Evaluation: The Key to Maximizing the Success of Library Programs

INFOPEOPLE WEBINAR

3/10/2021

Today's webinar: Topics

- Identify the most relevant evaluation questions to ask
- Understand the advantages of using multiple data collection methods
- Determine how to use evaluation results to take action

Today's webinar: Presenters

Rebecca Teasdale
Rebecca Teasdale & Associates

Linda Hofschire
Consultant

Lisa Dale
Sacramento Public Library

Elizabeth Gray
Yolo County Library

Andrea Hilliard
Carlsbad City Library

Madelyn Horton
Carlsbad City Library

Poll

Evaluation: Our definition

Public facing

Examines public-facing library programs or services

Evaluation: Our definition

Public facing

Examines public-facing library programs or services

Community focused

Adopts a community focus (rather than a library focus)

Evaluation: Our definition

Public facing

Examines public-facing library programs or services

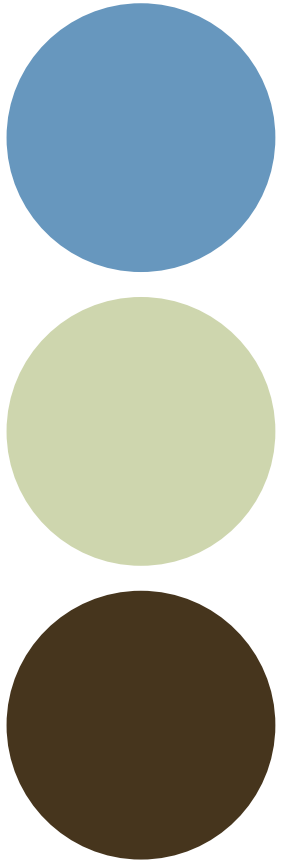
Action oriented

Aims to inform real-world actions

Community focused

Adopts a community focus (rather than a library focus)

