



Colorado Collective Outcomes

Evaluation Toolkit



Colorado Collective Outcomes

Module 1: Building the Foundation for Evaluation

What is evaluation and why do we do it?

As evaluation grows increasingly more popular in the nonprofit, philanthropic, and government sectors, it is important that practitioners develop a basic understanding of what evaluation is and why it is important. Program evaluation is widely recognized as the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding (Patton, 2008).

There are many benefits of evaluation, and organizations evaluate their programs for many reasons. Evaluation helps organizations accomplish the following:

- Authentically engage with their constituents
- Understand their constituents
- Improve their programs
- Understand their programs' outcomes
- Document progress toward achieving their outcomes
- Communicate successes to their community
- Provide information to funders and stakeholders
- Raise additional funds
- Advance knowledge in their field
- Increase staff morale and confidence

Core Values of Evaluation in Environmental Education

NAAEE developed a set of core values to guide evaluation in environmental education based on the collective wisdom of EE researchers, practitioners, policymakers, funders and evaluators. These core values help define the relationship between effective program evaluation and environmental education, in order to conduct high-quality program evaluation that contributes to healthier communities and equitable outcomes. The six core values include:

- **Collective Evaluation.** Collective evaluation allows for shared learning between organizations and networks. It relies on collective wisdom and utilizes multiple perspectives, approaches and forms of measurement.
- **Equity in Motion.** Evaluators have an obligation to design and conduct evaluations that take into consideration the disparity that exists within and between groups of individuals. Evaluations determine which viewpoints and perspectives will be highlighted. They also influence decision-making processes. Evaluators need to recognize the role power dynamics, white privilege and structural oppression take in the work.
- **Authentic Engagement.** Authentic engagement is dedicated to collaboration, inclusivity, capacity-building, and civic action in order to create healthier communities and equitable outcomes. Evaluations should include individuals impacted by the programs as key stakeholders in the evaluation and involve them as team members, designers, decision-makers and implementers of the evaluation.
- **Deep Curiosity.** It is imperative to include the perspectives of the cultures, histories and traditions of those involved in the programs and evaluations. Every person brings different meaning to key concepts and it's important to understand whose definitions are used in the evaluation. This often requires time and space to engage the community in developing tools and processes.
- **Lifelong Learning and Critical Reflection.** Evaluation leads to growth at the individual and organizational level, which often require humility, self-reflection and accountability. By creating a culture that celebrates the courage to question assumptions and practices, organizations can explore differences and understand how differences, biases and power influence evaluations.
- **High Quality Evaluation.** High quality evaluations balance sociopolitical (political, social, historical, cultural and organizational), ethical and technical (evaluation planning, implementing and reporting) considerations. High quality evaluation needs to be cultural responsive and embedded in programming.

For more information: <http://evaluation.naaee.org/values>

What is the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project?

CAEE has been engaged in a multi-year effort to bring together EE practitioners, evaluators, and funders to create and implement shared outcomes, with the goal of being able to demonstrate the role of EE in improving quality of life in Colorado. CAEE initiated a robust process of gathering community feedback in order to start establishing collective outcomes in Colorado.

The primary goal of this project, now referred to as Colorado Collective Outcomes, is to move all Colorado EE stakeholders closer to a shared language and a common understanding for intended outcomes across the state.

CAEE has identified the following five major outcome areas that encompass Colorado EE initiatives:

- Conservation
- Education
- Positive Child and Youth Development
- Health and Wellness
- Social Justice

Which of these outcome areas align with your programs?



Table 1: Colorado Collective Outcomes Project—Five Outcome Areas Defined

Outcome Area	Result	Programming
Conservation	All Colorado ecosystems are healthy, vibrant, and valued.	Programs with conservation outcomes include those that increase environmental knowledge, improve environmental awareness and attitudes, and inspire positive environmental actions that lead to improvements in environmental quality.
Education	Environmental education supports and ensures all PreK-12 students are lifelong learners with successful school outcomes.	Programs with education outcomes include those that improve academic performance, increase E-STEAM literacy, improve standardized test scores, and expand school engagement using the environment as an integrating context.
Positive Child and Youth Development	All Colorado children and youth grow into responsible, resilient, engaged citizens that care for themselves, their natural environment, and their communities.	Programs with youth development outcomes are aimed at guiding young people as they grow into responsible, engaged citizens that care for the environment and their communities. These outcomes may be achieved through strengths-based programs focused on character and leadership combined with outdoor experiences or community service.
Health and Wellness	Through increased safe access, connection to and comfort in the natural environment, all Coloradans are healthy and well—physically, mentally, and emotionally.	Programs with health and wellness outcomes are focused on improving physical, mental, emotional, and social health and wellness for participants through connection with nature. Health outcomes include improving nutrition, increasing physical fitness, reducing stress and anxiety, recovering from physical or psychological trauma, and increasing awareness and understanding of personal and environmental health.
Social Justice	All Coloradans have access to and opportunity to experience the outdoors.	Programs with social justice outcomes include those that increase access and opportunity for underserved communities and underrepresented populations. These outcomes include increasing access to outdoor experiences, improving urban green space, and developing and supporting environmental educators and leaders from traditionally underrepresented groups.

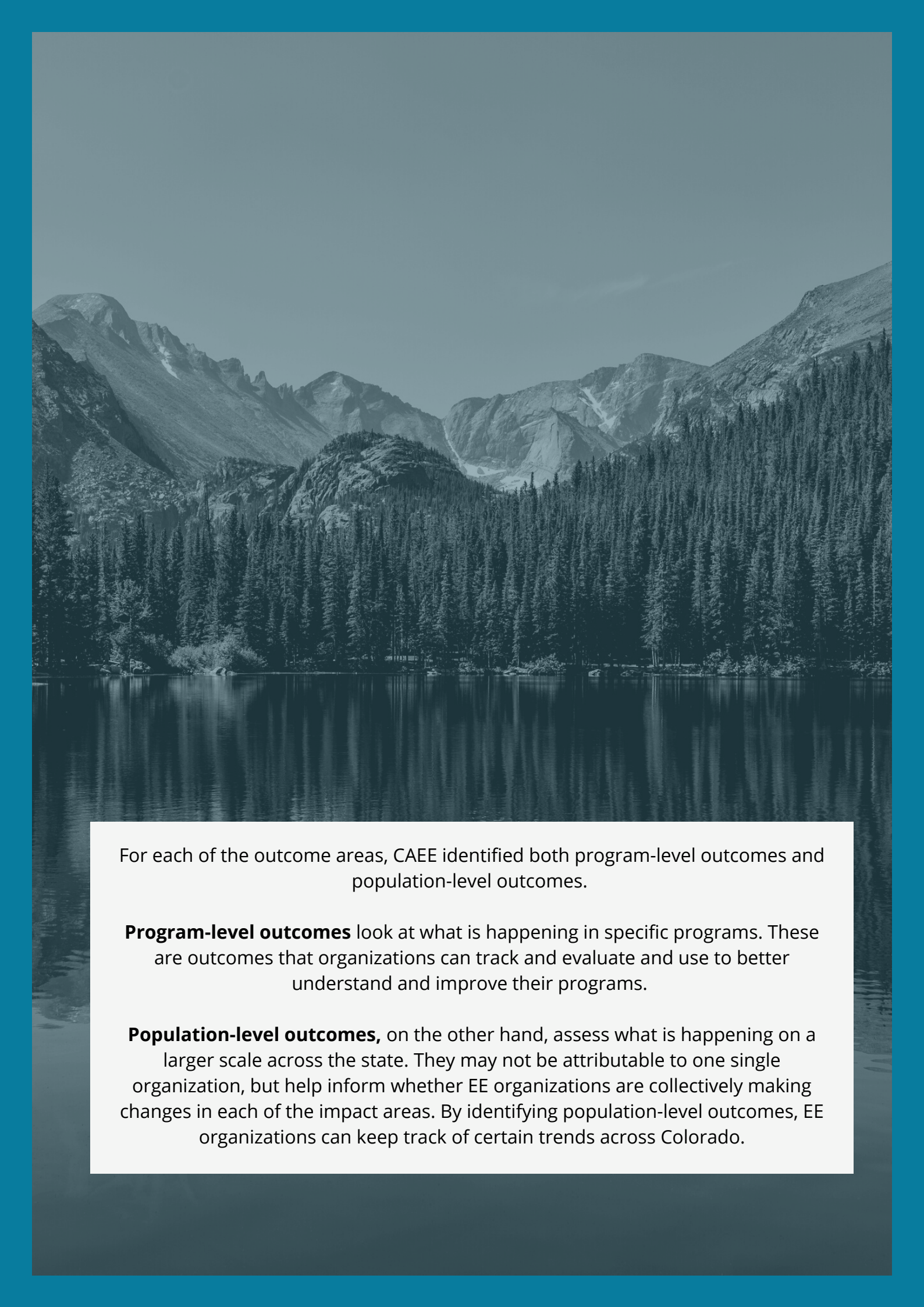


Why is the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project Important?

By collaborating with organizations statewide to work toward and evaluate common outcomes, CAEE is hopeful that we can create a common language and a unified voice about the role of EE in Colorado. There are numerous benefits to measuring the same outcomes across EE organizations.

