



Evaluating "Current Science" Shows

by Stephanie Long, Science Live Theatre, Science Museum of Minnesota



Dan Hopman performing *Dating Dinosaurs* with a volunteer playing pin-the-tail on the T. Rex.

The Science Museum of Minnesota

Thanks to the generous support of IMLS, Science Live Theatre created three comedies about current science. Below you will find our evaluation results and information about our scripts, which are available free-of-charge for you to produce and to make your own.

In our first show, *Dating Dinosaurs*, you need to plan a birthday party for a T Rex. You must determine the dinosaur's age in order to put enough candles on the cake.

Our second show, *As the Worm Turns*, satirizes hospital soap operas and introduces the field of biomimicry, the science of imitating nature.

Storming the Castle, our third show, is set in a castle's laboratory where a doctor is building with biology. The other character, the villager, attempts to get the audience to storm the castle and put an end to synthetic biology.

As promised, here's our evaluation approach and some of our findings. Formative evaluation examined if each show was entertaining and if the science content was consumable. Actors collected surveys and the evaluators cleaned the data. All three shows received positive comments from visitors, but we also wanted to explore the following questions in our summative evaluation:

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President's Welcome

Happy New Year IMTAL!

"My girlfriend loved it." That's the most telling evaluation response I've ever gotten in more than a decade of work in museum theatre. We do periodic evaluation of the program, asking what people learn, what they leave curious about, and trying to tease out how they connect what they saw with our exhibits, with their own stories, and with the world and events surrounding them. I've gotten responses that will be in my grant proposals forever. I've gotten "fines" and "greats" and "my mom made me comes." But, "my girlfriend loved it" is still my favorite.

Why? Because it is a great reminder that our visitors don't come to us to have learning "done to them." They come with their own agendas, their own interests and aims, their own identities and identity work to do. And none of that stuff is ours to control. All we can do is our best work and hope it resonates—somewhere, somehow, somewhen with our visitors' own internal indicators of success. Oftentimes, their aims and ours jibe—they find out something new, they learn more about one of their favorite things, and yes, sometimes they're just glad to sit down for 15 or 20 minutes and are pleasantly surprised when they enjoy what they see.

The show I performed that day was a demonstration program about women's undergarments and changes in fashion from the 1780s to the 1870s. People connected with it on all sorts of levels—"I am grateful for my jeans and sweats" was a common comment that also showed visitors were making personal connections to what they had seen. "I always wondered what hoop skirts looked like" showed curiosity satisfied. "[I'll leave thinking about] what women wear now and what that says about women's roles," showed people drawing connections between history and the present. They all showed that we were meeting our aims for the program. "My girlfriend loved it" showed that particular visitor had set out to take his girlfriend on a date she would enjoy. He had a very clear aim, one I had not even considered beyond a bland wish that folks would enjoy themselves, and we helped him succeed.

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Elizabeth Pickard, President

This shows how tricky evaluation is. How hard it is to quantify the right things and how we can succeed and fail in ways that we might not even consider when we set out. But it also shows that it is essential. We need to know those things—where we are being effective and where we're not. We need that information to tell others the story we know in our hearts and guts and souls—that museum theatre works. It is important because of how it moves us, intrigues us, surprises us. This issue is dedicated to how we show the world what we know already, "Yes, it works."

Happy reading.



Elizabeth

P.S. Don't forget to sign up for the IMTAL luncheon at AAM! Also I'll put in a shameless plug to please sign up for my On Site/Insight on May 7th, ACTivists in Action, which will highlight our IMLS funded museum theatre project in conjunction with our exhibit "#1 in Civil Rights, the African American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis." Are you presenting at AAM? Let us know so we can promote your session! Email me at president@imtal-us.org.



Editor's Corner

William Bruce Cameron said,

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.¹

But still, we try, because we want to improve.
We try, because we want to know what works, and why.
We try, because we need to provide the evidence that shows what we do works in a multitude of ways.
We try, because “knowing in our bones” isn’t enough.
We try, because inspiration is only a starting point.

And by trying, we succeed:
We improve.
We invent and innovate.
We lead.
We teach.
We inspire.

Judy



¹ 1963, *Informal Sociology: A Casual Introduction to Sociological Thinking* by William Bruce Cameron, p. 13, Random House, New York.



T. L. Brenneman

Judy Fort Brenneman, Publications Officer

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- ◆ **Submit a script for the 2017 Jon Lipsky Award for Excellence in Playwriting (deadline is Jan. 29):**
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Want to write for *Insights*?

