

# Collaborative, Participatory, and Empowerment Evaluation

Stakeholder  
Involvement  
Approaches



David M. Fetterman,  
Liliana Rodríguez-Campos,  
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## NOTES

See also Zimmerman (2000).

See GTO Step 9.

The quotations are summaries of several voices. They represent a collective voice based on a comprehensive series of interviews.

These self-assessments and judgments not only address the project accomplishments, implementation, and outcomes, but also other equally important formative factors, such as (a) examination of the chronological sequence of project planning and implementation; (b) analysis of project structure, components, and delivery systems; (c) a better understanding of contextual factors in which the project was taking place; (d) whether the outcomes and project design made sense in reality; (e) participation rates and engagement characteristics; (f) perception of project clients; (g) levels of community awareness; (h) resources used for project operation; and (i) an analysis of unplanned results, as well as the planned ones.

Much effort in an empowerment evaluation is spent building and maintaining relationships. This is accomplished, in part, by sharing perspectives and joint evaluation activities.

## CHAPTER 10

## A Google-Enhanced Empowerment Evaluation Approach in a Graduate School Program

David M. Fetterman and Jason Ravitz

Empowerment evaluation can assume many shapes and forms. For example, there is a three-step approach and a 10-step GTO model, both described earlier in Chapters 8 and 9. Google has developed a strategy for planning evaluation using a series of worksheets and resources that can enhance or provide another approach to empowerment evaluation. This chapter demonstrates the power of empowerment evaluation to create a shared vision, and the strength of Google's technologies and evaluation worksheets to improve practice and provide additional specificity, as is typically associated with rigorous evaluation.

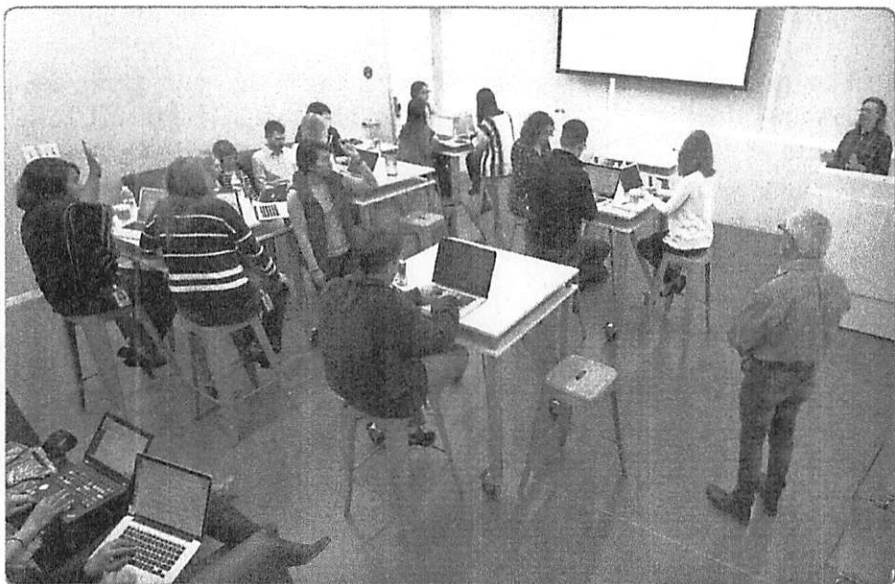
In this chapter, we discuss how this combined approach is being exported to higher education, specifically use of empowerment evaluation to evaluate a doctoral program at Pacifica Graduate Institute by its own graduate students. The lessons learned from this experiment are being reflexively mirrored back to Google to improve their evaluation capacity-building efforts with the nonprofits and initiatives they support. Our work enhances the three-step empowerment evaluation approach by adding more specific evaluation tools and technologies designed at Google to build evaluation capacity and improve outreach efforts.

## GOOGLE

Google is one of the most recognized company names in the world, largely known for its search engine. A part of its mission is “to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful.” It is also known for many of its “moon shots” like the self-driving car, Internet-beaming hot air balloons, and a pill that can detect cancer.

