cultivate an environment that was conducive to evaluation use (n= 5 organizations). For example, “While I can’t attribute that to our [ECB process], I can say that experience set the stage for how valuable that kind of process is” (OL# 3).

The second category of use was for development purposes (n=6 organizations). This category could also be split into three subcomponents: (1) using evaluation data for new grants and proposals, (2) feeding data and reporting back to funders, and (3) procuring grant money because of evaluation data. A total of four organizations reported that they used data for new grant proposals and shared their evaluation findings with their development department. Four organizations noted that data helped them quantify their successes to their funders and eased the reporting process, while one organization attributed getting new grant money as a result of evaluation data. Many organizations were willing to say that they felt data helped them procure funding but only one organization was able to draw a direct line between evaluation and funding procurement.

A final component of use was an evaluation artifact. An evaluation artifact was a substantial change made to a program that resulted from evaluation. This went beyond simple
tweaks made due to formative feedback and spoke to large-scale restructuring of a program that persisted over time. This is different from evaluation policies and procedures, which are changes in program practices as a result of ECB, because these were changes to evaluation policies and procedures as a result of \textit{evaluation findings}. Thus, artifacts moved beyond small modifications to programs, and represented large-scale changes in policies and programs that became embedded within organizational practice. A total of two organizational leaders detailed evaluation artifacts and one ECBP detailed an artifact, although that organization did not respond to requests for an interview.

The most prominent example of an evaluation artifact was one organization’s ability to onboard new staff. Evaluation findings suggested that new staff had trouble accessing resources and knowing who to contact when questions arose. As a result, a new onboarding protocol was created for the organization, which outlined resources and contact points for all new staff, and resulted in a smoother process for new employees. Thus, evaluation findings were used to implement a new protocol for onboarding staff, which persisted over time and is now ingrained policy within this organization. In another large-scale change, one organization created an entire endowment fund as a result of their evaluation findings, which refocused their grant-making on a specific aspect of their organizational mission.

One ECBP described how an artifact could outlast staff and persist throughout turnover; they described their ECB process within an organization that used data to create streamlined healthcare teams for patients. This process persisted across 100\% staff turnover:

\textit{…Everybody would be assigned a person and the team would meet, the way a team of doctors would meet about a patient. And so evaluation became the reason to create that, and actually that's what’s left there. The evaluation program may or may not exist in}
various fashions but these resident care teams are still in place. (ECBP #8)

From the quote above, we see the essence of an evaluation artifact: a persistent change to an organization or program that resulted from evaluation. Unfortunately, this organization could not be reached for an interview.

No organization produced all three types of use; however, OL# 10 provided a vivid example of how evaluation use became embedded within the organization. She described how her organization used data in a timely feedback loop that helped staff receive important feedback regarding their work. First, the organization developed a checklist with input from all staff that elicited buy-in, guided by the ECBP. Next, the ECBP created an automated report to quickly analyze this checklist data. Then, over the years, staff became accustomed to the exercise of giving these checklists back to the OL for analysis. The OL described this process, “But over time all of those numbers have increased because each year I give a report and say hey why isn’t your program doing [this], let’s look at how you are doing that and where we could do better” (OL #10). As staff acclimated to feeding the OL data, the OL was able to give timely feedback to staff if clients were in crisis. She described calling up staff to make sure they followed up with clients at the hospital, “But if something huge happened at a hospital I want my programs…to have responded to that and taken that as an educational opportunity” (OL #10). The staff got so used to her calling and following up, that staff “got tired of my calls and they just post it on the checklist to say yes we followed up…which is really good because that’s real time response and education outside of the crisis moments” (OL#10). Over time, the use of data at the organization became a routine part of their organization and an embedded system of practice.
In sum, data indicated that ECB resulted in three distinct uses for evaluation: feedback and program improvement, development, and evaluation artifacts. Based on Weiss’ (1979) typology of evaluation use, feedback and program improvement and evaluation artifacts fit within instrumental use. Development use could align to symbolic or persuasive use (Weiss, 1998), but “there is a lack of consensus on what should be considered persuasive or symbolic use” which some define as “using an evaluation to persuade important stakeholders that the program or organization values accountability” (Fleisher & Christie, 2009, p. 159). Development use was not contextualized this way, however it was described as a way to persuade funders. There were no instances of enlightenment or conceptual use, although this is likely due to the interview protocol, which asked for specific examples of using evaluations to make improvements (see Appendix B for OL interview protocol). For feedback and program improvement, the examples were stark and organizations provided rich examples of how data informed specific uses to enhance their programming and respond to their program participants. This was echoed within evaluation artifacts, which showed large, permanent changes to organizational practices as a result of evaluation use. For development, organizations were pleased to integrate data into grants, report their successes to their funders, and in at least one instance, help bring in funding to the organization.

**Evaluation policies and procedures.** A total of 11 organizations reported improved policies and procedures as a result of ECB efforts. These policies and procedures were broken down into three distinct categories: (1) creation of logic models/theories of change for their programs; (2) tool creation and refinement, which described how evaluation tools such as surveys and interview protocols were changed or created as a result of the ECB effort; and (3)
data collection and analysis, which denoted how these new tools were collected, analyzed and reported (see Table 12 below).

Table 12. Policies and Procedures for Evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies &amp; Procedures</th>
<th>Logic Models/ Theory of Change</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Collection Methods &amp; Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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The creation or refinement of logic models/theories of change was discussed by eight organizations, although one of them did state that they needed to revisit logic models. Eleven organizations reported that new tools were created or refined and that ECB helped bolster their data collection and analysis. In most cases, this was the most direct result of the ECB process, as the ECBP worked with the organizations to create logic models, create or refine tools (e.g., surveys, focus group protocols), and create a protocol for data collection and analysis.

Eight organizations spoke about all three policies and procedures components. OL #6 provided great detail about what all of them looked like in practice. She described a years-long process through which her organization created multiple policies and procedures for evaluation.
First, the ECBP convened evaluation committees made up of staff and Board members to tease out theories of change for each of their grant-making dockets. Because they were a foundation, they looked to identify short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes across all dockets; all dockets now have theories of change and a set of outcomes. The one docket most familiar to the OL used the new theory of change to revamp their surveys to reflect the identified outcomes. They analyzed these surveys and were able to report back to their Board that they saw increases across important outcomes. They began to systematize this process for this docket so that “…if I decide to move to Tahiti and do yoga tomorrow somebody else can pick that [evaluation] up” (OL #6). This organization renewed their contract with the ECBP in the hopes to replicate this process across all grant-making dockets, although their ability to do so remains tenuous due to changes in leadership.

**Shared evaluation beliefs and commitment.** A total of 11 organizations reported practices related to shared beliefs and commitment to evaluation. This outcome was divided into two practices: commitment and belief. Commitment described organizations that were committed to doing evaluation, while belief described organizations that were bought in and believed in the value of evaluation (see Table 13 below). Preskill and Boyle (2008) did not emphasize the distinction between commitment and beliefs; however, they did describe them differently. Commitment was “commitment to evaluation” whereas belief was “…that it [evaluation] is useful, necessary practice” (p. 13). In practice, the Preskill and Boyle descriptions were accurate but the differences were more stark. Data showed that commitment represented evaluation as something that needs to be done, while beliefs represented a higher-order understanding of evaluation, as organizational staff realized that it meaningfully contributed to
their programming. In this sense, beliefs represented the colloquial “buy-in” and value around evaluation.

Table 13. Shared Beliefs and Commitment

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<th>Organization #1</th>
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<td>Organization #2</td>
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Commitment to evaluation was present in three organizations. In these organizations, evaluation was seen as something that needed to be done; however, staff saw it as a requirement for programming rather than a value-added. For example, “…teaching artists understand it is something they have to do, especially for reporting, and they understand that it’s something that foundations get information from about how they are teaching…” (OL #1) and “I would say all of them know of the external requirement…” (OL #4). One organization stated there was a staff divide wherein some staff were committed, while others believed in the value of evaluation.

Shared beliefs around evaluation was present in eight organizations, as many of the OLs described how staff moved from commitment to beliefs as a result of the ECB process. For example, “I think we have about 25% who have been touched by assessment in such a way that
they have experienced a benefit…they do value it” (OL# 4). Furthermore, “…we have been about to take that information and share is with the Board in meaningful ways. It helps them see why we do this and why organization community voice is vital” (OL #8). Thus, findings suggested that there was a developmental process in this outcome: first, people understood that it was necessary and once they personally benefited from it, they began to believe in its value. They saw it less as something mandated, and more as something vital.

OL #2 provided a great example of how an ECB effort led to greater beliefs around the utility of evaluation, even though the organization was unable to continue to commit to ECB due to funding issues. OL #2 described, “So I think some of the outcomes are at the participant level, just an increased appreciation for evaluation.” He detailed how those who participated in the ECB effort are now “going around like evaluation champions” (OL #2). The OL ran an evaluation unit within the organization and stated that the ECB effort helped others in the organization understand what they do, how they fit into the organization, and the value they gave to the organization. The “[ECB effort] contributes to the culture of evaluation…People ask for evaluation, they want it.” (OL #2). The organizational leadership recognized the value of the ECB effort within this organization and planned to reintroduce it in the future when funding became available. Preskill and Boyle (2008) noted how evaluation culture develops when “…the organization develops an evaluation culture, these beliefs become manifested in the ways members talk about evaluation, their inclination to ask evaluative types of questions, their interest in using data for decision making, and their overall commitment to conducting meaningful, timely, and useful evaluations” (p. 13). This indeed appeared to be the case.
Resources dedicated to evaluation. Ten organizations also reported dedicating resources to evaluation. Resources were parsed into three distinct categories: (1) technology resources, which described technology used to either create or collect evaluation information, such as a Survey Monkey account or iPads for easy survey administration; (2) personnel resources, which described either a rearranging of personnel responsibilities or hiring of new personnel to accommodate evaluation; and (3) monetary resources, which described further financial investment in evaluation, such as the hiring of evaluation consultants, investment in training, and inserting evaluation into program or grant budgets. This section will detail each of these categories and give a summary of themes and responses related to each (see Table 14 below).

Table 14. Resources Dedicated to Evaluation

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Five organizations dedicated resources to technology. One additional organization had not made an investment since their ECB work; however, they planned to look at ways to use
their pre-existing database to better inform their evaluation work. Technological investments involved Survey Monkey accounts to track survey responses and analyses (n=3 organizations), an automated Excel workbook that ran statistics and frequency counts for an embedded evaluation system and/or a program dashboard that was fed back to staff for formative and summative purposes (n=3 organizations), and investments in iPads for visitors to fill out surveys (n=1 organizations).

Personnel resources were discussed by eight organizations. Investing in personnel resources took three forms: (1) changing job descriptions and roles, (2) hiring personnel for newly formed evaluation-related positions, and (3) creating an evaluation committee within the organization. These categories were not independent of each other in the data. Changed job descriptions/roles to include evaluation was the most common personnel investment, seen in six organizations. In many cases, this involved a staff member who worked closely with the ECBP to take over evaluation responsibilities and had their job description changed to accommodate these new responsibilities (n=3 organizations). In other cases, organizations decided to add it into job descriptions because they wanted all staff to have familiarity with evaluation (n=3 organizations). In a more drastic change, some organizations created a new position, or hired an intern, whose sole responsibility was evaluation (n=3 organizations); another organization is planning to hire an evaluation coordinator in the future. Finally, one organization convened an evaluation committee that is responsible for creating evaluation protocols and procedures for the organization.

