ABSTRACT

Non-profit organizations have historically focused their efforts on serving the needs of the poor and underserved without being too concerned with documenting and measuring the specific outcomes of their efforts. As competition for resources has grown over the past decade and accounts of mismanagement have become more frequent, philanthropic organizations have realized the need to become more results oriented.

While numerous researchers discuss the issues surrounding outcome measurement, there is a gap in the research on the impact outcome measurement requirements have on non-profit practice. Few researchers have probed the system dynamics between the funder and service staff that promote a results orientation; and fewer still consider the potential for using outcome measurement as an organizational learning tool.

This research enhances the existing literature in a unique respect, as it provides a holistic view of non-profit systems and the way they accommodate outcome measurement by exploring the impact of outcome measurement on non-profit systems in Florida. Data collected from both the non-profit funder and service providers illuminate the barriers and gateways to implementing effective outcome frameworks. Since one
premise of outcome measurement supporters is that the information generated from it facilitates organizational learning, the researchers examined this claim in some detail.

The results indicate outcome measurement has changed non-profit practice in certain regards. Funders and service providers now spend more resources on technology, data collection, and the acquisition of standardized assessment tools to measure outcomes. Other findings include that; in general, it takes between one to two years before the stakeholders come to a full understanding of how to implement outcome measurement systematically. It is not easy to balance innovation and learning in a compliance-dominated environment. Funders and policy makers often want evidence of success before sufficient time has passed to realize solid results. Progress depends on funders and service providers working together to learn each other’s capacity and functions within the framework. Finally, whereas many researchers argue results-oriented frameworks create mission drift and goal displacement, this phenomenon was not observed in this study.

With these findings in mind, the researcher suggests the following recommendations for consideration. First and foremost, non-profit organizations need professional development in order to adjust to the demands of measuring outcomes. If this change in practice is here to stay, resources must be allocated to build capacity for responding to its requirements. Funders and service providers seeking to learn from results must create genuine opportunities for review and reflection so services can be improved and staff can learn from the data generated by measurement of outcomes. Staff at all levels of the organization should be engaged in the learning process so continuous improvement can be achieved.
Non-profits should not view outcome measurement as a replacement for
evaluation. By so doing, they are reliant on a single perspective of program effectiveness
which does not capture the entirety of service efforts. In fact, most of the activities linked
to change in program participants do not lend themselves to linear accounting systems,
but entail in-depth evaluation approaches. Non-profits should put in place flexible
measurement systems that can be adjusted as providers learn through implementation
trials. Similarly, funders must support opportunities for learning if they expect continuous
improvement. Prospects for learning will be increased if reporting and feedback cycles
are synchronized with the critical decision points of the stakeholders.

Based on the current research, several recommendations for further study are
offered. Future studies should also include the state level funder to determine its
understanding of outcome measurement and uses of such information. Secondly, future
investigations should better discern the types of organizational learning that occur in non-
profits. Because most of the participants in this study were new to outcome
measurement, they had not maximized its use for learning and hence the results did not
go beyond very basic organizational learning. The research also indicated differences in
information use by service staff dependent on their organizational role. More research
should explore the nature of these differences.
DEDICATION

I’d like to dedicate this effort to my grandparents who taught me the importance of education and for my teachers who encouraged me to achieve.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my advisor, Dr. James Altschuld for his patience, his support and his guidance through this endeavor.

I express my appreciation to my committee members, Dr. James Austin, Dr. Peter Paul and Dr. Donald Haefele for their time and guidance.

I want to thank Dr. Carol Cullen for helping me step onto this path to achieve my educational goal as I was resting quietly until she gave me a call.

I am grateful to the program staff from the non-profit organizations who participated in the research and shared their insights with me in light of a most dreadful hurricane season. My appreciation for your efforts is as unrelenting as your passion for what you do.

I wish to acknowledge Ms. Carol Ridley, Mr. Robbie Brunger, Mr. Jim Russell, Ms. JoHannah Afton, Ms. Carol Gagliano, Ms. Tammy Coleman, and Ms. Chris Schuh for their time in assisting me with piloting the instruments, peer review of the transcripts and editing.

I especially want to thank my husband, Juan Gomez, and my daughter, Natylye, for taking this journey with me. I know that it was not always the easiest adventure but I couldn’t have walked it alone and having you with me has made it all worth it.
VITA

10-19, 1959.............................................. Born-Akron, Ohio

1985..................................................... B.A. Psychology
BA Sociology
AAS Criminal Justice
The University of Akron

1990..................................................... M.P.A.
The University of Akron

1990-1998.............................................. Evaluator
Oriana House, Inc.
Akron, Ohio

1999-2001.............................................. Evaluation & Research Associate
Eisenhower National Clearinghouse
for Mathematics and Science
Education
The Ohio State University

2001-Present......................................... Senior Evaluator
The Ounce of Prevention Fund of
Florida
FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Educational Policy and Leadership
Specialization: Quantitative Research Evaluation & Measurement in Education

Studies in Evaluation and Needs Assessment
   Dr. James W. Altschuld

Studies in Quantitative Research Methods
   Dr. William Loadman
   Dr. John Kennedy
   Dr. Thomas Knapp

Studies in Criminal and Juvenile Justice
   Dr. Christopher Browning
   Dr. Richard Lundman
   Dr. Katherine Meyer

Studies in Qualitative Research Methods
   Dr. Mary Anne Sagaria
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CHAPTER 1

To develop organizational capacity in some area, to improve agency performance, and to strengthen institutions are all purposes that need use to be achieved. (Eleanor Chelimsky, 1997 regarding the coming transformation in evaluation)

INTRODUCTION

Outcome measurement, also known as performance measurement, is not new. Since the early 20th century program evaluators have focused on outcomes, especially those in education. Objectives based approaches to evaluation are attributed to Ralph Tyler and date back to the inception of the field of evaluation in the 1930’s and even earlier. Tyler envisioned evaluation as a seven-step cyclical process used to improve programming (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997). The first is establishing broad goals and objectives and the final step is comparing performance data with behaviorally stated objectives (see literature review for a thorough discussion of Tyler’s framework). The last three steps in his approach (developing measurement techniques, collecting data, and comparing data with objectives) are the crux of outcome measurement.

House (1983), for instance, characterized outcome measurement as utilitarian because its criterion for determining the best programs is based on the most gains for the greatest number of people (House, 1983a). These evaluation approaches are easily adopted by government sponsored evaluations that provide information to public program administrators (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick 1997).

The results-oriented foci of the federal government initiated a need for systematic evaluation that required the development of organizational evaluation capacities. Legislation prompted the introduction of program evaluation as an accountability requirement for federally funded programs. One of the most influential legislative efforts impacting evaluation is the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) (U.S. Congress, 1993).

GPRA was a response to the general public’s concern regarding accountability in government. This act provides a broad legislative framework for many of the current government reform efforts (Wholey, 1998). Under GPRA, each federal agency is mandated to present a clear picture of its goals, the links between those goals, how it spends its money, and its performance (outcomes)–what it produces for the American people. In this respect GPRA gives agencies a chance to communicate the value of their activities (Rivlin, 1995). As a result of GPRA, a shift in federal funding focus occurred from providing services to linking them with observable changes in target populations.

Not only did GPRA greatly influence accountability initiatives in government, it has literally seeped into non-governmental programs. One example of the evolution of requiring outcome measurement in the non-profit sector is found in the programs of the
United Way of America, which funds numerous non-profit agencies throughout the United States. This organization has developed an outcome measurement framework for programs that is outlined in its publication, Measuring Program Outcomes A Practical Approach (1996). The United Way published this manual to educate program administrators and allocations volunteers about designing systems for measuring program outcomes and the subsequent use of the results so obtained.

Evidence of outcomes—in terms of the human benefits that result from intervention strategies—is being demanded from public and private funders alike (Horsch, 1996). For instance, a recent memo from the Director of the United Way of Delaware County, Ohio emphasized that allocation volunteers will be looking for results and considering outcomes explicitly in the next round of program funding (personal communication with Kathy Tatterson, United Way, July 2001). This memo, although only one instance, underscores the extent to which funding decisions are based on outcome measures in the non-profit sector. United Way is probably the most visible of the non-profit funders demanding outcome measurement efforts. Other funding sources, such as Pew Charitable Trusts, The Annie E. Casey Foundation and The W. K. Kellogg Foundation are also holding many of the over 83,000 non-profit agencies in the U.S. more accountable for results.

In this proposal the problem statement is introduced, including the historical development of outcome measurement in the non-profit sector. A discussion of the underlying premises for this research from current literature is highlighted. Additionally, outcome measurement and logic model concepts including the strengths and weaknesses
of both are explained. After introducing the main concepts, the importance of the current study and research questions is discussed. The research methodology addresses the definition of key terms, underlying propositions and methodological limitations. The study’s significance is presented to demonstrate the contributions this research will make to evaluation practice, especially in the non-profit sector.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Incorporating outcome measurement into program development and implementation has greatly influenced funding of non-profit programs. Although outcome measurement is not new to program evaluation, it is a relatively recent phenomenon in social services. As one respondent to a survey by Thayer and Fine (2001) notes, “Historically, we’ve been given money to provide direct services as a not-for-profit organization and that’s where our major concern has been. But the tide has turned in the last 4 years or so around responding to outcomes” (Thayer & Fine 2001). This change aligns the decision making of the non-profit sector much more closely with the profit sector’s way of evaluating products. Moreover, the shift is new and unfamiliar to many in social services (Reed & Brown, 2001).

The major impact that outcome measurement has brought to the non-profit sector is its importance in funding decisions. To date many non-profit funding agencies such as The United Way, The W. K. Kellogg Foundation, American Red Cross, Annie E. Casey Foundation and Pew Charitable Trusts and others have created frameworks for outcome measurement for the programs that they fund. The intent is to provide program planners with conceptual tools to link outcomes to activities, thus forming a logic model or theory-
based program design (Weiss, 1997). As observed in the literature, funders like Kellogg and Pew are moving toward a philosophy emphasizing strategic philanthropy (Pew, 2001, Kellogg, 2000). They view their philanthropy as investments for which they expect returns in the form of documented outcomes. As such, research on the implications of requiring outcome measurement in the non-profit sector is greatly needed.

Staff knowledge of outcome measurement is a significant factor for securing funding in the current era of increasing resource competition. As noted, much of the literature on outcome measurement cites the development of logic models as the first step for program planners in building outcome measurement systems. The next step in the process is documenting outcomes. Historically, most human service programs have been very effective in documenting program inputs, activities and outputs, but have not been consistent in demonstrating outcomes (United Way, 1996). While funders are pushing outcome measurement heavily, staff of many non-profit agencies are not equipped or do not thoroughly understand the steps in developing an outcome measurement system.

Generating a logic model is intended to engage program staff in the planning process. It is possible, however, that the agency staff responsible for grant writing (which includes constructing a program logic model) may be supplying information solely as an exercise in securing the funding without thoroughly engaging other staff members in the process. The lack of involving those who implement a program can potentially impact the forthcoming outcome-based evaluation, as the logic model may not truly reflect the program processes. Thus, it is vital to examine whether or not the agency staff are actually partaking in the total outcome measurement process or if they are just
tacitly responding to funding proposals without thoroughly understanding the attached responsibilities.

The practice of developing logic models is envisioned as a way to engage program staff (stakeholders) in goal clarification. Logic models offer program stakeholders the opportunity to fully discuss and explore the theories of program action, which are the if and then statements underlying the linkages between program activities and outcomes. This exercise is expected to ensure the outcome measurement system relays realistic, meaningful, agreed-on and evaluable goals. In their survey of 302 organizations, Thayer and Fine (2001) found that nearly 69% of the respondents who were currently measuring outcomes began doing so in the 1990’s, and almost half (45%) began measuring outcomes since 1995. The recency of this development in the non-profit sector offers opportunities for studying the practical implications on such systems in response to the new funding agenda. Yet, not much research to date has explored the actual practice of outcome measurement development, especially in the non-profit sector.

One objective of this study is to determine if a gap exists between the belief of how logic models can be used to develop outcome measurement systems and the actual practices of the non-profit sector. The findings of the research can be beneficial to understanding the practices in the field regarding outcome measurement systems and issues inherent in their use. Moreover, the findings could improve upon the current practice of outcome measurement for non-profit organizations by gaining more knowledge about the conditions that impede and/or encourage the creation of clear, specific and measurable outcome systems. This information can be used to guide
programs in the planning stages of systems development for evaluation, as well as prepare those who have effectively developed outcome measurement systems for the next step in the outcomes process, integration of the measurements into daily practice.

1.2 Underlying Premises

Outcome measurement systems are considered to serve two main purposes for program management: satisfy accountability imposed on them by funders and produce information that can assist them in improving performance (Buckmaster, 1999). Additional benefits are that the information can be used to aid decision making, promote organizational learning and support total quality improvement. Performance data can be a tool to help the management team determine strategies for program improvement and expansion.

Implications for evaluation practice involve potential impacts on both formative and summative evaluation. In regard to formative evaluation, logic models provide the blueprint needed to understand program design and intended implementation and to monitor program fidelity. Summative evaluation is promoted by outcome measurement systems in two ways. First, the logic models include the data elements necessary to assess outcome achievement. Secondly, databases designed to capture outcome data can be built from the elements included in the logic models.

Organizational learning is a frequent concern for evaluators (Preskill & Torres, 1996; Patton, 2002; etc. to name a few of the most prominent writers in this area). Learning is a process of detecting and correcting error, where error is defined as any feature, knowledge or knowing, that inhibits learning (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Learning
occurs when an organizational unit acquires knowledge that is recognized as potentially useful to the organization. This learning invokes a change in behavior from the organizational actors. In essence, learning is derived from a process of experiences, reflection, hypothesis building and testing (Huber, 1991). Organizations change as a result of experiences involved in learning fresh information and practicing new methods of doing things.

This theoretical foundation fits well with logic models and outcome measurement systems. Funders such as the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and United Way view logic models for building outcome measurement systems as organizational learning tools. Advocates suggest organizational learning may be achieved by engaging in various outcome measurement processes. For example, developing logic models is intended to help staff understand the theories in use of the organization. Secondly, outcome feedback provides insights into program strengths and weaknesses in achieving outcomes which should direct program improvement. The integration of outcome measurement with the daily functions of the agency should lead to achievement of outcomes based on better understanding of what is and is not effective.

Organizations can enrich their overall strategy for attaining desired results by using evaluative feedback in terms of outcome measurement. Limerick and Cunnington (1993) state that to achieve outcomes, organizations will need to adopt a learning paradigm that (1) is self-reflective; (2) can help the organization transcend and critique its own identity, values, assumptions and mission; and (3) is initiated and controlled by employees throughout the organization. Using logic models to develop outcome
measurement systems may support a framework in which reflective learning can take place.

1.3 **Strengths & Weaknesses of Outcome Measurement**

The literature identifies the strengths and weaknesses of outcome measurement systems and logic models. Figures 1 and 2 provide a comparison of the strengths and weaknesses offered by the literature.

**Strengths:** A key strength of outcome measurement is that it can lead to organizational learning (see Figure 1). Organizational learning is developed through a systematic effort of agency staff that begins with opening a dialogue on shared organizational meaning. Through reviewing the outcome measurement information, staff learn organizational strengths and deficiencies in achieving outcomes that can be used to initiate change in processes to improve performance.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Outcome measurement leads to organizational learning.</td>
<td>Developing outcome measurement systems may produce performance fear and anxiety in staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts as a conduit to open dialogue between critical program stakeholders.</td>
<td>May be misinterpreted and lead to inappropriate quotas and targets to funding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarifies mission through staff understanding their role in the outcome achievement process.</td>
<td>May be difficult to determine the measures that clearly reflect outcome achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the blueprint for database components needed to match the outcome indicators and processes.</td>
<td>May instill a numbers game of easy to count indicators which creates goal displacement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can aid program management in reporting achievements to funders.</td>
<td>It takes time and resources to build organizational measurement capacity that some agencies may not have.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supports strategic planning through highlighting program capacities.</td>
<td>The approach is iterative, ongoing and nonlinear which may make it difficult to grasp for some program staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides agency staff into future thinking that aids in program monitoring and fine-tuning.</td>
<td>Agreement on program purposes may be difficult and require significant up front investment of staff and stakeholder time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates a shared focus on outcomes that can reduce intergroup conflicts.</td>
<td>Although funders require it, they do not hold agencies accountable for the quality of the systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data is usually collected at specific time intervals which may provide opportunities for analysis of relationships between client, program factors and outcomes.</td>
<td>Lack of standard, easy to understand terminology regarding outcome measurement.</td>
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**Figure 1.1:** Strengths and Weaknesses of Outcome Measurement Systems
Instituting an outcome measurement system opens dialogue between the key stakeholders of the program. Buckmaster (1999) highlights four steps in that dialogue: 1) identifying intended program objectives, 2) selecting the outcome measures and evaluation criteria, 3) involving stakeholders in the feedback process and 4) feeding back the information learned into the planning system. Another benefit of this effort is that it has the potential of reducing conflicts because it focuses the group on the outcomes and not just the process of providing services. Some may counter this notion with an argument that inter-group conflict could actually increase when the focus turns to outcomes, although evidence of this is not found in the literature.

Clarity in mission can be achieved through creating an outcome measurement system. Focusing staff’s attention on understanding and verbally expressing their perspectives on program outcomes helps them to internalize the agency mission. Staff and stakeholders involved in this process will come to understand their part in achieving agency goals, which in turn may lead to increased motivation towards work.

The discussion involved in building an outcome measurement system inevitably comes to the components of a database to support the system. Meaningful measures are not easy to develop. A thorough discussion of the program’s target populations, mission, goals, objectives and measurement indicators supplies management information systems (MIS) staff with the data elements necessary for creating a customized system.

An effective outcome measurement system can aid program management in reporting achievement to funders. It generates information for strategic planning, improving program delivery and evidence for attributing results to service provision.
Program administrators can use the data to determine factors related to the achievement of outcomes. Moreover, focusing on outcomes guides agency staff into thinking about future initiatives and processes that can assist in program monitoring and fine-tuning.

**Weaknesses:** The literature reveals a number of weaknesses in designing outcome measurement systems. Macpherson (2001) cites the main barrier to implementing outcome measurement systems is fear. Frontline staff members are apprehensive that the performance indicators will give funders ammunition to use against them if they don’t achieve the objectives. By publishing results, program staff fear funders will attach inappropriate quotas and targets to funding continuation.

Outcome measurement systems must include indicators that either measure the desired outcomes or are relevant and linked to the achievement of outcomes (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 1994). Often times it is difficult to determine the measures that clearly reflect outcome achievement. Perrin (1998) argues that many program administrators roped into the outcome measurement numbers game will resort to using easy-to-count indicators that have little or no relationship to what the program is supposed to be doing. Along with producing irrelevant numbers, this practice can lead to what Perrin calls goal displacement.

Goal displacement is a shifting of actual program goals to easy to achieve objectives (Perrin, 1999; Blalock & Barnow, 2002). It is most likely to occur when consequences rest upon a program’s performance in meeting numerical targets. Consequently high stakes performance expectations from funders have the potential to initiate practices that inaccurately reflect agency objectives, which may ultimately alter
an agency’s mission as it responds to demands for measuring outcomes. A way to minimize this misrepresentation is to involve program staff in discussions regarding linkages in developing a logic model. Millar and colleagues (2001) ask; “is each linkage based on theory, research, data, tradition or intuition?” The responses to these questions should lead to well thought out outcomes that gives insight into program theory.

Weiss’ (1972) suggests that practitioners approach program development intuitively, not analytically, i.e., linkages are intuitively based. This query raises another issue in that, establishing performance frameworks within organizations is not easy. It takes time to build measurement capacity and there is a learning curve regarding the use of measurement data. The approach is iterative, ongoing and nonlinear which makes it difficult for some program staff to grasp. Agreement on program purpose(s) may be difficult and requires significant up-front investment of staff time (Kates, 2001). The research of Pool and associates (2000) attempted to determine if non-profits’ investment in building outcome measurement systems paid off in terms of improving service quality. They concluded a major weakness of outcome measurement systems is that although funders go through the motions of requiring outcome data, they do not hold agencies accountable for their system’s quality. This is mainly because funders lack either the confidence in their ability to evaluate these systems consistently or the resources to do it (Pool, et. al., 2000).

The lack of standard terminology regarding outcome measurement is another weakness in developing outcome measurement systems. Until United Way published *Focusing on Program Outcomes* in 1995, the language of outcome measurement was
foreign to many in the non-profit sector. Even though United Way and other funders have made significant strides in educating non-profits in the “outcomes” dialect, much work is still needed so clarity in terminology is gained.

Patton (1997) suggests that the jargon of outcome measurement is intimidating to program staff. According to Patton, the words themselves are associated with daunting weights that staff feel impede programmatic efforts rather than advance their progress. Breaking through this perception may in itself succeed in helping program staff craft effective and efficient outcome measurement systems. But, Patton advises, the more important breakthrough will be the evaluator’s ability to take program staff through a process that focuses on achieving outcomes and results rather than writing goals (Patton, 1997). The first opportunity to engage staff in an outcome measurement system is through encouraging their participation in designing program logic models.

1.4 Logic Models

Over the past decade the body of literature about logic models has expanded as evaluators and program planners seek to define and refine the construct. Logic models are perceived as iterative tools, articulated by program staff and stakeholders, that describe the logical linkages among program resources, activities, outputs, short, intermediate and long term outcomes (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999). They are word or pictorial depictions of real-life events and/or processes that project graphically the fundamental assumptions upon which the undertaking of one activity is expected to lead to the occurrence of another activity or event (Millar, Simeone & Carnevale, 2001).
Non-profit programs run the gamut of services that promote change at both macro and micro levels. Funding agents have responded by designing logic models that can be appropriate to varying situations and service levels. An example of this practice is the framework developed by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (1998), in which there are three types of models - outcome, activities, and theory driven models (see literature review for further discussion).

Logic models can function as road maps for formative and summative evaluations of a broad spectrum of programs. An evaluator can plan the evaluation around questions raised in the logic model regarding program implementation and outcomes. On the other hand, caution must be exercised in using logic models as the sole resource for evaluating programs, as they are preconceived and may not lead the evaluator to unanticipated outcomes.

1.5 **Strengths and Weaknesses of Logic Models**

**Strengths:** Logic models make it easy to understand linkages between inputs, activities and outcomes through graphically depicting them (see Figure 2). They communicate the program’s theory of change to non-service providers and stakeholders in a way that facilitates understanding. This leads to opportunities for openly discussing the underlying assumptions in achieving outcomes, through which stakeholders are able to more clearly understand the program philosophy, its critical elements and anticipated outcomes and the linkages between program components. Opening dialogue between stakeholders can focus them on acting cohesively to achieve long-term shared goals.
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<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
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<td>The graphic depictions of the conceptual chain linking inputs, activities and outcomes are easy to understand.</td>
<td>Developing logic models is time consuming and requires an investment of agency resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads to open discussion of underlying program theory in achieving outcomes.</td>
<td>Agencies must track the outputs and outcomes outlined in the logic models.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages stakeholders to focus cohesively on long-term shared goals.</td>
<td>Does not indicate the program alone causes the outcomes, oversimplifies the impact of the program on outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides critical building blocks for action plans needed in strategic planning.</td>
<td>May not take cultural contexts into account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of staff in the development of logic models increases the potential for use.</td>
<td>Programs are time sensitive and this should be considered in developing the logic models.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic models evolve with the program.</td>
<td>Adapting logic models to reflect program evolution is time consuming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps uncover conflicting or unrealistic expectations among stakeholders.</td>
<td>Logic models that are not inclusive of input from all staff levels may not accurately reflect program processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Updating logic models reduces the potential for goal displacement.</td>
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Figure 1.2:  Strengths and Weaknesses of Logic Models

Millar cites (2001) the most critical use of logic models is in managing performance. Logic models provide building blocks for action plans needed in strategic planning. They can serve a key role in linking the stakeholders, the strategy, the evaluation process and the budget in order to manage for results. Building logic models can establish a forum that focuses staff on outcome achievement rather than writing goals (Patton, 2002). It also provides a platform for open discussion on how the program inputs and outputs affects participant knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, skills or status.
Program staff and stakeholders’ engagement in developing logic models is expected to increase their use, as those involved take ownership and investment in them.

Another strength of logic models, which can also be a potential weakness, is the notion that logic models evolve with the program. As a program grows and staff learn from implementation trials, the logic model reflects the changes in the measures that are built into it, but this makes logic modeling a time consuming task. Most importantly, if fine-tuning of logic models is not done periodically it can result in static measures, which are susceptible to the problems Perrin (2001) outlined in his discussion on goal displacement.

**Weaknesses:** Developing logic models is time consuming and iterative. Smaller non-profit agencies with limited budgets may not have the resources to build the logic models required by funders. Furthermore, once the logic models are created, the agencies must track the outputs and outcomes outlined in them. This may become an overwhelming chore for agencies with small budgets. Another issue with logic models is that while they may lead to an outcome measurement system that can provide reasonably reliable information about the benefits of a program for its participants, they do not indicate that the program alone causes the outcomes. For some, logic models oversimplify the process leading to change. They do not account for all the confounding variables that interact to create the proposed program outcomes.

As a case in point, Madison (1992) notes that the use of a logic model as the sole theoretical framework for developing evaluation questions does not take into account cultural contexts. Thus the model may be fraught with inherent weaknesses.
An additional issue to be considered when developing logic models is the time frames affecting outcomes. Many programs are funded for a cycle of five years or less. Logic models that include long-term outcomes may be overstating program impact within the funding cycle. Therefore, it must be made clear to program staff that outcomes are time delineated within the funding period so that they avoid outcomes that are unachievable. More importantly, program staff should be made aware that they will not be penalized for not reaching outcomes outside the time frames of the current funding. The key to success in logic models is ensuring the outcome indicators are reasonable, useful and meaningful measures of the intended client outcomes (Patton, 1997).

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The present study is an attempt to seek a greater understanding of the impact that requiring outcome measurement systems has on non-profit agencies. Specifically, the researcher aims to discover if staff behavior is changed as a result of the emphasis on program outcomes. This study will be used to investigate the depth of understanding of non-profit staff regarding the logic model linkages between inputs, outputs and outcomes. Moreover, the research will help determine if the logic model process assists then in developing program theories of action that improve goal clarity, specificity and measurability. As a result of the research, the field of evaluation should gain a better understanding of outcome measurement use as a learning tool for improving programs. Furthermore, the information gleaned from the research can aid funders in determining where more technical assistance is needed for increasing outcome measurement systems effectiveness.
1.7 Research Questions

The main concern of this study is to explore the practical implications for non-profit organizations resulting from funders demand for outcome measurement systems. During the literature review many questions arose regarding the potential impact on non-profit practice from the use of outcome measurement systems. Many issues in the literature relate to the manner in which program administrators and other staff respond to the new requirement. Questions here can be separated into three themes: 1) the process of developing outcome measurement systems, 2) staff knowledge and understanding of outcome measurement and 3) uses of outcome measurement systems.

The assumption is made that outcome measurement changes the manner in which the non-profit sector does business. Therefore, the overarching research question is;

How does the demand for outcome measurement impact practice?

The main question raises sub-questions about perceptions, knowledge, understanding and uses of outcome measurement. Several interesting points emerged from the literature that this research will investigate further. The first was highlighted by Perrin, (1998) in his discussion regarding goal displacement. He suggests that when agencies are required to measure outcomes, they often measure those for which data is easily available and outcomes are achievable, often replacing original and potentially more in-depth and important program objectives. The question that comes from this line of thinking is;

How do the agencies determine which objectives and measurements to include in their logic models?
A second observation from the literature argued by Weiss (1972) regards the generality of program goals and objectives. She contends that by keeping the program objectives very general, the program can be marketed to a variety of potential funders. According to Weiss, single source funded programs may be noticeably different than those funded by multiple sources. Hence, the question that arises is; Does the support of multiple funders increase the generality of goals and objectives?

The literature exposed a number of strengths and weaknesses of outcome measurement systems and logic model development. This research will seek to determine if the strengths and weaknesses so highlighted hold true in practice by investigating the activities that occur during the development of logic models and outcome measurement systems. This line of investigation will seek to understand how logic models and outcome measurement systems are used. For instance, are program staff engaged in developing and using outcome measurement systems as proposed in the literature? Or, do they “go through the motions” to satisfy funding proposal requirements?

The final question will investigate organizational factors that may impact the development of an agency’s outcome measurement system. Moreover, questions focusing on outcome measurement uses and levels of learning will be presented. The organizational learning literature documents specific characteristics that encourage learning within organizations. This research will investigate if the characteristics present in the non-profit organizations under study account for differences in adopting outcome measurement systems as learning tools.
1.8 Brief Description of the Methodology

This study is exploratory in nature and will employ mixed methods in its conduct. Although much research on non-profit management and outcome measurement exists, there is a gap in the literature specific to the impact of outcome measurement requirement on non-profit systems. The researcher seeks to better understand the perceptions and practices of non-profit staff and other stakeholders regarding the use of logic models and development of outcome measurement frameworks. In order to accomplish this, the researcher will employ a case study approach.

As noted, the case study will apply different methods of data collection strategies so a better understanding of the viewpoints and practices of those involved in logic modeling and outcome measurement systems development can be gained. A review of historical documents that provide programmatic context and systematic interviews of funding staff will be the main methods of data collection of funder’s views in the case study. The historical documents and interviews with the funding staff will offer insights related to the first, second and final questions of the study.

A survey questionnaire and focus group interviews will also be used to generate information from the service providers on their understanding of outcome measurement development and use specifically related to the first, second, third and fourth questions of the research. The researcher will also maintain field notes to assist her in noting experiences related to the research endeavor.

Combining different data collection approaches allows the researcher to get a broad understanding of not only the viewpoints and practices of the stakeholders, but also the
context in which the phenomenon takes place (Yin, 1994). By including both funding staff and the service providers in this study, the researcher can determine congruence in the two types of stakeholders’ understanding of outcome measurement systems development and application.

The culmination of the methods will increase the researcher’s ability to develop a comprehensive picture of a complex and subtle phenomenon based on comparing and contrasting the perceptions of the non-profit funders and service providers. The funding staff interviews will answer questions regarding their views on the primary purposes of outcome measurement requirements, which will in turn influence the technical assistance and direction they provide to the project site staff. The insights of the service providers participating in the survey and focus groups will produce a detailed description of what actually occurs at the service delivery level.

1.8.1 Definition of Key Terms, Constructs and Operational Definitions

One of the chief barriers to understanding is language. The definitions of concepts and terms used in this research are outlined below. Understanding these terms will enhance the reader’s ability to grasp the research and the vantage point from which the researcher is operating.

**Benchmarks:** Performance data used for comparative purposes. A program can use its own data as a baseline against which to compare future performance or data from another program or pertinent literature as a benchmark.

**Critical elements:** Identifiable and discrete intervention activities.
**Goal:** A statement, usually general and abstract, of desired states of human conditions and social environments.

**Inputs:** Resources a program uses to achieve program objectives. Examples are staff, volunteers, facilities, equipment, curricula and money.

**Logic models:** Iterative tools that are articulated by program staff and stakeholders that describe logical linkages between program resources, activities, outputs, short, intermediate and long-term outcomes.

**Measurement indicator:** Specific data elements that are tracked to measure how well a program is achieving an outcome.

**Non-profit organization:** An organization (neither governmental nor business) that provides voluntary services to the community. The non-profit sector in the U.S. consists of more than a million such organizations that spend over $500 billion each year. This research focuses specifically on social welfare organizations; one of four non-profit sector subcategories that includes foundations, charities, and professional and trade organizations.

**Objective:** Specific operational statements regarding the desired accomplishments of the social welfare programs.

**Organizational learning:** The concept that organizations build upon past knowledge and experiences to develop incremental organizational improvements. The learning occurs when an organizational unit acquires new knowledge that it recognizes as potentially useful and changes policies and practices as a result.
**Outcome measurement system:** A framework for determining if changes are occurring in program participants that may be linked to services. The system includes data that are used to help assess program effectiveness in achieving programmatic objectives and goals.

**Outcomes:** Benefits for participants during or after their involvement with the program. Outcomes may relate to knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, behavior, condition or status.

**Short-term Outcome:** Changes in participants’ attitude, knowledge, values, status and/or behavior that occur during program participation or shortly after completion.

**Long-term Outcome:** Changes in participant’s attitudes, knowledge, values, status and/or behavior that occur one year or more after program participation.

**Outputs:** Products of a program’s activities, such as the number of meals provided, classes taught, brochures distributed or participants served.

**Program effectiveness:** The ability of a program to accomplish its goals.

**Program theory:** A description of the critical elements of the program focusing on what the program is intended to achieve and how it intends to do so.

**Social welfare organizations:** Non-governmental agencies and/or programs that work directly at the grass-roots and community levels to improve the situations of people who are experiencing poverty, hardship, distress or otherwise considered at-risk for these conditions.
Utilitarian evaluation: An evaluation that determines value by assessing the overall impact of a program on all those affected (i.e., assessing group outcomes as opposed to individual outcomes).

1.8.2 Significance of the Study

Exploring how the non-profit sector develops and uses logic models and outcome measurement systems is significant for several reasons. First, it will improve understanding of the implications that requiring outcome measurement systems has on the non-profit sector. There is currently an unverified assumption that this demand has changed organizational behavior. This research will help determine if in fact change has occurred.

Second, this research will shed light on staff’s understanding of logic models and outcome measurement systems that can lead to refinement of training for non-profit organizations. By understanding the processes and perceptions that non-profit organizations currently hold regarding outcome measurement systems, funders can better align training for their agencies.

Third, the research will provide agency characteristics associated with positive adoption of outcome measurement systems. Pool and associates in their study of non-profits in 2000 suggested that much more research is needed in determining factors that influence success in the development of outcome measurement systems. A better understanding, based on staff experiences, will aid in increasing capacity so agencies can better respond to funding requirements.
The findings of the research can be beneficial to improving the practices in the field regarding outcome measurement systems and issues inherent in their use. Moreover, the findings have the potential to identify conditions that impede and/or encourage the creation of clear, specific and measurable outcome systems. This information can be used to guide program planning of and evaluations, as well as to prepare those who have effectively created outcome measurement systems for the next step in the outcomes process, integration of the outcome measurements into daily practice.

1.8.3 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The limitations of this study relate to the use of self-report data to gather participant perceptions and practices, sampling, resources, instrumentation and generalizability of the findings. The nature of self-report data collected through interviewing presents several challenges and limitations. First, respondents may not feel comfortable responding to some of the questions. They may acquiesce, giving what they believe are answers favorable to the interviewer. Participants may not have knowledge about the question or may not feel comfortable responding candidly to questions.

A second and somewhat related issue is interviewer bias. Interviewer bias occurs when an interviewer leads participants to answer questions in a particular fashion. Subtle cues, such as a head nod, can be misconstrued by the respondent as affirmations that they are going in the “correct” direction or that the interviewer is pleased with their remarks. A third issue with interviews is that self-report data is limited to the memories and perspectives of the respondents. Asking respondents to recollect historical processes that they do not partake in daily relies on limited memories and cognitive recall.
Many respondents will only be able to give vague information that includes their involvement (often times over or under weighted) in the occurrence. To somewhat mitigate these limitations, collateral evidence from the agency logic models, historical documents and agency policies and procedures will be examined as additional data sources to triangulate the information.

Sampling is a consideration and a limitation of case study methodology. Case studies provide in depth information regarding “a case” (Stake, 1995), the phenomenon under study. In this research the case is non-profit agency development and implementation of outcome measurement. The case includes both the non-profit funder and the non-profit service providers the funder supports. Participants must be carefully selected so a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon can be gained. In light of this limitation, the research will include all current funding staff involved in the outcome measurement system development process and the project site staff from the currently funded programs and those no-longer funded programs known to still be in operation.

Another limitation is instrumentation. Interview and survey questions will be based on a review of the current literature. The researcher will pilot the interview and survey protocols to ensure they are valid. The questions will include probes to elicit subtle difference in staff perceptions regarding logic models and outcome measurement systems from various levels of staff. This technique will aid in estimating the depth of integrating outcome measurement throughout the organization by determining staff involvement in the outcome measurement enterprise.
Resources are yet another limitation of the study. The participants for the study will be chosen from a geographic location near the researcher to reduce the cost of data collection. This could lead to problems with applicability to other non-profit organizations outside the geographic area of study. On the other hand, since the participants will be selected from a broad range of service providers, it may increase the researcher’s ability to compare the findings with other non-profit organizations. Mark (2001), contends any investigation is associated with particularities of setting, participants, investigation and so on. He insists this should not be viewed as an impediment, but a natural opportunity for testing the role of context in evaluation research.

Another caveat to the study is researcher bias. Choice of cases may potentially be biased by the researcher’s relationships with agency staff. Participants will be assured confidentiality and their right to end their participation at any time. Besides researcher bias emerging in the interviews and on the survey, it must also be considered in interpreting participant responses. One way to counter researcher bias is to incorporate peer debriefing and member checks after the interviews. The use of these methods will reduce the possibility of researcher bias in interpreting participant responses. Likewise, the researcher will use triangulation of several data sources in comparing and contrasting emerging themes.

The final limitation relates to another aspect of generalizability. Since this study is exploratory and primarily qualitative in nature, it will be conducted in a naturalistic setting. Participants will be selected based on their involvement in non-profit programs
and will be located in the Southeastern United States. Logic for choice of cases is based on replication, not sampling logic (Yin, 1994). The findings of the study may be transferable to other non-profit organizations with similar contexts, but cannot be considered applicable beyond that context. Even with this limitation in mind, they can be useful in furthering insight into the best ways to approach developing logic models and outcome measurement systems in non-profit agencies.

The limitations of the research are mitigated by the use of mixed methodology. Since the purpose of the research is to describe what is happening through the lens of various stakeholders and assess congruence between perspectives, the use of multiple methods will be applied singly and then worked with across findings to produce a comprehensive understanding of a complex phenomenon. It is evident that outcome measurement systems are an ever-increasing part of the evaluation landscape (Mark, 2001). Even though there is a widening literature base, few researchers have investigated the phenomenon by collecting information from both funders and the service providers of the programs they fund. This research will aid in making outcome measurement systems useful tools for evaluators, funders and most importantly the service providers responsible for developing and applying them.
We no longer have the time nor the money to fritter away on nonessentials which won’t produce the needed visible impact on problems. Florence P. Dweyer (1970)

In order to fully understand outcome measurement and how it relates to evaluation, it is necessary to review the concept itself - how outcome measurement has historically developed and the transformation it has undergone over the past decade since its introduction to non-profit organizations. In this chapter, issues related to outcome measurement and the historical evolution of such will be discussed. In particular, the application of outcome measurement in non-profit organizations will be highlighted with specific attention given to the theoretical aspects of such usage. Lastly, a summary of the current research on outcome measurement and areas needing further investigation will be presented.

2.1 The Evolution of Outcome Measurement in the United States

2.1.1. Historical Overview of Outcome Measurement

Outcome measurement, often referred to as performance measurement, is not new. Since the early 20th century program evaluators have focused on outcomes, especially those in education. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest that the emperor of
China in 2200 BC instituted performance measurement requirements for his public officials. This is the earliest citing of outcome measurement on record. Objectives-based approaches to evaluation in the United States are attributed to Ralph Tyler and date back to the 1930’s. Tyler envisioned evaluation as a seven-step cyclical process used to improve programming. (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997). The first is establishing broad goals and objectives and the final step is comparing performance data with behaviorally stated objectives. The last three steps in Tyler’s approach including; developing measurement techniques, collecting data, and comparing data with objectives, are the crux of performance measurement that six decades later were embraced by the developers of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). The primary focus of the Tylerian approach to evaluation was program improvement. In promoting program improvement, discrepancies between performance and objectives are reported so modifications to correct deficiencies can be made and programs can actualize goal achievement. This seven step sequence is repeated throughout the lifecycle of the program as new objectives informed by the previous cycle are added to the implementation process.

