

## INTRODUCTION TO OUTCOME-ORIENTED EVALUATION: SELECTED RESOURCES

If outcome-based and other formal program evaluation methods are new to your institution, many excellent publications are available to introduce them. IMLS offers this list as a resource, but it is not intended to be limiting or exclusive. These resources draw most of their examples from educational and social service settings, but many are readily applicable to typical goals of library and museum programs. Dates refer to the most recent confirmation of URLs provided.

### Manuals And Guides

Most titles below are available at no cost online. While terminology differs from publication to publication, basic concepts are very similar. All are designed for use by organizations who want to know the results of their programs in terms of human benefits, whether those are called "impacts," "results," or "outcomes."

Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Health and Human Services. The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation (nd). Washington, DC:DHHS. Available at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/pubs\\_reports/prog\\_mgr.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/pubs_reports/prog_mgr.html) as of March 13, 2002. This excellent introduction was developed for grantees of this program and provides very concrete, practical explanations. It is accompanied by additional guides for specific kinds of human services programs funded by the agency.

Bond, Sally L., Boyd, Sally E., and Rapp, Kathleen A. (1997). *Taking Stock: A Practical Guide to Evaluating your own Programs*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Horizon Research, Inc., 111 Cloister Court, Suite 220, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, 919-489-1725 (\$25.00, pb). This manual was developed for community-based science education initiatives through funding from the DeWitt Wallace-Readers Digest Fund. Participating advisors included the Association of Science-Technology Centers and the National Science Foundation. Available via Acrobat PDF at <http://www.horizon-research.com/publications/stock.pdf> as of March

Diamond, Judy (1999). *Practical Evaluation Guide: Tools for Museums and Other Informal Educational Settings*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 192 pp. Available from American Association of State and Local History, 1717 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37203-2991. This guide provides a concrete guide to tools and approaches for understanding how well programs and exhibits communicate the intended messages to museum audiences. It includes samples of numerous strategies for collecting information on museum learning, and describes how to construct and use them.

Hernon, Peter and Robert E. Dugan (2002). *Action Plan for Outcomes Assessment in Your Library*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 192 pp. This recent title provides data collection tools to measure learning and research outcomes linked to user satisfaction. This practical, how-to manual, with detailed case studies from actual outcomes assessment programs, is intended to help academic librarians: plan an outcomes assessment strategy in line with accrediting guidelines; identify user needs, collect and analyze data; present findings; and

measure the value of services, and identify areas for improvement. The Plan includes a chapter designed to help public libraries apply its concepts.

Korn, Randi, and Laurie Sowd, (1999). *Visitor Surveys: A User's Manual*, Professional Practice Series Nichols, Susan K. (Compiler); Roxana Adams (Series Editor), Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 164 pp. Available from AAM Technical Information Service, 1575 Eye Street, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20005. This thorough introduction to visitor surveys in museums may also be useful in library and evaluation contexts; includes worksheets and samples.

Project STAR (no date). *Support and Training for Assessing Results*. San Mateo, CA: Project Star, 480 E. 4th Ave., Unit A, San Mateo, CA 94401-3349, 1-800-548-3656. A basic manual for outcome-based evaluation produced by Project STAR under contract to the Corporation for National Service. Available via Rich Text Format or Acrobat PDF at <http://www.projectstar.org/> as of March 13, 2002.

United Way of America (1996). *Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach*. Alexandria, VA: United Way of America, 701 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, 703-836-7100 (\$5.00, spiral bound, to not-for-profit organizations). Developed by United Way for its grantees, this manual led the movement to outcome-based evaluation by funders of not-for-profit organizations. Portions are available online at <http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/publctns.htm#ft0989> as of March 13, 2002.

*W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook* (January 1998). Available via Acrobat PDF at <http://www.wkcf.org/pubs/Pub770.pdf> as of March 12, 2002. The foundation document for not-for-profit organizations.

Sage Publications, Inc., 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320, 805-499-0721 or <http://www.sagepub.com> is a commercial publisher that specializes in publications on evaluation and related subjects. They offer many titles that cover aspects of evaluation in detail.

### **Baselines, Outcome Indicators, Data Collection Tools, and Related Resources**

A number of web sites offer additional guidance for outcome-oriented evaluation of community service and educational programs. You may find the following useful:

American Evaluation Society, <http://www.eval.org>. Links, publications, and information about evaluation training. Links are provided to consultants offering evaluation services; none of these have been assessed by IMLS and no endorsements are implied (March 13, 2002).

Arts Education Partnership, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and others have produced *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (2000), <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions>, a publication edited by Edward B. Fiske that reports findings of a number of research projects designed to measure concrete impacts on educational achievement from sustained activities in the arts. It provides examples of significant indicators and a model of how evaluation (in this case systematic research) can demonstrate impact (March 13, 2002).