Monetary investments related to evaluation were present in eight organizations. Although technological and personnel investments required monetary resources, these were separated from
formal monetary investments in this analysis. Monetary investments took multiple forms: renewing a contract with an ECBP and/or hiring consultants for evaluation work, integrating evaluation as a line item in the budget or as a line item in grant proposals, and sending staff to trainings, professional development opportunities and/or the American Evaluation Association (AEA) conference. Four organizations renewed their contract with their ECBP and continue(d) to work with them due to the positive results they had seen over time. Additionally, three organizations also found the money to invest in consultants for external evaluation work, workshops, or logic modeling. Three organizations also spoke of how they budgeted for evaluation as a line item either for grant proposals or within their formal organizational budget. Organizations also invested in professional development, finding resources to send their staff to trainings (n=2 organizations).

OL #12 detailed extensive technology, personnel and monetary investments that they made to sustain evaluation within their organization. They made a commitment to attend the AEA conference every year, and made time for webinars and other professional development opportunities that AEA provides. Additionally, they hired multiple evaluation consultants beyond the ECBP, and also renewed the ECBP contract. They made investments in important technology to track their data, and evaluation was added to at least two job descriptions as a result of ECB work. Currently, they are creating an evaluation coordinator position within the organization and hoped to hire in the near future.

Overall, organizations made substantial resource investments into evaluation as a result of ECB interventions. Across technology, personnel, and monetary investments, organizations
allocated significant dollars into continued training, consultants, technology infrastructure, and personnel to continue to build their internal capacity for evaluation.

Evaluation frameworks and processes. A total of six organizations discussed an overarching evaluation framework and set of evaluation processes. These frameworks and processes can be divided into three subcomponents: (1) an evaluation theory that guides organizational practice, which described how an evaluation theory, such as utilization-focused evaluation, was adopted as the standard philosophy of the organization; (2) a set of outcome indicators/goals that guided practice, which detailed how organizations created and utilized metrics to measure program progress towards overall outcomes; and (3) shared evaluation language among organizational staff, which described the common language and jargon adopted by an organization to discuss and talk about evaluation (see Table 15 below).

Table 15. Frameworks and Processes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Frameworks and Processes</th>
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Three organizations discussed an overall theory that helped guide their evaluation practice. One large organization that served multiple populations with limited evaluation resources adopted an ECB approach to evaluation; the internal evaluation team coached and trained others within the organization to perform their required evaluation duties. Another organization described adopting developmental evaluation and utilization-focused evaluation principles, while another adopted participatory, stakeholder-inclusive evaluation principles. A final organization discussed a culturally inclusive approach, as they brought people from the community into their evaluations. For all three organizations, these theories appeared to match their organizational contexts and missions. For example, the large organization adopted ECB out of necessity because they did not have the resources for the evaluation unit to perform all evaluation duties and the other two organizations adopted their theoretical frameworks because they fit with the types of programs they implemented within their communities.

Two organizations also discussed a set of overall goals and indicators that they used to frame their organizational outcomes. For example, “…We look at nine key indicators…and the nine indicators are things that the program, the people closest to the work, be held accountable and measured against.” (OL #7). Similarly, this organization described a set of five strategic goals set by the Board that were priority areas and were consistently reported on within the organization. One other organization described a similar framework: a set of goals and priorities that guided their evaluation practice and were used to measure progress and goal attainment within the organization: “And so evaluation has really helped us to identify what our priorities are and to keep us on track” (OL #8).
Lastly, three organizations highlighted how the ECB effort helped instill a set of common evaluation language within the organization, which helped to streamline understanding and build the capacity of the organization. In one example, an organization previously used an evaluator unfamiliar with the organization’s work and the evaluation effort failed due to a lack of common language and understanding. Once another evaluator was hired with background and knowledge in this content area, she was able to meld evaluation and mission-specific language to create a common understanding within the organization’s staff. The other OL at the organization also discussed how a shared evaluation language created through the ECB process bolstered understanding among staff; the ECBP of this organization similarly spoke about the utility of cultivating a shared language within the organization.

OL #7 detailed her organization’s development of all three categories of frameworks and processes as a result of ECB efforts. This organization was fortunate enough to have resources to hire consultants beyond the ECBP who were experts in utilization-focused and developmental evaluation. The organization adopted these evaluation approaches as their guiding evaluation theories. They also developed key indicators that guided their organizational practices and have a dashboard that they use to facilitate internal discussions. They used these indicators to focus their work, as the OL described how it kept them from getting sidetracked from interesting, but unrelated work, “It’s a great thing to do, but is it a one-off, how does it further the five goals? Where does it line up with our core values?” (OL #7). They brought this dashboard into staff meetings to facilitate discussion, which created a shared language and understanding among staff at the organization.
Continuous learning about evaluation. A total of six organizations discussed continuous learning around evaluation. This learning took two forms: informal and formal learning. These types of learning were mentioned by Preskill and Boyle (2008) but not described. In practice, formal learning involved using organizational resources to fund learning about evaluation, while informal learning involved learning about evaluation indirectly through investments in other resources (e.g., attending evaluation presentations at conferences not focused on evaluation). Four organizations described formal learning and three described informal learning. None of the OLs gave thick detail on this practice; they described it matter-of-factly, without much description. One organization described both formal and informal learning around evaluation (see Table 16 below).

Table 16. Continuous Learning about Evaluation

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multiple employees, attending relevant AEA webinars, and making an effort to attend the AEA conference every year. For another organization, it meant paying those struggling with evaluation responsibilities to attend off-site evaluation workshops and trainings. A supplemental interview of this organization also revealed that those who attended evaluation trainings in the past referred and encouraged their coworkers to attend these sessions, as well. For the other two organizations, formal learning involved training and evaluation expertise provided by the ECBP on an ongoing, as-needed basis.

Informal learning about evaluation was discussed by three organizations. All organizations that described informal learning about evaluation stated that their employees would attend conferences related to their organizational mission. At these conferences, employees chose to attend a few sessions about evaluation, in order to get ideas from similar organizations around evaluation practices. The following quote sums up indirect learning well, “…when he goes to those conferences he has to go to each one of those evaluation sessions just to see what other people are doing, but I haven’t sent him anywhere to do anything specifically that’s evaluation related....” (OL #11). Here, the organizational leader described how she sent her evaluation person, which was adopted into his job description as a result of ECB, to conferences. At these conferences, he attended evaluation sessions to learn from peers; this learning was always secondary to the larger organizational conference and there was no formal investment in evaluation learning.

The best example of continuous learning about evaluation was a description from an EBCP about an organization that could not be reached for interview. She described a member of this organization getting an AEA membership and attending multiple conferences and
professional development sessions, to the point that she presented at these conferences herself. This person also helped others in her organization to attend AEA with her. The ECBP described how the formal investment in evaluation learning was a manifestation of their growth around evaluation over time:

   Her staff, there were some people that told me at the very beginning like "Just so you know, I'm not your friend, I'd much rather be doing anything else, I think evaluation is a waste of time and our money." And that was the one I ran into [at AEA] and told you [they were excited about evaluation] so there have been some converts, which is huge (ECBP #5).

By investing in professional development and training around evaluation, an organization developed staff who began to understand the value of evaluation and became energized and enthusiastic about it.

**Integrated knowledge management systems.** A total of five organizations developed or invested in an integrated knowledge management system as a result of ECB (see Table 17 below). In all cases, these management systems were not something that the leaders described in detail, but were mentioned in passing, and few details were provided when asked directly. In some cases, these systems were not helpful, as they were not related to their own evaluation efforts, or the organization’s staff lacked the training necessary to make the system work for them.
Table 17. Information Management Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization #1</th>
<th>Information Management System</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization #2</td>
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<td>Organization #3</td>
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<td>Organization #12</td>
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</table>

These management systems took many forms. One organization described an investment in scan-tron technology so that they could scan in surveys and evaluation forms, which was a great value-added to the organization; this same organization also described a state-mandated database that they felt was more cumbersome than useful, “And in fact, that system is terrible” because it involved double data entry and it was not evaluation focused (OL #5). Another organization described a database that was set up by their ECBP; however, they were not able to get the information they needed out of it because the data entry staff member was not coached on how to input data. On the other hand, two organizations, which were both coached by the same ECBP, described an automated Excel workbook created by the ECBP that they thought was helpful to the organization because it “spits things out in a way that is a bit easier to understand” (OL #12). One other organization also discussed an automated report; however, they were not as effusive about its use as the others.
Two organizations also mentioned information management systems; however these systems were put in place prior to the ECB effort and are therefore not counted because they were not a result of the ECB intervention. One organization discussed a mandated information system, not related to their ECB effort, which was cumbersome and did not capture meaningful or useful data. One organization detailed a useful information system that was in place prior to the ECB effort; it was unknown whether the system was mandated or organizationally implemented.

Findings suggested that an information system is not enough *itself* to help build capacity. It must be aligned to the evaluation practices of the organization; it must be streamlined and not involve extra data entry work; and employees needed training to understand how the data can be collected and extracted in a useful manner. The best-case example of an integrated management system was detailed within the Use section (OL #10), where an automated report allowed an organization to develop timely feedback loops for staff.

**Strategic plan for evaluation.** A total of five organizations discussed how evaluation was integrated into the organization’s strategic planning and the benefits that ensued (see Table 18 below).
Table 18. Strategic Plan

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<th>Organization #1</th>
<th>Strategic Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
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</table>

Of the five organizations that integrated evaluation into their strategic planning, all of them felt that it was a beneficial and informative process. One organization stated that they changed the outcomes in their strategic plan due to evaluation data. Outputs were once indicators of goal attainment; however the organization restructured their thinking and began to use outcomes, which were more indicative of successful programming. Another organization described three ways evaluation and strategic planning were useful: (1) they infused evaluation into the strategic plan via a “listening tour” of their grantees so that they could better understand their perception and impact within the communities they served; (2) evaluation helped them identify individual donors and revamp their fundraising strategies; and (3) it helped them set realistic goals. Similarly, a third organization discussed how evaluations were infused in their strategic plan and guided how they interpreted and used data within the organization. A fourth organization detailed how infusing evaluation within their strategic plan led them to invest in
personnel and evaluation systems. Finally, a fifth organization discussed how evaluation was infused in their strategic plan and how they planned to use it to form an evaluation workgroup and build evaluation culture within the organization. Two other organizations, as a result of the interview process, planned to integrate evaluation into their strategic planning in the future.

OL #8 provided a detailed example of how a strategic plan around evaluation can benefit an organization. She described how her organization used a strategic plan to set goals, reconfigure their organization’s priorities, and use data as a way to tell their story and begin conversations about the future. As a result of strategic planning, this organization wanted to tell the story of their impact, and began a listening tour of their grantees across the state. They used this data to understand their impact and grantee experiences. Additionally, they were able to set up a data system that allowed them to better target donors and created a new grant-making docket. She described the strategic planning as key to their plans for the future: “It really helped us to actually figure out how we do both annual and long range planning…we have been able to get really clear about what some big goals are and to figure out when and how evaluation makes sense in that work” (OL #8). This organization planned to create a new strategic plan this year, and planned to use evaluation data to help them plan for the future.

Findings related to strategic planning showed that organizations used evaluation to inform their long-term goals and outcomes, helped them frame and assess what is considered attainable, and helped them invest in resources such as personnel, and technology to help build evaluation within the organization. In one case, evaluation was directly tied to fundraising and development.
Sustainable Evaluation Practices: Barriers and Impediments

So far, the sustainable evaluation practices have been discussed in a manner that suggests that these practices were attainable and permanent across organizations. This, however, was not the case. While the sustainable evaluation practices discussed above are indeed shared across many organizations and have sustained evaluation since the initial ECB effort (in some cases many years after), some OLs were worried that the practices were tenuous. The fear centered on the sustainability factor of organizational context, which is a broad term that describes the stability of an organization in terms of resources, turnover, and leadership. Specifically, OLs felt that two factors, a loss of resources and a loss of specific personnel, could cripple the sustainability of organization’s evaluation practices. This section details these concerns and highlights the anxiety many organizational leaders felt around sustaining their evaluation practices.

