Transforming Summer Reading: Using Outcomes to Create More Impactful Summer Reading Programs

Julia Carlis and Renee Grassi, Dakota County Library
Baseline

On a scale of 0 to 5, how much do you know about evaluation?
Baseline

On a scale of 0 to 5, how much do you know about evaluation?

Same scale, how confident are you in your evaluation skills and knowledge?
Outcomes

Outcome Measurement

Outputs vs. Outcomes

Why Outcomes?

1. Measure impact of a service
2. Identify effective practices
3. Identify areas of improvement
4. Prove value to stakeholders
5. Define purpose

We have a 3-D printer at the library, so that
The kids can make game pieces, so that
The kids can play a game, so that
The kids have fun, so that
They like to come to the library, so that
They come to the library more frequently, so that
They use more of the library's other resources, so that
They start checking out books, so that
They start gaining reading stamina, so that
They enjoy reading, so that
They do better in school, so that....

Evaluation Basics

Why evaluation?

What is the process?
- What are we evaluating?
- Why are we doing an evaluation and what do we hope to learn?
- How will we conduct the study?

- How can we use evaluation strategies?
  Quick vs. In-depth
WHY?
At the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, we...

So that participants...

- Enjoy shared experiences
- Explore art and history
- Feel involved and included
- Make unexpected connections
- Make personal connections
- Feel inspired to go deeper
- Build awareness and respect for diverse cultures and people
- Build bridges across differences
- Feel empowered to share their creative and civic voices
- Strengthen bonds with friends and family

Our community grows stronger & more connected
DCL Background

Team’s planning process

- Task force charge
- Outcomes for Summer Reading Program overall
- Outcomes for individual events/programs
- Specific programs for Pre-readers, Readers, and Teens
  - Outcomes were piloted for Reader Program only
Implementation for SRP 2017

What did we evaluate and measure?

After participating in Bookawocky,

1. Children increase confidence in their reading ability
2. Children learn how to use the library
3. Children learn something new
4. Children develop their appreciation for reading

Image from Farmington Library, Farmington
Chart your own reading and learning course this summer. Complete activities in the profited planets or choose activities from the Idea Rocket or your own imagination. Write your chosen activities in the blank planets and color them in when completed.

Finish 10 activities to reach Level 1 and finish 20 activities to reach Level 2. Each time you reach a level, bring your Activity Log to the Library and pick up your reward.

One activity log per child per summer. Logs must be picked up by Saturday, Sept 2, 2017.

IDEA ROCKET

Use these activities or come up with your own.
- Read for 10 minutes. Draw this activity as many times as you'd like.
- Read outside.
- Write an adventure story.
- Build a rocket using boxes.
- Name the planets.
- Ask a librarian for a recommendation.
- Write your teacher a letter.
- Visit a park or museum.
- Try a new fruit or vegetable.
- Write a poem.
- Learn about planets and stars.
- Go on a picnic.
- Read an award winning book.
- Write a story for a weekend book.
- How to build a rocket.
- Play a game with family or friends.
- Listen to an audio book.
- Write about your favorite memory.
- Create a collage.
- Read out loud to someone.
- Help someone or volunteer.

Read a book about outer space.
Show your library card to a librarian.
Tell a librarian what you’re reading.
Have a screen-free day.

BOOKAMOOCY
PRIZE DRAWING ENTRY
Fill out the entry form below to enter the prize drawing. Drop the entry form at any Dakota County Library location. Drawing takes place Wednesday, August 1st. The winner will be announced on August 16th. There will be 6 winners.

Name:
Age:
Phone:
Family member:

Come to know how to raise a reader at your Dakota County Library
How did we evaluate and measure?

**Summer Reading Survey**

Branch: ___________________________ Grade (Fall): ___________________________

After participating in Bookawocky...

- Are you a stronger reader? Circle one. Yes  No
- Did you learn something new? Circle one. Yes  No
- Do you want to read more? Circle one. Yes  No

How did you use the library this summer? Check all that apply.

- [ ] Found books
- [ ] Checked out books
- [ ] Asked questions
- [ ] Went to a program
- [ ] Used the website/catalog
- [ ] Downloaded something
- [ ] Talked to a librarian
- [ ] Other: ___________________________
What We Learned - Outcome Survey Results

477 total survey participants

Stronger reader?
Poor Reader, 50, 10%
Strong Reader, 427, 90%
90%

Learned something new?
Did Not Learn Something New
57, 12%
Learned Something New
88%

Read more?
29, 5%
448, 94%
What We Learned - Outcome Survey Results

**Use of Library**

- Talked to a Librarian: 309
- Downloaded Something: 63
- Used the Website/Catalog: 205
- Went to a Program: 232
- Asked Questions: 226
- Checked out Books: 456
- Found Books: 435
What We Learned - Outcome Survey Results

A total of 55 participants said they are not a stronger reader after participating in the program.

However, 91% of those same participants also said the summer reading program encouraged them to read more books.
What We Learned - Method

- Goal Setting
- Paper Survey vs. Participatory Activity
- Form Complications
- Missed Opportunities?

Image from Galaxie Library, Apple Valley
What We Learned - Execution

- Kids like giving feedback!
- Inconsistency
- Audience and Scope
- Process
- Simplicity--less is more

Image from Heritage Library, Lakeville
Using the Data - Marketing

- SRP promotional material
- Social media platforms
- Infographics
- Internal and external audiences
Using the Data - Advocacy

- Donation and sponsorship requests
- Budget requests
- Grant applications
- Community stakeholders and local partners
- Other library staff
Using the Data - Planning Improvements

Assessment Life Cycle

- Planning
- Measuring
- Applying and embedding findings
- Learning

ASSESSMENT LIFE CYCLE Developed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, whose model shows the role of assessment in a self-reinforcing cycle of continuing improvement.
Using the Data - Planning Improvements

2018 Summer Program

- Affirmation
- Transparency
- Digging deeper
- Refinement
Next Steps

Apply Strategies Outside SRP

- Updated Program Evaluation form
- Librarian-led summer programming
- Teen Volunteer Program Evaluation

2018 Summer Program

READsquared implementation

St. Kate’s Practicum and Teen Framework
FREE WEBINAR

Thursday, October 19 at 1 pm (CST)

PLA’s Project Outcome is a free online toolkit designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of their programs and services by providing simple, standardized surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes. Learn how to use Project Outcome data for programming decisions and improvements, funding requests, measuring against strategic priorities, and advocating for the impact your programs and services have on the community.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this webinar, participants will

- Understand what is included in the Project Outcome toolkit and how it works
- Know how other libraries are using resulting outcome data for program improvements and more
- Be able to apply what they learned to their library programs and services
Any Questions?
Thank you!

Renee Grassi
Youth Services Manager
renee.grassi@co.dakota.mn.us

Julia Carlis
Youth Programming and Outreach Librarian
julia.carlis@co.dakota.mn.us