EMBEDDING Evaluation

WRAP-UP INSTITUTE WORKBOOK

Colorado Cohort 2021-2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Colorado Embedding Evaluation Projects

Project:

Library:

Questions about the team's evaluation process or findings:

Other thoughts (recommendations or next steps for the evaluation, etc.):

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Questions about the team's evaluation process or findings:

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Other thoughts (recommendations or next steps for the evaluation, etc.):

Notes and reflections...

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Planning Evaluation

1. Define program/service
2. Analyze context
3. Clarify program theory
4. Develop questions
5. Design study

Conducting Evaluation

6. Collect data
7. Analyze data
8. Identify findings

Using Evaluation Results

9. Report results
10. Take action
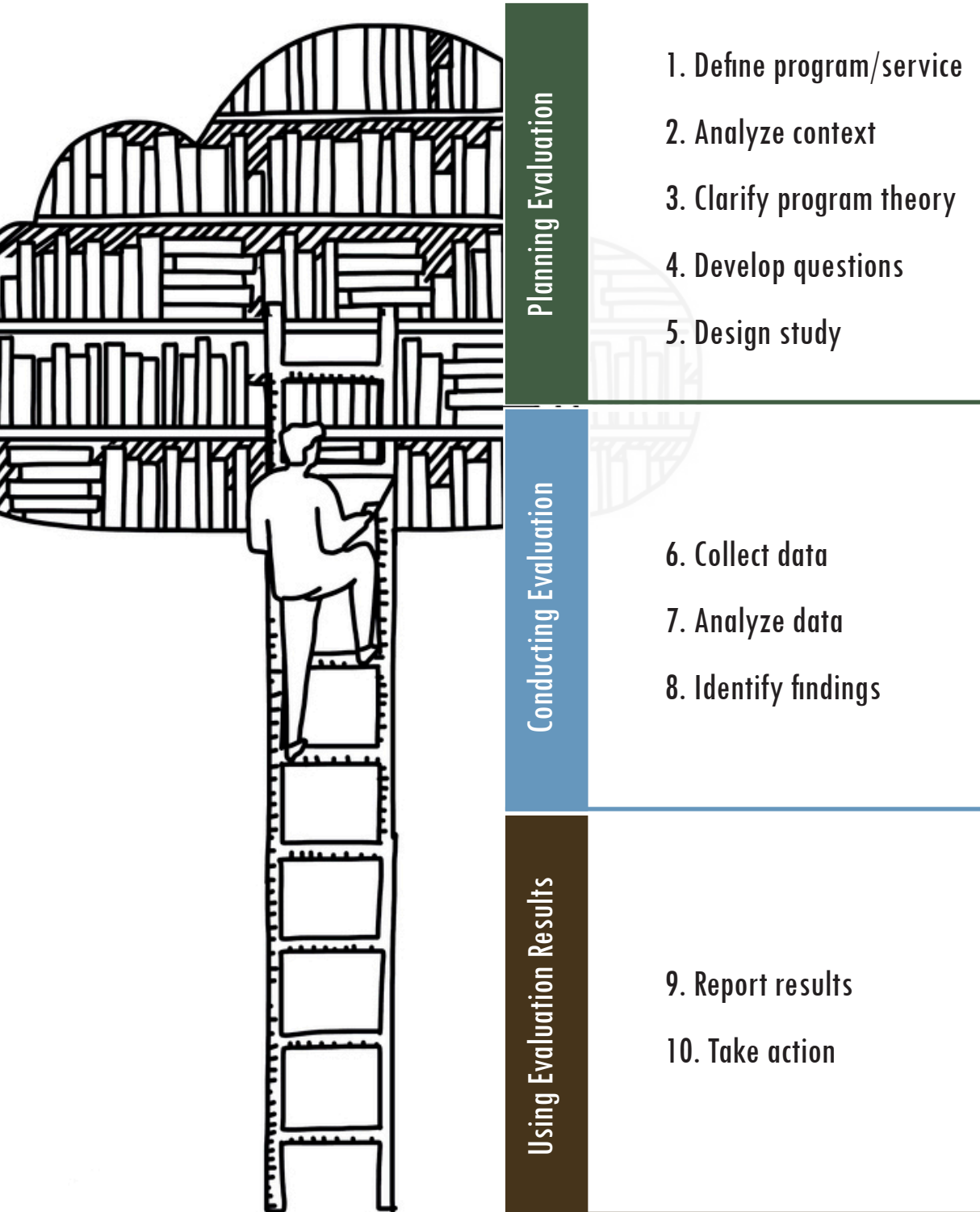
At the Kickoff Institute, you used the charts on the following pages to work through steps 1-5 of the evaluation process for the Emerson Community Library case study (described on pp. 18-20) and your evaluation project. We covered steps 7 and 8 during our coaching calls, and you will work through steps 9-10 at the Wrap-Up Institute.

