Outcomes-Based Program Planning & Evaluation

Workbook

Workbook compiled by M. Christine Castle

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Participant Workbook

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Appendix I – Case Study: "Inspiring a generation with museums." GEM Case Studies Vol. 9, 2012. Used with permission.

Outcomes-Based Program Planning & Evaluation (OBPE)

Background
This workshop and accompanying workbook are intended to help museums better meet the Interpretation and Education Standard of the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario. These tools are intended to provide you with a process to plan programs with measurable outcomes and then to plan strategies that will effectively evaluate those outcomes.

Intended audience
- Individuals responsible for planning & evaluating museum education and interpretation programs
- Museum workers who are new to the process of outcome based program design and evaluation

Intended outputs
- Two workshops on outcomes-based program planning & evaluation
- Workbook
- Evaluation session
- Facebook Group

Intended outcomes
Participants will be able to:
- Write objectives & outcomes for their program's target audience
- Plan an evaluation strategy to determine whether the outcomes have been achieved

Through you, your museums will be better able to:
- Meet the Ministry Interpretation & Education Standard
- Articulate their impact to stakeholders.
- Plan programs that meet the needs/interests of their audiences.

Action
Please take a moment to describe the program that you'll be working on today …

Resources for Further Study

Betts, Tracy. "The Nonprofit Social Media Decision Guide." idealware. idealware. October 2011. http://www.idealware.org/reports/nonprofit-social-media-decision-guide (accessed April 18, 2013).

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Plan:Net Limited. "Splash & Ripple." *Health Canada.* n.d. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/_contribution/ripple-ricochet/index-eng.php#a4 (accessed March 29, 2013).

Thomson, Gareth, and Jenn Hoffman. "Measuring the Success of Environmental Education Programs." *Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society.* http://macaw.pbworks.com/f/measuring_ee_outcomes.pdf (accessed March 29, 2013).

Why Outcomes-Based Evaluation?

- Decreasing funds for nonprofit programs

- Increasing community needs

- Greater emphasis on whether nonprofit programs are really making a difference – and outcomes evaluation focuses on whether programs are really making a difference for museum & cultural heritage audiences.

- Previous evaluation measures focused on how much $, # of people served and on client satisfaction – these measures don't really assess impacts on museum & cultural heritage audiences

- Outcomes evaluation looks at impacts/benefits to museum & cultural heritage audiences
    - during and
    - after participation in your programs

Basic Principles to Remember

You do not have to be an expert in outcomes-based evaluation in order to carry out a useful outcomes evaluation plan.

- Time & effort spent on planning & developing program evaluation will have a big impact on other aspects of your organization

- Keep it simple. Program evaluation is not 'rocket science.'

- Start small, start now and grow as you're able.

Some Definitions

Outcomes-Based Program Evaluation is a systematic way to plan user-centered programs and to measure whether they have achieved their goals. OBPE goes beyond documenting what you did and measures what difference you made in the life of your audience. How has your audience changed? (Indiana University IUPUI & Institute for Museum & Library Services 2006-2010)

Inputs – The materials and resources that the program uses in its activities. These are often easy to identify and are common to many organizations and programs. For example: equipment, staff, facilities, standards (Standards for Community Museums in Ontario), information, etc.

Activities – These are the tasks, or processes, that the program undertakes with/to the audience in order to meet the audience's needs; for example, recruiting participants, promoting the program, networking, training. Note that when identifying the activities in a program, the focus is still pretty much on the organization or program itself, not on changes in the audience.

Outputs – These are the most immediate direct products or results of your program. Program outputs are typically measured in numbers. For example, the number of ... people who participated, classes who completed a program, materials developed, workshops given, supplies consumed, web site hits, etc. Outputs create the *potential* for outcomes to occur.

Outcomes – These are changes that occur to people, organizations and communities as a result of your program. These changes, or outcomes, are usually expressed in terms of:

- Knowledge and skills
- Behaviours
- Values, conditions and status

Impact – This describes your vision of a preferred future and underlines why the project is important. It refers to the longer-term change that you hope your project will help create or to which your project may contribute.

