Issue: October 2012

Southeast Evaluation Association Newsletter

SEA's Annual Workshop is Coming in January 2013!

We are so excited to kick off 2013 with SEA's Annual Workshop! Although we do not have the specific dates yet (but will once the Florida Legislature releases its committee schedule), we will convene in January. We are excited to welcome Tom Chapel from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, as our Pre-Workshop Keynote Speaker. He will give a half-day presentation on Logic Modeling, then the remainder of the day and a half long-conference will include presentations from your colleagues in the field, a speed roundtable experience on specific challenges facing evaluators, and opportunities to network. Please see below for SEA's "Call for Proposals", and check SEA's website for up-to-date information. We hope to see you soon!

SEA's Annual Workshop CALL FOR PROPOSALS

We are seeking speakers on a broad array of areas including:

- Public Administration and Management
- Health Services
- Criminal Justice/Juvenile Justice
- Social Services
- Education (Early Education, K-20, Lifelong Learning)

Proposals on other topics are also welcome.

Proposal Requirements

- Title
- An abstract describing your work (150 words maximum)
- Time needed for your presentation (15 minutes or 30 minutes)
- Name of contact person, affiliation, email address, and daytime phone number
- Names and email addresses of all presenters

Please submit your proposal via email to Jennifer Johnson and Kathy McGuire, SEA Workshop Chairs, and Bernadette Howard, SEA Coordinator, with "SEA Workshop Proposal" in the subject line no later than 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 29th.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email Bernadette Howard.

Please join us and participate in a panel - submit your proposal today!

Upcoming Programs

November 8: GIS Webinar with Dr. Catherine Batsche and Dr . Steve Reader, University of South Florida

December TBA: Holiday Social

Inside this issue

Who Knew?
Learning More About Each Other

By Dawn Coleman, SEA member

The Center for Applied Research (CFAR) is a research and evaluation team in Charlotte, North Carolina. Housed at Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC), we are the first self-sustaining research center in the nation to be affiliated with a community college, rather than a university. CFAR was founded to provide affordable research, assessment, and evaluation services to educational and community-based organizations in the region and around the nation. CFAR functions as part of the CPCC Services Corporation, which serves as the entrepreneurial arm of the college. Although CFAR is small (only two full-time and one half-time staff), we are able to benefit from the expertise of other college staff members, particularly those in the college's Department of Planning and Research and the Department of Institutional Effectiveness who are also available to work on CFAR projects.

Because we are associated with a community college, much of our work is focused generally on higher education and specifically on the particular issues faced by community colleges. Project work has ranged from straightforward data collection and analysis (such as conducting the graduate and employment survey for UNC Charlotte) to evaluating multi-year grant programs, including grants from the National Science Foundation and the Department of Education (including multiple Title III grants). Additionally, CFAR has become a leader in improving institutional research and effectiveness at community colleges, offering the Annual Institute on Best Practices in Institutional Effectiveness each summer. At the institute, participants from all over the country learn how to effectively develop institutional effectiveness teams and are povided with the tools they need to go back to their institutions and implement strategies that will allow them to better use data to inform decision making.

In addition to working with institutions of higher education, CFAR has also worked with the Chamber of Commerce (mainly to gather information about major employers in the area but also on smaller data gathering projects including one to promote the development of the Biotechnology industry in the region), the Charlotte Housing Authority (various needs assessments of public housing residents), and a plethora of community based organizations across the southeast and beyond, including the Mental Health Association of the Carolinas, the Arts and Sciences Council, and several at-risk youth organizations receiving federal grant funding.

Project work at CFAR never gets boring because both the clients and the scale of the projects is so varied – and is constantly changing. At any given moment we might be evaluating several multi-year federal grants, implementing a few relatively straightforward survey and data analysis projects, helping an organization write a grant proposal, consulting with a college to help them with institutional effectiveness issues, and tracking student record data to help a privately funded initiative improve developmental education outcomes.

THE CENTER FOR
APPLIED RESEARCH

Claremont Graduate University Professional Development Series: A Day-Long Webinar on Grant Writing

By Sean Little, SEA Newsletter Editor

Each August, Claremont Graduate University (CGU) hosts a series of one-day workshops/webinars as part of its professional development program. These workshops/webinars have two levels: a live face-to-face workshop and an on-line webinar with virtual participation. The price, $90, does not differ between workshops and webinars.