Google is also committed to outreach and investing in education, with an emphasis on increasing interest in careers in computer science among underrepresented minorities and women. Google is exploring ways to use principles and practices from empowerment evaluation to improve its evaluation infrastructure and increase the impact of its outreach programs.

Training has been provided within Google, both in-person (Figure 10.1) and online, using Google Hangouts. It has also been offered to higher education institutions and nonprofits, as discussed below.



**FIGURE 10.1.** Jason Ravitz and David Fetterman developing their enhanced empowerment evaluation approach at Google.

## PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

The Pacifica Graduate Institute is an accredited graduate school offering masters' and doctoral degree programs in depth psychology (see Figure 10.2). Their empowerment evaluation course offered an opportunity to apply the three-step approach to empowerment evaluation, described in Chapters 8 and 9, and to add Google's evaluation worksheets (described below). In addition, we further enhanced the three-step approach to empowerment evaluation by adding an online feedback and review component. This mini-experiment has provided insights into the power of rubrics and technology to guide the self-assessment process and create more opportunities for empowerment within and across communities of learners<sup>1</sup> (see Ravitz & Hoadley, 2005). Our shared efforts demonstrated the value of using multiple tools to enhance empowerment evaluation.

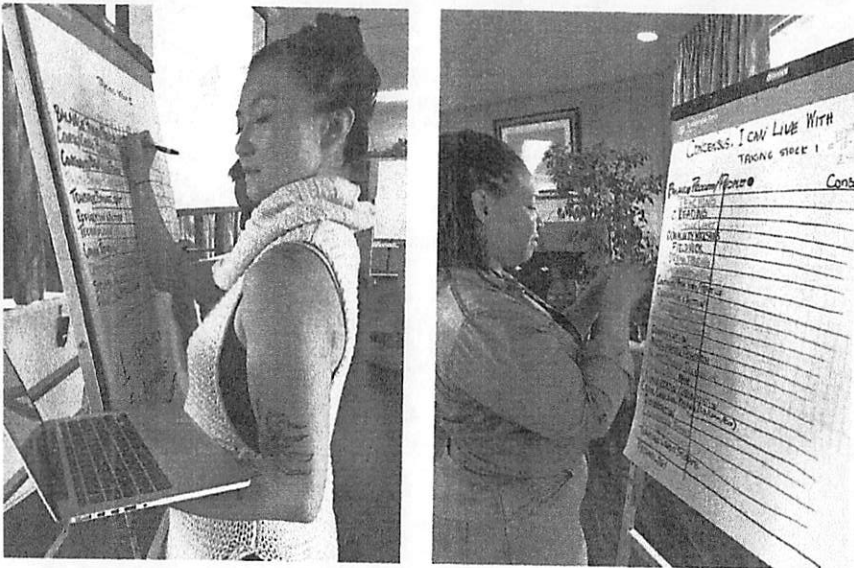
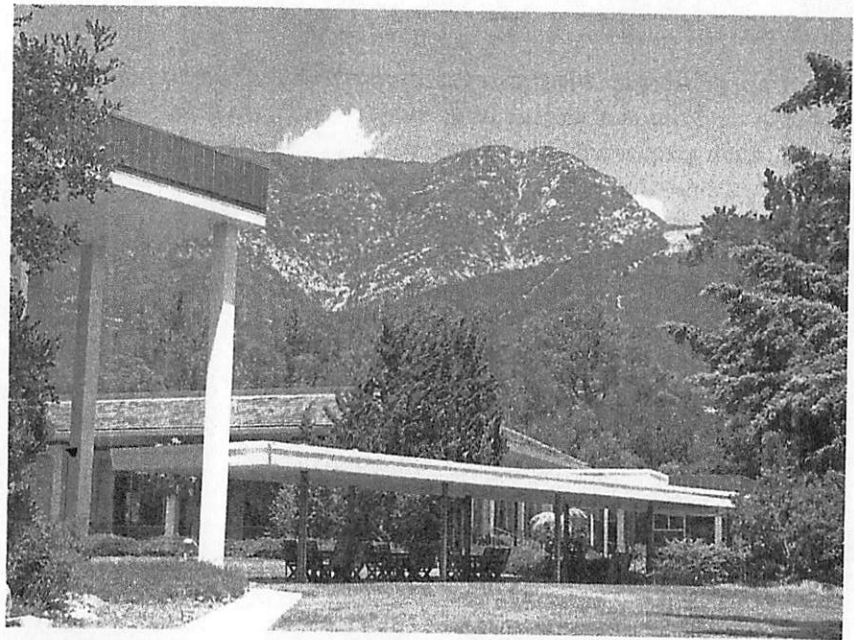
### WHY EMPOWERMENT EVALUATION?