2.1.2 GPRA and the Accountability Movement

Growing public concern for government accountability in the late 1980’s created an atmosphere in which the GPRA was enacted. The quote by Dweyer offered in the beginning of this chapter reflects the public sector where arena in which performance measurement premiered. Citizens demanded government accountability for the way tax
dollars were being managed. Congress passed GPRA to promote a new focus on improving program performance and accountability for results within the federal government. John Mercer, who is considered the “Father of GPRA” introduced the legislation. Mercer previously served as Mayor and Council member in Sunnyvale, California, whose internationally famous performance management and budget system was used as the inspiration for the Government Performance and Results Act. The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) declared that Sunnyvale’s system "stands out as the single best example of a comprehensive approach to performance measurement that we have found in the United States. An underlying reason cited for the success in Sunnyvale is the fact that every program manager uses the system to plan, manage, and assess progress on a day-to-day basis" (OMB testimony to the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, May 5, 1992).

GPRA’s primary aim is to improve performance by requiring agencies to develop measurable goals for all federal programs and to report actual results (Kim, 1995). Through the implementation of comprehensive performance measurement systems, managers are expected to be supported in their efforts to manage programs in ways that maximize performance, minimize costs, and achieve the results.

The General Accounting Office (GAO, 1993) describes GPRA as being the centerpiece of a statutory framework Congress put in place during the 1990s to address long-standing weaknesses in federal operations, improve federal management practices, and provide greater accountability for achieving results. In fact, as explained by John Mercer in his congressional testimony, GPRA was originally drafted with the specific
intent that it serve as a basis for bringing additional federal government reforms. The reforms originally stated in the act (S 20.) would have required cost accounting, performance-based budgeting, and managerial pay-for-performance. The provision on cost accounting was removed prior to enactment of the law, because federal agencies at that time were not yet required to have the requisite cost accounting systems.

GPRA’s major thrust was shifting the focus of federal agencies from simply accountability for process (e.g., did the program spend the correct amount of money in a proper manner?) to accountability for results (e.g., what did the program actually accomplish with the money it spent?) In doing so, the legislation introduced an important new emphasis into federal performance measurement – the need to identify desired outcomes. The creators of GPRA believe the distinction between measuring program outputs (i.e., how much will be done?) and measuring actual outcomes (i.e., to what end result?) is fundamental to the ultimate accountability of Congress and federal agencies for the effectiveness of the programs they develop and administer.

The GPRA legislation was expected to provide a management framework that included improvement strategies for agencies to measure results. Performance information was subsequently to be used to make programmatic decisions needed to improve operations (Mihm, 2002). Ultimately, along the way, the focus of GPRA shifted to accountability. In effect, replacing management practice improvement efforts, and changing to the original intent from an outcome evaluation framework (Kim, 1995).
Performance measurement combines three major accountability perspectives; the efficiency perspective, the quality perspective and the effectiveness perspective (Martin & Kettner, 1996). Efficiency relates to comparing the outputs and inputs of a program as the primary performance measure. This perspective basically compares the amount of services provided and the number of clients completing the program to the overall cost of the program. The quality perspective differs from efficiency because it builds in a “quality” benchmark along with the inputs to outputs cost-ratio. The intent is to maximize quality outputs that meet a specified quality standard in relation to inputs. The last perspective, the effectiveness perspective, is the one from which outcome measurement has grown. In it, performance measurement incorporates a focus on outcomes of programs such as the benefits to participants. Performance measurement is less concerned than program evaluation with attempting to demonstrate cause and effect relationships, and recognizes that programs cannot be divorced from their social settings. The effectiveness perspective is more concerned with basic practice questions such as what outcomes are achieved by what types of programs. Accordingly, an accountable social service program is one that strives to maximize outcomes in relation to inputs.

Although often referred to interchangeably, performance measurement and outcome measurement are distinct concepts. Table 1 compares the two concepts on seven characteristics. These features come from the literature and are logically organized for ease of presentation.

Both performance measurement and outcome measurement are rooted in reform based on public requirements for accountability and stewardship over resources, mostly
economic resources. Performance measurement precedes outcome measurement and is generally a phenomenon of public sector and for profit business. The primary concepts of performance measurement originated in systems engineering and organizational behavior which strive for excellence in the end product through efficient practices. Outcome measurement, applied in the non-profit sector, evolved from systems thinking and total quality management which both promote learning to improve the end products. They emphasize strategic planning and analysis of the processes involved in creating the results. Although outcome measurement shares some similarities with performance measurement, the focus of outcome measurement is on change or benefits not ratios of inputs to outputs.

The focus of performance measurement is generally on results defined as the input to outputs cost ratio based on some benchmark. Continuous monitoring is applied to document progress toward achieving the input output ratio within a specified time period. In contrast, outcome measurement is a more holistic approach grounded in a theory of change that focuses on benefit to the consumer of services. By identifying expected change in participants/consumers of services, staff are expected to align their day to day practices with achieving the change.

The reporting of results is distinctive between the two concepts as well. Performance measurement generally compartmentalizes findings/results and does not link results to process. Scheirer (2000) reports this as one of the major barriers to the use of performance measurement for decision making. She states that a summary analysis of federal agency’s performance plans found that many plans did not provide a clear picture
of how current programs and strategies would help achieve performance goals. In contrast, outcome measurement is relational in that it links processes with results through a logic model which is the theory of change articulated by project staff.

Both performance and outcome measurement contribute uniquely to program evaluation. Performance measurement provides information that aids in cost benefit analysis which is often difficult to gather in evaluation due to lack of documentation and standardization of units of service. It demonstrates the frequency and duration of services that can help in determining service ratios for optimal program impact. However, since it is generally compartmentalized it provides limited information on contextual features that impact benefits to participants.

In contrast, outcome measurement can be applied to both formative and summative evaluation. Via the logic model, strategies linked to change are highlighted and can be assessed by the evaluator throughout the program cycle. This feature of the logic model can assist the evaluator in determining program fidelity. At the end of the program cycle the logic model acts as a basic template for focusing the outcome evaluation as expected outcomes are the drivers of the modeling process.
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<tr>
<th><strong>Theoretical Foundations</strong></th>
<th><strong>Performance Measurement</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outcome Measurement</strong></th>
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**Relationship to Evaluation**

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Table 2.1. A Comparison of Performance & Outcome Measurement
2.1.3 Outcome Measurement in Philanthropy and Non-Profit Organizations

The United States has a strong history of philanthropy dating back to the early 17th century (Bremmer, 1988). As one of the wealthiest countries in the world, charitable giving has been a centerpiece for service provision to the poor. By 1993, the total assets of foundations in the U.S. were $189 billion. Foundation assets have nearly quadrupled since 1980 and grants given by foundations since 1980 have more than tripled (Independent Sector, 1998).

Many non-profit service providers receive funding from philanthropic organizations. A non-profit organization is defined as a public serving organization that is eligible to receive tax-deductible donations (501[c][3] organizations). Non-profit organizations are also referred to as nongovernmental organizations (NGO), not-for-profit or voluntary organizations that make up the third sector or civil society (Katz, 1999). Their tax status is basically where the commonality among non-profits ends. Non-profits are tremendously diverse in origin, size, finances, types of activities they undertake, the people they serve and the means they use to reach their goals. Although large non-profit agencies such as United Way and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America come quickly to mind when thinking of non-profit agencies, the non-profit sector is composed predominantly of small community-based entities with meager resources (Boris, 1998).

Nearly three quarters of the 494,000 charitable organizations, excluding most religious organizations and private foundations, have been founded since 1970. Thirty eight percent were founded between 1970 and 1984 and 34% between 1985 and 1992
Independent Sector, 2002). These statistics give the distinct impression that non-profit’s are in their management infancy in comparison to the for profit and government sectors.

The federal government’s devolution initiative that started in the 1980’s further expanded the dependence of social service funding on private sources such as foundations and non-profit funders (Boris, 1998). Public-private partnerships were created as the public’s confidence in government management began to wane. As non-profits began to grow so did the import of accountability measures to assure prudent stewardship of resources. Moreover, the expectation of devolution is that non-profits are expected to become less dependent on the government sector and more businesslike i.e.; accountable.

Included in this business orientation are the practices of being lean, efficient and effective which translates to doing more with less while showing results. This business based philosophy runs counter to the service provision philosophy on which non-profits have operated since their inception (Reed & Brown, 2001). The primary focus of non-profits has been service provision and aid to the poor based on client need. Applying the business acumen of the for-profit sector, although it may be a good thing, has created a necessity for non-profits to change established operational norms and managerial practices.

Since being propelled into U.S. public consciousness during the 1980’s, non-profits’ managerial practices have been influenced by several factors. First, their entry into public consciousness was a direct result of reductions in government funding for social services due to tight federal budgets. Concurrently, the public and society
increased demands for efficient use of donated dollars. Foundations and other non-profits began confronting these new pressures which created a sense of urgency to identify the most effective ways of achieving social impact at the lowest cost (The Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2002).

Like the public sector, the primary driver for results-based management in the non-profit sector is accountability. Along with the increase in public-private partnerships as a result of devolution during the 1990’s, the non-profit sector was rocked by several scandals that lead to a decrease in public confidence followed by decreased contributions to those organizations involved in the scandals. One of the most notable examples in non-profit history is the United Way scandal which accused William Aramony, President of UWA, of using charitable donations to finance a lavish lifestyle, including support of an expensive condominium, use of a limousine and trips on the Concorde (Shepard & Miller, 1994; Simross, 1992). The accompanying public outcry prompted a reduction in charitable contributions of 30% reported by some United Way affiliates (Miller, 1993). Consequently, the idea of reform measures inspired by GPRA began to seep into the private sector in the mid 1990’s when The United Way of America changed their evaluation focus from service provision to outcome measurement.

Competition between non-profit and for-profit organizations at the state level in contracting for a variety of social services as government funding declined in the 1990’s is another driver leading to the accountability movement in the non-profit sector. As organizations compete for private contributions and government funds, accountability
and performance have become increasingly more important (Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2002).

Similarly, non-profit organizations came under increasing pressure to measure and report their contributions to society as competition for philanthropic dollars began to increase. The demands for measuring outcomes in addition to service provision introduced a new dimension for determining performance. Outcome measurement involves the identification of outcomes, development of appropriate outcome indicators and data collection procedures, data analysis and regular reporting of program progress. These changes in focus have resulted in an expanded need for capacity building involving program evaluation skills within the non-profit sector.

2.1.4 The Relationship Between Outcome Measurement and Evaluation

Prior to discussing the diverse views on outcome measurement, it is important to describe the relationship between outcome measurement and evaluation. Evaluation is defined by Rossi and Freeman (1985) as “a robust area of activity devoted to collecting, analyzing and interpreting information on the need for implementation of and effectiveness and efficiency of intervention efforts to better the lot of humankind by improving social conditions and community life” (p.13). Evaluation includes various frameworks as described by Worthen, Sanders and Fitzpatrick (1997) that fall on a continuum from objectives-oriented approaches to participant-oriented approaches. These frameworks are not mutually exclusive and strategies used in one framework may be used in others depending on contextually driven needs.
Evaluation theory and practice have evolved substantially over the last three decades. In addition to impact and end of project evaluations, practice now includes process and implementation evaluations. Scriven (1967) further delineated between types of evaluation by distinguishing formative from summative evaluation. Formative evaluation is one conducted to provide program staff with information useful in improving a program. It is most typically undertaken when a program is being developed (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Summative evaluation provides decision makers and potential consumers with judgments about a program’s worth or merit in relation to important criteria, and to determine adoption, continuation, expansion or termination (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Outcome measurement is one strategy within the objective-oriented evaluation framework employed to determine program impact. Often outcome measurement is used interchangeably with evaluation, especially in accountability-oriented discussions. In theory, outcome measurement is a tool for determining program impact through objective measurement based on underlying program theory. Most evaluators would agree that even though it is an evaluative tool, outcome measurement falls short of a full and comprehensive evaluation.

Like evaluation, it has both rational and political aspects that shape the focus of what is measured (Tassie, Murray & Cutt, 1998). Martin and Kettner (1996) state an outcome orientation is not concerned with one-shot assessments of results, accomplishments or impact and recognizes that programs cannot be divorced from their social settings. In practice, it holds program staff accountable only for those things within
their immediate and short-term control and forgoes the distal effects of service provision. The long term distal effects of the service provision are the projected outcomes or change expected in the program participants after they complete services. Thus, some evaluators assert this issue distorts the original intent of outcome measurement and replaces it with outputs reporting which limits the value of outcome measurement as an evaluative tool (Fraser, 2003).

The primary goal of outcome measurement is to focus program staff on a results orientation to service provision. It includes aspects that apply in both formative and summative evaluation. Outcome measurement heightens organizational need to build evaluation capacity. The challenges entailed in it (clarifying the logic that links program outputs with desired long term outcomes and devising processes for verifying and validating performance data) have raised the hopes and expectations of evaluators that the technical assistance they can provide will be utilitarian and important (Newcomer, 2002). For example, Hatry (2002) purports outcome measurement by non-profit organizations has the potential for improving program service delivery and outcomes. He insists non-profit service organizations should benefit considerably by applying outcome information in their improvement efforts beyond producing outcome information for accountability purposes.

In sharp contrast with the aforementioned benefits of outcome measurement, several contemporary evaluators critique performance measurement. Blalock and Barnow (2002) openly criticize the performance management movement from which outcome measurement has grown. Their article provides an in-depth discussion on the
significance of evaluation and performance measurement as tools for decision making.
The results based orientation, the researchers argue, could produce misguided social remedies because of assuming change or lack of it is linked to interventions. (See the strengths and weaknesses section for a fuller discussion of this point) The literature points out the primary difference between performance measurement and evaluation is that evaluation looks holistically at all elements of program implementation, including the fidelity with which a program is implemented and impact, whereas performance measurement focuses solely on the results (Kim, 1995).

Performance measurement is limited because its primary focus is accountability, not evaluation, although there are instances where it has been inappropriately expanded to an evaluative role. Blalock and Barnow (2002) contend the critical relationships between program interventions, processes and goal achievement are left out of performance measurement. They urge decision making based on competent evaluation or applied social science research integrated with performance management instead of using only performance measurement to judge program worth. The authors conclude that this combination will yield more effective and useful benefits for social policy development, program and project design and ongoing program improvement than focusing on performance measurement alone.

2.1.5 Diverse Views on Outcome Measurement

The emphasis on outcome measurement creates fertile ground for discourse as evidenced by the fact that outcome measurement was the topic of discussion among
evaluators in 188 entries on Evaltalk, an international listserv for evaluators from a broad spectrum of backgrounds, between November 2001 and September 2003.

As mentioned in chapter 1 the literature posits several strengths of outcome measurement including the potential for creating opportunities for organizational learning through opening a dialogue on shared organizational meaning and providing data from which staff members can determine organizational strengths and deficiencies in achieving outcomes. The information learned from outcome measurement can be used to initiate change in processes to improve organizational performance. The interchange initiated by developing and using outcome measurement supports a forum for opening discussion and focusing staff on the desired program benefits for clients resulting in shared vision and clarity in each member’s role in achieving the mission.

Through involvement in the logic model development process, meaningful measures for assessing program achievement are developed and can be used for designing a customized information system. An effective outcome measurement system can aid program management in reporting success to funders. It provides support for strategic planning, improving service delivery and evidence for attributing results to agency programs (Perrin 1999, Winston 1999, Bernstein 2001). Program administrators can use the data to pinpoint factors related to the achievement of outcomes. Moreover, focusing on outcomes guides agency staff in thinking about future initiatives and processes that can be helpful in program monitoring and fine-tuning (Bernstein, 2001).

The literature highlights several barriers in implementing outcome measurement systems. The primary barrier is fear of frontline staff based on an apprehension that the
indicators they develop can potentially be used against them by funders if they don’t achieve the objectives. Moreover, they are afraid that inappropriate quotas and targets will be required for continuation funding (MacPherson, 2001).

The potential for goal displacement is a major concern for evaluators when developing indicators for outcome measurement systems. It can become a prominent issue when two specific conditions are present. The first is when measures that clearly reflect achievement are difficult to determine (Rock, Combrinck & Groves, 2001) and secondly when there is funding pressure for programs to meet performance measures such as high stakes performance expectations (Perrin, 1998) However, the potential for goal displacement can be reduced by involving program staff in the development discussions, as members articulation of program theory will lead to clearer measurement indicators (Patton, 1997).

Establishing performance frameworks within organizations is not easy. Weiss’ (1972) proposes that practitioners approach program development intuitively, not analytically. This suggestion raises another issue regarding outcome measurement systems in that, it takes time to build measurement capacity and there is a learning curve regarding the use of measurement data. The approach is iterative, ongoing and nonlinear which makes it difficult for some program staff to grasp. Agreement on program purpose(s) may be difficult and requires considerable up-front investment of staff time and resources (Kates, 2001).

The research of Poole and associates (2001) attempted to determine if non-profits’ investment in building outcome measurement systems paid off in terms of improving
service quality. They concluded a major weakness of outcome measurement systems is that although funders go through the motions of requiring outcome data, they do not hold agencies accountable for their system’s quality. This is mainly because funders lack the confidence in their own ability to evaluate these systems consistently or the resources to do it (Poole, et. al., 2001).

The absence of standard terminology regarding outcome measurement is another weakness. The language of outcome measurement is still foreign to many in the non-profit sector and some (Patton, 1997) suggest the terminology even intimidates program staff. However, United Way among others have made significant strides in educating non-profits in the “outcomes” dialect.

A recurring discussion between Perrin, Bernstein and Winston captures the essence of outcome measurement in theory and practice. This discussion has been coined the Perrin, Bernstein, Winston debate. Perrin believes that performance measurement can be useful for monitoring purposes, raising questions and identifying areas in need of management attention. But he warns that it is often seen as an end in itself and herein lies the opportunity for misuse.

Perrin strongly argues that a results orientation may end in distortions of program realities. He suggests management is forced to play a numbers game such as developing easy-to count indicators which often have little or no relationship to what the program is suppose to do. This leads to goal displacement (emphasizing the wrong activities and achieving the numbers without improving actual results or benefits to clients) which could have serious consequences for agency performance. Thus, the emphasis placed on
outcomes is the focus which shifts the resources from activities designed to support the original program goals. In this way, measurement-based approaches have not improved performance, but only hampered the development and implementation of effective strategy (Mintzberg, 1994).

Perrin (1998) attributes the limitations of measuring performance which render it useless for decision making to eight issues. They include; performance indicators are open to various interpretations, when indicators become the objective they result in goal displacement, reduction of complex programs into a small number of indicators which provide irrelevant and meaningless data, cost savings may be exaggerated as costs are shifted in order to achieve the indicators, indicators typically obscure subgroup differences, unintended consequences and program contexts are not taken into account, program indicators offer no direct implications for action, unless there are other means to explore the results and the potential future impact.

He asserts that the most ironic outcome of performance measurement is it typically leads to less rather than more focus on outcomes, innovation and improvement. Perrin concludes that the narrow focus on measurement is inconsistent with change and improvement that stresses constant questioning about what else can be done or done better.

Bernstein (1999) counters with his support of performance measurement by contending Perrin’s view that performance measurement is inherently flawed demonstrates a failure in implementation not a flaw in the basic concept. He highlights stakeholder’s involvement in the process of developing proper use of appropriate
performance measures as the hallmark for effective implementation. This notion is echoed by others in the field (Rock, et. al. 2001; Patton, 1997; and Plantz, et al., 1999). Moreover, Bernstein reasons most of the pitfalls outlined by Perrin, such as goal displacement, cost shifting, use of irrelevant measures and other limitations of objective-based approaches could be minimized if it is used in concert with more detailed evaluation work and not as a stand alone evaluation strategy.

Winston (1999) injects a Canadian perspective into the discussion of performance measurement between Perrin and Bernstein. The Canadian experience has a similar evolution as that in the U.S. However, Winston (1999) chronicles the waves in governmental reforms that have built the assertion against performance measurement as just another fad. He notes the lack of thorough articulation of concepts and succinct use of terminology that are coupled with the continued circulation of earlier training manuals as factors that contribute to the resistance regarding the current emphasis on performance measurement. According to Winston, without a distinct vernacular and practices that support a new framework, confusion abounds and learning can not take place.

2.2 Historical Overview of Learning in Organizations

“It is always difficult to put our energies into learning how to do something until we believe it can be done.”(Dixon, 1994)

Senge (1992) popularized organizational learning in his book, The Fifth Discipline. He describes learning organizations as “places where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people
are learning how to learn together” (p.3). Although Senge’s book brought the term organizational learning into vogue during the nineties, organizations have learned since their inception.

Competition is the primary driver for organizational learning in the private sector (Argyris, 1990; 1993). The immense changes in the economic environment caused by globalization and technology have forced organizations to make significant transformations in order to adapt and survive in a new world. Knowledge creation and dispersion are vital components of learning that promote adaptation and survival. Most writers on organizational learning agree that it occurs as a result of individual learning in organizational settings (Argyris & Schon, 1996; Senge, 1992; Preskill & Torres, 1998). It unfolds over time and is linked to individual knowledge acquisition and improved performance.

At the same time that accountability systems such as GPRA were being firmly set in place by the federal government, an interest in organizational learning in the public sector began to grow (McGinnis, 1998). Even though the private sector had emphasized organizational learning in various forms since the industrial revolution to improve quality of products and efficiency of workers (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Kanter, 1979; Senge, 1992), it wasn’t until the early 90’s that the public sector began to show a similar interest.

Simon (1991) commented that learning within an organization is influenced by the context of the organization. Learning in a group context has consequences for the organization and produces phenomena at the organizational level that go beyond anything that could be inferred simply by observing learning processes in isolated individuals. It is
this synergistic feature of organizational learning that makes it a valuable tool for organizational change that promotes survival in reaction to external forces.

Since Senge’s introduction of organizational learning in the early ninety’s, hundreds of articles and books have been written on the subject. A recent study by Roth and Kleiner (1995) found that over 150 books and articles were published about learning in organizations or organizational learning in the 4 year time period they reviewed.

Because the terms are used interchangeably which creates confusion surrounding the concepts of organizational learning and learning organizations, it is necessary to differentiate between a learning organization and organizational learning. A learning organization according to Senge (1994) and others is a work environment that promotes continual expansion of knowledge and reflection, usually in response to external competitive drivers. Organizational learning, which is the topic of the following section, is the existing processes that allow for organizational transformation through knowledge acquisition and reflection.

An organization’s learning system is made up of the structures that channel inquiry, organizational members and an organizational culture that facilitates or inhibits inquiry (Argyris & Schon, 1996). Organizational learning occurs when members of the organization act as learning agents for the organization, responding to changes in the internal and external environment by detecting and correcting errors in organizational theory-in-use and embedding the results of their query in private images and shared maps of the organization. Organizational learning is one dimension of a learning organization that is concerned with the use of information to transform the organization.
2.3 Organizational Learning Theory

Scholars suggest that organizational learning occurs when there is a match or a mismatch between intentions and outcomes (Argyris, 1992; Kim, 1993; Senge 1990; Pedler, Boydell & Burgoyne, 1997). In the first condition, an organization achieves what it intended. In the second condition, a mismatch between intentions and outcomes is identified and corrected. Organizations do not perform the actions that produce learning. It is the individuals acting as agents of the organization, within the confines of their individual biases and constraints, who produce the behavior that leads to the learning. On the other hand, organizations create conditions that influence how individuals frame problems, design solutions and produce remedies to the problems they encounter. Organizational learning means building upon what works and exhibiting a willingness to change in order to be effective. It is the intentional use of the learning process at the individual, group and system level that transforms the organization in a direction that satisfies stakeholders (Dixon, 1994).

A significant differentiation in defining organizational learning is the difference between single-loop and double-loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978). Illustrated in Figure 2.1, single loop learning occurs whenever an error is detected and corrected without questioning or altering the underlying values or governing variables of the organization. A thermostat that is programmed to detect states of too hot or too cold and to correct the situation by turning the heat off or on is an example of single loop learning. A thermostat that is a double loop learner would question why the thermostat is set at 68 degrees or why it was programmed to increase or decrease the temperature.
Marquardt (1996) expands on the types of organizational learning offered by Argyris and Schon and identifies four ways in which organizations learn. These types consist of adaptive learning (which include single and double loop learning described by Argyris and Schon), anticipatory learning, deutero learning and active learning.

![Adaptive Learning Cycle](image)

Figure 2.1. Adaptive Learning Cycle

Adaptive learning, especially single loop learning as described above, is the most common type of learning in organizations. It is a coping form of learning which has two distinctive types. Single loop learning focuses on direct problem solving encountered by an individual or organization. Double loop learning is a bit more involved and requires questioning the current system to determine how the error or success occurred in the first place. The importance and value of double loop learning to stimulate change is stressed in the literature on organizational learning. Double loop learning is less common because it draws into question existing structures, assumptions, norms and processes. Most actors within an organization are uncomfortable delving deeper into organizational norms and structures (Shein, 1993).
The second type of learning is anticipatory learning. It occurs when an organization plans based on their expectations for the future. Anticipatory learning begins with a vision, employees reflect on that vision of the future to plan an appropriate approach to avoid negative results and to accomplish their vision. Strategic planning is the most common use of anticipatory learning.

Figure 2.2 extends learning theory by adding Marquadt’s four phases of learning. In addition to single and double loop learning, Marquardt offers deutro learning as the first category of anticipatory learning. Deutero learning is learning about learning. This type of learning occurs when organizations learn from critically reflecting on their everyday operational assumptions. It takes into account organizational contexts that aid and hinder learning new approaches to problem solving. As a result of the reflection and self-evaluation, new learning strategies are developed and incorporated into organizational practice. Anticipatory and deutero learning are much more proactive than adaptive learning. They may be initiated as a reaction to an event, but are promoted through employee empowerment and creativity.
Marquardt (1996) presents action learning as the fourth type of learning. He believes it is the most valuable tool for organizational learning. Action learning was conceived by Reginald Evans over 50 years ago who believed there is no learning without action and no action without learning. It involves working on real problems, focusing on learning acquired and implementing solutions (Marquardt, pg. 39). Once a difficult task or problem is discovered, the employees act to change it and then bring the results back to the organization to review and learn. The focus is on learning from problem solving and building skills through challenging assumptions and confronting actions thus bringing about fresh approaches. This type of learning can promote major changes in policies, procedures and structures.
Most of the organizational learning literature details several factors that must exist to support learning. The first is a shared vision that provides the energy and focus for learning. Secondly is a culture that values learning, promotes learning as a responsibility for all, is trusting and allows for autonomy, provides incentives for innovation and risk taking, and commits to staff training and development. Furthermore, the organization must emphasize collaborative creativity, commitment to continuous improvement, be responsive to change and support a quality work life.

2.4. Evaluation Use for Organizational Learning

“The idea of reflection is a critical one in organizational learning.” (Williams, 1998)

Evaluation is often described as a tool to determine organizational effectiveness. Scriven (1967) defined evaluation as a tool to determine value and worth of an organization. It was assumed by many in the field of evaluation that the results of evaluation would be used to improve practices and increase the effectiveness of those organizations evaluated (Weiss, 1998). Evaluators have realized that more often than not, evaluation results were reviewed by organizational staff, but not used to promote change. King (1988) found stakeholder participation in evaluation to be an important way to increase the use of evaluation findings. She differentiates between four types of evaluation use and its purposes: instrumental use for program changes; conceptual use for a broader understanding of the program; persuasive use or citations of the results in reports and proposals to external audiences; and symbolic use for enhancing program prestige and visibility.
The topic of evaluation use was addressed by Weiss in a plenary session at the American Evaluation Association in 1988. Her speech provided a forum for widely discussing how to improve the use of evaluation results. Patton’s book, Utilization-focused Evaluation (1997) offers strategies for optimizing such use. Once evaluators openly admitted that the evaluation results were often not used, strategies to increase use could be developed. This issue became prominent enough as a result of Patton’s reflections on the topic that it was incorporated into the Guiding Principles for Evaluation in 1994. Since that time, several evaluators, Patton, Cousins, Preskill and Torres, Fetterman, Greene and Weiss have researched evaluation use and promoted strategies to enhance organizational learning which involve both instrumental and conceptual use as defined by King. The involvement of practitioners in evaluation is thought to help create the conditions for sharing and thinking about the meaning of data, thereby facilitating learning through evaluation which goes beyond single loop learning to questioning underlying premises and organizational operations.

A recent workbook published by the Canadian Evaluation Association (CEA, 2002) presents the theory of evaluation use. This model as presented in Figure 2.3 illustrates the linkage between evaluation and organizational learning.
Researchers have found that the primary factor in use is the ongoing involvement of key stakeholders in the evaluation. This finding has fostered the development of participatory evaluation. Participatory evaluation (Cousins & Earl, 1995) has its roots in contemporary knowledge utilization and change theory. It emphasizes collaborative decision making and the development of professional cultures that support collaborative processes to effect change. It increases the input and thus the understanding of stakeholders at various levels of organizations more so than traditional evaluation.
frameworks which typically involved upper management and the evaluator. This focus increases the evaluation capacity (represented in Figure 2.3 as Evaluation Outputs) of the organizational users and can improve their ability to use evaluation findings for change relative to improving effectiveness. When this happens there should be an increase in a program’s ability to remain competitive in an environment of decreasing resources.

2.4.1. Outcome Measurement as an Organizational Learning Tool

Preskill and Torres (1998) have written on evaluation use as an organizational learning tool where organizational learning is seen as a continuous process of growth and improvement that: (a) uses information or feedback about processes and outcomes to make changes; (b) is integrated with work activities and within the organization’s infrastructure; and (c) invokes the alignment of values, attitudes and perceptions among organizational members. Organizational learning goes beyond knowledge acquisition to the actual use of the knowledge to promote continuous improvement. It requires a commitment to learning on the part of the organization (Garvin, 1993).

Direct involvement of organizational staff in evaluation activities heightens opportunities for staff to discuss process and outcome data. Moreover, the discussion can lead to reflection that encourages rethinking basic assumptions regarding how a program works in achieving change (outcomes). Similarly, reflection leads to a group assessment regarding organizational goals, objectives and how they are achieved. The culmination of this is action learning described by Marquardt in the previous section.

Outcome measurement generally involves stakeholders at various levels of the organization. The first step in developing an outcome measurement system is creating a
logic model. This practice distinguishes performance measurement and outcome measurement. Generating a model brings together agency staff to discuss the underlying theories of change related to their program interventions. Through the logic modeling exercise, agency staff examine essential program elements, how these elements are related and linked to the expected changes in clients, systems, and so forth. It initiates discourse about conflicting assumptions regarding program goals, objectives and outcomes. It can enhance the awareness of the change processes service users experience to achieve outcomes (logic models will be more fully discussed in section 2.4.2).

Additionally, including different perspectives will flesh out which outcomes should be measured which increases their relevance.

Outcome measurement can also lead to organizational learning in ways beyond the initial development of a logic model. Once an outcome measurement system is in place, organizational staff can learn from monitoring the data captured by the system. Regular review and reflection on progress towards the outcomes can aid program staff in determining when implementation is not on target and help guide improvement strategies. Outcome monitoring is vital for developing needs-led, effective services as well as providing information to stakeholders (Cupitt, 2002).

Establishing and maintaining an organization that values learning is not easy. Several factors that influence the ability of organizations to learn are directly related to outcome measurement. For example, the demand for outcomes within short periods of time impedes organizational learning (Morley, et. al., 2002). Frequently organizations are not allotted adequate amounts of time from program implementation to outcome
measurement to clearly determine impact. One of United Way’s (1996) priorities in implementing outcome measurement in non-profits is to allow a sufficient period for change to occur before holding agencies accountable for measuring it. Others, the W.K. Kellogg (1998) and Anne E. Casey (1996) Foundations, suggest specific time frames for learning how to develop and use outcome measurement, such as five years before holding programs accountable for outcomes.

Many of the voices in evaluation caution that using performance measurement as an end in itself can curtail its value as an organizational learning tool (Newcomer, 2002; Perrin, 2001; Williams, 2002; and Patton, 1997). Translating outcome measurement exercises into organizational learning about program theory requires that managers think like evaluators. Newcomer (2002) recommends risk-taking and flexible evaluation teams to work with program managers to ensure that performance measurement results in institutional learning about program theory and effective management and not as ends in themselves.

Applebaum and Goranson (1997) recognize ten facilitating factors for organizational learning. They include features of the organization and its staff: “1) ability to scan the external environment for information; 2) a shared perception between actual and desired performance; 3) the use of metrics as an important learning activity; 4) an experimental mindset where trying out new things is encouraged and failure is not punished; 5) an open climate where information is shared and there is an acceptance of conflict; 6) commitment to continuous education at all levels; 7) operational variety where a pluralist approach to different competencies is taken; 8) new ideas and methods
are advanced by employees at all levels; 9) leadership involvement in articulating and implementing the vision by frequent interaction with staff and 10) systems perspective viewing an interconnectiveness between individual unit’s needs and goals and the company’s goals” (p. 125). One way for ensuring the entirety of the organization understands the linkages and is involved in the process of focusing on outcomes is through logic model development.

2.4.2 Logic Models in Learning Organizations

Logic models play a key role in helping organizations learn the underlying theories of change on which their interventions are based. Using logic models leads to benefits for clients, promotes shared understanding of organizational purpose, and helps organizational members know their role in contributing to agency success. The literature in the non-profit sector views logic models as a primary tool for developing outcome measurement systems.

2.4.3 Core Concepts of Logic Models

Over the past decade logic models have been perceived as iterative tools, articulated by program staff and stakeholders, that describe the linkages among program resources, activities, outputs, short, intermediate and long term outcomes (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999). They are word or pictorial depictions of real-life events and/or processes that graphically show the assumptions upon which one activity is expected to lead to the occurrence of another activity or event (Millar, Simeone & Carnevale, 2001).

The need to understand program theories that should produce outcomes presents
challenges (Chen, 1990). Services are often created to promote change at both macro and micro levels. As a result, funding agents have responded to the need by designing logic models that can capture various levels of changes within the broader social service system (Cooksey, Gill & Kelly, 2001).

Millar and colleagues (2001) describe logic models as causal chains explaining how phenomena occur through a series of controllable events. Although the activities (inputs) are controlled by program staff, the outcomes are to some extent a leap of faith, as programs are imbedded in complex societies, not experimental laboratories. Program evaluation is the key to proving or disproving the validity of the linkages in the logic models (Millar, 2001).

Evaluators test the validity between the linkages during the process of evaluating the program (Chen, 1990, Chen & Rossi, 1983). Formative evaluation determines if the inputs and activities are actually taking place as stated in the program model. Summative evaluation examines outcomes and tests the linkages between the program activities and the outcomes. Logic models can function as road maps for both formative and summative evaluations (Funnell, 1997). An evaluator who is privy to the program logic model can plan the evaluation around questions raised in them regarding program implementation and outcomes. On the other hand, caution must be exercised in using logic models as the sole resource for evaluating programs (Gill, et. al, 1998). Logic models are preconceived and may not deal with unanticipated outcomes.
2.4.4 Types of Logic Models in Outcome Measurement

The literature on logic models has become more sophisticated in the last decade. One such example is the framework developed by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (1998) refines the concept by differentiating three types: outcome, activities, and theory driven models.

Outcome models display the interrelationships of goals and objectives. The emphasis is on short-term objectives as a way to achieve long-term goals, although it is appropriate for program initiatives aimed at longer-term or intangible outcomes to design outcome-based logic models. They help programs capture hard-to-measure outcomes. Additionally, an outcomes model helps staff determine progress and program successes as well as locate gaps and weaknesses in program operations (W.K. Kellogg, 1998).

Activities models link various activities together that indicate the process of program implementation. This model provides a linear connection between antecedent activities and subsequent activities that occur as a result of the antecedents. An activities logic model is appropriate for complex entities involving many layers of activities and inter-institutional partnerships. It documents benchmarks toward progress and highlights issues faced by the program such as completion of activities, unanticipated activities or processes that are critical to success (W.K. Kellogg, 1998).

The third type of logic model is the theory model. This model links theoretical constructs together to explain the programs’ underlying assumptions. A theoretical model can be used for both simple and complex organizations because it describes why the program is expected to work as it does. This is similar to the concept of causative
theory posed by Chen (1990) who promotes using program theory as a tool for understanding the program to be evaluated and for guiding the evaluation. Some administrators may combine two or more types of logic models to articulate their program.

*Outcomes based logic models are especially useful for organizational learning.*

The feature that makes them useful beyond just being an exercise is the process of setting performance standards or the actual outcome measurements. This process may be referred to as benchmarking. Benchmarking is the setting of expected performance against a level of performance or standard which defines “best practice” or a range of working practices and policies. It also includes comparing outputs or measures from different organizations within the same service category. Benchmarking involves a detailed examination of the processes which produce a particular output through internal and comparative analysis that aid in understanding the reasons for expected and determined differences in performance levels (Zorzi, Perrin & McGuire, 2002).

Strengths and weaknesses are also scrutinized in benchmarking which is quite similar to double loop learning (Auluck, 2002).

### 2.4.5 Strengths and Weaknesses of Logic Models

Logic models share advantages and disadvantages common to outcome measurement systems. In addition to making it easy to understand linkages between the inputs, activities and outcomes through graphically depicting them, they present the program theory of change so non-service providers and stakeholders can understand and
discuss program philosophy, critical elements and anticipated outcomes and the linkages between each component in the logic (Corbeil, 1986). This opening of dialogue between stakeholders can facilitate cohesive action in achieving long-term shared goals.

The most critical use of logic models is in managing performance as they supply the essential building blocks for action plans needed in strategic planning (Millar, 2001). They can serve a key role in linking the stakeholders, the strategy, the evaluation process and the budget in order to manage for results (Julian, et. al., 1995). The process of building logic models provides a platform for looking at how the program inputs and outputs affect participant knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, skills or status (Patton, 2002). Program staff and stakeholders’ engagement in developing logic models should increase their ownership and investment in them (Coffman, 1999).

Logic models evolve with the program (United Way, 1996) so as a program grows and staff learn from implementation trials, the logic model reflects the changes in the measures. This can be viewed as both a strength and a weakness as the fine tuning makes logic modeling a time consuming task. And if not updated periodically, measures become static causing logic models be susceptible to the problems Perrin (2001) outlined in his discussion on goal displacement.

Logic models are also susceptible to similar weaknesses described in the outcome measurement discussion. Developing logic models is time consuming involving a lot of resources from the agency (Julian, et. al., 1995). Agencies with limited budgets may not have the assets to build sophisticated logic models or track the outputs and outcomes outlined in them. Freddolino and colleagues (1998), point out that this may become an
overwhelming chore. Another issue with logic models is that while they may lead to an outcome measurement system that can provide reliable information about the benefits of a program, they do not indicate that the program alone causes the outcomes. For some scholars, logic models oversimplify the process leading to change (Bell, et.al., 1998, Inse, 1994; Montague, 1997; and Julian, 1997). They do not account for all the contextual variables that interact to create the proposed program outcomes (Owen & Lambert, 1998). Extensive discussion with program staff is needed to capture contextual and process factors that impact outcomes.

Another problem to consider is the time frames required to achieve outcomes. Logic models that include long-term outcomes may be overstating program impact within the funding cycle. It must be made clear to program staff that outcomes are dependent on the funding period and if that time is not taken into consideration the outcomes may be unachievable which sets the program up for failure if such outcomes are the primary measure of success.

2.5 Overview of Related Studies in Outcome Measurement

*Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other. John F. Kennedy (1963)*

Several factors make reviewing empirical research on outcome measurement difficult. The first is that much of the literature is embedded in other topical areas so a specific body of research on outcome measurement in non-profit organizations does not exist. Secondly, much of the discussion on outcome measurement is actually based on government agency experience with performance measurement and written by evaluators...
from government. Although this information is helpful for the non-profits, there are some basic differences in the philosophies and practices of the two sectors. The other issue with the literature is that most of it is based on theoretical propositions on what should be done and not what actually occurs in non-profits regarding outcome measurement. This creates a gap in the literature from what should be done to implement outcome measurement systems to using outcome measurement results. It does not illustrate nor examine the actual process of designing and building outcome measurement systems within non-profits. Consequently, few literature sources discuss the impact of the new funding paradigm on non-profit systems and even less investigate whether this new emphasis has actually changed program focus to outcomes.