In order to improve my grant writing skills, I chose to take the webinar on grant writing, given by Dr. Allen Omoto from the sixteen workshops/webinars taught by evaluation luminaries such as Michael Scriven, Stuart Donaldson, and Huey Chen. These workshops/Webinars provide a great opportunity to develop professionally for the following reasons: the relatively inexpensive cost, the high quality instructors, the prestige of Claremont Graduate University, and the ability to participate without having to pay travel costs. Despite some issues, this workshop provided an excellent overview of grant writing and was well worth the cost.

While people judge books primarily on content, no consensus currently exists for other criteria with which to judge webinars, but two others would seem to be important: technology, and interactivity.

Webinar technology

Webinar designers have to design webinars to function on multiple "incarnations" of software/hardware and with levels of computer literacy and different monitor color display preferences (sender issues). While the technology of book production dates back centuries, that of webinars only dates back decades. Today people need minimal technology (lighting, reading glasses, audio tapes, libraries and bookstores) to access a published book, but they need an Internet connection and competent equipment to access a webinar (receiver issues).

Sender Issues. The CGU Webinar used software designed for on-line corporate meetings. This software displayed several windows. One window displayed the PowerPoint slide show. Another window carried the live proceedings of the class. While that window focused on Dr. Omoto, it was possible to see the Power Point slides in the background as the live class was seeing them. Dr. Omoto's lecture was audio-broadcast. Participants used a third window to enter their questions.

Receiver Issues. My ten year old computer with MS Office XP needed to be replaced "yesterday". When I signed up for this webinar, I was worried that my equipment would be too old and out of

Continued on page 4...

The President’s Message

by Fred Seamon, Ph.D.

As we gradually approach the end of 2012 and welcome 2013 in a few months, it is a pleasure to bring this message and highlight several exciting and noteworthy developments which have occurred since our last SEA Newsletter. This year our “mantra” has been re-birth, regeneration, and new growth while serving as a benefit and resource for evaluation practitioners, consumers and end users.

To achieve our goal of expanding SEA`s reach and impact by growing membership and offering high quality professional development opportunities that attract diverse audiences we have used our collective creative energy over the past few months to increase our visibility and reach. For example, we have completely revamped our website and you can now “friend” SEA on Facebook. We have planned an attractive menu of offerings that should be of interest to evaluation practitioners, consumers and end users. In January 2013, we will host a dynamic SEA Conference that is destined to become one of the best conferences SEA has ever hosted. We are also reaching out to students in a much different way in order to increase student participation in SEA programs and activities. All of what we have done so far, and will be doing over the next year, is designed to add value to your SEA membership and your participation in SEA programs and activities. Our goal is to make membership in SEA a high quality experience at a reasonable cost.

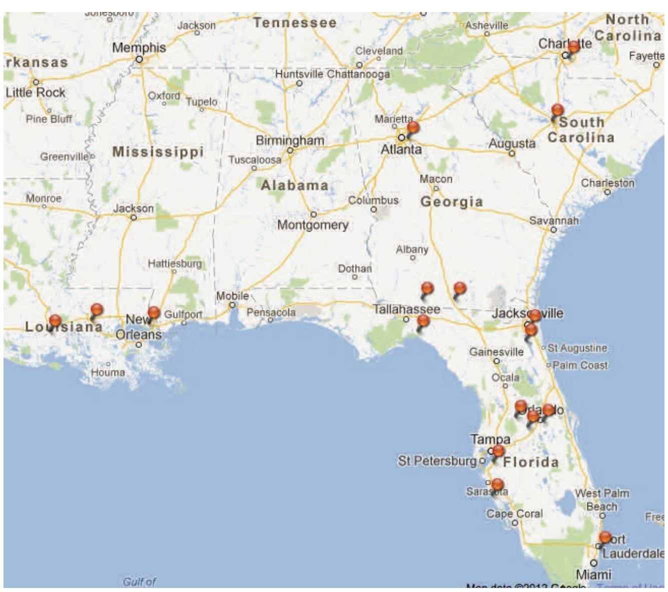
What SEA has accomplished in recent months has been made possible by an outstanding and supportive SEA Board and equally outstanding Sector Representatives. I want to personally thank Ms. Kelly Kilker, Dr. Barbara Gill, Ms. Kathy McGuire, Dr. Kellie O`Dare, Dr. Darlene Heinrich, Ms. Jennifer Johnson, Dr. Linda Schrader, Dr. Steve Lize, Ms. Sheena Horton, Ms. Saralyn Grass and Ms. Pat Holliday for their creative energy and tireless efforts on behalf of SEA. A special thanks is extended to Ms. Bernadette Howard who continues to be the “glue” that holds SEA together.