Empowerment evaluation provides a strategy for using data and evidence for decision making. This is consistent with Google's data-driven culture. Empowerment evaluation can contribute to this culture by helping people to develop a shared vision before they collect or analyze data. Empowerment evaluation helps people learn to think like an evaluator, developing evaluation capacity and helping create an *evaluation-driven* culture.

Google also invests in a multitude of educational outreach initiatives (e.g., the RISE awards at [go.co/csedu](http://go.co/csedu), Google.org, or the CS OPEN project, discussed below). Empowerment evaluation complements Google's efforts in the nonprofit space because it provides strategies for building evaluation capacity, especially for creating a shared vision for how metrics can be useful. Empowerment evaluation has been used to support elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions, as well as in nonprofit community-based organizations and for corporate philanthropic educational initiatives such as those created at Google.

Finally, Google's K-12 outreach team has invested in evaluation capacity building to help nonprofit organizations and universities monitor and assess their own performance. Empowerment evaluation is designed to help people and organizations build evaluation capacity. We share the goals of building capacity, and we want to do this by cultivating learning





**FIGURE 10.2.** Pacifica Graduate Institute students using empowerment evaluation steps to assess their program.

communities and learning organizations. Our aim is to help organizations, communities, and classrooms use evaluation to improve performance and accomplish their goals.

## APPLICATION OF EMPOWERMENT EVALUATION

Pacifica Graduate Institute doctoral students used the three-step empowerment evaluation approach to assess their own program, including (1) mission, (2) taking stock, and (3) planning for the future. They also created an evaluation dashboard to monitor their performance, comparing their actual performance with their goals and milestones. Their recommendations, based on their plans for the future, were shared with faculty in an effort to recruit support to improve their program, ranging from changes in the syllabi to increasing student and faculty diversity. (As discussed earlier, empowerment evaluation has been used in a number of accreditation self-studies in part because it ensures participation and increases the probabilities of producing desired results [Fetterman, 2012; Fetterman et al., 2010].)

In addition, the doctoral students assessed their own performance and their peers' performance in the empowerment evaluation course. Specifically, they were required to produce an empowerment evaluation proposal. The proposals have been used in the past to conduct empowerment evaluations, solicit funding, and/or to guide doctoral dissertations.

The proposals for this course included a description of the three-step process planned to assess their program's performance, as well as an evaluation dashboard to monitor their progress. This created a shared evaluation vision for the organizations, agencies, and programs (and a measure of accountability). Additional specificity, provided by the Google evaluation worksheets, improved their capacity to conduct an empowerment evaluation.

## GOOGLE EVALUATION WORKSHEETS

The Google evaluation worksheets provide the group with the opportunity to be more specific about their evaluation plans (Figure 10.3). It helps them clarify purposes, relationships, duties, responsibilities, methods, and contextual variables. There are four worksheet parts. The first asked the group to describe the program to be evaluated.

Questions included:

- “What is the overall program purpose?”
- “Whom does the program serve?”
- “Who else is involved or invested in the success of the program?”
- “What does the program do?”
- “What are the immediate and short-term outcomes?”
- “What are the longer-term outcomes?”