Turnover and potential turnover of key evaluation personnel was the main source of anxiety for organizations around the sustainability of evaluation practices. This sample consisted of organizations that were relatively stable and experienced mild turnover, in most cases leadership remained stable and/or the champion for evaluation remained at the organization, which helped evaluation continue to flourish. Two organizations, though, experienced turnover issues that affected their evaluation growth and progress. In one example, a new Executive Director was hired over the past year who had not worked with the ECBPs. She was described as understanding evaluation and felt it was necessary, but it was unclear if she would continue to invest significant time and resources into building evaluation capacity. While plans for
evaluation were still moving forward, the organization’s evaluation champion was unsure how important this work would be in the future, a sentiment that was echoed by the ECBP, as well.

In one harrowing example, an ECBP described an organization that could not be reached for interview:

…at this point 100% of the people that we worked with maybe five years ago are gone. And a lot of the program that we set up, not to say that we do everything right, we very intentionally work to embed systems that outlast people, so you know we look at evaluation technology and we create working groups and meetings, and even with all of that we find staff turnover is just like the death knell for a sustained capacity building success (ECBP #8).

Another organization discussed a scenario in which the staff member who absorbed the evaluation responsibilities of the organization left. Luckily, the organization was able to find an evaluation intern to continue the work; however, it was only through the help of a very involved Board member, who is connected to the evaluation community, that an intern was possible. In this instance, the OL worried that the evaluation work would not persist if the intern had not been hired and she continued to worry about what may happen once the intern leaves. While the organization hoped to hire a full-time evaluator, they did not have the resources at that time.

Additionally, fear of potential turnover was the most common theme related to the instability of evaluation practice. In many instances, organizations were able to continue their evaluation work in the face of turnover; however, many organizational leaders worried what would happen if they, or other key evaluation staff members, left the organization. For example,

So I think we have people on staff that were here with [ECBP] and really bought into it. I don't know… how that would shift if I left or if [staff member] left, if we have embedded it enough within the organization that somebody is going to be able to come in and pick it up at the level we have it now. (OL #11)
This was a common sentiment across organizations—what happens if specific staff left the organization? Many organizations were anxious about this type of turnover and felt that it could have a dramatic effect on their evaluation work. ECBPs were quick to echo this sentiment, as they identified the evaluation champion leaving as catastrophic to their work. For example, one organization reflected on what would happen if the champion and the leadership left the organization: “But as you know, people leave. What if [champion] decides to retire? What if [executive director]...oh my gosh!” (ECBP #6).

Lack of resources was also identified as an impediment to sustaining evaluation practices. Many organizations wished to continue their ECB work and find a full-time evaluator but they did not have the funds to do so. One organization did not have the extra funds to continue their ECB work and met with their ECBP on a pro-bono case. Because of this, it became difficult to have consistent ECB work, which affected the organization’s ability to sustain evaluation practices. In two other cases, once the grant ended, the ECB efforts were curtailed and there were fewer persisting sustainable evaluation practices.

The purpose of this section was to highlight the anxiety organizations felt around their sustainable evaluation practices. Even though organizations sustained these practices over time, in some instances many years after the initial ECB effort, there was still a pervasive anxiety about the sustainability of evaluation practices in some organizations. The organizational contexts of turnover, potential turnover, and a lack of resources all contributed to this anxiety and it is important to understand this context when discussing the sustainability of evaluation practices.
Summary of Findings for Research Question #1

Overall, the data showed that there is strong evidence that ECB efforts produced multiple sustainable evaluation practices across organizations (see Table 9). In addition, there was emerging evidence to support important sub-components of these practices. Specifically, use of evaluation findings, resources dedicated to evaluation, policies and procedures for evaluation, and shared beliefs and commitments were the most common sustainable evaluation practices. Examples provided in this section show what these practices looked like in reality. Organizations, though, feared these practices were tenuous. There was anxiety among organizations that these outcomes may not be sustained over time due to turnover, potential turnover and/or a lack of resources.

Research Question #2: How do sustainability factors develop and facilitate these practices over time?

The purpose of this section is twofold: to highlight how sustainability factors developed over time in organizations and to describe how these sustainability factors helped to facilitate sustainable evaluation practices.

The Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability consists of nine sustainability factors: (1) leadership, (2) outside supports, (3) evaluator rapport, (4) communication, (5) understanding the benefits, (6) alignment to mission and values, (7) systems and structures, (8) culture, and (9) organizational contexts. The model is also cyclical in nature, denoting the constant and ongoing nature of evaluation within an organization. That is, sustainable evaluation practices and sustainability factors are developed over time, over the course of multiple evaluation cycles. For example, at the beginning of an ECB effort, one sustainability factor may be the most critical,
but over time other critical factors emerge as evaluation practice progresses (i.e., the organization moves from one evaluation cycle to a second).

This section will be organized in a similar manner. Sustainability factors presented first are those that were either pre-existing or facilitated practices early in the process, while the factors presented later developed over a longer period of time. This section highlights every sustainability factor, noting the importance of specific factors during different parts of the evaluation cycle, and explains how each of these factors contributed to sustaining evaluation practice.

A coding matrix was created in NVivo to study how sustainability factors facilitated evaluation practice. Significant overlaps between sustainability factor codes and sustainable evaluation practices codes were inspected. There were five occasions in which codes overlapped five times or more (see Table 19 below).

Table 19. Factors and Practices Links

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Factors</th>
<th>Sustainable Evaluation Practices</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Benefits</td>
<td>Shared Beliefs &amp; Commitment</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems &amp; Structures</td>
<td>Policies &amp; Procedures</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems &amp; Structures</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems &amp; Structures</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In many instances, the links in the table above confirm what was already described in the practices and examples of the first research question. These examples highlighted the multifaceted ways in which these practices were linked to others. For example, the organization with a developed system and structure was detailed in the Use section because the developed system for evaluation helped facilitate widespread evaluation use within the organization.
Similarly, there were quotes that illustrated understanding the benefits of evaluation in the shared beliefs and commitment section, and communication and use were tied together in their respective sections (i.e., data discussions require communication).

Although NVivo was helpful for inspecting intersections between factors and practices, it was not a definitive list of interactions. The breadth of the interviewing protocol, as well as the time-limited nature of the interviews, did not allow for nuanced inspection of links between sustainability factors and sustainable evaluation practices. Concrete connections were not possible across many factors and practices but the interviews, taken as a whole, did suggest that sustainability factors helped to elicit buy-in from staff around evaluation, which led to staff becoming engaged with evaluation. That is, given a hermeneutical approach to qualitative analysis, these connections were clear (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In certain instances, organizational leaders made direct links about staff seeing “value” in evaluation as a result of certain factors. The idea of buy-in and value towards evaluation speaks to shared beliefs and commitment to evaluation; however, this did not always result in overlapped codes. When considering the interviews as a whole, these connections were clearer than looking at direct overlaps. These connections are highlighted in this section. See Table 20 below for a review of each organization and their developed sustainability factors.
Table 20. Sustainability Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECBP</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Sustainability Factors*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECBP #1</td>
<td>Organization #1</td>
<td>L x OS x ER x Com x UB x M &amp;V x S&amp;S x Cult x OC x Total 8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ECBP #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECBP #7</td>
<td>Organization #12</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x 9</td>
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| Total   | 12 | 6 | 4 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 12 | Avg. = 7.3 |


**Leadership**

Leadership emerged as a primary facilitator of sustainable evaluation practices.

A majority of organizations within this sample (n=9) were internally driven to seek out ECB (see Table 7, OL Sample). This means that leadership sought out ECB work for their organization, suggesting that leadership played an important role in starting the ECB process. In these cases,
leadership understood that there was a need for evaluation within their organization and/or they needed help with their existing evaluation practices.

The data revealed four specific types of leadership around evaluation, each playing an important role in facilitating sustainable evaluation practices: (1) Board involvement, which described how Board members were involved in and supportive of evaluation; (2) buy-in, which described Executive Directors who were bought into evaluation; (2) support, which described Executive Directors who were supportive of evaluation from a resource perspective, but were not engaged or enthusiastic about evaluation; and (4) champions, who were staff members in leadership roles who were engaged with and championed evaluation within the organization (see Table 21 below).

Table 21. Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Board Involvement</th>
<th>Buy-In</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Champion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization #1</td>
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<td>Organization #2</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
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Board involvement in evaluation appeared critical to facilitating evaluation work in a few organizations; however, just four organizations had this level of involvement and only two
organizations provided elaboration about the Board during interviews. In general, organizations with Board involvement did not have any differences in sustainable evaluation practices than other organizations (see Table 9, Sustainable Evaluation Practices); however, one organization, which had Board involvement and buy-in before the ECB process, described in detail how the Board drove evaluation efforts across the organization. They provided resources for a full-time evaluator and they hired an evaluation consultant to build an organizational system for automated reporting. As a result, this was the sole organization with a developed system and structure for evaluation. It is important to note that this Board was not a typical non-profit Board. This organization was a state coalition; the Board members were Executive Directors of the member organizations of the coalition. In another example, an organization had a Board member who herself was an evaluator and was integral to helping the organization build evaluation capacity. She provided training on evaluation and identified students for the organization to hire as evaluation interns. Both of these examples speak to the power of Boards to set an evaluative agenda and facilitate evaluation practice. In both instances, these examples are not typical Boards or Board members but they still demonstrate how critical Board leadership can be to facilitating evaluation practices over time, in particular when the Board is involved and thinking evaluatively before ECB occurs.

Leadership buy-in and leadership support were also critical to facilitating practices. As described above, many organizations were internally driven to seek out evaluation, suggesting buy-in and/or support for evaluation at the leadership level helps to incentivize ECB efforts. Looking across the data, there was no apparent gap in practices between organizations with buy-in and those with support. That is, organizations that had leadership support had a similar
number of sustainable evaluation practices as those who had full buy-in from leadership (see Table 9, Sustainable Evaluation Practices).

Leadership support facilitated others in the organization to encourage evaluation:

“Thankfully, he was really supportive of it and was like, great, if you feel like this will make your work stronger and you feel like we all understand the budgetary sort of limitations, the great go for it” (OL #8); “They do see the value in it and they are supportive and they are fine with signing off on money to go towards consultants and trainings” (OL #12). In other cases, leadership was bought-in to evaluation, becoming champions themselves. For example, “So the executive director, and those of us who are directors here…we celebrate each other’s outcomes, evaluation efforts” (OL #5). In most cases, though, the leadership that was bought-in was not described as a champion of evaluation, which requires ongoing advocacy within the organization. This is likely due to the fact that leadership itself does not have the time, nor the room for extra responsibilities, to engage with evaluation on a ground level. Thus, regardless of the level of buy-in from leadership, organizations still needed a champion within the organization to take the evaluation mantle and be responsible for its cultivation. While conventional wisdom would suggest full buy-in would be better for sustaining evaluation practice over time, the data did not support this rationale.

Most importantly, through ECB efforts, each organization developed an evaluation champion that valued and owned the evaluation process. Due to the sampling frame, the finding that evaluation champions were cultivated through the ECB process is not surprising; however, the degree of their enthusiasm, buy-in and productivity around evaluation is nevertheless a strong indication that ECB efforts can have lasting effects. The degree of enthusiasm is also worth
noting. For example, “I am kind of an evangelical evaluation person, I am like listen this is why we need to care about it and we try to always connect it back to it” (OL #12). This demonstrates how evaluation champions helped to facilitate evaluation practice; they constantly advocated for evaluation to staff.

