Non-quantifiable data can also be objective and can be used with rigor, although the tests of such analysis is not standard. One way to gain rigor is to present the data, in a descriptive form or by numbers, and then, separately, to explain its use as evidence in support of a point or recommendation. Evidence is the interpretation of the data used to support a point. This all admits much risk for error in judgment and intuition. Your only defense is to report and explain as completely as the limited space of an evaluation report allows. You may be able to use the models presented in this handbook to help reduce this risk.

F. Validity

Because of the subjective nature of an evaluation and the short time that you have to do it, achieving validity is not always easy. For your team to achieve credibility, you must be concerned with the problem. Here are some things you an do.

1. Plan your work systematically. Models will help you as will the implementation team's objectives and self-evaluation.

2. Check for consistency in both observations and analyses among your team members. Solving the inconsistencies may lead you through an exercise that will improve validity.

3. Develop hypotheses as soon as appears feasible and check them out specifically in your interviews. You may be able to specify the data needed, the source, and assign more than one member of the team to test the hypothesis. The entire team can hear the evidence and help draw inferences and conclusions.

4. Identify important data needs and gaps as early in the evaluation to improve your chance of getting the data.

5. Start drafting the report early in the evaluation. Writing the report is a good way to reveal data gaps and inconsistencies.

6. Interview techniques are critical. Never, ever, use questions in an interview that can be answered with "yes" or "no." These questions are so easy to answer that they yield misinformation as often as information. They are especially ineffective when you and the respondent do not share a common native language. Instead use questions that require thought and require a description or analysis.

A second useful technique is to demonstrate the attitude of a student, trying to learn and understand. Avoid the impression that you are trying to prove a point or make a case. Respondents are likely to be candid in helping you learn and understand. They are put on guard if you are trying to prove a point or make a case.