Most of the gap is probably related to the fact that outcome measurement in non-profits is a new phenomenon, only introduced formally in the early 1990’s. The majority of the research is preliminary (United Way, 2000; Morley, et. al., 2002; Thayer & Fine, 2001; Aspen Institute, 1998). The main assumption is that as non-profits evolve in implementing outcome measurement evaluation frameworks they will also use them for organizational decision making and strategic planning. Much of the evidence gathered to date shows non-profit organizations are in the formative steps of 1) understanding outcome measurement and 2) linking outcome measurement frameworks to useful information for internal use.

Thayer and Fine’s (2001) research on the non-profit sector revealed outcome measurement was the most popular purpose for conducting evaluations as a result of funding requirements. The primary stimulus for conducting evaluations within non-profit
organizations in this study was due to United Way’s requirement for establishing outcome measurement systems. Outcome measurement for enhancing organizational learning was mentioned by 20% or less of the respondents in Thayer and Fine’s research and they observed that evaluations involving stakeholders was more likely to be used than those that did not do so (pg. 105). This finding was confirmed by other authors who noted that the most effective outcome measurement plans were those that included stakeholder from all levels of the organization (Poole, Davis, Reisman & Nelson, 2001).

Stevenson and his colleagues (2002) indicated that building evaluation capacity in human services organizations requires overcoming many barriers. The initial one is the resistance of staff in learning something new due to limited resources, time and staff turnover. Using an organizational learning framework, the researchers provided workshops in evaluation capacity building for 13 community based organizations that chiefly focused on developing outcome measurement systems. Most of the organizations could incorporate the initial steps and measures including developing logic models and measurable objectives and outcomes and providing staff and agency resources for designing systems. Conversely, few of the organizations had the ability to develop data collection plans and carry them out fully. Even fewer reported having a clear plan for reporting findings and using results of outcome measurement. Similar findings were evident in the research of Morley, Hatry and Cowan (2002) which illustrated that non-profit organizations are in the beginning phases of developing capacity for creating outcome measurement systems that can become organizational learning tools.
Not only are non-profit organizations inexperienced in outcome measurement, but it seems that evaluators are also in the early stages of understanding its concepts and application. A recent survey on Evaltalk (March 2003, initiated by Fear) requested feedback from evaluators on concepts of outcome measurement. The responses demonstrate the lack of consensus among evaluators when it comes to outcome measurement. Little agreement was achieved in regard to fundamental concepts. The responses highlighted the difficulty in applying outcome measurement, especially in social service programs. Conclusively, evaluators are still struggling with pressures exerted by funders to document results. If this is the case for most evaluators imagine the difficulty faced by those whose practice it has been to account only for service provision.

One of the first studies on determining non-profit effectiveness was completed by Taylor and Sumariwalla (1993). Their investigation focused on program evaluation as practiced by major national philanthropic organizations funded by United Way of America. Via a survey administered to over 90 organizations, they determined the major evaluation activity in the non-profit sector is measuring the volume of program delivery and compliance with standards. The lowest areas of activity were assessment of program outcomes/results and participant satisfaction.

The researchers, in further discussion with funders, found that the greatest amount of assistance available to members is in assessing management practices, compliance standards, volume of program delivery and participant satisfaction and not outcome measurement (Taylor & Sumariwalla, 1993). Respondents perceived the barriers to
evaluating program results to be a lack of funding to support outcome measurement and the lack of skills among staff in conducting outcome measurement.

Respondents stated to offset these barriers they would need increased financing to support outcome measurement and additional staff training to build outcome based evaluation capacity. Although only a few of the grantees (7) reported that they have developed a systematic process of outcome assessment, those who did have done by means of a six stage formal training program that included appreciation, understanding, ability to define objectives, ability to design evaluation measures, data collection and discussion of results. The investigators suggest a new paradigm of program evaluation should be developed for non-profit organizations that make evaluation easier to routinely and realistically apply.

The work of Sicliano (1997) investigated a two dimensional performance framework that demonstrated organizational performance varies directly and positively with strategic planning formality in the 240 non-profit organizations she studied. This study divided performance into two dimensions; social and financial. Social performance was based on the ability of the organization to fulfill its mission. Financial performance was based on the total revenues to total operating expenses. Of particular interest for outcome measurement was that the activities of setting goals, objectives and action plans and monitoring results were linked to better performance in both the social and financial dimensions of the organizations. Siciliano encourages managers to actively involve staff members in developing goals, action plans and results monitoring systems. She suggests
the non-profit boards offers oversight and feedback in the efforts to increase programmatic success.

Another relevant study by Tassie and associates (1998) underscored the difficulty of determining organizational effectiveness. Their case study found discrepant information in evaluations by three funders of two agencies in Canada. The three funders had different approaches to the scope, focus and method dimensions of the evaluation that were influenced by the political and rational philosophies of evaluation held by the evaluators. Although the funders espoused a results oriented framework, all three focused on processes and not outcomes. Moreover, they were disparate in terms of which processes were emphasized.

The researchers concluded that although the funder’s rhetoric linked funding decisions to the agencies ability to demonstrate effectiveness, most decisions were based on non-official criteria and policy mandates regarding budget limitations. The variation of evaluation scope, method and focus created a reaction by those being evaluated to do the minimum necessary to meet the requirements of the funder’s evaluation processes as they saw no relation of the evaluation findings to funding decisions. The researchers coined the term “ceremonial conformity” which occurs when organizations simply comply with demands from institutions on which they are financially dependent but do not truly engage in the evaluation process nor use its results.

Poole and his colleagues (2001) addressed the issue of improving the quality of outcome evaluation plans. Based on a path analysis from telephone interview data of forty-five United Way funded agencies, they determined that involvement of staff in the
planning process has the strongest direct effect on the quality of outcome measurement plans. These findings are in agreement with those evaluators who use participatory evaluation framework such as Cousins, Earl and Patton. As a result, the researchers advocate more involvement of staff in developing outcome measurement plans through logic models and reflective strategies. Involvement is considered to impact not only the quality of the evaluation plans, but also the use of the results for program improvement.

2.6 Summary

As the demand for outcome measurement grows it is becoming a popular topic among evaluators. In the past eighteen months, over 380 entries on Evaltalk discussed outcome measurement and logic models or listed them in the topic description. It is evident that outcome measurement is impacting government and non-profit organizations as the demands from funders for results-based measurement increases. Organizations are responding to funder demands as best as possible while building evaluation capacity in outcome measurement.

Outcome measurement has altered the nature of relationships between funders and non-profit service providers with the new emphasis on accountability. As this movement continues there are widespread practice implications requiring further research and understanding. Research, although limited, is building in the area of results-oriented focus in non-profit and government organizations (Taylor & Sumariwalla, 1993; Morley, Hatry & Cowan, 2000; Poole, et. al., 2001). Large non-profits, such as United Way have commissioned work in this area. However, much work is still needed to determine how outcome measurement changes non-profit organizations and ultimately if the new
funding agenda is creating an opportunity for organizational learning or promoting ceremonial conformity.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The importance of data lies in the fact that they serve as evidence for the phenomena under investigation. Brian D. Haig, University of Canterbury

In this chapter the methodological design and procedures for conducting the study are presented. The chapter begins with a review of the underlying rationale for the methodology including the philosophical assumptions of the inquiry followed by the research design, conceptual framework, sampling, instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Rationale

The choice of a methodology for research is contingent on the goals of the research and the nature of the phenomenon under study. Understanding the impact of outcome measurement on non-profit organizations was the main intent of this study. Another aspect of the research was to determine if outcome measurement is used as a learning tool that prompts program improvement. Outcome measurement information specific to the non-profit sector is lacking. Even more so, there is limited empirical research that provides insight into how outcome measurement affects non-profit practices and some even presents conflicting information. Therefore, the study required an
exploratory and descriptive approach in regard to gaining a thorough understanding of practitioner perceptions regarding outcome measurement.

3.2 Research Design

As noted, this study was an examination of how non-profit organization professionals view outcome measurement requirements in terms of affecting organizational practices. Accordingly, the researchers sought data from the staff of funders, program staff and other stakeholders about the development and use of outcome measurement systems. To accomplish this end a case study approach was employed.

Yin (1994) describes a case study as an empirical inquiry that a) investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p. 13). In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” and why questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with some real-life context. This case study employed multiple data collection methods to provide insight into the views and actions of those involved in the development and use of outcome measurement systems. Combining different data collection approaches helps in understanding not only the opinions and practices of the stakeholders, but also the context in which they take place (Yin, 1994).

The first method was a review of historical documents with regard to programmatic context, espoused operational theories, and operational practices. The second method consisted of two focus group interviews of currently funded program staff
to probe into the development of logic models and the uses of outcome measurement for organizational learning. Similarly, interviews were held with the funder’s staff to learn about their experiences with the development and use of outcome measurement systems. The final method consisted of a survey sent to contacts of all currently funded programs and programs for which the funding had expired in the past three years.

3.2.1 Definitions of Key Terms, Constructs and Concepts

Below are terms, in addition to those defined in Chapter 1 that were utilized in this research effort.

**Adaptive learning:** The most common form of learning that is based on an individual coping with change. Single loop and double loop learning are forms of adaptive learning.

*Single loop learning:* Error detection and correction without questioning or altering the underlying values or governing variables of the organization.

*Double loop learning:* Error detection and correction that involves questioning why the error occurred and changing practice based on the discovery of new information. Double loop learning draws into question existing structures, assumptions, norms and processes.

**Anticipatory learning:** Organizational planning based on stakeholder expectations for the future. Anticipatory learning begins with a vision, employees reflect on that vision of the future to plan an appropriate approach to avoid
negative results and to accomplish their vision. Strategic planning is the most common use of anticipatory learning.

**Active learning:** Learning from problem solving and building skills through challenging assumptions and confronting actions to bring about fresh approaches. This type of learning can promote major organizational changes in policies, procedures and structures.

**Deutero learning:** Learning about learning. This type of learning occurs when organizations learn from critically reflecting on their day to day operational assumptions.

**Program:** A planned effort designed to produce intended changes in a specific population.

**Project:** A task or series of tasks generally more limited in scope than a program (can be a subset of a program).

**Service:** An activity (or array of activities) that is provided to help or benefit a client.

### 3.3 Conceptual Framework

The overarching research question of this study was: **How does the demand for outcome measurement affect program practice?** The question raised sub-questions regarding staff perceptions, knowledge, understanding and uses of outcome measurement. Several interesting points emerged from the literature that this research investigated further. The first was highlighted by Perrin (1998) regarding goal
displacement. He suggests that when agencies are required to measure outcomes they often will measure those for which data is easily available and outcomes are achievable, often replacing or displacing the original program objectives. The questions directed to staff that comes from this line of thinking is; **Do you use a logic model? If so, how do you determine the elements of your logic model?**

A second observation from the literature, argued by Weiss (1972), is about the generality of program goals and objectives. She contends that by keeping the program objectives very general, the program can be marketed to a variety of potential funders. According to Weiss, single source funded programs may be noticeably different than those funded by multiple sources. Hence, the question that arises is; **Does the support of multiple funders increase the general nature of goals and objectives?**

The literature exposes a number of strengths and weaknesses of outcome measurement systems and logic model development. This research sought to determine if such strengths and weaknesses hold true in practice by investigating the activities that occur during the development of logic models and outcome measurement systems. Furthermore, this line of investigation was developed to understand how logic models and outcome measurement systems are used. Questions such as **“Are program staff engaged in developing and using outcome measurement systems as proposed in the literature?”** Or, **“Do they engage in ceremonial conformity to satisfy funding proposal requirements?”**

The final focus of the research investigated the organizational factors that may impact the development and use of an agency’s outcome measurement system. The
organizational learning literature documents specific characteristics that encourage learning within organizations. These characteristics include self-reflection, critique and employee-driven change (Limerick & Cunningham 1993). This research attempted to determine if these characteristics were present in the non-profit organizations under study and if so, whether they accounted for differences in adopting outcome measurement systems as learning tools.

3.4 Selection of Participants

Participants were selected from non-profit service providers in the State of Florida and a non-profit funder in the State of Florida that supports the providers. To gain an understanding about service providers’ views on outcome measurements impact and use, a sample of management and line staff were asked to participate in two focus group interviews. Additional information was gathered through a survey of all providers that were either currently funded or whose funding had recently expired. At the funder level, interviews were held with management and administrative staff, including evaluators and program specialists¹ to understand their expectations and experiences with overseeing the implementation of outcome measurement systems. Pertinent agency documents from the funder were examined to compare espoused policy and actual practice in developing outcome measurement systems. Field notes were kept by the researcher during the research.

¹ Program specialists are responsible for providing technical assistance, contract monitoring and quality assurance to service providers.
The rationale for using Florida as the basis for participant selection was based on two factors. Florida has recently emphasized devolution and is experiencing a growth in public/private partnerships to provide social services. In addition, although the state is not directly monitoring the social service agencies, it continues to require outcome measurement as an accountability tool attached to all money distributed to the non-profits through private/public partnerships. The recent growth of these partnerships presents a rich opportunity for looking at the impact of the new funding agenda. The second factor was the programs in Florida are accessible to the primary investigator which allows for maximizing the limited budget available to her.

3.5 Permission and Consent

Approval for the study was obtained from The Ohio State University Behavior and Social Science Human Subject Review Committee. Each participant was informed of the purpose of the information to be collected and the intended use(s) of the research findings. All participation was voluntary and participants could decide at any point in the research process to withdraw from the study. Patton (2002) suggests participants should receive informed consent protocols and information in advance of an interview or visit for data collection and then again at the beginning of the research procedures. The researchers followed this process for each data collection strategy employed.

A packet of information was given to all potential research participants. It included a letter explaining the purpose of the study and a request for the involvement of agency staff in the interviews and data collection process. It also contained a written consent form and the contact information for the researchers. The letter to the potential
interview participants came with an interview schedule along with a request for an interview. The focus group interviews (FGIs) were held at the convention center where the funding agency convened its annual administrative meeting. All participants were asked to sign a consent form for audio taping of the interviews and for sharing documents with the researchers. Prior to this request, the researcher read the consent form aloud to the participants and answered questions regarding human subjects rights and researcher responsibilities. A copy of an individual’s signed consent was given to the participant and the original was placed in the researcher’s files. Due to the settings of the interviews audio taping was not feasible. To offset this, a scribe took notes during the FGIs.

3.6. Instrumentation

3.6.1. Stakeholder Interview Instruments

Two interview instruments were developed using the key questions to glean the stakeholders’ perceptions of the impact of outcome measurement on organizational practices. The funder’s interview protocol had ten semi-structured focused questions about the interviewee’s opinions on the purpose, impact and use of outcome measurement and contextual issues that shape the development and application of outcome measurement.

The FGI questions were separated into four sections regarding the process of developing a logic model to the implementation of the outcome measurement systems
within the participants’ home agencies. Organizational characteristics related to structure, change and use of information in general were also included.

The interview protocols were created following the literature on interview and focus group design (Kvale, S., 1996; Krueger, R.A., 1994). A small sample of social service professionals pilot-tested the instruments so the researchers could determine response time per question, clarity of items, areas needing revision and potential probes to generate more in-depth understanding of the concepts. Revisions to the instruments were made based on the feedback from the pilot testing and review by the researcher and dissertation advisor.

3.6.2 Development of the Survey

A survey of service provision staff containing questions on outcome measurement development and application was designed after consulting the literature on survey development (Dillman, D. 2000; Converse, J.M. & Presser, 1986, Fowler, FJ 1995) and outcome measurement (Perrin, 1998; Weiss, 1972; Tassie, 1998). The three primary research questions asked about logic model development, outcome measurement systems development, and subsequent use.

Five of the researcher’s colleagues and her advisor piloted the survey using a four stage pre-testing process outlined by Dillman (For a thorough discussion of the stages see Dillman, 2000, pp.140-147). Changes were made to the survey based on the feedback received during pre-testing. The final questionnaire consisted of six sections and contained fourteen questions. Several of them required a yes no response followed by an
open-ended comment to gather additional information. An invitation at the end of the survey asked the respondent to relay any remarks that would help in understanding the benefits and/or shortcomings of outcome measurement systems.

3.6.3 Development of the Outcome Measurement Data Matrixes

The researcher designed two data collection matrix (based upon factors identified in the literature review) to systematize the record review. Examples of items in the first matrix include agency type, management type, amount of funding provided by the funder, location of the program, action/policy that initiated outcome measurement, cost of implementation of outcome measurement, staff development, staff uses of outcome measurement information, strengths and weaknesses of implementing outcome measurement systems.

The researcher used the same process to develop the archival document review matrix. This matrix also incorporated the research questions to which the document pertained, the type of document, the origin of the document (either funder or service provider) and the date of the document. The researcher reviewed and refined the matrixes based on feedback from social service professionals and her dissertation advisor.

3.7 Data Collection

The data collection process consisted of four phases. The first phase included semi-structured personal interviews of the funding agency staff. The interviews were conducted in July and August 2004. The researcher sent each of the funding agency staff members a request for participation by e-mail in June that stated the purpose of the
research and provided a schedule of interview dates and times. A request for delivery was attached to the e-mail transmission to ensure the invitations were delivered. Likewise, an electronic read message was sent to the researcher when the recipient opened the e-mail. This measure was used to determine when the e-mail was read and/or if it was deleted by the recipient so the researchers could do another follow-up requesting participation in the study.

The second phase consisted of two FGIs held in late July at the funder’s annual administrative meeting. The focus groups were expected to generate more insight on outcome measurement use by the service providers. The agency vice president gave the researcher an attendance list for the administrative meeting that included participant contact information. Each person on the list was sent an electronic request for participation that contained the purpose of the research and the FGI dates and times. Again, the researcher used an electronic request for delivery and read receipt. A second request was sent to those on the attendance list that did not respond within one week. The researcher also sent a letter to each potential participant by U.S. mail if they did not respond by e-mail within two weeks of the initial request.

The third phase included a survey of the service providers to generate their perspectives on the process of developing and applying logic models and outcome measurement systems. The vice president gave the researcher a master list of all the projects funded by the agency within the past five years. This researcher used the list of projects to produce a directory of the agency contacts for distributing the surveys. All projects that were still in operation were maintained on the contact list. In addition, for
those projects that were no longer operating, the researcher asked the funding staff for contact information, since several of the former project directors maintained communication with the funding agency staff. The surveys were mailed to the program staff in August 2004 with a request for return by September 3, 2004.

The final phase of the research included an ongoing review of agency documents to examine the process and decision-making involved in implementing outcome measurement systems at both the funding agency and program levels. Each of the archival documents was reviewed, sorted and coded by research question to which it applied and entered into the data collection matrix. In addition to the document review, the researchers maintained field notes on her experiences to maximize recall of events, surroundings and context during the interviews and data collection processes.

As this study was exploratory in nature, the combination of the data collection strategies should furnish a richer perspective of the phenomenon under study through data triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, using four different data collection strategies aided in developing a grounded theory of outcome measurement’s affect on non-profit organizations.

Stake (1995) offers several options for data gathering and organizing that were utilized here. The data from the semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions were first aggregated by group and question. Once the data were combined, each interviewee response to the items was summarized and then each summary was coded. The summary of each respondent was compared with the other respondents’ answers to establish themes. The resulting themes that emerged from the information were noted in
the data transcription as observations. The themes were then compared and contrasted between the funding staff interviews and the FGI sessions.

Upon receipt of the surveys, each one was given an identification number so the hard copy could be compared to the data entered into the computer spreadsheet. Survey answers were entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to determine response frequencies for specific items and categories of responses. The frequencies were reviewed to determine data quality. The researcher contacted participants who submitted incomplete surveys so missing data could be replaced with accurate information.

The agency staff gave the researcher access to historical documents on logic model design and outcome measurement. Each document obtained by the researcher was catalogued using a unique identifier to ensure easy retrieval for further review and verification if needed. The documents were then coded using issue identification and theme development before being inserted into the appropriate field of the data matrix. Once the researcher reviewed and coded each record, she placed them in her archival data file.

3.7.1 Ethics and Politics of Research

Conducting research requires a great deal of care in regard to ethics and politics. Much has been written on the interplay of ethics and politics as it applies to research (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995; Rossi & Freeman, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Ethical considerations must be given the utmost attention in any research activity. Patton (2002) offers a ten point checklist to guide qualitative designs and data collection. The checklist
includes: 1) explaining the purpose of the data collection, 2) providing promises and reciprocity, 3) assessing risk, 4) guaranteeing confidentiality, 5) ensuring informed consent, 6) explaining data access and ownership 7) assuring researcher mental health 8) accepting advice, 9) understanding data collection boundaries, 10) discerning ethical versus legal issues. The final point deals specifically with the professional code of ethical conduct that guides the researchers.

As members of the American Evaluation Association, the following principles set by AEA (1995) guided the researchers.

1. **Systematic Inquiry**: Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries about whatever is being evaluated.

2. **Competence**: Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.

3. **Integrity/Honesty**: Evaluators ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.

4. **Respect for People**: Evaluators respect the security, dignity and self-worth of the respondents, program participants, clients, and other stakeholders with whom they interact.

5. **Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare**: Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of interests and values that may be related to the general and public welfare.

The researchers agreed to uphold the standards and guiding principles set forth by The Ohio State University and the governing practices of the American Evaluation Association in doing this study. By employing these principles the researchers felt confident that they were operating with ethics in the forefront of their research.
3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis will be discussed in depth in the next chapter. The researchers followed the strategies outlined by Yin (1994, p. 123) for achieving high-quality analysis who recommends four principles to guide good social science using case study methods.

1. The analysis should show that it relied on all relevant evidence.
2. The analysis should include all major rival interpretations.
3. The analysis should address the most significant aspect of the case study.
4. The researcher should bring their own prior, expert knowledge to the case study.

Another resource for data analysis guidance is Altschuld and Witkin’s (2000) technique for analyzing results from a multiple methods framework. The qualitative data from the FGIs and staff interviews will be sorted into categories until a fairly exhaustive list of categories develops. The data will be reviewed across categories for emerging, explanatory patterns or themes (pg. 86). It will then be analyzed using the constant comparison method whereby each set of results will be compared to the other data sources to determine areas of agreement and disagreement in the emerging themes. Key supportive data for the emergent themes by each source will be summarized to establish corroboration with the individual findings of other methods. Those that have the highest level of agreement across the informants will become the main findings and will be the basis for recommendations coming from the research.
3.8.1 Limitations and Delimitations of the Research

The limitations of this study related to the nature of participant responses, the use of self-report data to gather participant perceptions and practices, sampling, resources and generalizability of the findings are discussed thoroughly in Chapter 1. To counter these limitations for both the FGI’s and the funder staff interviews, interview protocols were developed using the research questions as a guide. The first part of the protocol explained the nature of the study, the voluntary role of the participant, maintenance of confidentiality and how the interview would proceed. The initial questions were low-risk for the participants which allowed the researchers to build rapport with them. Examples include; please tell me your title and how long you’ve been working in the organization? Once rapport was established the questions became more specific. The researcher used probes to encourage the participant to expand on their responses and to promote recollection of details regarding the phenomenon under study. The interviewer maintained a self-checking procedure to ensure neutrality in both nonverbal and verbal communications.

Asking respondents to recall historical processes relies on retrospective recall. Many respondents may only be able to give vague accounts about their involvement in the occurrence. To somewhat mitigate these limitations, collateral evidence from the agency logic models, historical documents and policies and procedures were examined as an additional information source.

Another strategy enlisted by the researcher to reduce the memory effect was adding probing questions to aid the recall of the respondent. The questions and probes
were employed to distinguish subtle differences in perceptions about logic models and outcome measurement systems from the respondents. This technique helped in estimating the depth of integrating outcome measurement throughout the organization by ascertaining individual staff involvement in the outcome measurement process. As an example of a probe, one question requested an illustration of how the respondent applied a specific strategy when designing a logic model. Another example was “when you received feedback on outcome achievement, did you make use of the information? If so, describe how you used the information.”

Sampling is a limitation of case study methodology. In this research the case is the system consisting of the non-profit funding agency and the service providers’ development and implementation of outcome measurement systems. The choice of representatives to contribute information on the case can be problematic. Participants were carefully selected so a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon could be gained. The inclusion of the both the funder and service providers creates a broader perspective from which to view the issue.

The participants for the study were chosen from a geographic location near the researchers to reduce the cost of data collection. While this could affect generalizability to other non-profit organizations outside the geographic area of study, Yin (1994) negates this claim. He suggests that case study methods can support analytical generalization rather than statistical generalization. In analytical generalization the researcher is striving to apply a particular set of results to some broader theory which differs from the goal of statistical generalization (p.36).
Another potential limitation in this research is researcher bias. To minimize researcher bias in both the participant selection and instrumentation several strategies were employed. First, the researchers solicited all potential respondents from the funding agency and the programs it supports. Miles and Huberman (1994) offer several tactics for avoiding bias stemming from the effects of the site on the researcher. They suggest including lower-status informants and people outside the focus of your study (peripheral or former actors) to reduce “elite” bias. Another suggestion is to include people with different points of view from the mainstream, people less committed to tranquility and equilibrium in the setting (p. 266). By requesting participation of all potential respondents, the researchers reduced the potential for selection bias.

Secondly, researcher bias in the instrumentation was reduced by pilot-testing the interview protocol to ensure clarity of questions, potential probes and areas needing focused. Expert assistance was requested from the researcher’s academic advisor to ensure the bias was minimized in the questions. Revisions were made to the instruments based on the feedback received from the pilot test.

Moreover, the interview data were verified through document analysis to diminish bias. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods strengthens the findings through method triangulation. It decreases the potential for bias while taking advantage of the strengths of multiple methods and offsetting the weaknesses of using only one method (Roycse, Thyer, Padgett & Logan, p. 88, 2001). Peer debriefing and member checks were used to ensure accurate accounts of participant remarks and descriptions of practices conveyed during the interviews.
The issues inherent in this study as addressed above speak to the need to exercise caution in generalizing the results of the study. Since this study is exploratory, it was conducted in a naturalistic setting. The choice of cases was based on replication not sampling logic (Yin, 1994). Replication logic is specific to case study research and directly related to analytical generalization. The available theory of outcome measurement in non-profit organizations was used in defining the research design and data collection methods. Hopefully the replicated findings will support the theoretical premises. If so, the findings may be transferable to other non-profit organizations for furthering the best ways to approach developing and using outcome measurement systems in non-profit agencies.

3.9 Summary

This chapter presents an overview of the research rationale, assumptions, design, participants, data collection, analyses and limitations. Ethical considerations and guiding principles employed by the researchers to safeguard participant rights were discussed to demonstrate the researchers’ understanding of the importance of these issues in this investigation. It is apparent that outcome measurement systems are an ever-increasing part of the evaluation landscape (Mark 2001). This research will aid in making them effective tools for evaluators, funders and the service providers that are required to apply them.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

_The purpose of an evaluation conditions the use that can be expected of it._
—Eleanor Chelimsky, 1997

This research study explored how outcome measurement impacts the daily practice of non-profit organizations. The research questions based on a review of the literature on outcome measurement were:

3. **How do non-profit organizations use outcome measurement?**

4. **Does the support of multiple funders increase the general nature of goals and objectives?**

5. **Are program staff engaged in developing and using outcome measurement systems?**

6. **Are program staff engaged in ceremonial conformity to satisfy funding proposal requirements?**

7. **What are the organizational factors that affect the development and use of an agency’s outcome measurement system?**
In this chapter, data are presented with a focus on emergent, grounded categories and themes regarding the perceptions of staff from a non-profit funder and project staff of the programs it funds. Four different data collection methods were used to ensure a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon. Two methods collected data from the staff of the funding agency - a semi-structured interview and reviews of archival documents. Service providers (both currently funded and previously funded) were asked to complete a survey and participate in focus group interviews. The researcher also kept field notes to record events and context during the two year research experience.

Data analysis and interpretation follow a four phase process that includes immersion, incubation, insight and interpretation. At each stage the researcher must condense the data and synthesize it into manageable chunks of information for interpretation. Rossman and Rallis (2003) liken this process to the difference in writing a novel and a poem on the same topic. The novel provides great descriptive detail; the poem synthesizes the essence of the experience depicted in the novel (p. 279). The current research reflects this need to balance the provision of rich description from which the findings emerge and synthesizing an abundance of data into tightly woven summaries that reflect the core of the research findings. It is hoped that through these means the reader will gain a thorough understanding of outcome measurement’s impact on non-profit organizations.

Altschuld and Witkin (2000) highlight both the advantages and disadvantages of using multiple methods of data collection in needs assessment studies which are also applicable to the current research. The most taxing of the disadvantages is combining
and interpreting data across methods. This issue brings with it a requirement to organize the data in a manner that is easily understood by the researcher and yet uses the nuances of each data source to draw verifiable results. To this end, data were analyzed using the constant-comparison method (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

As a matter of portraying such comprehensive sources of data, a description of the case (i.e., the system between the funder and the funded agency) will be presented followed by the results from each set of data collection methods; project staff survey, project staff focus groups, funding staff interview and archival data review. The results for each set of data will be organized in two distinct ways; first, through the development of clustered themes and secondly through the presentation of collated results. The collated results will also contain illustrations of agreement and disagreement between sources which lead to the primary and secondary findings of the research.

All focus group interview and staff interview excerpts and summaries in this chapter are followed by numbers indicating the transcript lines. For example “FSI03:…(43-50)” denotes that data are from Funding Staff Interview participant 03, transcript lines 43-50. Document page numbers follow all document data summaries and excerpts and are catalogued in the same manner as the interview data.

4.1 Description of the Case

The case under study consists of a funding agency and programs it funds. The agency is a public-private partnership established in 1989 in Florida that blends state and private dollars and invests them in innovative, community-based programs serving at-risk
children and their families. Its is to identify, fund, and evaluate innovative prevention and early intervention programs that improve the health, education and life outcomes of Florida's at-risk children and families. The agency has a budget of 34 million dollars according to the 990 form on file with the IRS for 2003.

This budget supports the organization’s original function as a laboratory for innovative, community projects to help children and families, as well as housing statewide initiatives, including a home visiting program, a foster care reunification program and a statewide commission on marriage and family. The specific focus of this study is the forty-six community programs of innovative prevention and early intervention programs the agency has funded using a results-oriented framework and the operation system created between the funder and local programs.

The funder began emphasizing a results orientation using an outcome measurement framework in 1998. According to the management staff, the pressure to emphasize outcome measurement came from the Board of Directors. “The sister program in Chicago was doing research and replication publications and we wanted to make sure we could do that (FSI006:1035-1036).” Other staff attribute the change from funding services to funding results-based programs to the acquisition of a large home visiting program that included an evaluation requirement along these lines.

Over the past six years the funder built the internal research, evaluation and systems capacity to aid project staff with implementing an outcome-based approach in projects the agency funds. A team approach is used that includes an evaluator, program specialist, and management information systems staff employed by the funder that work
with project staff in developing the logic model and using it as a template to create the management information system for the collection of outcome data. The funder requires grant-supported programs to have a logic model and the model must contain objectives and measures of the primary program processes as well as client outcomes and satisfaction.

The organization supports a broad range of primary prevention projects throughout the State of Florida. Table 4.1 presents the type of service offered by the programs involved in the case study. Several of the programs provide more than one service and some offer services to both adults and children. Sixty five percent of the projects are housed in established organizations which are defined as those with a budget of over 3 million dollars a year. The remaining 35 percent of the projects are housed in organizations that have budgets of lesser size.

The budgets of agencies in which the programs are located range from $100,389.00 to $981,375,289.00 based on the IRS 990 forms filed by each of the projects or their parent organizations. The mean is $49,475,208.77 (sd. 20,823,819.64)\(^2\). The programs are located throughout Florida. Over a third of the programs (38%) are in south Florida, 28 percent in central Florida and 34 percent are in the northern portion of the

\(^2\)Several of the programs are under the umbrella of large hospital foundations which inflates the average budget of the service providers.
state. The majority (93.5%) are in urban areas\textsuperscript{3} state with the remaining ones in rural regions of the state. Almost two thirds (63%) of the programs serve children, 22 percent serve adults and 15 percent serve both adults and children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Employment Skills</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Health Care Access</th>
<th>Substance Abuse Prevention</th>
<th>Academic Improvement</th>
<th>Child Abuse Prevention</th>
<th>Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Other includes community building, parenting skills and legal assistance programs.

Table 4.1. Type of Service Provided by Program

4.2 Findings Phase I

4.2.1 Survey Results

Over the past five years the funder has supported forty six programs. At the time of this research 34 were in operation and twelve were not. Surveys were sent to the 34 operating programs and 27 completed surveys were returned representing a 79 percent response rate. The response rate is especially noteworthy considering the survey

\textsuperscript{3} Populations over 2,500 constitute an urban area; populations of less than 2,500 are defined as rural.
administration fell within the time period of the 2004 hurricane season that reaped havoc on the State of Florida.⁴

In Table 4.2, the position titles of the staff completing the survey are presented. The majority of the respondents were either executive staff or management. Less than 20 percent were direct service staff. Forty-two percent of the respondents had four or more years of service at their current organization, with almost twenty percent of those being employed for more than ten years at that organization. The other fifty-eight percent of the respondents were employed at the organization for three years or less.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Staff</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Staff</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None Given</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2. Respondent Titles

⁴ Four hurricanes crisscrossed the state between August and November 2004 causing $1.6 billion worth of damages to homes and businesses.
A primary interest of the researcher was to gather information about the understanding of program staff regarding the purpose of outcome measurement. The questionnaire for staff had two relevant components. The first one listed a set of potential purposes of outcome measurement and asked for a yes/no agreement with each one (see Table 4.3). For the second component, the respondent rated the extent to which they agree with that purpose of outcome measurement on a five point Likert scale (see Table 4.4).

In Table 4.3, all respondents agreed that the purpose of outcome measurement is to help projects to achieve goals and 96 percent perceived the purpose as improvement. A review of the data by level, found that managers were in unanimous agreement that the purpose of outcome measurement is monitoring, whereas 80 percent of direct staff and 70 percent of executive staff believed the primary purpose is monitoring. Managers also agreed more than executive or direct service staff that the purpose of outcome measurement is to make funding decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Decisions</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve Goals</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Success</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. One respondent did not answer any of the questions but offered an open ended comment.

Table 4.3. Purpose of Outcome Measurement
In Table 4.4 the highest level of agreement is for using outcome measurement as an improvement tool, followed by its use for monitoring. The lowest level of agreement was for making funding decisions. A review of the data by level indicated that managers unanimously agreed with improvement as the purpose of outcome measurement, whereas 60 percent of the executives and 50 percent of the direct service staff strongly agreed with the improvement purpose of outcome measurement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Decisions</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve Goals</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Success</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4. Agreement with Purpose of Outcome Measurement

Twenty-two respondents (81.2%) noted they had developed a logic model for their program and over two thirds stated they had more than one funding source that required outcome measurement. A variety of individuals were involved in developing the logic models. Table 4.5 presents who was involved in such development. More than one person was usually involved with the most often mentioned groups being program managers (81.8%) and program staff (59.1%). Participants (13.6%), paid consultants (13.6%), volunteers (9.1%) and board members (4.5%) were those least often involved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Title</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Manager</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Staff</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funder Staff</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid Consultant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Respondents could select more than one response.

Table 4.5. Titles of Logic Model Development Participants

The researchers were interested in determining how program staff developed logic models that are used as the framework for the outcome measurement systems. Did they build the logic models anew or did they borrow the information from existing documents, or did they complete a literature review to determine best practices for their focus area? The answers from the twenty-two respondents regarding the process used for developing the logic model are presented in Table 4.6.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Used</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copied from another program</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began with group discussions</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management decided</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed literature</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6. Process for Developing Logic Models

5 Respondents could select more than one method for developing the logic model and most did.

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Most frequently the process began with group discussions among staff and stakeholders to determine logic model components. The least often chosen response was the management decided on the logic model. The “Other” category included the logic model emerged from a needs assessment (1 response) and paid a consultant to develop the logic model (1 response). A review of the data by level, found that executives reported the process began with a review of the literature more so than the managers and direct service staff. Managers responded more so than executives and direct service staff that the process began with group discussions.

In addition to understanding the logic model development process, the researchers wanted to grasp the program staff’s views of the usefulness of the logic model. The researchers were interested in learning if the program staff saw logic models as useful to their daily practice and effective in keeping them focused on outcomes. Table 4.7 displays the responses of staff to survey questions regarding effectiveness of the logic model they developed for the funder.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program staff were engaged in developing the logic models</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The objectives and outcomes of the logic model are worth tracking.</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The objectives and outcomes in the logic model are relevant to the program/project.</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The logic modeling process has helped staff articulate program processes that lead to outcomes.</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The outcome measurement system has helped us focus on outcomes.</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The logic model framework has improved understanding of the linkage between program implementation, services and outcomes.</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 Logic Model Development Responses

The highest level of agreement is with the statement, *the logic model framework has improved understanding of the linkage between program implementation, services and outcomes*, with 89 percent of the responses indicating strong agreement or agreement. The statement generating the least amount of agreement was *program staff were engaged in developing the logic models*. Although over two thirds (68.2%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, 22.7 percent indicated a neutral response.
and 9.1 percent disagreed. An examination of the responses by level, led to the observation that executives had a lower degree of agreement than managers and service staff in the items about the objectives and outcomes being worthwhile and relevant and helping staff articulate program outcomes and focus on outcomes. Comparatively, direct service staff acknowledged a higher level agreement with the item regarding staff engagement in the logic model development process than executives and managers.

The researchers attempted to understand the utility of the information generated by outcome measurement systems for project staff. Twenty of the twenty-seven respondents (74%) reported they had used the outcome measurement data provided to them by the funder. Table 4.8 contains the results relating to the uses of outcome measurement data by the respondents and Table 4.9 includes the usefulness of the data for each type of use.

---

Although 20 people responded they had used outcome measurement, only 19 indicated the type of use.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Use</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate Outcomes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan Future Programs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Outcomes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report to Funders</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Ongoing Evaluation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend Changes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain More Funding</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train Staff</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to Questions about Program</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Program</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Outreach or Public Relations</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocate Resources</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassign Staff</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8. Uses of Outcome Measurement Data
The most often cited use for outcome measurement was to articulate outcomes (95%). There was also strong indication that the project staff used outcome measurement for reflective practice such as planning future programs, improving outcomes, designing ongoing evaluation and to recommend changes in programming. The least often cited use of outcome measurement was to reassign staff (35%) and other which included developing quality improvement plans and providing feedback to clients. In Table 4.9, those project staff that responded yes to using outcome measurement data for purposes listed in Table 4.8 rated the level of usefulness of the outcome measurement data for each purpose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Use</th>
<th>Not Useful at All</th>
<th>Not Very Useful</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Useful</th>
<th>Extremely Useful</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Does Not Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate Outcomes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report to Funders</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Ongoing Evaluation*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend Changes</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Outcomes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain More Funding</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan Future Programs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Program</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train Staff*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to Questions about Program Strategic Planning Improvement Outreach or Public Relations Allocate Resources Reassign Staff</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocate Resources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassign Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Less than the original 20 respondents in this section marked responses for these questions.

Table 4.9. Respondents Perceived Usefulness of Outcome Measurement System
Respondents found outcome measurement data to be most useful in articulating program outcomes. Reporting to funders received the second highest ratings. Changing and improving outcomes were determined useful by 75 percent of the respondents. Outcome measurement data for allocating resources and improving public relations were reported as least useful by respondents.

The final section of the survey was designed to determine changes in operational practices resulting from outcome measurement requirements. Even though over two thirds of the respondents reported they were required by at least one other funder to report on outcomes, less than half (46.2%) added staff whose job responsibilities are directly related to outcome measurement development or reporting. Thirty-one percent reported spending 11-25 percent of their resources on outcome measurement, 15 percent spent 26 percent or more, 30 percent directed 10 percent or less of their agency budget, and 23 percent indicated they didn’t know how much they spent.

The open-ended survey responses mentioned a tension between service provision and data collection responsibilities that has arisen as a result of outcome measurement requirements. One respondent stated that even though outcome measurement is useful, “smaller organizations don’t have the money for so much emphasis on strategic planning”. Another stated it is “better to spend time on program participants than tracking to track” and yet another mentioned that “funding was cut in half and no additional resources were provided for data management.” Two of the respondents shared even more directly that “outcome measurement is time consuming with no money to support effort” and “it is required but not funded”.