Data showed that having an evaluation champion, somebody in a leadership position who valued, advocated, and took on evaluation responsibilities, was essential to facilitating sustainable evaluation practices. In all but one of these organizations, there was no full-time evaluator; thus, it was imperative that either one person took on evaluation responsibilities, or that all staff played a role in evaluation. This type of structure made it critical that a champion for evaluation emerge, because without somebody willing to take on the extra responsibility, set an example, and advocate for evaluation, it may not have been possible to sustain evaluation efforts. For example, many organizations expressed concern that while their evaluation efforts have persisted over time, turnover of the evaluation champion could bring that work to a halt,

…so we had a staff person for three years then who really learned from [ECBP], met regularly with [ECBP], took trainings, read the books, did all of that, and she was our guiding light… she left her position here about a year ago, which left a big hole. As an agency we decided to invest in staff, and that’s great as long as the staff is still here (OL #7).

The evaluation champion, then, was essential to helping to cultivate evaluation within an organization and their presence was necessary to help start the process and continue it after the ECB effort.

Overall, data demonstrated that leadership was a critical component for starting and continuing the ECB process. In most cases, leadership from Executive Directors and Board members around evaluation were already present prior to the ECB effort and they played a key
role in facilitating the start of ECB. Once these efforts were underway, an evaluation champion developed within the organization, who helped to continue and sustain an organization’s evaluation practices.

**Outside Supports – Cultural and Political Contexts**

Outside supports such as the cultural and political contexts surrounding an organization also facilitated the ECB process (see Table 22 below).

Table 22. Cultural and Political Contexts

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<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contexts</th>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Three organizations described how the culture within their state or an outside funder led them to engage with evaluation; however, these experiences were very different. One organization spoke about how the culture of the state valued data-based decision making, which led to greater buy-in during the ECB process. In the other organization, a statewide scandal led to a greater influx of funding for the organization, but it came with expectations of quick-fix programming because the state wanted to bolster its image, which was not in line with the
organization’s long-term outlook. Thus, the state culture led to greater funding, but conflicting ideas about how to understand evaluation results/expectations. Another organization spoke about external requirements being placed on their organization, which led to the creation of an evaluation department and the necessity of ECB within the organization.

In all three instances above, the political and cultural climate surrounding the organization helped facilitate the process of ECB. In one instance, the state’s value of data helped elicit buy-in from staff, which helped facilitate sustainable evaluation practices. In the other two instances, the contexts of the state or outside organization helped spur ECB work in the form of funding and mandated reporting requirements. In all instances, these outside supports helped to either support the need for ECB or buy-in around ECB, suggesting that the political and cultural context surrounding an organization can be critical for facilitating the ECB process.

Evaluator Rapport

Evaluator rapport emerged from the data as an important factor in sustaining evaluation practices (see Table 23 below).
Table 23. Evaluator Rapport

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<th>Organization #1</th>
<th>Evaluator Rapport</th>
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<td>Organization #12</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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ECBP’s came into the organization and worked with staff on re-arranging their protocols and practices around evaluation, which added extra responsibilities for staff members. Going through this process was challenging; however, an ECBP that was congenial, knowledgeable, and in-step with organizational mission helped facilitate the complicated ECB process.

Many organizational leaders praised the process of the ECBP and the enjoyment they had working with them: “[ECBP] is incredibly bright and has this really broad ability to see things in a very broad way but also get to the nuts in ways I haven’t experienced before. She was a pretty special person to have engaged our organization” (OL #11). Additionally, organizational leaders were able to note that having an ECBP understand their needs was a necessity. In one instance, an organizational leader described not rehiring an evaluator because his or her stance did not match the organization’s: “…the fact that she looks at it from like a long-term standpoint and I needed data right now. I did have to bring somebody else because that’s not necessarily her
style” (OL #9). Here we see a direct link between evaluator-fit and organizational need. For sustainable evaluation practices to manifest during the ECB process, it appeared that a good working rapport with an evaluator, and the evaluator’s approach aligning with organizational needs, were important for sustainability of evaluation practice.

**Communication – Data Discussions and Advocacy**

Once an organization underwent the first iteration of the evaluation cycle, communication emerged as a critical facilitator of sustainable evaluation practices. The data showed that communication consisted of four specific subcomponents: (1) data discussions, which described staff having specific discussions about data and reflecting on how it could be used for program improvements; (2) advocacy, which described organizations advocating for their work to funders; (3) collaboration, which described staff members working and talking collaboratively around evaluation; and (4) diffusion, which described the dissemination of evaluation knowledge and skills to other outside organizations. Only two of these sub-components will be discussed in this section because they emerged after the first evaluation cycle: data discussion and advocacy. The other two components, collaboration and diffusion, were seen after multiple evaluation cycles within an organization and will be detailed later. See Table 24 below for a summary of organizations that utilized data discussions and advocacy.
Data discussions took place once data was collected and analyzed. Organizations would bring staff together to discuss and reflect on the data to make formative program improvements. For example, “I know that more departments have a least one conversation each semester, or at least one a year about using assessment results to guide what’s going to happen in the future of the department” (OL #4). This quote is representative of what data discussions looked like across all organizations—staff meetings were used to reflect on how the data can be used to inform future programming.

Data discussions appeared to be an important component for cultivating staff understanding about evaluation. These discussions brought evaluation to the forefront and moved it from collection and analysis toward a mechanism for reflection and formative improvements. One OL described the benefits of these discussions, “I think it was a good way to

Table 24. Communication – Data Discussions and Advocacy

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<th>Organization</th>
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generate, get conversations going, and then from there looking at the data….OK so what are we going to do next with this?” (OL #7.2).

Likewise, advocacy also emerged after the first evaluation cycle, as organizations discussed using evaluation results to advocate for their own organization to funders. For example, “It makes it easier for me to have conversations with our officials who are major funders for us” (OL #11) and “…its helping us tell the story of yes, what we do is making an impact we want in the community” (OL #6). Communicating evaluation results and advocating for your organization served as an implicit reminder of the utility of evaluation. This took the form of an organization feeling empowered by their evaluation results and being able to engage funders with these results.

Data showed that both of these forms of communication were tied to use of evaluation findings. In practice, communication consisted of data discussions with staff about the evaluation results, which spurred reflection and conversation among staff about how to use the data. For example, one organization discussed how they used staff meetings as a time to reflect on data and think about improvement to program events, “And so we look and assess and measure towards goals we anticipated and then we talk about are we off goal, are we close, or are we not? And if not, why not and what might we change?” (OL #7).

Additionally, organizations would use data to talk about their impact and demonstrate their value by communicating their results to funders or potential funders. One OL described how evaluation made it easier to engage donors in conversation, “And then it makes it easier for me to have conversations with our officials who are major funders for us…who say, you know,
great, it looks nice but what’s the impact that you are really having on this community?” (OL# 11).

Communication around evaluation, both within the organization with staff and outside of the organization with funders, facilitated evaluation use, which helped guide programmatic thinking about improvement and conversations about impact.

**Understanding the Benefits**

Once data was collected and analyzed and communication around evaluation developed, staff began to understand the benefits of evaluation (n= 11 organizations, see Table 25 below).

Table 25. Understanding the Benefits

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There was a strong link between shared beliefs and commitments to evaluation and understanding the benefits of evaluation. In practice, once staff understood the benefits of evaluation, they were more likely to commit to evaluation and believe in its utility. One organization described this relationship, “We have about 25% who have been touched by
assessment in such a way that they have experienced a benefit, either personal or program benefit. They do value it” (OL #4). This shows a direct link that emerged across organizations: once staff understood the benefits of evaluation they were more likely to value it.

Developmentally, understanding the benefits occurred after the first evaluation cycle, as organizational staff were able to see how the data collection and evaluation information was helpful to their work:

The direct care folks who have the hardest job, they are not paid well. There’s a high burnout. They can take information to them and go... look you are actually making a difference in these peoples lives and its hard to know that sometime because people disappear, you don't often get the thank you card from a client that you only saw four times. But that I think has been really helpful for them. (OL #10)

Here, the organizational leader described how the organization is able to communicate to staff to show they are doing a good job and making a difference with their work. This is echoed in other organizations, “[Participants] say really nice and sweet things about the teachers, so I feel like they love reading, "This teacher was amazing!” It’s those times in the surveys, that’s when the teaching artists see the value in having them” (OL #1).

These examples show a relationship between communication, understanding the benefits, and shared beliefs and commitment. Once positive evaluation findings are communicated with staff, they understand the benefits of evaluation and begin to value it.

Alignment to Mission and Values

Alignment to mission and values was present in 11 organizations and likewise emerged as an important factor that facilitated sustainable evaluation practices (see Table 26 below).
Like understanding the benefits, alignment to mission and values was cultivated after the first evaluation cycle and helped staff value evaluation. Once staff were able to see how evaluation could help their organization promote its mission and values, they were more likely to become bought-in to evaluation. One OL described how she used organizational values to garner buy-in from staff: “We have a set of seven core values, like we are constantly going back to that because it's like if I see eyes glazing over when I am talking about evaluation I don't like that and I am going to tell you why you need to care” (OL #12). Another OL described how evaluation data helped her organization tell their story and helped staff reflect on their own values and impact: “…and so it speaks directly to that value, so it’s really based on…we make a set of commitment to community members, volunteers, and donors and this helps us to stay honest and clear about where we are doing well and where we need to do some work” (OL #8). In both these instances, and many more, the alignment of evaluation to the mission and values of

Table 26. Alignment to Mission and Values

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the organization helped garner buy-in to evaluation and value it, which in turn facilitated evaluation practice.

**Communication – Collaboration and Diffusion**

The other two components of communication, collaboration and diffusion, appeared after multiple evaluation cycles, once the staff had a greater grasp on evaluation. Collaboration described staff within an organization working together on evaluation and discussing/sharing evaluation best practices, while diffusion described the dissemination of evaluation knowledge and skills to other, outside organizations.

Table 27. Communication – Collaboration and Diffusion

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<tr>
<th>Organization #1</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Diffusion</th>
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| Total  | 6   | 5   |

In instances of collaboration, staff members would reach out to each other to talk about best practices, what worked in the past, and how they should frame their own evaluations:

“…she just shared with me some of the struggles she has had trying to navigate that process and asking me and using me as a soundboard what are my thoughts on this and on that…” (OL #4.2).
In another example, one department within the organization that was strong in evaluation after an ECB effort helped other departments that had questions about their own evaluation practices:

…We go into meetings and help figure out how to tackle or approach a grant, we certainly do talk about [evaluation] and we certainly offer our experience or our tools and say we've done focus groups this way, we've done post surveys this way… it’s valuable that we do have that knowledge and we are able to share that (OL #1.2).

These examples show that communication-as-collaboration helped to bolster evaluation practices by sharing evaluation information and engaging in discussion around evaluation practices across an organization.

Evaluation diffusion provided a great case for the ripple effects of ECB work. As staff became familiar with evaluation and went through the evaluation cycle multiple times, some become fierce champions of evaluation, which led them to share their evaluation knowledge with other organizations. This took many forms and was variable. One organization described how they engaged with partner organizations within a larger local network to disseminate evaluation practices and gave advice to others looking to enhance their evaluation work. A foundational organization created a community of practice for their grantees and held talks about how evaluation could be useful; they had grantees talk to each other about their own best practices. Two organizations discussed presenting evaluation work at conferences, and another is creating an evaluation toolkit that they plan to disseminate to partner organizations via their website. One individual who took part in an organizational ECB effort described how she brought those skills to other committees she worked on and passed the baton to another member of her department, who will continue to build on the evaluation system she was setting up for the department.