- By measuring the same things, organizations can utilize the same evaluation tools and methods and share lessons learned across organizations. EE organizations statewide can engage in collective learning as a network and use lessons learned to improve programs.
- By measuring the same outcomes across the state and with different populations, EE organizations can one day aggregate the data to assess the statewide impact of EE.
- Through establishing common outcomes, we can bring strength to our voice as a field, illustrate our collective impact, contribute to research and best practices, and increase understanding by the philanthropic community.

Think about how your engagement in Colorado Collective Outcomes can benefit your organization's work.



For each of the outcome areas, CAEE identified both program-level outcomes and population-level outcomes.

Program-level outcomes look at what is happening in specific programs. These are outcomes that organizations can track and evaluate and use to better understand and improve their programs.

Population-level outcomes, on the other hand, assess what is happening on a larger scale across the state. They may not be attributable to one single organization, but help inform whether EE organizations are collectively making changes in each of the impact areas. By identifying population-level outcomes, EE organizations can keep track of certain trends across Colorado.

Table 2: Colorado Collective Outcomes Project—Population Level and Program Level Outcomes

Outcome Area	Population-level outcomes*	Program-level outcomes**
Conservation	• Increase in connection to nature across all of Colorado's demographics • Increase in environmental behaviors • Increase in quality: water, air, and soil	• Increase in connection to nature • Increase in stewardship actions • Increase in desire to participate in positive environmental actions • Increase in positive attitudes toward nature and environment • Increase in awareness and knowledge of cultural, biological, and scientific systems
Education	• Increase in schools with EE • Increase in students' level of engagement in learning (attendance and referrals) • Increase in academic testing scores • Increase in students enrolled in NR/ENVS degree program	• Increase in understanding of EE program content • Increase in engagement in learning • Increase in time spent on EE in the classroom and outdoors • Increase in culturally relevant curriculum • Increase in professional development in environmental education • Increase in workforce readiness skills
Positive Child and Youth Development	• Increase in opportunities for civic or community engagement • Increase in programs that support PYD Components: ◦ Competence ◦ Confidence ◦ Character ◦ Caring ◦ Connection ◦ Contribution • Increase in opportunities that provide a continuum of experience between organizations, partnerships, and other collaborations	• Increase in civic and community engagement • Increase in understanding of healthy and unhealthy risk • Increase in critical thinking/problem solving skills • Increase in self-efficacy • Increase in participants' competence, confidence, character, caring, connection or contribution • Increase in youth-directed internships, mentors, authentic adult and peer relationships
Health and Wellness	• Increase in time in nature • Decrease in systemic barriers to accessing nature • Increase in understanding of the connection between healthy environment and healthy self • Improved physical, mental and emotional health • Decrease in stress, depression, fatigue, sedentary lifestyle and chronic illness • Increase in access to healthy nutrition	• Increase in time spent in nature • Decrease in barriers to accessing nature • Increase in comfort and enjoyment to explore outdoor spaces • Increase in self-agency in the outdoors • Decrease in fear, anxiety, unknown • Increase in sense of place and place connection • Increase in perceived wellness and health as result of being in outdoors • Increase in outdoor community-based health interventions

* Population level outcomes: a measure that encompasses population-level data points as opposed to individual programs or persons

** Program level outcomes: a measure that assesses individual programs or persons

Social Justice	• Increase in communities with access to safe, natural and healthy environments • Increase in Coloradans who feel welcomed and comfortable in outdoor spaces • Decrease in barriers to accessing nature • Use of outdoor spaces reflects demographics of community • Increase in commitment to DEI within organizations	• Increase in participants who feel welcome and comfortable in outdoor spaces • Increase in programs honoring diversity in outdoor spaces • Increase in diversity of organizational leadership, program staff and mentors • Increase in DEI training for staff • Increase in culturally aware and responsive programming • Improved access to outdoor spaces for all abilities
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Look through the program-level outcomes and identify which ones align with your work. Are you in a position to start tracking data for them? We would love to learn more about how your work supports the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project.

In Part 2 of this workshop series we will be discussing tools and data collection methods.

Articulating a Theory of Change



It is helpful to start by articulating a Theory of Change for your programs. A **Theory of Change** statement articulates the overall goals of the program and how the program will reach them. A comprehensive theory of change takes into consideration the following:

- Needs of the community
- The target population the program engages
- Key program elements
- Intended goals and outcomes

A simple Theory of Change statement can utilize the following formula:

“By providing X to Y, then Z will occur.”

Examples of a Theory of Change statement include the following:

- By providing a weeklong experiential outdoor education program to sixth-grade students at Outdoor Education Center, students will increase their knowledge and awareness of environmental stewardship.
- By providing outdoor behavioral healthcare programming to youth, youth will reduce behavioral problems, develop social skills, and overcome mental health challenges.

Not only is a Theory of Change statement helpful in understanding your program, it also provides a concise description of your program to stakeholders, funders, and your community.

Consider engaging program participants in developing a Theory of Change statement. What do they see as the biggest needs and how to address them?

Create your own Theory of Change using the formula,
"By providing X to Y, Z will occur."



Developing a Logic Model

In order to evaluate your programs accurately and efficiently, you must first have a clear understanding of what your programs are trying to accomplish and how they intend to do it. One way to do this is by developing a programmatic logic model.

A **logic model** is a high-level visual representation of a program that links program activities to intended outcomes. A logic model should include the following components:

- *Inputs*. The resources that go into the program, such as curriculum, staff, and partnerships.
- *Activities*. The specific actions and key components of your program and its implementation.
- *Outputs*. Quantifiable results of the program's activities.
- *Outcomes*. The changes that will occur as a result of your program (often changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behavior, etc.). Outcomes are often broken out into short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes and impacts.

The Logic Model is a great way to engage program participants, the community and staff in conversations about your program. Consider how you can authentically engage multiple voices in this process.

Connecting Your Logic Model to Colorado Collective Outcomes

While you are drafting your logic model, be sure to have the Colorado Collective Outcomes Population-Level and Program-Level Outcomes Table on hand. Make note of the following questions while thinking through the Logic Model components:

- Are there program-level outcomes from the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project that align with your activities?
- Are you tracking outputs that coincide with either population-level or program-level outcomes?
- Which program-level outcomes can you include as your own outcomes?

We would love to hear from you which program-level outcomes from the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project align with your work!

Refer to the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project program-level outcomes when drafting your Logic Model. Where is there alignment?



Logic Model Template

THEORY OF CHANGE STATEMENT: Articulates the overall goals of the program and how the program will reach them. Example: “By providing X to Y, then Z will occur.”

LOGIC MODEL: A logic model is a high-level visual representation of a program that links program activities to intended outcomes.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes and Impact
What resources are going into your program?	What activities will you be doing to achieve your outcomes?	What are the quantifiable results of your program—number of participants served, number of sessions held, number of weeks of programs, etc.?	What do you hope to achieve through your program? What are your goals? Short-term often refers to changes in knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes.	Medium-term often refers to changes in actions, behaviors, practices, or policies.	Long-term often refers to changes in conditions or status, whether social, economic, civic, or environmental.
Are there program-level outcomes from the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project that align with your work?					

Example Logic Model for eeProgram

THEORY OF CHANGE STATEMENT: By providing hands-on and real-world experiences to students in an outdoor educational setting, students will become stewards of self, community and the environment.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes and Impact
High school leaders Local school partnerships Interns Teacher teams Residential staff Principal at sites Curriculum Historic sites with land Greenhouse classroom facilities Business and Community Partnerships	Core courses Special interest/elective classes Evening activities Bunk time Family-style meals Chores Opening and closing ceremonies	6,000 sixth grade students served 1,000 high school leaders trained 33 weeks of programming at 2 sites 59 middle schools engaged 17 high schools engaged 40 interns trained 59 teacher teams engaged 6 core courses taught 7-10 special interest courses taught	Increase access to environmental education for all students. Increase in desire to participate in positive environmental actions. Increase in positive attitudes toward nature and environment. Increase in critical thinking/problem solving skills.	Increase in stewardship actions. Increase in perceived wellness and health.	Decrease in barriers to accessing nature. Increase in students enrolled in NR/ENVS degree programs.