Measuring Outcomes

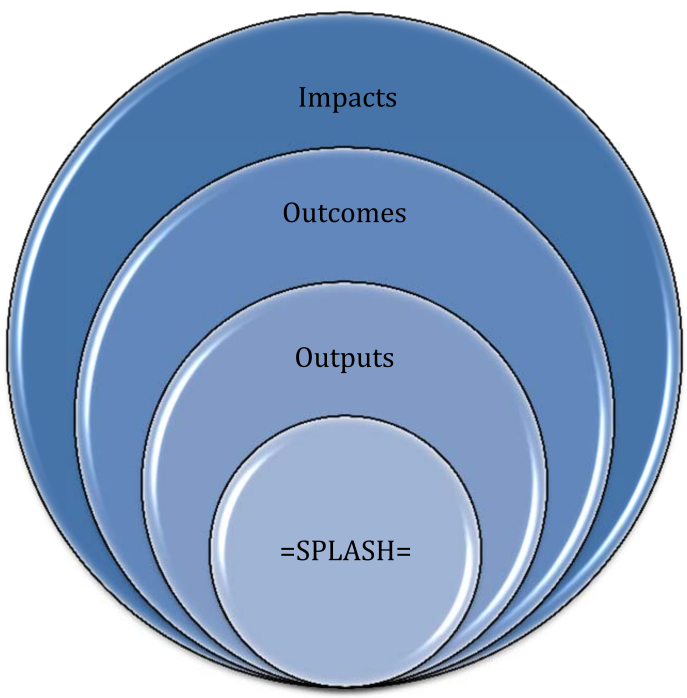
Program success is measured using indicators that measure any or all of the three logic model components of output, outcome, or impact.

Outcome indicators – These are observable and measurable "milestones" toward an outcome target. These are what you'd see, hear, read, etc., that would indicate to you whether you're making any progress toward your outcome or not. Indicators are measured using 'instruments' like questionnaires and surveys, and may be either quantitative or qualitative.

Outcome targets – These specify how much of your outcome you hope to achieve.

Splash & Ripple

Imagine your program is like a rock thrown into a pond. Your program makes a splash. The different outcomes measured are the ripples. **Inputs** are like the person & the rock. **Activities** are like dropping the rock. **Outputs** are like creating the splash. The ripples spreading from the splash are like your **Outcomes**, that later become your **Impacts**. The edge of the pond represents the **Situation**. (Plan:Net Limited & Stratecona Research Group, 2008)



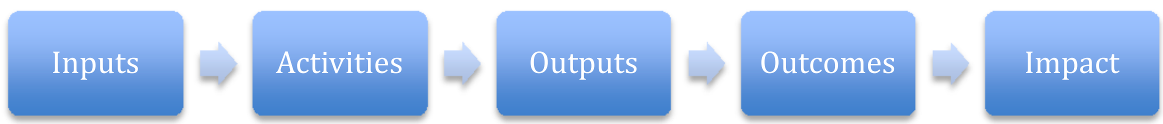
Program Logic Models

As not everything can be done, there must be a basis for deciding which things are worth doing. Enter evaluation. (Patton 1997)

"A logic model is an approach to planning & managing projects that helps us to be clear both about what our projects are doing and what they are changing. The word 'logic' is used because of the logical link between the system components: inputs are a necessary precondition to activities; activities need to take place before outputs are possible. Think of your program as a system that has inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes." (Thomson and Hoffman n.d., p.19)

