Evaluating Program Impacts:
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Orr, L. et al 2019, 'Using the Results from Rigorous Multisite Evaluations to Inform Local Policy Decisions', Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. (this is generally a difficult undertaking as the size of the local error is often equal or larger than the estimated effect size).

Patton, 1982, Practical Evaluation, Sage. (of all his books this one is my favorite, great chapters on data analysis and on preparing useful recommendations, highly recommended)

Patton, 1987, How to use qualitative methods in evaluation, Sage. (excellent discussion of combining qualitative and quantitative methods)

Patton, 1990, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, Sage. (good all round reference, helpful description of different types of purposeful sampling)

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Pearl, J. 2009, Myth, confusion, and science in causal analysis (Technical Report No. R-348). Retrieved from University of California, Los Angeles website: http://www.cs.ucla.edu/~kaoru/r348.pdf

Pearl, J. and Mackenzie, D. 2018, The Book of Why: The New Science of Cause and Effect, Basic Books, New York. (an advanced text for the enthusiast, challenging to read)

Peck, (ed) 2016, "Social Experiments in Practice: The What, Why, When, Where and How of Experimental Design and Analysis", New Directions in Evaluation, no 152. (a good overview of various issues from an econometric perspective)

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Posavac & Carey, 2002, Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies, Prentice Hall. (good all round text, includes a summary of the types of evaluation questions that can be answered by particular types of research designs)

Posthumus, H. and Wanitphon, P. 2015, Measuring Attribution: a practical framework to select appropriate attribution methods, with cases from ALCP in Georgia, MDF in East Timor, Propcom Mai-Karfi in Nigeria and Samarth-NMDP in Nepal, Hans Posthumus Consultancy. (a useful introduction from the DCED perspective with some helpful graphical illustrations).

Pritchett & Sandefur 2013, Context Maters for Size: Why External Validity Claims and Development Practice Don't Mix, Working paper 336, Center for Global Development. (this paper argues that impact evaluation findings are context dependent and hence we need to be very careful when seeking to generalize/apply findings from one context to another, even when using RCTs)

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Reinertsen, Bjørkdahl, and McNeill, 2017, Confronting the Contradiction- An Exploration into the Dual Purpose of Accountability and Learning in Aid Evaluation, SIDA. (their main conclusion is that, in practice, the dual purposes of accountability and learning leads to difficult trade-offs; there are tensions and sometimes direct contradictions between maximizing accountability vs learning)

Reschovsky, Heeringa and Colby, 2018, Selecting the Best Comparison Group and Evaluation Design: A Guidance Document for State Section 1115 Demonstration Evaluations, Mathematica Policy Research. (an excellent paper with a useful decision making flow chart, highly recommended). Available on the net at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demo/downloads/evaluation-reports/comparison-grp-eval-dsgn.pdf

Reynolds & West 1987, 'A multiplist strategy for strengthening nonequivalent control group designs', Evaluation Review, 11, 6, 691-714. (an excellent example of how to fix up a weak research design by adding additional features thereby improving your overall assessment of the program's impact, a classic article and highly recommended)

Rogers et al 2000, 'Program Theory in Evaluation: Challenges and Opportunities', New Directions for Evaluation, No. 87. (a series of papers on the strengths and weaknesses of using program theory to assist with causal analysis)

Rohrer, J. 2018, 'Thinking Clearly About Correlations and Causation: Graphical Causal Models for Observational Data', Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science, Vol. 1(1) 27–42. (this paper argues that it is very difficult to undertake causal analysis with observational data although graphical methods can help, highly recommended)

Roodman, 2008, Through the Looking Glass, and What OLS Found There: On Growth, Foreign Aid, and Reverse Causality, Working Paper 137, Center for Global Development. (discussion of assessing the impact of foreign aid)

Rosenbaum, P. 2019, Observation and Experiment: An Introduction to Causal Inference, Harvard University Press. (contains interesting examples and is quite insightful but it is not an easy read)

Rosling, H. 2018, Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World--and Why Things Are Better Than You Think, Sceptre. (highly recommended for its real-world examples of outcome trajectories)

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman 2003, Evaluation – A Systematic Approach, Sage. (recommended, includes an excellent discussion of different types of research designs and when to use each of them)

Rothman & Greenland, 2005, 'Causation and Causal Inference in Epidemiology', American Journal of Public Health, Vol 95, No. S1.