Finally, one ECBP described two individuals who championed evaluation via the ECBP’s work with their organizations. One of them was interviewed, while the other did not respond to
interview requests. The one evaluation diffusion interview took a job at another, similar organization after the ECB effort and infused similar evaluation practices, and tried to build the capacity within her new organization. For example,

…What I kind of focus on now in [state] is kind of honing in on what my colleagues at the coalition need when it comes to understanding evaluation, as well as how I can create spaces for folks to talk to other experts and kind of like connect with the evaluation community in different ways so that there's lots of different opportunities for evaluations to be infused in practice and then to have some sort of infrastructure around them. (OL #5.2)

While the other individual who engaged in diffusion could not be interviewed, the ECBP described these efforts:

And she ended up again doing podcasts on that, she presented that at her national sexual assault conference, so again she was like a rock star client and she joined AEA, that very first year, which I always encourage people to do. And again her staff continues to go. She earmarks and prioritized funding from a very small budget, you know, for her multiple members of her staff to attend AEA, which you and I have just talked about how difficult that is even if its your primary...She actually was promoted to director...deputy director of organizational change. So again, this idea of a big piece of evaluation capacity building is really making changes within the organization and then she went on to write the job description to hire a.... they now have an evaluation manager. (ECBP #4)

Evaluation diffusion had large ripple effects that included enhancing other organizations’ evaluation capacities, disseminating evaluation knowledge to other organizations, and helping to facilitate evaluation practices across other departments and committees within an organization. This provides strong evidence that ECB interventions not only have sustainable impacts on organizational evaluation practices, but also may affect other individuals and organizations, as well.

In sum, both collaboration and diffusion facilitated sustainable evaluation practices by bolstering communication within and outside an organization around evaluation practice.
Diffusion, in particular, demonstrated that ECB work can have a ripple effect across multiple organizations.

**Systems and Structures**

After multiple evaluation cycles, organizations began to coalesce their evaluation practices into a routinized system. A total of eight organizations discussed developing, or developed, systems and structures for evaluation as a result of ECB work (see Table 28).

**Table 28. Systems and Structures**

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<th>Organization #1</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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A developed system was one that was ingrained in the organization; there were routinized evaluation practices and policies that created an ongoing feedback loop of data to staff; engaging in this system was an explicit expectation within the organization. Developing systems and structures described organizations that were building routines within their organization and setting goals for systematic evaluation practices; however, this was not routinized within the organization and the organization still struggled to evaluate their programs routinely.
Most organizations described developing systems that they hoped to cultivate over time. In these instances, there were specific issues that needed to be resolved before evaluation became a routinized practice. For example, barriers to a developed system included turnover of staff, ways to analyze and report data in a timely manner, or disseminating this practice across all areas of the organization. One OL described how her change in position may have affected the continued effort to install an evaluation system within her department: “I’m actually going to be ending my interim position this month so I won’t exactly be able to get to having an actual assessment system developed for the program but at least there is some sort of infrastructure in place now so that whoever comes next will be able to follow through…” (OL #4.2).

Organizations also had trouble routinizing their systems across the organization. One OL discussed how a single evaluation system was put in place for an exhibit at their organization and staff valued the feedback and found it useful; however, staff continued to have trouble transferring these protocols to other programming and needed a reminder from leadership, “I’m not sure it’s as automatic as it needs to be but that’s why I am here” (OL #11).

One organization discussed a routinized evaluation system and it was an organization with an in-house evaluator prior to the ECB effort. Additionally, the leadership of this organization sought out an ECBP who could routinize evaluation within the organization. With the help of the ECBP, this organization set up evaluation protocols and tools to which all staff had given input, creating wide agreement. Then, the ECBP set up the automated report and helped the internal evaluator set up an improved system for data feedback. The internal evaluator would then use this report to create feedback loops to staff so they could use the data in real-time.
Systems and structures for evaluation were linked to three specific sustainable evaluation practices in the data: policies and procedures for evaluation, resources dedicated to evaluation, and use of evaluation findings. Each of these links will be described in the paragraphs that follow.

The first link was between policies and procedures and systems and structures; OLs described how creating policies and procedures for evaluation worked toward developing a routinized system for evaluation. For example, to have systematized feedback of data, an organization must have data collection methods, tools, and protocols in place to facilitate this system. One OL described how these protocols fed into a developing system for evaluation, “Our data collection says we are going to do a survey when they are two years out from receiving a grant….so we have it calendarized…so if I decide to move to Tahiti tomorrow and do yoga tomorrow somebody else can pick it up” (OL #6). Another organization described how they created a new instrument and put policies in place for how this instrument would be administered. Then, an automated tool was created to analyze it quickly. Another organization discussed their own developing system in terms of the data collection tools and processes they have put in place, “We now have a tool that we use whenever we do in-person trainings with folks, and we have a database to put that information into, we are able to easily pull data for reports or meetings” (OL #12). These examples show how policies and procedures help to build systems and structures for evaluation. They also provide evidence for the Integrated Model’s suggestion that practices can influence factors and vice versa. Here, we see the development of one outcome over time helping to build factors related to the sustainability of evaluation practices over time.
This idea of practices developing factors is also reflected in the link between resources and systems and structures. Building a system for evaluation requires an investment in numerous resources. For example, many organizations spoke about investment in technology such as Survey Monkey and iPads to help facilitate a routinized system for evaluation. Other organizations described how they shifted responsibilities of staff around to accommodate for evaluation, or plan to hire a full-time evaluator in the future. The one organization that developed a system for evaluation spoke about how it was only possible through investing the time and money to hire an ECBP. Indeed, a system for evaluation requires multiple components and expertise, both of which require dedicated resources of technology, money and personnel to be successful.

Additionally, systems and structures were linked to facilitating use of evaluation findings. The organization with a developed system for evaluation detailed how their system for evaluation allowed for quick feedback loops to staff for evaluation use (see Use section for greater detail). Other organizations spoke of something similar, although still developing. For example, one OL tied setting up a system to evaluation use, “How do we set up a system by which we effectively collect it, communicate it in a way that is useful to our decision makers” (OL #6)? Thus, we see an example of two systems, one developed system and one developing evaluation system. The OL of the developing system wants the system to help facilitate use, and the OL from the developed system showed how this can be achieved.

Overall, systems and structures were linked to the sustainable evaluation practices of policies and procedures, resources, and use. These links provided important insight into the development of evaluation capacity over time and demonstrated the ongoing influence between
practices and factors, factors and practices, in the Integrated Model. Here, we see that two sustainable evaluation practices, resources and policies and procedures, were used over time to build a system and structure for evaluation. These systems and structures then facilitated the outcome of use within an organization. This provides an explanation for why many organizations have developing systems and structures—it is developed over multiple evaluation cycles, and is the result of the emergence of certain sustainable evaluation practices. The end result, though, is a developed system, which can enhance an organization’s ability to use evaluation quickly and efficiently.

**Culture**

Evaluation culture is listed towards the end of this section because in all cases evaluation culture was developing and not ingrained. Thus, the multiple years and evaluation cycles experienced by these organizations was still not enough to develop a strong culture of evaluation. This is perhaps not surprising, as a developed culture is a long process that involves not only technical know-how but also changes in organizational knowledge, attitude, and institutional memory to combat turnover and resource instability. Culture was enhanced in ten organizations (see Table 29).
Table 29. Culture

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In most cases, developing evaluation culture manifested itself as changes in either organizational attitude or knowledge. For attitude changes, one OL described how evaluation used to be a source of anxiety for staff, but they have now come to accept it and are no longer intimidated by it (or her), “I think the good news is that people don’t run away or hide from me, which I think is a positive outcomes” (OL #4). For knowledge, it looked like a change toward an evaluation mindset. One OL described how their staff learned to think evaluatively about what the data said and also what it did not say, “Something I appreciate and admire about the way this organization works is that they often ask the question, what’s missing?” (OL #7.2).

Preksill and Boyle (2008) note that,

as an organization develops an evaluation culture, these beliefs become manifested in the ways members talk about evaluation, their inclination to ask evaluative types of questions, their interest in using data for decision making, and their overall commitment to conducting meaningful, timely, and useful evaluations.
The examples above speak to how the development of beliefs, attitudes and knowledge changed; however, behaviors and inquiry were still not manifested. Thus, these cultures were still developing, moving towards inquiry, but not yet achieved.

In terms of facilitating sustainable evaluation practices, the process by which this factor facilitated evaluation was not explicit within the data. Many organizations felt evaluation was just the way things were done, but there was not an explicit explanation of how and why this was helpful for growth. For example, “…we always know for our programming, evaluation will be a part of it” (OL#1). Here, evaluation just is, which implies facilitation of evaluation, but does not provide a full explanation, which was common across the data. One ECBP summed up the difficulties and complexities of developing an evaluation culture well,

…it is a heavy lift to change culture … You really have to teach them the language of evaluation, the habit of reflection, the activity of measurement… there's all these pieces to creating an evaluation culture that just takes time. (ECBP #8)

Organizational Context

Organizational contexts such as the stability of leadership, resources and staff were also an important factor facilitating sustainable evaluation practices and all organizations reported the importance of these contexts (see Table 30 below).
Table 30. Organizational Contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization #1</th>
<th>x</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization #2</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization #3</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization #4</td>
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<td>Organization #5</td>
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<td>Organization #6</td>
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<td>Organization #7</td>
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<td>Organization #8</td>
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<td>Organization #9</td>
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<td>Organization #10</td>
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<td>Organization #11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization #12</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In many cases, organizational leaders reported that stable funding and lack of turnover helped to stabilize the organization during and after the ECB intervention. While these were helpful, it was not necessary. For example, “...the last three years have been a pretty significant time of transition and change...I would say that evaluation has become a way for us to really center our organization” (OL #8). In this example, turnover and change at the organization did not impede long-term progress; however, in this example, leadership remained stable, suggesting that stable leadership may be more important than front-line staff stability. Much of this sample reported multiple sustainable evaluation practices and also reported stable funding and leadership, and relatively stable personnel. While the causal links between these cannot be confirmed given the methods of this research, there does appear to be a relationship between a stable organizational context and sustainable evaluation practices.
Outside Supports – ECBP Contact

A final factor supporting sustainable evaluation practice was another variation on outside supports: informal, ongoing contact with the ECBP. This type of outside support is different than the first, political and cultural context, which facilitated the beginning of the ECB process. Ongoing, informal ECBP contact helped to sustain practices after the ECB effort ended (see Table 31 below).

Table 31. ECBP Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ECBP Contact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization #1</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Organization #2</td>
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<td>Organization #3</td>
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<td>Organization #11</td>
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<td>Organization #12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three organizations described informal, ongoing contact with their ECBP. In these cases, the ECBP was not under contract with the organization for ECB work but was used on an as-needed basis to help them with evaluation questions and concerns. The four organizations with renewed ECBP contracts are not detailed here because they are discussed in the Resources section, but these contract renewals could also be described as outside supports brought into an organization to facilitate evaluation. Once the ECB contract ended, organizations would have
questions about evaluation processes and protocols, in addition to data analysis. Organizations found it beneficial to be able to connect with their ECBP, receive input, and move forward with their professional advice. Thus, ongoing and informal ECBP contact helped organizations “check-in” with their evaluation questions and concerns, which aided them in continuing their evaluation practices.

**Summary of Findings**

The purpose of this section was to detail how sustainability factors developed over time to facilitate sustainable evaluation practices. All eight previously identified sustainability factors, plus the emerging factor of evaluator rapport, contributed to facilitating sustainable evaluation practices. In addition, the data illuminated not only *how* these practices were produced but also provided a tentative developmental process which described *when*. This process is general and dynamic; however, it provides a useful framework for understanding how evaluation practices are sustained over time.