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In relation to outcome measurement resulting in program practice changes, almost three fourths (72%) of the respondents (n=25) believed there has been a change in program practice as a result of outcome reporting requirements. Most of those responding mentioned accountability and program improvement as the two biggest changes in practice initiated by outcome measurement reporting requirements.

4.2.2 Survey Summary

A majority of respondents reported they are required by more than one funder to report on outcomes, yet less than half have added staff whose job responsibilities are directly related to outcome measurement development or reporting. Program managers along with other staff are most often involved in logic model development. In general, logic model development comes from discussions among program staff and stakeholders and most of the respondents agree that the outcome measurement frameworks have improved understanding of the linkage between implementation, services and outcomes.

In terms of using outcome data, three fourths of the respondents have used it. King (1988) describes six types of uses for evaluation information; non-use, symbolic, instrumental, allocative, persuasive, and conceptual use. These uses were applied here to categorize the responses of the service staff. Respondents found the outcome data most useful for instrumental purposes such as designing ongoing evaluation, recommending program changes, improving outcomes. Strategic planning was the one exception to this finding. Although 60 percent of the respondents cited strategic planning, it was rated lowest among instrumental uses. Uses more symbolic in nature, such as planning future programs and obtaining more funding, were the second most cited use of outcome
measurement. The respondents indicated outcome data was less valuable for allocation purposes such as budgeting resources and reassigning staff.

The lack of financial support and the cost of outcome measurement was another theme that emerged from the open-ended responses. Almost half of the respondents (46%) appropriated at least 11 percent or more of their budget to data collection responsibilities. According to the respondents, the increase in data collection coupled with a lack of appropriate financial support results in a tension between service provision and data collection responsibilities.

4.3 Findings Phase II

4.3.1 Focus Group Interview Results

Two, two-hour focus group interviews were held in the evenings during the funder’s annual administrative meeting in July 2004. Supervisors and their subordinates were not in the same focus group. Five participants attended each group. A facilitator and scribe were also in attendance.

The demographics of the participants (Table 4.10) varied; 9 participants were female and one was male; 4 were African American and 6 were Caucasian. Years experience in social services ranged from two years to 29 years with an average of 17.4 years. All participants had at least a bachelor’s degree, 4 were at a master degree level and one was completing a doctorate. Most of the participants were middle management (3) or line staff (6) with the exception of one Chief Executive Officer. Participants represented the diversity of the programs sponsored by the funder and came from across
the state. An organizational structure was considered flat if open communication was encouraged by management for problem-solving. A hierarchical organizational structure was assigned if there is a vertical chain of command and communication for problem-solving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th>Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Region Program Located</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty Degree*</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Population</th>
<th>Service Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Health Care Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Academic Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Type</th>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Grass Roots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Abuse Prevention</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Specialty degrees are those that require licensure.

Table 4.10. Focus Group Participant Profiles

The focus group responses generally confirmed those of the survey regarding the primary purposes and uses of outcome measurement. Focus group members concurred that the primary purposes of outcome measurement systems are accountability and
program improvement (monitoring). They take outcome measurement very seriously as an indicator of success even though they question the validity of measurement. *One respondent said data is compiled to determine whether or not the program is doing what it is designed to (what we said it would) do. If we have not reached our outcomes, the question is whether we are formatting the data to reflect all of the things we did do.* She said *there’s a problem sometimes of staff “getting down” because we did not reach an outcome objective. Our managers tell these staff they have done a lot though.* She said *the data needs to reflect all that we did do even if we come up short on the measure. For example, with breastfeeding, there are cultural concerns that are reflected in the outcome measures. Some ethnic groups that the (program name) is serving are more inclined to do breastfeeding anyway. Some of the (program name) staff have never had a strong training background so we are trying to correct this with training. We need to try and figure out if there is a better way of measuring parent or child bonding. We need to determine if surveys and data measurements result in improvement or not (FGP1-SGTBD).* Respondents also suggested the need for more flexibility with the outcome measurement systems, as well having other methods for determining program success.

The participants were especially concerned about being judged on a small number of program participants included in the criteria for the outcome formulas and the benchmarks for which success is gauged. One participant commented that she thought the funders\textsuperscript{7} pull the baseline measures “out of the sky”. This comment was followed by

\textsuperscript{7} This comment was addressing funders in general.
“there needs to be a partnership between the funders and the providers for negotiating benchmarks.”

The focus group participants were asked about goal shifting which involves the development of broad project goals that appeal to multiple funding sources and is the basis for mission drift. The participants denied the practice of goal shifting to acquire funds. The CEO participant stated that he has turned down funds because the potential funder wanted the program to make major changes which would contradict its philosophy. Another participant commented that her agency has group discussions regarding funding opportunities and determine as a group whether the requests for proposals match the agency mission and goals prior to applying for funds.

Several of the participants mentioned they receive support from multiple funders and a resulting issue is the duplication of data entry. Respondents noted that each funder has specific data collection requirements that sometimes overlap, but are inputted into different databases. The participants suggested new funders review existing program data collection processes and attempt to collect similar data required by current funders to eliminate duplicative data collection and entry. Another option would be that funders merge data from databases to reduce the burden of data entry and reporting by the project staff. The consensus was that data collection and entry requirements draw staff away from service provision and lead to tension between data collection and service provision tasks.
A major interest of the researchers was the use of outcome measurement for organizational learning. The focus group engaged the participants in discussion to discover the types of learning they are experiencing and whether outcome measurement data is used to aid in the organizational learning process. The literature supports the idea that organizational learning is more likely to occur if conditions are present that nurture it (Marquardt, 1996; Shein, 1993; Dixon, 1994).

Questions investigated underlying organizational structures to determine if there are specific factors that promote the use of outcome measurement for organizational learning. Table 4.11 presents the types of use of outcome measurement offered by the focus group participants and an exemplar of each type. The examples are categorized based on the framework developed by King (1988), described earlier in this chapter. In most cases, the participants gave more than one use for outcome measurement data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Use</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Use</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>We’re the field soldiers. The information is generated and gathered by us and then given to management. (FGP9-SJSO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>Networking, and also we use the data to give the community updates on what we are doing. (FGP9-SJSO) I belong to a coalition of minority providers and I notice when we miss our outcomes we lose funding and I see this as a negative use of the data. (FGP4-WMTTYA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>The data has helped provide structure and uniformity across the sites (FGP3-TFRC) ..we use the data to diversify our funding and expand services (FGP7-CJSJ) We also learn our unintended outcomes, what’s reasonable to expect from the participants and the program. (FGP8-ABCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>It guides employee training and helps me to develop the forms to track the data.(FGP8-ABCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>We are also working with foundations and corporations to promote the program. We use it as a marketing piece. (FGP9-SJSO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>I use it for developing policy and procedures (FGP8-ABCD). I use it to look at program capacity issues and it forces the provider to see if what has been agreed to is really something the provider can live with. (FGP1-SGTBD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11. Type of Use for Outcome Measurement
The most cited use of outcome measurement data is instrumental, which means the data is directly tied into decisions or changes to programs. Several of the respondents reported that once they review the data they adjust their activities to improve. Symbolic and conceptual uses were cited three times each by the focus group participants. Symbolic includes using the data to fulfill funding requirements, to prepare new proposals or program design and to show the public accountability. Conceptual uses are indirect and cumulative to shape policies, to create new initiatives, etc. Two of the participants mentioned allocative use which directs internal resources and planning.

One of the conditions supporting organizational learning is a management style that responds positively to internal scrutiny. Most (8 out of 10) of the focus group participants stated management responds positively to internal scrutiny, although in one instance a participant suggested that in some circumstances line staff “shut down” during meetings with their CEO because they have little interaction with him. The CEO commented that he is not directly involved with the project staff as he sees his role as the business end of the organization and day to day programming, including logic models and reporting data, is left to staff.

Another factor related to organizational learning is openness to change, especially proactive change through use of reflection on new information. Focus group participants were asked about the drivers for change in their organizations. The majority of the participants cited reactive drivers of change such as critical incidents involving clients or staff and requirements from funders. Two participants described their organizations as
using ongoing proactive change and strategic planning processes such as brainstorming sessions. Another staff member depicted his process as describe the needed changes, set up a time line, negotiate, implement and then celebrate.

4.3.2 Focus Group Summary

The focus group by and large confirmed the pattern of responses from the survey regarding the primary purposes and use of outcome measurement. Focus group members agreed the primary purpose of an outcome measurement system is to ensure accountability and program improvement. Their perceptions of purpose were reflected in their use of outcome data. The project staff most often used outcome measurement information for project fine tuning and reporting achievement to stakeholders.

The participants questioned the validity of the measures used to determine program success and encouraged a partnership between project and funding staff in developing the measures. They suggested the need for more flexibility with the outcome measurement systems, as well as the need to have other methods for determining program success. Moreover, they recommended that new funders scan existing databases to determine data elements currently collected to inform the new funder’s data requirements. Respondents perceived this as a strategy for reducing the tension between data collection and entry requirements and service provision tasks.
4.4 Findings Phase III

4.4.1 Funding Staff Interview Results

Each member of the program, research, evaluation and system’s team was interviewed between June and August 2004 to gain their perspective of the outcome measurement process. The interviews lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. Half of the interviews took place at the agency and the other half at various locations in Tallahassee.

The interview participants (N=8) had a combined total of 39.5 years of working at the agency with a range of employment from 1 year to 12.5 years. All but one of the participants had at least a bachelor’s degree, 4 had master’s degrees and 2 had professional (doctoral) degrees. Participants were mixed on their professional expertise with logic models and outcome measurement systems. Five of the participants had some experience in using outcome measurement prior to coming to the current agency and three did not. All but two of the staff had previous social service experience.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Experience with Logic Models</strong></td>
<td><strong>Education Level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Experience with Logic Models</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Less than 1 Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1-3 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3-5 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty Degree*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5 or more Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Title/Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Experience with Outcome Measurement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Job Title/Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Experience with Outcome Measurement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Specialists</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Less than 1 Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluators</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-3 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3-5 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5 or more Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: 1 staff holds a certificate in website development and management information systems.

Table 4.12. Funding Staff Demographics

Three of the interviewees were males and 5 were females; 7 were Caucasian and one was African American. As mentioned previously, the funder uses a team approach which includes a program specialist, evaluator and management information system’s staff from the funder agency who work with the service providers to develop logic models and outcome measurement systems. Only one of the staff (from information systems) involved in the outcome measurement teams did not participate in the interviews.

The staff were asked to describe their job responsibilities which direct their approach to their work tasks. Their responses are listed in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Specialists</td>
<td>Monitor subcontracts for compliance with program objectives and outcomes and subcontract requirements. (FSI 002: 5-6) I oversee 15 programs that provide various types of services to clients. I provide technical assistance, monitoring as far as achievement on goals, objectives, outcomes as well as ensuring and verifying documentation. I also am responsible for collecting data, ensuring data is accurately entered into the database by the site staff. I am also sorta the main contact with the site if they are having any problems. For example, if there is a problem with the database I act as the contact that does the initial trouble shooting and then I get with the data management staff at the (funder name) to help correct the problem. (FSI005:14-22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluators</td>
<td>Evaluator, the guy who makes sense out of the data. I work mostly with the school groups and other family activities such as support groups, circle of parents, parenting skills classes. (FSI001:1-3) I review evaluation design, recommend modifications to the design, do literature reviews, assist with the development of objectives and outcomes, assist with data collection as it relates to objectives and outcomes, analyze the measures, relate the research findings to program recommendations. I also consult with program/project staff on issues related to research and evaluation. (FSI004:8-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Information Systems Coordinators</td>
<td>Develop and maintain websites, data systems and reports. (FSI003:7) I create databases, create reports and provide technical assistance to the programs for entering data. I also develop the queries and reports for the outcome measurement systems. (FSI007:29-31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Managers</td>
<td>I supervise the core (funder name) unit for the demonstration sites, monitor contract compliance with state contracts. Monitor contract development and procession for all contracts and subcontracts. I supervise the development of all quarterly and annual reports and evaluation studies submitted to the state funders. I serve on the management team which develops and enforces agency policy. (FSI006:25-28) My responsibilities include directing the RES unit for (funder name)—those duties include recruiting and hiring staff in program evaluation and systems development and maintenance. I am the direct supervisor of the staff responsible for developing the progress and objectives reports and evaluating the programs funded by the (funder name). I also supervise system staff in the development implementation and maintenance of data management systems. I am also responsible for the development and implementation of the unit budget and I participate on the overall organization management team. (FSI008:32-39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13. Funding Staff Job Titles and Descriptions
For the most part, the funding staff approach outcome measurement as a tool that focuses on results and promotes service delivery improvement. Accountability was mentioned by staff on several occasions as a secondary purpose of outcome measurement.

FS008: From the local program staff the feedback that I got somewhat earlier in my tenure here is that it was viewed with initial trepidation and seen as an accountability tool. This of course happened over time and I believe that over the course of the initial year they begin to lose their fear of the logic model and reporting process. I think this is based on our organizational philosophy that we present the logic model as a tool for improvement, as well as accountability, but within an improvement framework (333-340).

FSI003: The most beneficial use is to find initiatives that help people reach their goals and help the policy makers know which programs are worthy of funding so people in need get the help they need (819-821).

FSI006: Documentation of services has also improved over time because the logic model lays everything out in a logical manner. It holds the programs and funder accountable for the effectiveness of the project based on what they have written in the logic model (258-271).

FSI005: Use results to provide support for programs, identify weaknesses and strengths and provide support through feedback, reporting to state funders. We also use the information to help replicate programs and use them in lessons learned publications (826-829).

FSI007: I think it helps the program staff to see that they are on track or not. For example, once they get their reports back from me they can see their numbers are low. Once they see that they can determine if they need to do more work in that area or tell us that’s not the way the program works so we can rework our queries (503-506).
The funding staff perceived accountability as two fold. They had responsibility for being good stewards of stakeholder money, as well as holding project staff accountable to them for the wise use of those funds.

FSI003: We use the results to report to our funders to supply information on how well we’re using their resources. Whether or not participants are getting served to reach their goals…to evaluate and report to legislators and other funders on initiatives that work and are worth repeating across the state and those that don’t work. To see and maybe refine our processes and program requirements (814-818).

FSI005: The logic model when used can help refocus on specifics. It is a map of how the program is suppose to run. Program managers can use it to help manage their staff and keep them focused on the processes and services that lead to the general goal attainment. It is also an evaluation tool for performance measurement. Should be showing the areas of achievement to both audiences the funder and the program staff. It is also a tool that outsiders (not program staff) should be able to pick up and review so they can understand the program (156-163).

Generally, funding staff viewed the logic model as a contract. Programs are expected to adhere to the logic model which outlines the data collection elements on which the program achievement is judged. In fact, it is part of the program’s contract documents that are maintained in the funder’s files for accountability (Archival document AD005OPFF).

FSI006: It required the program specialists to be more astute in being able to help sites implement the goals and objectives and develop strong measurement tools for data collection. Documentation of services has also improved overtime because the logic model lays everything out in a logical manner. It holds the programs and funder accountable for the effectiveness of the project based on what they have written in the logic model. Having the logic model even for paraprofessionals helps make things understandable. My staff like having the clear cut guidelines (266-272).

Funding staff spoke of the tension between data collection and service provision resulting from an outcome measurement approach. This issue is related to barriers that
impede adapting to a results-based framework. According to the funding staff factors here include; lack of involvement of project staff, lack of technical savvy, lack of understanding the program implementation and lack of communication between management and line staff. Funding staff believe this tension is based on new and unfamiliar data collection requirements and the need to realign human resources from direct service provision to data collection and entry duties.

FSI003: Well unfortunately, it probably has somewhat of a negative affect on service provision to begin with because there is more time devoted to collecting the data. Hopefully after reports are provided to the program they can see areas that maybe they should be doing things that they’re not doing. They might get help being better organized—not meeting outcomes could encourage discussion on what they could change to make things better (121-126). I think there is some compromise. They (project staff) feel to a certain extent it (the logic model) does tell their achievement story, but sometimes they’re not too happy as the outcome measurement reporting requirements interfere with service provision. Because of all the requirements—some are too demanding in time that needs to be allocated to collecting the data and there are always exceptions to the rules…like the numbers and percentages don’t tell the whole story (430-435).

FSI006:…at first it was like fighting tooth and nail. Old school social workers were touchy-feely about what it was they were doing. They didn’t see the utility right off the bat of the frameworks—they were all about the smiles of the children. Documenting results was not what we were taught back in the day in social work (323-327).

The primary change in their practice discussed by the funding staff as a result of an outcome measurement framework was providing technical assistance to the projects to assist them in adapting to measuring results. Specifically, the amount of time that the funding staff spends with project staff in building capacity regarding query development and the use of logic models and outcome measurement systems for program improvement has increased. Additionally, they assist projects in locating and acquiring measurement tools such as pre/post test assessments to determine impact on clients served.
FSI002: I review reports before I go on a site visit and talk with the program staff about the low scoring areas. Work with the program staff to determine why it is happening (low scoring areas). It may be differences between the data being inputted and what the program says it should be. I work with the staff to reconcile the differences between the data output and the program staff’s hand calculations. I also work with the MIS staff and project staff to reconcile the differences in the output. Also use the data to talk about changes down the road, what needs to be done and how it can be done recognizing changes may not be made during the life of the contract due to the inability to change the current data base structure (237-246)…. Sometimes the words and what the discrete purpose of the individual outcome and how it relates to the program mission. It’s difficult to understand the formulas from the database software used—unless you know the software it makes it difficult to understand how the outcome is derived from the data. Since we don’t have the TA resources to fully train the project staff in the manipulation of the data they don’t understand how to use and make use of the databases (707-712).

FSI008: I think what they understand the least are the measurement tools. I don’t think the project staff have had the opportunity to have exposure to the issues of validity and reliability of measurement tools. There are a lot of tools available to them if they know where to go to get them. However, acquiring the tools also takes time (to research them) and resources (to pay for them). I also think another area that is critical but they still don’t understand that well about outcome measurement is how to collect the data…What I mean is that the project staff know that they have to collect the data but they don’t really know how it is suppose to be collected and maintained in order to be able to get good information out of it (729-737).

FSI003: …Well, I didn’t have any interaction with the programs before outcome measurement. Ummm, I think that the (funder name) is looking at programs in a different way in that we want to be able to show impact and not only “see the happy children’s faces”. One thing that I think is that the more the systems develop and get more sophisticated that there is more of a need for technical assistance. When the programs were only sending a narrative report, we didn’t even have an MIS unit. So the more sophisticated we get on the requirements for outcome measurement, the more need there is to provide technical assistance on how to use the systems (250-257).

FSI008: I think we have done more in the area of providing training on how to use the logic model as a tool for program improvement. We’ve also refined the logic model over time so that it more comprehensively captures information such as measurement tools, definitions of measurement and we’ve provided more technical assistance than we were initially providing as a function of resources. When I first came on board there was no protocol in place to refine the logic model and there is one now
that we follow to help us work with the program specialists and the MIS and evaluators so they can develop the logic model with the project staff (273-280).

Funding staff reported uses of outcome measurement similar to the survey and focus group respondents. Primary uses included: providing feedback to projects, determining trends in programming, identifying projects for replication, maintaining funding, reporting to funders to get more funding, and so forth. Some of the responses indicated the results are used in a reflective manner that supports organizational learning. Respondents disagreed on whether the results are used to make funding decisions. Both managers stated they do, but the line staff, with the exception of one, didn’t seem to think so. Table 4.13 presents the funding staff responses regarding outcome measurement use and exemplars for each use cited.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Use</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Exemplar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Use</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>We describe them (results), write them up and put them in reports and then send them to others to tell them what we learn. (Are the results being used?)…Yeah, probably, the impact will vary—it’s quite possible to write a very nifty report that no one reads and then it doesn’t get used—and then there are times that you’re in an informal meeting discussing an interesting piece of information with someone and then they pick up on it and pay attention. (FS 001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>We use the results to report to our funders to supply information on how well we’re using their resources. (FS 003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>We use the process and objectives report to guide the next site visit. During the site monitoring visit the previous report is used to develop the agenda—what you talk about, we also use it to determine training needs and technical assistance is provided based on what the program specialists see on the reports and from feedback from the site staff regarding the reports. (FS 006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Yes, we do use it for funding decisions when we are determining continuation funding and renewals of contracts. If the program is unable to meet a high number of their objectives and outcomes after a lengthy time we may stop funding. But if they weren’t providing data to support or verify they’ve been providing the services we would put up with the lack of reporting for about 6 to 9 months before we would defund. (FS 006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>We develop the reports so we can report back to the state to get more money. I give the report to the program specialist and they ship them out to the program staff. (FS 007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>We’ve made changes to the programs based on the data and we’ve also made changes to the way the data is captured based on what we’ve learned from the data reports. (FS 002)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14. Outcome Measurement Use by Funding Staff
As was the case for the survey and focus group respondents, funding staff most often use outcome measurement to improve services. They mentioned that when they look at outcome measurement reports and recognize discrepancies between the data so generated and the project staff’s perceptions of how they are doing, they reflect on what is actually occurring and make adjustments to reconcile the discrepancies. The statement made by FSI002 in the previous section illuminates this process of review, reconciliation and reflection. *I review reports before I go on a site visit and talk with the program staff about the low scoring areas. Work with the program staff to determine why it is happening (low scoring areas). It may be differences between the data being inputted and what the program says it should be. I work with the staff to reconcile the differences between the data output and the program staff’s hand calculations. I also work with the MIS staff and project staff to reconcile the differences in the output. Also use the data to talk about changes down the road, what needs to be done and how it can be done recognizing changes may not be made during the life of the contract due to the inability to change the current data base structure* (237-246). This statement also points out the lack of flexibility of the data systems that support outcome reporting.

Another use reported for the information generated by outcome measurement systems is to update the logic models of the program sites for the upcoming year. For example, one staff stated that when it comes time for discussing revisions to the logic models for the annual renewal of funding, she makes suggestions to the project staff on setting benchmarks based on achievement from the prior year. Other staff noted the need for program staff to be realistic about what they can accomplish and this can be achieved
by having staff involved in developing both the program and outcome measurement system.

FS003: I think that some of the programs have gone back and realized that some of the goals and objectives they stated (in the proposals and logic models) were not realistic—they gave it more thought on what it is they can legitimately expect to accomplish as a result of reviewing the outcome reports (213-216).

FS006: They all (the program staff) have a specific focus on what the program is suppose to do...they all have a program plan and can spell out their services pretty well & then identify a few things that they can track overtime. Often the project staff aim very high and unrealistically set bench marks that they cannot achieve. I look at their achievement from the year before and suggest they take a look at it too and then consider where they want to set their benchmark. Generally, I believe programs select objectives and outcomes they believe they will perform and meet. However, often times the goals are not realistic. Problems occur when grant writers develop the logic model & other staff who were not in the development phase attempt to implement the program. In order for logic models to “make sense” they must be clearly defined with frequency of services and specific measurement tools (572-582).

Several of the funding staff pointed out the improvement of their own knowledge regarding outcome measurement systems over the past four to five years. Numerous statements were made about learning through working with the project staff on outcome measurement implementation. The staff learned about outcome measurement practices as well as the project contexts within which outcome measurement is applied.

FS007: After sometime and several discussions and going back and forth over the numbers they ask me what am I counting and then I explain what I’m counting in the query and then they can tell me what they are actually doing so we both understand what the program is doing and how I should develop the query and where they should indicate what they are doing in the computer program (184-188).

FS008: As we measured attendance and looked at pre-post tests for change in knowledge attitude and behavior the program staff would work with the youth to help improve the level of interest and buy into the program. Problems of poor results—many looked at quality of staff, efficiency of staff were highlighted for the staff so they could
make program adjustments. We used focus groups to find out the perceived root causes of the problems and provided the info to project management. Sometimes it may have lead to replacement of staff or inform how staff delivers information so they could improve their delivery. It also helped provide guidance for changes in programs such as how, when and where the classes were offered and potential changes in staff. We shared the quarterly reports at the administrative meetings because there were 5 sites total that were involved in the project. By sharing the reports on lessons learned on performance the sites could use the information to improve the programs. For example, many of the sites struggled with parent participation. One of the sites had very good parent participation and the staff shared strategies with the other sites on how to improve parent participation (190-205).

FS002: For me personally, I am understanding the formulas used to build the queries in the outcome measurement systems and how the formulas are derived. My recent efforts have been toward making sure the objectives and outcomes actually are measuring the program’s efforts. We’ve made changes to the programs based on the data and we’ve also made changes to the way the data is captured based on what we’ve learned from the data reports. Some of the changes are generated from the program staff—mostly these come from the programs that are “getting it”. Whereas with the less sophisticated programs changes are usually generated from the program specialist and the funding staff (803-813).

FS004: I think the logic model framework we use could be modified to include the qualitative as well as the quantitative outcome measures. I haven’t thought through it all, but I think that would strengthen the logic model we’re using now (438-441). Well I think the staff (program funder) understand outcome measurement effectiveness. We need to distinguish between output and outcome better than we do. But, outcomes and outputs are blurry…outcomes is truly what they’ve achieved…it’s the change related to the program service, not providing the service itself (690-694).

Funding staff also admitted the challenges with instituting outcome measurement in social service environments. They see an initial phase of resistance very similar to ceremonial compliance, followed by various levels of acceptance and use. There was also the awareness that both the project and funding staff have difficulty with understanding the concepts and processes associated with outcome measurement.
FS004: Well there is a lot of variation in the programs and the staff’s perceptions of outcome measurement. For the most part, the project staff understand the need for outcome measurement, but don’t appreciate having to do it. Data collection is probably perceived as aggravating/frustrating sometimes (314-317).

FS008: From the local program staff the feedback that I got somewhat earlier in my tenure here is that it was viewed with initial trepidation and seen as an accountability tool. Once the program staff began to realize it’s relevance to them they saw it as a tool for helping clients and they seem to have bought into it (the logic model and outcome measurement process). This of course happened over time and I believe that over the course of the initial year they begin to lose their fear of the logic model and reporting process. I think this is based on our organizational philosophy that we present the logic model as a tool for improvement, as well as accountability, but within an improvement framework (333-340).

FS001: I think we have a peculiar issue that the programs have their own sense about what needs to be done—We come along with a big stick (money) and we create a structure that doesn’t always fit their structure—a little bit schizophrenia in the program occurs. They continue to collect data on what they’ve always collected data on and at the same time they collect the data that we request to please us—but it’s kinda secondary for them as they’re data system is the 1st priority. This can lead to problems….Some data entry duplication—it’s a real potential for numbers not adding up when there are two data collection systems being used simultaneously (281-288).

FS005: I think everyone is aware of what it is and it’s something they have to do. We don’t hear as many complaints about the logic models now. And they can connect their logic models to the databases and the reports. When the data is empty then that’s a red flag. The numbers kinda speak for themselves (318-322).

FS005: The program staff understand the purpose. I don’t think this was the case 5 years ago—before they were just doing them because the funder required it. Now they do it because the funder is asking and they can use the information for getting more funding, managing programs—improving services and evaluating services (365-369).

FS004: It seems there is still so much struggling to get a grass roots program to the level of sophistication to get to useful outcomes. I think there is still reluctance on the part of the projects because of the challenges related to data collection (359-364).

FS008: Their outcomes tend to focus exclusively on long-term outcomes and not focused on short-term outcomes that allow them to move to the long term outcomes. The outcomes they include in their logic models are rooted in their goals. I can give you an example from the pregnancy prevention programs that is relevant to this question. In the
pregnancy program the relevant factors in achieving the long term outcome or rather the larger goal of the project was an increase knowledge of birth control, an increase in self-esteem and increase in academic performance and basically an increase in life management skills. The project didn’t measure those things even though those things are recognized as related to teen pregnancy outcomes. They generally had a single outcome tied to their overarching goal and couldn’t link the influence of the other factors to why they didn’t achieve the teen pregnancy outcome. Outcomes are influenced by their macro goal and need to be broken down into the short-term goals (outcome) through factors that are proven to be related to the overarching goal (585-599).

FS006: I think taking the time to do it right, not just counting widgets—in a fashion that lends itself to be credible. Formulas and the lack of exposure to methodologies is probably the most difficult thing for folks to understand. Agencies that are mature, and have savvy in house staff seem to get it a lot better then some of the smaller, less savvy organizations. Of course sometimes because of the financing issues the programs cannot afford to hire folks that have a higher level of educational understanding and so this creates some issues. There is often times a lack of enough money due to funding constraints so they (the programs) end up hiring less experienced folks that don’t get it. I think experience and exposure are the two factors that contribute most to understanding and doing outcome measurement (662-671).

FS004: A lot of what we label as outcomes are not outcomes, but outputs. So it’s not clearly delineated for both the funding staff and the project staff. It can be frustrating to the program staff to develop an outcome that is truly realistic—Part of the reason is because data are not readily available. It also adds an additional challenge that may not be part of their daily service delivery… (collecting data and projecting outcomes). The projects and sometimes the staff providing technical assistance don’t really know what’s realistic about achieving the outcome…many times the n (number of cases) are small. I think we’re still not making enough progress on that (increasing the n’s) (140-148).

Gaining access to comparison data is another issue observed by funding staff. They reported because they are in the non-profit sector obtaining data sets with which to compare project and follow-up data on clients from other agencies is especially difficult.

FS001: Outcome indicators/data need to be OBTAINABLE. Unfortunately, it is all too common for various state departments to take the position that they must protect their clients' personal data and not relinquish it for ANY purpose, including the alleged data needs of some pesky do-gooder non-profit organization a few blocks away that says they want some personal data to evaluate their own programs. This comment is
particularly applicable to two very large state departments with which our own programmatic interests overlap quite extensively. (1093-1100)…… Note that we're very fortunate with our flagship program that the mechanism for obtaining child abuse and neglect information (the Holy Grail of outcome measures!) is legislatively BUILT-IN, but that's clearly a unique circumstance, and the situation is NOWHERE near as good as it should be for many, if not most, of our other programs (1026-1030).

4.4.2 Funding Staff Interview Summary

Most of the funding staff seemed to view the terms outcome measurement and evaluation interchangeably. When asked the purpose of outcome measurement the respondents used statements like determining program effectiveness, determine impact, value and worth which are evaluative functions. Only two of the funding agency respondents defined outcome measurement purpose in terms that are distinct from the function of evaluation. Their responses support the definition of outcome measurement in the literature.

Funding staff were unanimous in their perception that outcome measurement’s primary use is for service improvement and secondly an accountability tool. They perceived the implementation of an outcome measurement framework as directly responsible for numerous differences in their work routines. In this regard, they cited the type and manner of the technical assistance they give to service providers and their interactions with the project staff have changed based upon adopting an outcomes measurement framework. Frequently noted changes were providing more technical assistance in query development and understanding and acquiring measurement tools that match service provision.
The funding staff identified several issues they see as hindering the use of a results-oriented framework such as lack of: communication between management and line staff; understanding of program implementation; involvement of project staff in developing the logic models; and knowledge about how the data collected by staff is connected to reports. Like the survey and focus group participants, the funding staff believe there is a tension between service provision and data collection. They see the tension based upon a change in how the projects are required to do business.

A major barrier for effectively adapting to a results-based approach proposed by the funding staff is a deficiency in the technical savvy of local project staff. Funding staff suggested grass roots projects without previous experience with a results orientation are at a disadvantage in the new funding paradigm. As one funding staff lamented….we do a lot of talking, but most of the time we are talking past each other. This generally happens because they are required to do it (outcome measurement) but they don’t really have the time or understanding to thoroughly become engaged in the process (Field Notes entry 7/25/05). This lack of understanding creates the potential for ceremonial compliance in that the projects develop logic models and agree to the data collection process, but do not truly engage in the use of outcome measurement. Thus, projects are at different levels of understanding outcome measurement systems.

There tends to be an overall agreement that measurement and linking program processes to database components is difficult for service provision staff. Although, for the most part, the funding staff did not have strong insight into what is really occurring at
the site level. When questions specifically asked about site activities, respondents answered in generalities with the exception of the program specialist.

By and large, funding staff did see a change over the course of working with projects that indicated the project staff move from an initial ceremonial compliance to adopting outcome measurement into their daily practice. Generally, they thought the process took about a year before the funding staff and the project staff gained a working knowledge of each other’s roles and tasks related to implementing the outcome measurement protocols. I’ve noticed a difference in the past year and a half since I’ve been working with the programs in developing the systems. It takes at least a year for both the program staff and the MIS staff to learn what’s going on between the program and the data. If it doesn’t say it in the logic model, then I don’t know it’s happening because I don’t know about program implementation (FS 007:399-403). The program staff understand the purpose. I don’t think this was the case 5 years ago—before they were just doing them because the funder required it. Now they do it because the funder is asking and they can use the information for getting more funding, managing programs—improving services and evaluating service (FS005: 365-369.)

Funding staff also struggle with implementing outcome measurement and have learned through doing. Only a few of them had extensive experience (more than three years) with logic models and outcome measurement. Some still have difficulty understanding the terminology and with the level of technological knowledge associated with developing queries for outcome measurement reports. A lot of what we label as outcomes are not outcomes, but outputs. So it’s not clearly delineated for both the
funding staff and the project staff. It can be frustrating to the program (project) staff to develop an outcome that is truly realistic—Part of the reason is because data are not readily available. It also adds an additional challenge that may not be part of their daily service delivery... (collecting data and projecting outcome.). The projects and sometimes the staff providing technical assistance don’t really know what’s realistic about achieving the outcome...many times the n (number of cases) are small. I think we’re still not making enough progress on that (increasing the n’s) (FSI004: 140-14).

The interview participants remarked that the use of a team approach that includes the program specialist, an evaluator and a management information systems staff has aided in cross-learning of staff functions and increased the technical capacity of the funding staff.

General agreement exists that the outcome measurement reports do not tell the whole achievement story. Logic models developed by the project staff provide the elements for quantitative data, but there is a need for qualitative, complementary contextual information. ....because we let it begin with the project staff telling us about what it is that they do and want to accomplish with the programs. It is inherent in the social work field that quantitative outcomes don’t ever tell the whole story (FSI 008:447-450). The funder is willing to use a mixed methodology when resources are available and the project design is best suited for a mixed method approach. But, overall outcome measurement is used as the primary tool for evaluating the project’s success in achieving goals.

The funding staff interview results confirm organizational learning is occurring. Instrumental and symbolic uses of outcome measurement results were the most often
cited by funding staff (43% and 24% respectively). King’s work suggests that instrumental and conceptual uses of information are those that promote organizational learning. Although the funding staff reported conceptual use of data, it was not as prevalent as symbolic use (use for enhancing program prestige and visibility). Furthermore, staff mentioned several times that they review and reflect on the data, as well as use the data to inform the project staff on progress toward achieving results and establishing reasonable benchmarks. This would indicate an anticipatory use of data as described by Marquardt (1996). They also describe the process of going back and forth with project staff to get a thorough understanding of project components so they can create databases that accurately reflect the practices.

Despite the fact that funding staff described the reflective process, they also acknowledged the feedback loop does not routinely come full cycle. As one of the funding staff affirmed, “I think the end of the feedback loop may not be as complete as we’d like it to be…. It seems that the sequence of the process may need improved because you’ve already completed the logic models for the next year before you’ve reviewed the objectives and outcomes report for the previous year” (FS 004:1006-1010).

4.5 Findings Phase IV

4.5.1 Archival Record Results

The funding agency provided various documents during the study. Each document was reviewed and coded using the same coding scheme as the other data collection tools. Seventy-two documents totaling 346 pages were reviewed including
guidelines, protocols for developing logic models and outcome measurement systems used by the funders and the project staff, contracts, logic model review tools, project logic models for years 2001 through 2005, data reports, e-mail communications between funding staff, funding staff and project staff regarding logic models and outcome measurement systems development and reports, and outcome measurement reports provided by the funding agency to their funders. The majority of the archival records provided insight into the espoused logic model and outcome measurement process as well as the actual process based on communications and records between the funder and the service providers from 2001 to 2005. Table 4.15 presents the types of documents retrieved and reviewed from the funding and project staff.

The funding process begins with responses to requests for concept papers. This cycle is initiated in October and papers are accepted through December 31 for the upcoming fiscal year which begins the following July. The general eligibility and funding guidelines outline the requirements for funding and specify that “research and evaluation are the cornerstone” of the funder’s programs. The agency projects a science-based evaluation system that is user friendly and compatible with other data systems and involves a feedback loop for determining evidence-based practices (AD003RES). Funding recipients are required to participate in ongoing long- and short-term evaluation efforts. The maximum funding cycle is five years. According to the funding guidelines, the agency will “fund innovative, comprehensive, community-based, family-focused and

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8 The State Department of Health and Department of Children and Families provide some of the funds to the non-profit organization to distribute to the local projects.
culturally relevant programs that ensure the physical, emotional, social, cognitive, cultural and spiritual development of children through strengthening and supporting the family” (AD005OPFF).

The guidelines include the logic model framework and an example of each element in the logic model as guidance for the projects in developing their local project’s logic model. The application package also contains a budget and revenue summary with instructions. The budget instructions provide direction on allowable costs and a section on salary and wages describes the staff positions that will be supported by the funder. This section does not specify positions directly responsible for data collection related to outcome measurement (AD005OPFF, page 10). There is also a requirement that the program be fully operational within 30 days of receipt of initial funds (AD005OPFF, page 3).

The archival documents demonstrate the evolution of the funder over the past five years in regard to initiating a results-oriented approach to project funding and evaluation. Earlier dated documents show the initial adaptations to developing logic models and implementing outcome measurement systems. For example, a data scan of a project dated 2001 has a missing data range of between forty-five to ninety percent on those data elements (fields) required to determine outcome achievement⁹ (AD013OMSa). Comparatively, in the fifth year of funding the missing data decreased to less than twenty

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⁹ This was the first year of funding for the project and they had their own management information system. Therefore the requirement of reporting in the funder’s system was perceived by the project staff as burdensome.
percent for those elements (fields) required to determine outcome achievement (AD013OMSb). During this time the funder progressed from using EXCEL-based data collection spreadsheets to ACCESS and Web-based systems that have reduced the amount of data entry error. This modification has increased the utility for the end-user, as the project staff can now choose reports from a reports menu that they can easily generate and use.
Table 4.15. Archival Documents by Type and Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Document Source</th>
<th>Document Format</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funder Staff</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
</tr>
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Archival documents confirm substantial amounts of technical assistance is provided by funding staff to project staff in developing logic models and outcome measurement reporting. Only one document was received from the funder that reported outcomes achievement to the state funders. There was no archival data provided that gives insight into feedback from the state funders regarding outcome measurement achievement.
The documents support the funding staff interview comments that they have learned through implementing outcome measurement. The changes in documents, logic model formats and development information reflect fine-tuning of the protocols based on the funding staff receiving feedback from the projects and each other. As one interviewee expressed, *first thing that comes to mind is a technical point—when you analyze data you learn better ways to set things up. Figure out a better mouse trap. Get better at doing it* (FS001:109-111). Another staff summarized her experiences with the outcome measurement process as, *We’ve learned a lot in the three years I’ve been here and I’ve watched the programs make changes as we learned from the data* (FS002:119-120). This statement suggests that both the funding staff and the project staff are learning together through implementing outcome measurement. This is substantiated by the archival data as there are several iterations of logic model review tools (AD008RES, AD010RES, AD022LM, AD033LM, AD046LM, AD057LM, AD007RES and AD004RES) and corresponding staff trainings (AD069OPFF) to address the changes and offer technical assistance to the project staff.

Even though there is evidence of learning from both the project staff and the funding staff, the quarterly reports from the projects give the appearance that the project staff have not fully grasped outcome measurement for utilization in program planning. In general, the projects consistently report client demographics and service provision, but do not capture information that demonstrates outcome achievement. (AD049OMS, AD050OMS, AD051OMS, AD052OMS, AD053OMS, and AD054OMS) The primary issues listed by the projects in their narrative are the number of participants is very small.
within the measurement parameters and “this number should be higher, data not being captured accurately to track this measure”\textsuperscript{10}. This is especially evident in the first two years of funding. For example, as mentioned earlier, in one program\textsuperscript{11} during the first year of funding between 48-100 percent of the data was missing in the outcome measurement system that would be used to determine outcome achievement. However, the number of clients served and client demographics were accurately documented in the database. Several of the funding staff mentioned that after a year of working with the outcome measurement systems, they seem to be able to “get it”. The archival documents suggest the learning curve is closer to two years.