Rubin, 2008, "For Objective Causal Inference, Design Trumps Analysis", Annals of Applied Statistics, vol 2, pp. 808-840. (the title says it all and I agree with this position)

Salkind, N. J. (ed) 2010, Encyclopedia of Research Design, Sage. (very comprehensive at 1800 pages, and expensive)

Sauerbrei, W., Perperoglou, A., Schmid, M. et al. 2020, 'State of the art in selection of variables and functional forms in multivariable analysis—outstanding issues' Diagnostic and Prognostic Research 4, 3. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41512-020-00074-3. (multivariate analysis requires both advanced technical skills and expert subject matter knowledge, when undertaking observational research a number of subjective choices about analytical strategies are required and these can generate quite different results).

Scher, L. et al 2015, Designing and Conducting Strong Quasi Experiments in Education, Institute of Education Sciences. (a good overview of key issues)

Scriven, M. 1976, 'Maximizing the power of causal investigations: The modus operandi method'. In Gene V. Glass (ed.) Evaluation studies review annual, Volume 1, 101-118, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications. (in my view Scriven's argument that undertaking an impact evaluation is similar to a detective investigating a murder is simply incorrect)

Shadish, Clark, & Steiner, 2008, 'Can nonrandomized experiments yield accurate results? A randomized experiment comparing random and nonrandom assignments;, Journal of the American Statistical Association, 103(484), pp. 134-1343. (yes, provided that all key variables are observed and we have good covariates to facilitate adjustment)

Shadish and Cook, 1999, 'Comment-Design Rules: More Steps toward a Complete Theory of Quasi-Experimentation', Statistical Science, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 294-300. (describes the design elements used in constructing quasi-experiments, argues that statistics are not effective in resolving basic design problems)

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002, Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference, Houghton Mifflin. (a classic advanced text, recommended)

Shadish, Cook, and Houts, 1986, 'Quasi-Experimentation in a Critical Multiplist Mode', in W. M. K. Trochim (ed.). 'Advances in Quasi-Experimental Design and Analysis', New Directions for Program Evaluation, no. 31. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (in my view critical multiplism has a lot to offer when undertaking impact evaluations)

Shadish, Cook and Leviton, 1991, Foundations of Program Evaluation, Sage. (the final chapter contains an excellent summary of evaluation theory in relation to program design, evaluation practice, and theory of use, highly recommended)

Social Programs that Work, 2020, https://evidencebasedprograms.org/
(This site seeks to identify those social programs shown in rigorous studies to produce sizable, sustained benefits to participants and/or society, so that they can be deployed to help solve social problems)

Somers, M. et al, 2013, The Validity and Precision of the Comparative Interrupted Time Series Design and the Difference-in Difference Design in Educational Evaluation, MDRC. (technical but interesting)

Spector, 1981, Research Designs, Sage. (a basic introduction)

St. Clair, T., Cook, T. and Hallberg, K. 2014, 'Examining the Internal Validity and Statistical Precision of the Comparative Interrupted Time Series Design by Comparison With a Randomized Experiment', American Journal of Evaluation, vol. 35, no 3, pp. 311-327, 2014. (CITS often provide accurate estimates but are sensitive to choices in design parameters)

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Staines, G. L. 2007, 'Comparative outcome evaluations of psychotherapies: Guidelines for addressing eight limitations of the gold standard of causal inference', Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 44(2), 161–174. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-3204.44.2.161

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Stern E. 2015, Impact Evaluation: A Guide for Commissioners and Managers, Bond (a useful non technical overview). Available on the net at: http://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Impact_Evaluation_Guide_0515.pdf