In addition, this newsletter would not be possible without the tireless efforts of Sean Little and Dr. Portia Diñoso. Sean is a member of SEA from South Florida who serves as our volunteer Newsletter Editor. He has submitted book reviews with his editorial reviews since 2008. His willingness to collaboratively work on every newsletter since then is inspiring. Portia’s gifts and talents with the layout and production of a newsletter are apparent in this issue, and we greatly appreciate her willingness to volunteer.

To our current members and future members, I encourage you to participate with us in the coming months in our SEA programs and activities and the SEA Conference in January 2013!

SEA Membership Map

(as of October 3, 2012)



We welcome SEA’s Newest Board Member: Saralyn Grass, Ed.D.c.

Saralyn Grass is a Doctoral Candidate in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy at Florida State University pursuing an Ed.D. in Education Policy and

Program Evaluation. Her dissertation is a program evaluation on a student-run organization at FSU that sends students to developing countries to conduct service learning projects designed to meet the needs of the hosting communities. Her professional background includes positions at Florida State University as an instructor and a researcher, and research and management positions at local and statewide non-profits focused on early childcare workforce issues. Mrs. Grass is also a graduate of Virginia Tech, where she received her Master's in Human Development and the University of North Florida, where she received her Bachelor's in Psychology. This is her first year on the SEA Board.

Effective Webinars

By Kathy McGuire, SEA member

Appropriately enough, SEA hosted a webinar on Effective Webinars, presented by Karen Childs (University of South Florida), Dr. Steve Lize (University of South Carolina), and Dr. Linda Smith (Florida State University). The session shared ideas for preparing for and delivering webinars.

To get started, think about the purpose of the session.

- Is it to provide information, facilitate collaboration, conduct a meeting, or provide training?
- Knowing what you want to accomplish will help focus your content.

Design your session to foster participation.

- Ways to do this include polling the audience during the presentation, using the chat feature, taking and responding to questions, and accepting call-in comments and questions.
- If you know your participants, you can share the agenda ahead of time or ask for questions to be sent in advance.

Decide how you will manage your webinar.

- Have a partner to help present, assist with any technical problems that come up, or monitor and respond to chat can make for a smoother and less stressful experience.
- Practice your presentation ahead of time and test the technical aspects of the platform you'll be using.

The day of the webinar.

- Check the audio before starting and try to eliminate background noise.
- Ask participants to mute their phones when they're on the conference call.
- Be prepared to handle things that go wrong:
  - Server down- have rescheduling options ready.
  - Lost phone connection—use chat
  - No visual display—email documents
  - Slides not progressing—ask them to use handouts that you email
  - Slow or no broadband connection- skip parts of the presentation or condense information

After the webinar.

- Follow up with resources and a short evaluation.
- Provide contact information, presentation slides, and any additional materials that were used or referred to during the session.
- Survey participants about whether their goals were met, the content level was appropriate, the technology worked for them, and if they have suggestions for improvement.

Then make your next webinar even better. You can do this!!!

**SEA would like to thank Karen Childs at the University of South Florida for hosting SEA's webinars all year!*

Webinar on Grant Writing

Continued from page 2.

date, but it held up well.