Short, long, article, essay, opinion piece, announcement, photos
—if it has to do with Museum Theatre, we're interested!

Submission guidelines are now online:

<http://imtal-us.org/resources/Documents/Insights/2016-17-18-editorial-schedule.pdf>

1. Do the IMLS shows achieve their learning and experiential goals?
2. What about the IMLS shows supports or impedes visitors’ connections to the issues being raised, in comparison to similar shows?

We compared our three IMLS shows against three other current science shows in our repertoire. Data from the same questions and instruments were collected at all six shows. Our summative evaluation consisted of 41 interviews, and



The Science Museum of Minnesota

Ej Subkoviak and Melanie Wehrmacher performing *As the Worm Turns*.

165 surveys were conducted with audience members. We found that the novelty of the content, current science research, may impede visitors’ ability to make connections to their daily lives. Over half (70%) of the IMLS audience said they made a connection between something they saw in the show and their own lives, while nearly all (94%) of



The Science Museum of Minnesota

James Rodriguez and Neal Hazard performing *Storming the Castle*.

the comparison group of our other shows noted making a connection (Gaupt 2016). It should be noted that IMLS shows introduce unfamiliar research while our comparison group of other current science shows cover more familiar topics, so this

83% of visitors spoke to being inspired to learn more about the studies and indicated that they would be “Fairly” or “Very” likely to follow up with various information seeking behaviors in order to learn more.

result is not surprising.

The challenges of the IMLS current science topics did not hinder the effectiveness of the shows. Before watching IMLS shows, 75% of audiences reported feeling “A little” or “Not at all” informed on the topic. After, 90% of respondents indicated they felt “Fairly” or “Very” informed (Gaupt 2016). 83% of visitors spoke to being inspired to learn more about the studies and indicated that they would be “Fairly” or “Very” likely to follow up with various information seeking behaviors in order to learn more (Gaupt 2016).

In summary, we are very pleased with the results and excited by the challenges evaluation revealed, and we hope you’re interested in producing one or more of these shows. There is no leasing fee for the use of these scripts, and you are encouraged to make them your own. For more information on the scripts and evaluation, contact Stephanie Long at slong@smm.org.



The Science Museum of Minnesota

Stephanie Long

Central Park Zoo Quests:

Public Engagement Success at the Central Park Zoo

by Bricken Sparacino, Manager of Live Interpretation, Wildlife Conservation Society

Now more than ever, it is important for cultural institutions to connect their audience to their mission. As an example, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) created the 96 Elephants campaign, which included protection of elephant habitats, coordination with local and international governments to end ivory poaching, and interactive zoo exhibits, to share this important work with the WCS zoo visitors. Without the visitor component of the 96 Elephants campaign, visitors would leave the zoo without learning that the WCS is a major part of the efforts to save the African elephant. Additionally, the WCS would lose an opportunity to recruit visitors' support.



B. Sparacino

Ranger Rae (Nikki Casseri) with zoo guests

The good news is that more and more guests of cultural institutions want to learn. A 2014 study found that 70% of zoo guests include learning as one of the reasons they come to zoos (Roe & McConney 2014). There has been an important cultural shift in guests' expectations; they are now coming to the zoo to learn. It is also worth noting that the Roe & McConney study found guests left zoos feeling like they should do something to help conservation efforts, but that they had not been given any actionable information during their visit.

The scripted interaction seems to have allowed for a more directed educational outcome, creating a richer learning experience.

It behooves modern zoos to ensure that guests are given the opportunity to learn and make connections to conservation actions that zoos are engaged in around the world. This is a

useful lesson for all cultural institutions, and one way to keep zoos and museums relevant for the 21st Century.

The Wildlife Conservation Society has developed a "2020" strategy to help strengthen our conservation messages. With this strategy in mind, we at the Central Park Zoo's education department created the theatrical and interactive "Central Park Zoo Quests" program to provide guests the learning opportunities they seek.

The WCS Education Department, located at the Bronx Zoo, Queens Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo, Central Park Zoo, and the New York Aquarium, has chosen the 2020 strategy of "inspire" as its new programming motivation. The "inspire" goal hopes to engage and educate, connecting people to wildlife, and inspiring those people to conservation action. We at the Central Park Zoo (CPZ) piloted the "Central Park Zoo Quests" (Quests) program in summer 2015 to meet this new 2020 goal. The CPZ Quests program was designed to use theatre, inquiry, and citizen science techniques to highlight important scientific information in a fun and engaging way. Each task promotes scientific knowledge and includes an opportunity to speak about conservation actions that can be done after the participant leaves the zoo.

