Outcome Measurement in Public and Academic Libraries

Presenters:
Sara Goek (ACRL)
Emily Plagman (PLA)

April 18, 2019
Have you heard of Project Outcome?

Outcomes for Today

• Find out how Project Outcome can help you measure meaningful learning outcomes in libraries.

• Learn about using the Project Outcome toolkit, from administering surveys to visualizing results.

• Get tips on how to put your data to work in improving library services and advocacy.
Today’s Agenda

- Measuring Impact
- Outcome Measures for Libraries
- Project Outcome Toolkit
- Outcome Measurement Process
- Live Dashboard Demo
- Case Studies
- Taking Action Using Results
- Q&A
What is Project Outcome?

Measuring Impact
Measuring Impact

Impact requires **more than**
- Intuition
- Gate counts or usage metrics
- Anecdotes

Libraries need more **data and evidence** to show their impact

The **challenge** is measuring impact when
- Library and institution needs differ
- Staff are busy
- Resources are limited
- Lack of understanding of what and why to measure
What is an outcome?

An outcome is a *specific benefit* from a library program / service that can be *quantitative* or *qualitative*, and is expressed as *changes an individual perceives* in themselves.

It answers the question: *what good did we do?*

Or, in other words: *how have learners been changed as a result of our interactions?*

An outcome should be *meaningful, achievable, observable, and actionable.*
Measuring Impact

Needs Assessment

WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY NEED

Outputs

HOW MUCH DID WE DO

Patron Satisfaction

WHAT SHOULD WE DO BETTER

Outcomes

WHAT GOOD DID WE DO
Taking Action

**Grant Work**

A library staff member explained, “[Caregivers shared] how beneficial the program was, how they’re doing projects they wouldn’t have thought of to do at home,... using supplies that they don’t have at home... So, having that information, I could write a grant that shows this is what the community wants, and we want to provide it. And then, I also use the survey [results] to report during the grant period, talking about what the patrons liked most about the service, or programs...and what else they’d like to see the library doing.”

**Partnerships**

A library partner said Project Outcome surveys tell her “a lot about what the community needs, what each person's needs are, what else we could bring in, as far as technology is concerned, which is important as technology is changing pretty much every day now.”

**Programming Decisions**

One library program manager explained, “Some of these workshops...were well-attended, but the feedback was such that we no longer offer [them]. It’s a matter of making sure that it’s not just getting people in the door, but that people feel like it’s worth their time, and it’s something that they can use. That when they leave...they’re in a position where they feel they’re more comfortable with whatever the topic was.”

**Advocacy**

One library board member shared, “The [outcome] data provides an objective story, backing up much more engaging stories from staff about serving the community with objective numbers... [and] includes things the board may not think to ask for. This adds dimensions to how the board considers the library’s success in serving the community.”

**Funding Requests**

As explained by a library leader, “It was information from Project Outcome that gave us the confidence to ask the Friends [to fund the program], and to justify asking for that money.”
1. Is your library already measuring outcomes in some way?
2. What is a barrier to measuring outcomes at your library?
Outcome Measures for Libraries
PLA Performance Measurement Task Force

2013-2018

Membership: diverse group of public libraries, state libraries, and researchers throughout the country

Charge: develop standardized outcome measures for widely-offered public library programs and services
Public Library Survey Topics

- Early Childhood Literacy
- Digital Learning
- Education/Lifelong Learning
- Health
- Civic/Community Engagement
- Summer Reading
- Job Skills
- Economic Development

www.projectoutcome.org
ACRL Project Outcome for Academic Libraries Task Force

“The Task Force is established to adapt the Project Outcome measures, developed by the Public Library Association, to an academic library context. Collecting consistent outcomes data will allow academic libraries to benchmark at the national and state level and will help ACRL better support its members and mission.”
Academic Library Survey Topics

- **INSTRUCTION**
- **RESEARCH**
- **EVENTS/PROGRAMS**
- **TEACHING SUPPORT**
- **LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY**
- **DIGITAL & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**
- **SPACE**
**Outcome Measures**

- Knowledge
- Confidence
- Application/Behavior Change
- Awareness

**Quantitative Data**

**Qualitative Data**

What did patrons like most?
What can the library do to improve?
## Survey Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate Surveys</th>
<th>Follow-up Surveys</th>
<th>Outcome Measurement Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Patron-reported learning</td>
<td>• Patron-reported adoption</td>
<td>• Long-term impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use immediately after completion of a program/service</td>
<td>• Use 4-8 weeks after completion of a program/service</td>
<td>• Use to design your own surveys and data collection methods to capture long-term impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Still in development</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Still in development*
Why Project Outcome?