Step 1:
Define the program/service

Emerson Community Library	Your Library

What is the program/service?

☐ What parts of the program/service are you going to evaluate?

☐ What portion of the population will be included in the evaluation?

What are the goals of the program/ service?

☐ What are the priorities or aims of the program or service?

How is the program/service positioned in the library?

☐ What is the history of the program/service?

☐ How is it funded? Is the funding stable?

☐ Who are the key players in terms of staff and volunteers?

☐ What are the attitudes of the key players toward the program/service?

Step 2: Analyze context

What is the purpose(s) and desired use(s) of the evaluation?

☐ Accountability and oversight requirements

☐ Program improvements

☐ Advocacy

Who are the stakeholders? What is their "stake"?

☐ Who are the program stakeholders? What is their "stake"?

☐ Who are the evaluation stakeholders? What is their "stake"?

Evaluator(s)

Primary users of findings

Program/service participants and staff

Audiences for reporting

What is the political context?

☐ Who will be concerned about the evaluation?

☐ Who might benefit from positive or negative findings?

Emerson Community Library	Your Library

Step 3:
Clarify program theory

What research/evaluation has already been conducted about the topics

Emerson Community Library

Your Library

Ideas about how the program works

☐ Ideas about how and why a program or service will work to accomplish its goals

What are the components of the logic model?

Step 4:
Develop questions

What does success look like for this program/service?

☐ Outcomes-related definitions of success are rarely sufficient (by themselves)

☐ Consider a multi-faceted picture of success

What are the evaluation questions?

☐ Overarching guiding questions that the evaluation seeks to answer

Emerson Community Library

Your Library

Step 5:
Design study

What is your plan for conducting the evaluation (steps 6-8)?

What is your plan for using the evaluation results (steps 9-10)?

Emerson Community Library	Your Library

Step 6: Collect data

What data collection methods will you use to answer the evaluation questions?

☐ Types of data needed to answer your evaluation questions

☐ Strengths and limitations of methods

☐ Organizational resources and expertise

What steps will you take to collect relevant, credible data?

☐ Are your methods sufficient for yielding relevant, credible data?

☐ How will you define your samples?

☐ Who will collect the data?

Emerson Community Library	Your Library

Step 7:
Analyze data

How will you analyze the data?

Emerson Community Library

Your Library

Step 8:
Identify Findings

What are your steps to integrate and interpret the findings and draw conclusions?

Step 9:
Report results

What are your strategies for reporting findings to various audiences?

☐ Who are your stakeholders? (Identified in step 2)

☐ What messages will resonate with each stakeholder?

☐ How should the messages be delivered?