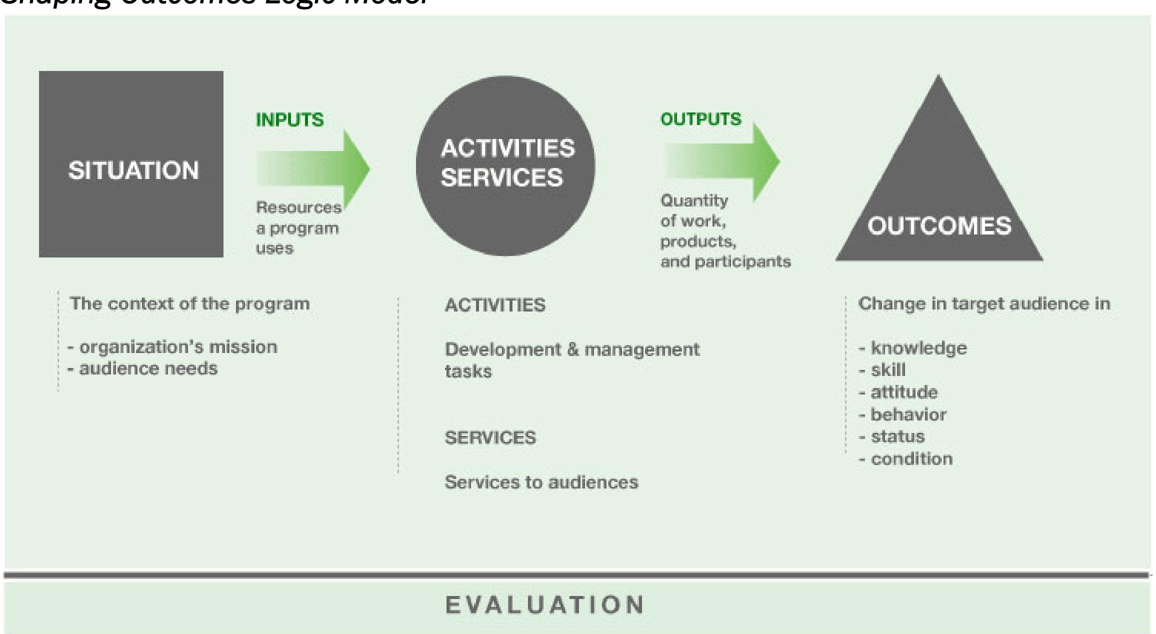
Examples of Visual Representations of Logic Models

Environmental Education Logic Model



Source: Thomson & Hoffman, p. 20

Shaping Outcomes Logic Model



Source: http://www.shapingoutcomes.org

Situation Assessment

(Health Canada has produced some handy resources on Outcome Measurement. The following is adapted from their online handbook, *Splash & Ripple* (Plan:Net Limited, n.d.)

Before charting Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact statements for a program, it is important to do some preparatory thinking. This involves an “outward” look at the issues and opportunities you could address, and an “inward” look at your organization, its mission, skills, and resources. Take some time to do this; it will speed up your planning process and sharpen your focus. In doing so, you should be clear about the following:

Looking Outward

- What is happening in your environment?
- What issues/opportunities most need to be addressed?
- Who will benefit?
- What timeframe is needed to make a difference?
- Who are possible partners/ funders/clients?

Consider …

- The priority issues/opportunities that exist, and those that fall within your organization's mission/ mandate and capability, e.g. you may see that your organization is well positioned to address community concerns about "teenage smoking". The issue is "hot," you have the contacts, and it fits your mandate.

- Spatial/geographic boundaries for the project (if any), such as a municipality, city neighbourhood or region, e.g. in a project to address "teenage smoking", the boundaries might be confined to a particular school and its catchment area.

- Population boundaries (if any), such as an ethnospecific community or gender group like teenage girls, e.g. in the same project, the boundaries might be a particular school population.

- The amount of time you may need to address your priority issues/opportunity, e.g. six months to participate in the teenage smoking study, two months to engage the public in discussion of findings for a total of eight months.

- Particular groups (individuals, other organizations/ institutions) that might have a role to play in the project's Outputs, Outcomes or Impact, e.g. school students, community leaders, teachers, school trustees, or key social service organizations.

In museums, this ‘end user’ is often referred to as the **target audience**.

Action

Target Audience

The following is drawn from *Shaping Outcomes* (Indiana University IUPUI & Institute for Museum & Library Services, 2006-2010)

- Who is the target audience for your program? Be as specific as possible. (Hint: “The public” is usually too broad.)
- What are the people like in your target audience?
- What characteristics might influence your target audience’s willingness or ability to use your program?
- Will any of the following affect your planning: age of your audience, gender, education level, interests, learning style, schedule, economics, mobility, or access to transportation or language?
- How should you consider the target audience’s attitudes or experiences, habits, values, belief systems or customs in your planning?
- What audience characteristics might create a **barrier** to the experience you want them to have or the changes you hope to see in this group?

