Participant Guide

Simple Interpretive and Education Evaluation Tools

Broadcast Training
August 12, 2010
1:00pm – 3:00pm

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Welcome

Welcome to today's training broadcast titled ***Simple Interpretive and Education Evaluation Tools.*** This training is scheduled from 1:00PM to 3:00 PM EST on August 12, 2010 and will consist of live instruction from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Thank you for joining us today. We look forward to your participation.

Background
This third session in the Evaluation for Interpretation and Education series will build upon the information and activities in the previous sessions, highlighting data collection methodologies that do not require OMB approval and will provide the user with the information they need to improve their program, product or service. Examples from a variety of parks, refuges and other offices will be used including a few directly related to the new Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative.

This series is sponsored by the National Park Service's National Education Council and presented by the Education Evaluation Coordination Team. It supports the Service-wide Interpretation and Education Evaluation Strategy and the I&E Renaissance Action Plan. This session is co-sponsored and presented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center, Division of Education Outreach.

How to Interact with the Instructors

We encourage you to ask questions and share your comments with the instructors throughout this TELNPS course. If you were physically in the classroom with the instructor, you would raise your hand to let her/him know you had a question or comment. Then you would wait for the instructor to recognize you and ask for your question. We are all familiar with that "protocol" for asking questions or making comments.

There is also a "protocol" to follow for broadcasts to ensure you can easily ask questions and others can participate as well. It may seem a little strange at first asking a question of a TV monitor. Remember, it is the instructor you are interacting with and not the monitor. As you ask more questions and participate in more broadcasts, you will soon be focusing only on the content of your question and not the equipment you are using to ask it.

As part of the distance learning equipment at your location, there are several push to talk microphones. Depending on the number of students at your location, you may have one directly in front of you or you may be sharing one with other students at your table.

When you have a question, press and hold down the push to talk button, maintaining a distance of at least 12-18 inches and say, "Excuse me [instructor's first name], this is [your first name] at [your location].

I have a question (or I have a comment)." Then release the push to talk button. This is important. Until you release the button, you will not be able to hear the instructor. The instructor will acknowledge you and then ask for your question or comment. Stating your name and location not only helps the instructor, but also helps other students who are participating at different locations to get to know their classmates.

Course Objectives

Objectives:
After the 2010 broadcast, the participant will be able to:

- Use two/three data collection methodologies at their sites to evaluate visitor response to an interpretive or educational program, product or service.
- Explain importance of analyzing data gained through evaluation projects.
- Use the materials in the workbook to customize their own evaluation of a program area such as youth employment or youth programming.
- Describe 2 evaluation tools that could be used to evaluate a site youth initiative program.

Class Credit and Evaluation

To Receive Credit for this Course:
You **must** register through DOI Learn to receive credit for this training.

After the broadcast, you will receive a follow up email with a brief survey. We appreciate your feedback!

Instructor Bios

Arlene Jackson

Arlene is the Chief of Interpretation at Ulysses S Grant National Historic Site, prior to that she spent 21 years at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial as a frontline supervisor. She has been active in the National Park Service's Interpretive Development Program over the last 15 years. She is a member of the National Education Council and the co-chair of the Education Evaluation Coordination Team subcommittee.

Martha Monroe

Martha is an extension specialist in natural resources education and professor in the School of Forest Resources and Conservation at the University of Florida in Gainesville. She provides support to a variety of state and national environmental education programs and teaches EE and Conservation Behavior courses on campus. Martha has worked with a variety of national agencies and organizations to evaluate programs. Her recent extension work has led her to developing programs to change behavior around wildland fire and defensible space issues. Her work in environmental education spans over 25 year of teaching youngsters, facilitating teacher workshop, developing curriculum, and teaching adults. She holds a BS, MS and Ph.D. in Natural Resources, all from the University of Michigan, where she concentrated on environmental policy, cognitive psychology and environmental education.

Julie Study

Julie is an Education Specialist in the Division of Education Outreach at the National Conservation Training Center. She has over 20 years of interpretive and environmental educational experience on national wildlife refuges, national and state parks. She has developed historical and environmental interpretive and educational programs and materials for a wide range of audiences. Julie received her B.S. in Outdoor Education in 1987 from Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin.