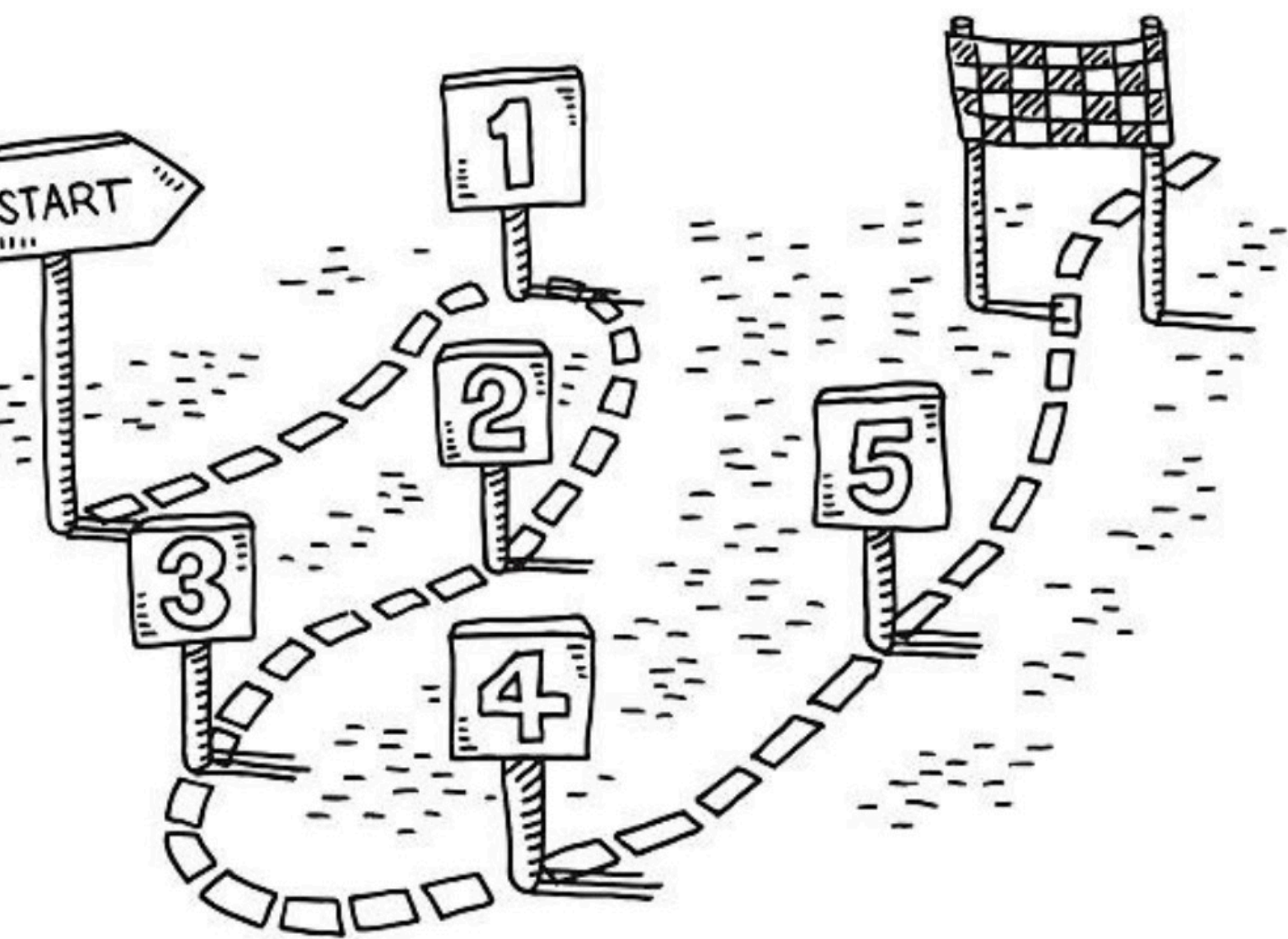☐ What recommendations will you make to each stakeholder?

Emerson Community Library	Your Library

# Step 10:
Take Action

How will you use your findings?

☐ Revisit the purpose of the evaluation, established in step 2, and use this to determine how you will use the findings (e.g., program improvement, decision-making, advocacy, etc.).

START

1

2

3

4

5

Case Study Overview: Emerson Community Library

Library and Community Overview

- ☐ Emerson Community Library (ECL) is a county library with a legal service area population of 110,000.

- ☐ ECL has three outlets and serves multiple communities across the county, which vary in levels of income and library use.

- ☐ Community concerns include STEM education, particularly elementary school math performance.

- ☐ Low-income families, such as those served by Head Start, are a population the library has historically underserved.

