

Evaluation Section 2/ 1:00 PM

Local Tremors, Nation Impact; Creating a Shared Assessment Toolkit

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The challenge for this workshop is how to develop an easy to use automated toolkit for a diversity of research facilities, which have diverse educational activities, audiences, staff and budgets. The tools should be concrete instruments that can be immediately used but also customized depending on the activity.

An assessment toolkit needs to:

- Improve activities
- Demonstrate Impact and justify budget and expenditures
- Identify activities for replication

A toolkit needs to be integrated within the framework of the project/program or research facility, the assessment tools must reflect the purpose, goals and include their strategic plan.

Some of the lessons learned by the development of the NEES Assessment Toolkit were:

1. Level of effort required for trust building
2. Resistance is your friend
3. Iterative process
4. A clarity of vision is essential in order to have concrete outcomes at the end.

The NEES Assessment Toolkit model is not a finished product, it is a work in progress as all evaluation truly needs to be.

Small groups were formed to practice the development of an Assessment for a program specific activity.

An assessment activity worksheet was given for participant to complete and as our facilitator suggested we use “assessment group therapy” to firm up what exactly do we want to assess.

Each group shared their reactions with the whole group.

Groups gave great suggestions for assessment with your kids, for example, concept mapping will work with young students.

Programs on the university level struggle with how to assess the social aspects of their diversity programs, social supports that need to be in place to help students in order to

achieve the goals of the program for these students to attend graduate school. How do you assess that?

It was felt that this was a very useful exercise, the hands on process raised many questions and gave participants a starting point for issues they can discuss with their evaluators.

The evaluation of a educational experience or museum display is hard because of the inability to show long term results. You may ask a scientist what was his defining event and they say it was when they were on a field trip when they were nine years old. You ask that scientist as a nine year old and he would say the experience was okay or maybe if you were lucky, he would say it was cool.