The development team for this session included:

Michelle Donlan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Elizabeth Hoermann	National Park Service
Arlene Jackson	National Park Service
Julie Study	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jennie Vasarhelyi	National Park Service

Slide Presentation

Simple Interpretive and Education Evaluation Tools

A TEL training brought to you by a collaboration between FWS and NPS

August 12, 2010

2008 Broadcast – Introduction to Evaluation

1. Overview of Evaluation
2. How to Decide what to Evaluate
3. How to Plan for an Evaluation Project

2009 Broadcast – Evaluating Interpretation and Education: Getting Started

1. Review of Logic Models
2. Developing an Evaluation Question
3. Overview of Data Collection Tools

How to Find Archived Broadcasts

1. Go to: http://67.202.209.147
2. Participant login: Use your first and last name, no password needed.
3. Click to enter the "Wimba Classroom"

How to Find Archived Broadcasts

4. Select ARCHIVES for viewing a past (recorded) event title.
5. Select the TITLE of the archive you need

To Order a Workbook

FWS Employees:
Michelle_Donlan@fws.gov

NPS Employees:
Elizabeth_Hoermann@nps.gov

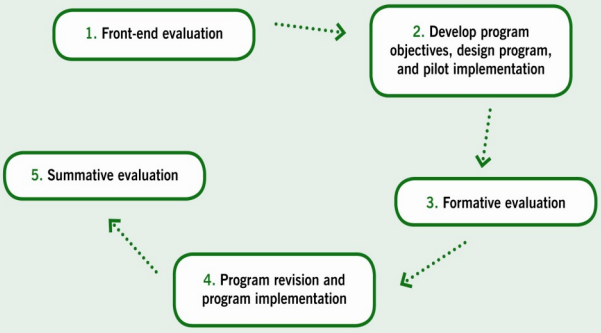
Office of Management and Budget

OMB approval needed for:

- **Asking exact same question to 10 or more non-employees**
- **Studies paid for or sponsored by federal agencies**

FIGURE 1.1

Types of Evaluation Linked with the Program Development Process



Previous Broadcast Covered The Plan:

1. **What will be evaluated?**
2. **Who wants the evaluation?**
3. **How will the results be used?**
4. **Who will conduct the evaluation?**

Previous Broadcast Covered The Plan:

5. How will the evaluation be funded?
6. What *questions* do you want this evaluation to answer?
7. What *information* will you need to answer these questions?
8. What *methods* will be used to collect information?

What questions do you want this evaluation to answer?

- What would help teachers in St Louis City Schools bring their students to our site?
- While the themes of the site easily match school curriculum, how can we make the program more relevant to the students.

What *information* will you need to answer these questions?

- Information on the obstacles to teachers in going on field trips
- Information from teachers on types of activities and information students find most relevant when studying history

Interview

- Guided Conversation
- Primarily uses open ended questions
- Best done in person
- Start each interview with same questions however usually encourage additional questions to elicit deeper responses.

ACTIVITY:
How can these questions be improved?

1. How many times have you brought students to this area?
2. Is it difficult to get permission from the school administration to take your students on field trips?

ACTIVITY:
How can these questions be improved?

3. Do students learn anything from their visit to this site? How much do students enjoy visiting this site?
4. Do the concepts we cover here fit your science/social studies standards?

Better Interview Questions

1. Please describe previous field trips to our site.
2. Could you tell me the top three reasons administrators are reluctant to approve field trips to our site?

Better Interview Questions

3. What do students say after a visit to this site?
4. How would you blend these concepts with your curriculum standards?
5. In what ways can a field trip to our site meet students' and teachers' needs?

A Variety of Evaluation Tools

Interviews
Focus Groups
Questionnaires and Surveys
Observation
Literature Review
Tests of Knowledge
Concept Maps
Document or Product Review
Case studies or Peer Review

For more information, see Table 2.2 on pages 32-33 of the Workbook.

Exhibit Observation Evaluation/
Canal Visitor Center and Boston
Store Exhibits
Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Evaluation Purpose:

To understand what exhibits should be retained, updated, or replaced in aging visitor center exhibit halls.

Exhibit Observation Evaluation/
Canal Visitor Center and Boston
Store Exhibits
Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Evaluation Question:

What is the level of visitor engagement with each exhibit in a visitor center exhibit hall?