We chose theatre as a teaching strategy for many reasons. Theatre can connect the audience to the lessons of the play through the emotions it evokes. Also, many people learn more easily if they are able to physically participate. Museum and zoo theatre often includes audience participation like songs, act-outs, and games to engage learners.

The Quests program includes theatre with elements of participation and aims to connect to the guests' emotions, creating a deeper learning experience.



Judith Wolfe

Professor Flight (Wendy Walter)

Other programs have found that one-on-one interactions between actors/educators and guests help to significantly raise the perceived learning in an exhibit. The Milwaukee County Zoo has a program where actors play characters and interact with guests. They found that 65% of adults who interacted with actors while in the exhibit recalled science information, compared to just 35% who had no actor involvement (Mills, McLellan & Williams 2013).

The Quests program has 5 stations. This article will focus on the two stations with actor/educators. Professional actors, who were specially trained to lead these inquiry-theatre blended interactions, portrayed Professor Flight and Ranger Rae. Guests who participated in Quests received a colorful map that guided them around the facility.

The first stop on the map is the Tropic Zone. As guests enter the Tropic Zone exhibit, they meet Professor Flight. The Professor engages with the guests and explains that she needs their help to solve a scientific mystery. Guests who are interested are given a mystery card to guide them. The guests explore the tropic exhibit while solving the mystery. Mysteries highlight the bird collection, adaptations, and endangered and endemic species.

At the end of the exhibit, Professor Flight's assistant, "Chris" waits for guests. Chris takes the visitors' mystery answer guesses and talks to them about things they can do to help birds in the wild. This learning conversation encourages guests to offer conservation actions that can be done at home to help animals all over the world. Chris also recorded the conversation on the "What can you do next?" log, which allowed us to track what people were learning and gave the guests a sense that their observations were important. Guests then got a stamp on their Quests map and continued their quest at the next station.

The good news is that more and more guests of cultural institutions want to learn.

At the Bear station, visitors meet Ranger Rae, a "ranger in training," who one day hopes to work at Yellowstone. Guests are invited to explore bio-facts about bears and then, with Rae, find the grizzly bears on exhibit. Ranger Rae leads guests through a simple guided inquiry, asking them questions about what they see and think and then has them make some scientific "hypotheses." Rae takes notes of their theories to be "submitted" later with her research. Guests learn about bear behaviors, their omnivorous nature, and special adaptations.



Ranger Rae (Nikki Casseri) and zoo guests

M. Birch

The other stations were led by teen volunteers. They interacted with guests at a citizen science birding station, a "measure up to penguins" station, and a final station whose goal was to raise awareness about the 96 Elephants campaign. The program was offered to visitors five days a week from July 1st through Labor Day weekend and then Saturdays and Sundays in the fall.

When a cultural institution is creating new programming, it is important to demonstrate its success quantitatively. Empirical visitor data can help explain a program's success to board members and possible donors or sponsors. We had a sense that the Quests program was a success. We could see guests at each station actively participating, using binoculars, reporting their findings to Professor Flight, and trying to care for their "eggs" like a king penguin.

However, we wanted to ensure that the visitor data matched our informal observations. A survey was developed with the help of the WCS's Education Research and Evaluation Department. The survey measured guests' satisfaction both quantitatively and qualitatively. Guests were asked to self-report their learning and enjoyment on a Likert style, 1 to 5 scale. The Likert style items included:

- ◆ I enjoyed my Central Park Zoo Quests experience, and
- ◆ Participating in the Central Park Zoo Quests added value to today's visit.

Guests were also asked to write about what they had learned and enjoyed with these qualitative questions:

- ◆ What was your favorite part of the Zoo Quests?
- ◆ Tell us one thing that you or your child learned from completing the Zoo Quests.

During August 2015, seventy-six surveys were completed at Central Park Zoo. Survey data were analyzed for meaningful trends. The data suggested that the Quests program was very successful. Of those surveyed, 98% either agreed or strongly agreed (4s and 5s) with all the statements. When asked to write about their “favorite” part, 50% mentioned things that they had learned during the program. When asked to write about what they had learned, 57% mentioned specific things they learned during the interaction with the actor/educators.