Another issue reported by the project staff is they have difficulty obtaining outcome data from local partner agencies (AD052OMS). This occurs even though the project has a letter of support indicating the partner is willing to cooperate with the project in the data collection process. This dependency limits the project’s ability to report results to the funder.

The archival data verify the lack of flexibility of the logic models from year to year and in the outcome measurement systems in capturing the full impact of the project activities. A review of the logic models found little difference between them. The most obvious changes were the benchmarks used for measuring achievement and the number

\textsuperscript{10} The projects submit a quarterly narrative report that responds to the data reports produced by the outcome measurement systems developed by the funder based on project logic models.

\textsuperscript{11} This project was housed in an established agency that also had an in-house management information system it used for reporting to other funders.
of clients the program was expecting to serve (AD024LM, AD026LM, AD015LM, AD016LM, AD012LM, AD029LM, AD030LM). One project, in particular illuminated this issue in an e-mail communication to the funding staff. The communication reads; 

Although (X program) has used an empowerment evaluation protocol for program planning and evaluation from its beginnings, it has also been required to adhere to other evaluations models required by program funders. It’s most rigorous evaluation plan is the result of being a pilot prevention program for the (X funder, case study participant) which uses a Logic Model planning and evaluation tool. Currently our evaluation results rely heavily on the information gathered from the post training participant evaluations and the results of follow-up contact with training participants. These measures predominantly deal with changes in awareness/knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that result from participating in any of our training programs. Although good information is derived from these evaluation and follow-up contacts, they in and of themselves, fail to capture all the good results we believe our different program strategies of facilitation, engagement and advocacy are achieving. Further, we continue to have difficulty connecting with a majority of our training participants in order to obtain evaluative information and therefore, not consistently capturing the results of our prevention work (AD028OMS).

The above communication speaks to the difficulty projects have in their follow-up efforts which are commonly a component of outcome measurement for determining long-term outcomes. Moreover, it suggests some outcomes are more easily documented through measurement tools than others. In the above case, it appears the project staff are
confident the systems are effective in measuring short-term change in awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors associated with their training programs, but less effective in determining further reaching results that are based on applying the skills learned in training.

There is little evidence of feedback to the funding staff from their funding source available in the archival records suggesting the feedback loop is not complete. Each year, the funder is required to produce and submit an annual report that includes the outcome achievement of each of the projects it funds. This report is labor intensive and takes about two months to produce based on data analysis, review and recommendations. (AD043OMS, AD044OMS, and AD045OMS) The researcher asked the funding staff management if they receive feedback from their funder and the response was “not usually”. Actually, they view the lack of feedback as a good thing in that, “no news is good news”. The fact that the funder renewed their contract was evidence to them that the funder was happy with the funding staff’s work. Likewise, when management was asked if they share the annual reports with the project staff, their response was “not generally, unless they ask”12. These examples suggest the feedback loop has not been thoroughly operationalized.

4.5.2 Areas of Convergence

The primary purposes and uses of outcome measurement were agreed upon by all of the data sources. Each source stated improvement and accountability as the main

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purposes and, consequently uses of outcome measurement. There was general agreement that an outcome measurement approach helps staff focus on results, although the survey responses imply this is not unanimously so.

Based on King’s framework, instrumental and symbolic uses were cited as the number one and two uses by all respondents. The focus group participants equally reported conceptual and symbolic uses of outcome measurement information.

All three respondent groups agreed that outcome measurement was viewed as least useful for reassigning staff and allocating resources (making funding decisions or reassigning staff). Likewise, persuasive use of outcome measurement, such as promoting the program with a funder or for public relations was viewed as a less acceptable purpose.

The need for more flexibility in the logic model and subsequent databases was another area of agreement across sources. The comments from the focus group and funding staff interviews indicated it is difficult to make changes to logic models and databases after the first year of funding. The archival data shows little variation in the project logic models from year to year. The most frequent changes were adjustments to the benchmarks for achievement levels. With the exception of one logic model in the archival data, the logic models remained virtually the same over time.13

Respondents in all groups indicated they were at varying levels of understanding regarding outcome measurement and integrating the use of outcome measurement data into program practice. The focus group and funding staff acknowledged they were

13 The logic model for the project that submitted an e-mail noted in the study had major changes once the e-mail was reviewed by the evaluator and program specialist.
“learning by doing” and it takes diligence in communication to improve the co-learning process. Several of the focus group participants identified the relationship with the program specialist as the most important factor in learning about the logic model and how to enter and use the data from outcome measurement systems. The archival data also demonstrated the various levels of understanding of the funding and project staff. For instance, logic model protocols and outcome measurement system documents revealed variation among stakeholders in accurate use of terms, population of data systems and understanding of linkage between logic models and data systems. The e-mail communications further highlighted the respondent’s challenges and strengths in accommodating outcome measurement.

The survey, focus group and funding staff interviews each described a tension that exists between service provision and data collection and entry required by an outcome measurement framework. The surveys indicated that one reason for this is the lack of financial support for the additional tasks associated with outcome measurement. Funding staff see it as based upon a change in how the projects are required to do business. The focus group participant’s remarks describe the tension as a diversion of staff resources to data collection and away from service provision which is similar to the survey responses perceptions of “it’s required but not supported”.

Funding staff and project staff use the terms evaluation and outcome measurement interchangeably. However, the focus group, funding staff interview and archival data agreed that the outcome measurement system reports do not tell the “whole program story”. The need to include other types of evaluation strategies to enhance what
the numbers don’t tell resonated among the different sources. Funding staff and focus
group participants suggested using qualitative information or program observation as
methods for improving the evaluative utility of the outcome measurement systems.

4.5.3 Areas of Divergence

One of the primary barriers to creating realistic and measurable goals and
objectives from the viewpoint of the funder staff is the lack of technical knowledge.
Although this is the perception of funding staff, it is not evident from the other data
sources. The survey and focus group participants cited resources and the lack of
familiarity with outcome measurement development and measurement tools as the
primary barriers to creating realistic and measurable goals. Both the evaluators and
program specialists admitted their lack of knowledge regarding developing queries and
their dependence on the management information staff in query development and
explanations of formulas to project staff. According to the funding staff, this factor
inhibits the development of realistic and useful outcome measurement systems. It also
has a direct impact on funding and project staff’s ability to use the information in
program fine-tuning and planning.

The funding staff had the perception that the service delivery staff were not
involved in developing the logic model and subsequent outcome measurement systems.
The survey results suggest a high level of involvement across service staff and minimal
involvement of hired consultants. In fact, the direct service staff that responded to the
survey acknowledged a higher level of engagement in the logic model development
process than executives and managers did. But this was not supported by the direct
service staff who participated in the focus groups. Project staff, especially those in direct service positions from more hierarchical organizations, were less likely to be involved in developing outcome measurement systems than those from flat organizations according to the focus group participants.

The amount of time required to adapt to a results-based approach was inconsistent across data sources. Although a period of time is needed to go from adapting to adopting outcome measurement systems, the amount varied by source. Funding staff were of the opinion that it generally takes about a year for all involved in the process to understand how the logic models reflecting program services link to the outcome measurement systems and resulting reports. The archival data imply the learning curve is closer to two years or more.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This study was an exploration of how the requirement of outcome measurement impact non-profit organizations. As the quotation by Chelimsky at the beginning of this chapter suggests, the purpose of evaluation information frames its use. The understanding of the purpose(s) of outcome measurement and its intended uses are reflected in the current research. Both the funding agency and the project staff provided insights into how they perceive outcome measurement and how that perception impacts use.
These views are reflected in the themes that emerged from the data which included:

1. The participants in this case study believe the most appropriate use for outcome measurement is in improving program performance and maintaining accountability. On the other hand, in several instances funding and project staff expressed concerns that outcome measurement information is used in a more evaluative manner as the sole source to determine worth or merit of a project.

2. Both the funding staff and the service providers struggle with developing appropriate measurement tools; indicators and benchmarks for defining success required by a results-oriented framework.

3. Outcome measurement requires a commitment of resources by both the funder and the service providers. Funding staff and service providers agree that they need more time and resources in order to understand projects and outcome measurements thoroughly enough to develop logic models and systems that capture program activities accurately.

4. A tension exists between a developmental/innovation model espoused by the funder and the efficiency model under which it operates. Funding staff made comments about the lack of flexibility of the logic models they develop. But on the other hand, they were cognizant of the need to compare project outcomes from year to year. This requires setting the standard up front and in turn holding the project staff accountable for achieving the static and
sometimes unrealistic measures. This seemed to be one of the areas that created the most concerns for both the funding staff and the project staff alike.

5. The timing of the data review, reporting and feedback cycle does not coincide with the timeline for updating the next year’s program model and accompanying database. This reduces the utility of the outcome measurement systems for program improvement and strategic planning.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

There’s a lot of managerial and political rhetoric about being results oriented, but not much expertise in how to set up a results-oriented system. Michael Quinn Patton, 1997

After a summary of prior chapters, the highlights of the findings from the study are given. Conclusions, recommendations for practice, and suggestions for future research complete the chapter.

5.1 Overview of the Study

The past decade witnessed a shift in non-profit sector funding that emphasizes accountability for results as captured through outcome measurement. Beyond accountability, funders expect outcome measurement to help programs in continuous quality improvement (Wandersman, Imm, Chinman & Kaftarian, 2000). They presume service providers use outcome information for enhancing practice and improving results. Yet, little research addresses how outcome measurement efforts change non-profit organizations.

Even though outcome measurement requirements are set by and involve funders, most studies focus on the impact on service providers and do not take into account its influence on systems. Few researchers have probed the system dynamics between the
funder and service staff. Fewer still consider the potential for using outcome measurement as an organizational learning tool. The present study explores the attitudes of non-profit funders and service providers about outcome measurement and ways that the two accommodate it.

This research employed a case study approach (Yin, 2003) with five data collection methods: funding staff interviews; archival data; service provider surveys; focus group interviews; and researcher field notes. The researcher synthesized the findings from the multiple sources using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Hubermann, 1984; Altschuld & Witkin, 2001) to create an understanding of perspectives held by stakeholders involved in outcome measurement systems. Data agreement and divergence across informants resulted in the following findings.

1. **Outcome measurement requirements have changed non-profit practice.**

   Non-profit systems now spend more resources on building technology capacity and understanding the connection between service provision and automated documentation. Another shift in practice is that funders and providers must acquire valid and reliable assessment tools to measure outcomes - a skill that many of them do not possess.

2. **Outcome measurement has not created mission drift or goal displacement.**

   Participants deny mission drift to acquire funds. They are cognizant of organizational missions and remain true to them. Even if supported by multiple funders, they do not generalize their goals and outcomes to appeal to them.
3. **It takes one to two years for all parties to understand how to implement outcome measurement.**

   The cycle begins with an initial phase of ceremonial compliance. Once stakeholders understand the linkages between the logic model, data collection and outcome reports, they move from compliance to integrating the requirements into practice. In the final phase, stakeholders use outcome information to improve practice. Progress necessitates continuous open communication, good relationships between funding and project staff and commitment of time and resources. The system must be flexible; accepting mistakes as opportunities to learn and not as failures.

4. **Funding staff and service providers learn from working with outcome measurement systems.**

   They build shared understandings of each other’s roles and services, develop logic models and monitoring/outcome processes, and co-construct reporting systems. But, they vary in their understanding of how these methods relate to organizational learning. A feedback sequence that is out of sync with critical decision points exacerbates knowledge differences and is a barrier for using information to advance organizational learning.

5. **Non-profit organizations have difficulty balancing learning and innovation with operational efficiency within a results-based framework.**

   Implementing a learning community philosophy in a compliance-oriented environment is challenging. Funders and policy makers often want hard evidence of success before sufficient time has passed to realize solid results. In the current case, the
funder purports to support innovative programs that require flexibility and dedication to learning. However, the operational modes of the funder and service providers are more aligned with an efficiency model of contractual compliance. The funder’s lack of investment in thorough data review and feedback to providers corroborate this finding. According to staff participating in the study, increased reporting reduces time available for reflection, which ultimately hinders learning.

6. **Resources drive the process.**

Non-profits are always asked to do more with less. As the preceding findings suggest, most decisions in non-profits are resource driven. Increased technology demands coupled with systematic data collection divert resources from service provision. Capacity building for these activities changes staff functions without ample support from funders. Consequently, staff sense a tension between providing services and collecting data as described by both funding and project staff. A related issue stemming from limited resources involves using outcome measurement as the main source for judging service provision. Funding staff make evaluative decisions based on outcome measurement but are aware that the outcome data “do not tell the whole program story.” They judge services on them because they lack resources to carry out comprehensive evaluations.

5.2 **Conclusions**

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study. They offer insights on outcome measurement’s relationship with service provision, decision making, and the
value of outcome measurement to inform change.

1. **Innovation implicitly requires flexibility.**

   The funder’s mission is to identify, fund, and evaluate innovative prevention and early intervention programs. Innovative programs are attempts to try something new; not finished products. This newness calls for flexibility so staff can make adjustments after each implementation cycle. On the other hand, the funder creates the data system during the first year of funding which includes mostly static measures that do not match the developmental phase of programs.

   A program life cycle has three stages; development, installation and maintenance (Halpern, 1999). The funder supports programs for five years which involves development, pilot-testing, and fine-tuning of services for program maintenance. Development includes mapping out program components to create a logic model. Installation is the trying out the program and making modifications based on what has been learned from initial implementation. Data collection is vital here to understand what does and doesn’t work, before moving to maintenance. Full maintenance usually takes several years to reach and comes from adjustments made in the prior phase. It is during maintenance that service providers can expect to see the greatest impacts.

   Each stage warrants evaluative functions that match it (Whooley, 1998; Rossi & Freeman, 1994; Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Outcome measurement is not appropriate for the development phase of a program, although, the initial step in outcome measurement design (logic modeling) facilitates dialogue among stakeholders about
expected service frequency, duration, and outcomes. It also introduces staff to outcome measurement frameworks and the necessity for focusing on results.

During installation, programs should benefit from monitoring provided by outcome measurement. Ideally, programs use monitoring information for fine-tuning and maintenance. The participants in this research emphasized inflexibility as a serious limitation with the outcome measurement systems. They perceived data collection rigidity as being compounded by their inexperience with measurement tools and inability to generate useful data reports.

Although, participants denied goal displacement (as noted earlier), the opportunity for a mismatch between the performance indicator chosen and the desired outcome is heightened due to the staff’s limited knowledge of measurement tools. If they choose indicators that are easy to count but have little relationship to program goals, then goal displacement is there (Perrin, 1999).

Data system inflexibility adds to the potential for flawed measures and takes away from activities designed to support meaningful goals. As stressed by the participants, flexibility is especially critical for innovative programs since they are in a process of development. Opportunities for reflection and learning before solidifying outcome measurement processes are a critical need.

2. **Respondents used outcome measurement and evaluation interchangeably.**

Neither funding nor project staff clearly differentiated between outcome measurement and evaluation. In fact, funding staff use outcome measurement as the primary method for determining service effectiveness. While outcome measurement is
one evaluation tool, it does not replace evaluation (Wholey, Hatry & Newcomer, 2004). Outcome measurement as the only means for judging programs is short-sighted for several reasons. First, there is an assumption that all stakeholders possess the expertise for developing accurate and realistic outcome measurement systems. Respondents noted that their outcome measurement skills vary; most have limited knowledge, others basic understanding and a some are more expert.

Second, even if the staff were fully versed in measurement, logic models do not include all factors that impact outcomes. They are linear portrayals of processes and simply do not capture the entire array of variables that influence effectiveness. If funders use outcome measurement as the only evaluation method, it may lead to faulty judgments concerning programs.

A third issue with using outcome measurement as evaluation is the assumption that if you build the data system service providers will populate it with accurate information. Often in the current case, databases included sketchy data in the first and second years of funding, resulting in little reliable information. Thus, the funder could not say much based on data which left a void in terms of evaluation.

3. **Service providers described a high level of involvement in outcome measurement system development, but fewer agreed they were engaged in the process.**

   Whereas this finding seems contradictory, it may point to the subtle distinction respondents make between two concepts. Survey results indicated a variety of individuals are involved in developing logic models. In nearly all cases, more than one person participated; most frequently program managers and service staff.
In contrast, respondents did not as strongly support the statement about their *engagement* in developing logic models. The terms, involvement and engagement themselves, may be part of the difference observed here. Staff may believe they are *involved* if their supervisors discuss the logic model with them. Engagement, however, requires more in-depth knowledge and interaction with a phenomenon.

The literature recommends organizations adopt a learning paradigm initiated by employees that are meaningfully engaged in the process to achieve outcomes (Limerick & Cunnington, 1993). Executive and direct service staff reported less involvement with outcome measurement development and did not express as much ownership of it as management. It is not surprising then that management found more value in it than did executive and line staff. Since the latter two did not feel a high level of engagement, they are less likely to use outcome measurement systems.

4. **Outcome information feedback loops and sequencing are not conducive to program improvement or strategic planning.**

There was consensus among sources that the primary purposes for outcome measurement are improvement and accountability. Service providers collect and submit data to funders and expect feedback on outcome achievement from them. However, the funder seldom offers recommendations for program changes based on data submission, creating a gap in the feedback loop. Much of the funder’s suggestions are about improving data collection efforts. Gaps in feedback and sequencing occur at several points in the funder and service provider relationship.

First, although service providers receive outcome measurement reports quarterly
and are allotted time to respond in writing, their responses demonstrate limited familiarity
with the mechanics of report generation. Many times, providers state that the report
numbers do not correspond with their hand tabulations of program services and leave it at
that. Data are not reconciled so changes can be made in upcoming reports. This finding
contradicts learning theory which posits error detection is followed by questioning
reasons as to why it occurred and then rectifying the problem (Argyris & Schon, 1978;
Marquadt, 1996). While funding staff claim they use the reports to reconcile data errors,
archival data does not support this assertion.

Secondly, funding staff produce annual reports three months after the fiscal year
ends, thus affecting their utility to inform the upcoming year. This situation may explain
the low respondent ratings given in regard to outcome measurement for strategic planning
and quality improvement. Interestingly, despite the fact that service providers and
funding staff are required to review data quarterly, few actually do. Reasons for this may
be; daily tasks reduce review time, staff do not link reports to daily activities, little
incentive exists to review reports in an ongoing fashion, and project staff may not
thoroughly understand report formulas so they don’t ask questions or use them.

Finally, the state level funder does not offer feedback on outcome reports. The
non-profit funder submits reports to the state but does not receive formal feedback.
Interview respondents concluded no news is good news and therefore deemed continued
funding as affirmation of satisfaction with their reports. This suggests that the state
approach to outcome measurement is more ceremonial - focused on contractual
compliance instead of service improvement and learning. It lends credence to the quote
at the beginning of this chapter that a results orientation is more rhetoric than real.

The aforementioned gaps in feedback and report sequencing help elucidate the barriers to outcome measurement use for planning and improvement. Since the feedback loop is not closed and the reporting sequence is not timely, outcome measurement use for informing strategic planning and quality improvement diminishes.

5. **Funding staff have limited first-hand knowledge about service provision.**

Funding staff gave little evidence they were speaking knowledgeably about service provision, even though they develop logic models and outcome measurement systems supposedly designed to capture the essence of service delivery. A comparison of the focus group and funding staff interviews showed a lack of congruence between the funder’s understanding of program practices and actual program practices. Clearly, these perceptions affect outcome conceptualization and frame interactions among funders and project staff.

Patton (1997) stresses the key to success in logic modeling is that outcome indicators are reasonable, useful and meaningful measures of intended client outcomes. This warrants thorough knowledge of program practice. Since only the program specialist person(s) of the funder visits projects, he/she becomes the linchpin in the outcome measurement development process. The program specialist must have broad knowledge of services and be able to articulate it to other team members so meaningful logic models and outcome measurement systems are developed. If they are unable to do
so, it is likely the logic models and subsequent data systems will not be effective measures of services.

6. **Respondent learning is predominantly adaptive; not anticipatory.**

   Respondents’ use outcome measurement to advance organizational learning only in a very narrow sense, the preponderance of learning is adaptive. Adaptive learning is reactive and involves limited questioning of existing structures, assumptions, norms and processes. In contrast, anticipatory learning (in which strategic planning falls) is proactive and promoted through employee empowerment and creativity.

   A number of factors may explain this finding. The majority of the respondents worked in hierarchical organizations which reduces employee empowerment and creativity; two essential factors for anticipatory learning. A somewhat related reason could be that respondents are not specifically involved in strategic planning at their agencies due to their location in the hierarchy. It stands to reason then, they rated strategic planning; (a proactive use of the information) as lowest among outcome measurement uses.

   Staff may not understand outcome measurement enough to recognize its potential use for purposes other than reactive ones. Respondents referenced accountability and program improvement as the two biggest changes in practice initiated by outcome measurement. If stakeholders view accountability as more prime then the data will mainly be for fiscal stewardship (reactive use) and will not be perceived as valuable for other, more proactive purposes.
A final explanation is service providers may not be able to use outcome measurement data because they cannot generate useful reports. If so, they may feel the information belongs more to the system and not them and they will not attempt to learn how to use it.

7. **Funding staff struggle with the same issues regarding results-based frameworks as service providers.**

Results-based systems are new to non-profit organizations. Most of the study participants could articulate the steps in creating logic models, but few had the ability to develop and carry out data collection plans. A salient issue for them was becoming familiar with and locating outcome assessment tools. Service providers and funding staff alike had little experience here and believed they needed to build capacity in this area.

Funding and service staff also reported confusion regarding terminology specific to outcome measurement and problems with database queries. Yet funding staff exhibited more advanced understanding of terms and query strategies than service providers. Overall, with the exception of MIS staff, few of the research participants could run a database query. Until non-profit staff overcome this barrier, it is unlikely that outcome measurement will be fully incorporated into practice.

8. **The funder’s rhetoric and practice are contradictory regarding outcome measurement use.**

Management staff declared decisions to continue supporting services are based on results. Service providers also perceived this to be true. In reality, the funder was reluctant to defund providers based on outcome measurement data. When further probed,
management conceded that while they consider outcome measurement for continuation funding and contract renewals, it is not the deciding factor. Funders additionally take into account service delivery verification, local need for services, and technical capacity of the program in providing data (FSI006).

Historically, relationships between funders and grantees were based on service contracts whereby funders expected grantees to comply with their contracts without question. Now the expectation has supposedly shifted to the emphasis that grantees learn and improve while also ensuring accountability. Therefore, they should feel free to question contracts and data systems in order to make improvements to practice.

Programs unaccustomed to this type of funder/provider dynamic, believe funds will be withheld for questioning funder assumptions or not achieving goals quickly. This interpretation explains the adaptation cycle noted earlier in the research. If service providers perceive a power imbalance, they will more likely comply with funding conditions even if they are not in agreement with them (ceremonial compliance). If the funder stresses that their philosophy is to advance learning, service providers will be more likely to ask questions and negotiate decisions. This stance is more in tune with relationships that foster learning and good adoption of outcome measurement strategies.

5.3 Recommendations for Practice

This study included non-profit funders and service providers from one geographical region. Implications for policy and practice should be considered within that local context, although they may have farther reaching application.
1. **Develop logic models with static core objectives and outcomes that can be compared from year to year and dynamic ones that change as programs evolve.**

Outcome measurement inflexibility was a complaint of both the funder and service providers. Core objectives generally remain the same throughout the life of the program whereas developmental (dynamic) components change based on information gained through service implementation. By including both, system flexibility and the potential for use by program staff will increase. This creates a more pragmatic approach that provides a balance for monitoring programs at various developmental stages.

2. **Funders should complete an information audit prior to developing outcome measurement systems to ascertain other funder requirements and the site’s technical capacity.**

Some programs have their own information systems to track and report client-level data unique to their operation. As explained by one staff lamenting about accountability, “I have five funders who all require different levels of specificity on similar information. It would be a lot easier if all the funders would get together and decide how to reduce the duplication of effort." An audit would minimize this type of situation and provide the funder with an understanding of the technical capacities of projects they intend to support.

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14 Personal communication with site staff, June 2004.
3. **Funders should provide adequate financial resources for integrating service provision and outcome measurement responsibilities.**

Adequate resources are especially important in the first two years of funding until service providers incorporate outcome measurement functions into routines. Staff assert despite the fact they are mandated to report outcomes, less than half have added jobs directly related to outcome measurement. One way to do this would be to integrate outcome measurement into daily tasks, but as service providers noted in the FGI, data entry for outcome measurement requires longer working hours to complete. Staff are pulled between service delivery and data reporting responsibilities.

Extra resources would be essential for checking data prior to submitting it to the funder. This will improve data quality, but also means staff must learn how to manipulate databases to run reports or that funders develop report menus to assist service providers in this regard. By so doing, the service provider’s frustration with database queries could be reduced. At the same time, the initial learning curve associated with report generation and data checking will call for additional effort which in turn requires financial support.

4. **Non-profit staff need ongoing training to develop outcome measurement skills.**

Over the past decade, the introduction of new technology has dramatically altered the landscape of nonprofit organizations, changing the skills required by them. They demand knowledge of change theory, logic model design, database creation and operation, and outcome measurement as applied to specific programs. Respondents
perceived the obstacles to assessing program outcomes to be a lack of funding and skills in relation to outcome measures. Formal training is clearly needed.

Study participants reported learning through doing which suggests minimal training opportunities exist to develop outcome measurement systems. In this vein, Worthen, Sanders and Fitzpatrick (1997) noted that a role for evaluators in the non-profit sector will be to change attitudes among potential stakeholders about incorporating evaluation skills into practice. This will be hard if funding agencies are uncooperative.

One way to bring about such change is through professional development. Training to build capacity for technology-based and results-oriented systems should begin in college for students entering social sciences, especially those going into the non-profit sector. Another suggestion (from a funding staff respondent) was to incorporate systematic data collection and outcome-related measurement skills into job descriptions and annual performance reviews as incentives for learning.

5. **Begin earlier in the proposal process assisting service providers in accommodating a results framework.**

Involving evaluators and other funding staff earlier will highlight where projects require fine-tuning so objectives and outcomes are specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic. Earlier involvement would improve funder and service provider relationships. First, it may help service providers find appropriate measurement tools. Secondly, conversations about data collection strategies can assist service providers in tying them into daily routines. Third it can improve the evaluator’s understanding of program theory and practice. Fourth, it may reduce barriers by clarifying terminology and assumptions.
Another benefit is that it can lead to more understanding of reporting structures and increase service provider’s knowledge about database queries.

Project staff noted during the focus group interviews one more relevant issue. Service providers are sometimes dependent on local partners for supplying outcome data i.e., arrest records, emergency room visits, but it is often difficult to obtain such information, even with written agreements. The problem might be partly due to the fact that in the proposal stages of a project, data needs are vague. Until logic models are finalized they do not have clear data requirements. Early involvement of funding staff will assist service providers in clarifying data needs so they can relay requests more accurately to their community partners.

6. **Funders must clearly state criteria for initial funding and on-going support.**

   Funding criteria define the relationship between the funder and service provider (Crusto & Wandersman, 2002). Currently, funders send mixed messages about expectations. While the funder states its philosophy is to learn from projects, the proposal guidelines language focuses on contract monitoring. Staff internalize contractual obligations and do not question the funder for fear of losing support.

   As one FGI participant commented, “*There needs to be a partnership between the funders and the providers for negotiating benchmarks.*” If the funder’s primary interest is to learn from programs so exemplary ones can be replicated, there must be a partnership that allows for reflection and learning from mistakes.
7. **Synchronize reporting and feedback cycles with critical decision points to make data more useful.**

The existing reporting and feedback cycles are not favorable for organizational learning. Funders should align reporting time lines with informational needs of stakeholders, thus improving usefulness for strategic planning and mid-course program corrections. In addition, funders could create report menus for service providers so staff can generate reports when they want them.

Funders must also ensure the feedback loop is closed. i.e., giving service providers copies of reports submitted to state funders and requesting written feedback from the state funders on those reports. Written feedback to the service providers along with that of the state brings the information loop full cycle and should increase information utility.

5.4 **Recommendations for Future Research**

Literature on outcome measurement claims it is valuable for program improvement and organizational learning (Poole, et. al., 2001; Newcomer, 1997; Thayer & Fine, 2001). To date, most of the research studies looked solely at the practices of either the service providers (Botcheva, et. al., 2002) or the funder (Tassie, et. al., 1998). Few include both groups, thus creating a gap in understanding how funder and service providers assist each other in implementing outcome measurement systems.
The findings of this effort contribute provide a holistic picture of the impact of outcome measurement on the funder and service providers in a non-profit environment. The results illuminate the operational challenges faced by both in accommodating results-oriented systems and shed light on the individual and joint perspectives of the stakeholders. Moreover, they point out the importance of allocating appropriate resources for building system capacity to maximize use. In light of the findings and the escalating demand of non-profit funders for outcome measurement, four recommendations are offered.

1. Future research should focus on creating instruments to better distinguish the subtleties of the organizational learning phases so the researcher can determine if deutero and action learning are occurring. The results did not fully elucidate the impact of outcome measurement on these types of organizational learning.

2. Investigation of mature non-profit programs would be desirable. Most organizations in the current sample were still learning how to apply a results-oriented framework and had not reached a level of maturity to fully utilize data for organizational learning. More mature non-profit organizations may present a different picture of such a framework.

3. Include state level funders in subsequent studies. The current research relied on perceptions of non-profit funding program staff and archival data to determine the role of state funders and the interplay between the various levels of the system needs further investigation.
4. Executive, management and line staff reported major differences regarding the usefulness of outcome measurement which need to examine in depth, possibly through focus groups that separate managerial and line staff. This strategy provides a more open environment for discussion as participants in this study were cognizant of each other’s position. In this regard, the scribe in one group was the evaluator assigned to the service providers in it and therefore the frankness of responses may have been affected. Future research should avoid such occurrences.
APPENDIX A: SURVEY COVER LETTER

Date

Dear (insert name),

The impact of outcome measurement on providers is a topic of great interest to nonprofit organizations. Funders are requiring that service providers demonstrate results in the form of outcomes. Yet, little research has been done to determine how the requirement of outcome measurement impacts practice.

The purpose of this study is to gather information from service practitioners such as yourself concerning ideas about outcome measurement development and use. This includes your involvement in developing logic models leading to outcome measurement reporting systems and your uses of the information obtained from the reports so generated. Your perceptions of the purposes, uses and process of outcome measurement systems will help inform funder policy and practice.

You have been selected to complete the enclosed survey from the service providers in your state that are currently or have in the past received funding from The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida. It is important that everyone who receives this survey responds in order that a balanced picture be developed of the impact of outcome measurement on service providers. The survey should take only 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Please take the time now to complete the survey and return it in the postage-paid envelope by September 3, 2004. This survey is not directly associated with The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida. However, the research includes a component that gathers information from the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida staff that will compare their perceptions with those of staff directly involved in programs. Your answers will remain anonymous and will not be linked to you or your agency. Only the aggregated results of the survey will be made public.

If you have any questions regarding the survey or the research please contact the researchers listed below. All potential respondents will be informed when the research is made public. Thank you for your participation in this effort.

Respectfully,
Sandra Ortega, MPA, Ph.D. Candidate
The Ohio State University
509 Terrace St.
Tallahassee, FL 32308
(850) 224-1960
ortega.12@osu.edu

James W. Altschuld, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University
Professor, Educational Policy and Leadership
301 Ramseyer Hall
29 West Woodruff Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1177
(614) 292-7741
altschuld.1@osu.edu
APPENDIX B: PROGRAM STAFF SURVEY

Program/Project Staff Survey Protocol

Program Project Name: _________________________________________
Respondent’s Title: ____________________________________________

Section I.
Read the following statements about the primary purpose(s) of outcome measurement and indicate on the left whether you think it is a primary purpose by marking yes or no and circle the response that most closely matches your agreement with it where 1 = Strongly Agree and 5 = Strongly Disagree.

1. The primary purpose of outcome measurement is (for)……

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<th>No</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>helping funders determine which programs to fund</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>helping funders evaluate the success of a program/project.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>purposes of which I am not sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section II.
Think about the most recent logic model that you developed for the {Funder} (or other funders if not for {Funder}), and respond to the following questions.

If you have not been involved in developing a logic model skip to Section IV.

2. Please provide the title of staff/individuals who were involved in developing the logic model.
3. What individuals participated in developing the program/project proposal that included the logic model? *(Check all that apply)*

- ___ Evaluator
- _____ Board Members
- _____ Funder's Staff
- _____ Program Participants
- _____ Volunteers (not participants)
- _____ Paid Consultant
- _____ Program Manager
- _____ Program Staff
- _____ No one else was involved in developing the program/project proposal
- ___ Other (please describe) ________________________________________________

4. Which of the responses below describes the process you used for developing the logic model? *(check all that apply)*

- ___ We mostly copied the logic model from another program, adjusting it to fit our needs.
- ___ We began with group discussions among staff and other stakeholders to determine the components.
- ___ Management decided what we were going to include in the model.
- ___ We reviewed literature on the intervention and outcomes to develop the logic model.
- ___ Other, please describe ________________________________________________

Section III.

5. Reflecting on the most recent logic model that you were involved in developing, to what extent do you agree with the following statements. Circle the response for statement a through f that most closely matches your response where 1 = *Strongly Agree* and 5 = *Strongly Disagree*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Program staff were engaged in developing the logic models</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. The objectives and outcomes of the logic model are worth tracking.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The objectives and outcomes in the logic model are relevant to the program/project.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
d. The logic modeling process has helped staff to articulate program processes that lead to outcomes.

e. The outcome measurement system has helped us focus on outcomes.

f. The logic model framework has improved understanding of the linkage between program implementation, services and outcomes.

Section IV.

6. Have you used the outcome measurement data provided to you by The {Funder} (or another funder such as United Way)?

_____ Yes

_____ No. If you have not used outcome measurement data, skip to Section V.

6. In the table below indicate whether you employed the logic model and the resulting outcome measurement system developed with The {Funder} for any of the uses listed. If used, specify the usefulness with 1 as “Not useful at all” to 5 as “Extremely Useful”. If you do not know circle 6 and if the use does not apply to your experience, circle 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome measurement used? Type of Use</th>
<th>How useful was the information from the outcome measurement system?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Articulate program processes and anticipated outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_______</td>
<td>Not useful at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_______</td>
<td>Recommend changes in program design or operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_______</td>
<td>Not useful at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome measurement used? Type of Use</td>
<td>How useful was the information from the outcome measurement system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Not useful at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve program outcomes or impact</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report to a funder</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to questions or criticisms about the program</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the program to potential participants/clients</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain additional funding</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan future programs</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train staff</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassign staff</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid in annual strategic planning</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocate organizational resources</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve outreach/public relations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design an ongoing monitoring/evaluation process</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please describe)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section V.

8. Have you had or do you currently have a funder, other than The {Funder} that requires reporting on program outcomes?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

   If so, who was (is) that funder?
   ____________________________________________________________

9. Have you added any staff whose job responsibilities are directly related to outcome measurement development or reporting?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

   If yes, provide their title and briefly describe their job duties
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Title</th>
<th>Job Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. How much of your program/project resources are spent on reporting outcome measurement? (Check only one response)
    - Less than five percent
    - 5 to 10%
    - 11 to 25%
    - 26% or more
    - Don’t Know

11. In general, do you believe there has been a change in program practice at your agency as a result of outcome reporting requirements?
    _____ Yes
    _____ No

    If yes, please provide examples of change in practices as a result of outcome requirements reporting.
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________

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12. Looking back on the outcome measurement development process you described above, are there things your organization should have done differently?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, what are they?

---

Section VI.
Please check the box after the questions below that most closely describes you.

13. How long have you worked for this organization?

- [ ] Less than 6 months
- [ ] 6 months -1 year
- [ ] 1-3 years
- [ ] 4-6 years
- [ ] 7-10 years
- [ ] More than 10 years

14. Which of the following best describes your job category

- [ ] First line supervisor
- [ ] Middle manager
- [ ] Senior manager
- [ ] Administrative
- [ ] Non-managerial professional
- [ ] Technical
- [ ] Other _______________________________

Please add on the back side of this page any comments you have that would help us better understand the benefits and/or shortcomings of the outcome measurement systems you are currently using.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY!

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed envelope by (date) to Sandra Ortega, 509 Terrace St., Tallahassee, FL 32308
APPENDIX C: RESEARCH RELEASE FORM

Research Release Form

I have read the Draft Interview Summary of my interview with Sandra Ortega on {date}, and I agree this summary is an accurate reflection of my comments shared during the interview. I have/have not (circle one) modified this report to reflect my responses prior to returning the transcript to Sandra Ortega.

I grant Sandra Ortega permission to use this information for the purpose of fulfilling her Doctoral Dissertation requirements and any published articles resulting from her dissertation. I understand that my responses will remain anonymous and I nor my employer will be revealed in any publications by name. I also understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time without any negative consequences.

_________________________________________    ____________________________
Participant’s Signature                             Date

Principal Investigator       Investigator
James Altschuld, Ph.D.     Sandra Ortega, M.P.A., Ph.D. Candidate
Professor, Educational Policy and Leadership 509 Terrace Street
The Ohio State University Tallahassee, FL 32308
301 Ramseyer Hall          (850)459-8588
29 West Woodruff Ave.        Columbus, Ohio 43210-1177
Columbus, Ohio      (614) 292-7741
APPENDIX D:  FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in Outcome Measurement Focus Group
To learn more about the impact outcome measurement has on program policy and practice, we are asking for your participation in a focus group interview. This commitment will take approximately two hours of your time and is totally voluntary. The focus groups will be held on July 20th and 21st from 5-7 p.m. at the Saddlebrook Resort in Boardroom C.

If you agree to participate in the focus group, everything you say will be confidential. The information you provide will be combined with information from all the other focus group participants. No one will be able to tell which answers are yours. In consideration of others in the group, we would also appreciate your efforts in maintaining confidentiality of other participants’ responses. The focus group interview will be tape recorded to ensure accuracy in capturing the participant’s comments.

Once the focus groups are completed the data will be analyzed and themes will be extracted from the data so we can get a picture of how the outcome measurement works from the staffs’ and other participants’ perspective. Two weeks after the focus group you will receive a transcript of the focus group. The letter accompanying the transcript will ask for further feedback from you to determine if the information we develop from the focus group correctly reflects what the participants intended to say.

Participation in either the focus group or follow-up discussions for clarity of reporting is voluntary. Your decision to participate in the focus group will not affect your employment or relationship with the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida. All information from the focus group interview will be made available in aggregate to the participants and will not be reported back to supervisors.

If you agree to participate in the focus group, please read the below agreement, sign it and return it to Sandra Ortega, 509 Terrace Street, Tallahassee, FL 32308 in the enclosed stamped envelope.

I have read this form and I agree to participate in the outcome measurement focus group session at the annual Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida administrative meeting. I understand that my participation is totally voluntary, and that I can refuse to answer any question that is asked.

______________________________________  _______________________
Participants Signature      Date
_______________________________________
Printed Name
_______________________________________  ________________________
Researcher/Witness      Date
Focus Group Protocol & Questions

Good morning (afternoon/evening), my name is Sandra Ortega and I am here with my colleague, as part of a research project that I am conducting on the impact of outcome measurement on social service providers. (Recorder/Scribe/Co-facilitator Name) and I would like to get your input and feedback on various questions regarding the use of Outcome Measurement in your program/project. Since you actually implement programs/projects on a day to day basis your insights can help us to better understand the impact of outcome measurement on program operations.

What we are going to do today is a group interview. We’d like to conduct this group in a semi-structured format since we only have an hour and a half of your time. Basically, this means that we will ask questions and give each respondent time to respond until the group determines the question has been answered thoroughly. (Recorder/Scribe/Co-facilitator) and I will facilitate the session by probing for understanding of the responses or perhaps redirecting you to hold a thought that may fit an upcoming question.