• We’ve been told we need to engage in assessment
• We know that learning outcomes are important
• We need to be able to better tell our library’s story
• We need a consistent and convenient way to measure
• *Why reinvent the wheel at every institution?*
The Project Outcome for Libraries Toolkit
Project Outcome Toolkit

• Quick and simple surveys
• Easy-to-use survey management portal
• Ready-made and customizable data reports
• Interactive data dashboards
• Resources and training
• Peer discussion board

It’s FREE!
NEW! Project Outcome for **Academic Libraries**: Visit the Site

**Outcome Measurement Made Easy**

for **Public Libraries**

Resources and Tools to Create Surveys and Analyze Outcome Data

**227,579**

Responses collected through **public library surveys**

**1,468**

**Public libraries** have created surveys

Visit: [http://www.projectoutcome.org](http://www.projectoutcome.org)
## Who Has Access?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free full access</th>
<th>Free limited access</th>
<th>Access at a cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic library users <em>(ACRL site only)</em></td>
<td>Users who do not work in a public or academic library</td>
<td>Consultants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Public library and state public library staff *(PLA site only)* |                                                                                    | Groups (multiple institutions in a consortium or association) |}
| Research library users *(ACRL site only)*              |                                                                                    |                                           |
| Library school students *(ACRL site only)*             |                                                                                    |                                           |

*Full access* = all resources, peer discussion, survey management, and data dashboards  
*Limited access* = resources and peer discussion only
Immediate Surveys

- Patron-reported learning
- Open-ended feedback
- Immediate impact
- End of program
- Less staff time

This workshop aims to help you use library resources for your research.

Please take a few minutes for this brief survey and let us know if, as a result of participating in the Research workshop program...

1. I learned something new that will help me with my research.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
   - N/A

2. I feel more confident about my ability to conduct my research.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
   - N/A

3. I intend to apply what I learned to my research.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
   - N/A

4. I am more aware of the library’s resources and services.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
   - N/A

5. What did you like most about this research service?

6. What else could the library do to help you with your research?

Date: Location: Chicago State University
Thank you! Your feedback will help improve this workshop.
Using Immediate Survey Outcomes

- Assess the immediate impact of a program/service
- Inform changes to the program/service
- Get a “snapshot” for reporting and advocacy
Follow-up Surveys

- Patron-reported adoption
- Open-ended feedback
- Change of behavior
- 4-8 weeks later
- More staff time

Please take a few minutes for this brief survey and let us know if, as a result of getting research assistance from the library...

1. I used what I learned to complete a research task or goal.
   - Yes
   - No
   - N/A
   Please Explain:

2. I applied what I learned to other research tasks or goals.
   - Yes
   - No
   - N/A
   Please Explain:

3. I used another library resource or service.
   - Yes
   - No
   - N/A
   If yes, please explain: what other resource or service did you use?

5. What did you like most about this research service?

6. What could the library do to continue to help you with your research?

Date: Location:

Thank you! Your feedback will help improve library programs and services.

This survey is part of Project Outcome, a national initiative to help libraries measure the impact of their programs and services. For more information about this effort, please visit aol.projectoutcome.org.
Using Follow-up Survey Outcomes

- Assess the impact of a program/service after some time has elapsed
- Inform internal planning
- Measure progress towards strategic goals
- Provide evidence for advocacy
Open-Ended Responses

I enjoyed how the program was tailored to our specific assignment. Instead of focusing on different services the library offers, she decided to focus on our major writing assignment and how we can use the library's services specifically to succeed on our current assignment.

It was really helpful when it comes to finding the correct resources and databases for information. It will help very much in future assignments and research.

That I learned a new database that I can use in my studies.

I enjoyed how interactive it was.

I like seeing what I can use in my potential interviews with future employers.

I like how they give us resources to help us succeed and make the best work possible! It's really awesome how they give us the resources and also take time to teach us how to use the resources efficiently and inform us about what things to do and what things to stay away from when using each different resource.

Have more open hours (at night).

Here's something I think we should have more people to help us individually.

Make their website and services more known. Before this program, I was unaware of a lot of the things they offered, and I feel like the same goes for many students on campus. The library offers so many things to help students succeed, but students aren't utilizing these things because they are unaware.

I think that it would help if we had these meetings in more of our classes.

Make website more compatible with phones.

Keep supplying research resources for as many subjects as possible.