Prior to the workshop, CGU e-mailed the participants all the hand-outs, including the Power-Point sideshow. These hand-outs not only complemented the presentation but also included a list of resources for further study. On the night before the webinar, I was able to go over these hand-outs rather than fumbling with them during the presentation, distracting me from the presentation. With current technology and minimal planning, any teacher or presenter can send pre-registered participants all the hand-outs relevant to the webinar before-hand. Conversely, participants have the responsibility to read the hand-outs prior to the start of the presentation. This should become standard practice for all pre-registered workshops/webinars.

The technology used to transmit the webinar had a minor irritant. The slide visible in the PowerPoint window did not always match the slide visible in the live class window. It frequently lagged. Logically, the slides should be in tandem, as one advances so does the other. While problems with the software are not under CGU's direct control, it is something that CGU should communicate to the manufacturer of the software/hardware.

Interactivity

The two-level audience (face-to-face live workshop and on-line virtual webinar) structure presented technological, social, and pedagogical opportunities and challenges. While the face-to-face workshop appeared to be normal size, the on-line webinar only had three to four participants. Unfortunately, and disrespectfully, some of the on-line participants dropped into, and out of, the webinar at different points during the workshop. This small number of on-line participants lessened the chances for interaction among the on-line participants as well as between the on-line and face-to-fact participants, but this two-level audience structure did not facilitate interaction. As the software used was designed for corporate meetings, it may have a built-in hierarchical bias which can be problematic when transferred to professional development. This bias tended to structure communication as a vertical information flow (teacher to student) rather than a horizontal information flow (student to student) and reinforced a "full pitcher-empty glass" model of learning.

In face-to-face situations, social interactions will occur in spite of rules, but in an on-line environment, social interaction may not readily occur, particularly for those of us who did not grow up using computers. Classes and workshops provide great opportunities for personal, social, and professional networking. In a society with high levels of alienation and isolation, these social goods are not minor issues. This challenge to interactivity, at least in my experience, is not unique to the CGU professional development webinar program, but the two-level audience structure of their program may increase its visibility.

Given that the audience had two levels, Dr. Omoto could not moderate questions posed by the on-line participants, the way a moderator of an on-line meeting would. Instead someone else had to take the role of the on-line moderator, and to relay the questions to Dr. Omoto. While cumbersome, this process generally worked.

The webinar started a half hour late due to problems with registration for the face-to-face participants. As this webinar occurred on the first day of a week-long series of classes, the problem probably would not have occurred on other days. This half-hour delay probably caused Dr. Omoto to abandon the introductions, which he had listed in the agenda. If the introductions had occurred, it is not clear how, or if, the on-line

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participants would have been introduced.

Content

Dr. Omoto displayed a good presentation style, a strong grasp of the field of grant writing, and an excellent ability to organize the material.

Major Sections of the Grant. Dr. Omoto presented a thorough discussion on the major sections of a proposal, identifying eleven major sections in a proposal: 1) Title, 2) Abstract, 3) Statement of the Problem/Specific Aims, 4) Hypothesis, 5) Theoretical Framework/ Review of Relevant Literature, 7) Preliminary Research or Program Experience, 8) Method, Design, and Approach, 9) Data Analysis/Evaluation Plan, 10) Significance, and 11) Budget and Justification. People familiar with research will recognize these sections.. While some funders will have a standard application and restricted page length, others will be much more free form. Even in grants with restricted page length, each of these sections should be present if only in an abbreviated form.

According to Dr. Omoto, the "Specific Aims" section forms the most critical part of the grant application, because it ties everything together: the problem to be addressed, the methodology, the evaluation plan, and the significance. The "Specific Aims" should be narrow and few. The "Significance" section can refer to theoretical, methodological, applied or social significance. According to Dr. Omoto failure to include "Significance" section forms one of the most common mistakes in grant writing.

Like a resume, a grant application is a marketing document, and should stress the prior experience and research background of the project leadership relevant to this problem. The grant application should match as much as possible the words and concepts of the funding announcement. Dr. Omoto presented a good section on writing and formatting tips. Including a quotation that every writer should study: "One should not aim at being possible to understand but at being impossible to misunderstand" (Quintilian). Grant reviewers, like resume reviewers, have to read a great many applications in short period of time. Dr. Omoto suggested inserting periodic summaries throughout the application to emphasize key points to compensate for the "speed reading" of the reviewer.