The second part asked the group to define the evaluation context. Questions included the following:

- “Why are you evaluating?”
- “Who are the audiences for the evaluation?”
- “What do you really want to know? What is the focus of evaluation?”
- “How will the results be utilized, and by whom?”
- “Are there other contextual factors that influence the evaluation?”

The third part was designed to elicit information to help plan the evaluation. Questions included:

- “What are the key evaluation questions?”
- “Who are participants in the evaluation?”
- “What methods will you use to collect the data?”
- “Will you use existing data instruments/tools or create your own?”
- “How will you analyze and draw conclusions?”

The fourth part addressed creating an evaluation management plan. Questions focused on the following areas: team description and roles, reporting, budget, management plan, and timeline.

These worksheets compel the group to, for example, state who the audiences are, list key questions, describe the methods they will use, and specify what they are going to do. This approach, which builds on lessons from graduate evaluation courses created by Nick L. Smith at Syracuse University, helps to maximize their efforts and minimize missed steps.

Describe Program	Define Evaluation
<p><b>Part A: Describe the Program to Be Evaluated</b></p> <p>What is the overall program purpose? Is a primary purpose or need addressed? Are there secondary purposes or needs? (More info)</p>	<p><b>Part B: Define the Evaluation Context (Purpose, Audience)</b></p> <p>Why are you evaluating? (e.g., development of the program, accountability, testing a theory, or learning) (More info)</p>
<p><b>Whom does the program serve?</b></p> <p>Who are the primary and secondary participants? Who benefits directly and indirectly (e.g., students and their families or communities) (More info)</p>	<p><b>Who are the audiences for the evaluation?</b></p> <p>Who is paying for the evaluation? Who are the primary and secondary audiences who will see the results, care, or be impacted by them? (often the program funder and/or stakeholders) (More info)</p>
<p><b>Who else is involved or invested in the success of the program?</b></p> <p>(e.g., key stakeholders such as funders, boards, staff, parents, community members, partner organizations)</p>	<p><b>What do you really want to know? What is the focus of evaluation?</b></p> <p>You can't look at everything. Is the key issue program design, activities, delivery, outcomes, etc.? (More info)</p>
<p><b>What does the program do?</b></p> <p>What are the main activities? Who delivers it? How do people participate (e.g., online, face-to-face)? How often and how long does it run (e.g., contact hours)? (More info)</p>	<p><b>How will the results be utilized, and by whom?</b> (e.g., improving, informing, deciding, guiding, etc.)</p>
<p><b>What are the immediate and short-term outcomes?</b></p> <p>What happens as an immediate result of the program? (More info)</p>	<p><b>Are there other contextual factors that influence the evaluation?</b></p> <p>What else may influence your results? (e.g., new policies, initiatives, another study, etc.) (More info)</p>
<p><b>What are the longer-term outcomes?</b></p> <p>What happens over the longer term as a result of the program? (More info)</p>	

FIGURE 10.3. Google evaluation worksheets (Ravitz & Fetterman, 2016).

<b>Plan Evaluation</b> <b>Part C: Plan the Evaluation (Questions, Data Sources, Procedures)</b> What are the key evaluation questions? What are the specific questions you will spend your time and resources answering? (More info)	<b>Management Plan</b> <b>Part D: Create an Evaluation Management Plan</b> Team Description and Roles Who plays what role? Who leads and what does that include? What will staff handle? What are the qualifications of those involved? What relationships exist and will be created? (More info)
Who are participants in the evaluation? Whose perspectives or data will you include? How will participants be selected? (More info)	
What methods will you use to collect the data? (e.g., field work, surveys, interviews, observations, etc.) (More info)	<b>Reporting</b> What needs to be reported, to whom, when? What will the format of each report be? How will you share interim and final findings differently? (see template below or more info)
Will you use existing data instruments/tools or create your own? What measures are already available? What will you have to collect yourself? How can you partner with the program to streamline data collection and make it more useful? (More info)	<b>Budget</b> What is a breakdown of costs and resources used for the evaluation, including staff time by level? What are costs for travel, materials, supplies, etc.? (More info/Templates)
How will you analyze and draw conclusions? What analytics will you use, how will you use them to set criteria and make judgments? (More info)	<b>Management Plan and Timeline</b> What is the evaluation task list, timeline, and responsibilities? (More info)