Types of actions



Improvement of library programs and services

Accountability and oversight

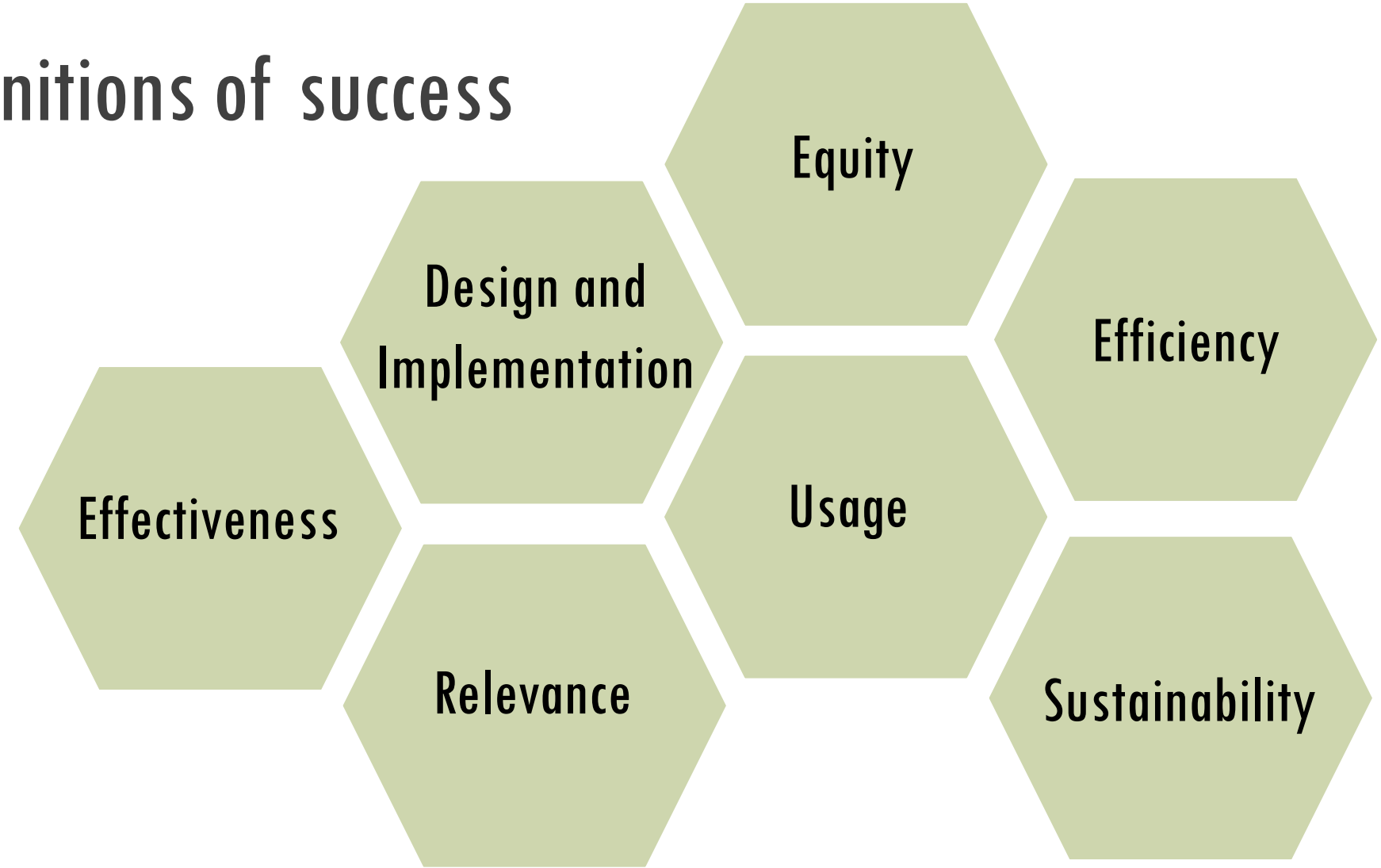
Funding and advocacy

Evaluation: Our definition

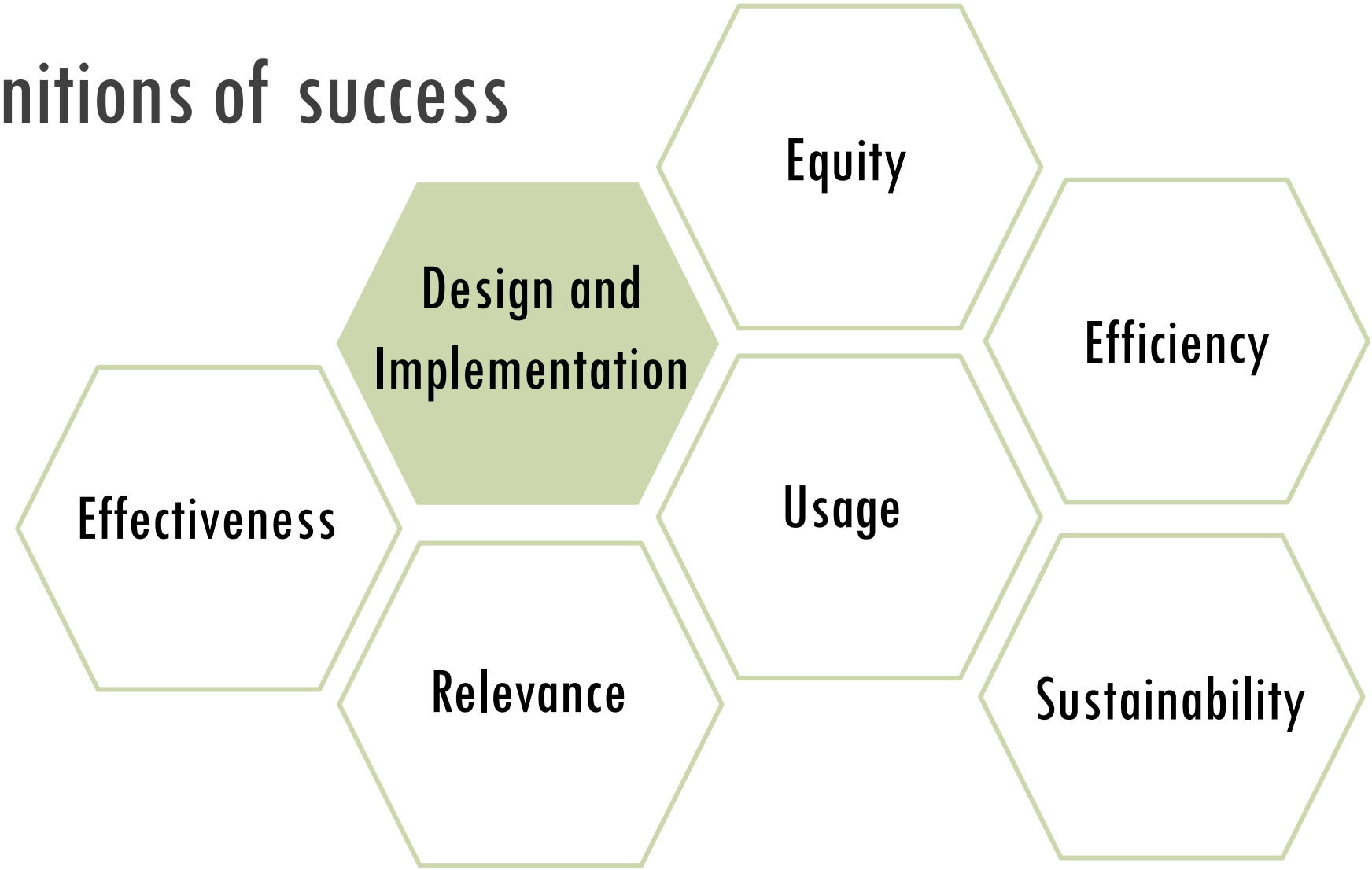
Public facing	Examines public-facing library programs or services
Action oriented	Aims to inform real-world actions
Community focused	Adopts a community focus (rather than a library focus)
Multi-dimensional	Uses multiple dimensions of success to assess programs/ services