Budget issues

Most of my experience in grant writing has been on the budget side. I found his discussion of the budget to be a thorough introduction with one exception: there was minimal discussion of how to calculate the indirect. An indirect rate of 12% is not the same as 12% of the total grant award; it is 12% of the direct costs. If a grant writer does not know how to calculate the indirect, they will not know the maximum amount available for direct costs. A novice grant writer could easily get confused on this issue and any introductory discussion of grant writing should thoroughly discuss this issue. If the grant writer can not accurately calculate the amount available for direct expenses, s/he will not be able to develop an accurate budget.

Conclusions

The CGU transmission system worked on computer in dire need of updating, indicating that people and organizations with minimal resources can access these webinars. The CGU webinars do not exacerbate disparities beyond those already inherent in the digital divide.

My suspicion is that, for people with a high need for horizontal interactivity, a day-long webinar would not be that attractive. This could become a marketing issue. Classes and workshops frequently break into small groups as a learning tool; on-line chat room technology could be adapted to facilitate small group work in webinars. Whether software developed for corporate meetings has chat room capability is beyond my technical knowledge.

The section on the major sections of the grant application was excellent and well organized, particularly the sections on "Specific Aims" and "Significance". Dr. Omoto presented good writing tips.

These CGU Webinars are a relatively inexpensive non-formal education product. I plan on taking more of them in the future.

While the use of webinars for professional development is in its very early stages of development, it promises to a major force in non-formal education and professional development. CGU with its program, faculty, and graduate students could become a major player in this field. This two level program presents an opportunity for a type of quasi-experiment comparing the learning and experiences of the face-to-face students with that of the on-line students. Obviously the numbers of students will not be large enough for quantitative studies, but comparative case and qualitative studies are certainly possible. We need to know in what ways webinars exceed traditional classes and in what ways they do not, if we are to take full advantage of this new technology.

For more information on Professional Development Programs at Claremont Graduate University please visit their website http://www.cgu.edu/pages/465.asp.

Surfing the Web with Sheena Horton

Evaluators do research for a living, yet the World Wide Web can be an overwhelming place to start. SEA Board Member Sheena Horton has graciously volunteered to review websites that provide information useful to evaluators in what has become a recurring column in the SEA Newsletters. Let the reviews begin!

We Transfer

This website offers a free service for transferring big files to others (up to 2GB per transfer). Files remain available on your channel for sharing for two weeks and are accessible to everyone with whom you share the URL. However, We Transfer neither views your files nor allows a third party to view them.

wetransfer.com

Asana

This website provides a way for team members to coordinate on projects and streamline activities, including assigning tasks, prioritizing, and monitoring progress. Asana also allows users to view others tasks, offering a great tool to aid supervisors or project managers for monitoring workloads and delegating assignments.

asana.com

PDF Escape

This website allows users to upload PDF documents for free and edit within the browser window. PDF Escape also offers users the ability to form fill and design PDF documents.

Pdfescape.com

Online OCR

This website offers a free Optical Character Recognition (OCR) web-based software that will read scanned PDF documents and convert the files into other files types, such as Microsoft Word or Excel. Simply, convert images to text. Online OCR is capable of

Continued on page 6...

Using Evaluation in Substance Abuse and Mental Health Programs

Sybille Allendorff, SEA Member

The three presentations provided a great summary of current research on the treatment of mental illness, substance abuse, and substance abusers in the criminal justice system. Participants discussed the benefits of treatment and services on outcomes as well as cost savings.

John Bryant with the Florida Council for Community Mental Health started the discussion talking about current efforts by the Council to inform the Florida Legislature about the need to support and fund mental health initiatives. Florida ranks 50th in per capita funding for mental health services. In addition, there seems to be a need to educate the public that mental illness is a disease and not a symptom that can be easily regulated by individuals suffering from it. He cited research that has demonstrated the benefits of mental health treatment and services. For example, one major study shows that 43 percent of individuals with serious mental health disorders who received community services demonstrated significant improvements in functioning. Ninety percent of these individuals were able to maintain or improve their functioning levels.