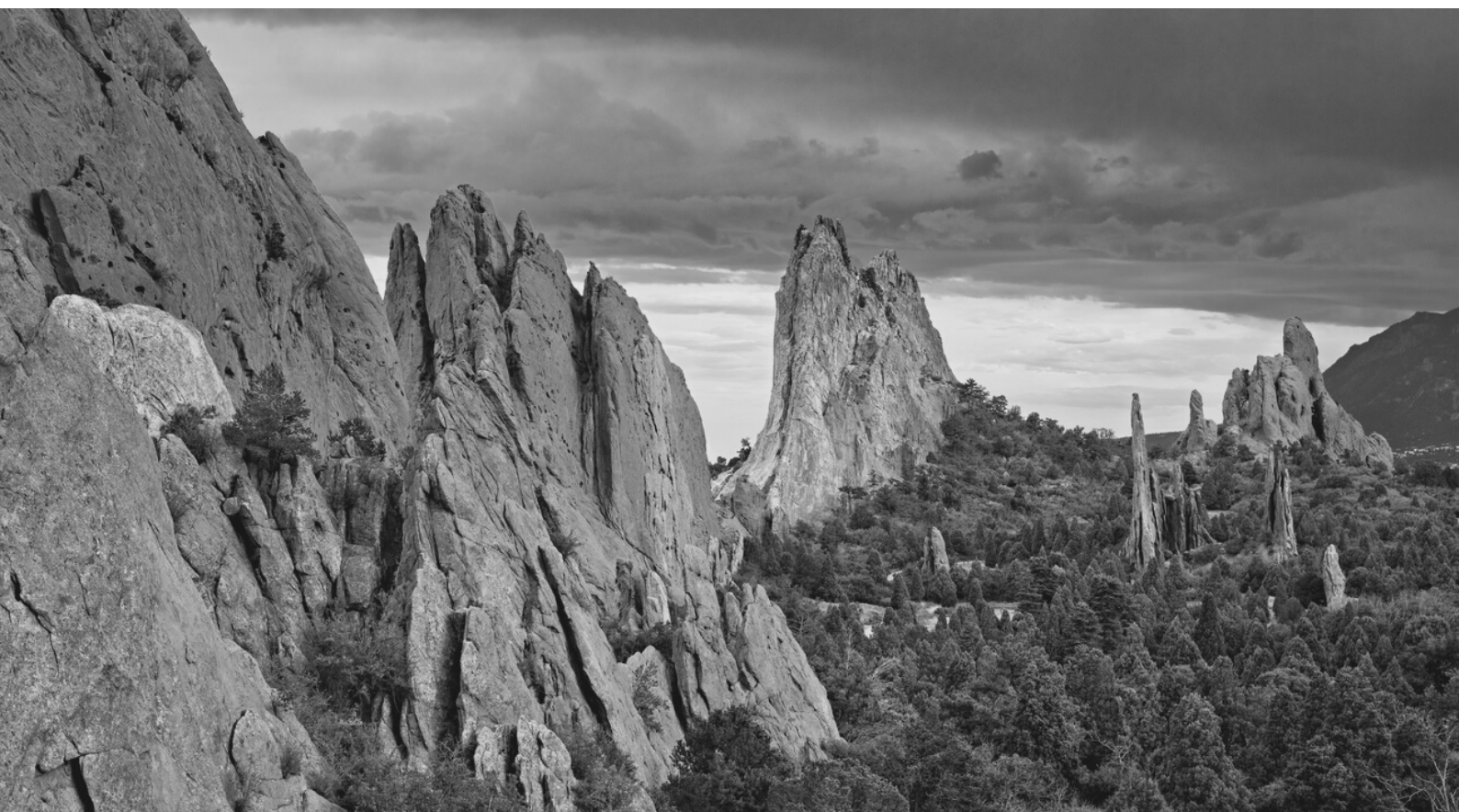
Additional Resources

Harmon, Elena. (2019). The Great Nonprofit Evaluation Reboot: A New Approach Every Staff Member Can Understand. Pleasant View, Tennessee: CharityChannel Press.

My EE Evaluation Resource Assistant (MEERA).
<http://meera.snre.umich.edu/home>

Patton, Michael Quinn. (2008). Utilization Focused Evaluation (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

University of Wisconsin-Madison Program Development and Evaluation, Logic Model Examples, Templates and Resources.
<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/programdevelopment/logic-models>

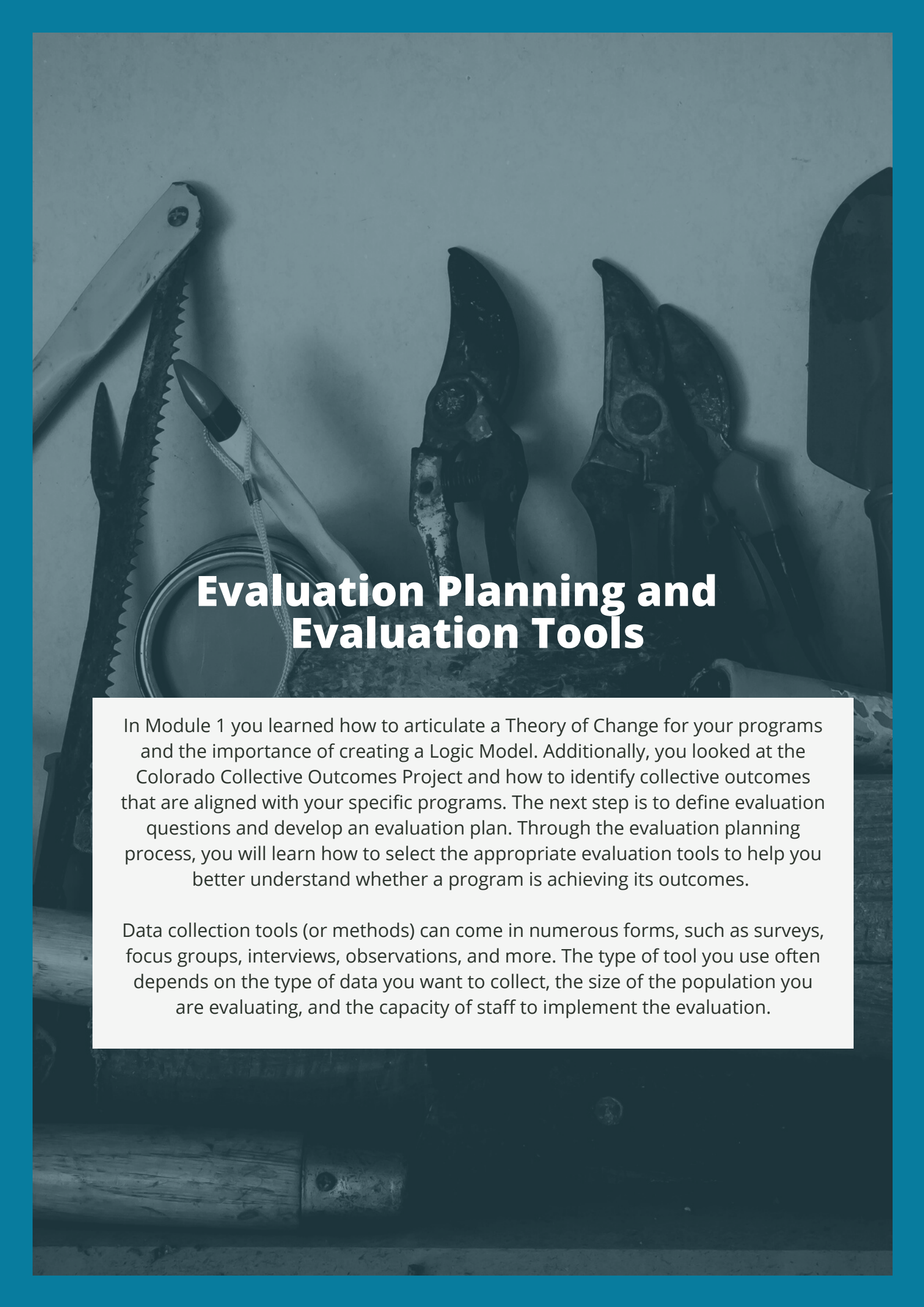




WELCOME TO
COLORFUL
COLORADO

Colorado Collective Outcomes

Module 2: Linking Evaluation Tools and Data Collection to your Evaluation Plan



Evaluation Planning and Evaluation Tools

In Module 1 you learned how to articulate a Theory of Change for your programs and the importance of creating a Logic Model. Additionally, you looked at the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project and how to identify collective outcomes that are aligned with your specific programs. The next step is to define evaluation questions and develop an evaluation plan. Through the evaluation planning process, you will learn how to select the appropriate evaluation tools to help you better understand whether a program is achieving its outcomes.

Data collection tools (or methods) can come in numerous forms, such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, observations, and more. The type of tool you use often depends on the type of data you want to collect, the size of the population you are evaluating, and the capacity of staff to implement the evaluation.



Determining Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions guide the evaluation. It is often unrealistic to evaluate everything you want to explore about the program. Prioritizing evaluation questions will help focus your time and resources.

To refine your evaluation questions, think through the following two factors:

- *What you want to learn through the evaluation.* Are you trying to determine if the program is being implemented as planned, or the same at multiple sites? Do you want to understand whether you are achieving your outcomes? Do you want to understand if volunteers are satisfied? It's important to define what you want to learn through the evaluation.
- *Who the intended audience for evaluation results will be.* Are results of the evaluation to be used by program staff to improve and refine the program? Are you reporting out to funders? Are you presenting to your community or target population? Once you understand who will use the information, you'll be able to refine your evaluation questions even further.

Once you've thought through the above factors, you'll be able to identify the evaluation questions. A few example evaluation questions may include:

- To what extent are we achieving our outcomes?
- To what extent are we increasing youth connection to nature?
- Did students increase knowledge of environmental education content?
- To what extent were the activities completed?
- Is the program being implemented the same at each school site?
- Is the program reaching the intended audience/target population?

Talk to your team and your participants about their evaluation questions. How can you authentically involve the community in framing the evaluation? What do they want to learn? Who will be using the results and how?

