

How Do Libraries & Librarians Help? What Differences Do They Make?

SI 643 Week 9

The Current Evaluation Climate

- Pressure on all agencies for increased accountability
 - Outcome assessment becoming essential
 - Outcomes require most agencies to think differently about evaluation
 - The difference: focus is on the impact of the service on the user
 - Hazards associated with outcome assessment include the results of the mandated "No Child Left Behind"
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Broad Outcomes Categories

- Knowledge gains
 - Skill gains
 - Attitude change
 - Behavior change
 - Status change
 - Life condition change
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Annie E. Casey Foundation

Outcome Domains Suggested for a Neighborhood Development Project

Family Strengthening, Alliance Building, Advocacy, and Collective Action

To date, the review of survey literature has identified very little content of direct relevance to this domain.

Connection to Informal Social Networks

Indicators in this domain pertain to relationships and interactions among neighbors and families; social, linguistic, and technological isolation; participation in community, religious, or civic activities and organizations; relationships between youth and adults; and neighborhood culture.

Connections to Formal Helping Systems

Indicators in this domain pertain to health, education, child care, child welfare, resident relationships to service providers, and community based organizations.

Connections to Economic Opportunity

Indicators in this domain pertain to employment, income, assets, debt, and financial services.

Building Neighborhood Assets

Indicators in this domain pertain to neighborhood economy, housing, amenities, nuisances, safety, political power, and resident satisfaction.

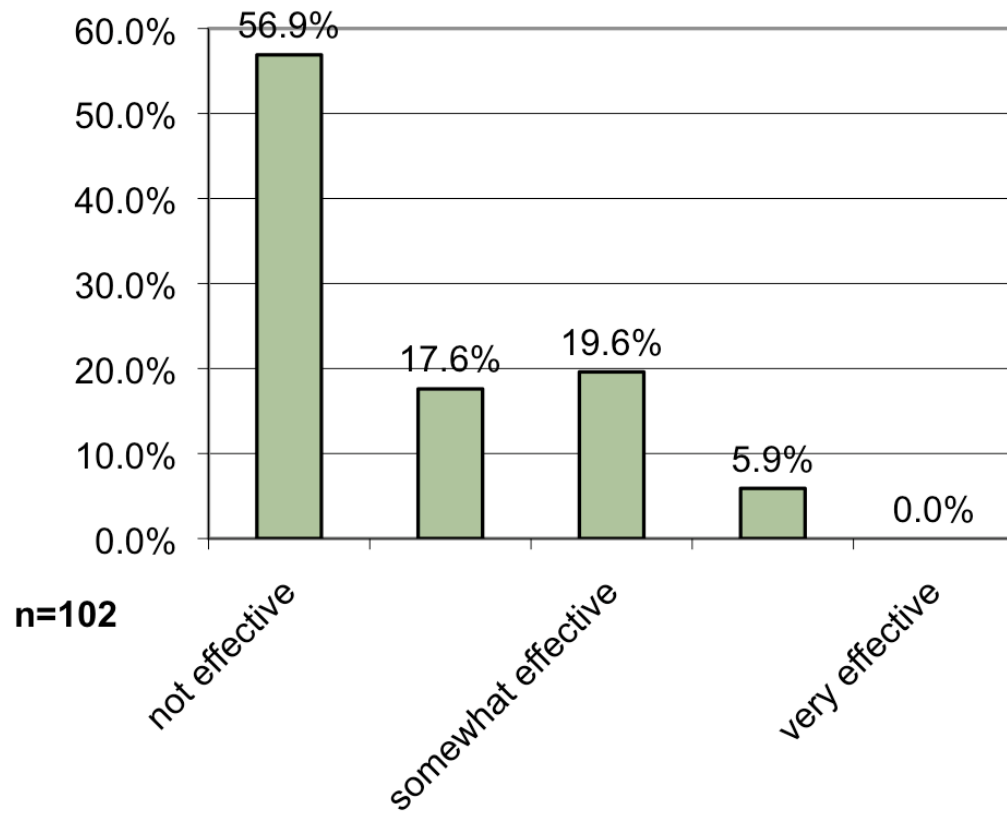
Family Function

Indicators in this domain pertain to parental competencies, parenting practices, home safety, and parent child relationships

Child and Family Well-Being

Indicators in this domain pertain to child health, social adjustment, educational achievement, and economic well-being.