Indicators of Engagement

-Did not approach

-Approached, glanced, did not stop

-Stopped briefly without time to read

-Appeared to read labels

-Appeared to watch video/study objects

Indicators of Engagement

-Read label aloud

-Discussed exhibit with companion

-Revisited exhibit

-Manipulated exhibit

-Discussed exhibit with staff

Evaluation Questions Addressed through Tracking Studies

- Relative success of specific exhibits
- Trends and patterns across multiple exhibits
- Patterns in visitor circulation
- Best choices for placing an exhibit within an exhibition
- How new exhibit approaches impact behaviors

Evaluation Questions Addressed through Tracking Studies

- Identifying what types of exhibits are most attractive to visitors
- How labeling systems influence visitor reading behavior
- Realistic expectations about time and level of engagement

Exhibit Observation in Progress

Volunteers are observing how visitors use the exhibits in this visitor center. They will only observe adults. If you do not want to be observed, please inform the front-desk staff.

Coding Scale

0 - No evidence of engagement

1 - low engagement

2 - moderate engagement

3- high engagement A

4- high engagement B

BOSTON
AND PENINSULA

FINISHING & FITTING OU

Workbook Sheets & Activities

WORKSHEET 1.2

Focusing Your Evaluation*

	CONSIDER:
A. Purpose for Evaluation • Who is the intended user of the evaluation results? • What is the intended use for the evaluation results? • Evaluation Purpose Statement:	• Are you able to reach consensus among major stakeholders as to the purpose of the evaluation? • Are the intended use and user of the evaluation clear, specific, and well defined? • Is what is at stake in this evaluation appropriate for an in-house evaluation? *(If the stakes are very high, then you may want to consider hiring an external evaluator.)* • Is the evaluation driven by appropriate reasons (as opposed to its being threatened by conflict of interest or unethical motives)? • Can the evaluation purpose be addressed in a way that respects the rights and dignity of those involved? • Will evaluation results be used? • Will decisions be made be based on the data that is collected?
B. Description of Program to Be Evaluated *(In lieu of a description, attach a logic model)*	• Are the program objectives well defined? • Is it possible for the program objectives to be achieved with the intended target audience? • Is the program, as carried out, similar to the implementation intended? • Is the program grounded in sound assumptions? • Is the program likely to achieve the stated goals/objectives based on the program's inputs, outputs, and/or assumptions? • Does the program have the potential for sufficient impact, thus warranting the time and expense of evaluation?
C. Logistical Considerations • Available staff for the evaluation: • Information reporting timeline: • Resources available for the evaluation: • Political context/external factors:	• Is the desired evaluation purpose feasible given available staff, time, and resources? • Given logistical constraints, can an evaluation be carried out that would yield useful and relevant information?

** Worksheet questions based on the work of Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004), Smith (1998), and Wholey (1987).*

Uses, Benefits, and Limitations of Data Collection Methods for Evaluation

Methods	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Interviews	To fully understand someone's impressions or experiences or learn more about their answers to questionnaires.	• Provides full range and depth of information. • Promotes relationship with respondent. • Allows follow-up questions.	• Can be time consuming. • Can be hard to analyze and compare. • Can be costly. • Interviewers can bias responses. • Generalization may be limited.
Focus groups	To explore a topic in depth through group discussion, e.g. reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints, etc. Useful in evaluation and marketing.	• Can quickly and reliably produce collective impressions. • Can be efficient way to gather range and depth of information in short time. Can convey key information about projects.	• Can be hard to analyze responses. • Need good facilitator for safety and closure. • Difficult to schedule 6-8 people together.
Questionnaires and surveys	To quickly and/or easily get a lot of information from people in a nonthreatening way.	• Can be completed anonymously. • Inexpensive to administer. • Easy to compare and analyze. • Can be administered to many people. • Can get lots of data. • Easy to create: many sample questionnaires already exist.	• Might not get careful feedback. • Wording can bias client responses. • Impersonal. • Surveys may require sampling and statistical expertise. • Doesn't get full story.