First, leadership sought out and supported evaluation and ECB efforts. This allowed for champions to develop within the organization who advocated for evaluation and helped to promote ECB efforts. In certain instances, the outside political and cultural climate surrounding an organization also helped demonstrate the need and importance of evaluation. Once an ECBP was brought in, their ability to gain rapport and trust with staff was critical to facilitating the ECB strategies, taking the organization though the evaluation cycle(s), and eliciting buy-in from staff. Once the ECBP took an organization through the first evaluation cycle and outcome data was available, communication helped enhance evaluation use via data discussion and advocacy to funders. This use helped staff understand the benefits of evaluation and how it aligned to their
program mission and values. It did this by showing staff that data could make helpful program improvements, validate their own work, and be used to engage with funders. Over time and multiple evaluation cycles, other components of communication emerged, including collaboration and diffusion, which sustained evaluation practice by bolstering internal and external communication around it. At the same time, systems for evaluation practice started to routinize within organizations, although data indicated that this developed over a longer period and resulted from the development of specific practices such as policies and procedures for evaluation and resources dedicated to evaluation. The end result was a developed system for evaluation, which greatly facilitated evaluation use. Similarly, a culture of evaluation began to take root, particularly in regards to organizational knowledge and attitudes towards evaluation; however, data did not show a developed culture within any of the organizations, which indicated that this too takes more than a few evaluation cycles to develop. Finally, this development was facilitated by an organizational context with stable leadership and funding, as well as informal contact with an ECBP to help with any pressing evaluation issues that arose after the formal ECB intervention.

This process described above is not definitive, but it provides helpful insight into the developmental processes that facilitate sustainable evaluation practices in organizations that underwent an ECB intervention.

**Summary of Research Questions and Findings**

This chapter presented findings related to two research questions:

1. What are the sustainable evaluation practices of an organization that underwent an ECB intervention?
2. How do sustainability factors develop and help facilitate these practices over time?

Results for the first research question showed that there were multiple sustainable evaluation practices associated with ECB efforts; every organization that underwent an ECB intervention enacted multiple sustainable evaluation practices. There were no explicit links between sustainable evaluation practices and ECB strategies. Specifically, resources dedicated to evaluation, use of evaluation findings, shared belief and commitment about evaluation, and policies and procedures for evaluation were the most common sustainable evaluation practices. All sustainable evaluation practices identified in the Integrated Model occurred across multiple organizations. Specific impediments to sustainable evaluation practices were also identified, such as lack of resources and staff turnover. In particular, potential turnover of key staff members created anxiety in organizations that their evaluation practices were not sustainable.

Results for the second research question showed how sustainability factors developed over time, across multiple evaluation cycles. Leadership, specific organizational contexts (e.g., political and cultural contexts) and ECBP rapport helped facilitate buy-in around evaluation at the start of the ECB efforts. After the first evaluation cycle, specific communication components (e.g., data discussions, advocacy), and understanding the benefits, and alignment to mission and values were developed. Then, after multiple cycles, other communication components (e.g., collaboration and diffusion), as well as systems and structures and culture, were developed over time to help sustain evaluation practices. Outside supports, like ongoing ECBP contact, and stable leadership and funding facilitated sustainable evaluation practices during and after the ECB process.
The second research question showed how these sustainability factors developed evaluation practices. Leadership, organizational context, and ECBP rapport helped spur ECB strategies and elicited commitment to evaluation from staff. Communication was linked to evaluation use and understanding the benefits and alignment to mission and values were linked to shared beliefs and commitment to evaluation via staff buy-in and valuing of evaluation. Systems and structures for evaluation were developed over time via the sustainable evaluation practices of resources and policies and procedures for evaluation, which can result in a developed system for evaluation that can efficiently facilitate evaluation use.

Overall, the findings indicated that (1) there was strong evidence to support the notion that ECB interventions have long-lasting impacts on organizations but concern that these practices may be tenuous over time, (2) specific sustainability factors developed over time to help facilitate these sustainable evaluation practices in an ongoing developmental process, and (3) there was a complex relationship between certain sustainable evaluation practices and sustainability factors that illustrated how evaluation capacity is sustained over time.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This research study provided the first empirical inquiry into the sustainability of evaluation practices as a result of ECB efforts. Results demonstrated that ECB interventions produced sustainable evaluation practices and sustainability factors developed over time to facilitate these practices. In addition, a model for ECB sustainability was created based on theory derived from multiple literatures and it was empirically studied through this research. This model can help guide the field forward as it begins to tackle theoretical and practical issues related to sustainability. This chapter highlights the findings of this research and discusses the important ways they match, build on, or diverge from the ECB literature. Implications for future research and practice are emphasized and the limitations of this research are explored.

Implications for Research and Practice

The culmination of this research was the development and refinement of the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability (see Figure 5). This is a model for ECB sustainability and can be a useful map for the ECB field as it moves toward addressing sustainability through research and practice. It is not meant to be definitive but a building block for future research to confirm, deny, and improve aspects of this model. This section will explore findings related to the model via its three components, ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and sustainability factors, highlighting areas for future research and practice.
Figure 5. The Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability
ECB Strategies

Many of the findings related to ECB strategies corroborated existing literature. First, this research confirmed the Labin et al. (2012) finding that ECBPs tend to prefer a multi-pronged approach to ECB efforts, implementing multiple ECB strategies. It also confirmed that involvement in evaluation, coaching, and training are some of the more common ECB strategies across practitioners. All ECB strategies identified in the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model but one were identified by this research; appreciative inquiry, was not used by any ECBP in this study. This research expanded the field’s typology of ECB strategies via its identification of new strategies such as promotion, modeling data conversations, internal communities of practice/work committees, and evaluation reports. An expanded typology of ECB strategies is an important first step in understanding a larger menu of ECB strategies; the strategies defined by the Integrated Model are not the full toolkit of strategies. The ECB field would benefit from research that inquired about ECB strategies from a larger sample of ECBPs to create a comprehensive list of ECB strategies. A better understanding of strategies would help the field diversify ECB approaches and select tailored interventions based on organizational needs and contexts. For example, if an organization struggles to involve different staff in evaluation, internal communities of practice can help form working committees that bring together different types of people to discuss and work on evaluation. If an organization struggles with interpreting data, modeling data conversations might be a helpful choice, and so on. With a wider list of options, ECBPs would have flexibility in their practice to address organizational issues that arise during ECB efforts.
This research did not provide causal evidence linking strategies to evaluation practices. No ECB study to date has directly connected strategies to practices, which is likely due to the lack of quantitative, causal methods within ECB research (Suarez-Balcazar & Taylor-Ritzler, 2014). Future research to determine the causal mechanisms of specific strategies and their links to outcomes would be helpful to ECB practitioners; understanding these links could lead to more intentional and productive ECB efforts than current practice. For example, if an ECBP understood that communities of practice enhances evaluation use while technical assistance was most impactful for policies and procedures around data collection, an ECBP could structure their interventions accordingly, given the specific needs of an organization and its context.

This research also correlated a multi-prong ECB approach to multiple sustainable evaluation practices, which echoes the findings from other research (Labin et al., 2012; Nacacarella et al., 2007; Wade et al., 2016). In this study’s sample, most ECBPs utilized a wide menu of strategies; no ECBPs utilized only a few strategy options. All organizations experienced multiple outcomes, which relates positively to the number of ECBP strategies. Given the methods utilized for this study, these links do not have strong causal claims. Understanding the link between the number of strategies and sustainable evaluation practices will be helpful moving forward. If this link were causally proven, this knowledge would help ECBPs structure their ECB efforts in a purposeful and efficacious manner. For example, ECBPs may want to use multiple strategies for organizations wishing for wider impact, while scaling down ECB strategies for organizations with low-impact goals.
Sustainable Evaluation Practices

This research provided an expanded typology of sustainable evaluation practices. In a review of the empirical ECB literature conducted in the second chapter, only a few studies followed up their ECB efforts (MacLellan et al., 2007; Taut, 2007) or conducted a formal empirical inquiry (Campbell et al., 2004; Carden & Earl, 2007). No studies have conducted a long-term review of multiple ECB efforts and no study focused on sustainable evaluation practices. Thus, this study represents the first attempt at this type of research and provides preliminary evidence for the sustainability of ECB efforts. Long-term for this research was defined as six months after the first ECB contract. Although this research gave the field a baseline understanding, more focus and attention is needed around the sustainability and long-term impact of ECB. Formal and consistent long-term inquiry is needed from the field to confirm, deny, and build on this research. Long-term inquiry is needed across multiple types of organizations and ECB approaches.

In general, this research matched the previous empirical research, which showed positive, sustainable evaluation practices (Campbell et al., 2004; Carden & Earl, 2007; Katz et al., 2002; Nagao et al., 2005). Sustainable evaluation practices mirrored common short-term outcomes found in the ECB literature. For example, Labin et al. (2012) found that the most frequent short-term organizational outcomes were processes, policies, and practices of evaluation (PPP), followed by mainstreaming evaluation and resources dedicated to evaluation, which is echoed by other studies that conducted long-term follow up (Campbell et al., 2004; Carden & Earl, 2007; Katz et al., 2002; Nagao et al., 2005). This research also found that policies and procedures for evaluation and resources dedicated to evaluation were some of the
most common sustainable evaluation practices. Other common practices included use of evaluation findings and shared beliefs and commitment to evaluation. This mirroring of outcomes follows conventional wisdom: the most common sustainable evaluation practices are also the most common short-term outcomes. ECBPs can leverage this information and frame the long-term ramifications of their work around these practices to set appropriate expectations. In addition, ECBPs can discuss with organizations the less common practices, such as a strategic plan for evaluation and an integrated knowledge management system, and talk about whether they would like to prioritize these practices for their organization, given that they do not commonly occur over the long-term.

This research also confirmed all eight of the Preskill and Boyle (2008) sustainable evaluation practices and expanded their typologies. For example, use of evaluation findings has many subcomponents such as feedback for program improvements, development, and evaluation artifacts. In fact, all practices except for a strategic plan and integrated knowledge management system contained subcomponents. Further research on the nuances of these expanded typologies, as well as the desirability of certain components over others, would benefit the field. For example, which type of use of evaluation findings is most impactful for ECB sustainability? Are these the only types of use? Similar logic can be applied to the other sustainable evaluation practices. Is there a hierarchy of importance as it relates to sustainability and are there more components to be unearthed? Given the limited scope of organizations that participated in this research, it is likely that there are both more sustainable practices to be identified as well as more expansive categories of identified practices. In addition, understanding the nuances of how each of these practices and their subcomponents are
cultivated, as well as their impacts on sustainability over the long-term is critical to understanding ECB sustainability and improving ECB practice.

In addition, this research pointed out obstacles to obtaining specific sustainable evaluation practices. Findings for an integrated knowledge management system demonstrated that an information system is not enough itself to help build capacity—it must be aligned to the evaluation practices of the organization, it must be streamlined and not involve extra data entry work, and employees need training to understand how to input data and pull out data in a way that can be useful and informative. Knowing this moving forward, ECBPs can be more intentional in their work with organizations to combat these issues.

When comparing the findings of this research to other empirical studies of ECB, issues of terminology arose. Terms are conflated across studies and there is no standard set of terminology around evaluation practices. This research utilized the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model for the basis of its sustainable evaluation practices and the findings provided a real-world understanding and typology of these practices. The ECB field however, has reported evaluation practices in different and disparate ways (e.g., Katz et al., 2002; Miller & Lennie, 2005; Taut, 2007). For example, a common reported practice is mainstreaming (Davidson, 2001; Labin et al., 2012; Taylor-Ritzler et al., 2013). The construct of mainstreaming is multi-faceted and aligned to various sustainable evaluation practices and sustainability factors from the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability (see Table 32 below).