Creating an Evaluation Plan

The final step in developing your evaluation is thinking through each element of the **evaluation plan**. Like the logic model, an evaluation plan helps provide a concise picture of your evaluation. A comprehensive evaluation includes the following elements:

- *Outcomes*. These come from your logic model and are selected based on your evaluation questions.
- *Indicators*. Indicators help direct you to the information that will answer your evaluation questions and inform whether you've achieved your goals. It is often helpful to identify multiple indicators for each outcome. For example, if you're looking to increase youth environmental stewardship, indicators would include youths' environmental awareness, environmental knowledge, and personal responsibility. Similarly, if you're looking to increase conservation efforts in your community, indicators may include participants' nature connection, attitudes toward nature and the environment, and stewardship actions.





- *Objectives.* Objectives break the outcomes down into specific and measurable statements. Objectives answer the question, “How much change is enough?” They help you think through what percentage change you want to see or what percentage of the population will achieve the results. For example, if we look at the indicator options above pertaining to environmental stewardship, an objective may be, “85% of students report an increased understanding of how to take care of the environment,” or “75% of participants indicate a greater appreciation for the outdoors.”
- *Data Collection Tools and Methods.* Once you’ve identified the type of information you need to gather, you’ll decide which data collection tools and methods to use. Here, you’ll think through whether you want quantitative or qualitative data and how you will collect it—through methods such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, observations, etc. (This will be covered in more depth in Part 2: Tools and Data Collection.)
- *Timeline and Staff.* In order for any evaluation to be successful, you’ll need to have a clear action plan of when you will collect the data and who will be responsible for it.

Start thinking through your evaluation using the Evaluation Plan Template included with this toolkit. Remember to include program-level outcomes from the Colorado Collective Outcomes project when applicable!

Evaluation Plan Template

Outcomes	Indicators	Objectives	Data Collection Tools and Methods	Timeline and Staff
What do you hope to achieve through your program? What are your goals? (Taken from Logic Model.)	What information will inform whether you've achieved your goals?	How much change is enough? What percentage change do you want to see? What percentage of the population will achieve the results?	What tools will you use to collect/gather the data?	When does the data need to be collected and by whom?

Example Evaluation Plan for Colorado Collective Outcomes

Outcomes	Indicators	Objectives	Data Collection Tools and Methods	Timeline and Staff
Increase in time spent on EE in the classroom and outdoors.	Students participating Time spent on EE	6,000 students will participate in a weeklong program	Tracking log	After each week by program administrator
Program participants will report an increase in stewardship actions.	Nature connection Stewardship actions Positive environmental actions	60% of students will report they are more likely to help to protect the environment. 60% of students will report they are more likely to talk to others about ways to protect the environment.	Student Survey (with questions taken from EE21)	After each week by program administrator
Program participants will report an increase in comfort and enjoyment to explore outdoor spaces.	Perceptions of nature Enjoyment of nature	75% of students will report that being in nature makes them happy. 75% of students will report that spending time in nature is very important.	Student Survey (with questions taken from Nature Connection Index from MENE Survey)	After each week by program administrator
Participants will report an increase in connection to nature.	Nature connection	80% of students will report they like to love and care for nature. 80% of students will report they like to be in the outdoors.	Student survey (with questions taken from Revised Connection to Nature Index)	After each week by program administrator

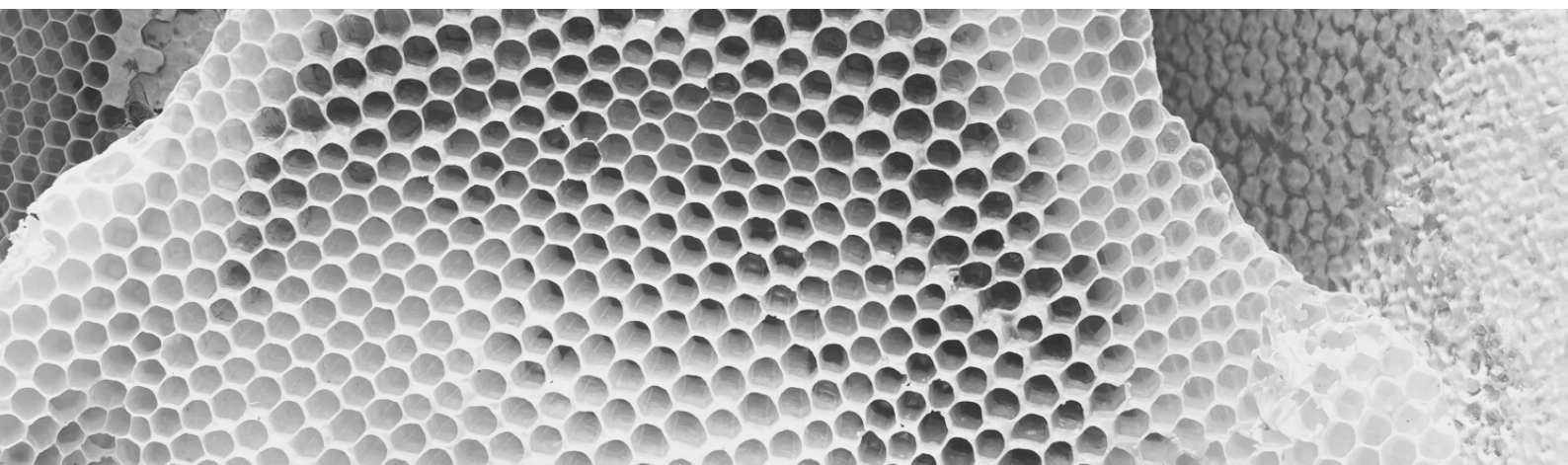
Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data refers to numerical data (number of students served), data that can be defined by categories (agree, somewhat agree, disagree), or data that can be placed on a scale (scale of 0 to 10, where 0 = Nothing at all and 10 = A huge amount). Quantitative data is particularly useful when you want to include a large number of participants in the evaluation and can gather information through fixed response option. Quantitative data collection tools include surveys, tracking sheets, pre- and post-tests, student achievement data, and demographic information, to name a few.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data includes descriptive or narrative data. Qualitative data collection allows you to gather rich and meaningful data from participants that dives deeper into their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. This type of data is useful when you want to understand why participants have their perceptions of the program or when you want to dig into how the program is truly impacting them. Examples of qualitative data collection tools include focus groups, interviews, observations and open-ended survey questions.



Types of Data Collection Tools

There are many types of data collection tools you can utilize for your evaluation. Table 1 details a few of the most common quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. When developing your evaluation plan and identifying the tools you plan to use, it is important to understand staff time and capacity as well as the needs of your participants and community. Additionally, when capacity allows, a mixed-methods approach (using both quantitative and qualitative tools) is recommended to create a robust picture of program outcomes and fully address evaluation questions.

Table 1. Data Collection Tools

Data Collection Tool	Definition	Best time to use
Survey	A tool that can be administered by paper or online and is used to gather information from participants. Often, surveys include questions with fixed responses or scales.	When gathering information from a lot of people, when confidentiality is important, when time is limited.
Tracking Log	Used to track program activities, events, participants, and other outputs.	When tracking program outputs and numbers, or when you need to understand program implementation.
Focus Group	Used to gather in-depth qualitative information from a small group of individuals. Focus group protocols have pre-defined, open-ended questions used to elicit discussion.	When gathering in-depth information from a group of individuals with a shared experience, or when group discussion can draw deeper conversation.
Individual Interview	Used to gather in-depth qualitative information from individuals in a one-on-one setting, either in person, by phone, or through a virtual communication platform. Interview protocols have pre-defined, open-ended questions to gather feedback.	When gathering in-depth information from specific individuals, when information is sensitive, or when confidentiality is needed.

Observation	Used to gather information in real-time settings, either overtly (individuals know they are being observed) or covertly (individuals do not know they are being observed).	When gathering information on how a program is implemented, when outcomes can be observed, or when gathering information on interactions between people.
Photo Elicitation	Combines participant-directed photography with interviews to explore participants' perceptions of a place or time period.	When wanting to add a visual element to the evaluation, when pictures can elicit additional information.

Whenever possible, considering selecting more than one evaluation tool and consider collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.

Make sure the tools you select represent the needs of your population.



Collecting Data in a Virtual World

Evaluation doesn't have to stop when programming goes virtual. Many, if not all, of the evaluation tools can continue to be used virtually, with the right modifications.

- **Surveys** are an excellent tool to complement virtual programming. Upload your survey into an online platform such as Survey Monkey or Google Forms and administer it to your participants through email, text, or chat.
- **Focus Groups** can also be successful through virtual platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet. Encourage program participants to activate their cameras to thoughtfully engage and discuss with other focus group participants.
- **Interviews** are ideal over the phone. Schedule your interview ahead of time so you know you won't catch your interviewee at a bad time.
- If programming is taking place through a virtual platform, **observations** can also happen simultaneously. If the observer wants to be non-intrusive, encourage them to turn off their camera and chances are participants will forget they are even there.
- You can continue to encourage participants to utilize **photo elicitation** by taking pictures and sharing them with you through text or email. Follow up with a telephone interview to understand what the photos mean to them.





Population and Sample Sizes

It is important to understand the difference between population and sample when embarking on your evaluation. Population refers to the entire group that is the focus of the evaluation. For example, if you are facilitating a program on environmental stewardship with all sixth-grade students in the entire school district, the population would be the 6,000 member, sixth-grade student body. A sample, on the other hand, is a portion of the larger population that is randomly selected with the goal that it will reveal information about the population as a whole. In this case, a sample could be 500 of the sixth-grade students in the district.