Your responses will be recorded so that we can review them at a later date. All information is confidential. That means that we will not use anyone’s name in the report and we will not connect a specific person with a specific response. The report will state the conclusions drawn from the interview and will expand the understanding of data available from program documents, databases and other data collection tools. Once responses are summarized we will send a copy to you to review to make sure we have captured the essence of all input accurately. In an effort to make sure that we are accurately capturing what you say we will be using a tape recorder. Since we are planning on transcribing the comments it is important that only one person speak at a time. Does anyone have any concern over us tape recording the session? If not, let’s begin. (2 minutes)
**Opening Question (3 minutes)**

1. Tell us your name and something you enjoy doing (hobby, activity)

**Introductory Questions (7 minutes)**

1. How does change (regarding organizational improvement) occur in your organization (agency)?

2. How are ideas generated at your organization/program?

**Transition Questions (8 minutes)**

1. What is the mission of your organization?

2. How are data and other types of information used in your organization/program?

**Key Questions (40 minutes)**

1. Do you have discussions within your organizations as to how your program/project is connected to the organizational mission?

2. How does the leadership of your organization react to internal scrutiny (reflection) of processes and practices by program staff?

3. How do you use information generated by logic models and outcome measurement systems?

4. What makes data useful to you in your workplace?

5. What changes have you made in your program/project based on information generated by logic models and outcome measurement systems?
Summary Questions (10 minutes)

1. Let’s summarize the key points of our discussion today.
2. Have we missed anything?
3. What advice do you have for us in improving the usefulness of the logic model and outcome information provided to you?

Use the debriefing script here.

Closing Comments

(Recorder/Scribe/Co-Facilitator) and I would like to thank you for taking the time to provide us with your insights. As we said earlier, once the information is processed and summarized we will send you a summary of the session so that you may review it and provide additional feedback. If you have any questions for us after the session please feel free to contact us. Again, thank you for the work you do and your participation in the focus group.
Focus Group Debriefing Script

As I mentioned in the invitation to participate in this interview, the purpose of this study is to gather your perspectives on how organizations use outcome measurement. Organizational learning, the use of information to change the way programs operate on a daily basis, is just one dimension of how organizations change and develop. The literature suggests that logic models, and outcome measurement systems may aid staff in opening a dialogue on shared organizational meaning. From information about outcomes staff may learn about strengths and deficiencies and ways to improve organizational performance. Through the interview I was trying to determine the various types of learning going on within your organization and the role of outcome measurement in it.

All information you have provided during the interview is confidential. That means that we will not connect a specific person with a specific response in the report. That report will state the conclusions drawn from the statements as an aid in understanding data from program documents, databases and other data collection tools. Once responses are summarized we will send a copy to each participant to review to make sure we have captured the essence of the interview accurately. The information will not be shared and will be for research purposes only. It will not reflect positively or negatively on those responding.

(Recorder/Scribe/Co-Facilitator) and I would like to thank you for taking the time to provide us with your views. Once the information is processed and summarized we will send you a summary of the session for review and to provide additional feedback. If you have any questions after the session please feel free to contact us at the phone number or e-mail address provided on the consent forms. Again, thank you for your participation in the focus group.
APPENDIX G: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Research Questions

1. How do non profit organizations use logic models?

2. Does the support of multiple funders increase the general nature of goals and objectives?

3. Are program staff engaged in developing and using outcome measurement systems? Or,

4. Are program staff engaged in ceremonial conformity to satisfy funding proposal requirements?

5. What are the organizational factors that affect the development and use of an agency’s outcome measurement system?
### Appendix Table G

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRQ</th>
<th>OMCAT</th>
<th>Project Staff Statement/Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Respondent Characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This focus group was attended by five participants including four women and one man. There were 2 African Americans (a man and woman) and three Caucasians. One participant was a CEO of his provider and the other participants were more on the program manager level. One participant was substituting for her Executive Director. Two providers were from Broward County and the other three were from Miami Dade, Hillsborough and Polk Counties respectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This focus group was attended by 5 people. Five women; 3 white and 2 African Americans. They were all mid managers or direct service staff in various programs, 2 were from the same agency but different sites.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Drivers of Organizational Change & Organizational Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRQ</th>
<th>OMCAT</th>
<th>Project Staff Statement/Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Most are reactive, only 1 stated proactive change</td>
<td>[Observation: Participants named the internal and external drivers for change. They include; consumers, participants, staff, reaction to a crisis, strategic positioning, funder or contract requirements, and one manager stated that he requests staff feedback regularly for program improvement]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Contract driven</td>
<td>One respondent indicated external contracts with her program's funders are a source of organizational change. These contractors may ask for certification training requirements and are a pretty rigorous source of training. She said internally there's a program improvement committee that looks at grant application opportunities. (FGP1-SGTBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,5</td>
<td>Another respondent said on a monthly basis there's a mentoring meeting with the CEO and participants can report to the CEO information on what types of service delivery issues and process measures there are. When changes are made, we will have training regarding how these changes will be implemented.</td>
<td>Another respondent said her agency struggles with reactive changes and change seems to derive from a top-down approach. (FGP2-KBCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proactive change</td>
<td>Another respondent, the Broward CEO, said he looks to do assessments of his agency and involve anyone who is advocating for change. He said there have to be leaders, beside himself, who are involved in this. He said he is also trying to empower managers. He said his philosophy on this is to set up a time line, negotiate, implement and then “to celebrate.” (FGP4-WBTYYA)</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She said her organization’s managers are great advocates of change and know how to look at the big picture and accomplish change. She said there are a lot of front line practice changes so that the organization can deliver its message so people at the front line level can become involved in this change. She said unfortunately when crises occur this too brings change in her organization and that was the case with all organizations ultimately. She said crises cause policy changes. (FGP5-DDK)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We use the meetings to do staff and management brainstorming. Change also comes through the independent contractors. (FGP8-ABCD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Organizational Environment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Observation: Overall, 4 of 5 focus group participants indicated that ideas can be generated from talking to people at all different levels of the organization. Participants identified structured forums and strategies for idea generation within their agencies]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are monthly meetings that can last for 1 to 4 hours depending on the client issues being brainstormed and problems coming up. She said she has fostered a trust with her staff and in this environment her staff feels safe to share the problems they have encountered. Staff deal pretty openly with things and we try to be creative to solve problems. (FGP1-SGTBD)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Visionary meeting every 3 months with the Executive Director to brainstorm how to solve problems. (FGP5-DDK)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix Table G continued</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>It is to save children. <em>He said he wants all of his line staff to be able to remember the mission and to understand the most basic purpose of the organization.</em> (FGP4-WBTTYA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Another respondent indicated the mission depends on what level of the organization you are at. She said there are differing missions for the Broward Healthcare Planning Council, the Broward Hospital District, and the Doula program all have different mission statements. The Health Planning Council has health issues that go down into all the levels of the agency. She said the bottom line is the health of the family and the child. (FGP2-KBDC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>I think our unit’s mission is definitely aligned with the mission of the lead agency.</em> The agency I work for is kind of the lead agency in the area. It’s a very good marriage for my unit to be in with this agency. The infrastructure was there so we just came under the agency’s umbrella…it was a good fit. (FGP8-ABCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>It’s been thematic throughout our agency in that everyone shares information and helps each other achieve the mission of the overall agency and the individual units.</em> (FGP8-ABCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tension between mngt roles &amp; program focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Another respondent said with her agency’s town meeting with the Executive Director some of the staff “shut down” and this happens because many of the line staff has little interaction with him. (FGP3-TFRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation: The majority of the participants stated management responds positively to internal scrutiny. The director’s response was quite different from the other participants in that his focus is on keeping the program fiscally sound and not becoming involved in the programmatic end of the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Logic Model Development & Understanding

**Observation:** At this point a number of focus group participants talked about not knowing where some baselines come from and how they might agree to one and find it is unrealistic later which might mean amending the contract or falling way short on the measure. Jar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,3,5</td>
<td>One respondent said data is compiled to determine whether or not the program is doing what it is designed to (what we said it would) do. <em>If we have not reached our outcomes, the question is whether we are formatting the data to reflect all of the things we did do.</em> She said there’s a problem sometimes of staff “getting down” because we did not reach an outcome objective. Our managers tell these staff they have done a lot though. She said the <em>data needs to reflect all that we did do even if we come up short on the measure</em>. She said, for example, with breastfeeding, there are cultural concerns that are reflected in the outcome measures. Some ethnic groups that the Doula is serving are more inclined to do breastfeeding anyway. Some of the Doula staff have never had a strong training background so we are trying to correct this with training. <em>We need to try and figure out if there is a better way of measuring parent or child bonding.</em> We need to determine if surveys and data measurements result in improvement or not. (FGP1-SGTBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,3,5</td>
<td>Focus is on service provision not outcome measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Our <em>data usage and teaching them that if they do not make a particular outcome measure they are still doing a great deal of good for the clients.</em> She said her organization is working on “<em>selling its data</em>” better and helping people to understand what the <em>measures mean.</em> (FGP6-BMMG)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Logic Model Usefulness Outcome Measurement Use by Funder & Project Staff**

Categorize uses based on King, 1988: Instrumental or allocative (direct use to make decisions or changes), persuasive (personal gain or persuade funders of program success), conceptual (indirect & cumulative to shape policy thinking which leads to changes or new initiatives), symbolic (unintended uses report to fulfill funding requirements, to support or attach a point of view, to prepare new proposals or program design, to legitimate decisions, to show the public it is indeed being done).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation:</th>
<th>It appears that in general the participants take outcome measurement very seriously as a measure of success even though they question the validity of the measures and benchmarks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,5,4</td>
<td>Questions measures—demonstrates double loop learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often times the funders will pull a baseline measure “out of the sky” and that providers need to be able to negotiate concerning these standards given the risk factors of the clients they are serving. He wanted to know what criteria some of these standards are based on. Are they published anywhere? Even if we are using national data, providers need to often figure out what would be a good baseline. He asked, “What makes 85 percent of mothers’ breastfeeding a good outcome? There must be a partnership between funders and providers for negotiating benchmarks.” (FGP4-WMTTYA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,3,4,5</td>
<td>Double-loop learning broadens understanding of measurement &amp; shows willingness to make changes in organizational behavior to adapt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another respondent said it is often the funders idea that if you cannot achieve an outcome that you can amend the contract, but this is difficult. She said her program doesn’t really want to go down that road. She said she may see how an outcome turns out differently on the logic model and wish she could have known this two years ago (when the logic model was being formed and agreed to) (FGP1-SGTBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>She said the measures made the program 1 step better and gave program staff more focus. She said that initially when she served in the Family Resource Center she was the lead teacher and there was no uniform application or measures from one center to the next. The data has helped provide structure and uniformity across the sites. (FGP3-TFRC)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shows double-loop learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Determining Logic Model Components</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Observation</strong>: Overall, focus group participants were conscientious about going after grant funding that fulfills their agencies’ missions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2,4</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The provider’s program model and community needs to be considered.</em> There should be a partnership with that community. He said his agency has given the State back $2 million in funding because the program model stipulated did not fit the scope of services his agency provides. He said the Department of Juvenile Justice provided funding which he turned down (for a Level 8 Commitment facility) because this required putting handcuffs on the boys which is not consistent with his agency’s mission. <a href="FGP4-WMTTYA">Does not shift mission for money</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2,4</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Another respondent said her agency has <em>a program improvement committee that is “bizarre”,</em> but it has program directors on it and they review grants and decide if these grant opportunities <em>would fit with the mission of the agency.</em> This committee then seeks the blessing of the CEO to implement a program. (FGP2-KBCD)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2,4</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Lakeland provider stated that <em>her agency does not seek all of the funding it could if a grant does not fit in with our mission.</em> She said in one instance there was a DCF District 14 funding opportunity concerning adoption. Program staff discussed this opportunity and decided adoptions of youth from foster homes was a need in our community as was reducing the number of child abuse cases. Hence, the agency applied for this grant. (FGP5-DDK)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Observation**: Participant responses were mixed from one end of the use spectrum (high use) to the other (non-use).
| 194 | 1,3 | One respondent said her provider uses the logic models as a program guide. Once the staff has “bought in” to the logic model goals then they know what is expected of them. The outcomes also give employees a direction and roadmap of where the organization is going. There is largely very good support in the program managers meetings for this. She said her organization uses logic models to do more than just meet outcomes. Logic models give us a good road map and an attainable goal. Logic models also give her organization a focus on who they should hire and the zip codes she might be hiring people from. Logic models also tell the organization what kind of paper work and items should be tracked. Another respondent indicated logic models help her look at program capacity issues and force the provider to see if what has been written is really something the provider can live with. [Management supports use of the logic model and outcome measurement systems to guide program decisions](FGP1-SGTBD) |
| 1,4,5 | No sense of ownership | We’re the field soldiers. That information is generated and gathered by us and then given to management. [Not connecting to data](FGP9-SJSO) |
| 1,4,5 | No sense of ownership | No we were not brought into the development of the model. We inherited the model. And although we were not in the development of it was largely acceptable to us. Sometimes you see sort or long-term outcomes as unattainable in the timeframe we have the kids. We have a high turnover rate in the staff too. I would have liked to have had an opinion in the development of the logic model. I think the logic model is doable. It’s just a matter of time. [Believe the time frames are unrealistic](FGP7-CJSJ) |
Appendix Table G continued

| 1,5 | I loved using the logic model. I’m very visual so it helped me develop guidelines for service delivery. It really helped me to outline visits, and other tasks for the staff. I use it for developing policies and procedures. It guides employee training and helps me to develop the forms to track the data. {Links to daily tasks} (FGP8-ABCD) |

| Observation: Again, responses were mixed on how worthwhile the logic model development is for program use. Participants expressed the need for more flexibility in the logic model although they do use the data to inform decisions and to make process and programmatic changes |

| 1,3,4 | It is worth the time to do a logic model. Another respondent said there needs to be more flexibility put into the logic model so that when a program is in its first cycle of funding the logic model can be made out day by day. She said she sees glitches in a program that are not working to anyone’s benefit and there needs to be flexibility to change these things when they come up. {Need more flexibility} (FGP2-KBCD) |

| 1,4 | Another respondent said her program has to choose its battles for when to re-negotiate on the logic model. She said the logic models need to be used to inform necessary program changes. {Changes need to be made early in the project or the logic model is less likely to be changed} (FGP1-SGTBD) |

| 1,4 | I don’t think the outcomes are set in stone. We’re using reflection to ask what are our strengths and what are our weaknesses. And hopefully from those reflections we’ll be able to make improvements. I think it was mostly OK since we were brought into the situation after the logic model was developed. But there is always some quibbling going on about the way the numbers are set...it’s a numbers game. {See it as a numbers game} (FGP7-CJSJ) |
### Appendix Table G continued

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<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><em>I think the logic models best use it that it helps me think through the process.</em></td>
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### Making Outcome Measurement Systems Useful to Project Staff

| 1,3,5 | **Observation:** Participants described several factors that make data useful to the program; ease of data entry, flexibility of reporting, resources for data entry and report extraction, user control over data, seeing the data as having more than a funder accountability purpose, user friendly entry and extraction. The converse factors were reported as barriers to data use...the program staff feel the databases that store the data are somewhat inflexible, need to be less time consuming for data entry and need to mirror their program forms. There was also a repeated tension between the role of staff in doing data entry that competes with service provision...staff perceive the data entry as something they are doing for the funder and not something that can be useful for them. The relationship with the funder staff was also mentioned by several participants as a factor that has affected their ability to make programmatic changes based on the data retrieved from the outcome measurement systems. |

<p>| 1,3 | One respondent <em>said her organization seeks staff input on how to arrive at the logic model standards.</em> These benchmarks help the organization see where it is going. At one of the Ounce Program Specialist’s site visits, program staff met with her on why the outcome standards were not being met. The Program Specialist redirected us on whether we were asking the right questions. <em>She said her program is able to work with the Program Specialist.</em> She said you write a grant because thinking you can accomplish certain things so we have to ask if we’re asking the right questions for us. We have to look at our own staff and see if the goal is right for us, too. If we have stipulated an unrealistic goal for ourselves, that is our own fault. (FGP1-SGTBD) |</p>
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<td>1,3,4</td>
<td>The CEO respondent from Broward said there has to be <em>shared ownership between the provider and funder</em>. There has to be shared ownership for both parties. [Relationship between funder and project staff is important] (FGP4-WMTTYA)</td>
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<td>1,3,4</td>
<td>Another respondent said the logic model terminology is new given from her perspective. She said if logic models could be general in their first application of submitting the proposal, and then after, the program has begun implementation, more specific logic model goals can be developed. (FGP2-KBCD)</td>
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<td>3,4,5</td>
<td><em>Program staff needs to appreciate the data.</em> She said the age of agencies doing the “feel good” and helping people programs are over. She said her agency must help program staff learn to interpret data and use it to guide the organization toward meeting its purpose. <em>The problem for some small agencies is, they see this process as a “headache.”</em> (FGP1-SGTBD)</td>
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<td>3,4,5</td>
<td>Another respondent said <em>for a small provider helping the kids and keeping up with the data system is a problem.</em> She said there are competing needs. She said one Lead Teacher must come in on Saturdays to keep up the data system. It is definitely a hindrance. <em>The data system is like a double edged sword.</em> (FGP3-TFRC)</td>
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<td>3,4,5</td>
<td>She said there needs to be flexibility so she can pull certain reports and manipulated the reports better. She said this gives her the ability to move data so that if her program has not achieved its outcomes, it can still display all of the program activities that have been done. She said this <em>data serves as a management tool, for writing grants, and there are lessons learned from the data that is very critical.</em> (FGP2-KBCD)</td>
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<td>3,5</td>
<td>Then he can use this information to when an outcome is not met and he and staff can better determine what went wrong. (FGP4-WMTTYA)</td>
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<td>3,5</td>
<td>Another respondent said she does not know if the data was useful in the past, but the system that she has now is wonderful. She said inputting data into the system is really not that hard, it is just that you have to make the time to do it. <em>She said there needs to be added resources (staffing?) to actually put the data in the system.</em> She said in some projects her agency has built in a half-time position for doing this. (FGP1-SGTBD)</td>
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<td>3,4,5</td>
<td>Increase administrative costs can adversely affect direct service provision. If her agency does not have the capacity for keeping up with the data system requirements, they will not pursue the grant money. (FGP2-KBCD)</td>
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<td>3,4</td>
<td>The data is good info for us to have and be able to use for other purposes such as additional grants, and to determine needs in other areas. For example, we’re serving 2 zip codes right now, what about other zip codes…is there a need for our services in other zip codes? (FGP8-ABDC)</td>
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<td>3,4</td>
<td>We used this information to help us recruit other participants so we can have a more diverse program. It also helps me to see the geographical needs. (FGP9-SJSO)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Organizational characteristics &amp; technical characteristics</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The database is <em>not as user-friendly as we’d like</em>. It can be pretty time consuming too since we are responsible for direct service and data entry. (FGP7-CJSJ)</td>
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<td>Also technology factors</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>I think the biggest challenge is to really query the data to get what I’d like to know from it. Before the training I didn’t feel like I had much control over what the database would report. Now I feel somewhat more secure that I can get useful information from it. (FGP8-ABCD)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Also technology factors</td>
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<td>Our forms are different from what comes up on the database. If we can have the database and our forms mirror each other then that would make it easier. WE don’t have a data person. There is a lot of the data I know already. <em>I feel inadequate on the part of manipulating the data.</em> I have a lot of distractions from the kids and then I worry about whether or not my data is accurate. (FGP9-SJSO)</td>
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<td>I think if you could do away with recording the information on last year’s participant outcomes that would make it easier for us. We don’t know the kids from last year so to follow up on them they are strangers to us and we are strangers to them. I think we should only focus on the second year of data so we know the kids we’re responsible for following up on. [The staff member is not linking the program outcomes with the objectives. She does not see the purpose for collecting follow-up data on kids she did not work with even though the kids did go through the program] (FGP9-SJSO)</td>
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APPENDIX H: CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in Outcome Measurement Interview

Outcome measurement has become a requirement of many social service funders in the last decade. Showing the results of social service activities has become a priority in determining continued funding. The purpose of this study is to gather information on how nonprofit organization staff develop and use outcome measurement systems. The information provided will help inform nonprofit practice regarding outcome measurement.

If you choose to take part in this study, you will be asked to spend about one hour in an interview regarding your views on outcome measurement. In addition, you will be asked to review the transcript of your interview to ensure it accurately reflects your responses. The transcript review will take about an additional hour of your time.

There are no perceived risks of participating in the interview. However, you may benefit from your interview participation by reflecting on your experiences in developing logic models and outcome measurement systems for your program/project. The insights that you share with the researcher may help you to better understand how you do your work. The findings of the research will be made available to you and others who participate in the research, which may assist you in future project planning and evaluation.

I understand my interview will be tape recorded. I also understand that my participation in the study is voluntary, and all responses that I give during the interview will be anonymous. Further, I understand that my responses will remain confidential and I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and discontinue participation in this study without negative repercussions to me. I may voluntarily withdraw from the study by contacting Sandra Ortega at the address or phone number listed below.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information about this study by contacting the investigators listed below and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Finally, I acknowledge I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Participant’s Signature    Date

Principal Investigator
James Altschuld, Ph.D.
Professor, Educational Policy and Leadership
The Ohio State University
301 Ramseyer Hall
29 West Woodruff Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1177
(614) 292-7741
altschuld.1@osu.edu

Investigator
Sandra Ortega, M.P.A., Ph.D. Candidate
509 Terrace Street
Tallahassee, FL 32308
(850)224-1960
Ortega.12@osu.edu
APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW APPOINTMENT LETTER

Dear {Name},

The impact of outcome measurement on social service providers has become a topic of great interest in nonprofit management. Funders at all levels are requiring that social service providers demonstrate results with the money they receive in the form of outcomes. Yet, little research has been completed to determine how the requirement of outcome measurement impacts social service practice.

The purpose of this study is to gather information from social service practitioners such as yourself concerning your ideas about outcome measurement development and use. This includes your involvement in developing logic models that leads to outcome measurement reporting systems and your uses of the information obtained from the reports generated from the systems. Your perceptions of the purposes, uses and process of developing outcome measurement systems will help in informing nonprofit policy and practice.

Your interview is scheduled for {date & time}. The interview will be tape recorded (with your permission) to ensure accurate reporting of your comments. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can opt not to participate without any negative consequences whatsoever. Responses that you provide will be anonymous and any references to you or other ways in which you can be personally identified will be deleted from any reporting. The results of the research will be reported back to participants and not shared directly with supervisors.

We look forward to hearing your views on outcome measurement and greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Sandra Ortega at (850) 459-8588 or James Altschuld at (614) 292-7741 or by e-mail at ortega.12@osu.edu or altschuld.1@osu.edu.

Respectfully,

Sandra Ortega, MPA, Ph.D. Candidate
The Ohio State University
509 Terrace St.
Tallahassee, FL 32308
(850) 459-8588

James W. Altschuld, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University
Professor, Educational Policy and Leadership
301 Ramseyer Hall
29 West Woodruff Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1177
(614) 292-7741
Funding Staff Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me to talk about your experiences with program evaluation and outcome measurement. Let me begin by explaining the purpose of this interview. I am exploring how evaluation and measurement of outcomes affects and are used by nonprofit organizations. The research has three phases. The first phase is a discussion with you, the funding staff, to gain your insights into logic modeling and outcome measurement systems development. The second phase includes a survey to funded sites to get feedback from them on the same topics. The final phase involves a focus group interview at the annual administrative meeting with project/program staff to further refine my understanding of how projects develop and use outcome measurement in their daily practice.

This interview should take approximately one hour. Your involvement in this research is completely voluntary and you may choose not to answer any of the questions if you feel uncomfortable during the interview. With your permission, I would like to tape record this interview to ensure that I am capturing the information accurately. All of your responses will remain confidential. I will not identify you by name or link your responses with you in the research or other forums. Within two weeks, I will send you a summary of our conversation and ask for your feedback to ensure its accuracy. The results will be reported back to participants and will not be directly shared with supervisors, unless the supervisor is also a participant.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? Is it okay to tape record the interview? Will you sign a consent form allowing me to record and report portions of this interview in my dissertation?
Background Information

1) Please take a few minutes to tell me your title and primary responsibilities in your organization.

2) How long have you worked for this organization?

Developing Outcome Measurement Systems

Think of a program/project that you worked with in terms of developing ways to measure impacts and outcomes.

3) Describe how the measurement of impacts and outcomes has or how it potentially will affect practice.
   Probes:
   Are there changes that you think will/have occur(ed) at the programmatic level? If so, what are some of those?

   As a result of outcome measurement, what changes have you made to the way you provide technical assistance to programs that your organization funds?

4) What do you think are the program and staff perceptions of the measurement of outcomes and/or systems that have been put in place to carry out this function?
   Probes:
   How would you describe the program staff’s buy in into the outcome measurement frameworks?

   From your conversations with the program staff, what do you think is their level of understanding regarding the linkage between the objectives and outcomes?

   Do you think the staff believes the variables (elements) being emphasized in the framework are important and represent their program/project’s achievement story?

5) In what way if any do the reporting requirements help project staff focuses on outcomes/results?
   Probe: From your discussions with program staff how do they describe the benefits that participants get from programs and has that description changed as they have progressed in using outcome measurement?
6) What factors influence program/project staff in determining the objectives and measurements they include in their logic models?

**Probes**
- Are there any specific factors that aid a project’s ability to develop relevant, realistic and achievable goals?

- Are there any specific factors that you have noticed that work against a project’s ability to develop relevant, realistic and achievable goals?

- In your judgment what is it that the staff understands the most about outcome measurement?

- In your judgment what is it that the staff understands the least about outcome measurement?

7) Are there any particular characteristics that make a program/project more successful than others in developing and using outcome measurement systems? If so, what are they?

**Probe:** Are there specific organizational factors or staff characteristics that promote a results orientation?

**Outcome Measurement Use**

8) How do you and your organization use the results from the outcome measurement systems that are currently in place?

**Probes:**
- When you receive the process and objectives reports, what do you generally do with the information?

9) For you, what do you consider the primary purpose of outcome measurement systems?

10) Can you think of any specific examples of how your projects have used the results of the measurement frameworks?
Conclusion

11) Looking back on the development of the outcome system and the actual measurement of outcomes, are there things you wish your organization had done differently?

Yes     No

If yes, what?

Do you have any questions for me?

This concludes the interview process. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. As I said in the beginning of our meeting, I will provide you with a transcript of our interview in about two weeks. I would like you to review the transcript for accuracy and return it to me with your comments/concerns. Thank you for participating in this research. I will notify you upon publication of the final report.
APPENDIX K: FUNDING STAFF COMBINED INTERVIEWS FOR CODING

Background Information

1. Please take a few minutes to tell me your title and primary responsibilities in your organization.

Evaluator, the guy who makes sense out of the data. I work mostly with the school groups and other family activities such as support groups, circle of parents, parenting skills classes. I used to work with a wider range of programs in the past—child abuse prevention, foster care, teen pregnancy prevention. (001)

Program Specialist. Monitor subcontracts for compliance with program objectives and outcomes and subcontract requirements. (002) {Previous experience with outcome measurement}

MIS Coordinator, Develop and maintain websites, data systems and reports. (003) {No previous experience with outcome measurement}

Senior evaluator. I review evaluation design, recommend modifications to the design, do literature reviews, assist with the development of objectives and outcomes, assist with data collection as it relates to objectives and outcomes, analyze the measures, relate the research findings to program recommendations. I also consult with program/project staff on issues related to research and evaluation. (004) {Review, recommend, develop, consult, Previous experience with outcome measurement}

Senior program specialist—I oversee 15 programs that provide various types of services to clients. I provide technical assistance, monitoring as far as achievement on goals, objectives, outcomes as well as ensuring and verifying documentation. I also am responsible for collecting data; ensuring data is accurately entered into the database by the site staff. I am also sorta the main contact with the site if they are having any problems. For example if there is a problem with the database I act as the contact that does the initial trouble shooting and then I get with the data management staff at the Funder to help correct the problem. {I am definitely the main contact for the sites for programmatic issues as well as any other issues} {Monitoring and technical assistance, previous experience with outcome measurement} (005)

I am the Vice President/Director of Program Administration. I supervise the core {Funder} unit for the demonstration sites, monitor contract compliance with state contracts. Monitor contract development and procession for all contracts and subcontracts. I supervise the development of all quarterly and annual reports and evaluation studies submitted to the state funders such as DCF and DOH. I serve on the management team which develops and enforces agency policy.
MIS Coordinator, I create databases, create reports and provide technical assistance to the programs for entering data. I also develop the queries and reports for the outcome measurement systems. {No previous outcome measurement experience} (007)

I am the Director of RES. My responsibilities include directing the RES unit for OPFF—those duties include recruiting and hiring staff in program evaluation and systems development and maintenance. I am the direct supervisor of the staff responsible for developing the progress and objectives reports and evaluating the programs funded by the Funder. I also supervise system staff in the development implementation and maintenance of data management systems. I am also responsible for the development and implementation of the unit budget and I participate on the overall organization management team. {Previous outcome measurement experience} (008)

[Observation: The respondents describe their roles and responsibilities in distinct ways. Some use contract monitoring language whereas the majority uses technical assistance/helping language]

2. How long have you worked for this organization?

3 and half years…3 years, 5 months to be exact. (001)

3 Years in August (002)

10 ½ years. Prior to coming to the OPFF I worked for DHRS which is now DCF as an administrative assistant. I worked in the Executive Office for the Department Secretary. I was responsible for providing assistance to the advisory boards and created graphics for presentations given by the Secretary. I did correspondence tracking for all correspondence that required a response. Worked on communication flow and information tracking systems. When I worked in legislative planning, I had to look at every bill and determine the impact on our department, assign it to the correct department staff and coordinate who needed to attend the legislative committee hearings. (003)

1 year at my current employer. Prior to my work at OPFF I worked for nine years developing and conducting evaluations of programs in criminal justice and juvenile justice. I also worked with nonprofit groups funded through DCF, DCA, most of the projects were administered by private nonprofit agencies through subcontracts with state agencies. I also did public policy development and research related to developing public policy. This was primarily with government agencies such as special districts which are pseudo government agencies. One example of such a type of special district is water and sewer. (004)

I’ve been at the Funder for 6 years in August. I have an MSW and prior to coming to the Funder I worked as a social worker, providing individual and group counseling to youth in the school system with K-12. It was a collaborative effort that provided counseling and services for both the students and their families including substance abuse, domestic violence and other types of counseling services. We also referred out to service providers. I did some social skills training with K-3 and worked with all the schools which totaled 14 that fed into the High School in West
Orange County. *I have had previous experience with logic models and goals, objectives from that job.* We also worked with outside evaluators. *The logic model was promoted by the supervisor who bought into the philosophy of logic modeling and outcome measurement.* I held that job for 2 years; 1996-1998. (005)

I started at the {Funder} in August of 1992 so I guess that makes it about 12 years. Prior to coming to the {Funder} I worked for the Department of Children and Families in Foster Care and adoption. I did that for 4 years. *(I asked if they had used logic models and outcome measurement at DCF during her tenure there and she said they had not.)* (006)

It will be 4 years in September. Before I started working here I was a student studying computer information systems. This is *my first job out of college*. Applied for the position because I needed a job and they were looking for someone to work with computers. *I didn’t know anything about nonprofit organizations and just wanted to get a job.* Before I worked here I did manual labor lifting watermelons and other types of agricultural products and also construction types of jobs. (007)

I have worked at the {Funder} for 6 years. Prior to coming to {Funder} I was the senior minister of a church. *(I asked if he had experience with OM in his former role and he stated he did and provided examples of how OM was used in his former position)* In my former position we used measurement related to contributions in church donations by characteristics of the membership. We linked the average donation to other characteristics and tracked program participation, conducted surveys to determine parishioner’s interests and satisfaction surveys with various aspects of church programs. We also collected information on opinions of church members in determining program design and policy of the church. Prior to that my dissertation work included a social research project in which I developed a workshop design focused on preaching to life situation of congregation. This information was used to set the agenda in the context of worship—it helped prioritize issues and topics that the congregation wanted to see incorporated into the sermons—It set a calendar based on needs and interest and used follow-up focus groups to determine relevancy and helpfulness of the sermons. I also have an undergraduate in sociology where I studied the comparison of the expectations of the congregation and their ministers. This research looked at a number of factors around expectations on duties—such as time spent on tasks, priorities, relevance to the health of the church. It was published but it has been. *(I asked if churches usually look at this type of information for planning)* Churches don’t always look at the different variables in the mix but they do sometimes look at age, gender and family types as related to contributions to the church. They may use the information for planning stewardship campaigns for increasing participation. My study used focus groups, survey information to develop programming and budgetary forecasting. I stratified the contributions by age and looked at giving patterns of age groups to target age groups where participation might be enhanced. (008)

*[Observation:]* The respondents had a combined total of 39.5 years of working at the agency. The range for employment was 1 year to 12.5 years. Participants were mixed on their professional experience with logic models and outcome measurement prior to coming to their current jobs. All but one of the participants had at least a bachelor’s degree, 4 had master’s degrees and 2 had professional (doctoral) degrees. 5 of the participants had some experience in using outcome measurement prior to coming to their current job]
Developing Outcome Measurement Systems

Think of a program/project that you worked with in terms of developing ways to measure impacts and outcomes.

3. Describe how the measurement of impacts and outcomes has or how it potentially will affect practice.

1st thing that comes to mind is a technical point—when you analyze data you learn better ways to set things up. “Figure out a better mouse trap.” Get better at doing it. {Practice improves development} (001)

I can see it clearly with the three programs (health care projects) because they made adjustments in their programs based on the data. This included changes in various instruments that that use for measuring outcomes (attachment tool) and the way they capture their service provision (home visits versus office visits) and the other outcomes of the programs (breastfeeding). We learned about culture issues around differences in prenatal care and increased the involvement of the service providers with the clients prenatally and found it had an impact on delivery. “We’ve learned a lot in the 3 years I’ve been here and I’ve watched the programs make changes as we learned from the data” {“learn from data” to improve practice}. (002)

Well unfortunately, it probably has somewhat of a negative affect on service provision to begin with because there is more time devoted to collecting the data. Hopefully after reports are provided to the program they can see areas that maybe they should be doing things that they’re not doing. They might get help being better organized—not meeting outcomes could encourage discussion on what they could change to make things better. {Competition of resources for program implementation and data entry; can help with organization, improvement} (003)

Yeah, I actually just completed an evaluation of (name of program deleted; parent support program) which used performance measures from the contract. The program needed to meet a certain percentage of improvement in their activity. They did not meet the threshold of a specific performance measurement indicator and there was a decision to emphasize the improvement of that domain—which was information sharing with the program participants. We made some specific recommendations on how to make the improvement working with the project staff. Now that’s one example of collecting a lot of information, data but it was not tied directly to the contract. The initial interest in focusing on the data collection came from the interest of the program’s central office. The statewide project director was interested in the process for recruiting and retaining clients in the support groups.

A lot of what we label as outcomes are not outcomes, but outputs. So it’s not clearly delineated for both the funding staff and the project staff. It can be frustrating to the program staff to develop an outcome that is truly realistic—Part of the reason is because data are not readily available. It also adds an additional challenge that may not be part of their daily service delivery…(collecting data and projecting outcomes) The projects and sometimes the staff providing technical assistance don’t really know what’s realistic about achieving the outcome…many times the n (number of cases) are small. I think we’re still not making enough progress on that (increasing the n’s). {Use of outcome measurement results for improvement,
there seem to be misuse of outcome measurement terms both by the funder and project staff, lack of knowledge about outcome measurement) (004)

Umm. I guess. I think it is a tool to use to ensure the program is doing what they’ve set out to do. It helps with implementation and maybe to keep the programs on track with implementation---maybe they don’t refer back to the document after they start implementation as much as they should. But for those that do, I think it is a great tool to keep them on focus. Programs have in mind what they’re doing; i.e.; prevent drug abuse or whatever their primary goal is—they have the bigger vision, but they forget they should be focusing on the specifics because they have the global goal in mind. The logic model when used can help refocus on specifics. It is maps of how the program is suppose to run. Program managers can use it to help manage their staff and keep them focused on the processes and services that lead to the general goal attainment. It is also an evaluation tool for performance measurement. Should be showing the areas of achievement to both audiences the funder and the program staff. It is also a tool that outsiders (no program staff) should be able to pick up and review so they can understand the program. In my other job my work wasn’t driven by an outcomes orientation; it was more service provision. I think it helps provide focus. Even in the beginning, I don’t think the programs all had logic models, but now they do understand the reasons we encourage their use. {My answer sounds a little unclear here—perhaps due to some long work hours in dealing with many things the day of the interview. The logic model clearly states the services the program will perform. The logic model should clearly spell out the number to be served, frequency of services and impact of services on the participants. “The measurement of these items helps programs identify their strengths & weaknesses and can ultimately help the program to improve services to achieve their goals”.} {Looks at it as a contract for service delivery and results} (005)

Being able to measure outcomes allows us to determine the effectiveness of the services we provide which in time will tell us what works and what doesn’t work. It assists us in determining the impacts of the programs and helps us refine the models so we can determine continuation of funding for those models that are proven to be effective practice. {Program effectiveness, improvement, funding consideration} (006)

A lot of times what goes on the paper is not what the program does. Once the program staff see their numbers in the report they go back and fit the logic model to their program implementation. Since I’ve only worked with the programs for about a year and a half the first part of that time was me trying to learn how to do my job. The longer I work with the programs the more they tell me about the program. After sometime and several discussions and going back and forth over the numbers they ask me what am I counting and then I explain what I’m counting in the query and then they can tell me what they are actually doing so we both understand what the program is doing and how I should develop the query and where they should indicate what they are doing in the computer program. {Need for clear communication in determine what is involved in determining the outcome} (007)

One of the first projects that I worked on at OPFF was the (name of project deleted) project. It was a Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project. As we measured attendance and looked at pre-post tests for change in knowledge attitude and behavior the program staff would work with the youth to help improve the level of interest and buy into the program. Problems of poor results—many looked at quality of staff, efficiency of staff were highlighted for the staff so they could make
program adjustments. We used focus groups to find out the perceived root causes of the problems and provided the info to project management. Sometimes it may have lead to replacement of staff or inform how staff delivers information so they could improve their delivery. It also helped provide guidance for changes in programs such as how, when and where the classes were offered and potential changes in staff. We shared the quarterly reports at the administrative meetings because there were 5 sites total that were involved in the project. By sharing the reports on lessons learned on performance the sites could use the information to improve the programs. For example, many of the sites struggled with parent participation. One of the sites had very good parent participation and the staff shared strategies with the other sites on how to improve parent participation. {Provides process feedback that can improve program implementation} (008)

Probes:
Are there changes that you think will/have occur(ed) at the programmatic level? If so, what are some of those?

Not sure, (pause & probe)... I can think of one example where we saw a specific problem where the satisfaction rating was lower than expected...we thought it might be problems with implementation of the program. So we scheduled a site visit early on to determine the reason for the data results and offered technical assistance. We do periodic data reviews which have unveiled a number of things that need to be paid attention to at the project level—pattern of indicators in the data suggest different things and we relay that to the program staff. {Timely review may uncover implementation issues that can prompt immediate technical assistance; uncover issues early so project staff can adapt} (001)

I think that some of the programs have gone back and realized that some of the goals and objectives they stated (in the proposals and logic models) were not realistic—they gave it more thought on what it is they can legitimately expect to accomplish as a result of reviewing the outcome reports. {Provides feedback; reality check} (003)

Before databases there was not a clear understanding of the linkages between the logic models and the outcome measurement systems. I think the introduction of the databases makes it clear to the project staff what it is they should be doing and what data they need to collect. {Link between data in data out} (005)

I have noticed an increased willingness and benefit of measurement collection and utilization to help guide their practice. Over the years, the programs have learned to use the measurement to help them implement programs as it shows tangible proof they’re making a difference. “It is a motivational and a managerial tool in that it keeps the programs focused on their job, which is promoting some type of change, either behavioral, attitudinal or learning change”. {Use of measurement information to guide practice, managerial tool} (006)

As a result of outcome measurement, what changes have you made to the way you provide technical assistance to programs that your organization funds?

