Speaker 1:

Welcome to the third chapter of Module 2. In this chapter, you will a learn process for prioritizing and finalizing the evaluation questions that you drafted in chapter 2.

To meet the complete criterion of the PARSEC framework in chapter 2, you may have found yourself drafting 10 or more questions. Some organizations may have the capacity to answer that many questions, but others may have the resources to answer only a few. So, an evaluation team must ask, "Which questions do we focus on?" or "Which questions do we focus on first?" One strategy for prioritizing evaluation questions is to apply an *important/urgent* rating system.

An important question is necessary to improve or assess a program. For example, in the AMMP! evaluation, it might be nice to know if tutors enjoyed the professional development, but it is essential to determine whether they mastered the tutoring techniques. This second question would have a higher rating of importance.

An urgent question needs an answer as soon as possible, either to satisfy reporting requirements or to obtain necessary information before moving forward. Some urgent questions may be easily or quickly answered using existing data. For example, in the AMMP! evaluation, the grantor may need to know how many students participated in each activity before the next year's funds are released to the school. This question would have a high rating of urgency.

Questions that have high urgency and high importance should have the highest priority, and questions that have low urgency and low importance should have the lowest priority. On this slide, the "sweet spot" of prioritization is in the upper right quadrant of the graph, highlighting the place where both urgency and importance are at their highest. From your list of evaluation questions, prioritize questions that are both important and urgent as the first set of questions to target.

The AMMP! evaluation team uses the logic model and the PARSEC framework to create a list of 10 evaluation questions. Given available time and resources, the grant timeline, and other considerations, the team knows that it cannot address all the questions. So, what are the priorities? What questions have both urgency and importance?

When the AMMP! evaluation team discusses the importance and urgency of each question, two things become very clear. First, although the team added question 7 about teacher promotion of the program to make the set of evaluation questions more complete, that question is not very important or urgent to the team. Therefore, the question is not worth the time or resources at this point. Second, although questions 4, 5, and 6 about professional development are moderately

important, they aren't urgent. Although the team decides not to pursue these three questions at this time, it doesn't mean that they aren't worthy questions. Rather, the priority is placed on other questions, and these three questions can be addressed later.

Question 3 about recreational activities offered through AMMP! has high urgency and moderate importance. The evaluation team chooses to prioritize this question because it can be easily and quickly answered using existing data. Questions 1 and 2 about the number of students who participate in AMMP! are moderately urgent and important, making these questions a priority as well.

When the AMMP! evaluation team discusses the importance and urgency of the outcome questions, the team determines that all of the questions are important, with the two homework questions being the most urgent. The team's rating is not surprising given that the logic model and problem statement highlight these areas as critical needs of the program.

After prioritizing the questions, the AMMP! evaluation team comes up with this list of six final evaluation questions.

Now it's your turn! Using the *Prioritizing Evaluation Questions Worksheet*, available on the resources page of the website, prioritize your evaluation questions by following the *important*/*urgent* rating system.

You can use a scale of 1 to 5 to rate the importance and urgency of each question. A 1 indicates low importance or urgency, and a 5 indicates high importance or urgency. On the *Prioritizing Evaluation Questions Worksheet*, write an evaluation question in the first column and then place the priority number in the appropriate box. Including all your questions on the worksheet will allow you to examine each question in comparison to the others, making your decisions on priorities a little easier.

In the example on this slide, the AMMP! evaluation team rates the student attendance question a 4 for importance and a 3 for urgency. These ratings will help them decide between this question and other questions that also have high importance and urgency.

Once you have a set of final evaluation questions in place, you are ready to move to the next step of the program evaluation cycle: evaluation design. In Module 3 you will learn major considerations for designing an evaluation.