- ☐ There are 20 Head Start centers in the county which serve children ages birth to five.
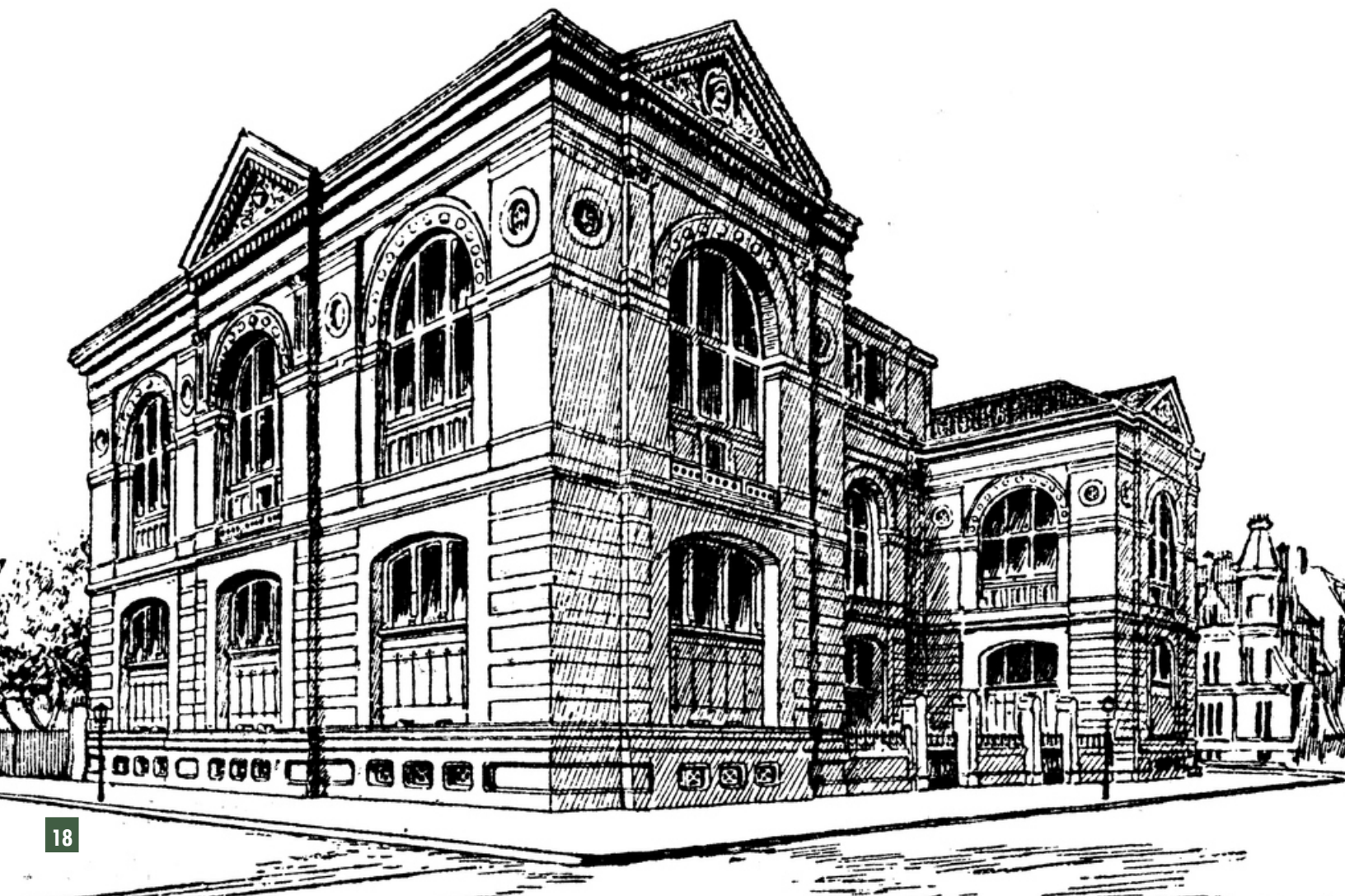
Program

ECL offers a variety of STEM storytimes both in and outside of the library to various age groups, including an outreach program that brings a math-focused 8-session storytime series to the Head Start centers across their county: Infusing Math into Preschool Services. This program was launched a year ago and is funded by operating funds and a starter grant from a local corporate foundation. The starter grant provides 18 months of funding.

Location

The "Infusing Math into Preschool Services" storytime series is offered at ten Head Start centers that are located in the three communities with the lowest levels of library use within the county. The main library is located about 20 miles from these communities.

Key Staff/Volunteers

The children's librarian at the main library is in charge of the "Infusing Math into Preschool Services" storytime series. She developed and tested the content, and recruited, trained, and supervises a team of five volunteers.

The five volunteers are based in the main library and work in pairs to deliver the math storytime series at the Head Start centers.

The evaluation team consists of the children's librarian and the assistant library director.

Program Goals

The program is based on the idea that early engagement with math concepts and activities lays the groundwork for success in elementary school math. Its overarching aim is to support a school district initiative focused on boosting elementary school math performance.

The primary goal is to engage 3 to 5-year-olds in math concepts and activities. A secondary goal is to help Head Start teachers understand the importance of early math engagement, learn how they can support early math engagement with math concepts and activities, and incorporate math concepts and activities in their work.

Case Study Overview: Emerson Community Library

Staff and volunteer attitudes

library director

Eager to support a school district initiative focused on boosting elementary school math performance.

assistant library director

Concerned STEM is a trendy topic rather than the core mission of library youth services.

children's librarian

Excited to integrate reading and STEM, and serve Head Start centers.

teen librarian

Disappointed operating funds weren't allocated to making-related teen programming in the same three focal communities.

volunteers

Love the library and are eager to give back.

