

BTOP Evaluate & Sustain Workshop



**April 18 & 19, 2011
Ramada Geneva Lakefront, Geneva, New York
Presented by the New York State Library**



INTRO TO OUTCOME-BASED EVALUATION (OBE)

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What is OBE?

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- A systematic approach
- Determines if a program has achieved the desired results
- Answers the questions:
 - Was the program a success?
 - What impact did it have?



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Outcomes

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- Are the desired results
- Must be predictable and measurable
- In OBE, an outcome is defined as:
 - A change in the target audience
 - Could be a change (an improvement) in skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, status, or life condition

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Program

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- In OBE, a program is defined as:
 - A project or activities intended to produce the desired results (outcomes)
 - Designed to change skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, status, or life condition
 - Has a beginning and end

Overall process

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Plan

- Identify need, plan program/activities, and predict outcomes
- What are the desired results?

Implement

- Implement planned program

Measure

- Measure outcomes and outputs
- Was the program a success?
- What impact did it have?

A basic example

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- **Need:** Unemployment is increasing in the community due to factory closures
- **Program:** The public library director wants to hold a job fair



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A basic example (continued)

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- **Activities:** Library staff will assist with online job searching and resume writing, related resources will be displayed, and local organizations and businesses will be invited to participate
- **Target audience:** Job seekers (200 participants expected)



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A basic example (continued)

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- The director has asked a local community foundation for a grant to fund the job fair
- The grant application requires OBE
 - Can you write 3 outcomes for the event?
 - Remember that outcomes must be predictable, measurable, and indicate change in the target audience



A basic example (continued)

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- Possible outcomes:
 - Participants rate the job fair highly
 - Participants report they learned about at least one job or education resource that they plan to use
 - Participants view the library as a source for job and education information



A basic example (continued)

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- Adding data source and target achievement level:
 - Participants rate the job fair highly (measured by participant survey with target of 160 or 80%)
 - Participants report they learned about at least one job or education resource that they plan to use (measured by participant survey with target of 120 or 60%)
 - Participants view the library as a source for job and education information (measured by participant survey with target of 160 or 80%)

A basic example (continued)

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- Can you think of any additional ways to measure these outcomes?
 - What about circulation stats?
 - What about looking at job-related reference questions asked or program attendance post-job fair?
- Which outcomes show the greatest impact? Which one is a “lite” outcome?

Outputs

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- Up to this point, you may have evaluated your programs in terms of outputs—measurable items or products (think numbers)
- Examples:
 - # of exhibitors
 - # of participants



Outputs (continued)

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- While outputs provide valuable information, they are not outcomes and they do not show impact
- Example:
 - Output: 200 people attended the job fair
 - Outcome: 120 or 60% report they learned about at least one job or education resource that they plan to use



Common myths

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- You might be thinking:
 - *OBE is really complicated*
 - *I don't have the time or resources*
 - *There's only a "right" way to do OBE*
 - *I already know what our clients need, and that our programs and services are meeting those needs*

Program evaluation benefits

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- **Big on planning ahead**
- **Shifts focus to the target audience**
- **Organizes the collection of data and promotes consistency**
- **Meets stakeholder requirements**
- **Strengthens proposals**

Management benefits

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- Assists in decision-making
- Provides objective information
- Helps make the argument for change when change is resisted
- Enables comparison to other libraries with similar programs and services



Advocacy benefits

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- Shifts focus to the target audience
- Provides powerful data to support programs and services
- Shows the library is making a difference
- Enhances public relations



Who is using OBE?

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- Local, state, and federal agencies
- Many others
 - Private funders
 - Non-profits
 - Businesses



Second example

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- **Need:** Resume writing assistance at the job fair was very popular and many requested more help
- **Program:** The director wants to hold resume writing workshops at the library
- **Activities:** Library staff will hold 3 resume writing workshops on how to create, save, and update an electronic resume
- **Target audience:** Job seekers (30 participants expected, 10 in each class)

Second example (continued)

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- The director would like training results to be documented
 - Can you come up with 3 outcomes for the training?
 - Remember that outcomes must be predictable, measurable, and indicate change in the target audience



Second example (continued)

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- Possible outcomes:
 - Participants complete new/updated resume.
 - Participants report increased knowledge of resume writing.
 - Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer.



Second example (continued)

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- **Adding data source and target achievement level:**
 - Participants complete new/updated resume (measured by trainer observation with target of 21 or 70%).
 - Participants report increased knowledge of resume writing (measured by participant survey with target of 24 or 80%).
 - Participants report satisfaction with workshop content/trainer (measured by participant survey with target of 24 or 80%).

Recap

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- **You can use OBE to:**
 - Plan effective programs
 - Measure your library's impact
 - Show your library's achievements
 - Seek funding, resources, and support
 - Submit consistent funding applications and reports



Resources

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- New York State Library: OBE page
 - <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/obe/index.html>
- IMLS: OBE page
 - <http://www.imls.gov/applicants/obe.shtm>
- Free Management Library: Basic Guide to Outcome-Based Evaluation for Nonprofit Organizations with Very Limited Resources
 - <http://managementhelp.org/evaluatn/outcomes.htm>

Your turn!

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- Writing basic outcomes
- See Handout #1



EVALUATING PCCS & E-MOBILE UNITS

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General outcomes

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- Developed specifically for BTOP
- General enough to be used (and customized) by all PCCs and E-Mobile Units
- See OBE Handout #2

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Sub-recipient outcomes

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All PCCs and E-Mobile Units will measure the following outcomes:

- PCC/E-Mobile Unit users gain digital literacy skills
- PCC/E-Mobile Unit users are better prepared for the workforce
- PCC/E-Mobile Unit users are satisfied with services
- Community partners are aware of PCC/E-Mobile Unit services

Your turn!

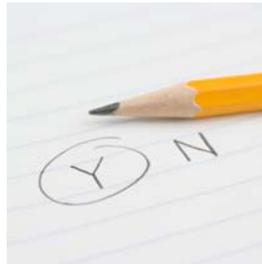
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- Creating a custom OBE plan
- See Handouts #3 and #4



SELECT DATA SOURCES

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Surveys & questionnaires

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- **Advantages:** Anonymous if desired, inexpensive, easy to analyze, can get lots of data
- **Challenges:** Impersonal, wording can bias, may not get careful feedback or the whole story
- See Handout #5 for survey tips

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Interviews

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- **Advantages:** Can get the whole story and more, develops relationship with client
- **Challenges:** Can be time-consuming, costly, difficult to analyze, interviewer's questions and body language can influence responses



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Focus groups

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- **Advantages:** Can obtain common impressions in a short time, go in-depth if desired, opportunity to inform of services
- **Challenges:** Need a good facilitator, difficult to analyze, can be hard to schedule

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Resources

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- **Free Management Library:**
 - **Basics of Developing Questionnaires**
<http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/questnrs.htm>
 - **General Guidelines for Conducting Interviews**
<http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/interview.htm>
 - **Basics of Conducting Focus Groups**
<http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/focusgrp.htm>