Methods	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Observation	To gather accurate information about how a project actually operates, particularly about processes.	• Allows viewing of project operations as they are actually occurring. • Allows for adaptation of events as they occur.	• Can be difficult to interpret behaviors. • Observations can be difficult to categorize. • Can influence participants' behaviors. • Can be expensive.
Literature Review	To gather information on the audience and/or the issue. To identify what previous investigations have found about the state of the knowledge, skills, behaviors, or attitudes of the intended audience with relation to the issue.	• Can provide much information in relatively little time. • Has most likely been reviewed or seen by audience. • Makes use of already-gathered information. • Helps to sort changes over time. • Provides evidence about the problem. • Involves minimum effort or interruption of audience.	• Can be out-of-date (e.g. technology changes quickly). • Data synthesis can be difficult. • May not address specific questions of concern. • Not a flexible means to get data; data restricted to what already exists. • Statistical data may not address perceptions of the problem or may not address causes of the problem. • Reports may be incomplete.
Concept maps	To gather information about someone's understanding of and attitudes toward a complex subject or topic.	• Can offer a more comprehensive and complex view of someone's thinking than a test does. • Could be a better tool for visual learners or test-phobic people. • Can gather qualitative and quantitative data.	• Takes training to complete properly. • Takes training to administer. • Can be challenging and time consuming to score. • Can be difficult to analyze and interpret.

Methods	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Document or product review	To gather information on how the project operates without interrupting the project; comes from review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, etc.	• Provides historical information. • Doesn't interrupt project or client's routine in project. • Information already exists. • Few biases about information.	• Often takes much time. • Information may be incomplete. • Reviewer needs to be quite clear as to what information is sought. • Not a flexible means to get data; data restricted to what already exists.
Case studies or peer review	To fully understand or depict client's experiences in a project, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross-comparison of cases.	• Fully depicts client's experience in project input, process, and results. • Powerful means to portray project to outsiders.	• Usually quite time consuming to collect, organize, and describe. • Represents depth of information, rather than breadth. • Information gathered cannot be generalized.

Adapted from McNamara (n.d.).

WORKSHEET 3.1

Interview Guide Checklist*

Circle: First Draft Second Draft

1. Instrument Title

- ❒ Clear and concise words that reflect the interview's content are used.
- ❒ Program name and type of program are stated, if appropriate.
- ❒ Type of instrument (interview guide) is indicated.

2. Logistical Information

- ❒ Space for recording the interviewer's name is included.
- ❒ Space for recording the interviewee's name or identification number is included.
- ❒ Space for recording the interview location, date, and time is included.

3. Introductory Statements/Instructions

- ❒ Written statements (that can be paraphrased verbally) are included that establish credibility, the purpose of the interview, how the data will be used, and approximate length of interview.
- ❒ Written statements (that can be paraphrased verbally) are included—that confidentiality will be protected, that there are no right or wrong answers, and that all answers are important—to encourage interviewee to respond honestly.
- ❒ Permission to record the conversation, when appropriate, is asked.

4. Questions

- ❒ Questions are open ended, allowing the interviewee to respond on his or her own terms.
- ❒ Questions are clear.
- ❒ Questions are specific and singular (one question is asked at a time).
- ❒ Questions are not leading or value laden (as in, "Don't you think . . . ?").
- ❒ Questions are worded as "how" or "what" rather than as "why" inquiries. ("How" questions invite interviewees to explain without feeling as if they need to justify the response.)
- ❒ If topics are sensitive, a hypothetical context is provided for the question to make it less personal or intrusive.
- ❒ Questions regarding relevant demographic information are included.
- ❒ Questions to elicit general, descriptive information about the present program experience are included.
- ❒ Questions asking what interviewees believe, feel, or know are included.
- ❒ Possible follow-up probes to elicit greater detail or clarify responses are included.
- ❒ A concluding question asks the interviewee if there is anything he or she would like to add or clarify
- ❒ Questions collectively elicit the information you intended to collect and the information you need.

5. Format/Sequencing

- ❒ The font is legible and large enough to be read easily.
- ❒ Questions are sequenced from general to specific and (or) from easy-to-answer to hard-to-answer.
- ❒ Questions about noncontroversial activities or concepts precede those about controversial subjects.
- ❒ Questions about the present precede questions about the past or the future.
- ❒ Demographic questions are spaced strategically and unobtrusively throughout the interview or at the end.

6. Summary Statements

- ❒ A written reminder to summarize the interviewee's main points (a check for validity) is included.
- ❒ A written reminder to thank the interviewee for his or her time and input is included.