While it would be great to implement an evaluation with your program's entire population, that is often not realistic, nor is it necessary. When identifying an appropriate sample for your evaluation, consider the following:

- Is it representative of your overall population (gender, age, race, etc.)?
- Is it randomly selected (you are not targeting one portion of the population over another)?
- Is it aligned with your staff capacity (don't attempt to survey 1,000 students if you do not have the capacity to do so)?
- Is it guided by the evaluation plan (you are selecting from a population that can address your evaluation questions)?

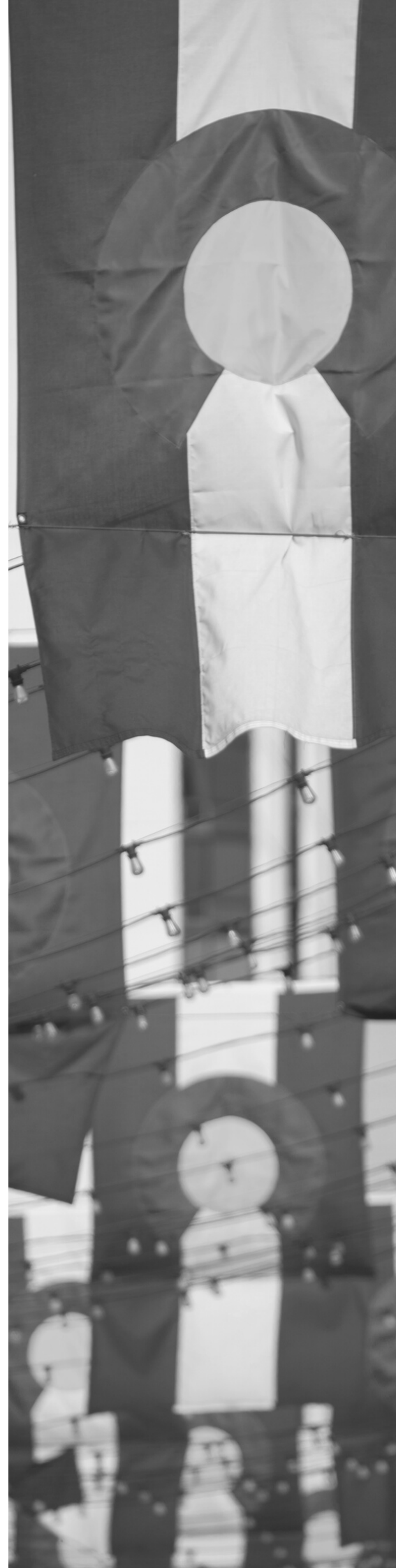
Data Collection for Colorado Collective Outcomes

In Workshop 1, we introduced the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project. CAEE has identified the following five major outcome areas that encompass Colorado EE initiatives:

- Conservation
- Education
- Positive Child and Youth Development
- Health and Wellness
- Social Justice

Throughout this project, CAEE and its stakeholders identified both population-level and program-level outcomes for each area. Population-level outcomes focus on what is happening on state-wide basis, while program-level outcomes look at what is happening in specific programs.

The following pages provide a reminder about each outcome area and their corresponding population-level and program-level outcomes. Additionally, we provide recommendations for data collection tools that can be used for program evaluation. Links and citations to the tools are provided in the Additional Resources section.



Conservation

All Colorado ecosystems are healthy, vibrant, and valued.

Programs with conservation outcomes include those that increase environmental knowledge, improve environmental awareness and attitudes, and inspire positive environmental actions that lead to improvements in environmental quality.



Population-Level Outcomes

Increase in connection to nature across all of Colorado's demographics
Increase in environmental behaviors.
Increase in quality: water, air, and soil.

Program-Level Outcomes

Increase in connection to nature.
Increase in stewardship actions.
Increase in desire to participate in positive environmental actions.
Increase in positive attitudes toward nature and environment.
Increase in awareness and knowledge of cultural, biological, and scientific systems.



Optional Tools for Ages 10 and Under

Connection to Nature Index (Tool #4 in Practitioners Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature)
Children's Environmental Perceptions Scale (Tool #2 in Practitioners Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature)
Connectedness to Nature Scale (Children's Version) (Tool #3 in Practitioners Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature)
Focus Group and Interview Protocol for Colorado Collective Outcomes
eeCorps Nature Survey for Younger Participants

Optional Tools for Ages 11 and Older

EE21 Survey
Connectedness to Nature Scale (Tool #3 in Practitioners Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature)
Environmental Identity Scale (Tool #5 in Practitioners Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature)
Love and Care for Nature Scale (Tool #9 in Practitioners Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature)
Focus Group and Interview Protocol for Colorado Collective Outcomes

Education

Environmental education supports and ensures all PreK-12 students are lifelong learners with successful school outcomes.

Programs with education outcomes include those that improve academic performance, increase E-STEAM literacy, improve standardized test scores, and expand school engagement using the environment as an integrating context.



Population-Level Outcomes

- Increase in schools with EE.
 - Increase in students' level of engagement in learning (attendance and referrals).
 - Increase in academic testing scores.
 - Increase in students enrolled in NR/ENVS degree program.
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Program-Level Outcomes

- Increase in understanding of EE program content.
- Increase in engagement in learning.
- Increase in time spent on EE in the classroom and outdoors.
- Increase in culturally relevant curriculum.
- Increase in professional development in environmental education.
- Increase in workforce readiness skills.



Optional Tools for Ages 10 and Under

- Children's Environmental Perceptions Scale (Tool #2 in Practitioners Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature)
 - Interest in Science and Nature (Youth Version) (by Cornell Lab of Ornithology)
 - eeCorps Nature Survey for Younger Participants
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Optional Tools for Ages 11 and Older

- EE21 Survey
- Self-Efficacy for Environmental Action Scale (by Cornell Lab of Ornithology)
- Self-Efficacy for Learning and Doing Citizen Science Scale (by Cornell Lab of Ornithology)

Positive Child and Youth Development

All Colorado children and youth grow into responsible, resilient, engaged citizens that care for themselves, their natural environment, and their communities.

Programs with youth development outcomes are aimed at guiding young people as they grow into responsible, engaged citizens that care for the environment and their communities. These outcomes may be achieved through strengths-based programs focused on character and leadership combined with outdoor experiences or community service.



Population-Level Outcomes

- Increase in opportunities for civic or community engagement.
- Increase in programs that support PYD Components: Competence, Confidence, Character, Caring, Connection, Contribution.
- Increase in opportunities that provide a continuum of experience between organizations, partnerships, and other collaborations.

Program-Level Outcomes

- Increase in civic and community engagement.
- Increase in understanding of healthy and unhealthy risk.
- Increase in critical thinking/problem solving skills.
- Increase in self-efficacy.
- Increase in participants' competence, confidence, character, caring, connection or contribution.
- Increase in youth-directed internships, mentors, authentic adult and peer relationships.



Optional Tools for Ages 10 and Under

- Positive Youth Development (PYD) Retrospective Survey for Colorado Collective Outcomes (can be used for ages 10-18)
- Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development by The Colorado Trust (can be used for ages 9 and 10)
- Focus Group and Interview Protocol for Colorado Collective Outcomes
- eeCorps Nature Survey for Younger Participants

Optional Tools for Ages 11 and Older

- EE21 Survey
- Positive Youth Development (PYD) Retrospective Survey for Colorado Collective Outcomes
- Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development by The Colorado Trust
- Positive Youth Development Student Questionnaire Short Version from 4-H Study of PYD
- Focus Group and Interview Protocol for Colorado Collective Outcomes

Health and Wellness

Through increased safe access, connection to and comfort in the natural environment, all Coloradans are healthy and well—physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Programs with health and wellness outcomes are focused on improving physical, mental, emotional, and social health and wellness for participants through connection with nature. Health outcomes include improving nutrition, increasing physical fitness, reducing stress and anxiety, recovering from physical or psychological trauma, and increasing awareness and understanding of personal and environmental health.



Population-Level Outcomes

- Increase in time in nature.
- Decrease in systemic barriers to accessing nature.
- Increase in understanding of the connection between healthy environment and healthy self.
- Improved physical, mental and emotional health.
- Decrease in stress, depression, fatigue, sedentary lifestyle and chronic illness.
- Increase in access to healthy nutrition.

Program-Level Outcomes

- Increase in time spent in nature.
- Decrease in barriers to accessing nature.
- Increase in comfort and enjoyment to explore outdoor spaces.
- Increase in self-agency in the outdoors.
- Decrease in fear, anxiety, unknown.
- Increase in sense of place and place connection.
- Increase in perceived wellness and health as result of being in outdoors.
- Increase in outdoor community-based health interventions.



Optional Tools for Ages 10 and Under

- Connection to Nature Index (Tool #4 in Practitioners Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature)
- Nature Connection Index questions from the MENE Survey
- Focus Group and Interview Protocol for Colorado Collective Outcomes

Optional Tools for Ages 11 and Older

- Outdoor Time, Screen Time, and Connection to Nature Survey
- Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) Survey
- British Children's Play Survey
- Focus Group and Interview Protocol for Colorado Collective Outcomes

Social Justice

All Coloradans have access to and opportunity to experience the outdoors.

Programs with social justice outcomes include those that increase access and opportunity for underserved communities and underrepresented populations. These outcomes include increasing access to outdoor experiences, improving urban green space, and developing and supporting environmental educators and leaders from traditionally underrepresented groups.