Definitions of success

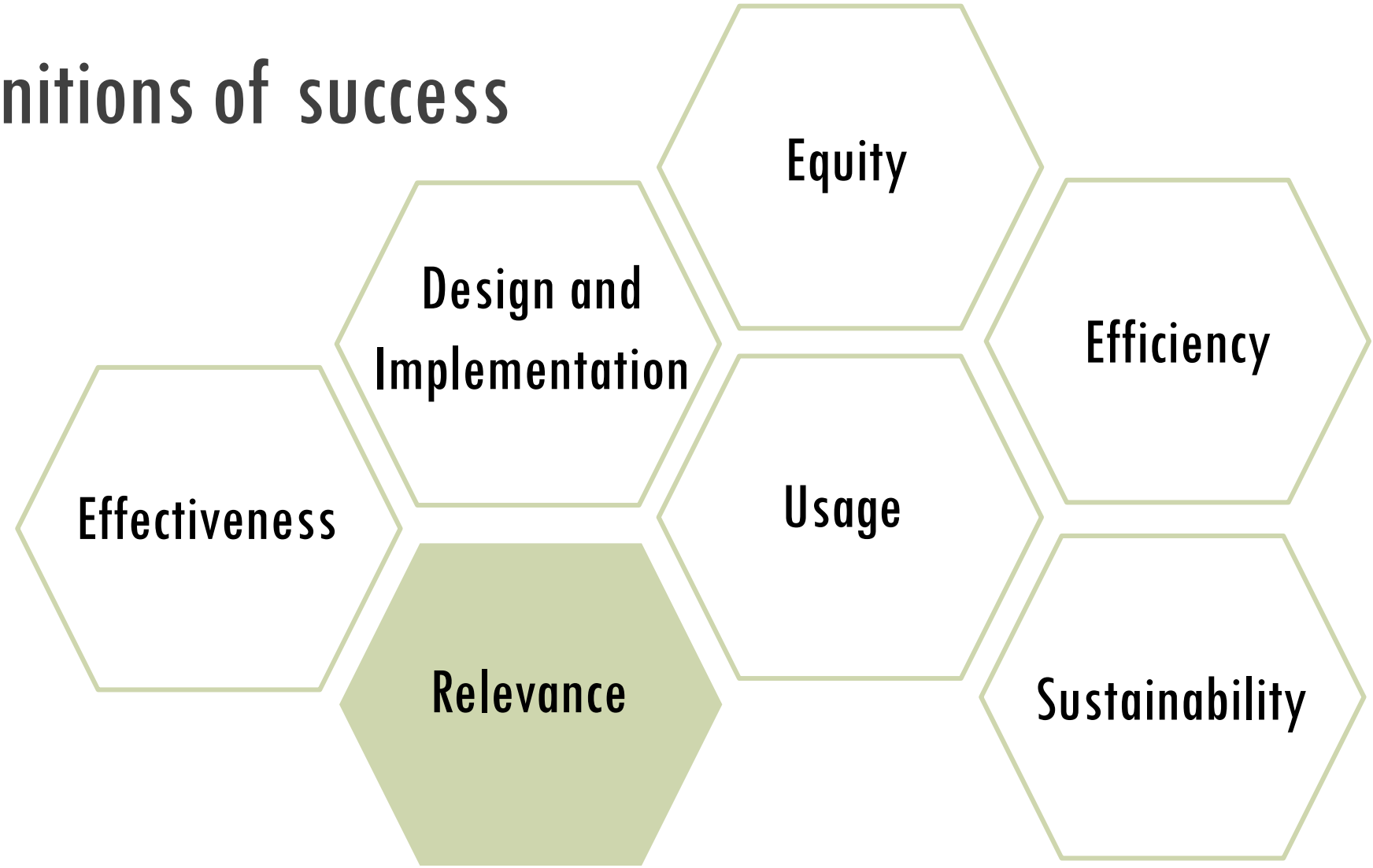
Definitions of success



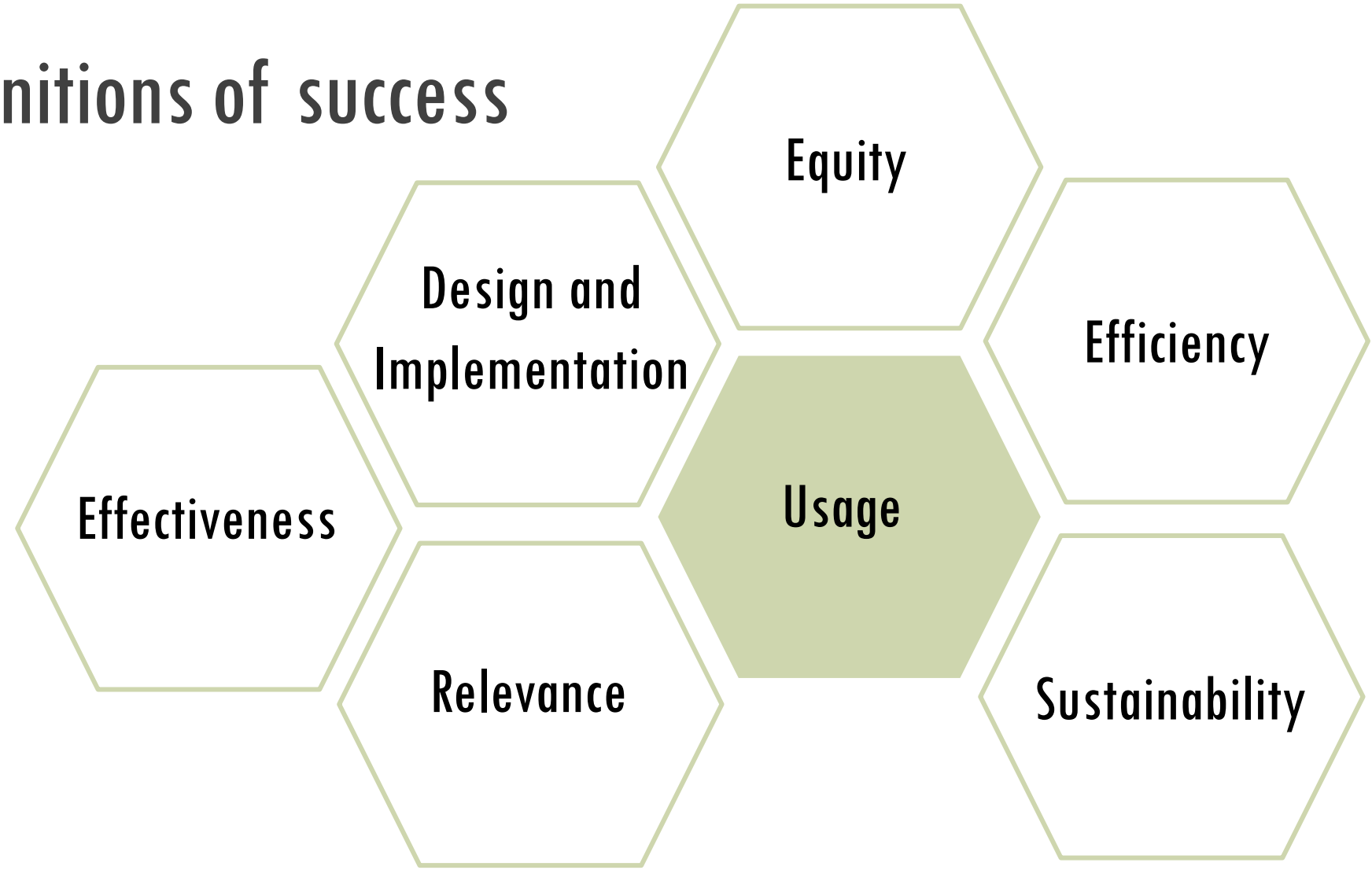
Definitions of success



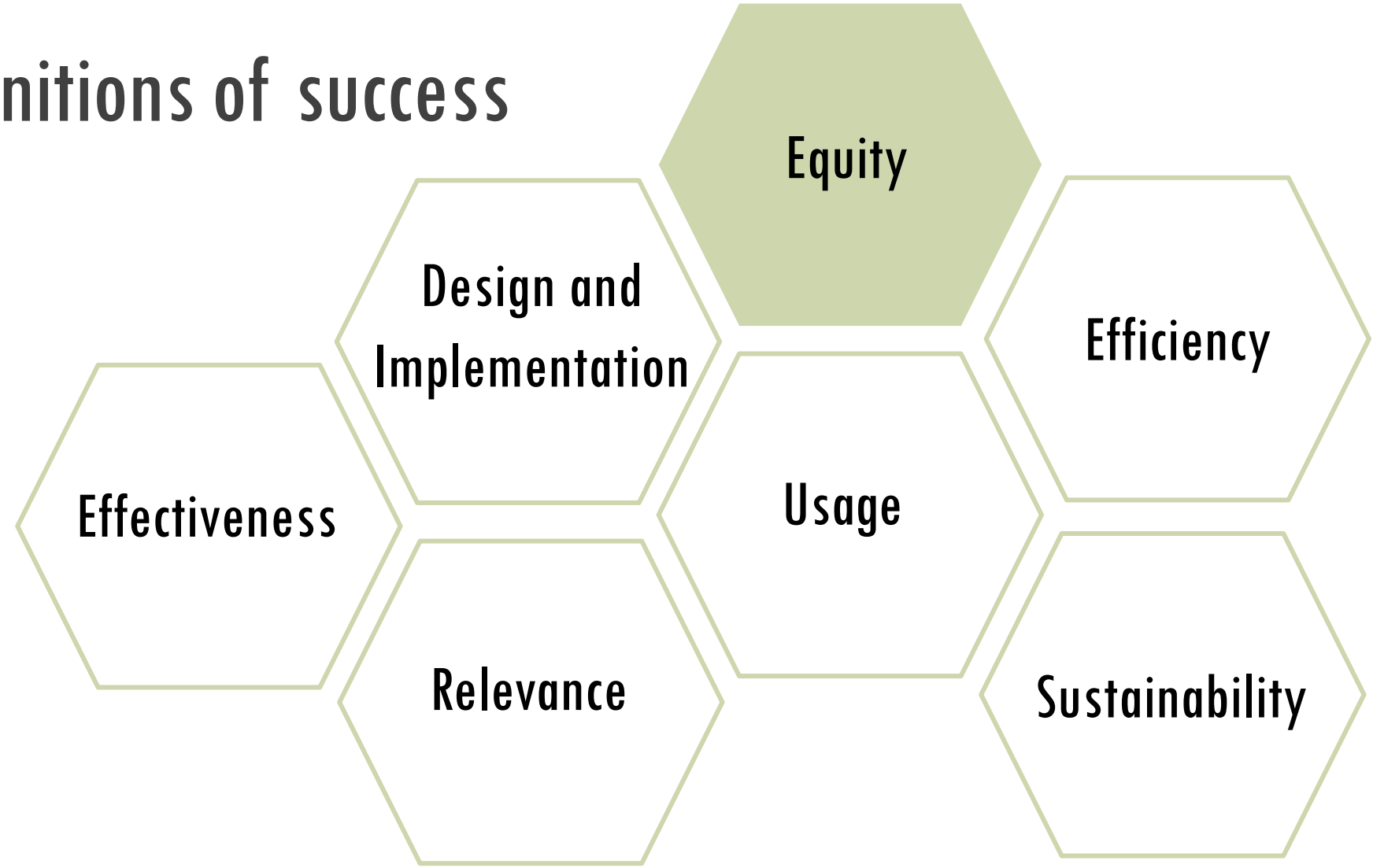
Definitions of success



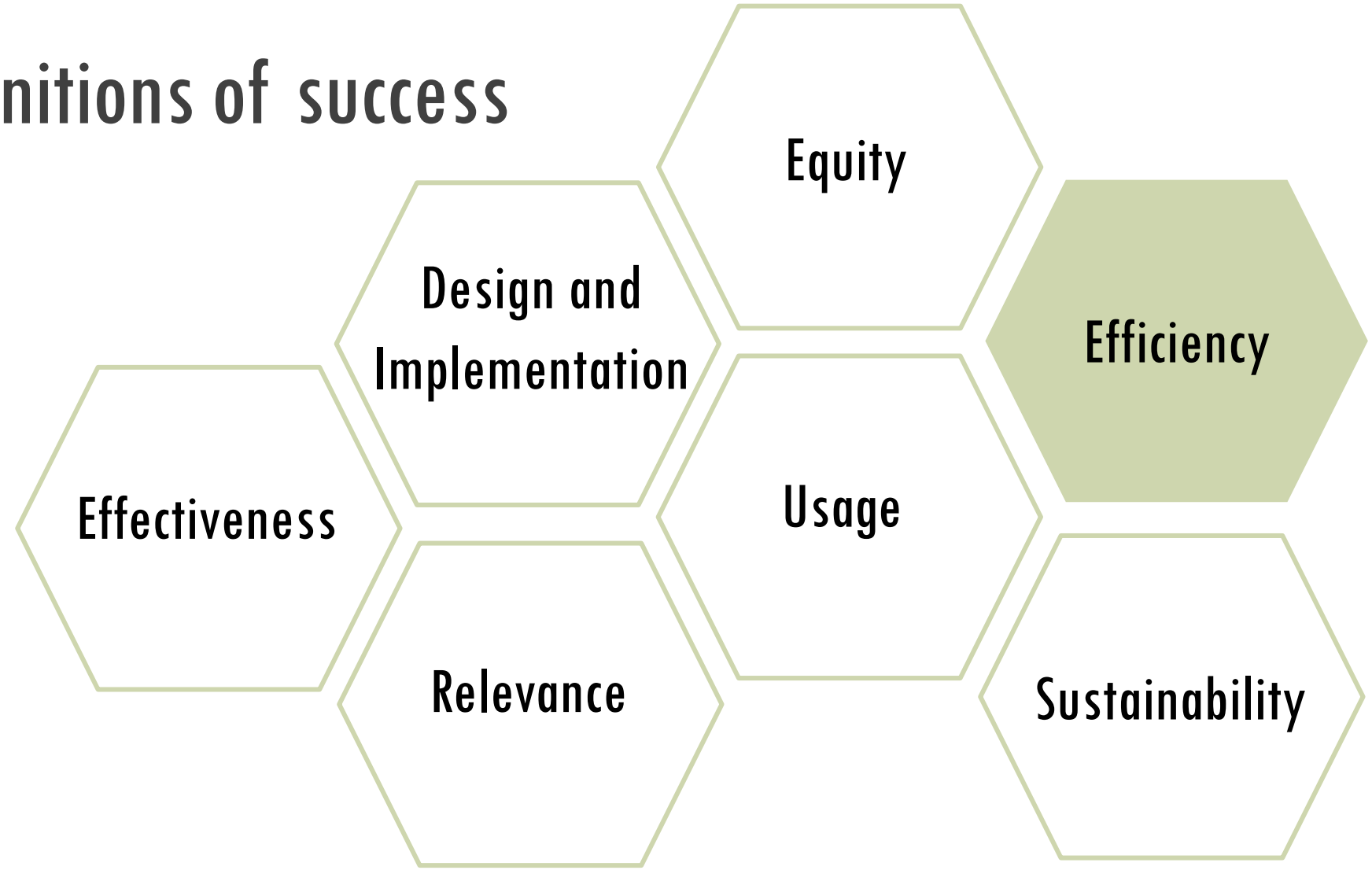
Definitions of success



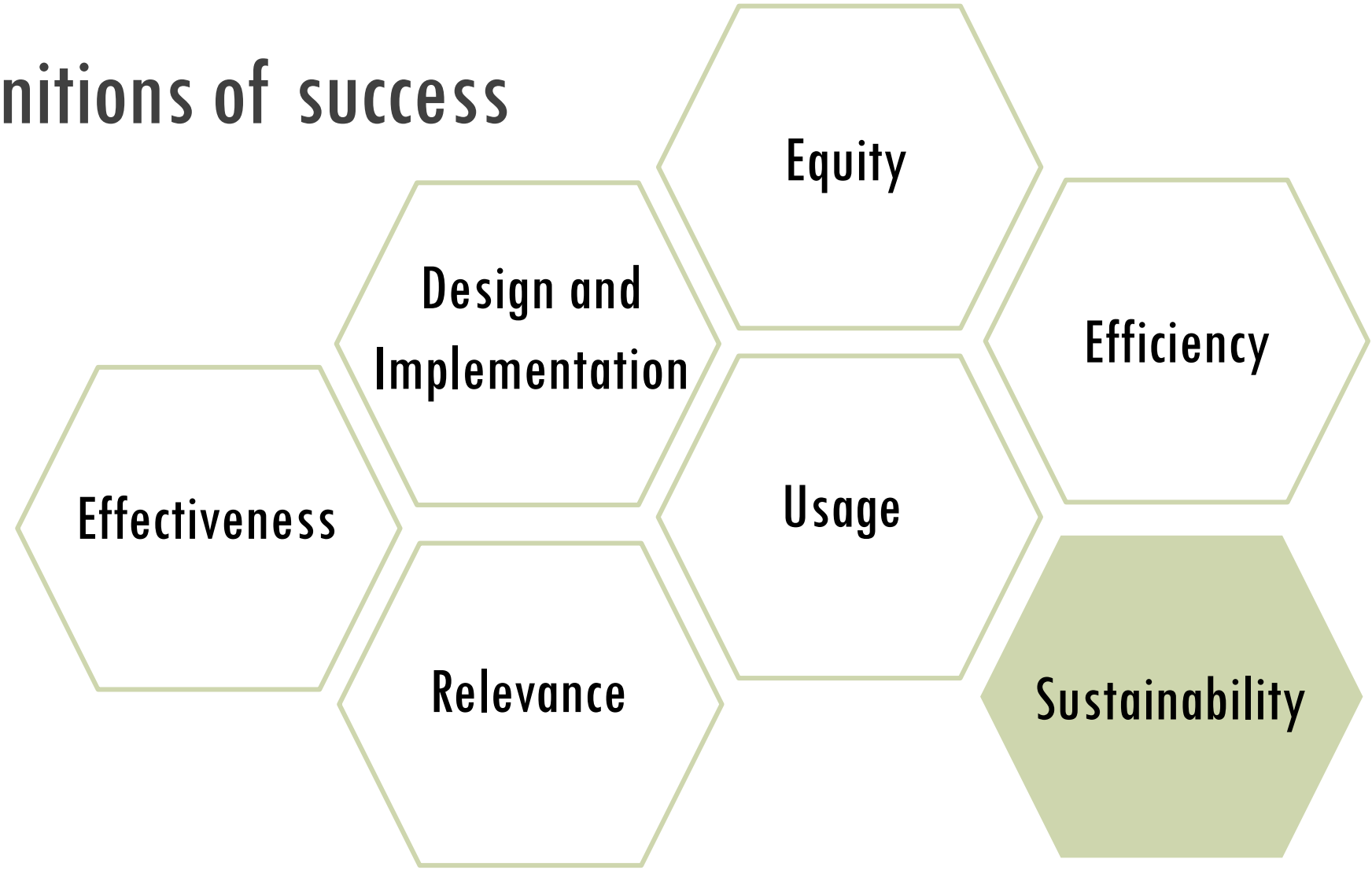
Definitions of success



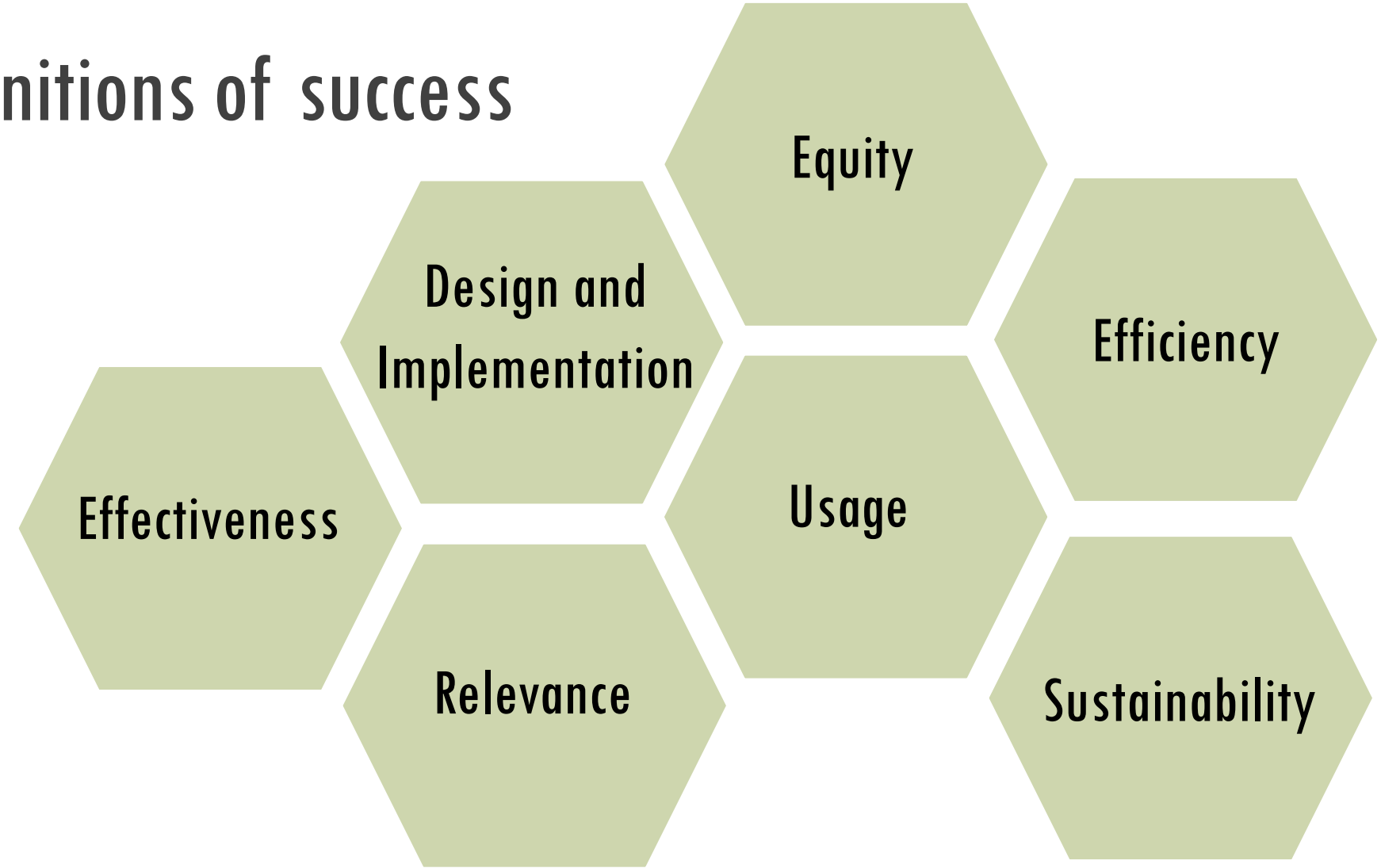
Definitions of success



Definitions of success



Definitions of success



Evaluation: Our definition

Public facing	Examines public-facing library programs or services
Action oriented	Aims to inform real-world actions
Community focused	Adopts a community focus (rather than a library focus)
Multi-dimensional	Uses multiple dimensions of success to assess programs/ services

EMBEDDING
Evaluation

- 9-month team-based training and coaching program
- Evaluation project focusing on an innovative service or a program for an underserved community
- Training sessions, library-specific coaching, technical assistance, coaching videos and related resources

califa

RebeccaTeasdale & Associates LLC

RIPL
RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

LRS
LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE
Your reference point for library data + evaluation

COLORADO
Department of Education