The Evaluation Tools Gap



←----- continuum of effectiveness ----->

Source: undetermined

Librarians have had difficulty telling their story literally for decades.



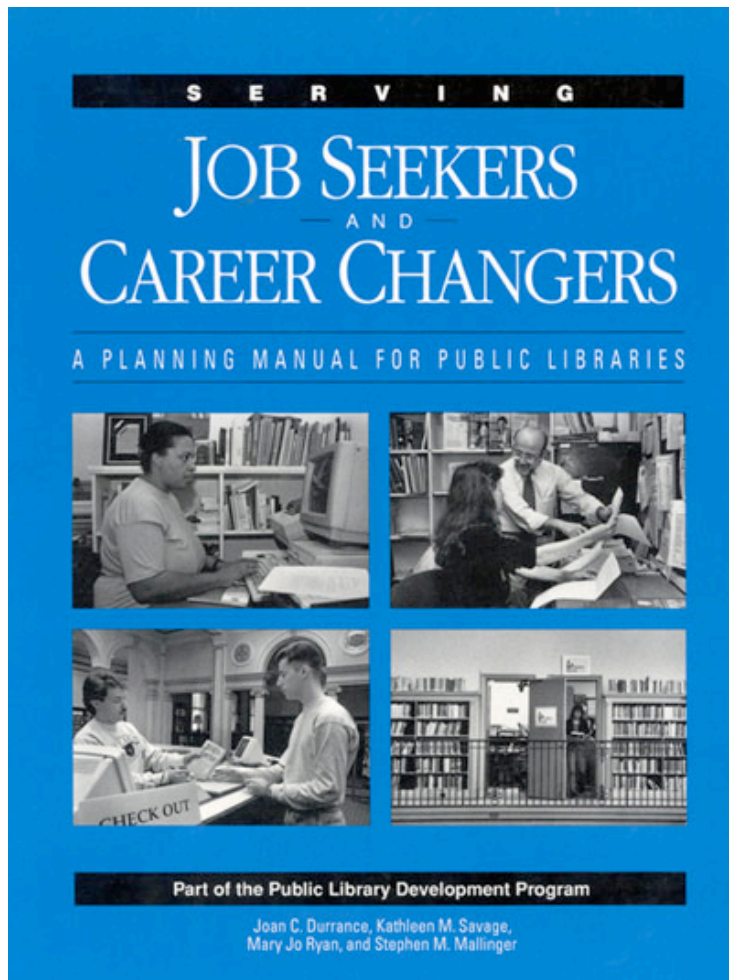
Photograph of
Gratia Countryman
removed

“Why is it that we have not impressed ourselves, as an important and essential institution, upon the governing body or upon intelligent authors and scholars? Is it in the very nature of our work that it should be so, or is it in ourselves?” Gratia Countryman, ALA President: 1932. (Preer, LJ, Jan 2001. p. 62)

Librarians STILL Have Considerable Problems
Telling “the Library Story.”
How **do** librarians contribute to. . . ?

- Personal growth
 - Learning gains
 - Intellectual, emotional & social growth
 - Personal health and safety
 - People’s confidence
 - Individual skill building
 - Safe, thriving neighborhoods
 - Civic engagement
 - The quality of life in the community
 - Building the community
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Some Librarians Begin to Understand User Outcomes During Recession Periods



Source: American Library Association
<http://www.ala.org>



Source: New York: Neal-Schuman
<http://www.neal-schuman.com/>

Benefits of Job & Career Info Centers (Before the Use of the Term Outcome)