Population-Level Outcomes

- Increase in communities with access to safe, natural and healthy environments.
- Increase in Coloradans who feel welcomed and comfortable in outdoor spaces.
- Decrease in barriers to accessing nature.
- Use of outdoor spaces reflects demographics of community.
- Increase in commitment to DEI within organizations.

Program-Level Outcomes

- Increase in participants who feel welcome and comfortable in outdoor spaces.
- Increase in programs honoring diversity in outdoor spaces.
- Increase in diversity of organizational leadership, program staff and mentors.
- Increase in DEI training for staff.
- Increase in culturally aware and responsive programming.
- Improved access to outdoor spaces for all abilities.



Recommended Tools for Self-Evaluation

Oregon State University Extension Service created a series of self-evaluation tools to support Oregon's Outdoor School. The goal of these tools is to support programs in moving through the evaluation cycle, which includes: 1) Evaluating current policies and practices; 2) Reflecting, learning, and planning for change; and 3) Implementing changes to make programs more equitable, accessible, and culturally responsive. While components of these self-evaluations may reflect specific criteria for Oregon programs, we believe all organizations can benefit from the authentic reflection, learning and action that can be facilitated by using these tools. By engaging in internal reflection and developing a strategic improvement plan, Colorado organizations can make progress toward achieving the Social Justice population-level and program-level outcomes.

Culturally Responsive Self-Evaluation Tool
Special Education and Accessibility Self-Evaluation Tool

Additional Resources

Websites for Tools

After-School Initiative's Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development by The Colorado Trust <https://www.coloradotrust.org/sites/default/files/ASIToolkitJun04.pdf>

Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Citizen Science, Resources for Practitioners. The scales are available for free and instant download by completing a brief request form at the following website: <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/citizenscience/resources-for-practitioners/>

EE21 Tools and Guidance by Robert B. Powell and Marc J. Stern.
https://frec.vt.edu/people/Stern/stern_docs.html

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) by Natural England
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-survey-purpose-and-results>

Positive Youth Development Student Questionnaire by Richard Lerner et al.
<https://cyfar.org/positive-youth-development-student-questionnaire>

Practitioner Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature by Gabby Salazar, Kristen Kunkle and Martha Monroe.
https://cdn.naaee.org/sites/default/files/assessing_connection_to_nature.5.11.20.pdf

Self-Evaluation Tools by Oregon State University Extension Services Outdoor School Program.
<https://outdoorschool.oregonstate.edu/about-us/research-evaluation-assessment/self-evaluation-tools/>

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Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment. Technical Report to the 2019-2018 surveys. Natural England Joint Report RP2920. 10 September 2018. Interactive website with results: <https://defra.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=d5fe6191e3fe400189a3756ab3a4057c>

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<http://evaluation.naaee.org/>

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Porticella, N., Phillips, T., Bonney, R. (2017). Self-Efficacy for Environmental Action Scale (SEEA, Generic). Technical Brief Series. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca NY.

Robert B. Powell, Marc J. Stern, Brandon Troy Frensley & DeWayne Moore (2019). Identifying and developing crosscutting environmental education outcomes for adolescents in the twenty-first century (EE21), *Environmental Education Research*, 25:9, 1281-1299, DOI: 10.1080/13504622.2019.1607259. Link to this article:
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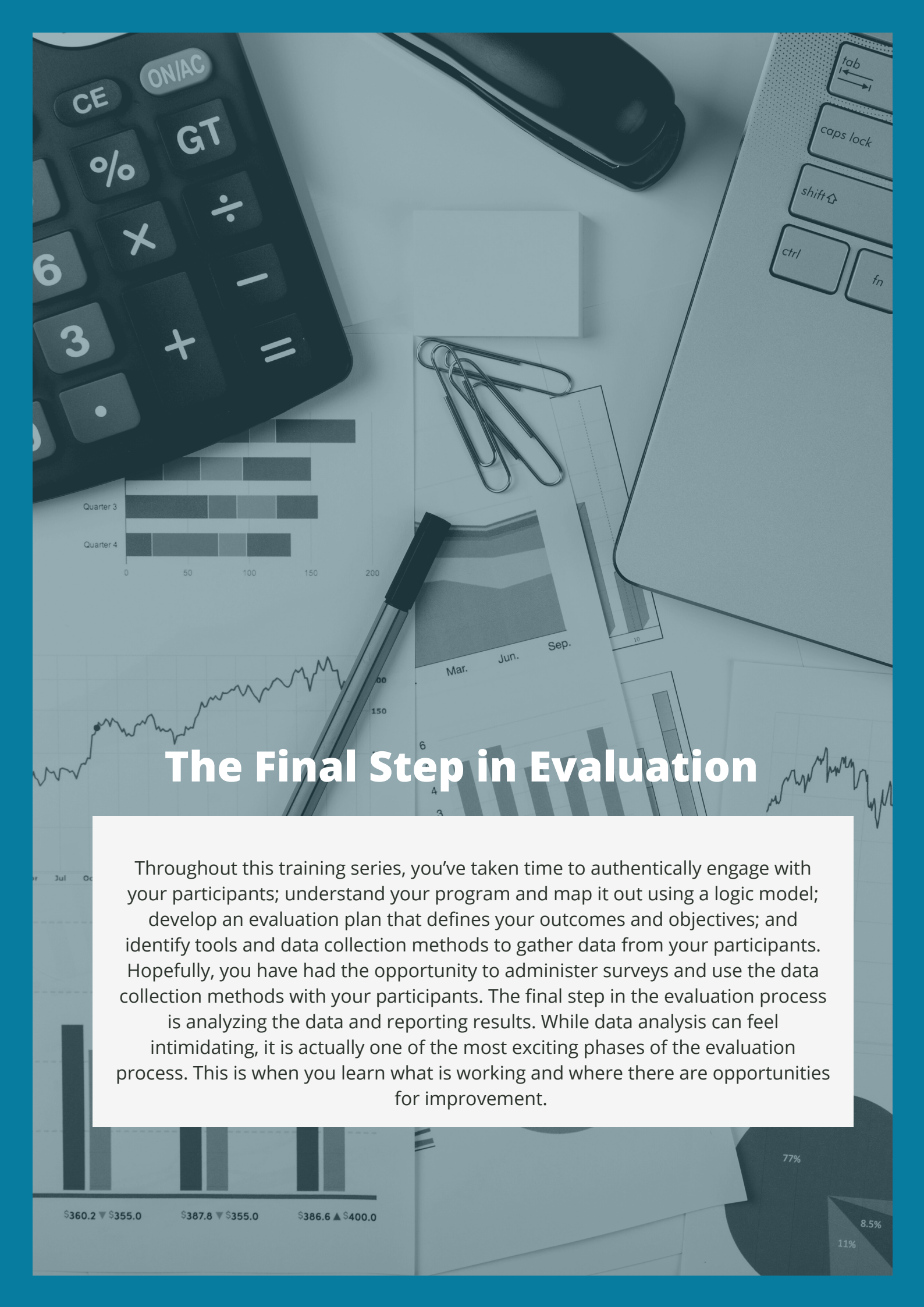
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Colorado Collective Outcomes

Module 3: Analyzing Data and Telling Your Story



The Final Step in Evaluation

Throughout this training series, you've taken time to authentically engage with your participants; understand your program and map it out using a logic model; develop an evaluation plan that defines your outcomes and objectives; and identify tools and data collection methods to gather data from your participants. Hopefully, you have had the opportunity to administer surveys and use the data collection methods with your participants. The final step in the evaluation process is analyzing the data and reporting results. While data analysis can feel intimidating, it is actually one of the most exciting phases of the evaluation process. This is when you learn what is working and where there are opportunities for improvement.

Preparing Quantitative Data for Analysis

As a reminder, quantitative data refers to numerical data, data that can be defined by categories, or data that can be placed on a scale. Quantitative data can be converted (or coded) into numerical data for analysis. There are several steps evaluators go through in order to analyze quantitative survey data.

Code the data. First, you will need to transform the survey data into simple numerical terms by developing and using a coding system. A coding system converts scale or categorical data into numbers in order to run statistical analysis. The following examples illustrate how and when to code data:

1. Question: Did you enjoy this field trip?

Answers: No, Yes

Code: No = 0, Yes = 1

2. Question: Which program did you participate in?

Answers: Field trip, Afterschool program, Weekend family event, Nature hike

Code: Field trip = 1, Afterschool program = 2, Weekend family event = 3, Nature hike = 4

3. Question: How much do you agree with the following statement? "I learned how to take good care of nature."

Answer: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Not sure, Agree, Strongly agree

Code: Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Not sure = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5

If you are using a program such as SurveyMonkey to administer the survey, you have the option of downloading the response data as "Actual Answer Text" or "Numerical Value." The "Numerical Value" option does the coding and converts the data to numbers. It is important to understand how the data was converted prior to analyzing it.





Enter the data. If you are administering the survey electronically through a platform such as SurveyMonkey or Google Forms, the data has already been entered. You will need to download the data from the platform into Excel in order to conduct your own data analysis. If you administered the survey using paper and pencil, you will need to enter the data into a spreadsheet, using the codes you outlined in the previous step. Be sure to assign each survey a unique identifier in case you need to go back and confirm the data.