Colorado State Library

SLNC State Library of North Carolina

This project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services grant #RE-13-19-0076-19.

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

1. California, 2019-2020
2. Colorado, 2021-2022
3. North Carolina, 2022-2023

Today's webinar: Evaluation projects

Carlsbad	Exploration HUB: Silhouette Cameo classes
Sacramento	STEM programming at affordable housing sites
Yolo	Bilingual storytimes

Evaluation Questions

What are evaluation questions?

- Overarching, guiding questions that the evaluation seeks to answer
- Provide the 10,000-foot view
- Are NOT the questions you ask in an interview/focus group or on a survey

What's the point of having evaluation questions?

- Provide focus and clarity
- Guide data collection

Strong evaluation questions

Aligned	Aligned with the definitions of success for the program/service
Informative	Provide new insight, not leading or predetermined
Answerable	Are specific, feasible, and can be answered with data
Timely	Reflect evaluation and decision-making time frames

Math Storytime Program Series

- Goal: Engage children ages 3-5 in math concepts and activities to help prepare them for success in elementary school math.
- Activity: Math-focused storytime series, led by volunteers

Math Storytime Program Series

Possible evaluation questions:

To what extent do the math storytimes increase 3rd grade math assessment scores among participating children?

Math Storytime Program Series

Possible evaluation questions:

To what extent do the math storytimes increase 3rd grade math assessment scores among participating children?

Timely

Reflect evaluation and decision-making time frames

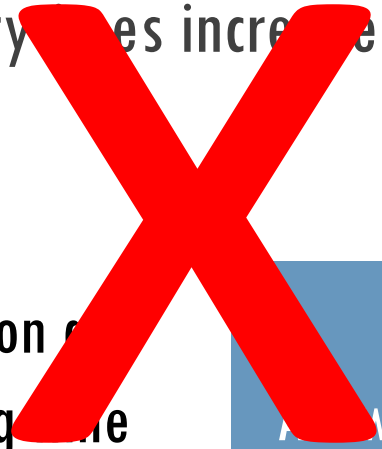
Answerable

Are specific, feasible, and can be answered with data

Math Storytime Program Series

Possible evaluation questions:

To what extent do the math story[illegible]es increase 3rd grade math assessment scores among participating children?



Timely

Reflect evaluation [illegible] decision-making [illegible] frames

[illegible]verable

Are specific, feasible, and can be answered with data

Math Storytime Program Series

Possible evaluation questions:

What do children like about the math storytimes?

Math Storytime Program Series

Possible evaluation questions:

What do children like about the math storytimes?

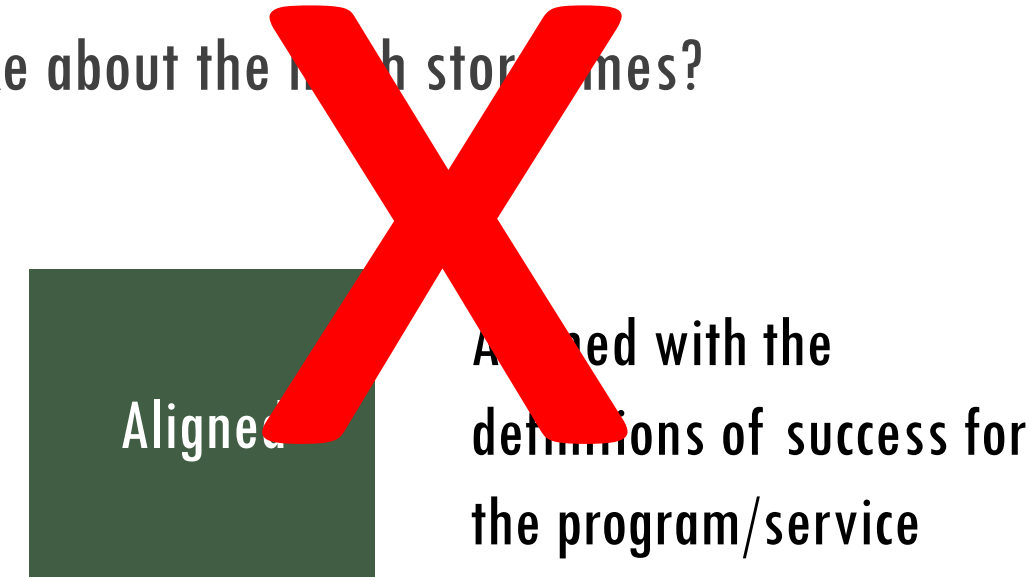
Aligned

Aligned with the definitions of success for the program/service

Math Storytime Program Series

Possible evaluation questions:

What do children like about the m[illegible]h stor[illegible]mes?