Table 32 provides an example of the differences in how evaluation practices are reported across ECB studies by comparing the Labin et al. (2012) study of mainstreaming to the practices of the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability. The table above is but one example; there are
many. For example, Taylor-Ritzler, et al. (2013) proposed the Evaluation Capacity Assessment Inventory (ECAI), an assessment tool meant to measure evaluation capacity. For this tool, organizational factors were leadership, learning climate and resources, which led to outcomes of mainstreaming and evaluation use. The evaluation terminology and relationships between terms changes from study to study.

Table 32. Comparison of Labin et al. (2012) Mainstreaming to the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labin et al. (2012) mainstreaming components</th>
<th>Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation is more routine</td>
<td>Systems and Structures/ Integrated Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs redesigned to include evaluation</td>
<td>Resources- Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New relationships among organizations</td>
<td>Outside Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing learning opportunities</td>
<td>Continuous Learning about Evaluation/ Resources- Monetary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other mainstreaming outcome</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General mention of mainstreaming</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main issue is that there is no standard for evaluation practices, which makes it difficult to make cross-study comparisons. For example, it is difficult to make comparisons to other studies about the frequency of practices around strategic plans and integrated knowledge management systems when many studies do not report them; they are absent in two studies that synthesized the ECB literature (Labin et al., 2012, Taylor-Ritzler et al., 2013). In addition, the table above shows that some practices align to sustainability factors; there appears to be a serious conflation of terminology and meaning around practices and factors that facilitate these practices in ECB work. A standardized set of language around practices and factors that influence them is needed. Researchers should work towards a unifying framework of evaluation practices by conducting a synthesis of ECB studies, models, and assessment tools.
This research focused on successful cases that bought into evaluation. As a result, there was limited information about the barriers and impediments to sustainable evaluation practice. The barriers identified in this research, such as turnover (potential and real) and a lack of resources were consistent with prior literature (Andrews et al., 2006; Chinman et al., 2008; Huffman et al., 2006; Labin et al., 2012; King, 2002; Miller & Lennie, 2005). Research on ECB has focused on successful, high dosage and multi-pronged approaches (Labin et al., 2012). Research on unsuccessful cases, low and medium-engagement organizations, as well as low and medium dosage ECB efforts are all needed to understand the barriers that surround sustainable evaluation practice.

More specifically, this research showed there was a lot of anxiety surrounding the sustainability of evaluation practices. Many organizations were worried that turnover and potential turnover at certain positions would halt their evaluation progress. To combat these anxieties, ECBPs can focus on sustaining their ECB work by encouraging organizations to find funding and prioritize the hiring of a full or part time evaluator and/or procuring consistent funding for an evaluation intern. In addition, ECBPs may want to try to diffuse evaluation responsibilities. ECB strategies such as internal communities of practice may help facilitate this process. That way, the loss of a single position would not be cause for concern. In addition, ECBPs might want to sit down with organizational staff and think through easy-to-use, step-by-step protocols for evaluation to make it easier for other staff members to step in and take over evaluation work. ECBPs could also encourage organizational leaders to hire new staff with evaluation experience and/or knowledge around evaluation, which may help an organization overcome turnover issues.
Sustainability Factors

The sustainability factors from the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability were derived from the ECB, evaluation and organizational change literature that inspected influencers of sustainability. This research showed convergence with these factors, validated their inclusion in a model of ECB sustainability and provided an initial understanding of how they are developed over time to facilitate sustainable evaluation practices.

This is an important finding for the ECB field. The ECB literature produced three ECB models that identified factors related to sustainability (Alaimo, 2008; Labin et al. 2012; Preskill & Boyle, 2008). All of these models identified culture and communication as critical and two or more models identified leadership, organizational context and outside supports. Only one model identified understanding the benefits or alignment to mission and values (see Table 2, Summary of Factors Influencing Sustainability). Furthermore, the ECB literature has not empirically investigated these factors, providing little evidence for their influence on sustainability or inspected these typologies. By looking to other literature, identifying important sustainability factors, and empirically investigating their effects on sustainability, this research provided the ECB field with its first holistic look at how ECB efforts can be sustained over time. As the field moves forward, research is needed to confirm, deny and improve our understanding of these factors.

Beyond the identification of important sustainability factors, this research also unearthed a developmental process. Labin et al. (2012) stated that, “There may be an optimal sequencing regarding the targeting of particular organization characteristics before others” (p. 328). The findings of this research provided an initial glimpse into this optimal sequencing. Some factors
are present at the start of ECB efforts, some affect outcomes early on in the evaluation cycle, while others are developed after multiple evaluation cycles and are the result of the development of multiple sustainable evaluation practices. These findings provided initial evidence of this developmental process; however, long-term case studies could provide a needed understanding of how these factors develop over time to confirm this developmental understanding of ECB sustainability. For example, leadership was present at the start of ECB for all cases of this research. This is not always the case (Labin et al., 2012); however, this research confirmed previous short-term ECB findings that revealed leadership to be a key facilitator of evaluation outcomes (Chinman et al., 2008; McDonald et al., 2003; Milstein et al., 2002). When leadership is not initially supportive, how is it developed over time and how does it contribute to sustainable evaluation practice? Similar logic can be applied to other factors. More research is needed into this initial list of sustainability factors and how they develop over time to facilitate sustainable evaluation practice.

The development of sustainability factors over time and their potential links to specific outcomes has important implications for ECBPs. Understanding the developmental process of sustainability factors and how they are developed through evaluation cycle(s) can help ECBPs to frame expected development over time for organizations. For example, if an organization wants to develop a culture of evaluation, then ECBPs can help them understand that this is difficult to develop and takes a considerable amount of time. On the flip side, if organizations want their staff to understand the benefits of evaluation, that can be accomplished in a shorter time frame. Understanding the time and developmental process of ECB can aid ECBPs in directing organizations towards the best length of involvement, given their specific evaluation needs.
This research also gave a nuanced look at the typology of specific sustainability factors. Leadership is one such example, which was identified as a key ingredient to successful ECB initiatives (Chinman et al., 2008; Compton et al., 2002; Milstein et al., 2002; Preskill & Boyle, 2008). Labin et al. (2012) stated, “more attention should be paid to defining, targeting, developing and measuring leadership” (p. 327). This research provided a more nuanced depiction of leadership and its subcomponents than the current ECB literature; it also provided specific definitions and descriptions of how the components helped facilitate sustainable evaluation practices. Data showed that leadership is a multi-faceted construct, which has implications for future research and practice. For example, what types of leadership are preferable for ECB sustainability, if any? The data revealed that there was no difference in sustainable evaluation practices for Directors that were bought in to evaluation versus those who were supportive of it. At face value, this does not appear congruent and future research would do well to inspect why this is or is not the case. In addition, Board involvement was noted to be important, especially in two specific cases. The ECB literature has not focused on how Boards can impact sustainable evaluation practices even though Carman (2007) found that 95% of non-profits report their practices to their Board. This is a key area of importance moving forward. Lastly, evaluation champions, as a result of the sampling frame, were found in all organizations. How are they developed, what barriers impede their development, and what are the long-term ramifications for ECB when champions are not cultivated?

A similar train of thought can be applied to the other multi-faceted sustainability factors. For example, this research found that within the factor of communication, data discussion and advocacy occurred earlier on in the ECB process than collaboration and diffusion. Do these
subcomponents necessarily occur at different points in the evaluation cycle(s)? Also, the data found that certain factors could not be parsed into subcomponents. Is this universally true? For example, are there emerging subcomponents of understanding the benefits and alignment to mission and values? If so, do they occur at different or similar times as their other components? Are their different types and kinds of evaluator rapport and if so, how do they affect sustainability?

In addition, current ECB models do not include understanding the benefits or alignment to mission and values as factors influencing sustainability; they were pulled from the organizational change literature (Boyce, 2003; Buchanan et al., 2003; Rogers, 1995). These factors have important implications about how to frame ECB and evaluation. The ECB field would benefit from a greater understanding of these sustainability factors, their potential subcomponents, and how they affect sustainability. This knowledge would contribute to efficacious ECB practice, as ECBPs can leverage these factors for their benefit during ECB efforts. For example, the data demonstrated that once staff understood the benefits of evaluation and saw it aligned to their mission and values, they began to value it and buy into the evaluation process. This has important practical implications. If ECBPs can highlight the benefits of evaluation and show how it aligns to organizations’ mission and values, they can garner shared beliefs and commitment to evaluation, which can help facilitate evaluation practice across an organization.

The Preskill and Boyle (2008) model theorized that ECB efforts would lead to organizations diffusing their knowledge. This research validated this idea and identified evaluation diffusion as a powerful mechanism to spread evaluation knowledge. Examples from
this research revealed persons who took their evaluation knowledge and infused it into other organizations, suggesting that ECB work can have a wide ripple effect. Understanding how diffusion impacts other organizations has important implications for the overall efficacy of ECB work and deserves further study.

Two specific sustainability factors were not described or developed in the data: systems and structures for evaluation and an evaluation culture. There was one developed system and structure and there appeared to be no developed culture. For systems and structures, Organization #10 was well documented and provided a full description of their developmental process. This experience, however, is not the only way a system and structure for evaluation can be developed. This research also showed that systems and structures were a result of a few sustainable evaluation practices: resources dedicated to evaluation and policies and procedures for evaluation. Systems and structures for evaluation, in general, are not well addressed in the ECB literature; they are only identified in the Preskill and Boyle (2008) model. Case examples of their development over time might provide an expanded understanding of the different types and kinds of systems that can be developed and how they contribute to sustainability so that ECBPs can be planful during their interventions.

This research found that culture was difficult to cultivate over time. A culture for evaluation was difficult for organizational leaders to describe and articulate in this research; no organizations reported a developed culture for evaluation. More research is needed to understand the development of an evaluation culture, as well as the specific components of an evaluation culture. Researchers linked culture to factors like alignment to mission and values (Hoole & Patterson, 2008), an in-house evaluator (Arnold, 2006), leadership (Milstein et al.,
valuing evaluation skill (McDonald et al., 2003) and a nurturing support structure for evaluation (Arnold, 2006; Cousins et al., 2004). In addition, Milstein et al. (2002) provided an initial set of seven criteria of an evaluation culture, which can serve as a theoretical basis for future research. Many researchers noted that the development of an evaluation culture is critical to sustainability, which furthers the need for future research on how it is developed over time (Alaimo, 2008; Beere, 2005; Preskill & Boyle, 2008). Understanding how culture develops over time has important practical implications. It can help ECBPs understand the best way to develop a culture within an organization and create targeted ECB interventions around cultural components, which can result in sustainable evaluation practice.

Finally, this research highlighted many potential links between sustainability factors and sustainable evaluation practices (see Table 18, Factors & Practices Links). Given the qualitative, exploratory methods utilized in this research, more quantitative and causal methods should be employed in the future to confirm these links. Understanding the links between factors and practices has important implications for ECB. ECBPs can leverage and develop certain factors to elicit specific practices. For example, the results showed that communication around evaluation was linked to use of evaluation findings. ECBPs can facilitate use of evaluation findings by focusing on enhancing organizational communication. By encouraging data discussions, advocating for evaluation and enhancing collaboration around evaluation, the ECBP can create an organizational climate that is comfortable communicating about evaluation, which can lead to the consistent and sustainable use of evaluation findings. As the developmental process becomes clearer, they can do so in a developmentally appropriate manner that fits the
needs and context of an organization, which should result in a successful and streamlined ECB process.

**Summary**

This section highlighted the findings of this research, how they are related to past research on ECB, and the implications for future research and practice. This study’s findings mirrored common findings from research on the short-term outcomes of ECB. For example, the frequency of ECB strategies and sustainable evaluation practice of this research were often aligned with past research on ECB. ECBPs can leverage this knowledge to set appropriate expectations and be deliberate during their interventions. This section also highlighted areas where this research fills in specific gaps in current ECB knowledge such as the developmental process of ECB over time and an expanded typology of strategies, outcomes and sustainability factors. Understanding these areas can help practitioners create targeted, planful and efficacious ECB efforts. In addition, this research revealed discrepancies in research, such as the conflation of terminology and the lack of a standardized set of outcomes and sustainability factors.