The Finance Project <http://www.financeproject.org> is a non-profit organization formed in 1994 to "support decision making that produces and sustains good results by developing and disseminating information, knowledge, tools and technical assistance for improved policies, programs, and financing strategies." See in particular its publications at <http://www.financeprojectinfo.org/Results/performance.asp#TFP> for management use of outcome information to support long-range planning (March 13, 2002).

Free Management Library <http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/evaluatn.htm> provides extensive information about evaluation including materials developed by Carter McNamara for The Management Assistance Program for Nonprofits, plus links to manuals for evaluation and other resources (March 13, 2002).

Grantmakers Evaluation Network, <http://hogg1.lac.utexas.edu/Gen/> offers pointers to resources and guides (March 13, 2002).

The Harvard Family Research Project <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/> publishes a free newsletter for evaluation professionals (*The Evaluation Exchange*) and has a helpful Web site that includes full-text publications on evaluation. See information on outcome-based evaluation logic models at [http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/learning\\_logic\\_models.html](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/learning_logic_models.html)

Independent Sector, <http://www.independentsector.org/pathfinder/impact/index.html> offers pointers to resources and guides (March 13, 2002).

Library Research Service, Colorado Department of Education, <http://www.lrs.org/>. This invaluable resource provides social and economic statistics, technology statistics, data about libraries and communities, information about research methods, and tools for statistical analysis. Designed primarily for library planning, but provides baselines against which outcomes can be measured for indicators appropriate to many library and museum educational programs. See especially *Counting on Results*, a report of IMLS-funded research to develop common library outcomes measurement tools (March 13, 2002).

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/guide/board.asp> provides access to statistics applicable to measuring the educational impact of library and museum programs. It provides research data on educational indicators in the arts, science, math, and history among other topics, which suggest useful indicators and baselines against which program outcomes can be measured (March 13, 2002).

National Center for Educational Statistics National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nels88> reports findings of major longitudinal effort designed to provide trend data about critical transitions experienced by students as they leave elementary school and progress through high school and into post-secondary institutions or the work force. Data includes indicators of student learning, early and late predictors of dropping out, and school effects on students' access to programs and equal opportunity to learn. These can

provide baselines applicable to library and museum educational and outreach programs (March 13, 2002).

National Science Foundation Directorate for Education and Human Resources, <http://oerl.sri.com>. The Online Evaluation Resource Library (OERL) includes plans, instruments, and reports that have been used to conduct evaluations of projects funded by the Directorate for Education and Human Resources of the National Science Foundation. OERL also contains glossaries of evaluation terminology, criteria for best practices, and scenarios illustrating how evaluation resources can be used or adapted. Examples and tools are in the context of science and related applications, but are transferable (March 13, 2002).

*The Staff Room for Ontario's Teachers*, <http://www.odyssey.on.ca/~elaine.coxon/rubrics.htm> (March 13, 2002), provides a broad array of sample rubrics (tools for comparing progress towards common outcomes) with links to several no-cost online programs for creating your own rubrics.

University of Maryland Civil Society/Community Building Initiative, <http://www.independentsector.org/pathfinder/impact/public/books.html> provides the *Independent Sector Non-Profit Pathfinder* for evaluation. This is an encyclopedic resource for resources and innovative models for measuring social and educational impact (March 13, 2002).

University of Michigan Institute for Social Research Survey Research Center, *Monitoring the Future*, <http://monitoringthefuture.org/> reports findings of an ongoing study of the behaviors, attitudes, and values of American secondary school students, college students, and young adults. It provides baseline data for numerous indicators of program impact on education, behavior, and attitudes for a large sample of these groups (March 13, 2002).

Western Michigan University Evaluation Center's <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/index.html> principal activities are research, development, dissemination, service, instruction, and leadership for advancing program, personnel, and student/constituent evaluation, applied primarily to education and human services. This site includes a directory of evaluators <http://ec.wmich.edu/evaldir/Evalmenu.htf> that can be searched by country, region, state, organization, or area of specialty. Note that the listed professionals represent many approaches to evaluation, and do not all have expertise in outcomes measurement or in library or museum contexts (March 13, 2002).

### **Automated Online Survey Tools**

The number of commercial products and services for this purpose is increasing steadily, and those below are given as examples only, with no implied recommendation. Others can be found by searching for "Online Survey Software" using Internet search engines. All are designed to make the job of creating and using online surveys simple for users. They typically provide a variety of templates and standard surveys, as well as tips for building effective surveys. Information is automatically tabulated as it is entered by the responder, with the data automatically compiled by the product/service for the user to interpret. Costs and fee structure vary from product to product.

*PC Magazine* has published reviews ("Editor's Choice," February 8, 2000) of software tools for several commercially available Web-based surveys. See <http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/stories/reviews/0,6755,2417503,00.html> (as of March 13, 2002).

*WebSurveyor* <http://www.websurveyor.com>. The fee structure can be fee-per-survey or a multi-survey license arrangement.

[WWW.AskGet.Com](http://www.AskGet.Com). No information is immediately available about fees.

*Zoomerang*, <http://www.zoomerang.com/>. The fee structure is an annual subscription.

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