Looking more closely at the qualitative data, the interactions with Professor Flight and Ranger Rae show special strengths. When asked to write about what they learned, some of the participants included these scientific vocabulary words: environment, hibernations, extinct, endemic, endangered, omnivore, primate, and conservation. These words are part of the scripted encounters the actor/educators use when interpreting as Professor Flight and Ranger Rae. The scripted interaction seems to have allowed for a more directed educational outcome, creating a richer learning experience.

Data suggest the guests were more likely to walk away with the science knowledge the program intended to teach when their experience included the actor/educator interaction.

We also evaluated the Professor Flight’s “What can you do next?” logs. In one day alone, out of eighty people who participated in the Professor Flight station, twenty people said they would recycle, ten said they would turn out the lights, eight said they would carpool or walk more, seven said they would conserve water, two said they would put up bird feeders in their backyard, and one said they would plant a tree. This daily evaluation also showed the education message was being received.

With the results from the survey and information collected daily, data suggest the guests were more likely to walk away with the science knowledge the program intended to teach when their experience included the actor/educator interaction.

Of the survey respondents, 23% percent were from Manhattan, 35% were from the other four New York City boroughs, and 42% percent were from areas outside the city. Of the 42%, eleven different states were represented, ranging from New Jersey to California, plus three international locations (Argentina, Canada, and Sweden). Over the course of the season, the program reached an average of

405 participants a day. This broad reach combined with the overall high scores shows that the Quests program was an effective theatrical public engagement effort.

Most powerful perhaps is the reach of a cultural institution. We all see a blend of visitors from our local community to tourists who have traveled a great distance. This means a well-crafted, engaging education message extends beyond our own facilities as far as our visitors are inspired to take it. We are happy to announce the program has been funded for a second summer and is being expanded. For summer 2016, the Prospect Park Zoo will be developing a Quests program, and the Queens Zoo will be creating a pilot Quests program.

Bricken Sparacino works as the Manager of Live Interpretation at the Wildlife Conservation Society. She worked at the Central Park Zoo for over ten years as part of the Wildlife Theatre troupe. She created the theatrical elements of the Central Park Zoo Quests. In her new position, she will oversee the Quests as they develop at all five WCS facilities. She completed this article as a part of her graduate work with Project *Dragonfly* at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

References

- Mills, J., McLellan D., and Williams K. “Zoo Theatre: A Performance Approach to Conservation Interpretation.” *IZE Journal* 49 (2013): 26-28.
- Roe, Katie, and Andrew Mcconney. “Do Zoo Visitors Come to Learn? An Internationally Comparative, Mixed-methods Study.” *Environmental Education Research* 21, no. 6 (2014): 865-84.



Catherine Lynne

Bricken Sparacino

Reaching GOALS at The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis

by Carey Meier, Program Development Manager, and Aaron Bonds, Experience Manager, Actor Interpreter Unit, The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis

Planning to evaluate and evaluating to help us plan is the revolving process that lets us know if we are reaching our goals in interpretive programming at The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis. We will use one specific case study, “Jolly Days Characters,” to take a closer look at how this process works. This process clearly demonstrates how evaluation directly identified successes and areas of growth that allowed us to continually make program improvements over a three year period.

At the most wonderful time of the year, The Children’s Museum opens *Jolly Days: Winter Wonderland*, our annual holiday exhibit where families are able to explore winter and holiday traditions to create memories. The Jolly Days characters were developed to create opportunities for families to interact with some well-known holiday characters and a few lesser known characters who support the opportunity to share and create new traditions and memories. The interpretive planning process for these characters happened alongside a re-envisioning of the exhibit, basically giving it a facelift and re-focus.

Jolly Days has been a Museum tradition for over 20 years, but several years ago, an exhibit planning team started meeting about redesigning the space. That led to the loss of a program room where Jolly Days programming had previously taken place. An Interpretation Plan was the first step in deciding on the variety of types of programs that would support the exhibit messaging, allow for different types of learning styles, and appeal to families—always a goal here!

Family Learning is a museum-wide initiative that encourages family interactions under three categories: Participation, Collaboration and Problem Solving, and Enhancing the Exhibit Experience. We have a Family Learning Inventory of observable behaviors we call FLIP (Family Learning Behaviors in Programs), which can be used during the planning process, as well as throughout development and evaluation.

We designed programs in Jolly Days with a target audience of three- to eight-year-olds and their families. The goal for these new roaming characters is that they would be immersed in the exhibit to create a playful and inviting environment that families could interact with. Here’s one of them now—that’s Zazzelz, the Stand-up Comic Elf!