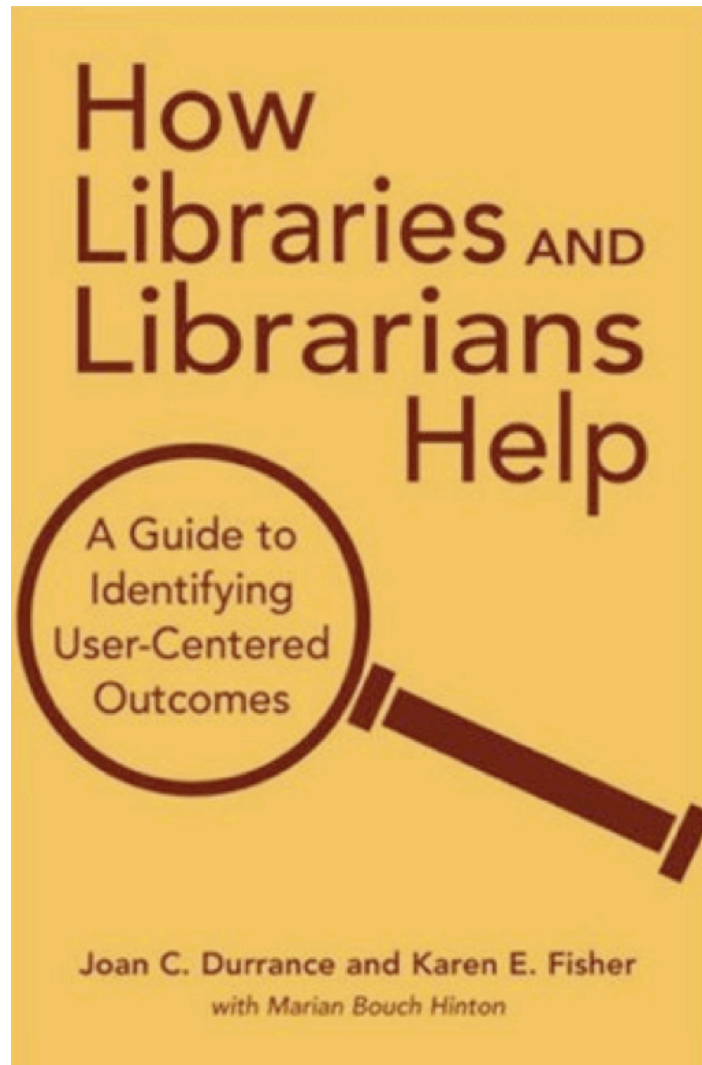
- **Job related benefitss** (got a job, learned about a job, made a connection with an employer)
- **Education/training related** (prepared for a new career; enrolled in program, university, etc.)
- **Skill changes** (learned to do something new)
- **Personal learning gains** (learned more about themselves and their capabilities)
- **Personal efficacy gains** (Gained confidence, etc.)
- **Made connections in the community** (social network, social capital gains)

Durrance, 1993; 1994

New User-Focused Output Measures Are Helping to Bridge the Outcome Gap

Examples below are from the Hartford PL Annual Report-2003

- 4,000 children use the Library's **Homework Centers** every month
 - The **American Place** reaches 450 immigrants and refugees each month
 - 1,000 people each month attend **cultural and educational programs** at the Library
 - **Family Literacy** programs reach 2,000 children, parents and day care providers each month
 - Community Librarians attend more than 600 **community meetings** each year
 - HPL provides assistance to
 - 3,000 **small businesses**,
 - 1,700 **entrepreneurs** and
 - 3,250 **job seekers**
 - **With data like this the library is on its way to assessing outcomes**
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Source: American Library Association
<http://www.ala.org>