Clean the data. Before analyzing the data, double check that it has been entered correctly and understand if there are any anomalies in the data. You will need to decide how to handle potential irregularities that come up with the surveys. For example, what if a participant selects multiple responses on a question that requires only one answer? Or how will you handle a survey where the participant fills out their name and age only but doesn't complete the rest of the survey? Identify a protocol to address and clean those anomalies prior to analysis.

It is important to have a protocol to check that data was entered correctly and that there were no errors, if manually entering the data. One useful protocol is to do a 10% quality check by randomly selecting 10% of the surveys from the stack and checking the accuracy of the data entry. If errors are found, do another 10% check on the surveys. Another useful tool to check the accuracy is to run some descriptive statistics on the data, as described below. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means are useful in identifying irregularities in the data.

Determine what you want to learn from the data.

There are a lot of ways to analyze and understand the data. Spend time thinking through how you plan to use the data and what would be the most meaningful. Here are some basic ways to analyze data:

- Calculate the number of participants that rated scaled questions high, such as Agree and Strongly agree.
- Calculate the percentage of participants that rated scaled questions high, such as 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale.
- Calculate the mean (or average) rating of all participants on a scale score, such as the average rating of all students on a scale of 1 to 5.

Refer to your evaluation questions to help define how you will analyze the data. What do you want to learn? Who wants the information?

Do you have data that can be rolled up to the Colorado Collective Outcomes Project? We want to see it!



Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are the most basic type of data analysis and help describe the data. They can be used to paint a picture of the perceptions of those who participated in the evaluation; however, they cannot be used to make inferences into the larger population. Common descriptive statistics include frequencies, percentages, means, and minimum and maximum.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics are a more advanced form of data analysis and are used to compare groups or to make generalizations (or inferences) about the larger population. In inferential statistics, the characteristics of the sample (the sample size, whether it is random, whether it is representative of the population, etc.) are important to the use of and success of the statistical test. Common inferential statistics include t-tests, regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Statistical software such as SPSS and SAS are helpful tools for conducting inferential statistics.





Analyzing Quantitative Data Using Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are the most basic type of data analysis and help describe the data. They can be used to paint a picture of the perceptions of those who participated in the evaluation; however, they cannot be used to make inferences into the larger population. Below are the common types of descriptive statistics that are used in program evaluation.

- **Frequencies (or counts).** This method calculates (or counts) the number of times a standard is met and is often noted by “n.” For example, the number of participants that are age 8, the number of participants who participated in the nature hike, or the number of participants that selected “Strongly agree” on a survey question.
- **Percentages.** This method is used to show the proportion of the participants that meets the criteria. For example, it can be used to describe the ratio of the participants that are under the age of 10, the percentage of the population that “strongly agrees” with a statement, or the proportion of the participants that is “highly satisfied” compared with the proportion of the participants that is “highly unsatisfied.” Percentages are calculated by taking the number of times a response is given divided by the number of people who responded to the question. For example, 100 participants completed a survey and 75 indicated that are under the age of 10 years old. $75/100 = .75$ or 75% of survey participants are under the age of 10.

- **Means (or averages).** A mean calculates the average of a set of numbers in order to identify a tendency in the data or a central number. It is best used in scale data when it has a meaningful and continuous order. To calculate the mean, take the sum of the values and divide by the number of values. Examples might include the average rating of participants on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree; or the average score of students on a pre-test about conservation practices; or the average amount of time participants spend in class.
- **Minimum and maximum.** These methods are useful in illustrating the range in data and noting the highest rating and the lowest rating. For example, the youngest student and the oldest student, or the least amount of time spent in nature to the most amount of time spent in nature.
- **Standard deviation.** Standard deviation calculates how spread out the data and responses are. A high standard deviation indicates responses vary widely, while a low standard deviation indicates responses are relatively close. It is often associated with a mean to give more meaning to the data set. For example, if 100 students responded to a question about satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5 and the average was a 3, it is unclear whether most students responded with a 3 or if half indicated a 5 and the other half indicated a 1. Standard deviation will help provide clarity.

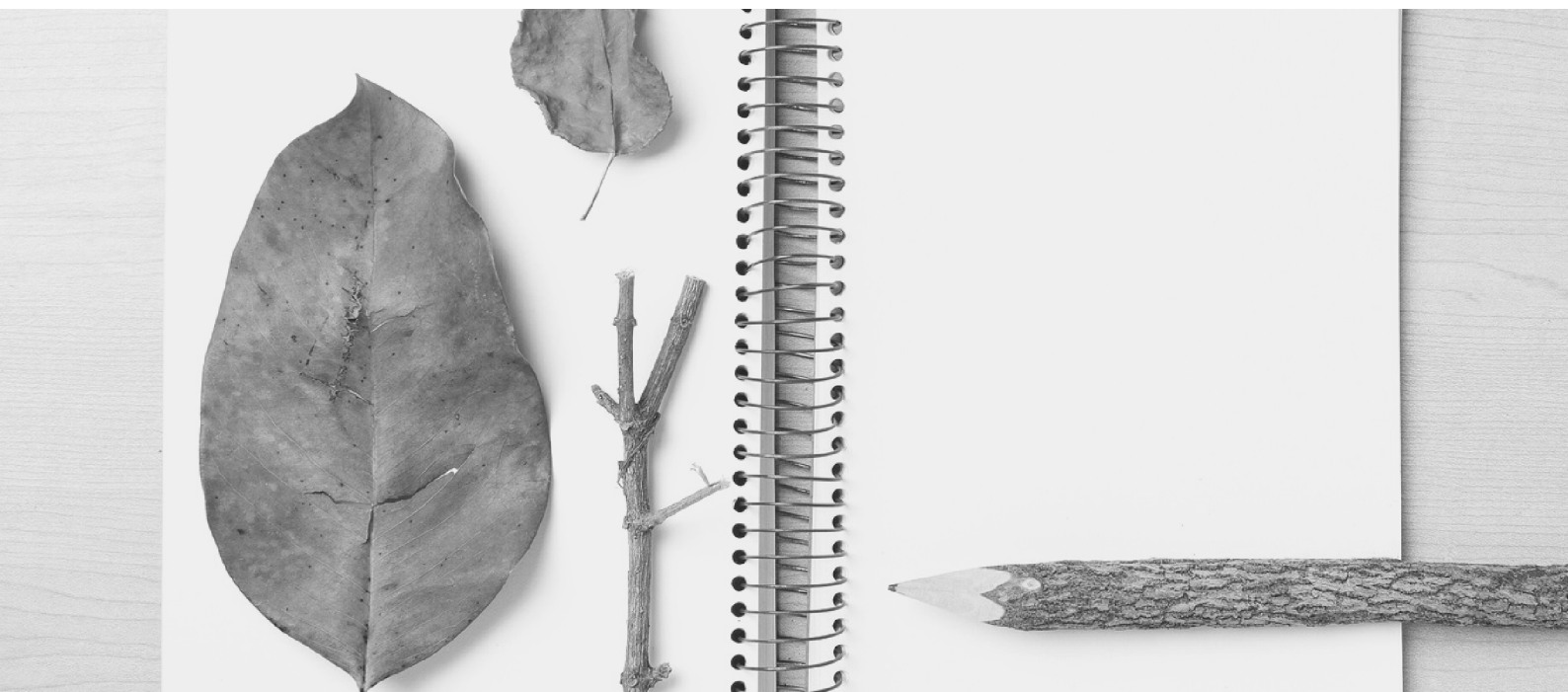


Preparing Qualitative Data for Analysis

Unlike quantitative data, qualitative data is not inherently numerical as it includes descriptive and narrative data. It is important to note, however, that you can still analyze qualitative data. Through qualitative data analysis, you can identify themes or trends and determine findings about those involved in the evaluation.

Organize the data. To begin, you will want to compile and organize the qualitative data you are analyzing, such as focus group notes, interview notes, or open-ended survey questions. Ensure they are all in a format to be able to read and take notes. One suggestion is to enter the data into an Excel spreadsheet to have all related data in one place. Keep in mind the evaluation questions, outcomes and objectives you are seeking to address through the analysis.

Review the data and identify themes. Familiarize yourself with all of the data by reading through each item. As you read, begin identifying themes, trends, similarities or differences.





Analyzing Qualitative Data

Code the data. Once you understand the information and themes, begin categorizing and coding the data. This can be done in several ways, such as highlighting themes in different colors, using Excel to add columns, or using a qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo or ATLAS.ti.

Summarize findings. After you have identified themes and coded the data, summarize the findings. It is important to note that qualitative data can often be summarized quantitatively. For example, if 10 out of 20 students wrote they liked fishing best when asked what they liked about the field trip, you can indicate that 50% of respondents liked fishing best.