Zazzelz (Michael Hosp)

courtesy of The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis

During the planning process, we acknowledged that this type of program would be different from most other museum theatre type programming our actors were used to.

To initiate buy-in, interest, and excitement, we invited each actor to brainstorm and create their own winter or holiday character. This included planning their own unique costume and props that they would use to encourage engagement with families and building their individual strategies to reach the program goals.

Oh look—

There’s Andy the Zookeeper with all his animals!

As in every new program, we began the development process with a “One Sheet.” For us, the one sheet is like the bread of a sandwich; it’s on the top and bottom, and it holds the meat—the content—in the middle. It informs the front end planning, including all of the goals and objectives and family learning behaviors. During the script development process, it serves as the outline



Andy the Zookeeper (Matt Anderson)

courtesy of The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis

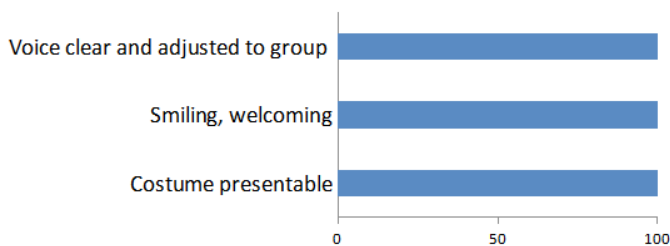
and is also an accompanying training tool for staff learning the program. The one sheet also serves as the support for our evaluation process and helps us determine if we have successfully reached the intended goals of the program. All of the goals and objectives on the one sheet are transferred into a series of check boxes that allow us to observe the program in action to see if the intended behaviors are happening. We plan for evaluation throughout every step of the planning process, starting with the one sheet.

Collaboration between key players in the process continues throughout the development process. The actors continue to develop their strategies and work to create an informal program script. Costumes and props are identified and purchased. Rehearsals begin weeks before the exhibit opening date. Then the characters hit the floor.

Collaboration between key players in the process continues throughout the development process.

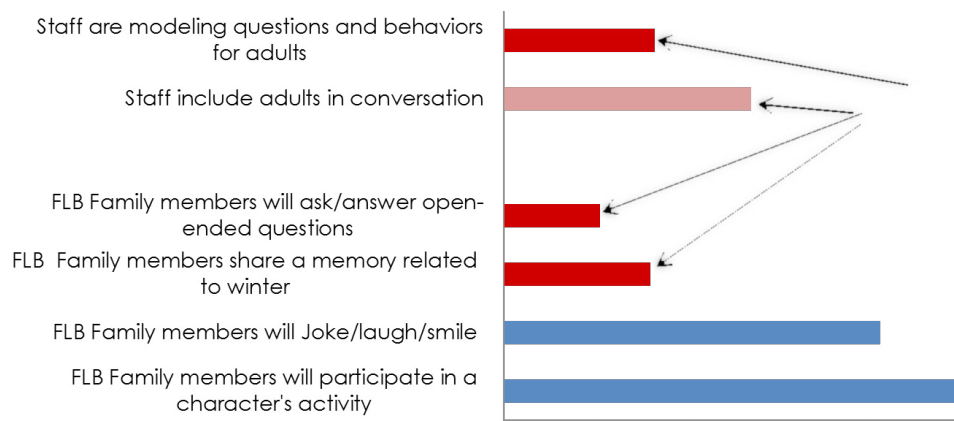
Jolly Days characters were scheduled three times daily. After a few initial weeks of programming to work out kinks, the ongoing evaluation process began in 2012.

Each Jolly Days Character was observed a total of fifteen times. The observations were measured against the planned goals. The findings in 2012 concluded that we were reaching all goals as far as looking the part and sounding the way that we hoped.



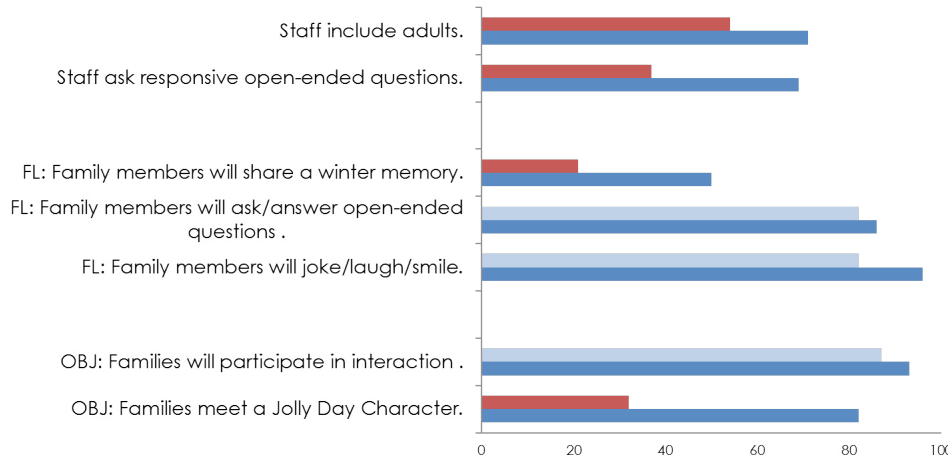
But, we were able to identify some areas for improvement: we didn't meet our goal of 60% when including adults; our goal of having fully developed questioning skills; and our specific program goal of families sharing a memory.