Ways Libraries and Librarians Help Individuals, Groups, the Community

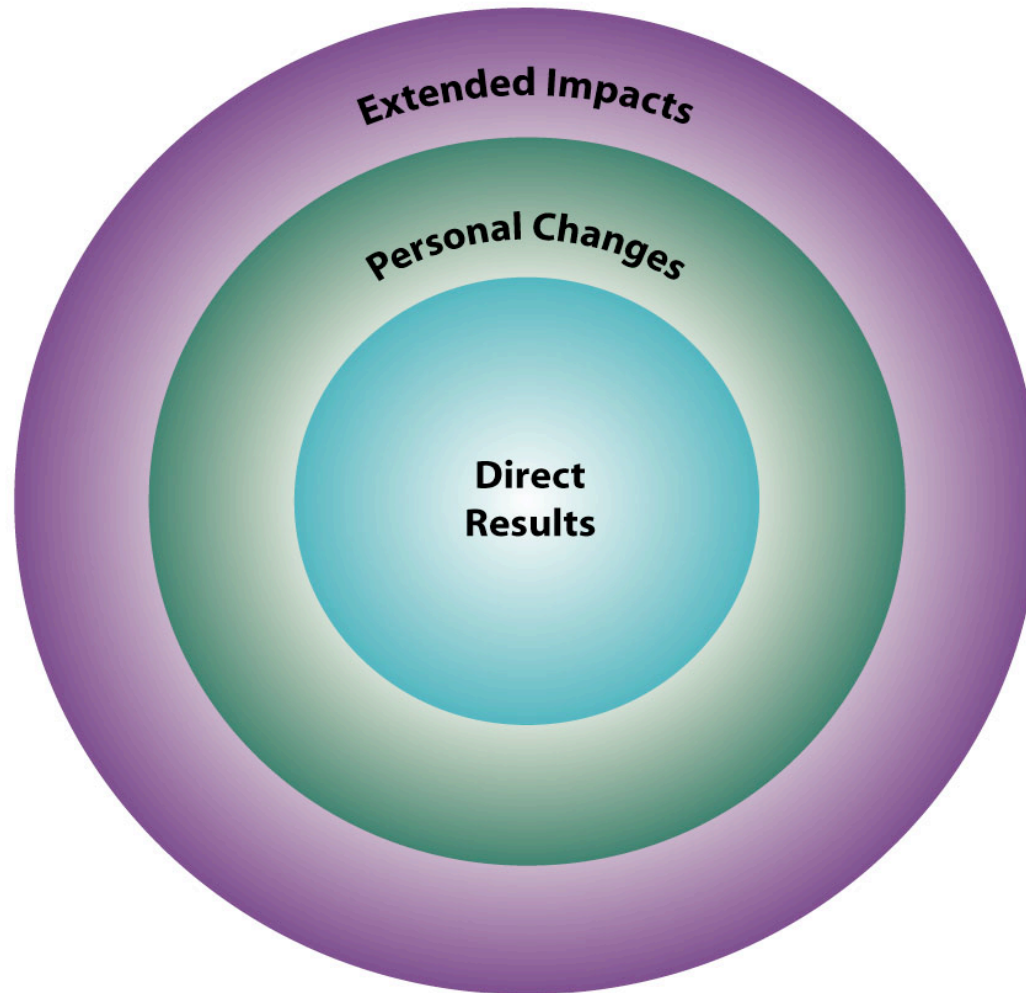
HLLH Found that Libraries and librarians can:

- **Increase people's access** to information, knowledge, culture
- **Save people time, money, & energy**
- Provide a safe, comfortable, accommodating, and nurturing environment (**Place**)
- **Change people's attitudes** and perceptions about libs, librarians, etc.
- Foster **personal efficacy gains** (self esteem, confidence, etc.)
- Help people progress toward a goal or **solve a problem**
- **Facilitate skill gains** (Internet, literacy, language, communication, social)
- **Foster learning or knowledge gains**, lifelong learning” “info literacy”
- Help people **make connections** (with ideas, people, to a larger world)
- **Increase social capital,**
- Foster **citizenship gains** (become more engaged as a citizen)
- **Facilitate status changes** (prepare to get a job, decide to return to school)
- **Build Community:** (civic problem-solving, partnerships, collaboration)