**Adapted from the Project STAR (Support & Training for Assessing Results) "Instrument development checklist," Senior Corps (1999). Available online at the National and Community Services Resource Center Web site, http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/star/sc-instrument-development.*

Sequencing Activity

Put the following interview questions in an appropriate sequence (1, 2, 3, etc.) for an interview with middle school students.

_____ A. What did you enjoy about those experiences?

_____ B. How different are your experiences at the lagoon if you are with your friends? Your family? Your teacher?

_____ C. If you could design the best possible trip to the lagoon, what would it look like?

_____ D. Tell me about your experience exploring the Indian River Lagoon.

_____ E. What types of experiences were not enjoyable?

Activity from: ***Evaluating Your Environmental Education Program***, 3.2 Check for Understanding, Pg. 50

WORKSHEET 3.4

Observation Form Checklist*

Circle: First Draft Second Draft

1. Instrument Title

- ❒ Clear and concise words that reflect the observation form's content are used.
- ❒ Program name and type of program are stated, if appropriate.
- ❒ Type of instrument (observation form) is indicated.

2. Logistical Information

- ❒ Space for recording the evaluator's or observer's name is included.
- ❒ Space for recording who or what is being observed is included.
- ❒ Space for recording the location, date, start and stop time, and length of the observation is included.
- ❒ Space is included for recording a general description of other relevant logistical, contextual, or situational information (e.g., weather, size of crowd, size of group or class, program setting).

3. Questions/Items

- ❒ Preidentified items for observing specific, observable behaviors or attributes have the appropriate response format (e.g., checklist, rating scale).
- ❒ If observation is used to assess performance of a specific task, each of the task's steps is listed, along with either a place to record whether it does or doesn't occur or a rating scale to indicate how well it was carried out.
- ❒ Space is included for commenting on preidentified items as well as for additional observations not prompted by preidentified items.
- ❒ Space is included for reflective notes (evaluator's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings regarding what is being observed).

4. Format/Sequencing

- ❒ The form is clear and easy to use.
- ❒ The font is legible and large enough to be read easily.
- ❒ The form provides enough space for writing notes.
- ❒ Items and (or) space for broad descriptive areas to be observed are placed first, followed by items that require more narrow or focused observations.
- ❒ Space for reflective notes follows the objective and descriptive notes and items.

**Adapted from the Project STAR (Support & Training for Assessing Results) "Instrument development checklist," Senior Corps (1999). Available online at the National and Community Services Resource Center Web site, http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/star/sc-instrument-development.*

Case Studies

Julie Study
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - National Conservation Training Center
Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) enrollees developed a formative evaluation of the National Conservation Training Center's (NCTC) first YCC program to determine success and improvements needed. Tools used included interviews of enrollees and surveys of NCTC staff.

Jennie Vasarhelyi
National Park Service - Cuyahoga Valley National Park
Cuyahoga Valley National Park staff uses evaluation to make decisions about which current exhibits to retain, update or replace before updating their exhibits at Canal and Boston Store Visitor Centers.

Martha Monroe
Brevard Zoo
Evaluation of a brand new exhibit to help visitors learn about a local ecosystem, the Indian River Lagoon.

National Conservation Training Center
Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) - Interview

1. What is one experience that you won't forget from being in the YCC program?

2. What did you know about the NCTC, or the Fish and Wildlife Service prior to working here?

3. Can you name three things you've learned about NCTC or the Fish and Wildlife Service after working here this summer?

4. What did you expect to get out of the YCC program?

5. Do you think you would have had a better experience at NCTC if you could have chosen where you could have worked? (DEO, Outside, Museum, etc.)

6. Did you have any interest in a conservation career or working for NCTC prior to working this summer? Has it changed?

7. Would you return to the YCC program, or become a STEP/SCEP? Explain.

8. Is there anything you do that has changed as a result of your experience here? Explain.

9. Did the orientation help prepare you for your summer job at NCTC , and how could NCTC make the YCC program better next year ?

Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) - Questionnaire

What has/hasn't the YCC program help you accomplish so far this year?

Would you have been able to accomplish this otherwise?
__ Yes
__ No

Check the following: How many more YCC students would you like to have next year?
__ 2 more YCC students.
__ 1 more YCC students.
__ No more YCC students needed.