Some don't like math.

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Methods			
	Observation of volunteers during a sample of math storytime sessions	Interviews with volunteers	Observation of children during a sample of math storytime sessions	Survey of children's parents and caregivers
To what extent do volunteers implement math storytimes as designed?	X	X		
In what ways do participating children demonstrate engagement and interest in math storytime sessions?			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

STEP 8: IDENTIFY FINDINGS

The evaluation team reviews all of their findings and integrates them to reach their evaluation conclusions. Discuss how you would interpret their findings to answer the evaluation questions. Then compare your conclusions with the team's.

Finding #1

All volunteers successfully implement reading and singing activities during storytimes.

Finding #2

Most volunteers struggle to implement math activities, resulting in gaps in math content.

Finding #3

Two specific lesson plans are particularly difficult for volunteers to implement.

Finding #4

Most children demonstrate high levels of engagement and interest during most storytime sessions.

Finding #5

Some children demonstrate basic math skills during some storytime sessions, typically during those sessions when volunteers most effectively implement math content.

Finding #6

Few parents report that children demonstrate basic math skills at home.

Conclusion #1:
To what extent do volunteers implement the math storytimes as designed?

The evaluation found that math storytimes were implemented as designed to a moderate extent. All volunteers were highly successful in implementing the reading and singing components of the math storytimes. However, most volunteers struggled to implement the math activities and, as a result, those activities were rarely implemented as designed. In addition, there is evidence that the math activities in two of the eight lessons plans were particularly difficult for volunteers to implement and need to be revised.

Conclusion #2:
In what ways do participating children demonstrate engagement and interest in math storytime sessions?

Evaluation data indicate that most children who participated in math storytimes directed their attention to the presenters and materials throughout the majority of the storytime sessions. They responded appropriately and enthusiastically to the presenters' instructions and questions and eagerly participated in songs and hands-on activities. Children also demonstrated interest and engagement by repeating the presenters' words and phrases, pointing to materials, laughing, clapping their hands, and positioning themselves close to the presenters and activities. Overall, these data indicate high levels of engagement among participating children.

Conclusion #3:
To what extent do participating children demonstrate basic math skills (a) during math storytime sessions and (b) at home?

There is evidence that some children demonstrated counting, sorting, and matching skills during some storytime sessions. These behaviors occurred during sessions in which volunteers implemented the math activities as designed. This suggests that improving the delivery of the math activities may contribute to an increase in the extent to which children demonstrate basic math skills during storytime sessions.

The evaluation found little evidence that children demonstrated the basic math skills introduced during the math storytime sessions at home. This is consistent with the understanding that basic math skills would first need to be practiced during storytime sessions before children would demonstrate them at home.

STEP 9
ECL: Report findings to stakeholders

The evaluation team meets to strategize about reporting findings to stakeholders. Work with your group to develop strategies to communicate findings to the following ECL stakeholders: Foundation, Board, Library Staff, and Volunteers. What findings will you emphasize? What format will you use to present them?

Foundation

Board

Library Staff

Volunteers

STEP 10

ECL: Take action

The evaluation team meets to determine how they can use the results. How can ECL use the results for program improvement and decision-making?

Program Improvement

Decision-Making

Your library: Identify stakeholders and report findings to them

Work with your group to identify key stakeholders and develop strategies to commuinicate findings to them. What findings will you emphasize? What formats will you use to present them?

Stakeholder #1: _____

Stakeholder #2: _____

Stakeholder #3: _____

Stakeholder #4: _____

Data visualization sketches

Use the space below to skech out some data visualization ideas for the findings you identified on the previous page.