FIGURE 10.3. (continued)

In the context of empowerment evaluation, answering these questions makes the self-evaluation more efficient, potentially more rigorous, and more likely to remain on target. It also permits larger studies to be proposed and funded, and makes sure these are conducted with staff buy-in, simultaneously addressing concerns about bias, rigor, and accountability.

RUBRICS: GOBRICS, GOBRICS FOR STUDENTS, AND GOOGLE FORMS

One of the requirements of the class was to assess their own evaluation proposals and their peers' proposals. They used the feedback, along with the instructor's assessment, to refine and improve their final product. The class met face to face, but a virtual classroom strategy, proposed by Ravitz and Hoadley (2005), was added to facilitate the peer review and assessment. This improved the quality of the proposals before they were reviewed by the instructors, and modeled the course focus on empowerment evaluation and capacity building. It also helped the instructors reinforce what was learned and adapt instruction to address misconceptions or missed concepts.

The class used Google Docs, an online word-processing program, to draft their proposals, facilitating peer and instructor access. The doctoral students posted their proposals online in the cloud using Doctopus, a group or classroom management software (Figure 10.4). These two

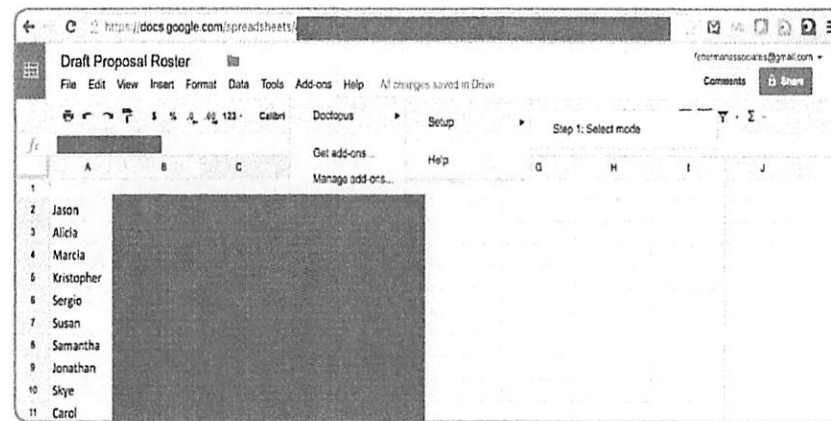


FIGURE 10.4. Using Doctopus to manage student files online.



programs enabled students to access each other's proposals (once invited) and for the instructors to keep track of all the proposals in one place.

The instructors used rubrics to provide additional guidance for proposal development and review. Rubrics are criteria used to guide instruction and assessment. Students were asked to rate on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale how well their peers discussed topics or activities in their proposals, specifically related to the three-step empowerment evaluation process and the four evaluation parts of the worksheets.

They used Goobrics and Goobrics for Students (Chrome browser extensions) as well as Google Forms (a survey software) to rate their own work and their peers' proposals (Figure 10.5). With the press of a button on their screen, the rubrics appear on top of the proposal being reviewed, appearing as a menu of topics with cells for their ratings (Figure 10.6). They rated their proposals based on categories such as description of the theory of change, use of a critical friend, as well as standard concerns such as budget, reporting, and timeline. The "comments" section of Google Docs provided an opportunity for more detailed feedback.