In addition, John described the significant cost benefits of treatment and services compared to the societal costs incurred when treatment is not provided. Social costs of mental illnesses include a lower life expectancy (25 years less than the general population), a higher suicide rate, as well as a higher incidence of smoking, obesity and chronic diseases. A high number of the homeless have a mental illness, and many of whom end up in a prison where their condition is usually not treated.

John described some of the ongoing efforts by DCF to develop performance measures and the challenges associated with using them, such as comparing clients to others with similar severity of symptoms and comparing services of one program to similar services in another program in their impact on outcomes.

Mark Fontaine with the Florida Alcohol & Drug Abuse Association presented some similar ideas on the need to understand substance abuse as a disease, the success of treatments, and funding considerations. He discussed the implications of a recently proposed legislative cut in funding for substance abuse treatment. For example, decreased funding for substance abuse treatment would lead to increased prison costs as 65% of inmates have substance abuse problems. The Department of Corrections spends only one percent of its funding on substance abuse services, even though 94% of incarcerated individuals with substance abuse problems return to the community. In addition, child welfare costs would increase as a large proportion of individuals in treatment have dependent children and over 50% of youth are in child welfare programs because of parental substance abuse problems. Finally, health care costs would increase as substance abusers have a high incidence of emergency room visits. While the average cost of an emergency room visit is $3,819, the average cost of substance abuse treatment is $2,400. In addition, there are the social costs to the families of drug abusing individuals and their communities as well as the loss of lives.

Jennifer Grandal, Office of State Courts Administrator, concluded the round of presentations from the viewpoint of Florida's Drug Courts. There are 112 drug courts in the state. They place substance abusers into treatment, and a judge and treatment professionals monitor their progress for a period of generally 12 to 18 months. Participating individuals are randomly drug-tested, followed by graduated sanctions and incentives. While drug courts have no dedicated funding stream, they are supported by federal, state, and other local resources.

The Supreme Court Task Force on Treatment-Based Drug Courts adopted four performance indicators to evaluate Florida's drug courts, which include recidivism, retention, sobriety, and units of services. Jennifer presented several results that demonstrate the effectiveness of drug courts in these areas. In addition, the effectiveness of this approach to treating adult criminal drug abusers compared to other criminal justice strategies has been demonstrated, showing better treatment outcomes, and more cost benefits. Social benefits include better public safety, restoring individuals and families, and saving lives.

There are significant cost benefits of treatment and services for those with mental illness and addictions to substances compared to the societal costs incurred when treatment is not provided.

SEA thanks John Bryant, Mark Fontaine, and Jennifer Grandal for their presentations.

Surfing the Web

Continued from page 5...

reading documents written in 32 different languages.

onlineocr.net

Tag My Doc

This website provides a quick, easy, and free way to add QR codes to documents and presentations for distributing to others. No need to email or provide hard copies of presentations - your audience can scan the QR code from your presentation to automatically download a copy.

tagmydoc.com

Scribble Maps

This website allows users to create custom Google maps with images, text, and markers for free. Maps can be printed, saved, and emailed to colleagues.

scribblemaps.com

"Hands on Surveying"

By Mark Mahoney, Ph.D., R.D.

Summary of SEA Training

On August 29, 2012, Jenny Wilhelm and Mark West of the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) presented some practical information on how surveys can provide a useful tool for gathering missing information and other critical data. The overall intent of the class was to provide an interactive forum where participants could learn and share the most appropriate use of surveys, ways to construct effective questions, issues relevant to administration of surveys and input on avoiding (or minimizing) biased results. The mix of attendees from both the public and private sectors allowed for a lively discussion as well as providing real-life examples of what has been surveyed and what might be prudent to consider when employing surveys.

Basic elements of surveys are to obtain representative information from a large number of people and employ standardized questions. Surveys are particularly useful when information is not readily available, credible self-reported information and opinions can be obtained, representative information is desirable from a large group of identifiable individuals, and questions can produce the needed information. Readability, presentation and the survey's length are also important factors. Types of surveys include telephone, hard-copy (mail, drop-off, in-person, and electronic (e-mail or internet). The best survey depends upon the type of contact information available, your target audience, time available for survey completion and staff available for the survey.