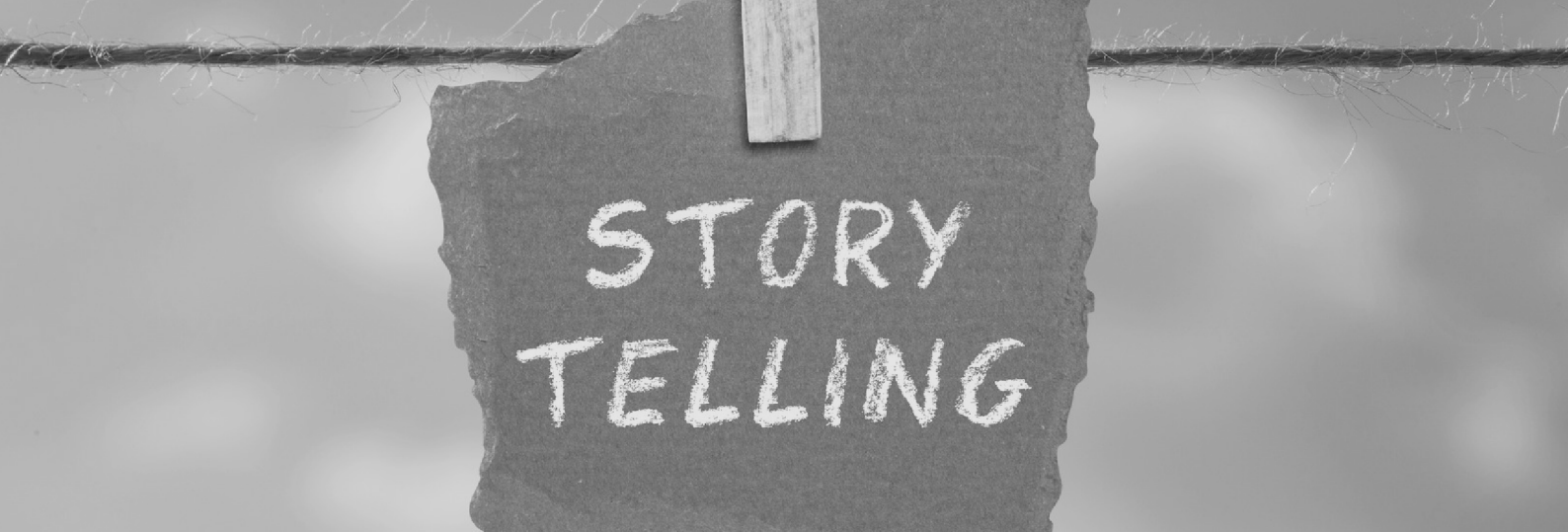
Qualitative data adds rich stories or quotes to an evaluation report. Think about how you can use both quantitative and qualitative data to paint a full picture of your programs.

Reporting Evaluation Findings

Now that you have analyzed the data, it is time to report it to your stakeholder groups. Before reporting and presenting your results, refer to the initial evaluation questions. What do you want to learn from the evaluation and who is the intended audience? Ensure the evaluation report is structured based on these two guiding elements. For example, if the evaluation is used to understand the strengths and weaknesses of a program and is geared toward program staff, outline the report in a way that highlights the successes of the program along with opportunities for improvement and provide recommendations at the end. On the other hand, If the program is geared toward funders, be sure to include all of the outcomes and objectives they are expecting you to report out on. It is often helpful to include successes and lessons learned, along with a quote or story about the specific program to funders as well.

Spend time reflecting on how the voice of your community is being represented in the report. Are you including all voices? Are you aware of how power or bias might be present in reporting?





STORY TELLING

How to tell a more effective story about Environmental Education

CAEE partnered with FrameWorks Institute in 2020 to develop a framing strategy for advocates, educators, practitioners and program leaders to tell a more effective story about environmental education. By utilizing a shared framing strategy, we will be able to provide a clear vision for strengthening environmental education and expanding access to opportunities for everyone.

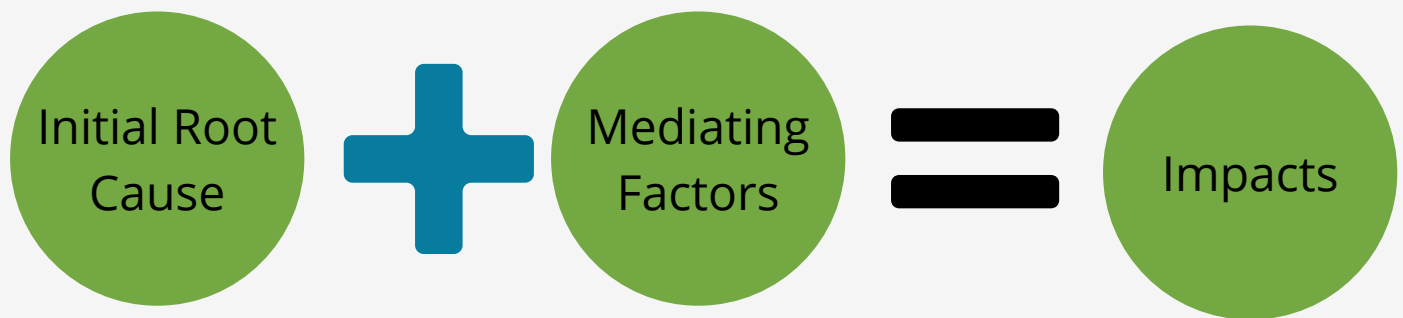
The FrameWorks guide provides the following five framing recommendations to tell a more effective story about environmental education:

1. **Set the scene.** Provide a clear definition of environmental education.
2. **Invite people into the story.** Paint a big picture of why environmental education matters to all of us.
3. **Reveal the plot.** Explain key processes and cause-effect relationships.
4. **Feature the full cast of characters.** Use inclusive language to place disparate outcomes in the context of universal needs and shared responsibilities.
5. **Offer a compelling conclusion.** Provide concrete solutions that we can implement together to strengthen environmental education and become the global society we want to be.

For a complete description and list of tools, review the full report provided with this training: Moyer, J., Trester, A.M., & Nichols, J. (2020). How to Tell a More Effective Story about Environmental Education. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.

Explanatory Chain as a Tool to Communicate and Explain

How does environmental education enhance positive youth development? How does it make our communities healthier? How does it link to K-12 curricula? The answers to these and other questions involve complex processes, which are largely invisible to the general population (How to tell a more effective story about Environmental Education).



One of the tools FrameWorks has provided is the Explanatory Chain. "An Explanatory Chain is a clear, concise, well-framed explanation of the causes of a problem, including the mechanism by which the problem is created." (Explanatory Chains Brief.) It offers a clear path of logic, that connects causes to consequences and builds a shared understanding. When used effectively, an Explanatory Chain empowers individuals to understand an issue and how to address it more effectively.

Consider your evaluation data. What was the chain of events leading to your results? What are the processes that might be invisible to your stakeholders? How might explaining those processes help them increase their support for your program? With your team, list a series of bullets describing: the problem, how your program mediates the problem, and what might happen as a result of the program. How can this help you tell your story?



Metaphors as Tool to Explain Complex Processes

Explaining complex processes to funders and stakeholders can be difficult, and often takes time. One tool that can help is to provide an analogy between a new or abstract concept, and a comparable but more familiar and concrete one. The following metaphors have been tested extensively by the Frameworks Institute through a variety of issues and are recommended to help explain particular aspects of environmental education.

Education **Wiring Up**

We can energize learning by establishing connections between the different places that ignite our passions and generate deeper understanding. Through an extensive circuitry of experiences, EE helps ensure that the knowledge and skills students gain in one place can easily flow into new contexts, powering further exploration and boosting ongoing innovation.

Social Justice **Charging Stations**

EE sites are like charging stations that power up kids' learning. Some families benefit from high wattage areas that provide lots of opportunities, while other families have very little to plug into. A patchy and unreliable grid means our EE system is not as strong as it could be, but we can rewire it to eliminate dead zones and boost learning for everyone.

Positive Youth Development **Cultivating Connections**

Just like a root system supplies nourishment to a plant to help it flourish, environmental education provides kids with enriching experiences and supportive relationships that foster lifelong stability and continual growth.

Health and Wellness **Foundations of Health**

Healthy communities are built on solid foundations, assembled by many different professional sectors, institutions, and people. A dependable foundation includes reinforcements, like access to green space, occasions to socialize, and quality learning opportunities. Environmental education programs supply these essential components of a strong and stable foundation and, therefore, support healthy, thriving communities.

Common Report Formats

Option 1

- **Executive Summary**—includes a summary of the primary elements of the report.
- **Introduction and Overview**—provides background information about the program, the purpose of the evaluation, and the evaluation questions.
- **Methodology**—includes detailed descriptions about the data collection tools and methods. Demographic data about the participants can often be included here.
- **Key Findings**—summarizes the findings of your evaluation. One approach is to present findings aligned with evaluation questions, capturing each of the data collection methods. For example, if you are reporting on whether participants feel more connected to nature, include the findings from survey, focus groups and interviews before presenting results for the next outcome.
- **Recommendations and Conclusions**—finalize the report by providing recommendations based on results of the evaluation. Provide a final summary to close out the report.

Option 2

The key difference in this report approach is to include the detailed methodology at the end of the report. The methodology section may seem overwhelming and tedious to non-evaluators. In this report option, it takes that section of the report and moves it to the end. Be sure to provide a brief overview of the data collection tools used in order to orient the reader to the methods.

- **Executive Summary**
- **Introduction and Overview**
- **Key Findings**
- **Recommendations and Conclusions**
- **Methodology**

Additional Resources

Moyer, J., Trester, A.M., & Nichols, J. (2020). How to Tell a More Effective Story about Environmental Education. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.

FrameWorks Institute. (2019). Unleashing the Power of How: An Explanation Declaration. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.

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