A[illegible]ed with the definitions of success for the program/service

Math Storytime Program Series

1. To what extent do volunteers implement the math storytimes as designed?

Math Storytime Program Series

1. To what extent do volunteers implement the math storytimes as designed?
2. To what extent do participating children demonstrate basic math skills (counting, sorting, matching) during:
   a. math storytime sessions, and
   b. at home?

CARLSBAD CITY LIBRARY

Andrea Hilliard

Madelyn Horton

Ashleigh Hvinden

Maile McKeon

Carlsbad City Library - Exploration HUB

We wanted to know how and if patrons were changed somehow by time spent in the Carlsbad City Library's technology lab, the Exploration HUB.

How do we tell the story of the Exploration HUB?

Are people enjoying the classes and making new friends?

Is the HUB helping people build job skills?

What types of data should be collecting?

What does success look like for the HUB?

Original definition of success: Class attendees would have enhanced skills and creativity, improved positivity toward technology, a sense of accomplishment, and the likelihood of coming back to the Exploration HUB.

Carlsbad City Library – Evaluation Questions

We attempted to write evaluation questions using our definition of success.

1. To what extent do participants demonstrate a positive attitude toward technology?
2. In what ways do participants feel they are part of a creative community?

We realized that "positive attitude" assumed they would have a positive attitude when other types of attitudes were equally possible.

We realized that capturing data about the ways participants felt part of a creative community would be difficult to determine and measure.

Carlsbad City Library – Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent do participating patrons develop Silhouette Cameo-related skills and knowledge?

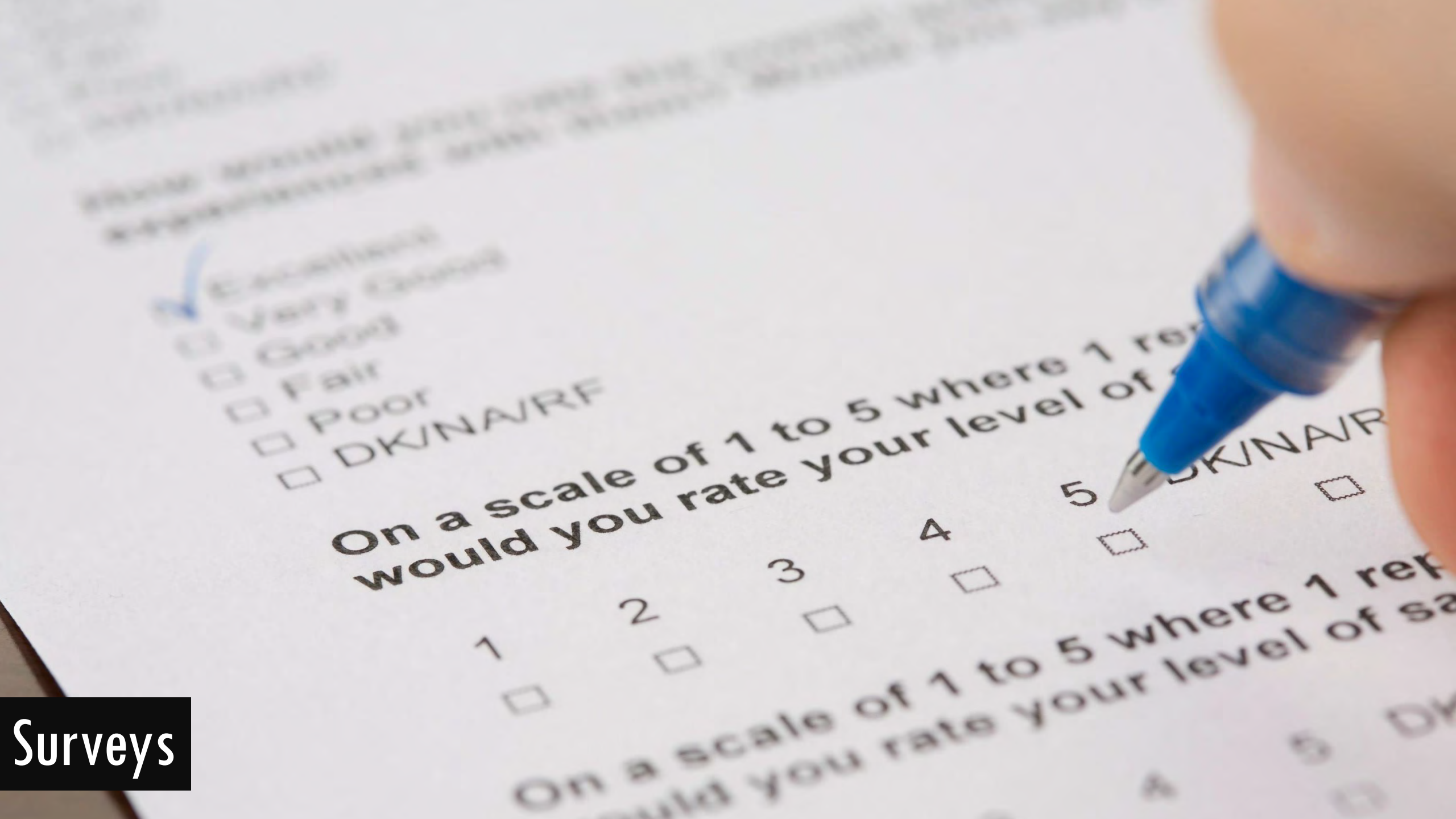
2. To what extent do participants' attitudes toward technology change?

3. In what ways do participants feel they engaged in a creative experience after attending a Silhouette Cameo class?

New definition of success: Exploration HUB class participants will develop Silhouette Cameo-related skills and knowledge, their attitudes toward technology will change, and they will feel they are part of a creative community.

Data Collection Methods

Data Collection Methods


Excellent
Very Good
Good
Fair
Poor
DK/NA/RF
On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1
would you rate your level of
1
2
3
4
5
DK/NA/R
On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 rep
would you rate your level of sa

Surveys

Interviews

Focus Groups

Observations

Poll

Data Collection Methods

	Surveys	Interviews	Focus Groups	Observations
Type of information collected	Self-reported; attitudes, perceptions, opinions, factual information; answer questions of what, how often, to what extent	Self-reported, unique experiences, answer questions of how and why	Self-reported, group perceptions and varied perspectives, answer questions of how and why	Behaviors, characteristics of physical environment (bypass self-reporting)

Math Storytime Evaluation - Methods Grid

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Methods			
	Observation of volunteers during a sample of math storytime sessions	Interviews of Volunteers	Observation of children during a sample of math storytime sessions	Survey of children's parents and caregivers
To what extent do volunteers implement the math storytimes as designed?	X	X		

Math Storytime Evaluation - Methods Grid

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Methods			
	Observation of volunteers during a sample of math storytime sessions	Interviews of Volunteers	Observation of children during a sample of math storytime sessions	Survey of children's parents and caregivers
To what extent do volunteers implement the math storytimes as designed?	X	X		
To what extent do participating children demonstrate basic math skills (counting, sorting, matching) a. during math storytime sessions, and b. at home?			X	X

Evaluation Questions	Findings			
	Observation of volunteers during a sample of math storytime sessions	Interviews of Volunteers	Observation of children during a sample of math storytime sessions	Survey of children's parents and caregivers
To what extent do volunteers implement the math storytimes as designed?	Volunteers successfully implemented reading and singing activities but struggled to implement math activities.			