Your library: Take action

How can your team use the results for program improvement and decision-making?
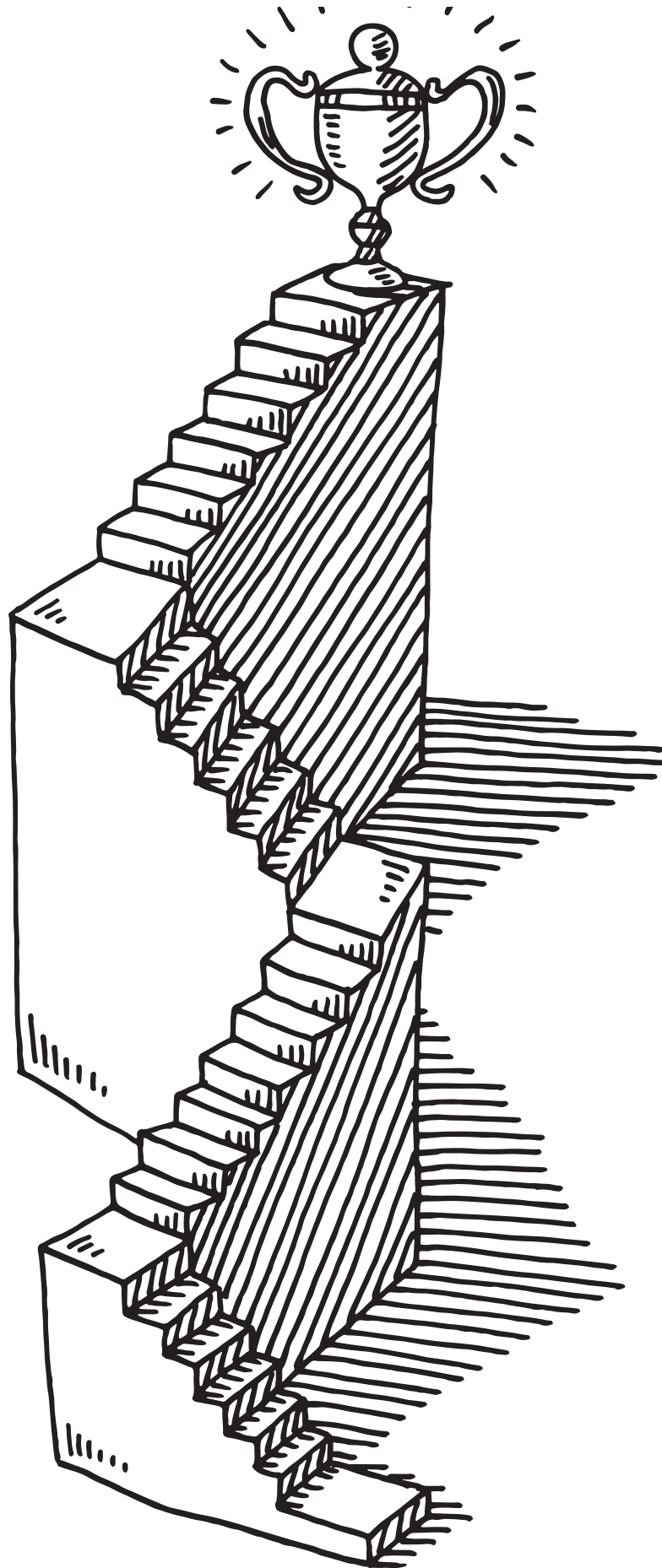
Program Improvement

Decision-Making

Notes and reflections...

IDENTIFYING NEXT STEPS

What are your information needs?

What are your evaluation resources?

What are your top priorities?

What are your information needs?

Key Considerations:
List the programs and services you have questions about.

Identify the purpose evaluation would serve and its desired use (see Step 2 of the evaluation process).

Determine the depth of information needed.

What are your evaluation resources?

Key Considerations:

Time

Money

Staff abilities

Capacity to train additional staff

Access to outside assistance

Goodwill and buy-in

What are your top priorities?

5 approaches to establishing evaluation priorities:

1. Begin with the easiest and progress to more challenging

2. Begin with the most urgent or time sensitive

3. Sequence projects as learning opportunities to build skills

4. Sequence projects to cultivate buy-in

5. Sequence projects based on timing of the programs or services being evaluated

DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION NEEDED
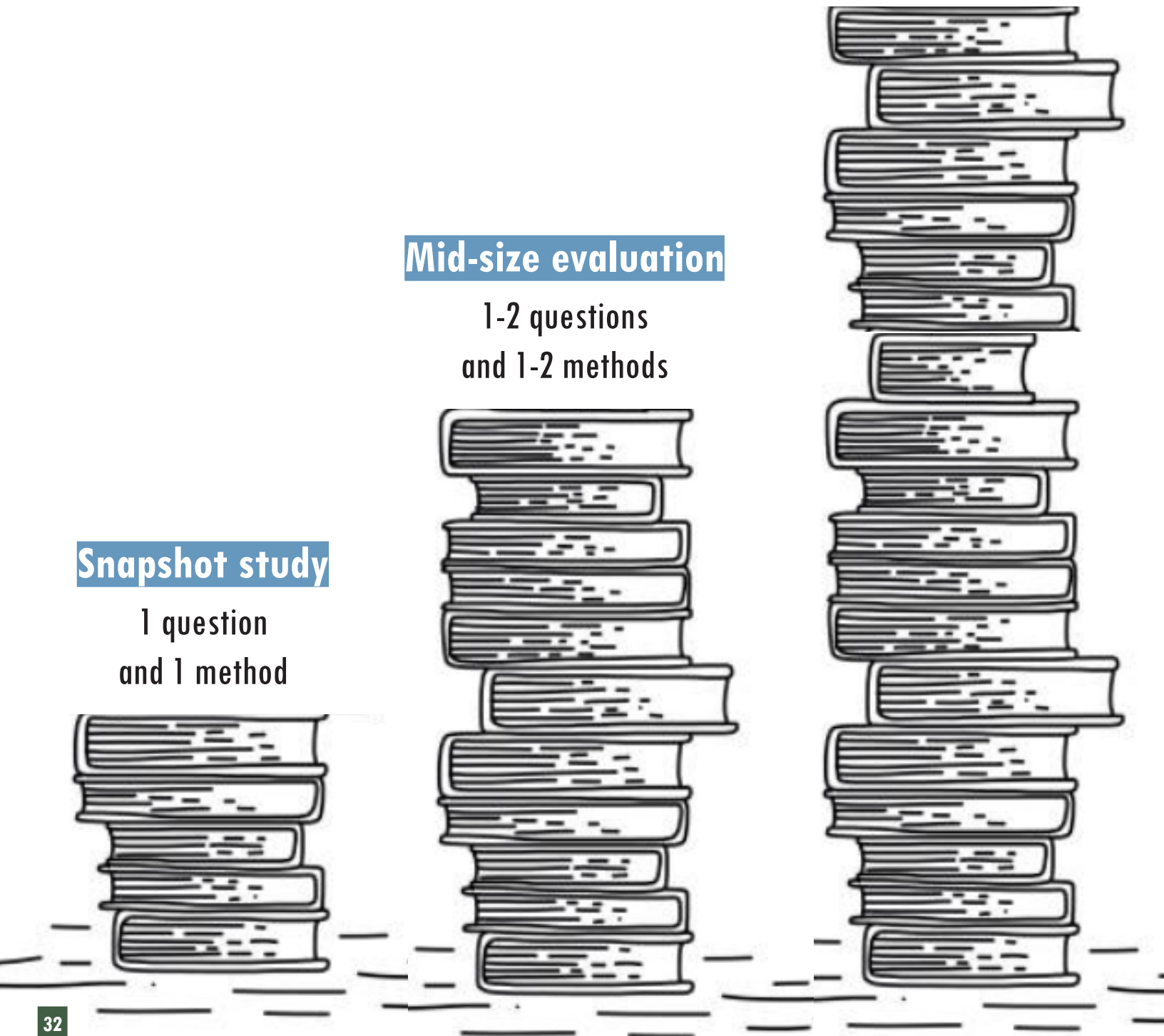
Full evaluation

2-3 questions
and 2-3 methods

Mid-size evaluation

1-2 questions
and 1-2 methods

Snapshot study

1 question
and 1 method

YOUR LIBRARY: IDENTIFYING NEXT STEPS
Activity 1

What are your information needs?		
List the programs and services you have questions about	For each, identify the purpose evaluation would serve and its desired use • Accountability and oversight requirements • Program improvement • Advocacy	For each, determine the depth of information needed • Snapshot: 1 question, 1 method • Mid-size evaluation: 1-2 questions, 1-2 methods • Full evaluation: 2-3 evaluation questions and 2-3 methods

What are your evaluation resources?

Time

Money

Staff abilities

Capacity to train additional staff

Access to help outside assistance

Goodwill and buy-in

What are your top priorities? Which strategy will you use to establish your priorities?

1. Begin with easiest and progress to more challenging

2. Begin with the most urgent or time sensitive

3. Sequence projects as learning opportunities to build skills

4. Sequence projects to cultivate buy-in

5. Sequence projects based on timing of programming/services being evaluated

IDENTIFYING NEXT STEPS

What is your evaluation strategy?

