Evaluation for Grant Writers (and others)

An Infopeople webinar
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This webinar will cover ...

- What is project evaluation and why is it important to grant writers?
- Using logic model to plan evaluation
- Developing evaluation questions
- Collecting data
- Analyzing data
- Writing the report

http://www.imls.gov/applicants/basics.shtm

What is evaluation ?

- Measure something's worth or merit
- Conducted for a purpose...
  - provide accountability
  - increase effectiveness
  - build capacity
  - solve problems
  - increase engagement and ownership

Evaluation in project planning

Evaluation is good management
- Setting goals
- Planning activities
- Measuring implementation
- Fixing problems

What gets measured gets...
- done ?
- or just measured ?

Ways of focusing evaluations

- Effectiveness
- Goals-based
- Intervention-oriented
- Needs assessment
- Accountability
- Appreciative inquiry
- Capacity-building
- Cost-effectiveness

Two (of many) types of evaluation

Formative
- occurs during project development, implementation, progress
- assess ongoing activities
- monitor and improve project
- aka progress reporting

Summative
- occurs after the fact
- assess success in reaching goals
- aka outcome or impact evaluation

This material has been created for the Infopeople Project [infopeople.org], and has been supported *in part* by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian.

Program evaluation questions

- Were project activities implemented as planned?
- Was project successful? Strengths, weaknesses?
- Did project meet overall goals?
- Did participants benefit? In what ways?
- What components were most effective?
- Were results worth cost?
- How effective were collaborative partnerships?

Logic models

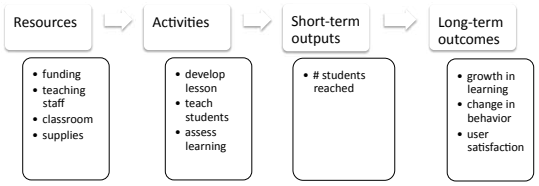
- What is a logic model?
  - Describes relationships among project elements
  - Illustrates details of project plan
- Benefits
  - document inputs, activities, outcomes
  - clarify understanding
  - facilitate planning

☞ Please take out your logic model template now

Elements of a logic model

Resources	Activities	Short-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
• aka inputs • funding, personnel, facilities	• specific actions that make up program	• outputs	• impact

Example of a logic model



Constructing a logic model

Example program

- After-school program for at-risk youth
- Overall goal: help teens learn how to make good choices, stay out of trouble, and succeed in life
- Public library partnership with local law enforcement, juvenile court, family services agencies, and high school
- Book discussion, reflection, creative writing, information literacy for various life skills; 1x/week for 10 weeks

➪ **Library role: teach information literacy for life skills such as how to find information on employment, GED study, parenting, health information**

Resources (aka “inputs”)

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- Grant funds
- Personnel
- Meeting room
- Materials & supplies: gift books, handouts, refreshments
- In-kind contribution (time, expertise) from partners

Activities

Activities

- Train staff
- Develop curriculum
- Conduct program

Outcomes: Short-term “outputs”

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- Number of teens served
- Number of hours attended
- Number of leaders trained
- Number of hours of preparation time

Outcomes: Long-term

Outcomes: Long-term

- Growth in awareness of good decisions
- Growth in problem-solving skills
- Growth in life skills
- Change in behavior, attitude

➪ **Growth in awareness of information resources, information literacy skills**

Which leads to our evaluation questions...

What do I want to know?

Use logic model
to chart evaluation plan

☞ Please take out your evaluation planning matrix handout now

Evaluation questions

Activities	**Evaluation questions**
Leader training & preparation	Was training adequate? Hours of preparation?
Project activities	Were users satisfied with each activity? Did activities meet leader expectations?
Short-term outputs	Were output objectives met? Program attendance, level of participation
Long-term outcomes	Change in teen self-awareness/knowledge/ skills Satisfaction Change in behavior

Make it measurable

Evaluation question	Measures
Was training adequate?	Hours of training Effectiveness of training
Were program activities appropriate? (specific activities)	User/leader satisfaction
Did short-term outputs meet expectations?	Program attendance Level of participation (hours, accomplishments)
Were long-term outcomes met?	Change in teen self-awareness/ knowledge Change in behavior Change in information literacy skill level

Data collection techniques

- **Program records**
  - activities, attendance, participation
- **Surveys**
  - users, leaders
- **Interviews**
  - users, other stakeholders
- **Observation**