The power of rubrics was compelling when the self-, peer, and instructor ratings were compared. (Concerning the validity of online self-ratings, see Kaplan & Bornet, 2014; Topping, 1998; Wagner, Churl Suh, & Cruz, 2011.) We found that the self-, peer, and instructor assessments

Pacifica Graduate Institute: Proposal Self-Evaluation

QUESTIONS RESPONSES 1

Criteria for Empowerment Basics (Part 1)

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Theory	Low - does not value people conducting the evaluation themselves		Medium - somewhat values people conducting the evaluation themselves		High - highly values people conducting the evaluation themselves
Concepts	Low - does not have cycles of reflection or action		Medium - has cycles of reflection OR action - but not both		High - has cycles of reflection AND action
Principles	Low - does not demonstrate any of the 12 principles		Medium - demonstrates 6 of the principles		High - demonstrates all 12 principles
Steps	Low - does not use any steps		Medium - uses 1 or 2 steps		High - uses all 3 steps
Critical friend	Low - does not include a critical friend		Medium - uses someone to assist, but not in the role of a critical friend		High - uses a critical friend

Your ratings

	1	2	3	4	5
Theory					
Concepts					
Principles					
Steps					

FIGURE 10.5. Students using Google Forms to assess self and peers.

My assessment for Google Class Test Hosted

	1	2	3	4	5
Theory	Low - does not value people conducting the evaluation themselves		Medium - somewhat values people conducting the evaluation themselves		High - highly values people conducting the evaluation themselves
Concepts	Low - does not have cycles of reflection or action		Medium - has cycles of reflection OR action - but not both		High - has cycles of reflection AND action
Principles	Low - does not demonstrate any of the 12 principles		Medium - demonstrates 6 of the principles		High - demonstrates all 12 principles
Steps	Low - does not use any steps		Medium - uses 1 or 2 steps		High - uses all 3 steps
Critical friend	Low - does not include a critical friend		Medium - uses someone to assist, but not in the role of a critical friend		High - uses a critical friend

ing Rubrics on "Mock" Proposal

Help you practice applying the rubric to a document or citation is presented below:

is a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale. The scales have descriptors. For example, concerning theory a proposal would demonstrate an "understand of the value of process uses." It would receive a 5 or high rating if the proposal clearly state the theory of process use. The empowerment is listed in the rubric include: theory, concepts, principles, steps. It also includes an EE Summary Rating

include: logic model, purpose of evaluation, evaluation plan, method to answer questions, analysis, evaluation and use of results, lessons learned, implementation on staff qualifications, evaluation budget, key tasks in

FIGURE 10.6. Rubric to guide student self- and peer assessment (using Goobric for Students software).

were closely aligned, highlighting effective communication and learning (Figure 10.7). The ratings also helped identify areas meriting additional attention before the course concluded.

Together these online feedback and review programs enabled students to critique both their own proposals and each other's work conveniently, while maintaining instructional supervision. Rubrics and their resulting data were used to guide both learning and instruction. We believe adding technology in this case is a further enhancement of empowerment evaluation because it is free, encourages collaboration, and is not restricted to any single institution. In addition, it can be replicated to help groups evaluate themselves.

## CONCLUSION

Empowerment evaluation is used in a wide variety of contexts and settings. In addition, there is no single set of tools required to conduct an empowerment evaluation. It should be guided by specific principles (described in Chapter 8), including improvement, respect for community

knowledge, capacity building, organizational learning, and accountability. However, in this case a three-step process was combined with an evaluation worksheet approach. The combination was synergistic. The three-step process helped create a shared vision. The worksheets allowed people to drill down and specify the who, what, when, and where of an evaluation.

The work does not end here. We are learning from each application how to refine and improve practice, and this is influencing our work in empowerment evaluation, at Google and with other nonprofits as well. Through the Computer Science Outreach Program Evaluation Network (CS OPEN) Google has funded and provided technical assistance to 12 nonprofits through a partnership with the National Girls Collaborative Project. As the lessons we are learning influence programs such as these, we will see more real-life examples that demonstrate the power and utility of empowerment evaluation and its ever-evolving toolbox to support and foster self-determination.