**Limitations**

This section explores the limitations to this study. The major limitations were methodology, sampling, and defining parameters for long-term inquiry.

**Methodology**

The methods employed for this research study have several limitations. First and foremost, the sampling protocol and qualitative methodology used limited the generalizations that can be made from the data. Qualitative methods are interested in “transferability” of findings to similar, specific contexts rather than generalizability to broader organizational contexts;
however, even the small, non-random and purposive sample from which the data was generated means that even transferability was limited. Care was taken to provide thick description of the data to enhance transferability; however, the sampling procedures inhibit broad transfer of the findings. Quantitative methods, such as experimental and quasi-experimental designs, would be able to confirm the sustainable evaluation practices and the development of sustainability factors found in this study; they can also attribute causality to ECB interventions.

**Sampling**

In addition, by selecting organizations that “bought in” to the process, the results do not paint the full picture of ECB impact. Many types and kinds of organizations undergo ECB interventions; however, not all of them are ready or able to engage in the process. By only interviewing leaders from organizations who engaged the process, the research was unable to provide a description of ECB impact at medium or low levels of ECB engagement. Many organizations fall into these categories, which limited the scope of the findings.

Another issue was that this study consisted largely of non-profit organizations, foundations, and higher education institutions. All of these organizations are different from each other, with different sets of goals and resources. Thus, this study is comparing apples to oranges. Long-term studies of ECB would benefit from future research that focused on specific types and kinds of organizations, such as those in this study, and others like public health organizations and international development organizations. In addition to organization type, organizational size is also important. A majority of the organizations used here had less than 50 full time employees. Differences between large and small organizations are likely; understanding those differences moving forward is imperative.
Sampling issues were not limited to the organizations, but the ECBPs, as well. A vast majority of the ECBPs interviewed were independent consultants who started their own consultancies. This is not representative of all practitioners. Larger consultancy organizations were unable to participate in this study because of organizational protocols that disallowed them from identifying clients. A diversified portfolio of ECB practitioners and their impacts would have benefited this study.

The need for diversified approaches was a limitation, too. For example, this sample utilized a multitude of ECB strategies. The ECBP approaches were immersive, and lasted many months, if not many years. This practice is common, but not representative of all ECB efforts. It is also common for ECB to consist of brief training institutes and professional development for organizations looking to build their evaluation capacity. These types of trainings are low dosage and less immersive. These approaches to ECB were not captured in this study. Understanding the long-term impact of the diversity of ECB approaches is important moving forward.

**Defining Long-Term**

There were also decisions made during this research process that are open to debate from other researchers. For example, long-term is not a defined or fleshed out construct in the field. For this study, sustainable evaluation practices were considered any practices that persisted six months after the initial ECB contract. While most of the sample ceased formal work with their ECBP (n=7), three of those organizations still have informal contact with the ECBP, while the other five organizations renewed their initial contract and were still working with them.

The decision to include the latter types of organizations was justified for two reasons: (1) renewing a contract can be viewed as a sustainable evaluation practice (e.g., resources dedicated
towards evaluation), and (2) informal contact was low dose and consisted of a few emails or phone calls for clarification, rather than a full-on ECB effort. While these decisions for inclusion can be justified, they are by no means standardized, and there is no formal debate within the ECB research community about what constitutes long-term and how to properly define the end of an ECB period. These are concepts that deserve to be examined and debated within the field. The author’s hope is that this research serves as an impetus for these conversations.

**Summary**

This chapter provided a discussion around the findings of this research, which has important implications for both researchers and practitioners of ECB. Overall, the results were positive, highlighting many areas critical for understanding the nuances of ECB, and discussed how the findings of the research mirrored, challenged, and improved our understanding of ECB as it relates to the current body of ECB literature. The findings of this research coalesced into the Integrated Model for ECB Sustainability, which provides an important first step in synthesizing theoretical and empirical knowledge about how ECB efforts can be sustained over time. The findings centered on an expanded understanding of the typology and development of the model’s three components: ECB strategies, sustainable evaluation practices, and sustainability factors. Each of these components have important areas for future research and implications for ECB practice. As the field of ECB moves forward and turns its attention to sustainability, this chapter can provide an important roadmap of where to focus future research and how to improve practice.
APPENDIX A

ECB PRACTITIONER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
1. Could you please describe a little background on yourself and your work?
   a. **Probe: Education / training?**
   b. **Probe: Philosophy of service?**
   c. **Probe: Years of practice?**

2. Could you identify organizational leaders who have participated in your intervention? Specifically those who:
   a. Engaged and “bought in” to your ECB intervention?
      i. Preference for 1-2 “champions/advocates” of the intervention per organization
      ii. Preference for positive organizational growth and change over time as a result of the intervention
      iii. Preference for those the practitioner had a positive working relationship with leader(s)
   b. Is at least 6 months and at most 5 years removed from the intervention?
      i. Preference for organizations who have more recently undergone and intervention.
   c. Any other organizations (1-3 maximum organizations per ECBP)?

3. Could you describe to me some recent ECB intervention(s) that you implemented with (XX) organization?
   d. **Probe: What circumstances lead to the intervention (i.e., why was the intervention supported/ sought after/undergone?)**
   e. **Probe: What were your thoughts/perceptions about the intervention as a whole?**
      i. **Probe: short term impact? Long-term impact? What practices will be sustained?**

4. Specifically, what strategies or main activities did you engaged in during this ECB intervention?

   [**Probe: Describe some ECB activities from list below to jog memory**]

2. **Internships** describe participating in a formal program that provides practical evaluation experience for novices.
3. **Written materials** include reading and using written documents about evaluation processes and findings.
4. **Technology** consists of using online resources such as websites and/or e-learning programs to learn from and about evaluation.
5. **Meetings** are an allocation of time and space to discuss evaluation activities specifically for the purpose of learning from and about evaluation.

6. **Appreciative inquiry (AI)** is using an assets-based, collaborative, narrative approach to learning about evaluation that focuses on strengths within the organization.

7. **Community of practice** is sharing evaluation experiences, practices, information, and readings among staff within the organization and/or between staff at other organizations who have common interests and needs (sometimes called learning circles).

8. **Training** includes attending courses, workshops, and seminars on evaluation.

9. **Involvement in an evaluation process** describes participating in the design and/or implementation of an evaluation.

10. **Technical assistance** is receiving help from an internal or external evaluator.

11. **Coaching or mentoring** describes building a relationship with an evaluation expert who provides individualized technical and professional support.

5. Do you still have contact with this person/organization? If so, can you speak to the differences between their evaluation practices at the beginning and where they are now?
   
   a. What do you think facilitated/impeded these differences?

6. Could you identify any colleagues or other ECB practitioners that may be willing to participate in this research?
APPENDIX B

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Background Information

1. Could you please give a little background information on your organization?
   a. Services
   b. Population Served
   c. Budget
      i. Program
      ii. Organization

2. And could you also give me a description of the ECB intervention? What were the strategies used?
   a. What lead to participation in the intervention?
   b. What lead to your engagement with the intervention?

Sustainable Evaluation Practices

1. Thinking back to before you participated in the intervention, what do you remember evaluation practices being like?”

2. What is evaluation practice like today in your organization?
   a. [Probe: What has changed in your evaluation practices as a result of the intervention? How has the organization improved their evaluation/reporting as a result? Personnel and resource changes?]
   b. What have been the outcomes of evaluation within your organization? How has evaluation been used? Extra Funding? Data-based decision making? Program changes?

3. Specific Probes for each evaluation practice:
   i. Evaluation Policies and Procedures:
      1. Renewed logic models?
      2. Data collection methods?
      3. Survey overhauls?
      4. Analysis plans?
   ii. Evaluation Frameworks and Processes
      1. Organizational logic model?
      2. Standardized protocol for evaluation?
      3. Standardized data collection tools/methods?
      4. Common evaluation language?
   iii. Resources Dedicated to Evaluation
      1. Personnel (units, job descriptions)
      2. Technology
      3. Monetary
   iv. Use of Evaluation Findings
1. How have you used evaluation findings?
2. Do you all engage in data-based decision making due to evaluation data?
3. How has evaluation data been used to improve programming?

v. Shared Evaluation Beliefs and Commitment
   1. Do all staff “buy in” to evaluation? Front line staff?
   2. Does leadership support evaluation?
   3. How many people in the organizations are champions/advocates of evaluation?

vi. Integrated Knowledge Management Systems
   1. Do you all have a systematic data collection protocol?
      a. Database?
      b. Surveys accounts?
      c. Form accounts?
      d. Reporting protocol?

vii. Strategic Plan for Evaluation
   1. Do you all have a long-term plan for evaluation/outcomes measurement?
   2. A long-term plan for data collection?
   3. How does the development team utilize evaluation?

viii. Continuous Learning about Evaluation
   1. Have you all undergone more evaluation PD?
   2. Hired or engaged in other evaluation consultation/processes?
   3. Do you all have any on-boarding plans for new staff and evaluation?

Sustainability Factors

4. Let’s take a step back and talk about the factors that may affect evaluation practice within your organization. What supports are there for evaluation in your organization? How did they develop during the ECB process?
   a. [Probe: Were there any people who really bought into the intervention? How do you all know speak about evaluation in the organization? Are there any overarching policy or protocols for evaluation organization-wide?]
      i. Leadership
         1. Evaluation champion?
         2. Consistent discussion and emphasis on evaluation?
      ii. Systems and structures for evaluation
         1. Logic Models?
         2. Data collection systems?
         3. Surveys?
         4. Analysis Plans?
      iii. Evaluation culture
         1. Program?
            a. Front line staff?
2. Organization?

iv. Communication
   1. Discussion internally with staff about evaluation?
   2. Discussions with funders?
   3. Discussion with other organizations?
   4. Research publications?

v. Organizational context
   1. Stability of Funding?
   2. Leadership Turnover?
   3. Staff turnover?

vi. Understanding the benefits of evaluation
   1. Improved programming based on evaluation? Data-based decision making?
   2. Funding?
      a. Procuring more funding streams?
      b. Sustaining current funding streams?

vii. Alignment to mission and values
   1. How does evaluation align to your program mission?
   2. How does evaluation align to your organizational values?
      a. How does evaluation empower your organization?

viii. Outside Supports
   1. Other organizations?
   2. Funders?
   3. Political/social/community climate and environment?

Conclusion

5. Is there anything else you would like to describe or discuss that you feel is important to understanding the overall impact of the ECB intervention? Is there anything you would like other organizations to know before that engage in an intervention?
APPENDIX C

EMPIRICAL ECB REVIEW
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Labin*</th>
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<tbody>
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*Y= “Yes”, article is included in the Labin et al. (2012) study.
*N= “No”, article was not included in the Labin et al. (2012) study.
REFERENCE LIST


VITA

James W. Wade grew up in Nashville, Tennessee. Prior to attending Loyola University Chicago, he earned his Bachelor’s degree in English and Psychology at the University of Notre Dame in 2010.

From 2010-2014, James served in an administrative role at Loyola University Chicago’s School of Education, where he went to graduate school part-time and got his Masters in Community Counseling in 2014. In 2014, James became a Data Analyst for PIE Org, and then was promoted to Evaluation Director in 2016. He still serves in this role today. PIE Org specializes in evaluation and evaluation capacity building services for Chicagoland non-profits, educational institutions, and foundations.

His academic interests focus on evaluation and evaluation capacity building. He currently lives in Chicago, Illinois with his partner, Meaghan Jennings.