Data collection matrix

Measure	Data collection tool
Hours of preparation time	Staff reports
User/leader satisfaction	Satisfaction surveys
Program attendance Level of participation (hours, accomplishments)	Attendance logs Participation records
Change in teen self-awareness/ knowledge/skill level	Pre- and post assessments (surveys); follow up interviews
Change in behavior: stay in school, graduate, get/keep a job, stay off drugs, stay out of justice system	School/probation/ social services records; follow up interviews

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Surveys

Advantages:
- Collect a lot of information from a lot of people
- Cover a wide range of topics
- Inexpensive
- Analyze with variety of software

Disadvantages:
- Self-reports may be biased
- Data may lack depth
- May not provide much context

Interviews

Advantages:
- Explore complex issues
- Opportunity for follow up
- Establish rapport

Disadvantages:
- Interviewer bias
- Training and analysis is time consuming
- Smaller samples

Developing user survey questions

- Tailor your survey to the specific goals of your program
- Address questions from funders
- Address issues in proposal

In general, your survey should cover:
- Did you accomplish what you expected to accomplish?
- Did your users get what they wanted?
- What could be improved?

Some example user survey questions

Pre- &/or post-assessment on information literacy skills

Tell us how much you agree with the following:
(scale: 1=agree strongly/5=disagree strongly)

1. *I know how to find information on things I am interested in*
2. *I know how to find information on how to get a job*
3. *I know how to find information on finishing high school*
4. *I know how to find information on applying for community college*
5. *I wish I knew more about: _____*

Odd or even?

agree – disagree (even)

agree – disagree – don't know (odd)

Data collection tips

- Take advantage of the "captive audience"
- Build time into project schedule for evaluation

On survey question preparation...

- Keep it simple! And short!
- Look for existing questions but don't forget your unique evaluation needs
- Get input from partners
- Use familiar language
- General to specific
- Pretest!

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Making sense of your data

Explore your numerical data:

- count up responses, calculate percentages
- mean (average)
  example: 1 = agree, 2 = disagree; add up responses and divide by N
- range (high, low)
- create categories for qualitative data
  ➪ *how do you create categories ?*

Coding qualitative data

- Read all responses
- Summarize main topic for each response in a "code" – a word or short phrase
- List of code words = categories
- Number of categories should be small (<10)
- Every response belongs to at least one category
- Responses can belong to more than one category
- If you have enough responses, count up responses in each category

Rules of the road

- Be systematic
- Percentages as well as raw count
- Include N
- Explore graphical displays! Bar graphs, pie charts, etc.
- Share analysis with colleagues right away

Writing the report

First things first:

- Who is your audience?
- What do they want to know?
- IMLS performance reporting

Outline of a formal report

- Summary
- Background
- Evaluation study questions
- Study methods
- Findings
- Conclusion and/or recommendations

Optional:

- References
- Appendix: survey instruments, data tables

Summary

- Short summary of the report
- Essential main points
- Purpose, findings, outline of methods, major findings
- Relate conclusions to larger context if appropriate

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Background

- Problem addressed
- Stakeholders and their information needs
- Participants
- Project objectives
- Activities and their components
- Resources used to implement the project
- Expected measurable outcomes

Evaluation study questions

- Identify stakeholders' specific information needs
- Draw from proposal, updated as necessary
- Lots of questions are possible; limit this section to those questions actually addressed
- Point out questions that could NOT be addressed and why

Study methods

- Who participated
- Sampling strategy (if applicable)
  - How representative?
- Measures used
- Type of data collected
- How data was collected
- Instruments used
- How data were analyzed

Findings

- Results of the analyses
- Use Evaluation Study Questions to organize findings
- Address each question, whether or not findings were satisfactory
- Include a summary at the end to present major conclusions

Conclusions and recommendations

- Summary of findings from a broader perspective
- Relate findings to overall program goals
- Recommendations for further study or future projects
- Base recommendations on solid data, NOT anecdotal evidence, no matter how persuasive!

Writing the report

- Ahead of time: Background, Study questions, Study methods
  - Include descriptions from original proposal, updated as needed
- Last steps: Findings, Conclusions, Summary

➪ **Get feedback from colleagues**

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IMLS Performance Reports

Check IMLS website - requirements differ

- Interim & final reports
- Part 1: narrative on project activities, achievements
- Grant products (evaluation report, other deliverables)
- Part 2: quantitative outputs

http://www.imls.gov/recipients/administration.shtm

That's it !

Questions?

For more information...
see the Resources handout

Thank you for attending this webinar!

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