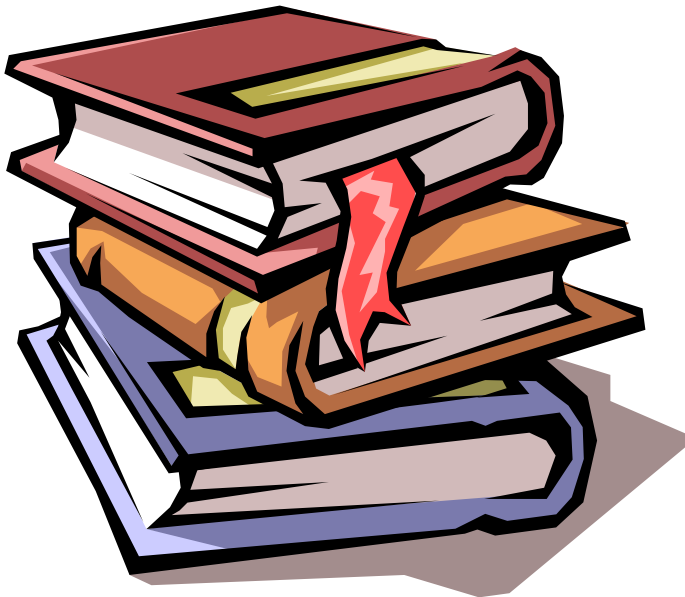


PROJECT EVALUATION

IT'S ALL ABOUT STUDENTS



In partnership, we help America's students stay in school and graduate by:

- Reducing gaps in college access and completion among differing student populations
- Improving academic attainment
- Strengthening institutions
- Strengthening accountability



We do this by:

- Expanding and enhancing institutional -
 - Academic quality
 - Management
 - Financial stability
- Using Federal program grant funds
- Implementing specific projects based on established and innovative practices
- Following sound management and oversight processes
- Measuring and reporting the results of the projects



Success is evaluated by:



- Students
- Project staff
- Institutions
- Department of Education
- Office of Management and Budget
- Congress
- America's taxpayers

Success is measured, in part, by:

- **An institution's evaluation results**
 - Project performance data
 - Annual Performance Report (APR) data
 - Percentage of project goals met or exceeded
- **The Department's program evaluation results**
 - Strategic Plan program data
 - Achieving a high rating on OMB's Program Assessment and Rating Tool (PART)
- **How well we use this information for -**
 - Strategic planning, decision-making, funding, and improving student success nationwide

Program and Project Processes for Achieving and Measuring Success:

Program

- I. Purpose
- II. Strategic plan with national goals and measures
- III. Program Management
- IV. Program Results**

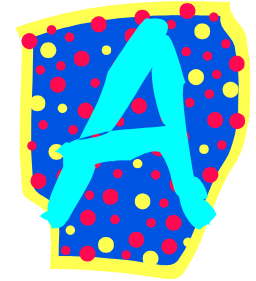
Project

- I. Development plan
- II. Implementation strategy & activity objectives
- III. Project management plan (key personnel & budget)
- IV. Evaluation Plan**

Program and Project Results

- **Results are outcomes** based on activities (interventions) and costs
- **Outcomes are quantifiable measures of:**
 - Annual and long-term performance improvements; and
 - Result from the funded activities
- **Outcomes affect future policy and funding decisions**

Defining Annual Outcomes



Program Measure

- Students at grantee institutions **persist at a higher rate than other similar students** who previously attended these institutions or currently attend other institutions.

Project Measure

- Students who receive tutoring **pass courses and improve GPAs at a higher rate than similar students** at the school who were not tutored.

Defining Long -Term Outcomes

Program Measure

Students at grantee institutions **graduate at a higher rate than similar students** who previously attended these institutions or attend other institutions.

Project Measure

Students who receive tutoring **graduate at a higher rate than similar students** not tutored.