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Straight Talk on Evidence, 2019, Why most non-RCT program evaluation findings are unreliable (and a way to improve them). (useful) See: https://www.straighttalkonevidence.org/2019/12/12/why-most-non-rct-program-evaluation-findings-are-unreliable-and-a-way-to-improve-them/

Streiner & Norman, 2012, 'The Pros and Cons of Propensity Scores', CHEST Journal, Volume 142, Issue 6, Pages 1380–1382, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1378/chest.12-1920 (PSM's apparent simplicity masks a number of rather arbitrary statistical assumptions and tradeoffs)

Stuart, E. A., & Rubin, D. B. 2008, 'Matching with multiple control groups with adjustment for group differences'. Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics, 33(3), 279–306. (an illustration of this method)

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The International Campbell Collaboration, 2020, https://campbellcollaboration.org/
(this site offers a registry of systematic reviews of evidence on the effects of interventions in the social, behavioral, and educational arenas)

Tipton et al 2017, "Implications of Small Samples for Generalization: Adjustments and Rules of Thumb", Evaluation Review, 41(5), 472-505. (illustrates why it is important to be careful when seeking to generalise from small nonprobability samples)

Ton, G. et al 2019, Contribution Analysis and Estimating the Size of Effects: Can we Reconcile the Possible with the Impossible? Centre for Development Impact Practice Paper 20, Brighton. (an interesting discussion of how contribution analysis might be stretched to give some sense of the importance of a contribution in a quantitative manner. However, I do not agree with the criteria the authors apply to test for causal inference). Available free on the net at: https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/123456789/14235

Treasury Board of Canada, no date, Program Evaluation Methods: Measurement and Attribution of Program Results, (useful overview). It is available free on the net at: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/meth/pem-mep_e.pdf

Trochim, 1984, Research designs for program evaluation: The regression discontinuity approach, Sage. (excellent method for evaluating impacts where entry into the program depends upon meeting a numerical eligibility criterion, e.g. income less than X, academic grades more than Y)

Trochim, 1989, 'Outcome Pattern Matching and Program Theory'. Evaluation and Program Planning, Vol. 12:355-366. (an interesting alternative for impact evaluations using case studies and pattern matching)

United Nations, 2013, Impact Evaluations in UN Agency Evaluation Systems - Guidance on Selection Planning and Management. Available on the web at: http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp

U.S. Department of Education, 2003, Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide. (a useful summary of what counts as good evidence in evaluation, this publication caused some controversy in the USA)

U.S. Department of Education, 2008, Technical Methods Report: Guidelines for Multiple Testing in Impact Evaluations.

USAID 2018, Guide for planning long-term impact evaluations. (useful introductory guidance)

Wauters and Beach, 2018, 'Process Tracing and Congruence Analysis to Support Theory Based Impact Evaluation', Journal of Evaluation. (this article illustrates the difference between process tracing and congruence analysis and their relative advantages).

Weisburd, D. 2010, 'Justifying the use of non-experimental methods and disqualifying the use of randomized controlled trials: challenging folklore in evaluation research in crime and justice', Journal of Experimental Criminology, volume 6, pages 209–227. (The key limitation of passive observational impact evaluation methods is that they require an assumption that all confounding factors related to treatment are identified in the statistical model being applied. The author explains why this assumption is so critical and challenges what he describe as "folklores" that are used to justify the use of non-randomized studies despite this major limitation).

Weiss, C. 1997, "How Can Theory-Based Evaluation Make Greater Headway?" Evaluation Review, 21, 4, 501-525. (this article explores the problems of theory-based evaluation as well as the potential benefits)

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West, S. and Thoemmes, F. 2010, "Campbell's and Rubin's Perspectives on Causal Inference", Psychological Methods, Vol. 15, No. 1, 18–37. (Campbell's approach tends to be used in education and psychology and Rubin's in economics, medicine and statistics, they are actually complementary)

Weyrauch, V. and Langou, G. D. 2011, Sound Expectations: From Impact Evaluations to Policy Change, 3ie Working Paper 12. London: 3iE. It is available free on the net at: http://www.3ieimpact.org/3ie_working_papers.html.