Image of
immigrant gains
from library use
removed

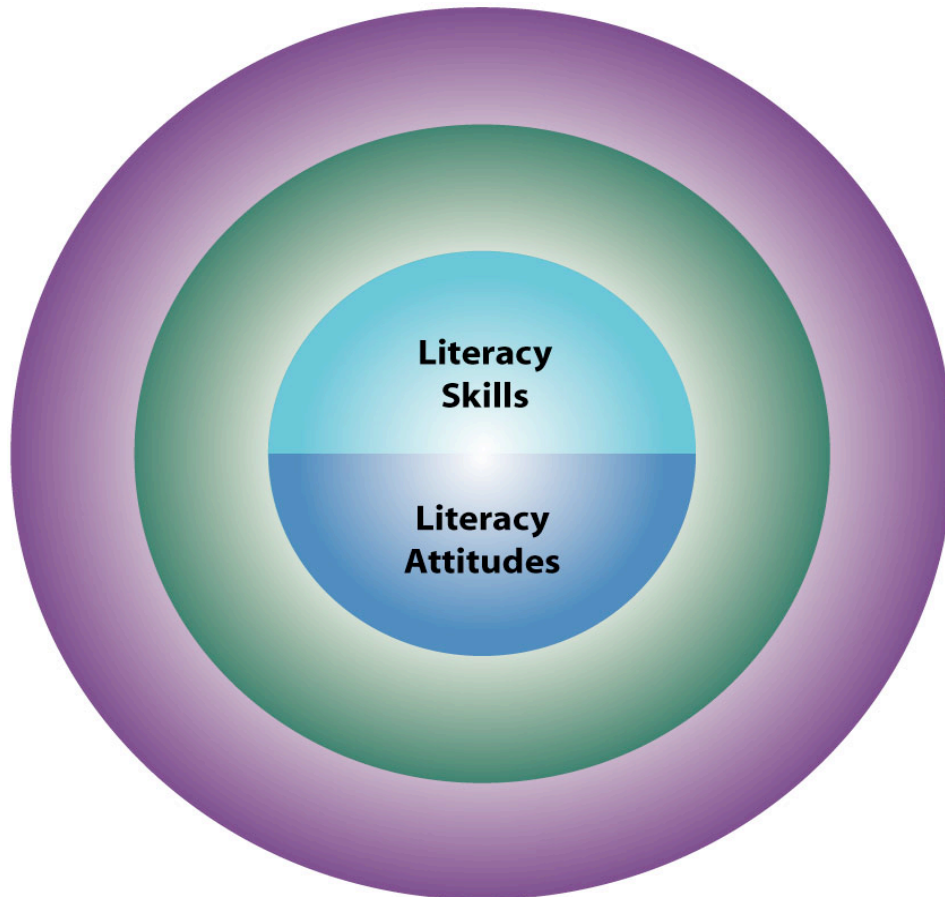
Figure 1 can be found in the
"Queens Borough Public Library
New
Americans (NAP) and Programs
Case Study Report" at
[http://www.si.umich.edu/
~durrance/casestudies/
casestudyreports/
QueensReport.html](http://www.si.umich.edu/~durrance/casestudies/casestudyreports/QueensReport.html)