Outcomes are not:

Output data: Activities necessary to achieve impact and outcome goals -

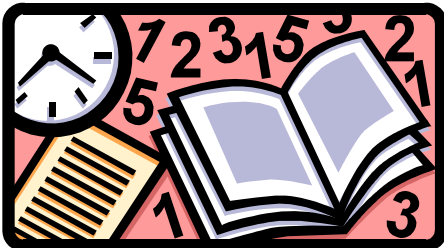
- Number of tutoring sessions held
- Number students receiving tutoring
- Staff hours and costs per activity

Descriptive data: General information about the the project and participants -

- Funding amount
- Length of project
- Socio-economic data
- Race/ethnicity

Quantitative Outcome Measure

- Consistent measure overtime
- True and accurate measure of the intervention outcome
- Easily interpreted data (e.g., rates and proportions)
- Is not based on qualitative (e.g., surveys, focus groups) or descriptive data



Planning Before Grant Writing Is Key

1. **Purpose** – defines the problem
2. **Goals** – establishes objectives/outcomes that are:
 - Measurable and logically related to intervention and anticipated results
 - Based on historical data and *benchmarking*
3. **Evaluation Plan** -
 - Shows how the goals/objectives will be met
 - Establishes processes for measuring if the goals/objectives were met and at what cost
 - Identifies approach for clearly reporting results (outcomes based on activities and costs) in a timely manner

Benchmark & Benchmarking

Benchmark -

A standard by which something can be measured or judged

Benchmarking -

To measure (rival's product) according to specified standards in order to compare it with and improve one's own product

Data Timing

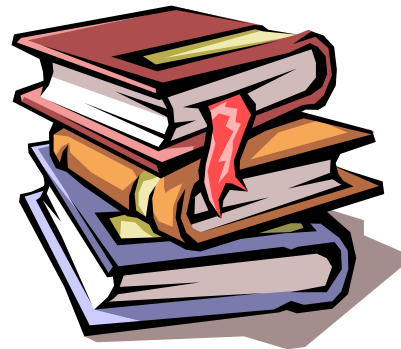
Evaluation plan must ensure data are useful for strategic, operational, policy, and budget decision-making

- School
 - APR
- Department
 - Performance accountability report (October)
 - Integrated performance and budget (November)
- OMB – President’s integrated performance and budget plan (early in calendar year)

Evaluation Process for Measuring Outcomes

Classic experimental approach:

1. Similar students randomly assigned to intervention and control groups
2. Pre- and post- intervention performance measurement
3. Multiple interventions and measurements over time



Difficulties in Implementing Random Assignment

- Students generally self-select
- Identifying a valid comparison group

Options to help address these:

- Draw comparison group from waiting list or those who applied but were not selected.
- Use historical data and benchmarking on similar students performance.

Difficulties Implementing Pre- and Post-Testing

- Identifying valid baseline and post-activity data measures

Options to help address this:

- Use institutional data measures already collected -
 - Institutional records (services offered)
 - Course grades
 - Graduation rates
- Identify Federal & other data sources already collected, such as the National Center for Educational Statistic's IPEDS database.

Difficulties Implementing Multiple Interventions and Data Collections

- Students may not choose to participate annually or consistently.

Options to help address this:

- Collect student-specific information.
- Measure outcomes each semester.
- Conduct same activity and measurement with similar students over time.
- Conduct activity and measurement at multiple institutions.
- Look for relationships between varying usage of activity and performance of participants.

Difficulties in Implementing the Evaluation Plan

- Limited resources-staff and money
- Implementation staff also conduct analysis

Options to help address these:

- Request evaluation monies in grant application (5-10%).
- Hire an independent evaluator.
- Use academic staff and students.
- Use measures and student identifiers already collected.

Difficulties in Collecting and Analyzing Data

- Data are self-reported
- Inconsistent or missing data

Options to help address these:

- Document **clear data definitions**.
- Require **routine, systematic collection** and provide training/guidance.
- Develop **simple data collection tools** (Excel, Access databases).
- Hold **project staff meetings** to regularly review data collection processes, data quality, progress in meeting performance outcomes.

Analysis of Data and Reporting Your Results



- Flows from evaluation plan and data collection processes in grant application
- Includes descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative data collected
- Results: outcomes based on activities and costs
- Identification of “best practices”
- Conclusions and recommendations

Project Evaluation Plan



- Must be fully documented
- Address the three components of an experimental design
- Specify data definitions, and collection and analysis processes.
- Include outcome and cost data needed to measure results.
- Completed for the grant application

Resources



- ED: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/fipse/evaluate
- NSF: www.her.nsf.gov/rec/programs/main.asp
- FY 2004 Annual Plan:
 - <http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2004plan/plan2004.doc>
 - <http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2004plan/edlit-e-institutionaldev.html>