Looking Inward

Action

It is just as important to stay true to your own purpose as an organization

What is your mission/mandate?

What are your best skills/ resources?

Stakeholders

Key stakeholders are your governing body, the participants, those who contribute time (partners) and money (funders). They decide whether to start the program, to participate in it, and to keep it going.

Action

Define your stakeholders

STAKEHOLDER	WHAT DO THEY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE PROGRAM?	HOW WILL THEY USE THE ANSWERS?
TARGET AUDIENCE		
YOUR ORGANIZATION		
PROGRAM FUNDERS	Who does the program serve? Is the program effective?	• To decide on continued funding • To promote replication
PROGRAM PARTNERS		

Action

Write Your Program Purpose Statement

Your program will …

Do what?

For whom?

For what benefit/outcome?

Components of Outcomes-Based Program Planning & Evaluation

Target Audience	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes – Short-Term	Outcomes – Medium Term	Outcomes – Long-Term	Impact
For whom is the program intended? Be specific.	Resources dedicated or consumed by the program ➢ Money ➢ Staff & staff time ➢ Volunteer & volunteer time ➢ Facilities ➢ Equipment & Supplies ➢ Standards ➢ Information required	All the necessary parts of the program. What are you going to do?	The direct products of the activity. *Usually a count.* ➢ $ raised ➢ # of visitors attended ➢ # of brochure distributed ➢ # of vol. hours ➢ # of website hits	Benefits for the participants, during & after the program (0-6 months) ➢ Changes in skills, attitudes or knowledge	Benefits for the participants after the program (6-12 months) ➢ Changes in behavior & decision-making	Benefits for the participants long after the program (< 1 year) ➢ Changes in status or life conditions	Impact on the participants, museum, or community as a result of the program or a series of programs

Worksheet – Your Program

Target Audience	Activities	Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes – Short-Term	Outcomes – Medium Term	Outcomes – Long-Term	Impact
		1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.				

Inputs

Inputs include:

- Human Resources - For example: staff, volunteers, consultant time, etc.
- Material Resources - For example: supplies, room rental, equipment, etc.

This is where you create a list of what you need to carry out the project. Consider, for example:

- *Staffing* - What skill sets? How many full- time equivalents (FTE's), how many volunteer hours?

- *Office or meeting space* - Size? Location?

- *Equipment* - Computers? Chairs? etc.

- *Materials* - Stationery? Training text books? Bus tickets?

- *Standards* – Association requirements? Educational standards? Curricula?

- *Information* – Databases? Surveys? Research? Front-end evaluation?

Budgeting – Although money is not an input per se, having a good understanding of your INPUT requirements helps you to draft a budget. Remember that your Outputs, Outcomes and Impact are based on receiving a certain amount of money. If you receive less funding, you'll need to modify these results.

TIP - Although logic models start with Inputs, do not start planning your OBPE here. Sketch in some Activities, try writing your Impact statement early on, complete Output and Outcomes statements. Inputs are easier to fill in once you have these other parts completed, because it is easier to see what you will need when you've decided what you want to accomplish and how you will go about it.

Action

Using your Worksheet, list the inputs your program will require once you have completed the rest of the columns.

Activities

Activities are what you do with the Inputs that you have. Try to group your activities into 5 to 8 clusters. It is difficult to keep track of your program if you have too many activities listed.

Common headings include promotion, participant recruitment, development of materials, coordination of materials & staff, staff/volunteer training

> *Action*
>
> Using your Worksheet, list the activities your program will undertake.

> *TIP* - Under these headings, you can write short paragraphs describing what the program will DO.

Outputs

These are the most immediate direct products or results of your program. Program outputs are typically measured in numbers. They usually coincide with the completion of an activity. Each output should relate directly to an activity or service.