Nothing, I always love coming in!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designed to help libraries:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Develop their own outcome measures;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Implement data collection methods other than the existing Project Outcome standardized surveys;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Measure outcome data over time; and,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Develop strategies for working with partners on outcome measurement projects (e.g. contributions to institution-wide initiatives).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESOURCES

Project Outcome provides resources to help libraries throughout the outcome measurement process.

Search Project Outcome Resources

Featured Resources

Project Outcome 101
What to know about Project Outcome

Preview Surveys
Preview the standardized Project Outcome for Academic Libraries surveys

Writing Open-Ended Survey Questions
Tips for writing your own open-ended survey questions

Getting Started
- Project Outcome 101
- Tutorial Videos
- What Is Outcome Measurement?
- Outcome Measurement Process
- Outcome Measurement Continuum

Surveys
- Preview Surveys
- Choosing the Right Survey
- Writing Open-Ended Survey Questions
- Survey Background
- Protecting Patron Privacy

Data Collection
- Data Collection Roadmap
- Date Collection Team
- Building Internal Support
- Survey Best Practices
- How to Talk to Patrons
- Following Up with Patrons
- Informed Consent
- Sample Size
- Glossary

Data Analysis
- Analyzing Qualitative Data
- Analyzing Quantitative Data
- Framing Survey Results

Taking Action
- Good Practices for Communicating Data
- Advocacy Tips
- Advocacy Resources

From the Field
- Case Studies
- Meet the Task Force
- Feedback Form
- Workshops
Data Dashboards

Average Score is calculated by assigning a 1-5 value to each Likert Scale answer (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). Aggregated responses are then averaged by weighting to these categories to come up with an aggregate score for each question, which can also be aggregated further to larger groups of libraries.

The number of responses for each specific survey question are displayed below. Use the controls to filter or group responses by available options.

SURVEY RESPONSES BY PERCENT

* N/A responses are not included in charts or percentage calculations. Note that due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.
Benefits of Project Outcome

- Short & simple surveys = higher response rates
- Capture snapshot data and make immediate improvements
- Open-ended comments are a goldmine
- Standardized outcome measures
- Aggregate, national benchmarks
- Ready-made reports and data visualizations do the heavy lifting for you
- Work at your own pace: pick & choose surveys based on program, capacity, and learning objectives
- Customize: add context and custom questions to surveys, and create reports that highlight the information you need
What program or service could your library measure?

Public Libraries
- Early Childhood Literacy
- Education/Lifelong Learning
- Summer Reading
- Digital Learning
- Job Skills
- Civic/Community Engagement
- Health
- Economic Development

Academic Libraries
- Teaching Support
- Events/Programs
- Library Technology
- Instruction
- Digital & Special Collections
- Space
Outcome Measurement Process
Project Outcome Roadmap

Get Started
- **Register**: Create your Project Outcome account at acrl.projectoutcome.org
- **Onboard Staff**: Have conversations with staff about importance of outcomes

Plan Survey
- **Review Resources**: Review “getting started” resources
- **Choose Survey**: Choose survey topic and type based on community needs and library goals

Create Survey
- **Create Survey**: Select survey topic and type, enter program name and date, choose location, confirm survey name
- **Customize Survey**: Add library logo, internal notes, custom intro and/or footer message

Enter Data
- **Enter Responses**: Enter survey responses, include location if applicable
- **Add Attendance**: Enter program attendance to get response rates

Administer Survey
- **Distribute and Collect Surveys**: Print out surveys and access survey links; ask patrons to complete surveys after program is complete
- **Talk to Patrons**: Explain to patrons the importance of outcomes and honest feedback
- **Reduce Bias**: Have an anonymous drop-box or ask a volunteer to collect surveys

Review Results
- **Analyze Quantitative Data and Qualitative Results**: Use survey reports and dashboards to understand your results

Take Action
- **Plan Advocacy**: Tailor advocacy messaging to your audience
- **Share Results**: Share results with internal and external audiences
Outcome Measurement Process

Step 1: Set Goals
Step 2: Measure Outcomes
Step 3: Review Results
Step 4: Take Action
RESOURCES

Project Outcome provides resources to help libraries throughout the outcome measurement process.