As a result of the data, we outlined our next steps. We needed to provide actors with more specific strategies for their specific characters. We provided focused objectives and family learning behaviors. In other words, we worked to identify more specifics about what these objectives and behaviors should look like. We allowed time for actors to reflect on where they were struggling and then to develop an individual plan for success. Finally, we provided opportunity for more practice and training on informal learning in other museum programs.



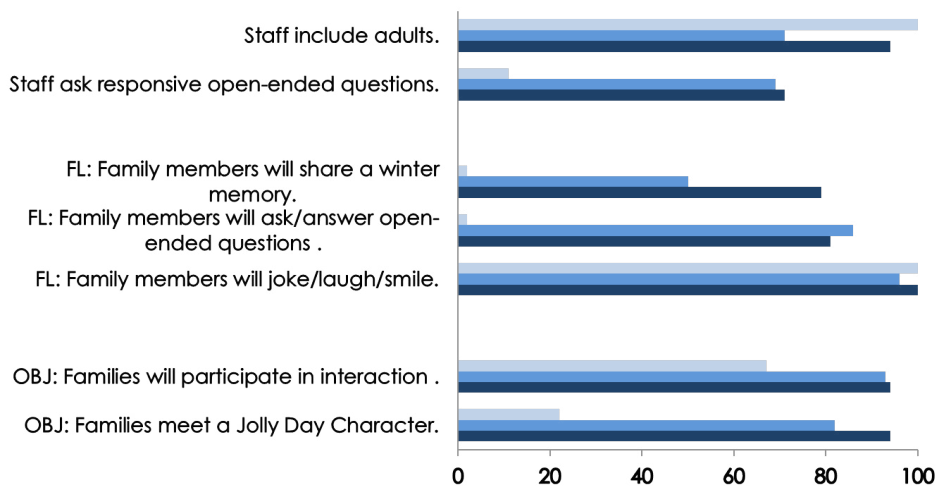
The management team continued to evaluate the Jolly Days characters under the direction of the Program Developer/Evaluator for the next two years. We were able to follow one character throughout those three years to measure individual growth and change. Since, with staff turn-over and the need for casting in other areas, we were not able to compare individual growth for all characters over these three years, we will compare Zazzelz the Elf to all Jolly Days characters results, so we can see the connections.

The first year of observations allowed us to look at the team's outcomes so we could establish a baseline. The following year, our observations allowed us to break out individual data, and to use it to compare to year one. In the chart below, light blue indicates the areas that reached their goals in year one, red indicates areas of improvement in year one, and dark blue indicates Zazzelz specific results in year two.



We saw the improvement we had hoped for in the results! Now we needed to continue to refine and individualize the one sheets for each character. We continued to coach on open ended questioning strategies. We worked with each actor to add more specific goals that would encourage adult engagement. We also continued to allow actors time to reflect on whether the strategies they were trying were working or not.

We were learning how to create stronger characters through this evaluation process, but there were also unplanned take-ways from the process as a whole. With practice, the team learned how to make better observations. We continually refined the evaluation tool we were using to better evaluate and communicate what we were seeing. We invited several other departments involved in the exhibit development process to assist in the collection of data to ensure we had outside perspectives. We also identified the value of having a section to write in notes on the observation forms. This helped us to answer questions as to “why” certain things were happening as we reviewed a large set of data. We used all of this new found knowledge as we entered year three of data collection. Below you can see a three year comparison of Zazzelz’s growth.



The light blue indicates the 2012 (year one) results, with target percentages at a baseline of 60%.

The medium blue indicates the results of 2013, where we played around with adjusting some of the target goals.

The dark blue indicates the results of 2014, where we can see improvement or consistency in each instance. This also allowed us to stretch our planned goals to around 75%.