Evaluation Questions	Findings			
	Observation of volunteers during a sample of math storytime sessions	Interviews of Volunteers	Observation of children during a sample of math storytime sessions	Survey of children's parents and caregivers
To what extent do volunteers implement the math storytimes as designed?	Volunteers successfully implemented reading and singing activities but struggled to implement math activities.	Volunteers felt uncomfortable with the math activities and didn't understand how to implement them.		

Evaluation Questions	Findings			
	Observation of volunteers during a sample of math storytime sessions	Interviews of Volunteers	Observation of children during a sample of math storytime sessions	Survey of children's parents and caregivers
To what extent do volunteers implement the math storytimes as designed?	Volunteers successfully implemented reading and singing activities but struggled to implement math activities.	Volunteers felt uncomfortable with the math activities and didn't understand how to implement them.		
To what extent do participating children demonstrate basic math skills (counting, sorting, matching) a. during math storytime sessions, and b. at home?			Children demonstrated math skills during storytime sessions where volunteers effectively implemented math content.	

Evaluation Questions	Findings			
	Observation of volunteers during a sample of math storytime sessions	Interviews of Volunteers	Observation of children during a sample of math storytime sessions	Survey of children's parents and caregivers
To what extent do volunteers implement the math storytimes as designed?	Volunteers successfully implemented reading and singing activities but struggled to implement math activities.	Volunteers felt uncomfortable with the math activities and didn't understand how to implement them.		
To what extent do participating children demonstrate basic math skills (counting, sorting, matching) a. during math storytime sessions, and b. at home?			Children demonstrated math skills during storytime sessions where volunteers effectively implemented math content.	Few parents reported that their children demonstrated math skills at home.

YOLO COUNTY LIBRARY

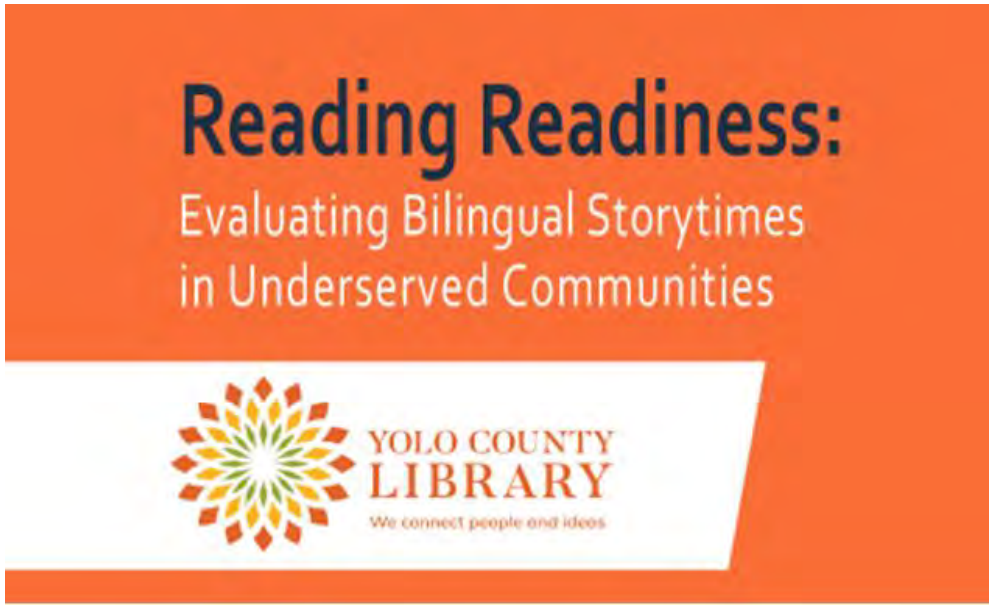
Malinda Baker

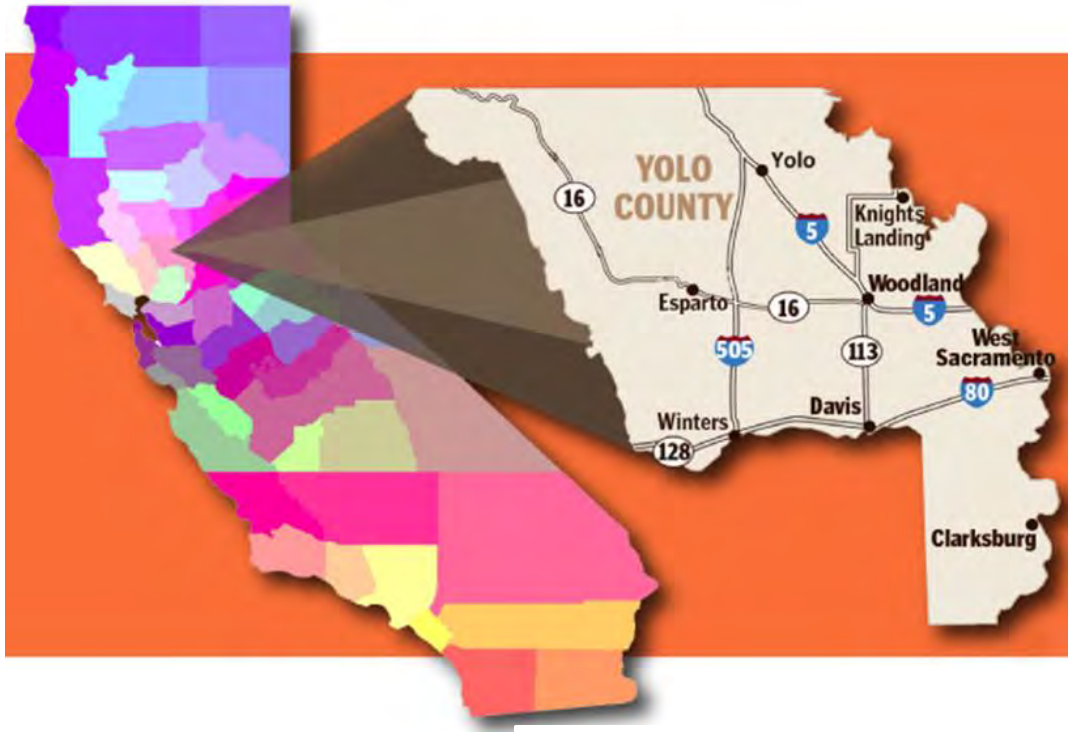
Elizabeth Gray

Sharon Tani

Hualing Wan

Advantages of Using Multiple Data Collection Methods





Methods Used to Answer Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Methods	
	Method 1: Observation of Storytime Program	Method 2: Focus Group with Participating Parents & Caregivers
To what extent are we preparing participating children for success in reading?	X	X
To what extent are we effectively helping parents/ caregivers support reading skills at home?		X
In what ways are children demonstrating engagement with reading at home?		X

PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS USED SURVEYS AS A DATA COLLECTION TOOL.

IN THIS EVALUATION, WE USED OBSERVATIONS AND FOCUS GROUPS.