Search Project Outcome Resources

Featured Resources

**Project Outcome 101**
What to know about Project Outcome

**Preview Surveys**
Preview the standardized Project Outcome for Academic Libraries surveys

**Writing Open-Ended Survey Questions**
Tips for writing your own open-ended survey questions

**Getting Started**
- Project Outcome 101
- Tutorial Videos
- What Is Outcome Measurement?
- Outcome Measurement Process
- Outcome Measurement Continuum

**Surveys**
- Preview Surveys
- Choosing the Right Survey
- Writing Open-Ended Survey Questions
- Survey Background
- Protecting Patron Privacy

**Data Collection**
- Data Collection Roadmap
- Data Collection Team
- Building Internal Support
- Survey Best Practices
- How to Talk to Patrons
- Following Up with Patrons
- Informed Consent
- Sample Size
- Glossary

**Data Analysis**
- Analyzing Qualitative Data
- Analyzing Quantitative Data
- Framing Survey Results

**Taking Action**
- Good Practices for Communicating Data
- Advocacy Tips
- Advocacy Resources

**From the Field**
- Case Studies
- Meet the Task Force
- Feedback Form
- Workshops
Live Dashboard Demo
Case Studies
Public Library: Burnsville, WV

Project Outcome helps Burnsville Public Library:

- Understand impact
- Develop new partnerships
- Design new programs
- Increase funding

Library Name: Burnsville Public Library
Library Location: Braxton County, West Virginia
Library Size: Very small (one building, service area: 3,700)
Immediate Surveys Used: Summer Reading (Caregiver), Summer Reading (Teen/Child), Digital Learning
Public Library: Tulsa City-County, OK

Early Literacy Storytimes

64%
Activities such as puppets, bubbles, and playtime
- "Learning new songs and new books for my child"
- "Standing and doing songs"
- "Singing and finger play"
- "Bubbles"

27%
The staff’s enthusiasm and interactivity with the children
- "Rita is great with the kids her patience is awesome"
- "Miss Shelly is very prepared and patient"
- "Becky reads with so much enthusiasm that captures the kids attention"
Dollar General Grant for Early Readers

### Summer Reading Centennial Program Survey

Please take a few minutes for this brief survey and let us know if, as a result of your child’s overall experience with the Summer Reading Centennial Program...

**Is this child is between ages 0 and 7?**
- Yes [ ]  No [ ]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Nether Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child maintained or increased their reading skills.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child is a more confident reader.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child reads more often.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child uses the library more often.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What did your child like most about the program/service?**

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

**What could the library do to help your child continue to learn more?**

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Iowa State University Libraries

Aspires to be the most welcoming land grant university library

Space
- Eight group study rooms (reserve-able)
- 2,300 seats (16:1 ratio)
- Open 112 hours/week
- Open 24X7 Dead and Finals week

Technology
- 275 public computers
- 212 laptops available for checkout
- 210 technology accessories available for checkout
- Over 38,000 unique wireless users/month
- 30 TB of wireless data/month
- 22% increase in mobile device use since 2017
- >2.3 million pages printed annually
Space

• This space contributed to my ability to learn something new. ($M = 4.45$)
• Using this space makes me feel more confident about my ability to achieve my goals. ($M = 4.73$)
• I am likely to use this space again in the future. ($M = 4.95$)
• After using this space, I am more aware of library resources and services ($M = 4.23$)
Central Piedmont Community College

Large, urban, multi-campus institution located in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, NC

- CPCC Libraries
  - 7 libraries on 6 campuses
  - 32 full-time staff and 14 part-time staff

- Enrollment: 18,885
  - Male: 44.8%
  - Female: 55.2%
  - African-American: 31.5%
  - Hispanic: 13.2%
  - Asian/Pacific Islander: 6.6%
  - White: 43.7%

Technology & space surveys

- Evidence-informed decision making
  - Changes to circulating laptops
  - Changes in group study room policies

- Comparisons / benchmarking

- Trends
Take Action Using Results
Taking Action

- Program Improvements
- Strategic Planning
- Secure Funding
- Communication & Advocacy
- Build Partnerships
WHAT NEXT?

What’s your plan of action when you get back to your library?

What’s the first thing you need to do to get your ducks in a row?
QUESTIONS?

Share questions in the chat…

Further questions after today?
Use the peer discussion board (http://acrlcommunity.projectoutcome.org)
or email us (acrl@projectoutcome.org)
Keep in touch…

• Watch the **resources** page, as more will be added

• Keep up with **news and events** – including upcoming workshops and webinars – on the websites:
  
  Public Libraries: [https://www.projectoutcome.org/news_posts](https://www.projectoutcome.org/news_posts)
  
  Academic Libraries: [https://acrl.projectoutcome.org/news_posts](https://acrl.projectoutcome.org/news_posts)

• If you are a registered user, you’ll get occasional **email updates** (opt-out available)

• Follow Project Outcome on **Facebook** and **Twitter** (@ProjectOutcome)
Thank you!