After three years of evaluation, we decided the Jolly Days Characters were holding strong and consistent! We had developed the tools, including the one sheet and script, and used those tools to support the continued success of this program. We were able to focus our attention on the next project with informal check-ins to assure that things were still holding strong. We had also become stronger developers, trainers, and evaluators as a result of this project—skills we continue to use in other projects.

Speaking of other projects, you might be asking how this information transfers to you and your projects. You might be wondering if there are ways to evaluate other than solely doing observations. You may also be asking if a different program format requires a different process. Let's take a quick look at two other projects, in completely different galleries with completely different goals, to see how planning to evaluate still works.



The Children's Museum of Indianapolis

Michael Hosp, Peace Pagoda

National Geographic: Sacred Journeys opened at The Children's Museum in August, 2015. This exhibit was developed with the goal of using the beautiful imagery of National Geographic to transport families to faraway places across the world, to see extraordinary objects such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Dalai Lama's throne, and a piece of the Western Wall, and to tell the inspiring stories of millions of people who travel to Sacred Places around the world as part of pilgrimage. This new exhibit came with new challenges and a lot of unknowns. It also came with an opportunity to foster awareness of cultural diversity and respect for religious traditions. We decided to create a series of individual monologues detailing specific sacred journeys through our program, *My Story*.

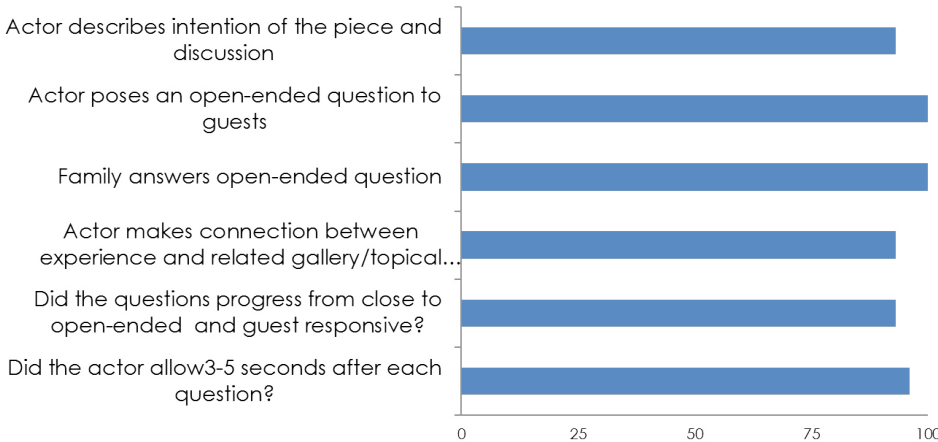
This museum theatre program format was planned to be similar to our successful *Power of Children* shows. What was going to be new, and what we wanted to measure for success, was, "Could we successfully facilitate a new level of post-show that encouraged families to share their own personal experience not only with their own family, but with a group?"

We followed the same planning process, starting with the one sheet, that informed a formal script, which provided for a lengthy rehearsal process. In addition to the normal process, we planned strategies for a successful post-show discussion. We planned steps for the Actor to build upon as the discussion progressed. The chart below shows how the planning of this progression did lead to success.

We also wanted to know if families were responding to our planned strategies, and we discovered:

- ◆ They were making connections from the story to their own lives—YES!
- ◆ They were sharing—YES!
- ◆ They were talking—YES!
- ◆ They even shared with the group to the level we hoped for—YES!

We were able to reach our goals!



Who doesn't love a turtle? What about a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle?

To move to yet another completely different type of gallery, which required a totally different type of program, we would like to introduce you to *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Secrets of the Sewer*. In this experience, we would use an ex-break dancer turned ninja to lead "Ninja Academy."



Ninja Academy

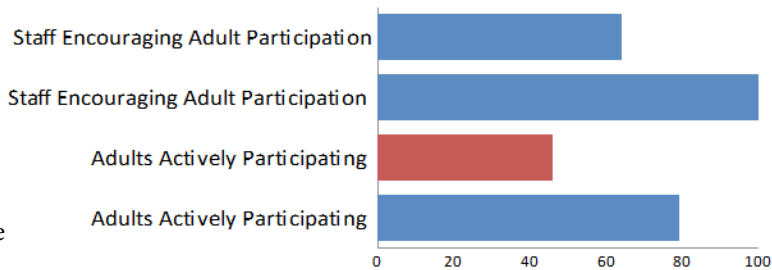
We planned the experience in the same way, but our questions were different. We wanted to find out if families would participate in a highly active experience. We wanted to see if the strategies we planned would support the request for adults to participate.