What Works Clearinghouse, 2017, Standards Handbook. (A good but very technical set of standards for impact evaluation. The What Works Clearinghouse identifies existing research on education interventions, assesses the quality of this research, and then summarizes and disseminates the evidence from studies that meet the Clearinghouse's standards)

White, H. 2010, 'A Contribution to Current Debates in Impact Evaluation', Evaluation, 16(2) 153-164. (a useful summary of some of the issues and controversies)

White, H. And Raitzer, D. 2017, Impact Evaluation of Development Interventions – A Practical Guide, Asian Development Bank. (a useful resource with an econometric flavour). It is available free on the net at: https://www.adb.org/publications/impact-evaluation-development-interventions-practical-guide

Williams, R. 2015, Logic of Scientific Inference/ What is Causality? University of Notre Dame, https://www3.nd.edu/~rwilliam/. (a concise overview, explains Mill's 3 causal criteria)

Winship, C. and Morgan S. 1999. "The estimation of causal effects from observational data", Annual Review of Sociology. 25: 659-706. (a useful summary of the field; the author's overall conclusion: the challenges of estimating causal effects with observational data are often formidable, the authors tend to favour longitudinal methods)

Winston, J. 1993, 'Performance indicators: Do they perform?' Evaluation News and Comments, 2(3), 22-39. (this paper outlines a number of concerns with how KPIs get used)

Wong, Steiner & Anglin, 2018, "What Can Be Learned from Empirical Evaluations of Nonexperimental Methods?", Evaluation Review, 42(2), 147-175. (a lot, this paper provides a summary of the key issues)

Woolcock, M. 2019, Reasons for Using Mixed Methods in the Evaluation of Complex Projects, CID Faculty Working Paper No. 348, Centre for International Development at Harvard University. (a helpful overview of the topic)

Work-Learning Research, 2019, Levels of Evidence for the Learning Profession. (a useful summary as to what counts as better evidence). See: https://www.worklearning.com/2019/11/20/levels-of-evidence-for-the-learning-profession/

World Bank (Independent Evaluation Group) no date, Impact Evaluation- The Experience of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank, author. It is available free on the net at: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/475491468138595632/Impact-evaluation-the-experience-of-the-independent-evaluation-group-of-the-World-Bank

World Bank (Independent Evaluation Group) 2006, Conducting Quality Impact Evaluations Under Budget, Time and Data Constraints, author. (this text is a highly summarized version of Bamberger's book). It is available free on the net at: http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/ecd/conduct_qual_impact_eval.html

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Yang and Hendra, 2018, "The Importance of Using Multiple Data Sources in Policy Assessments: Lessons from Conditional Cash Transfer Programs in New York City", Evaluation Review, 1-25. (this paper argues that it is important to triangulate data sources in order to reach accurate conclusions about program effects)

Yeaton and Thompson, 2016, "Transforming the Canons of John Stuart Mill from Philiopshy to Replicative, Empirical Research: The Common Cause Design", Journal of Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences, Vol. 7, No . 2, p 122-143. (discussion of the strengths and weakensses of this little known approach).

Yin, 2000, 'Rival Explanations as an Alternative to Reforms as Experiments', in Bickman (ed) Validity and Social Experimentation, Sage. (good review of how to identify and test rival explanations when evaluating reforms or complex social change)

Yin, 2003, Applications of Case Study Research, Sage. (very good reference, includes advice on undertaking causal analysis using case studies and pattern matching - in my view this is preferable to process tracing)

Young, J. and Mendizabal, E. 2009, Helping researchers become policy entrepreneurs, ODI Briefing Papers 53. London: ODI http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/1127.pdf (guidance on the research:policy interface)

Zhao, Y. 2018, "What Works May Hurt: Side Effects in Education, Journal of Educational Change, DOI10.1007/s10833-016-9294-4. (If an intervention can potentially help it can also potentially harm. Unintended side effects are inseparable from intended effects – both are outcomes from the same intervention; highly recommended)

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