Components:

- ☑ Describe your next 1-2 projects
- ☑ Explain the rationale for your priorities
- ☑ Specify the resources required
- ☑ Outline your timeline
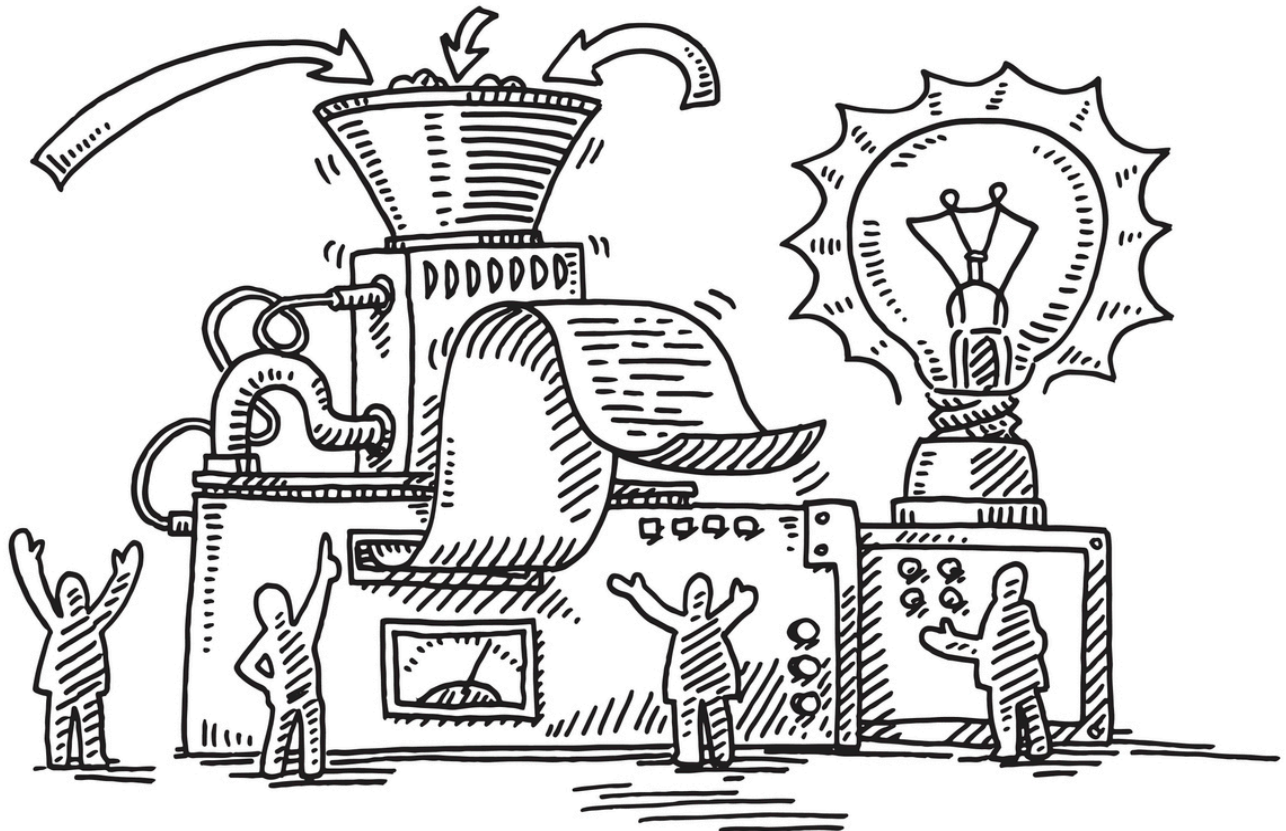
YOUR LIBRARY: IDENTIFY NEXT STEPS

Activity 2: Outline your evaluation strategy

Next 1-2 projects

1. Describe the program(s) to be evaluated 2. Identify the evaluation purpose(s) and desired use(s) 3. Outline the depth of the evaluation(s)	

Rationale

1. Explain why you are prioritizing these 1-2 projects 2. Describe subsequent steps for your evaluation priorities	

Resources required for these 1-2 projects

1. Name the core evaluation team

2. Specify the source of any needed funding

3. Identify staff with needed skills or staff who can be trained

4. Identify evaluation champions who can help you

5. Describe how you will draw on the EE resources and cohort

6. Identify other learning resources as needed

Timeline

1. Outline timeline for these 1-2 projects

2. Specify timeline for revisiting your evaluation strategy

NEXT STEPS FOR LIBRARY COMMUNITY

☑ Staying connected with the Colorado cohort

☑ Connecting with the North and South Carolina cohort

☑ CAL presentation

☑ Other conference presentations

☑ Embedding Evaluation project profile

REFLECTION

What are 2-3 ways your Embedding Evaluation experience will impact your work?

After participating in Embedding Evaluation, how has your view of evaluation changed?