We did our program observations, and we found out that adults would participate, but they were not participating at the planned rate we wanted them to. So, before we completed the evaluation, we stopped and implemented new strategies in the middle of the study.

Yes, you can do that!

We were measuring the effectiveness of change because this was a temporary exhibit run, and we couldn't wait to implement the new strategies for success.

The red data show the beginning of the evaluation, where we easily identified what we could coach the actors on to improve adult participation. Blue indicates the results after our actors shared strategies that were working among the group and implemented them across the board. In identifying and implementing changes, we were able to successfully get adults to participate in learning ninjitsu moves, the martial art the TMNT use, as well as perform a flash mob incorporating those moves in the middle of the exhibit alongside their family members. And, yes, this was an amazing program to observe—I laughed every time!



Carey Meier

These three completely different scenarios show that the process can work, once you identify your goals and what you want to find out. Your tools can be specific to your process and your institution's goals and purpose. Planning to evaluate from the beginning can help you increase your chances of success and can help you show your institution the value in what you are planning!



Aaron Bonds

Auditions, Calls for Submissions & Announcements

Auditions and Cool Events for Museum Theatre; Calls for Submissions

Calls for Submissions

Lipsky Award for Excellence in Playwriting

January 29, 2017: DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS for the 2017 Jon Lipsky Award for Excellence in Playwriting. Submission guidelines: <http://imtal-us.org/lipsky-award>

IMTY Award nomination deadline Jan. 29, 2017

Nominate your leader for the IMTY:
<http://imtal-us.org/IMTY-award>

Scripts on a science-related topic or person, 20–45 minutes in length, no more than 2 actors, for Carpenter Science Theatre Company's quarterly staged readings of "science theatre" scripts at Science Museum of Virginia's Lunch Box Science events. Submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis; royalty payment of \$50.00 for single staged reading performance of accepted scripts.

Email copy of your script to lgard@smv.org OR submit hard copy to:

Larry Gard
4716 Scouters Pl
Chesterfield, VA 23832



OR to

Larry Gard
Science Museum of Virginia
2500 West Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23220

Conferences, Workshops, and Events

May 7–10, 2017, St. Louis, MO
AAM (American Alliance of Museums) conference

<http://annualmeeting.aam-us.org/>

May 9, 2017, St. Louis, MO
IMTAL AAM luncheon

July 18–22, 2017, Columbus, Ohio
VSA Annual Conference

This year's theme is New Pathways in Visitor Studies
To learn more, please visit our conference page:
<http://www.visitorstudies.org/conference-page>



Submit articles, news, and ideas for *Insights!*

Send us your article, opinion, or news to publications@imtal-us.org no later than March 31, 2017 for the Spring 2017 issue.

(It doesn't have to be perfect; it just needs to be reasonably coherent. If we have questions, we'll contact you.)

Spring 2017 issue: The Training Challenge: Who, how, why, where (and how to pay for it): deadline March 31, 2017

Summer 2017 issue: Annual Award Winners, new board members, & AAM report: deadline June 22, 2017

Be Included on a Map of Conservation Theatres

Bricken Sparacino is creating a map of Conservation Theatres to share with teachers, community leaders, and others who bring groups on field trips or have tours visit their facilities. Conservation Theatre uses theatre as a teaching tool to inspire young people and their families to love wild things and wild places, helping to create the next generation of conservationists. Here is what the map looks like so far.

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=zYPl9ZckjnWc.k7YnqoF4Gjgk>

If you feel that your work fits under the Conservation Theatre umbrella, please fill out this survey and she will add you to the map:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1zDJ8t1tN2Aduo6xBaTO_QL0u5eyYUG5X3KIwcUyVSxI/viewform?usp=send_form

Once it is finished, it will be searchable on a blog and Facebook.

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**Doug also continues as IMTAL Website and Social Media guru. Please send questions about such things to him at web@imtal-us.org.*

The International Museum Theatre Alliance (IMTAL) is a nonprofit, professional membership organization and an affiliate to the American Alliance of Museums. IMTAL's mission is to inspire and support the use of theatre and theatrical technique to cultivate emotional connections, provoke action, and add public value to the museum experience. For more information, to become a member, or to volunteer, please visit our website, <http://imtal-us.org/home>, or contact a board member via email.

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