Mostly formative—how program is providing service—implementation orientation. Other than a commitment to be on site occasionally, not much. It is important to have site visits in order to
describe programs and get a good understanding of how they are implemented. I think it is a very constructive and worthwhile process. “the official description of the programs can be real bad”. For example, Family Resource Center—It’s hard to get the idea of what the program is doing from the proposal submitted (to the funder). The project is actually embedded in a bigger program and therefore the description in the proposal is very limited. It appeared to be a program serving adults when in fact the project was serving the children of the adults within a larger program. {Description of the program in the proposal to the funder can be misleading; the logic modeling process helps decipher what the actual nuggets of the program are} (001)

*I review reports before I go on a site visit and talk with the program staff about the low scoring areas.* Work with the program staff to determine why it is happening (low scoring areas). It may be differences between the data being inputted and what the program says it should be. I work with the staff to reconcile the differences between the data output and the program staff’s hand calculations. *I also work with the MIS staff and project staff to reconcile the differences in the output.* Also use the data to talk about changes down the road, what needs to be done and how it can be done recognizing changes may not be made during the life of the contract due to the inability to change the current data base structure. *“In the first year of implementation the data base is a little more flexible than subsequent years. But after the first year we need to maintain the same database structure so we can compare between the years of the funding contract for the same programs.”* {TA provided in determining data collection and queries, there seems to be a tension between flexibility and continuation for comparative purposes} (002)

Well, I didn’t have any interaction with the programs before outcome measurement. Ummm, I think that the {Funder} is looking at programs in a different way in that we want to be able to show impact and not only “see the happy children’s faces”. One thing that I think is that the more the systems develop and get more sophisticated that there is more of a need for technical assistance. When the programs were only sending a narrative report, we didn’t even have an MIS unit. So the more sophisticated we get on the requirements for outcome measurement, the more need there is to provide technical assistance on how to use the systems. {Technical assistance has increased due to the level of sophistication of the systems} (003)

*It allows the program specialists to a better job as they have a concrete tool to monitor, data collection, and encourage accountability.* It allows staff a useful tool and it makes everything clear for everybody. I think it levels the playing field for everybody—all of the folks involved see clarity as the logic models are pretty cut and dry so folks know what the objectives and outcomes of the programs are suppose to be. *The TA we provide has improved greatly because it had to and having a clearer understanding of what the program is suppose to be accomplishing through the use of the logic model tool, has provided more understanding and the program specialist had to focus more clearly on the service objectives and outcomes.* It required the program specialists to be more astute in being able to help sites implement the goals and objectives and develop strong measurement tools for data collection. Documentation of services has also improved over time because the logic model lays everything out in a logical manner. *It holds the programs and funder accountable for the effectiveness of the project based on what they have written in the logic model.* Having the logic model even for paraprofessionals helps make things understandable. My staff like having the clear cut guidelines. {Technical assistance; has increased understanding for matching measurement tools; acts as a contract} (006)
I think we have done more in the area of providing training on how to use the logic model as a tool for program improvement. We’ve also refined the logic model over time so that it more comprehensively captures information such as measurement tools, definitions of measurement and we've provided more technical assistance than we were initially providing as a function of resources. When I first came on board there was no protocol in place to refine the logic model and there is one now that we follow to help us work with the program specialists and the MIS and evaluators so they can develop the logic model with the project staff. {TA, increased capacity about measurement applications, increased structure of units, increased teamwork between project staff and funder staff} (008)

**Observation:** Respondents mentioned at the programmatic level the most noticeable change that has occurred with the introduction of outcome measurement systems is technical assistance requests to adapt to the new framework requirements. Another change mentioned by respondents is the increase in obtaining measurement tools to match the program outcomes and also making sure the program is being realistic about service provision components and achievement potential]

4. What do you think are the program and staff perceptions of the measurement of outcomes and/or systems that have been put in place to carry out this function?

That’s a problem—“I think we have a peculiar issue that the programs have their own sense about what needs to be done—We come along with a big stick (money) and we create a structure that doesn’t always fit their structure—a little bit schizophrenia in the program occurs.” The continue to collect data on what they’ve always collected data on and at the same time they collect the data that we request to please us—but it’s kinda secondary for them as they’re data system is the 1st priority. This can lead to problems….Some data entry duplication—it’s a real potential for numbers not adding up when there are two data collection systems being used simultaneously. {Complying, but not embracing} (001)

OK, that’s been an evolving issue—Instruction on the data system has changed. How they record impacts on the outcomes has also changed over the past couple of years. We have gone through an evolution and various data corrections have been made as a result of everyone involved getting a better understanding of how the database is structured and how to match the data collection process at the program level with that structure. I’ve had meetings with the program staff on how these things are related and this has helped with their acceptance of the systems and their understanding of how to capture the data that is required within the data queries. I’ve also provided TA and “cheat sheets” for the project staff with profiles of what the service pattern for a typical client should look like at closure to help with report reconciliation. I've been providing more TA at what it means to document and how it impacts compliance with objectives and outcome achievement—“the data needs to capture what you do or you’re not going to get credit” {Building capacity on database structure, also initiating learning so projects can be in compliance} (002)

Program staff, Ummm—I think that as we improve the systems, they are happy to see that. When we give them a new system and do the training they seem happy to have it as they see it as something that will help them. But, when there are problems and there isn’t a good relationship or understanding between MIS and the program staff they get discouraged. The numbers aren’t what they thought they would be so this can be discouraging to the program staff. Overall, I think
they are glad to have that tool—I know several of the programs have asked for assistance on how to upgrade their systems. We try to help them do the upgrade so it’s useful for them after we stop funding them. Since they’re invested in the system they want to make sure that it has utility beyond the OPFF use and funding cycle. {Need to have a positive relationship between the MIS and project staff to forge dialogue and understanding of roles/responsibilities} (003)

“Well there is a lot of variation in the programs and the staff’s perceptions of outcome measurement”. For the most part, the project staff understand the need for outcome measurement, but don’t appreciate having to do it. Data collection is probably perceived as aggravating/frustrating sometimes. (004)

I think everyone is aware of what it is and its something they have to do. We don’t hear as many complaints about the logic models now. And they can connect their logic models to the databases and the reports. When the data is empty then that’s a red flag. The numbers kinda speak for themselves. {Improving from a compliance perspective} (005)

I think it even makes their job easier because it cuts down on guessing and speculation of what the program is all about. I think they’ve all bought in to the framework—at first it was like fighting tooth and nail. Old school social workers were touchy-feely about what it was they were doing. They didn’t see the utility right off the bat of the frameworks—they were all about the smiles of the children. Documenting results was not what we were taught back in the day in social work. I think the frameworks are user friendly and that helps both the large more sophisticated agencies as well as the smaller grass roots agencies. {Initial resistance of the project, but now seem to find utility in the frameworks} (006)

I don’t have a lot of communication with the programs so they don’t tell me much about what they like and don’t like. I think it is because they know they don’t have a choice but to enter the data. (007)

From the local program staff the feedback that I got somewhat earlier in my tenure here is that it was viewed with initial trepidation and seen as an accountability tool. Once the program staff began to realize it’s relevance to them they saw it as a tool for helping clients and they seem to have bought into it (the logic model and outcome measurement process) This of course happened over time and I believe that over the course of the initial year they begin to lose their fear of the logic model and reporting process. I think this is based on our organizational philosophy that we present the logic model as a tool for improvement, as well as accountability, but within an improvement framework. {Initial fear followed by acceptance; use of an improvement framework with underlying accountability improves acceptance} (008)

Probes: How would you describe the program staff’s buy in into the outcome measurement frameworks?

“It varies a lot—from complete ignorance to a moderately enthusiastic acceptance of them (outcome measurement frameworks) and all points in between.” Ignorance is worth a comment—if you are recoding a bunch of activities and processes then you’re going to think that all there is to it. Short-term programs are very limited in the impact that they can
Some understand the importance of documentation better than others. It was slow as I don’t think they are usually involved in the development of objectives and outcomes. “I encourage them by showing them the usefulness of using the data for getting ready for 3rd party payment options as the data can demonstrate a decrease in hospital stays, decrease in the use of expensive medications and can help them get external funding beyond our contract”. {Puts it in a use context to encourage buy in from program staff} (002)

I think if they put the time into developing the logic models then they have the buy in. I think they have buy into that—maybe that process helps them to think through the development of their program. I think it is important that they (program staff) develop the logic model first when they are applying for funds. {Program staff should develop the logic model when they submit the proposal for funding} (003)

From your conversations with the program staff, what do you think is their level of understanding regarding the linkage between the objectives and outcomes?

“I think they’re (project staff) are on board but probably sitting in the back of the boat…now, I’m not sure who is driving the boat—not sure if it’s the Board of Directors at OPFF that are driving the evidence based practice boat.” It seems there is still so much struggling to get a grass roots program to the level of sophistication to get to useful outcomes. I think there is still reluctance on the part of the projects because of the challenges related to data collection. Sometimes the data that must be collected for outcomes is at a location other than the project site. This complicates the situation even more for the site staff. {Not sure who is driving the emphasis on outcome measurement, data collection challenges cause reluctance on the part of site staff} (004)

Now I think there is buy in for sure. The program staff understand the purpose. I don’t think this was the case 5 years ago—before they were just doing them because the funder required it. Now they do it because the funder is asking and they can use the information for getting more funding, managing programs (improving services and evaluating services) {moved from resistance to acceptance to use} (005)

[Observation: Buy-in from project staff is varied and along a continuum…it seems that in general the respondents agree that the initial response from project staff is resistance, followed by acceptance and once technical skills are built in outcome measurement, the projects move to active users of the data]

From your conversations with the program staff, what do you think is their level of understanding regarding the linkage between the objectives and outcomes?

It varies from “not getting it at all” and these are very competent professionals in their content area—some are very savvy and have the outcomes lingo down and can substantiate it with measurable objectives and outcomes data. {Linkage understanding is on a continuum and varied} (001)
After about a year they get the picture and that’s after talking to them each quarter. UCP created a data input position and filled it with a person who who is also a content person & that has helped provide immediate feedback on how accurate the data is. On the other hand, the Osceola program uses a team approach which is much more participatory and takes more time to implement changes and communicate the changes among staff. {Notes differences between centralized data entry and team approach regarding efficiency and effectiveness} (002)

Since I’ve only been here one year I may not have as much knowledge of this as the other evaluation staff. But, I think their (project staff) understanding is still somewhat limited. At least with the programs that I’m assigned. I even find it frustrating to get the pieces linked together i.e.; the goals, service objectives (outputs) and outcomes (in the framework that is provided) There’s not a good flow from the objectives to the outcomes. I think it does help the program develop and maybe they’ll decide not to provide a specific service as a result of doing the exercise. The creation of a logic model can be a learning tool that helps the program make decisions and understand their program a little better. {The frameworks lack flow which is evidence of the lack of understanding linkages between the components in the logic model} (004)

We talk about the outcome measurements and logic models and why we’re tracking them and they understand better because we keep emphasizing their importance. I think this helps the program staff connect the logic models to the outcome measurement systems and the databases which provides more meaning. {I think their level of understanding is very high based on the fact that we talk about it so often} {Reinforced by funder increases the understanding of the project staff} (005)

I don’t think that’s a problem especially if it’s presented at the front-end. The projects accept that they will need to do the logic model and outcome measurement data collection and see its utility for what they’re doing. I think the staff believe that the framework does represent the important elements of the program. {The linkage needs to be verbalized (reinforced) up front so project staff understand the linkage} (006)

I think they’re getting better now than in the beginning. As the programs work more with the systems and the staff they get a better understanding. I’ve noticed a difference in the past year and a half since I’ve been working with the programs in developing the systems. It takes at least a year for both the program staff and the MIS staff to learn what’s going on between the program and the data. If it doesn’t say it in the logic model, then I don’t know it’s happening because I don’t know about program implementation. I have an example of that going on right now. It’s not exactly the same, but it is a cause for frustration because I don’t know exactly what the program means when they write it in the logic model inaccurately. The logic model says they’ll complete a post test within two weeks before the program---well, I developed the query to determine if this happens…what the program really is doing is providing a post test within two weeks of completing the component, not discharge, so the service objective numbers were off. There was a miscommunication about the time point when something is to be completed…that directly effects how the query is built so the logic model needs to accurately describe the program process and in some cases it is too vague {Sometimes the data bases don’t match program implementation because of lack of understanding on the developer’s implementation knowledge and the staff’s lack of database knowledge}. (007)
Our staff have a better understanding between the services provided and their measurement than the project staff and certainly than from when I was first on board. *Initially if the program staff had not had experience with logic models, especially with ours since we use our own framework, they initially may see the service objectives and the process objective and outcomes as separate things.* But after we work with them they see the linkage between the logic models and the quality of service provision and their references in the outcomes. *{Project staff need technical assistance and support to understand the linkage}* (008)

**Observation:** Respondents comments suggested the project staff’s understanding of the linkage between the objectives and outcomes is varied. Some suggested it was very high due to the reinforcement of funding staff, others stated that the understanding has evolved over time as the projects have received technical assistance and grown to understand the technical aspects of querying for data reports

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**Do you think the staff believe the variables (elements) being emphasized in the framework are important and represent their program/project’s achievement story?**

Osceola, yes. UCP moreso now than when I first started—they can actually use it for management purposes. I think the differences have to do with the training manual use as a guide for the programs. Initially we did not have the training manual and once we developed it we had to go back and train the staff. Now, with the newest program the training manual was on hand during the initial contract meetings. The newest program knows from the start how we will utilize data since our first conversation with them. In the other cases, the data collection was secondary. It was here (motion to head) but wasn’t here (in their hearts) and then once they learned the funder would not give credit for the work done without the data they got the linkage and began to document better. *{Reinforcement with review of data output}* (002)

*I think there is some compromise. They feel to a certain extent it does tell their achievement story, but sometimes they’re not too happy as the outcome measurement reporting requirements interfere with service provision.* Because of all the requirements—some are too demanding in time that needs to be allocated to collecting the data and there are always exceptions to the rules…like the numbers and percentages don’t tell the whole story. *{Tension between data collection and service provision}* (003)

Probably not for every program. But I think it reflects a decent amount of what’s going on—there is more emphasis on quantitative versus qualitative (context) which leaves some gaps there. *I think the logic model framework (we use) could be modified to include the qualitative as well as the quantitative outcome measures.* I haven’t thought through it all, but I think that would strengthen the logic model were using now. *{Dominant emphasis on numbers leaves out context that may be important to the story}* (004)

Most of the data elements now do fit the program and that’s because we’ve taken a lot more time with the logic model before executing the contract. The teams we’ve develop and the time we put in have made them a better fit than they were before. *{Increase in commitment up front has improved logic model development process}* (005)

I don’t know because I don’t get feedback from the program staff. (007)
Well, I think that for the most part they do in our situation because we let it begin with the project staff telling us about what it is that they do and want to accomplish with the programs. They tell us what will determine success of their program and then we add to this and get other factors that will illustrate success. *It is inherent in the social work field that quantitative outcomes don’t ever tell the whole story.* They focus on helping individuals and that is what they are use to...they are not use to having to document a bunch of numbers and so we need to use a mixed methodology in our evaluations where resources allow for this. “It also depends on how well they have met the outcomes as program staff want to put a face on the numbers and logic models and outcome measurement generally don’t provide that”. {Since the process begins with project staff it is more likely to tell the story. Still is missing the context, the focus on outcome measurement has shifted the traditional social work focus which is more service oriented than outcomes focused} (008)

[Observation: There appears to be general agreement that the logic models do not tell the whole achievement story, but logic models developed by the project staff provide the elements to tell the story with the quantitative data but need to be complimented with qualitative context information]

5. In what way if any do the reporting requirements help project staff focus on outcomes/results?

To the degree that the reports are reporting what they’re suppose to be reporting they can work real well. *It’s a “what gets measured gets done philosophy”*. If we bug them about it they can see the connection with it (results). Longer term outcomes are not realistic for a short-term intervention but can help the staff link the program with results and helps them focus on them. If its awkward for them to see the link between the need for data collection and reporting you may need to push them along. **For example, one of the programs is expected to follow-up with teens regarding their employment and pregnancy post-program involvement. This is awkward for staff but is part of the outcome measurement system requirements in determining program outcomes. Sometimes it depends on the sensitivity of the follow-up questions and activities. [Note: Project staff from this program were involved in the focus groups and concur with this comment] (001)**

Quarterly they have to look at them—The program specialist goes over the quarterly reports with the program staff—when we all sit down and focus on the data. It’s been a long haul but I know we’re getting there. (Interviewer observation: The respondent provides technical assistance with data reconciliation…it seems there is duplication in the recording of the data that can be confusing for folks) Service sheets for each person and staff had to fill out each (seems like duplication of data reporting) They see what they should be providing & what they have provided. {Reinforce scheduled reviews of data use various strategies to help staff remember to record data} (002)

Well if they didn’t have to report on it they wouldn’t have the numbers and statistics to look at and they might think they are accomplishing things they’re not. And when they get the reports that show that only a low percentage is reaching that goal, it encourages them to look at it and determine how they can do something different. {Shows discrepancies between service provision and data output. Reinforces the need to improve data collection efforts} (003)
Yes, (nodding head) I think it’s important to have the project staff involved in the process and not just have outside researchers come in and record the data, etc. “I think when the projects staff are more of an integral part of the process they get to understand the process better and it helps them to focus on results”. (004)

They provide a map to how staff should be implementing their program and it is also an evaluation tool to assess achievement with their objectives and outcomes. I think it is pretty obvious when they get their report back and they’ve only achieve 30% when they set out to achieve 60% or whatever, they realize they need to increase their focus on achieving their results. {The numbers in the reports motivate staff to focus} (005)

It allows them to see what they’re doing...see the results of their inputs. Back in the day you’d see maybe in five years what you were doing because that is how often a report was written. Logic models allow for short term outcomes and provide short term incentives and rewards in being able to see results of the work so they can see for the long haul. It provides the program staff with immediate feedback so they can keep in perspective the long term change that may occur based on their efforts. {Gives a report quickly-immediate feedback to the project staff can serve as a reward for their efforts} (006)

I think it helps the program staff to see that they are on track or not. For example, once they get their reports back from me they can see their numbers are low. Once they see that they can determine if they need to do more work in that area or tell us that’s not the way the program works so we can rework our queries. {Numbers could be the result of two things low data entry or low service delivery...the staff see the reports as a way to reconcile project efforts} (007)

If they are required to submit periodic reports that allow them to see adjustments over time they can make midpoint adjustments. However, if they don’t get that type of feedback then they won’t have the opportunity to make adjustments. When we provide them with the feedback I think the outcome measurement reports serve the function of program improvement, not just effectiveness. {Gives quick feedback and can be an improvement tool} (008)

[Observation: Respondents agree that the data reports remind the project staff what the numbers are showing related to their performance goals. They show discrepancies between service provision and data output and assist in reconciling differences between the two forms of performance feedback.]

Probe: From your discussions with program staff how do they describe the benefits that participants get from programs and has that description changed as they have progressed in using outcome measurement?

I don’t think it has changed, but they describe it a bit differently. They come at it from a very emotional perspective (one project). Others come from it from very clinical perspective. It may be a difference in experience and organizational culture as one is community based and the other is hospital based. {Description/articulation has changed but not the benefits for the clients} (002)
Reporting requirements demand that programs focus on their outcomes. Funding is driven by programs being successful & providing quality services. Knowing the level of their achievement with outcomes helps programs to provide better services if needed. The programs are concerned about meeting their goals and want to meet their goals for a number of reasons—mainly to provide quality services to their population and also to continue obtaining funding.) Respondent added these comments after reviewing her transcript. {Encourages project staff to focus on outcomes} (005)

I think there has been a change in the way the program staff view outcome measurement, they’ve grown beyond the “smiles of the children mentality”. They saw that as results/data were required that was what they were going for. They recognize you can’t take the smiles of the children and the anecdotes to the funders or legislators…so now they make the connection between change/outcome and data and ultimately funding. {Change in funding environment from “feel good descriptions” to quantity descriptions} (006)

[Observation: Sounds as though the projects have learned to use the data to describe program success. This is based on their understanding that the funders are requiring it. The projects are adapting their language and culture to fulfill funder requirements in hopes of getting further funding]

6. What factors influence program/project staff in determining the objectives and measurements they include in their logic models?

(An ahuh type of laugh) Big guess here… that they found whatever they could use and use whatever they could find. Found a logic model example, copied, borrowed and changed it a little bit of the wording & it may work just fine or it may not. Some were created from scratch by the funding staff. {Various factors mostly copy it from existing documents} (001)

How useful the outcome will be first to the people they serve and secondly to demonstrate project impact. {based on program plan} (002)

There probably are some that think the way that performance is tied to funds probably influences some of the goals and objectives they choose. A lot of the programs I get—they want to make sure they’re meeting the goal that is set. They’re afraid that if they don’t meet the target that it will negatively impact on their funding. I think it is good and bad in the same sense. Good in that it motivates them to document their work and bad in that it can be seen as a threat or creates a “fear” on the project staffs part that they will lose funding. {Seems to believe that there may be some goal shifting, but mostly concerned about the negative impact of tying funding to documentation of achievement of outcomes} (003)

The projects, themselves? A lot of them only do the logic model because it is required—factors they use are probably from what is described in the logic model template. In all cases they (logic models that project staff create) need to be revised. They probably focus solely on service provision; number of clients, number of clients that complete…I’ve only participated in the logic model development process for one year so I haven’t had the involvement during this round. I think getting a couple of short term measures that reflect improvement is more important than having a ton of objectives. For example, some projects (one that I have in particular) seem to have a measurement tool for everything. They do a ton of pre and post testing using what appear
to be standardized measurement tools. Now, whether the measurement tool that is being used by
the project can give us the info is another thing. Sometimes they seem to be very sophisticated so
they were further along with pre/post use and measurement. The program I’m thinking of is a
substance abuse treatment center. *Sometimes they use so many tools it makes the program seem
like “test taking”*. I think some of the programs have more experience with testing and
measurement and those programs tend to feel more comfortable with including them in the logic
models. {Only do them to fulfill funding requirement. Focus is predominately on service
provision components (service objectives and outputs) and not the outcomes} (004)

I think if someone else has written the grant and is not involved in program implementation then
it is obvious that there is a disjuncture in the logic models objectives and measurements. People
are often not the same regarding who is writing the logic model and who is implementing the
program. I’m not really sure how they choose what to include in their logic models. They all
(the program staff) have a specific focus on what the program is suppose to do…they all have a
program plan and can spell out their services pretty well & then identify a few things that they
can track overtime. {Generally I believe programs select objectives and outcomes they believe
they will perform and meet. However, often times the goals are not realistic. Problems occur
when grant writers develop the logic model & other staff who were not in the development phase
attempt to implement the program. In order for logic models to “make sense” they must be
clearly defined with frequency of services and specific measurement tools.} (006)

I’ve never been on that side of the process. I only see the completed version of the logic models
and then from there I build the databases. (007)

As far as the service objectives what information they give us is the kinds of things they’ve been
required to report to funders in the past. Now these are really more like outputs…such as how
many classes, how many kids served…it’s the typical contract stuff that structures their service
objectives. The program structure influences the outcomes and I think they (the outcomes) tend
to initially be a little too global and their outcomes are stated more like goals…things like they
may want the youths to have more successful lives. Their outcomes tend to focus exclusively on
long-term outcomes and not focused on short term outcomes that allow them to move to the long
term outcomes. The outcomes they include in their logic models are rooted in their goals. I can
give you an example from the pregnancy prevention programs that is relevant to this question. In
the pregnancy program the relevant factors in achieving the long term outcome or rather the
larger goal of the project was an increase knowledge of birth control, an increase in self-esteem
and increase in academic performance and basically an increase in life management skills. The
project didn’t measure those things even though those things are recognized as related to teen
pregnancy outcomes. They generally had a single outcome tied to their overarching goal and
couldn’t link the influence of the other factors to why they didn’t achieve the teen pregnancy
outcome. Outcomes are influenced by their macro goal and need to be broken down into the
short-term goals (outcome) through factors that are proven to be related to the overarching goal.
(008)
Probes
Are there any specific factors that aid a project’s ability to develop relevant, realistic and achievable goals?

I think a systematic brainstorming process would be a good idea. I had the opportunity to be involved in such an exercise at my former employer...It was a SWAT exercise and helped the staff to really understand how they fit within the big picture. Also, if you have savvy leadership that can help the project staff develop the goals this is a factor. (001)

Usually the educational level of the project manager and staff---not to sound biased or uppity but some folks do not understand the behavior change theory. Although it is not difficult to grasp, it is difficult to write even though we know the processes. It also matters whether the program has been exposed to the concept of theory of change before---it helps them to articulate how they will capture the change in this program. How do we want to demonstrate what we’re doing and what results we expect to achieve. (002)

I think the experience they have coming into the project and the assistance the {Funder} provides to them helps them be realistic about their goals. (003)

Like I mentioned before, experience in measurement and experience if they have already got the familiarity with behavioral and cognitive change approaches and measurement helps them accommodate the needs of the evaluation and be more realistic. (004)

Having the grant writer work with the program implementers and have experience with the programs increases the likelihood that the goals will be realistic and achievable. The numbers will speak clearly to achievement---seeing the numbers explains it all to the project staff on whether or not their outcomes were realistic. (005)

Sure, I think that if the program staff lack knowledge about how the data they collect is directly connected to the reports. One program that we shut down, the guy had no idea how to input data--it may be that he didn’t have the technical infrastructure or understanding of the logic models and outcome measurement system and how it relates to the numbers that come out of the computer in the reports. I think if the programs staff have the ability to understand technology and using technology as a tool it helps a lot when we’re developing the systems and in understanding the linkage between the logic model, databases and reports. (007)

I think the level of education of the staff is a factor and the specific training of the staff about evaluation. Age of the staff may be a factor as younger professional staff have more experience with evaluation and are more cognizant of how to use evaluation in the field for project improvement. (008)

Are there any specific factors that you have noticed that work against a project’s ability to develop relevant, realistic and achievable goals?

Not sharing information with people who do the program—if top management doesn’t share the information you won’t get any buy in from the people who do the work. I try to share the
information with the people who do the work so that they understand how everything fits together and this helps with buy-in. (001)

People who aren’t involved in the program writing the proposals and not involving the program staff. For example, one program that I monitor has a grant writer that hasn’t got a clue about what the program does. She works in isolation and does not include the program staff. The resulting proposal is clichés that are strung together and make no sense, let alone tell what the program is suppose to be doing. It is vital for the project staff to be involved in the development of the goals in order for them to accurately represent what the program is trying to achieve. (002)

I can’t think of anything specific about what works against a project’s ability to develop achievable goals. (003)

When the program is not well developed—they (the programs) have struggled terribly with the logic models. The programs need to be clear in their understanding of the program concept and the possibilities for the program in developing the concept need to be realistic...I think sometimes once they get from the concept to the implementation component it creates a lot of confusion for them when they’re not real clear from the start. (004)

This issue kind of came up recently with a group counseling project where the clients were suppose to have a session one time per week and 100% were suppose to attend at this level. I don’t think the program staff have accounted for the realities that kids will not be there 100% of the time. They may not thing through the possible achievements realistically so when they break down the objectives they don’t take into account the idea that some kids will not be there all the time whereas others might attend. I think 100% of anything is not necessarily realistic. (005)

I think some of the grass roots folks still aren’t getting it—sometimes the paraprofessionals and faith based still have not made the full leap between funding and outcome measurement.

In your judgment what is it that the staff understand the most about outcome measurement?

$ data =funding, that seems to get everyone’s attention.

In your judgment what is it that the staff understand the least about outcome measurement?

I think taking the time to do it right, not just counting widgets—in a fashion that lends it self to be credible. Formulas and the lack of exposure to methodologies is probably the most difficult thing for folks to understand. Agencies that are mature, and have savvy in house staff seem to get it a lot better then some of the smaller, less savvy organizations. Of course sometimes because of the financing issues the programs cannot afford to heir folks that have a higher level of educational understanding and so this creates some issues. There is often times a lack of enough money due to funding constraints so they (the programs) end up hiring less experienced folks that don’t get it. I think experience and exposure are the two factors that contribute most to understanding and doing outcome measurement. (006)
One of them is the lack of administrative maturity. By that I mean organizations and programs that function within the context of a well-organized agency seem to embrace evaluation because they are used to being accountable. So outcome measurement (used interchangeably with evaluation) translates well into the program. Those organizations and projects with less experience in contractually funded contexts have less experience and how to work with it. If the program/organization is young and hasn’t had to depend on grants and contract money then it will have some issues adapting to the “contract” language and requirements. I think this directly influences the project’s ability to develop relevant, realistic, and achievable goals. (008)

**In your judgment what is it that the staff understand the most about outcome measurement?**

The concept is easy enough to understand… you do X to achieve Y—the problem is when the projects actions are expected to be too grandiose, too far away from what is currently taking place…it won’t work so well if you have to great of expectations for impact from a small scope time limited program. (001)

Percentages, people seem to get percentages, it’s real clear to see how 20% relates to 100%. They are accustomed to seeing percentages and so this really drives home how they are doing with reaching their outcomes. (002)

Program staff? What do they understand the most? I can’t think of anything… (003)

Well I think the staff (program funder) understand outcome measurement effectiveness. We need to distinguish between output and outcome better than we do. But, outcomes and outputs are blurry…outcomes is truly what they’ve achieved…it’s the change related to the program service, not providing the service itself. (004)

As I mentioned before, experience in staff, funding can be a restraint and can prohibit you from hiring folks that have the experience and exposure to appreciate outcome measurement. Another issue I see is that some people are not familiar with technology—-not everyone is in the computer age and those folks that aren’t are really at a disadvantage when it comes to outcome measurement. (006)

As far as the measurements go, most of the programs are learning that what they put in (to the computer) is what they are going to get out of it. (007)

Can you repeat the question…I think they understand it does require commitment of resources, staff time and energy. I also think they do understand that it has relevance to funding—-it opens the doors to those that do it (outcome measurement) and that understanding expands on how it can help with program improvement and how they can get further along in that process through using outcome measurement. (008)
In your judgment what is it that the staff understand the least about outcome measurement?

Sometimes the words and what the discrete purpose of the individual outcome and how it relates to the program mission. It’s difficult to understand the formulas from the database software used—unless you know the software it makes it difficult to understand how the outcome is derived from the data. Since we don’t have the TA resources to fully train the project staff in the manipulation of the data they don’t understand how to use and make use of the databases. We have some limitations with what TA we can provide. The staff who have time to sit and play with the data can generally figure out how to develop a query and then they can use it for management purposes—something their boss asks them to do will help them to use the data—like average length of stay, average age of clients. It seems like the more clinically-oriented programs can find ways to use the databases for running other reports—they use them for developing reports for other funders and also seeking other funds, determining cost savings, and service patterns such as average length of stays. (002)

They get that they have to give us the basic information on people but they don’t now how all the information comes together to generate the numbers on their report. They don’t understand what goes into the equations for the outcomes generated through the database. (003)

I have different levels of understanding based on the program. One of my programs (DEV) is pretty good. They’ve even sent their staff to Access training so that helps a lot. PKFL, I don’t even know how to explain what they do or don’t understand. I think they have some of it, but then if they don’t tell me how their program works, then I can’t build a report query that shows what they are doing. (007)

I think what they understand the least are the measurement tools. I don’t think the project staff have had the opportunity to have exposure to the issues of validity and reliability of measurement tools. There are a lot of tools available to them if they know where to go to get them. However, acquiring the tools also takes time (to research them) and resources (to pay for them). I also think another area that is critical but they still don’t understand that well about outcome measurement is how to collect the data…What I mean is that the project staff know that they have to collect the data but they don’t really know how it is suppose to be collected and maintained in order to be able to get good information out of it. (008)

7. Are there any particular characteristics that make a program/project more successful than others in developing and using outcome measurement systems? If so, what are they?

A good design in both the program and the data management system. The individual personnel are also a factor that make a program more successful in developing and using outcome measurement systems. High energy, committed individual that gets it—everyone wants and ace on their team and it really does help. (001)

Those projects that see the need for it and use the data—when they see how it (the data) will benefit them. Yes, we talk about documentation and sustainability to encourage the programs to verify outcomes. But, it also depends a great deal on the personalities of the people and the
length of time they’ve been in social service environments that require outcome measurement. Some of the project staff understand the outcome measurement philosophy and why it is required. Politics is also an aspect of whether or not projects are successful in developing and using outcome measurement systems. (Chris could you elaborate a little bit more on this comment so I fully understand what you meant to say.) (002)

A lot of it has to do with the experience of their administrative section and the quality of the staff that was hired for the program. I’ve seen the same program model run at different sites and so much has to do with the programs staff’s knowledge and experience in working with participants and meeting funding requirements. (003)

You know what, previous experience with measurement—We get way too complicated in developing the logic models. We get too focused on the process and that makes it difficult to come up with good measurement and outcomes. I think expertise and commitment of the staff on data collection, training is also important for understanding the need for good data collection. I think the training needs to start in undergraduate school so the people going into the service positions have a better understanding of the need for good data. Also, whether there is buy in from the top to accomplish documenting the program through data collection. The data collection component and the need for outcome measurement should be part of the staff’s training. Even could make it a part of the performance requirement of staff in the projects to ensure that they have the knowledge needed to work with the systems. (004)

The ones that are communicating with their staff on a regular basis about the goals and objectives and make sure staff are in line with implementation. If they have frequent communication with the funder’s staff and ask for help before they get too far into the project with problems this helps too. Generally the people that are familiar with logic models and keep the objectives and outcomes in focus will be successful. (005)

As I mentioned before, experience in staff, funding can be a restraint and can prohibit you from hiring folks that have the experience and exposure to appreciate outcome measurement. Another issue I see is that some people are not familiar with technology—-not everyone is in the computer age and those folks that aren’t are really at a disadvantage when it comes to outcome measurement. (006)

**Probe: Are there specific organizational factors or staff characteristics that promote a results orientation?**

{See additional comments for question #6.} (005)

See response to question 5. (007)

I think the number one factor that promotes a results orientation is strong executive leadership. Supervisors that buy into outcome measurement and understand the importance of it will encourage the use of it with their staff. Agencies or organizations that demonstrate their professionalism through well defined policies and procedures will be those that are more successful. The level of education and professional experiences within the organization is also a critical factor in success. Also, the size (of the agency) in terms of the staff, and number of
programs influences their successful use of outcome measurement systems. If the organization/agency is already reporting performance based information then they will adjust to the outcome measurement frameworks of other funders. The complexity of organization and level of funding drives this of course as organizations that already have quality assurance or evaluation staff as part of their agency are quicker to utilize outcome measurement than those that don’t have these internal functions. (008)

**Outcome Measurement Use**

8. **How do you and your organization use the results from the outcome measurement systems that are currently in place?**

We describe them (results), write them up and put them in reports and then send them to others to tell them what we learn. (Are the results being used?)…Yeah, probably, the impact will vary—it’s quite possible to write a very nifty report that no one reads and then it doesn’t get used—and then there are times that you’re in an informal meeting discussing an interesting piece of information with someone and then they pick up on it and pay attention. I had this happen just yesterday and I think it is the personal interaction with folks that they pay attention to and may get them to use the information. (001)

We use the data for monitoring and program improvement. One of our programs actually uses the outcome measurement data for monitoring job performance. This program is very hierarchical in structure and uses the outcome measurement data as a management tool. I think the difference is based on the background of the staff and the organizational climate. As I mentioned earlier, one of the programs I work with is very clinical in nature and the other is more personal in nature and I think that makes a difference on how they use the information produced from outcome measurement.

For me personally, I am understanding the formulas used to build the queries in the outcome measurement systems and how the formulas are derived. (The interviewee takes responsibility for providing TA to the programs so they can understand this better) My recent efforts have been toward making sure the objectives and outcomes actually are measuring the program’s efforts. We’ve made changes to the programs based on the data and we’ve also made changes to the way the data is captured based on what we’ve learned from the data reports. Some of the changes are generated from the program staff—mostly these come from the programs that are “getting it”. Whereas with the less sophisticated programs changes are usually generated from the program specialist and the funding staff. (002)

We use the results to report to our funders to supply information on how well we’re using their resources. Whether or not participants are getting served to reach their goals…to evaluate and report to legislators and other funders on initiatives that work and are worth repeating across the State and those that don’t work. To see and maybe refine our processes and program requirements. The most beneficial use is to find initiatives that help people reach their goals and help the policy makers know which programs are worthy of funding so people in need get the help they need. (003)

We use it mostly to highlight weaknesses in the program so they can improve. We give feedback to the programs in the form of evaluation so the programs can make changes…some programs
may add a service based on the data or include an additional task; like the information sharing example I gave earlier. (004)

Use results to provide support for programs, identify weaknesses and strengths and provide support through feedback, reporting to state funders. We also use the information to help replicate programs and use them in lessons learned publications. We have also used them for funding decisions---as we won’t continue to fund a program that’s not achieving; especially if their objectives and outcomes are realistic. We have closed programs because of that & I think funding now is driven more by outcome measurement than it was 5 years ago. (005)

We use outcome measurement and the data that are collected from the programs to monitor program progress and development. We also use it as part of our quality assurance review and to evaluate program improvement and effectiveness. We have used it as a fund raising tool and evaluative tool by sharing it with the powers that be to get more funding. Other uses include to determine best practices and to share with others who are considering replicating similar programs.

**(I asked if she has used the outcome measurement data to make funding decisions since this is an issue that is brought up in the literature)** Yes, we do use it for funding decisions when we are determining continuation funding and renewals of contracts. If the program is unable to meet a high number of their objectives and outcomes after a lengthy time we may stop funding. Also, if TA has been provided and they are still unable to achieve then we may cut funding. However, that is providing the data verifies that the services are provided as planned but yet they are poorly received by the participants then we would defund. But if they weren’t providing data to support or verify they’ve been providing the services we would put up with the lack of reporting for about 6 to 9 months before we would defund. It depends a lot on the program’s maturity level how long we would allow them to go along without providing the data. We realize that some programs don’t have the infrastructure right off the bat to support the data entry. This happens so we work with them through providing technical assistance to get up to par. I think the important contribution of the logic model and outcome measurement is that everything is spelled out and it helps you to look at all of the pieces to see what’s working or not working in the whole. (006)

We develop the reports so we can report back to the state to get more money. I give the report to the program specialist and they ship them out to the program staff. The program staff gets them back with whether my numbers (generated by the computer system) is right or wrong. If they tell me that’s not what the numbers should be then we adjust the query or I tell them the queries are right and they are not entering the data. (007)

Well, we use them in making continuing funding decisions. We also use the information to determine program replication—the information is shared with the respective field of interest so if another agency wants to replicate a model then they can see what has been effective with the model applied in another agency. We also use the information to inform how we do our program evaluation so we can improve our own processes. (008)
Probes:

When you receive the process and objectives reports, what do you generally do with the information?