Why we chose Observation and Focus Group data collection methods:

- This program had already been evaluated using Surveys as the data collection method and we wanted to know more about the participant's experience.
- The Interview method didn't fit the context of our program.
- Observation provided a means to observe the activities of participants and avoid self-reporting. It also allowed us to gather data on what elements of the program were consistently used and conversely what elements were not consistent.
- Focus group was the method that fit the style of our program – it carried forward the "family style" of the storytime and encouraged participants to share ideas that may not have come out in a survey or an interview.

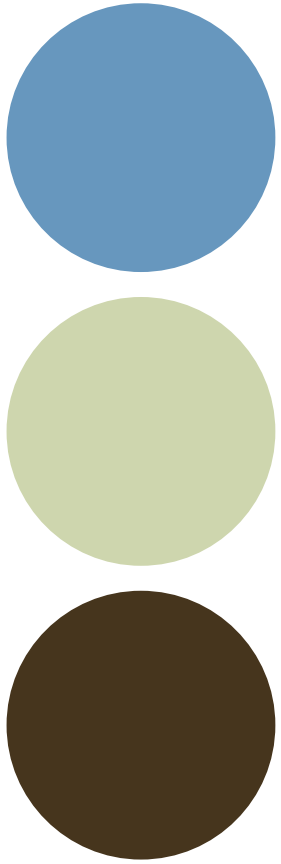
Lessons Learned

- **Observations work well for program improvement**. Although that wasn't our stated goal, we found that, in practice, observation provided a lot of data that guided us toward program improvement. We can imagine using Observations to help us improve the quality and consistency of programs like Bilingual Storytimes. If we could do it again, we would adjust our Observation form to provide more room for comments – and, in this way, gather more information on Storytime interactions.

- **Focus Groups are helpful to hear direct feedback from participants.** We were pleased that people were willing to participate and once we got going, the process went smoothly and easily. We recommend setting aside time to hold a practice session or two. We included give-aways and different techniques to engage participants (large sticky notes for the facilitator, pictures of Early literacy activities, check-in emojis, etc).

- **Thinking it through.** We learned that the process of using two Methods of Data Collection encouraged us to think through every step: Developing questions, notifying the participants, collecting data, reviewing data, and reporting back to the community.

Types of actions



Improvement of library programs and services

Accountability and oversight

Funding and advocacy

SACRAMENTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Katie Ball

Kelly Clark

Lisa Dale

Christie Hamm

Key Results

1. Addition of programming changed experience from passive to active and engaging.
2. Increase in both attendance and material borrowing during mobile visits with STEM programming
3. Staff wasn't consistent in promotion of STEM materials to participants. When promoted, materials checked out.

Evaluation Results ⟶ Action #1

Result: Addition of programming changed experience from passive to active and engaging.

- Children stayed longer at site
- Children engaged more with library staff and each other
- Children enjoyed programming and wanted more

➢ **Action:**

- Mobile Services will build in time for programming at stops whenever possible.
- Mobile Services will use lessons learned when scheduling both stops and staffing.
- Staff seeking training in crowd control

Evaluation Results ⟶ Action #2

Result: Increase in both attendance and material borrowing during mobile visits with STEM programming

- 33% increase in attendance
- 67% increase in STEM item borrowing

➢ **Action:**

- Data is being used to demonstrate need for additional resources to implement programming
- Funding allocated to bolster collection to support programming

Evaluation Results ⟶ Action #3

Result: Staff wasn't consistent in promotion of STEM materials to participants. When promoted, materials checked out.

- **Action:**
  - Mobile Services staff equipped with information about connection between activity and materials for lending.
  - Ensure adequate selection of materials at future visits.
  - Program participants encouraged to borrow related materials.

What's Next @ SPL?

Summer 2021

California State Library, Shared Vision/Bringing the Library to You

Out-of-School Time Grant Evaluation

- 30 Teens
- 6 week virtual program

➢ Data Capture
  - Surveys
  - Observation

How can I learn more?

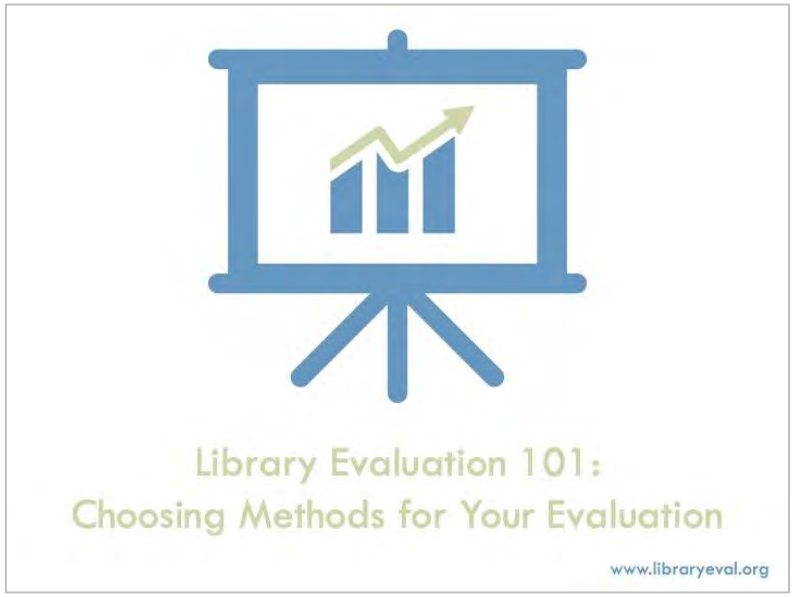
FREE EVALUATION RESOURCES

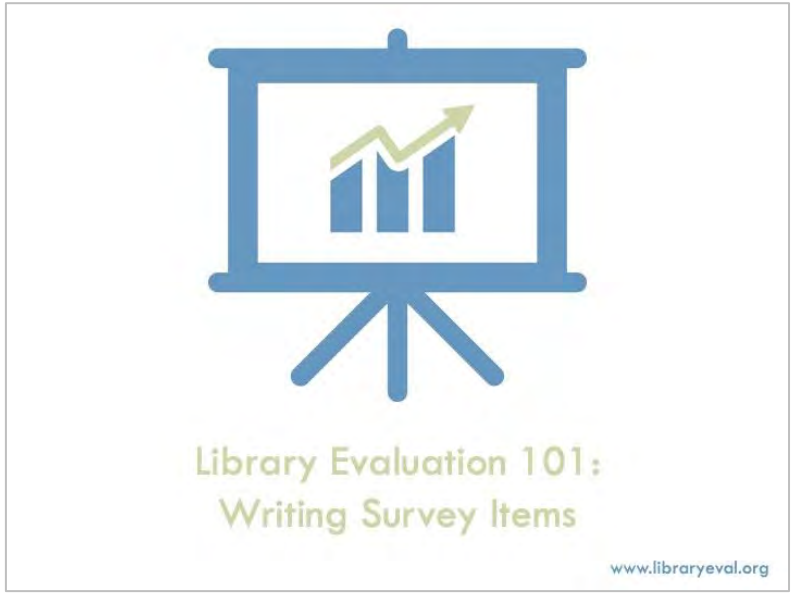
Embedding Evaluation Videos

16 videos (and counting!) on topics including:

- Patron Privacy
- Data Collection Methods – Surveys, Interviews, Focus Groups, Observation
- Data Analysis
- Data Visualization

https://www.libraryeval.org/library-evaluation-101/





Infopeople

RIPL
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

infopeople.org

ripleffect.org

project | OUTCOME
MEASURING THE TRUE
IMPACT OF LIBRARIES

projectoutcome.org

Questions?

Thank You!

www.libraryeval.org
info@libraryeval.org