Check the following: Does there need to be an interview process?
__ Yes
__ No

Check the following: Should we target specific groups of people to try enroll them into the YCC program?
__ Yes
__ No

Check the following that best describes your participation with the YCC enrollees.
__ Assigned tasks that the students completed independently.
__ Worked with the students to complete tasks.
__ Did not work with or assign tasks to the YCC students.
__ Other _____

Check the following that describes the work the enrollees completed for you.
__ Tasks were completed above my initial expectations of YCC enrollees.
__ Tasks were completed at my expectations of what YCC enrollees can do.
__ Tasks were not completed to my satisfaction.
__ Other_____

If given the opportunity next year to assign work to the YCC enrollees, I will:
__ Will request at least one enrollee to work with me/my office.
__ Will probably have some work but not request an enrollee for the entire term.
__ Will not take advantage of the opportunity.
__ Other_____

Comparing your expectations prior to working with this year's YCC enrollees to your opinion after working with them:
__ The enrollees were capable of a lot more than I expected.
__ The enrollees met my expectations.
__ The enrollees did not meet my expectations.
__ Other_____

If one thing could be changed about the YCC program to improve it, what would you suggest?

The best part of the YCC program is:

Exhibit Observation Evaluation, Canal Visitor Center and Boston Store Exhibits at Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Summer 2010, Protocol Prepared: 5/10/2010 by Jennie Vasarhelyi

Background and Purpose

Cuyahoga Valley National Park is beginning to plan to update exhibits at Canal and Boston Store visitor centers. The purpose of this evaluation is to understand which of the current exhibits are most successful. We will use this evaluation to make decisions about which of the current exhibits to retain, update, or replace.

Evaluation Approach

The method for this evaluation was guided by Judy Diamond's *Practical Evaluation Guide: Tools for Museums and Other Information Educational Settings*, Lanham, Maryland: AltaMira Press, 1999 and by *Evaluating Your Environmental Education Programs, A Workbook for Practitioners* by Julie A. Ernst, Martha C. Monroe, and Bora Simmons, published by NAAEE in 2009.

Method: We will use observation as the method for this study, focusing on the level of observable visitor engagement at each exhibit in the centers. This is a cost-effective approach that does not require the OMB approval that is mandatory for surveys. While the measure of engagement does not directly indicate the effectiveness of the exhibits in impacting visitors' knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors relative to a subject, it is still a useful indicator of visitor engagement in the exhibit. Engagement is necessary to create impact.

Volunteers will carry out the data collection using a check sheet. The check sheet will include pre-defined categories that reflect level of engagement. We will not use timing in this study, but relative time spent at exhibits will be suggested by the pre-defined categories.
Volunteers should be trained to make sure they understand the categories on the check sheet. Having volunteers all follow one "visitor" together will help ensure consistency in how the check sheet is filled out.

Sample and Schedule: Sample size for the study will be 100, which will provide a sampling error of ±10 percent. It is not realistic to have a 1,000 person sample size needed for a sampling error of ±3 percent.

Observations will focus on adults, primarily because, with a few exceptions, the existing exhibit design is more suited to an adult audience. Thus, we will not expand the sample size to include an analysis of children's interaction with the exhibits. Only one adult should be observed from any visiting group. The data collector should alternate observing men and women. A random sample will be generated by having the data collector focus on the first adult of the appropriate gender to walk into the exhibit area once they have returned to the "start position" for data collection.

Data collection will occur during the peak season during a designated period between mid June and mid August. The schedule below assumes that volunteers will be able to make on average 10 observations during a 2.5-hour observation shift. However, observers should make as many observations as possible during their shift:

Week 1	**M**	**Tu**	**W**	**Th**	**F**	**Sa**	**Su**
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.				**X**		**X**	
1 – 3:30 p.m.			**X**		**X**		**X**
Week 2	**M**	**Tu**	**W**	**Th**	**F**	**Sa**	**Su**
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.					**X**		**X**
1 – 3:30 p.m.				**X**		**X**	**X**

Notifying Subjects: We have an ethical obligation to make sure subjects have "sufficient knowledge of an evaluation or other research project to make an informed decision about whether or not they want to participate."* To accomplish this, we will post signs at the major entryways into the exhibit areas notifying the public that volunteers will observe their use of exhibits and allow them to decline to be observed by notifying the front-desk staff.