For example, the number of ... people who participated, classes who completed a program, materials developed, workshops given, supplies consumed, web site hits, etc. Outputs create the *potential* for outcomes to occur

> *Action*
>
> Using your Worksheet, list the outputs you expect from each activity.

> *TIP* You won't know these exact numbers ("250 visitors attended") at the beginning, but you will want to keep track of them for your final report

Outcomes & Impact

Outcomes – These are changes that occur to people, organizations and communities as a result of your program. These changes, or outcomes, are usually expressed in terms of:

- Knowledge and skills (short-term outcomes)
- Behaviours (intermediate-term outcomes)

Long-Term Outcomes & Impact – This describes your vision of a preferred future and underlines why the program is important. It refers to the longer-term changes that you hope your project will help create or to which your project may contribute.

- Changes in values, conditions and status (longer-term outcomes & impact)

Generic Learning Outcomes

Outcomes are further removed from Activities, are fewer in number (2 to 4) and flow from a combination of several immediate Outputs.

Outcomes for your program should ...

- Be measurable
- Demonstrate a change in people, organization(s) or community. Outcomes relate to the individuals who directly participate in activities, but like ripples in a pond, they go beyond those individuals to include, for example, families or organizations surrounding those individuals.
- Define success
- Be attributable to your program

TIP - For more detailed suggestions for learning & social outcomes, visit Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (UK). *Inspiring Learning: An Improvement Framework for Museums, Libraries And Archives.* http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/ (accessed March 29, 2013)

List the outcomes you want your program to achieve.

➢

➢

➢

➢

➢

➢

➢

➢

TIP – An outcome is the benefit that your audience member receives from participating in your program. It is NOT a statistic. Try using words like “enhanced,” “increased,” “more,” “new” or “altered” to describe the desired change.

Action

From the above list, choose the two to four outcomes you are most interested in examining. Consider your timeframe and what you can evaluate within it.

On your *Outcomes-Based Program Evaluation Plan*, list the top 2 to 4 outcomes you hope this program will achieve.

Outcomes-Based Program Evaluation Plan for Program ____

Outcome	Indicator(s)	Source of Data (Records, Participants, Website, etc.)	Method to Collect Data (Questionnaire, Interview, Observation, etc.	Who Collects Data	When Collect Data

Source: (McNamara)

Measuring Outcomes

Indicators

When selecting indicators, ask:

- What would I see, hear, read about the target audience that means progress toward the outcome?

- Include numbers and percent regarding the target audience's behavior; for example,"200 of the participants (50%) will quit smoking by the end of the program" and "300 of the participants (75%) will quit smoking one month after the program"

- Just starting out?
    - **Don't spend a great deal of time** trying to find the perfect numbers and percentages for your indicators.
    - Choose an activity that it **small & well-defined**
    - Bring as many people as possible into the process. **Gather different perspectives.**
    - **Limit the number of indicators** to those you consider to be key.
    - Think of your first year of applying OBPE as a **pilot process**. Identify problems, improvements, etc. as you go and document them. Apply your learning to program evaluation in the following year.

TIP - Use the following format to ensure your indicator is measurable … *The # and % of [participants] who [demonstrate the specified change]*

Targets. What will success look like?

Base your targets on …

- Your review of past performance with similar programs
- Your past performance before the program's implementation
- Peer institutions' results
- Published literature or relevant programs

Action

On your *Outcomes-Based Program Evaluation Plan*, identify at least one indicator per outcome.

TIP - Remember that OBPE isn't as rigorous as research that looks for "statistically significant" differences. You may be dealing with small numbers of participants, so it's hard to prove anything statistically. Instead, think of a "target" as a way to quantify success: your program was worth your time and effort if # and % of participants achieve a particular level of results.

Data Sources

No one source of data is better than another. Use your common sense and knowledge of the situation to decide which one(s) to use. A summary of some key sources for data follows. See also the *Practical Evaluation Guide: Tools for Museums and Other Informal Educational Settings* (Diamond, Luke, & Uttal, 2009) for more ideas.