We don’t really seem to use the data to make funding decisions unless the programs just aren’t providing us with any data to verify what they are doing. We use the data more in a research approach. We look at the data and determine where the program seems to be doing a good job (based on the data) and where it does not seem to be doing a good job (based on the data) Perhaps we should be looking at it as a tool for helping us determine the placement of our funding. (Chris could you elaborate a little more on this point to make sure I’m clear on what you are suggesting.) (002)

I look at it and try to identify if there are trends over time. It helps me to look for change over time in the program. I also look at the N’s (number of cases) to determine how many clients are being captured in the database and for each of the objectives and outcomes. I find it useful for keeping up with the number of clients who are getting to each component of the logic model. (004)

We use the process and objectives report to guide the next site visit. During the site monitoring visit the previous report is used to develop the agenda—what you talk about, we also use it to determine training needs and technical assistance is provided based on what the program specialists see on the reports and from feedback from the site staff regarding the reports. (006)

9. For you, what do you consider the primary purpose of outcome measurement systems?

To say something useful about what the program does and why you’re doing it—When you can write something about how and why something works it can be pretty powerful. (001)

I think it’s to validate the effectiveness of the program. To document that the program works or has an impact on the people they serve. (002)

This goes back to the previous answer---It’s an evaluative tool to determine impact. (003)

Ummm, program effectiveness, that’s it. (004)

It is an evaluation tool to help me assess how well a program is doing in meeting their objectives and outcomes. (005)

To measure program effectiveness and determine the value of the services to the people who receive them. (006)

To evaluate if the program is doing what it is suppose to be doing and whether they are worth giving money to or not. (007)
The primary purpose is to speak to whether a program was effective in achieving its stated goals. There are some other things as well, but ultimately it points at that one thing. All in all, it comes down to whether the program was effective. (008)

10. Can you think of any specific examples of how your projects have used the results of the measurement frameworks?

Program improvement—how can we keep people involved, how can we improve recruitment and retention. But the main use for me has been in a formative manner for program improvement. I give the feedback from the data to the staff and allow them to interpret what it means and what they should do with it. For example if I see that the data shows the class composition is 75% females and 25% males I tell the staff and they can interpret this a couple of ways to determine what to do with it…they may want to determine if the composition of the class should be more equally distributed male/female…then they may want to think of ways they can recruit/retain more males…if on the other hand, they don’t see that as an issue they may want to make a determination if the class content is appropriate i.e.; specific enough in content for the females since the class is mostly females. (001)

I mentioned some of those before…like Tampa uses them for job performance evaluation. They use it as a management tool. Also, some of the programs have used it as a tool for documenting their efforts for other funding to prepare for sustainability. Mostly, programs use the information for program improvement, changing the focus of the program. Our databases aren’t flexible enough to allow for changes in the data collection procedures—at least not dramatic changes between years, anyway. Because the databases lack flexibility we can’t upgrade the objectives and outcomes too much as it will decrease the comparability (of the data) between one year and the next. This then reduces the accuracy of what is occurring in the programs. (002)

I don’t get that feedback, I don’t really know. (003)

Circle of Parents—we used the findings to change the program. In my other program (HFF) the data is reviewed extensively by the program specialists and the program staff. There are actual performance measures built in for the project staff and then the program specialists use the data for process evaluation. (004)

Report back to the board of directors, to obtain future funding and promote community awareness among other community organizations. It is also used for program recognition and can verify/prove the success of their programs. I think some of my programs also find outcome measurement useful for improving their programs and evaluating their own services. They use the reports for internal audits and to make their staff aware of how well they are doing or the things they need to improve. {They definitely use the results to monitor and evaluate services} (005)

They’ve been used to secure additional funding—to modify the program for the better, modify the way some of the programs do business, to fine tune services and also for replication of the program. (I asked if the programs continued to use the outcome databases once they are defunded by the {Funder}) Yes, some have asked permission to continue using the databases and have asked for help on how to run the queries for the reports once we stop funding them. I
think the staff like the fact that they can use the databases as they need them and they don’t have
to wait until the end of the quarter or the year to determine their progress and provide feedback to
their staff on progress. They can run a query and get a snap shot at any given time and then
 tweak the program as the data recommends. (006)

For the {Funder} programs, no one has told me what they are doing with the results. But I know
that HFF probably looks at it (the reports) for tracking services, use it as a management tool to
make sure the program staff are implementing the program per design. (007)

I can’t site specific programs per se, but I know the programs have used the results for writing
grants to acquire funds and they have also used the information to modify program components
and develop strategies for modifying the programs. The projects have also used the results to
improve services to participants. (008)

**Conclusion**

11. Looking back on the development of the outcome system and the actual measurement of
 outcomes, are there things you wish your organization had done differently?

    Yes             No
If yes, what?

That’s a big question…I have three major points that I’d like to share regarding this. (001)

1) Let’s get the outcome to really match what the program is really doing—scope it down to
   size—it might be a rather limited data collection activity such as a satisfaction survey or a
   basic pre/post test on content learning, but it might be all we can do. The outcomes
   should match the scope of the project. We can get a bit grandiose about our setup.(001)

2) We need a more participatory way of developing the outcome measurement systems. We
   need to involve the people we work with i.e.; program staff other than just the directors to
   get them involved in the discussion. This will help with the buy-in process and will also
   help us to better understand what the program is doing so we can build systems to match
   them. We do too much of imposing the logic models on them. Although we do a much
   better job in developing the logic models than they do, we still need to involve them so
   we understand programatics and to ensure the buy in. (001)

3) We need a little more flexibility with the data systems. Currently we use a triad, program
   specialist, evaluator and management information systems staff and this may be the
   lowest common denominator. We have to do what the data people are willing to do and
   I’m not sure this is always the best way to capture the data that shows what the programs
   are doing. (001)

Yes, I wish we would either write the logic models or go down to the sites and work with them to
write the logic models. We need to do it together in order to make them realistic. The complex
programs need more detail than the simpler programs. These programs are multidimensional and
sometimes we don’t have the content to understand the specifics of them (the programs). Or maybe we need to change our strategy for how we fund programs. Instead of having RFP’s that are very general—maybe we need to market the program concept and require that agencies interested and willing to replicate the concept will be funded. I also think we should have a position to work with the sites to create management reports that make the data more useful to them. This would increase the buy-in from the sites and result in more accurate data that could inform us on replication or models. (002)

(Laughs, covers face and tugs hair) Done different or sooner??...Well, initially we didn’t have data systems and QA checks but I wish we could have gotten into collecting data sooner. Made the systems more user friendly, yet accurate. I also wish we had the resources to build in more management components for the programs---although we do some—the programs request more assistance and we don’t have the staff resources to allocate to this type of TA. I think if we built in the management components they would work more at it to make sure it’s being done correctly. The more it (the database) helps them the more they’re going to work to make it right (the data).

The systems folks don’t get feedback on some of the questions that were asked. I think the systems staff should make on site trainings that way we would get more feedback and get a better idea of what the participants do and what the projects are all about. That would make for developing better systems. (003)

The {Funder} is a lot further along than many (program funders) and even though it’s (outcome measurement) frustrating—it’s still a good framework (logic model) that is helpful. We’re overloaded with the number of projects that we fund and monitor---there’s a lot of variation between the projects that makes it difficult to know all the intricacies needed to develop outcome measurement systems. It is hard to even categorize the programs that we monitor for comparison purposes. And, the n’s are so small sometimes that it makes the value of the findings questionable from a research perspective. But all in all I think it is a good direction to go. Another thing is, I think the end of the feedback loop may not be as complete as we’d like it to be.... It seems that the sequence of the process may need improved because you’ve already completed the logic models for the next year before you’ve reviewed the objectives and outcomes report for the previous year. Maybe we need to fine-tune the process a little bit to change the sequencing so one year can be informed by the previous year’s data. (004)

I think we are getting to the point where we have perfected the logic models but, the objectives are not accurately reflected in the databases due to the inability to correctly formulate them. We get objectives like students will attend whatever one time per week so the formula may not be accurate---due to probably a lack of flexibility or it may be too difficult to track with the present system. So, we end up measuring the objectives and outcomes according to what is possible with the present system. They don’t seem to match up exactly. I think we’re improving and I try to make it more easily measured but I think we need better clarification to match the formula and the objectives and outcomes. I think we’ve definitely improved over the past couple of years. Especially since we are bringing people together and working on the systems as a team to improve the understanding of program needs/services and funder needs/technical assistance. But,
I still think that some more flexibility in the databases would increase the accuracy of the measurement reflecting what the programs are doing.

{Basically, what I was trying to say here is that we may need to simplify some of our objectives and outcomes. Sometimes the objectives get too complicated & it’s difficult for our systems developers to accurately account/reflect them in the database;} (005)

I wish we would have started the process of collecting outcome data in a more systematic way sooner. If we had just started taking evaluation more seriously in the early years we could have brought trained evaluators on board. Before we were just crunching numbers and not really doing evaluation to analyze data. The evaluation and the use of outcome measurement within the evaluation helps with the analysis and learning that we need to inform practice. (006)

This respondent offered some historical insight into the evolution of the outcome measurement focus at her agency…The pressure to emphasize outcome measurement came from the Board of Directors. The sister program in Chicago was doing research and replication publications and we wanted to make sure we could do that. I think we’re there but we’re spread too thin and we go off our internal focus. We should be putting out some publication at least once a year. Now, HFF does that but I think we need to put at least a product of the core programs out annually. There is a way to balance between the external projects that bring in additional dollars and maintain a dedicated amount of staff to the internal focus of demonstration site research and replication. I would have liked to been able to have the outcome measurement function up and operating a little sooner. If we had programs that were similar models sooner we could have taken a more focused approach in evaluating models. We could have tried out the models, evaluated them, learned from then and then moved on to different models. We’re moving closer to that now, but I also see the competition for resources from the external projects. We need to dedicate resources to our internal focus so we don’t get too far away from our initial emphasis. (006)

I wish they would have reviewed the logic models more thoroughly and wrote down what they really meant—need more turn around time—even though I know this is based on resources. We are always trying to do so many things at the same time that by the time we get something started it’s time to move on to the next thing. We need to have more resources (staff) so we can take time to do a more thorough job. (I took the opportunity to ask the respondent about how long it took him to understand the logic model process since he had no prior experience with using them) It takes about a year to catch on to what it’s all about. Once you understand how the logic model and the data systems fit together and are supposed to work it makes sense. (007)

Well, I think for our organization we’re relatively new within the last 6 or 7 years of really formalizing evaluation and evaluation staff. I think that initially the organization invested more in hiring staff that understood evaluation but focused more on creating the MIS system by which to collect data as opposed to hiring staff more focused on the program evaluation side. That was driven by the funding of Healthy Families Florida as they had an external evaluation component but needed the MIS built so data could be collected and sent to the evaluators. It appears to me that within our context that we were doing a better job at developing systems to collect data than doing evaluation designs with the logic models. Maybe if we could have committed more to
hiring program evaluation staff we would have been further along in the design phase of gathering data and processing it and having the systems for analyzing the data for internal evaluators to use. I think that we have taken a good path and we do make changes as we go along to improve the processes that we currently use. Since my tenure here we have formalized the logic models and outcome measurement system protocols and reflect on making changes as needed. I think the drivers of the MIS development preceding the evaluation development was a resource issue more than a strategic planning issue. The opportunity presented itself through HFF to bring on staff to develop the data management system and allowed the agency to move toward internal program evaluation staff to formalize it. I don’t think we had many choices on how we were going to develop the evaluation and systems piece because the funding dictated the starting point in the process. (008)

Do you have any questions for me?

I know where to find you if I do. (002)

Does your advisor or {Directors of Funding Agency} want you to ask the questions of other nonprofit’s in order to get perspectives from people outside the {Funder}? (004)

No (008)

This concludes the interview process. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. As I said in the beginning of our meeting, I will provide you with a transcript of our interview in about two weeks. I would like you to review the transcript for accuracy and return it to me with your comments/concerns. Thank you for participating in this research. I will notify you upon publication of the final report.

Added from comments received via e-mail 7/09/04

I remembered this morning one thing I should have mentioned yesterday as a particularly important difficulty with establishing and using outcome measures in our own work environment, and it's IMPORTANT. I would appreciate it if you could incorporate this e-mail as an addendum to your interview notes. (001)

Outcome indicators/data need to be OBTAINABLE. Unfortunately, it is all too common for various state departments to take the position that they must protect their clients' personal data and not relinquish it for ANY purpose, including the alleged data needs of some pesky do-gooder non-profit organization a few blocks away that says they want some personal data to evaluate their own programs. This comment is particularly applicable to two very large state departments with which our own programmatic interests overlap quite extensively: the Department of Education and the Department of Children and Families. The Department of Revenue is another example, and this concern is probably true for the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Health as well, although I have no personal experience with them. (That may not be an exhaustive list, either - there's also the Department of Corrections, the Department of Elder
Affairs, and the Agency for Health Care Administration with which we might become involved at some time or other.) (001)

Here are some real examples of where this has been a problem in the past. For example, if our outcome is high school graduation, we need to make sure that the school system or the Department of Education is willing to play ball with us and provide us with that information. Similarly, with example #2: if we're trying to improve students' GPA's, we obviously need to have a mechanism to be able to collect data on grades. Again, for example #3: if we're trying to reduce truancy or disciplinary referrals, we will need a COOPERATIVE school system. My most aggravating instance of this was example #4: if we want to improve non-custodial fathers' rate of payments on their child support obligations, we need Revenue's data on how much they are paying at one time vs. another time. When we tried to obtain that data, they stalled, and stalled, and stalled, and stalled. We never could make it happen, and the only way we were able to discuss the issue at all in our report was that one of the program sites had a good working relationship with their local child support payment office, so we collected the data for that program site and used it as an illustrative case study. It was one of the best and most interesting sections of that entire report, but it was only possible because we discovered a "back door" way to obtain at least some data. Every one of these examples has caused us to stumble seriously in various {Funder} of Prevention Fund programs that I have personally been involved in. (001)

Note that we're very fortunate with our flagship program, Healthy Families Florida, that the mechanism for obtaining child abuse and neglect information (the Holy Grail of outcome measures!) is legislatively BUILT-IN, but that's clearly a unique circumstance, and the situation is NOWHERE near as good as it should be for many, if not most, of our other programs. (001)
APPENDIX L: FUNDER STAFF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Observations Combined for Coding

Research Questions

1. How do non profit organizations use logic models?

2. Does the support of multiple funders increase the general nature of goals and objectives?

3. Are program staff engaged in developing and using outcome measurement systems? Or,

4. Are program staff engaged in ceremonial conformity to satisfy funding proposal requirements?

5. What are the organizational factors that affect the development and use of an agency’s outcome measurement system?
### Appendix Table L

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRQ</th>
<th>OMCAT</th>
<th>Funding Staff Statement/Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Respondent Characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Varied amounts of experience and use of outcome measurement.</td>
<td><strong>Observation:</strong> The respondents had a combined total of 39.5 years of working at the agency. The range for employment was 1 year to 12.5 years. Participants were mixed on their professional experience with logic models and outcome measurement prior to coming to their current jobs. All but one of the participants had at least a bachelor’s degree, 4 had master’s degrees and 2 had professional (doctoral) degrees. 5 of the participants had some experience in using outcome measurement prior to coming to their current job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Changes in Practice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,3,5</td>
<td>Change in TA provided to projects</td>
<td><strong>Observation:</strong> Respondents mentioned at the programmatic level the most noticeable change that has occurred with the introduction of outcome measurement systems is technical assistance requests to adapt to the new framework requirements. Another change mentioned by respondents is the increase in obtaining measurement tools to match the program outcomes and also making sure the program is being realistic about service provision components and achievement potential.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1,3 | Learning by the funding staff from experience with the data | **Exemplars:** "1st thing that comes to mind is a technical point—when you analyze data you learn better ways to set things up. “Figure out a better mouse trap.” Get better at doing it. (FS FS 001)"
| 1,3 | Learning, co-learning | “We’ve learned a lot in the 3 years I’ve been here and I’ve watched the programs make changes as we learned from the data.” (FS 002) |
| 1,3 | Resource competition | It probably has somewhat of a negative affect on service provision to begin with because there is more time devoted to collecting the data. (FS 003) |
| 1,3 | Provides focus | The logic model when used can help refocus on specifics. It is a map of how the program is suppose to run. (FS 005) |
| 1,3 | Focus | “It is a motivational and a managerial tool in that it keeps the programs focused on their job, which is promoting some type of change, either behavioral, attitudinal or learning change”. (FS 006) |
**Appendix Table L continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>After sometime and several discussions and going back and forth over the numbers they ask me what am I counting and then I explain what I’m counting in the query and then they can tell me what they are actually doing so we both understand what the program is doing and how I should develop the query and where they should indicate what they are doing in the computer program. (FS 007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>Service improvement</td>
<td>“The measurement of these items helps programs identify their strengths &amp; weaknesses and can ultimately help the program to improve services to achieve their goals”. (FS 005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Demonstrates results—co-learning</td>
<td>Should be showing the areas of achievement to both audiences the funder and the program staff. (FS 005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4 Respondent Perception of Service Providers Use of Outcome Measurement Systems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Use by funding staff</td>
<td>Mostly formative—how program is providing service—implementation orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>Potential misuse</td>
<td>Short-term programs are very limited in the impact that they can make...therefore, overreaching by expecting the programs to have long-term outcomes puts a lot of misplaced outcomes out there. (FS 001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,4</td>
<td>Buy-in by project staff</td>
<td>“It varies a lot—from complete ignorance to a moderately enthusiastic acceptance of them (outcome measurement frameworks) and all points in between.” (FS 001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>Presentation of reason for O.M. to project staff</td>
<td>From the local program staff the feedback that I got somewhat earlier in my tenure here is that it was viewed with initial trepidation and seen as an accountability tool. This of course happened over time and I believe that over the course of the initial year they begin to lose their fear of the logic model and reporting process. I think this is based on our organizational philosophy that we present the logic model as a tool for improvement, as well as accountability, but within an improvement framework. (FS 008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,4,5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Make the frameworks user friendly</td>
<td>I think the frameworks are user friendly and that helps both the large more sophisticated agencies as well as the smaller grass roots agencies. (006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>Need for flexibility so learning can take place; co-learning</td>
<td>“I think it even makes their job easier because it cuts down on guessing and speculation of what the program is all about. I think they’ve all bought in to the framework—at first it was like fighting tooth and nail.” (006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Need for flexibility so learning can take place; co-learning</td>
<td>“In the first year of implementation the data base is a little more flexible than subsequent years. But after the first year we need to maintain the same database structure so we can compare between the years of the funding contract for the same programs.” (FS 002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Increase in technical assistance</td>
<td>One thing that I think is that the more the systems develop and get more sophisticated that there is more of a need for technical assistance. (FS 003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>For funding staff use</td>
<td>It allows the program specialists to a better job as they have a concrete tool to monitor, data collection, and encourage accountability. (006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Funding staff</td>
<td>The TA we provide has improved greatly because it had to and having a clearer understanding of what the program is suppose to be accomplishing through the use of the logic model tool, has provided more understanding and the program specialist had to focus more clearly on the service objectives and outcomes. (006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,3</td>
<td></td>
<td>It holds the programs and funder accountable for the effectiveness of the project based on what they have written in the logic model. (006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>Change in methods based on learning; co-learning</td>
<td>We’ve also refined the logic model over time so that it more comprehensively captures information such as measurement tools, definitions of measurement and we’ve provided more technical assistance than we were initially providing as a function of resources. (FS 008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,3,4</td>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>“I think we have a peculiar issue that the programs have their own sense about what needs to be done—We come along with a big stick (money) and we create a structure that doesn’t always fit their structure—a little schizophrenia in the program occurs.” (FS 001) Follow up with 001 for clarification on this statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents Perception of Buy-In &amp; Understanding of Service Providers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Observation: Respondents comments suggested the project staff’s understanding of the linkage between the objectives and outcomes is varied. Some suggested it was very high due to the reinforcement of funding staff, others stated that the understanding has evolved over time as the projects have received technical assistance and grown to understand the technical aspects of querying for data reports]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1,3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Buy-in through utility</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>It was slow as I don’t think they are usually involved in the development of objectives and outcomes. “I encourage them by showing them the usefulness of using the data for getting ready for 3rd party payment options as the data can demonstrate a decrease in hospital stays, decrease in the use of expensive medications and can help them get external funding beyond our contract”. (FS 002)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1,3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy-in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I think if they put the time into developing the logic models then they have the buy in. (FS 003)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1,3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning &amp; decision making tool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The creation of a logic model can be a learning tool that helps the program make decisions and understand their program a little better. (FS 004)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix Table L continued

| 1,5 | Factors of the tool as well as project | But, I think their (project staff) understanding is still somewhat limited. At least with the programs that I’m assigned. I even find it frustrating to get the pieces linked together i.e.; the goals, service objectives (outputs) and outcomes (in the framework that is provided) There’s not a good flow from the objectives to the outcomes. (FS 004) |
| 3,4 | Learning curve | After about a year they get the picture and that’s after talking to them each quarter. (FS 002) |
| 3,4,5 | Learning utility | I don’t think this was the case 5 years ago—before they were just doing them because the funder required it. Now they do it because the funder is asking and they can use the information for getting more funding. managing programs(—improving services and evaluating services) (FS 005) |

#### Perception of Service Providers Understanding of Linkage between Logic Models and Data Systems

| 3,5 | [Observation: There appears to be general agreement that the logic models do not tell the whole achievement story, but logic models developed by the project staff provide the elements to tell the story with the quantitative data but need to be complimented with qualitative context information] |
| 3 | I think the staff believe that the framework does represent the important elements of the program. (006) |
| 3,5 | Co-learning | I’ve noticed a difference in the past year and a half since I’ve been working with the programs in developing the systems. It takes at least a year for both the program staff and the MIS staff to learn what’s going on between the program and the data. If it doesn’t say it in the logic model, then I don’t know it’s happening because I don’t know about program implementation. (FS 007) Initially if the program staff had not had experience with logic models, especially with ours since we use our own framework, they initially may see the service objectives and the process objective and outcomes as separate things. But after we work with them they see the linkage between the logic models and the quality of service provision and their references in the outcomes. (FS 008) |
| 3-5 | Learning organizational factors | I think there is some compromise. They feel to a certain extent it does tell their achievement story, but sometimes they’re not too happy as the outcome measurement reporting requirements interfere with service provision. (FS 003) |
| 3,4 | Tool factors and organizational factors | I think the logic model framework (we use) could be modified to include the qualitative as well as the quantitative outcome measures. (FS 004) |
| 3,5 | Linking LM to OM system data | Because we let it begin with the project staff telling us about what it is that they do and want to accomplish with the programs. It is inherent in the social work field that quantitative outcomes don’t ever tell the whole story. (FS 008) |
| 3,5 | Project staff involvement in development helps them learn | (Interviewer observation: The respondent provides technical assistance with data reconciliation…it seems there is duplication in the recording of the data that can be confusing for folks) |
| 3,5 | Provides a framework for implementation & evaluation Quick feedback | [Observation: Respondents agree that the data reports remind the project staff what the numbers are showing related to their performance goals. They show discrepancies between service provision and data output and assist in reconciling differences between the two forms of performance feedback.] |
| 3,5 | Provides a framework for implementation & evaluation | “They provide a map to how staff should be implementing their program and it is also an evaluation tool to assess achievement with their objectives and outcomes. (FS 005) |
| 1,3 | Quick feedback | It provides the program staff with immediate feedback so they can keep in perspective the long term change that may occur based on their efforts.(006) |
| 1,3,5 | Learning | I think it helps the program staff to see that they are on track or not. For example, once they get their reports back from me they can see their numbers are low. Once they see that they can determine if they need to do more work in that area or tell us that’s not the way the program works so we can rework our queries. (FS 007) |
| 1,3,5 | On-going feedback | When we provide them with the feedback I think the outcome measurement reports serve the function of program improvement, not just effectiveness. (FS 008) |
Appendix Table L continued

| 1,3,5 | [Observation: Sounds as though the projects have learned to use the data to describe program success. This is based on their understanding that the funders are requiring it. The projects are adapting their language and culture to fulfill funder requirements in hopes of getting further funding] |
| 1,3 | Learn through the data feedback |
| 3 | Seeing the necessity for using outcome measurement |

| Project Factors thought to impact development of logic models and outcome measurement systems |
| 2,3 | Borrowed from other projects |
| 2,3 | Do what they need to meet funding requirements |
| 3,4 | Use the OPFF template and only do it because it is required…service outputs focus…over inundate with outcome tools |

- Funding is driven by programs being successful & providing quality services. Knowing the level of their achievement with outcomes helps programs to provide better services if needed. (FS 005)
- I think there has been a change in the way the program staff view outcome measurement, they’ve grown beyond the “smiles of the children mentality”. (006)
- (An ahuh type of laugh) Big guess here…that they found whatever they could use and use whatever they could find. Found a logic model example, copied, borrowed and changed it a little bit of the wording & it may work just fine or it may not. (FS 001)
- There probably are some that think the way that performance is tied to funds probably influences some of the goals and objectives they choose. A lot of the programs I get—they want to make sure they’re meeting the goal that is set. They’re afraid that if they don’t meet the target that it will negatively impact on their funding. I think it is good and bad in the same sense. Good in that it motivates them to document their work and bad in that it can be seen as a threat or creates a “fear” on the project staffs part that they will lose funding. (FS 003)
- A lot of them only do the logic model because it is required—factors they use are probably from what is described in the logic model template. In all cases they (logic models that project staff create) need to be revised. They probably focus solely on service provision; number of clients, number of clients that complete......Sometimes they use so many tools it makes the program seem like “test taking”. (FS 004)
### Appendix Table L continued

<p>| 3,4 | I’m not really sure how they choose what to include in their logic models. (006) |
| 3,5 | Service focus and the ultimate long term change is the predominant focus; not linking using the steps from objectives to ST outcomes to LT outcomes. They all (the program staff) have a specific focus on what the program is suppose to do...they all have a program plan and can spell out their services pretty well &amp; then identify a few things that they can track overtime. Their outcomes tend to focus exclusively on long-term outcomes and not focused on short term outcomes that allow them to move to the long term outcomes.... They generally had a single outcome tied to their overarching goal and couldn’t link the influence of the other factors to why they didn’t achieve the teen pregnancy outcome. (FS 008) |
| 5 | [Observation: Most of the respondents mentioned education, experience with logic models, evaluation, theory of change and training as important factors for developing relevant, realistic and achievable goals. The knowledge of theory of change was mentioned by two of the respondents] |
| 3 | Example of how to improve logic model development. I think a systematic brain storming process would be a good idea. (FS 001) |
| 5 | Project factors for developing realistic LM &amp; OMS experience in measurement and experience if they have already got the familiarity with behavioral and cognitive change approaches (FS 004) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Communication between project staff, funding staff on expectations, content and program implementation</td>
<td>[Observation: Factor the respondents mentioned that work against the projects developing realistic objectives and outcomes include lack of involvement of project staff, lack of savvy, lack of understanding the program implementation and lack of communication between management and line staff]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
<td>Lack knowledge about how the data they collect is directly connected to the reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>Technical infrastructure or understanding of the logic models and outcome measurement system and how it relates to the numbers that come out of the computer in the reports. .. understanding the linkage between the logic model, databases and reports (FS 007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Buy-in</td>
<td>Not sharing information with people who do the program—if top management doesn’t share the information you won’t get any buy in from the people who do the work. (FS 001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>Thorough knowledge of program implementation</td>
<td>People who aren’t involved in the program writing the proposals and not involving the program staff. It is vital for the project staff to be involved in the development of the goals in order for them to accurately represent what the program is trying to achieve. (FS 002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>Clarity in understanding of program</td>
<td>The programs need to be clear in their understanding of the program concept…(FS 004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>Being realistic about what they can achieve with the clients/projects</td>
<td>I don’t think the program staff have accounted for the realities that kids will not be there 100% of the time. (FS 005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Maturity of project &amp; experience with accountability</td>
<td>One of them is the lack of administrative maturity. By that I mean organizations and programs that function within the context of a well organized agency seems to embrace evaluation because they are use to being accountable. So outcome measurement (used interchangeably with evaluation) translates well into the program. Those organizations and projects with less experience in contractually funded contexts have less experience with evaluation and how to work with it. (FS 008)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Observation: Understand the general concept of outcome measurement and the fact that it takes commitment and is time consuming. Several of the respondents discussed the issues or problems the staff have in understanding and did not give examples of what the staff understand most. This is an interesting observation and need to investigate a little more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Coercive, tying the data to $</td>
<td>$ data =funding, that seems to get everyone’s attention. (FS 006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>Learning about the data reports &amp; how it ties into the data entry they do</td>
<td>As far as the measurements go, most of the programs are learning that what they put in (to the computer) is what they are going to get out of it. (FS 007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>Resources, tie the work into the opportunity to improve &amp; $ sustainability</td>
<td>I think they understand it does require commitment of resources, staff time and energy. I also think they do understand that it has relevance to funding--it opens the doors to those that do it (outcome measurement) and that understanding expands on how it can help with program improvement and how they can get further along in that process through using outcome measurement. (FS 008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>Observation: The respondents suggested projects are at different levels of understanding outcome measurement systems. There tends to be an overall agreement that measurement and linking the program processes to the database development components is difficult for service provision staff. If the service provision staff are not linking the data collection with the reporting due to a lack of technical expertise or a general lack of understanding then the potential for data use is limited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,5</td>
<td><strong>Lack of technical savvy &amp; TA to increase understanding</strong></td>
<td>Sometimes the words and what the discrete purpose of the individual outcome and how it relates to the program mission. It’s difficult to understand the formulas from the database software used—unless you know the software it makes it difficult to understand how the outcome is derived from the data. Since we don’t have the TA resources to fully train the project staff in the manipulation of the data they don’t understand how to use and make use of the databases. (FS 002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,5</td>
<td></td>
<td>But they don’t now how all the information comes together to generate the numbers on their report. (FS 003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,5</td>
<td><strong>Lack of technical savvy &amp; resource constraints.</strong></td>
<td>I think taking the time to do it right, not just counting widgets—in a fashion that lends itself to be credible. Formulas and the lack of exposure to methodologies is probably the most difficult thing for folks to understand. There is often times a lack of enough money due to funding constraints so they (the programs) end up hiring less experienced folks that don’t get it. I think experience and exposure are the two factors that contribute most to understanding and doing outcome measurement. (FS 006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,5</td>
<td><strong>OM tools; resource constraints, lack of data collection experience</strong></td>
<td>However, acquiring the tools also takes time (to research them) and resources (to pay for them). I also think another area that is critical but they still don’t understand that well about outcome measurement is <strong>how to collect the data</strong>…<strong>What I mean is that the project staff know that they have to collect the data but they don’t really know how it is suppose to be collected and maintained in order to be able to get good information out of it.</strong> (FS 008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organizational Factors that Contribute to Developing Realistic Outcome Measurement Systems

<p>| 5 | <strong>Observation:</strong> The majority of respondents indicate staff and organizational characteristics as the lead factor for promoting a results orientation. These factors include experience, commitment to outcome measurement/results orientation, management support, and technical savvy. |
| 5 | <strong>Context &amp; staff</strong> | A good design in both the program and the data management system. The individual personnel are also a factor that makes a program more successful in developing and using outcome measurement systems. <em>High energy, committed individual</em> that gets it—everyone wants and ace on their team and it really does help. (FS 001) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Funding staff focus on process</th>
<th>We get too focused on the process and that makes it difficult to come up with good measurement and outcomes. (FS 004)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Resource allocation from mngt</td>
<td>Also, whether there is buy in from the top to accomplish documenting the program through data collection. (FS 004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Communication from mngt</td>
<td>The ones (project management) that are communicating with their staff on a regular basis about the goals and objectives and make sure staff are in line with implementation. (FS 005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mngt, leadership well-defined protocols for OM</td>
<td>I think the number one factor that promotes a results orientation is strong executive leadership. Supervisors that buy into outcome measurement and understand the importance of it will encourage the use of it with their staff. Agencies or organizations that demonstrate their professionalism through well defined policies and procedures will be those that are more successful. (FS 008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>Internal evaluation resources</td>
<td>The complexity of organization and level of funding drives this of course as organizations that already have quality assurance or evaluation staff as part of their agency are quicker to utilize outcome measurement than those that don’t have these internal functions. (FS 008)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Ownership &amp; buy-in</td>
<td>[Observation: The comment regarding internal q.a. &amp; evaluation units contradicts the experience of the internal agency evaluators in working with a couple of the OPFF funded programs that have internal evaluation units and data management systems. The major issue is the lack of adaptability/flexibility to report the data required by OPFF with the org’s current database. This has lead to tensions in the past and has created situations where the internal evaluators have had to mediate the tension between the project staff and the funding staff so outcome data could be obtained. In one instance, the evaluator was asked by the quality assurance staff to just let them know what they needed to submit to get paid as they really were not interested in the system designed by OPFF since it was based on esoteric logic that could not benefit them with other funding sources]</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Outcome Measurement Use by Funder &amp; Project Staff</th>
<th>3,5</th>
<th>3,5</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-use Symbolic Use</strong></td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>Non-use Symbolic Use</td>
<td>We describe them (results), write them up and put them in reports and then send them to others to tell them what we learn. (Are the results being used?)…Yeah, probably, the impact will vary—it’s quite possible to write a very nifty report that no one reads and then it doesn’t get used—and then there are times that you’re in an informal meeting discussing an interesting piece of information with someone and then they pick up on it and pay attention. (FS 001)</td>
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<td><strong>Instrumental Co-learning</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Instrumental Co-learning</td>
<td>We’ve made changes to the programs based on the data and we’ve also made changes to the way the data is captured based on what we’ve learned from the data reports. (FS 002)</td>
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<td><strong>Symbolic</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>We use the results to report to our funders to supply information on how well we’re using their resources. (FS 003)</td>
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<td><strong>Allocative Symbolic</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Allocative Symbolic</td>
<td>We have also used them for funding decisions—-as we won’t continue to fund a program that’s not achieving; especially if their objectives and outcomes are realistic. We have closed programs because of that &amp; I think funding now is driven more by outcome measurement than it was 5 years ago. (FS 005)</td>
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**Observation:** The responses tend to agree with the literature regarding the various uses of outcome measurement results. Primary uses listed by the respondents include provide feedback to projects, determine trends in programming, determine project replication, continuation of funding, report to funders to get more funding, to determine results. There seems to be a bit of disagreement here on whether the organization uses the results to make funding decisions. Both management staff stated they do, but the line staff, with the exception of one, didn’t seem to think this is the case. Some of the responses indicate the results are used in a reflective manner that supports organizational learning.
Appendix Table I continued

| 3,5  | Allocative | *(I asked if she has used the outcome measurement data to make funding decisions since this is an issue that is brought up in the literature)* Yes, we do use it for funding decisions when we are determining continuation funding and renewals of contracts. If the program is unable to meet a high number of their objectives and outcomes after a lengthy time we may stop funding. But if they weren’t providing data to support or verify they’ve been providing the services we would put up with the lack of reporting for about 6 to 9 months before we would defund. (FS 006) |

| 3    | Conceptual | *We use the data more in a research approach.* (FS 002) |

| 3    | Instrumental | We use the process and objectives report to guide the next site visit. During the site monitoring visit the previous report is used to develop the agenda—what you talk about, we also use it to determine training needs and technical assistance is provided based on what the program specialists see on the reports and from feedback from the site staff regarding the reports. (FS 006) |

| Respondent’s Perspective of Reason for Outcome Measurement |

| 3    | Instrumental | *(Observation:)* The purpose was generally stated very succinctly by the respondent. Most suggested determining program effectiveness, determine impact, value and worth as the primary purposes which are evaluative function. This suggests the respondents use outcome measurement and evaluation interchangeably. Only two responses defined outcome measurement purpose in terms that are distinct from the function of evaluation. These responses support the definition of outcome measurement in the literature. |

| 3    | Instrumental | To evaluate if the program is doing what it is suppose to be doing and whether they are worth giving money to or not. (FS 007) |

| 3    | Instrumental | The primary purpose is to speak to whether a program was effective in achieving its stated goals. (FS 008) |

| 3    | Instrumental | *(Observation:)* Most of the respondents could give specific examples of how their projects used the outcome measurement information. For the most part the uses were to improve program processes and modify practice. Additional uses included grant writing, requesting funds, replication of services, providing feedback to staff, funders and stakeholders and replication of programs |

<p>| 3    | Instrumental | Program improvement—how can we keep people involved, how can we improve recruitment and retention. (FS 001) |</p>
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<th></th>
<th>Instrumental Symbolic</th>
<th>Like Tampa uses them for <em>job performance</em> evaluation. They use it as a management tool. Also, some of the programs have used it as a tool for <em>documenting their efforts for other funding</em> to prepare for sustainability. Mostly, programs use the information for <em>program improvement, changing the focus of the program</em>. <strong>Our databases aren’t flexible enough to allow for changes in the data collection procedures—at least not dramatic changes between years, anyway. (FS 002)</strong></th>
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<td></td>
<td>Utility of databases Instrumental</td>
<td>Yes, some have asked permission to continue using the databases and have asked for help on how to run the queries for the reports once we stop funding them. I think the staff like the fact that they can use the databases as they need them and they don’t have to wait until the end of the quarter or the year to determine their progress and provide feedback to their staff on progress.(FS 006)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reactive focus reduces time for reflection and learning</td>
<td><em>Observation:</em> Staff agree that they need more time and resources in order to understand the projects thoroughly to develop logic models and systems accurately. Some staff suggested more flexibility in the systems while others suggested the systems need to be simplified. It was evident from the comments that the funding drives the machine and not the machine drives funding...this can lead to a very reactive cycle that focuses on sustainability and not perfecting programs or processes*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Need to close the feedback loop Resource issue and need to change the time line or order of events in the timeline</td>
<td><em>Observation:</em> The respondent points out a particularly difficult barrier for nonprofit programs in determining whether outcomes are achieved. Since nonprofits are dependent on state agencies that have the outcome data they must build in mechanisms for obtaining the data in order to fulfill their responsibilities for determining results. It appears this can be very frustrating for the staff and can result in staff feeling the need to be creative in developing approaches to collecting the needed data.</td>
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<td><em>Another thing is, I think the end of the feedback loop may not be as complete as we’d like it to be.... It seems that the sequence of the process may need improved because you’ve already completed the logic models for the next year before you’ve reviewed the objectives and outcomes report for the previous year. (FS 004)</em></td>
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<td>5,3</td>
<td>Resources drive development not strategic planning.</td>
<td>I wish they would have reviewed the logic models more thoroughly and wrote down what they really meant—need more turn around time—even though I know this is based on resources. ) It takes about a year to catch on to what it’s all about. Once you understand how the logic model and the data systems fit together and are suppose to work it makes sense. (FS 007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dilemma of non-profit status in ascertaining follow-up data to determine outcomes.</td>
<td>Resources drive development not strategic planning.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Here are some real examples of where this has been a problem in the past. For example, if our outcome is high school graduation, we need to make sure that the school system or the Department of Education is willing to play ball with us and provide us with that information. Similarly, with example #2: if we're trying to improve students' GPA's, we obviously need to have a mechanism to be able to collect data on grades. Again, for example #3: if we're trying to reduce truancy or disciplinary referrals, we will need a COOPERATIVE school system. My most aggravating instance of this was example #4: if we want to improve non-custodial fathers' rate of payments on their child support obligations, we need Revenue's data on how much they are paying at one time vs. another time. When we tried to obtain that data, they stalled, and stalled, and stalled, and stalled. We never could make it happen, and the only way we were able to discuss the issue at all in our report was that one of the program sites had a good working relationship with their local child support payment office, so we collected the data for that program site and used it as an illustrative case study. It was one of the best and most interesting sections of that entire report, but it was only possible because we discovered a &quot;back door&quot; way to obtain at least some data. Every one of these examples has caused us to stumble seriously in various (OPF) programs that I have personally been involved in. (FS 001)</td>
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Major Theme: There is co-learning between the funder & the projects it funds through working with the logic models and developing the outcome measurement systems. Staff mentioned a year of working with the projects and the same staff from the project and the funder as the amount of time needed to develop a realistic and useful logic model and data management system. The logic models provided by the projects prior to funding are almost unanimously in need of clarity and require greater understanding from both the funder staff and the project staff as to the roles, purposes and processes of program implementation and outcome measurement systems development (structure).
Dear [name],

This letter is a follow-up to the interview we had on (date) at (time). The focus of the interview was how outcome measurement impacts social service practice. I want to once again thank you for taking the time to meet with me and sharing your insights regarding outcome measurement.

Included in this letter is a draft summary of the information gathered during the interview and the transcript of the interview. I would appreciate it if you would take some time to review the draft summary and the transcript to ensure your ideas and information are accurately detailed in the transcript and interview information. The transcript and other information gathered during the interview will be used for the purpose of my doctoral dissertation, as well as any potential publications resulting from my dissertation. It will only be reported back to the individual participants and will not be shared with supervisors. You may notice that the draft summary does include your name and other identifying information. These identifiers will not be included in the dissertation or any resulting publications. I will maintain your anonymity within all publications and the final transcript by assigning you the code ( ) and referring to myself as (SDO).

I will be contacting you within the next week to follow-up with you regarding any questions or recommendations you may have regarding the transcript of our interview. At this time I will ask you to return a copy of the draft summary with all of your edits and written comments. In addition, I would like you to return a signed copy of the enclosed Research Release Form so that I can include your interview information in my dissertation.

Again, thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to participate in this research. Please feel free to contact me at (850) 459-8588 or via e-mail ortega.12@osu.edu if you have any questions or comments.

Respectfully,

Sandra de Ortega, M.P.A., Ph. D. Candidate


Cracknell, B. E. (2001). Knowing is all: Or is it? Some reflections on why the acquisition of knowledge, focusing particularly on evaluation activities, does not always lead to action. *Public Administration and Development, 21,* 371-379.