**NOTE**

1. Students use these online tools to give peer feedback to help refine and improve their proposals: Goobric (software to facilitate group assessment of performance by individuals), Goobric for Students, and Google Forms (software to facilitate self, peer, and leader or instructor assessments).

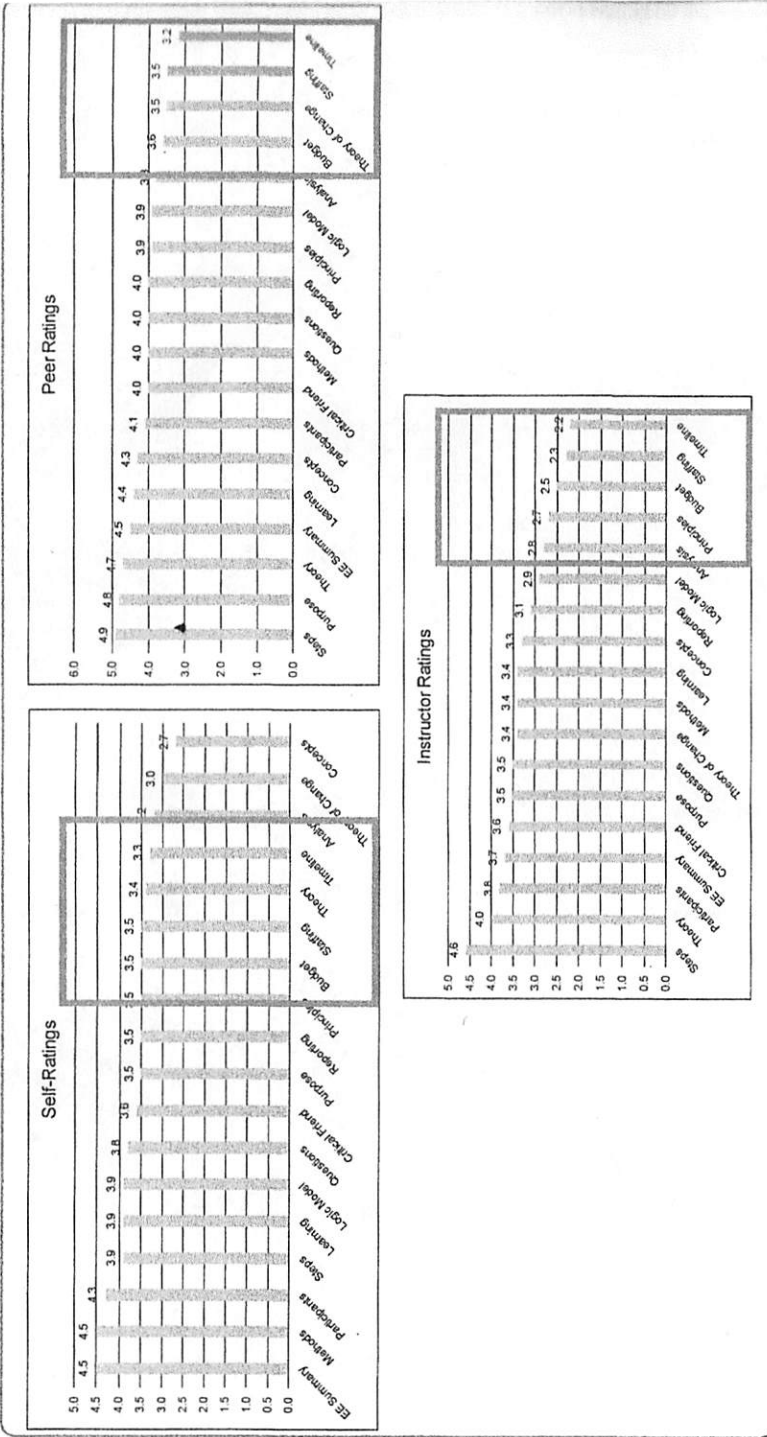


FIGURE 10.7. Self-, peer, and instructor evaluations (demonstrating convergence of ratings).