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Identifying Outcomes

Week 11

March 31, 2009

Sources of Outcome Data (A Review)

- Anecdotes → Patterns
- Surveys, evaluation instruments
- Observations
- Participant-related projects (gain the ability to do something)
- Records kept by the agency
- You may want to suggest ways for your agency to continue your work

HLLH Outcome Categories/Domains

- **Access:** Increase access to information, knowledge, culture
- **Savings:** Save people time, money, & energy
- **Place:** People found a safe, comfortable, accommodating, and nurturing environment
- **Attitudes:** Changed attitudes and perceptions about libraries, librarians, community, etc.
- **Personal Efficacy:** Personal efficacy gains (self esteem, confidence, etc.)
- **Problem-solving:** People progress toward a goal or solve a problem
- **Skills:** Increased skills (Internet, literacy, language, communication, social, coping, etc.)
- **Learning:** Learning or knowledge gains (including fostering active involvement in learning—"lifelong learning" "information literacy")
- **Connections:** People make connections (with ideas, people, to a larger world)
- **Engagement:** Community connectedness (increased social capital, become more informed or involved as a citizen)
- **Advancement:** Status changes (people prepare to get a job, become a citizen, decide to return to school)
- **Community:** Community building (civic problem-solving, partnerships, collaboration)

Making Connections: A Neighborhood Transformation Family Development Initiative

brought about by the Annie E. Casey Foundation

Outcome Domains
for a
Neighborhood
Development
Project
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Outcome Domains for a Neighborhood Development Project can be found at
http://tarc.aecf.org/initiatives/mc/mcid/domain_main.php.

Sample Candidate Outcomes

- In HLLH we suggested candidate outcomes that arise from an initial study, some of which may be adopted
- Agencies can then measure them on an ongoing basis
- HLLH identifies outcome domain areas and candidate outcomes from specific studies
- Rhea Rubin has identified scores of “candidate outcomes” that may help jog your own identification process

Outcome Indicators:

- The evidence; e.g., how we know the specific differences that particular program activities make
- Indicators reveal or demonstrate the change in knowledge, skill gains, etc;
- They are the first step toward measurement
- On an ongoing basis agencies who focus on outcomes will set targets & calculate the percentage of those achieving a particular outcome

Early indicators of 'outcomes' of PL services

- got ideas/understandings about something;
- accomplished something;
- decided what to do or when or how to do it;
- got rest and relaxation and a quiet retreat;
- got motivated to do something;
- felt good about myself, my decision, my circumstances;
- calmed down and eased my worries;
- felt like I belonged and was not alone;
- got pleasure, entertainment, and happiness

Dervin & Clark (1987)

Image of Dervin
& Clark's
“outcomes” from
previous slide
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This image can be found at

<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED286519>, p 29.

Dervin, B., & Clark, K. D. (1987-04). ASQ: Asking significant questions: Alternative tools for information need and accountability assessments by libraries. Sacramento, CA: California State Library (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED286519.)

Rhea Rubin's
Outcomes
Continuum
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Rhea Rubin's Outcomes Continuum can be found in on
page 17 of the Microsoft Word document at
<http://mblc.state.ma.us/grants/lsta/manage/obe/rubinobemannual.doc>.

Your Own Outcomes Continuum

- 623 outcome studies are generally **NOT** quantifiable because our aim is to provide the agency with “candidate” outcomes
- Most graphic representations of 623 outcomes, however, are designed as a continuum.
- Caution: Include both high-end and low-end outcomes; don't be afraid of identifying negative outcomes.

Short-Term & Long Range Outcomes

- This distinction is often made in outcome studies
- Short term outcomes may be more readily achieved;
- Long-range outcomes are likely to be more complex, even more meaningful-but a likely to require more exposure to the program OR time
- Radio Works: An Example

Radio Works Short Term Outcomes

1999-2000

- Improvement in competency in life skill areas

Before

After

40%

67%

- 45% reported increased time spent sharing books with their kids

2000-2001

- Improvement in competency in life skill areas

Before

After

49%

73%

- 59% reported increased participate in school conferences
- 36% enrolled in literacy program

Radio Works Long-Range Outcomes (4 Years Later)-72% response rate

- 100% had enrolled in a literacy program; all but one had increased scores on a standardized literacy test;
- 100% reported that the *Radio Works!* project had helped to improve their life skills.
- 70% say that the project helped them communicate with employers and coworkers.
- 100% reported that they attend school meetings.
- 85% do pre-literacy activities with their children.
- 70% attended library story times with their children.
- 95% check out library books for themselves.
- 48% demonstrated both increased skill and increased confidence by submitting writings for a student book.

Preparing Your Agency for Ongoing Outcome Assessment

- Provide “candidate” outcomes from which they can choose
- Provide them resources that can help them take the next steps toward
 - Identifying outcomes on an ongoing basis,
 - Determine indicators for each outcome
 - Set targets for their outcomes
 - Develop a data collection plan
 - Monitoring the outcomes they have chosen

Selected Outcome Resources for Busy Practitioners

- Rhea Rubin. (2006) Demonstrating Results: Using Outcome Measurement in Your Library. Chicago: ALA Books.
- Harry P. Hatry, et al (2006) How Effective Are Your Community Services? Procedures for Performance Measurement, 3rd ed. ICMA.
- <http://www.shapingoutcomes.org/course/index.htm> IMLS
- Your recommended resources, given the context of your agency.

Image of the
Logic Model
from Shaping
Outcomes
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The image can be found at

<http://www.shapingoutcomes.org/course/model/index.htm>

or

<http://web.archive.org/web/20070729051024/http://www.shapingoutcomes.org/course/model/index.htm>

Outcomes Clinic