Action

☐ On your *Outcomes-Based Program Evaluation Plan*, identify a data source, data collector and time frame for each of your indicators.

Indicator Test

For each indicator statement, ask…

- Accuracy - Does it measure the result? ❒YES ❒NO
- Is it cost-effective to collect the information? ❒YES ❒NO
- Can information be gathered without invading privacy? ❒YES ❒NO
- Does it give useful information with which to make management decisions? ❒YES ❒NO
- Will the information communicate well to stakeholders (including funding bodies)? ❒YES ❒NO

(Plan:Net Limited, n.d.)

Data Sources Chart

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaires, Surveys, Checklists	Quickly and/or easily get lots of information from people in a non threatening way	• Anonymous • Inexpensive to administer • Easy to compare and analyze • Administer to many people • Provide lots of data • Sample questionnaires online	• Less careful feedback • Wording can bias client's responses • Impersonal • In surveys, may need sampling expert • Doesn't get full story
Interviews	To fully understand someone's impressions or experiences, or learn more about their answers to questionnaires	• Full range and depth of information • Develops relationship with participant	• Take more time • Hard to analyze and compare • More costly • Interviewer may bias participant responses
Document Review	Impression of how program operates without interrupting the program; is from review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, etc.	• Comprehensive and historical information • No program interruption • Information already exists • Few biases about information	• Often takes more time • Info may be incomplete • Need to be focused • Not flexible • Data restricted to what already exists
Observation	To gather accurate information about how a program actually operates, particularly about processes	• View operations of a program as they are actually occurring • Can adapt to events as they occur	• Difficult to interpret seen behaviors • Challenging to categorize observations • Can influence behaviors of program participants • Can be expensive
Focus Groups	Explore a topic in depth through group discussion, e.g., about reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints, etc.; useful in evaluation and marketing	• Quickly and reliably get common impressions • Efficient way to get much range and depth of information in short time • Can convey key information about programs	• Challenging to analyze responses • Need good facilitator for safety and closure • Difficult to schedule 6-8 people together
Case Studies	To fully understand or depict client's experiences in a program, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross comparison of cases	• Fully depicts client's experience in program input, process and results • Powerful means to portray program to outsiders	• Time consuming to collect, organize and describe • Depth of information, rather than breadth

Source (McNamara)

Data Sources Chart for Social Media

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Views	Views tell you how many people you're reaching. Blog page views measured through a website analytics tool like Google Analytics or Facebook views measured through Facebook Insights can show you just how many people you're reaching.	Useful if primary goal is to spread a message—for instance, who should get a flu shot—but don't get too caught up in views.	Expanding your audience is great, but if none of these people chooses to follow your information, engage with you or act to help your organization, then increasing your reach may not be useful to the organization as whole.
Followers	Followers tell you the size of your supporter base e.g. number of Twitter followers, people who "like" your Facebook page or those who subscribe by RSS to your blog,	You can get a sense of the number of people you're able to reliably get in touch with in order to spread a message or ask for help.	Just as with views, it's all too easy to look at your number of followers as an end in and of itself rather than a means to reach your goals. Does it matter if you have a million Facebook fans if none of them ever does anything to help you?
Engagement	Commenting on your blog, posting on your Facebook page and retweeting on Twitter.	Confirms that you're saying the types of things people want to hear and effectively encouraging them to be more involved. If engagement itself is a core goal—for example, to get youth talking about sexual health, or to give homebound people a creative outlet—then these metrics provide a great way to track your progress.	Does not demonstrate real world results in terms of getting people to do anything beyond engagement.
Conversion	Conversion metrics help you measure actual, tangible outcomes for your organization, like donations, number of volunteers or event attendees. How do you count the impact of social media on such things? You could ask people where they heard about the opportunity, or attach online source codes so you can tell where someone came from to donate or register.		

Source (Betts, 2011)

Analyzing Information

Drawn from Museums Association of Saskatchewan *Evaluation Workbook* (Museums Association of Saskatchewan, 1999)

Analyzing the information is simply:

> The process of **arranging** the information in a way that will increase your understanding, and enable you to present what you have discovered to others.