Outcomes Model for Washtenaw Literacy: "Ripples of Impact"-Maria Souden



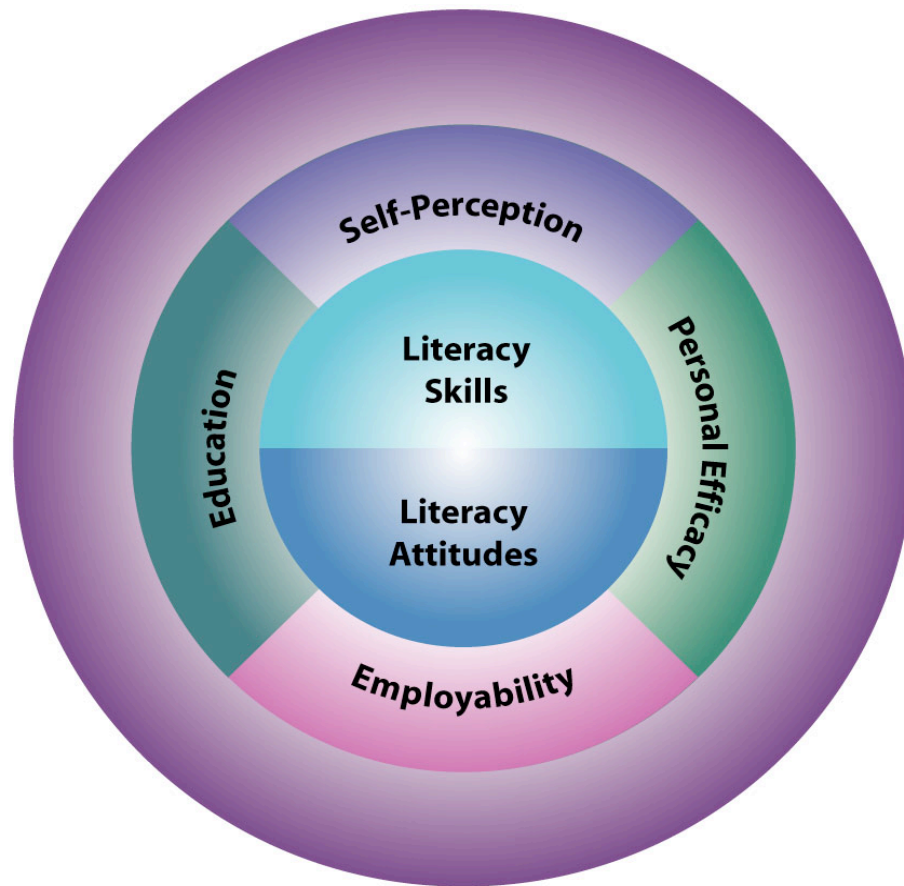
CC:BY-NC-SA Maria Souden

Direct Results: Literacy Skills and Attitudes



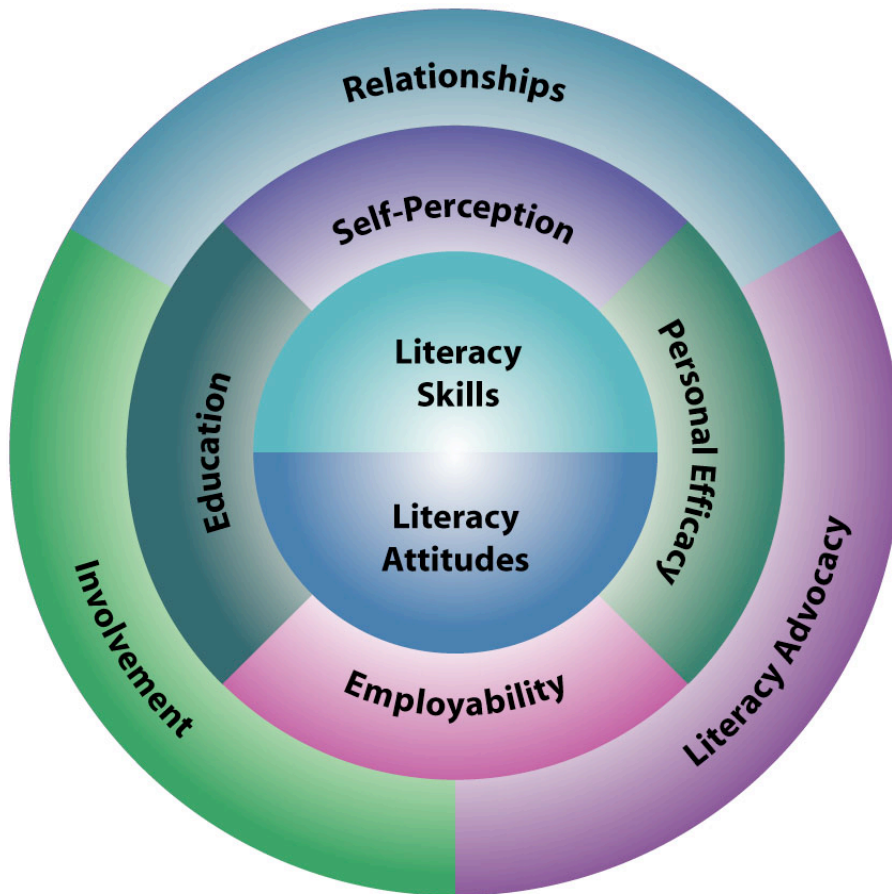
- Improved reading, writing
- Learning disabilities
- Become readers
- Importance of reading
- Changed attitude toward library

Personal Change: Self-perception, Personal Efficacy, Education, Employability



- Increased confidence
- Decreased shame
- Expanded worldview
- Ability to learn
- Independence
- Life skills
- Complete degree
- Take courses
- Better job
- Job skills

External Impacts: Relationships, Involvement, Advocacy



- Increased social comfort
- Family connections
- Tutor relationship
- Improved home life
- Correspondence
- More visible at work
- WL involvement
- Community participation
- Role model
- Recruitment
- Passion for literacy
- Learners become tutors

Outcome Assessment Class-SI 623 Outcome-Based Evaluation of Programs and Services

Objectives of 623 are to:

- ‡ Learn about approaches to outcome-based evaluation
 - ‡ Identify and use context-centered methods for evaluating public information services,
 - ‡ Examine the role of evaluation in developing more effective user-focused services,
 - ‡ Gain skill in identifying appropriate data collection and analysis methods,
 - ‡ Develop an understanding of recent developments in measurement and evaluation,
 - ‡ Gain the ability to conduct an outcome-based evaluation.
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