Some considerations for writing questionnaires include the following: short is better than long, simple is better than complex and specific is better than vague. Question formats may incorporate the following: choose one response option, choose all response options that apply, rate and rank questions or open-ended questions. When using open-ended questions, one needs to do content analysis and a pilot study before use to obtain potential responses. Wording of questions also plays an important role. Some characteristics to avoid with wording of questions include the following: too lengthy, "double-barreled" ambiguous or vague, loaded and leading questions, incomplete overlapping response choices, and assumptions about respondent's knowledge. Examples of each of the aforementioned were presented and an exercise given out to each group to formulate questions based upon content presented. This proved to be beneficial in generating an interactive discussion and interchange between participants and the presenters.

Administering the survey instrument involves creating a timeline with various steps to be undertaken. Advice to seriously consider in the process include obtaining contact information, developing questions, pre-testing your survey, sending out the survey (with plans for a first and second follow-up as needed to increase response rates), data entry, coding and analysis.

Obtaining contact information is sometimes more difficult than developing questions and this can be important regarding determining the type(s) of survey(s) employed. Think creatively when researching this area. Pre-testing your survey can provide big pay-backs. A good idea is to have a colleague read through it (someone not directly involved) and have target respondent(s) complete it before sending the survey out to larger group. To increase response rates some issues that need to be considered include providing advanced notice, sending a cover letter employing exemplary marketing writing, and undertaking multiple follow-ups. Note that data entry and coding may benefit from the advantages of employing different software packages. On-line surveys may provide a data entry advantage (no need for someone to enter completed survey data into a computer.

The importance of survey response rates with relation to assessment of non-response and response bias was presented by Mark West. He pointed out the importance of looking at response bias where possible. He presented an example from a survey of former teachers. The example showed that former teachers who were satisfied with their teaching salaries were far more likely to answer the survey than teachers who were not satisfied with their teaching salaries; this biased the survey results. Mr. West discussed approaches for dealing with response bias such as "weighting" different response groups. Response rate sufficiency depends upon factors such as the confidence levels employed (i.e., at 90% less responses needed than for 95%). One might also consider response rates in terms of the marginal cost for an increase in these rates.

The presentation on hands-on surveying reinforced the knowledge base which many of the participants appeared to possess beforehand. At the same time, it also allowed the group an opportunity for some practical exercises as well as generating an interactive discussion amongst participants—something that is an important goal for any seminar or workshop. A follow-up workshop which may be of particular relevance for the future is under consideration which would address the issues of sampling and validity testing. Stay tuned.

"The best survey depends upon the type of contact information available, your target audience, time available for survey completion and staff available for the survey."

SEA Programs presented in September/October

Academic Theory vs. Political Reality in Education Evaluations
Dr. John Hughes, The Florida Center for Reading Research
Monday, September 17th, 11:30 – 1:00

Talk with the Pros about Careers in Evaluation
Evaluators who work as consultants; internationally; with local, state, and federal government; non-profits; and in academia
Friday, September 21, 11:30 to 1:00

Evaluating Advocacy (webinar)
Thomas Kelly, The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Tuesday, October 16, 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

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About SEA...

The **Southeast Evaluation Association** (SEA) is a regional affiliate of the American Evaluation Association. We represent evaluators and evaluation-related professionals from the state, university, school system (local) and private sectors. Our members come from a variety of backgrounds: policy analysis, program auditing, teaching, program evaluation, and performance measurement. SEA's annual conference attracts nationally recognized speakers and participants from the entire southeast region. Several agencies use our programs and conferences as low cost training and networking opportunities for their employees.

Annual membership ($30; $10 for full-time students) offers reduced registration fees for the Annual Conference, Pre-Conference Workshop, Essential Skills Workshop, and the various training sessions held throughout the year. Members also periodically receive a newsletter throughout the year. The newsletter is a great way to keep up with the SEA activities and innovative research in the field of evaluation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to **email** us.

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Suggestions

SEA welcomes all ideas for topics for future workshops, brown bag lunches, newsletter articles, and conference sessions. Please contact Bernadette Howard with your ideas!

Thank You

We sincerely thank the Newsletter Production Crew for their diligent work in publishing this newsletter.