Action

Analyze the following information

> Your museum has recently spent the winter months creating a new exhibition on wetland conservation and farming. You want to know what visitors have learned from the exhibit, and specifically, did visitors learn two key messages – the importance of wetlands to water conservation, and farmers' misconceptions about the importance of wetlands (**outcomes**). Your group has decided that as **outcome indicators** you will seek visitor reactions to the exhibit (what messages do they remember) and will record how long visitors look at the exhibit. In designing the exhibit, you determine that a visitor will need to look at the exhibit between 3 and 5 minutes to read all the information in the exhibit.

Look at the following information collected by summer staff on how long visitors looked at a Wetland Exhibit:

	Total Number of Adult Visitors	Did not look at exhibit	> 1 minute	1-3 minutes	<3 minutes
July 3	45	20	21	4	0
July 4	42	21	19	1	1
July 5	15	5	7	3	0
July 6	23	7	7	6	3
July 7	19	8	4	5	2
July 8	22	10	3	7	2
July 9	25	11	5	7	2
Total	191	82	66	33	10
		43%	35%	17%	5%

Summary of Findings:

43% of visitors did not look at the exhibit (82 out of 191 adult visitors). Of those adult visitors who looked for any amount of time at the exhibit 35% (109 out of 191) looked at it for under 1 minute, 17% looked at it for 1 to 3 minutes. Only 10 adult visitors (5%) looked at the exhibit for more than 3 minutes.

Did the exhibit achieve its outcomes?

On the basis of the above information, the answer would likely be no. When the exhibit was developed, you felt that visitors would need between 3 and 5 minutes to read/look at the exhibit in order to learn about the messages. According to the summer students' observations, only 9% of those looking at the exhibit did so for more than 3 minutes.

However, before we draw any conclusions, we need to look at the information from another outcome indicator;

<u>Information from the post-card survey:</u>

Q1. From the exhibits, check which exhibits you remember looking at.

> Of the 191 adult visitors, 25 (13%) checked off the Wetland Exhibit as one of the exhibits they remembered.

Q2. If you identified the Wetland Exhibit as one of the exhibits you remembered, what do you remember about the exhibit?

> Of the 25 visitors who answered, 15 wrote in answers that indicated they remembered something about misconceptions about wetland conservation.

Did this exhibit achieve its outcomes?

What can you do with the OBPE Framework?

Based on Health Canada's *Splash & Ripple Handbook* (Plan:Net Limited, n.d.)

Communicate Intent

Use your Framework to plan or clarify the project internally, as well as explain your project idea to potential sponsors. A framework can provide a powerful summary of:

- What you intend to DO;
- What you intend to CHANGE;
- WHY the project is important;
- The resources you NEED to accomplish the project.

Monitor and Evaluate

Once the project is underway, use your Outcome Measurement Framework to MONITOR your progress. Monitoring, or collecting and tabulating data, is a task that you build into your regular routines. This provides information for continuous improvements or the fuel for modifying future work and establishes a historical marker from which the organization can measure whether things have improved or not. Your Indicators, in particular, help you focus on the information you need.

Sometimes you have Indicators that do not fit well into regular project monitoring; they require periodic and intensive assessment. This is an EVALUATION; it can be done internally, externally or jointly. Evaluations look more comprehensively at the project -examining the day-to-day monitoring information, changes in the project's context, and progress toward the longer term results.

Modify & Report

Information generated through monitoring and evaluation provides insight at many levels within a project.

- Information may be very important to those directly involved in Activities such as community members or clients. Involving participant or beneficiary groups can enrich their understanding and create additional momentum toward the desired change.

- There is information that can best be used by those carrying out the project - managers, field staff, and volunteers. Your examination of the information may lead to modifications in the design of your Activities, changes in the allocation of Inputs, or new strategies to address issues uncovered in the process.

- At a more general level, there is information about the state of the project overall. This is particularly useful to funding organizations or private donors. Using the Activity, Output, Outcome, and Impact statements from your performance framework, you can write reports that show progress against what was agreed upon and expected.