Categories on the check sheet:
Basic demographic information based on observational assumptions (number of people in group; gender)

Did not approach
Approached, glanced, but did not stop
Stopped briefly (without time to read)
Appeared to read exhibit label
Appeared to watch video, study objects, view diorama, etc.
Read exhibit label aloud
Discussed exhibit with a travel companion
Called someone over to view the exhibit
Revisited the exhibit
Manipulated the exhibit
Discuss the exhibit with visitor center staff

* Not all researchers agree that notification is necessary for observational studies.

Analysis Approach

The categories on the check sheet will be bundled into categories, with each assigned a numerical value:

0 - no engagement (did not approach)
1 - low engagement (approached, glanced, but did not stop AND stopped briefly without time to read)
2 - moderate engagement (appeared to read exhibit label, watch video, study objects, view diorama, etc
3- high engagement A (manipulated exhibit without other evidence of high engagement)
4- high engagement B (Read exhibit label aloud, discussed exhibit with a travel companion, called someone over to view the exhibit, revisited the exhibit, discuss the exhibit with visitor center staff)

We will calculate the average level of engagement to compare levels of engagement at exhibits. We will also explore other mathematical calculations such as mode and percentage of visitors who stop at an exhibit to gauge levels of engagement. When reviewing the engagement scores, the type of exhibit will be taken into consideration. For example, we would expect exhibits with parts that can be manipulated to have a higher score than flat panels with just text and graphics.

The downfall of this approach is that we do not know what variables cause the levels of engagement. We would need a methodology that involves interviews or surveys to determine the variables.

Exhibit Observation Evaluation, Canal Visitor Center and Boston Store Exhibits at Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Exhibit Observation Check Sheet

Observer's Name: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Gender of Person Being Observed (Circle one):

Male Female

Who the person observed is visiting with (Circle one):

Alone Only other adults (small group) With children Large organized group

Notes (Please describe any additional, notable observable behavior):

Exhibit Observation Evaluation, Canal Visitor Center and Boston Store Exhibits at Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Activity - Four Key Steps

What occurred?	What else could have been done?
1. What to look for:	
2. Developing the data collection:	
3. Managing the data collection process:	
4. Using the data:	

Brevard Zoo
Observation Checklist

Paws-On Children's Exhibit: Area Observation Form

Name:_____ **Date:**_____ **Exhibit Area:**_____

1. During the 30 minute observation block, count how many adults/children do the following actions.

Action	Tally	Total
Adult glances at interpretive sign		
Child glances at interpretive sign		
Adult reads interpretive sign		
Child reads interpretive sign		
Adult explains interpretive sign to child(ren)		
Adult given educational info by zoo staff/volunteer		
Child given educational info by zoo staff/volunteer		
Adult uses wireless internet access		

Comments:

2. When you begin your observation, count the number of visitors in the area and describe what they are doing. Repeat this process every 5 minutes for 30 minutes.

Observation Start Time:_____		**1 (0 min)**	**2 (5 min)**	**3 (10 min)**
Count	**# adults**			
	# ages 0-4			
	# ages 5-10			
	# ages 11-17			
Description of How Visitors are Using the Area	What are **children** doing? (if playing: with what, how, where, together, alone).			
	What are **adults** doing? (supervising kids, sitting, playing with kids, talking to other adults, reading, etc.)			

Brevard Zoo
Observation Checklist

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		4 (15 min)	5 (20 min)	6 (25 min)	7 (30 min)
Count	# adults				
	# ages 0-4				
	# ages 5-10				
	# ages 11-17				
Description of How Visitors are Using the Area	What are **children** doing? (if playing: with what, how, where, together, alone).				
	What are **adults** doing? (supervising kids, sitting, playing with kids, talking to other adults, reading, etc.)				

Additional Comments:

How to Find Archived Broadcasts

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3. Click to enter the "Wimba Classroom"
4. Select ARCHIVES for viewing a past (recorded) event title.
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Other Resources and Contacts

Ernst, J.A., Monroe, M.C. & Simmons, B. (2009) ***Evaluating Your Environmental Education Programs: A Workbook for Practitioners.*** Washington, DC: NAAEE

Serrell, B. (1998) ***Paying Attention: Visitors and Museum Exhibitions***

Yalowitz, S and Bonnenhant (2009) From Visitor Studies, 12(1) ***Timing and Tracking: Unlocking Visitor Behavior***

National Park Service. Social Sciences Program.

National Conservation Training Center's Distance Learning:
http://distancelearning.fws.gov/broadcasts.html