

# Learning Group\_ Introduction to Empathy Evaluation

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

empathy, evaluation, zoo, enrichment, animals, tools, programs, word, folks, survey, network, measure, audiences, wanted, toy, grant, observation, question, theo, guests

## SPEAKERS

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo), Shanna Hillard, Ryann Stacy (Racine Zoo), Mary Jackson

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Hi, everybody, welcome. This is our introduction to empathy evaluation learning group if I was one of, and if you would like to drop in the chat, your name and where you are joining us from, that would be fantastic. And I'm just gonna hit gonna go ahead and roll right on through our introduction. So we can spend as much time as possible digging into the content today. If you have not already met me, in some way, shape, or form, my name is Emily Bernhardt, I use she her pronouns, and I am the empathy network specialist over out Woodland Park Zoo. And we are the advancing conservation through empathy for wildlife network or the ACE for Wildlife network. If you have never attended an event that we have hosted before, we are a learning network that creates and shares effective practices to foster empathy for animals and people leading to conservation actions are currently made up of 27 AZA accredited zoos and aquariums throughout the US. And those are called our partner organizations, you may hear that term thrown around. And across those 27 partners, we have about 250 network members. Outside of those partner organizations, we have over 100 individuals affiliates, worldwide, which is pretty excited. As a network, we define empathy as a stimulated emotional state that relies on the ability to perceive, understand and care about the perspectives or experiences of another person or animal. Now this slide is super sparse because we are heading into the summer season. But we do have two more events this week, both on the same day. Or I guess one and a half events still this week, but both on the same day, the 16th. We have our pollinator toolkit, lunch and learn. It's going to be co hosted by the chairs of our conservation action committee. And then if you're interested in attending the steering committees open meeting, which is going to be dealing with the revision of network statements like our mission, vision and values, definitely welcome you to attend either one of those and we'll drop our events calendar page link in the chat so you can go ahead and get registered. But after May 16, we will be taking an event hiatus through the summer season and coming back after AZA in the fall. Here is our rundown of the day so I'm about to pass it off to Ryann Stacy from the racing Zoo. And we're also going to hear from Mary Jackson at Woodland Park Zoo and Shana Hillard and Katherine Neville at the Zoological Society of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee county zoo respectively. We're going to have some breakout discussions in which folks can chat with the individual presenter that they are interested in for kind of some smaller discussions. And then Theo is going to bring us home with network evaluation resources and opportunities. I'll have some time for some final q&a as a big group, and then we'll go ahead and

wrap up the event. But you are not here to hear from me today. You are here to hear from Ryan and Mary and Shana and Catherine. So I'm going to go ahead and stop sharing my screen and pass it off to you, Ryan.

Right. Awesome. Thank you, Emily. Hello, everybody. My name is Ryan, I use she her pronouns. And just bear with me while I try to share my screen. It did not really work for everyone last time, so we'll see how it goes. All right. Let's do a test that everybody just see the screen advance to the second slide. Just awesome. Yeah. All right. Well, let's see how this goes. Hello, everybody. I am here in racine. I am a conservation education specialist at the racine Zoo. And I actually started full time at the zoo thanks to a capacity building grant from the network. So then it worked definitely holds a very special place in my heart. And prior to those grants, we did not really do a ton in the way of evaluation, just in terms of our education department. Um, of course, I can't really speak for the other departments at our zoo. But this was really this tool in front of you. It doesn't look, it's fine. It's not super helpful. Um, this was pretty much the only evaluation tool that we used, at least during my time at the zoo for programs that weren't already funded by other grants. Of course, when we get programs funded by other grants we have to evaluate for those grants. Um, so we evaluated in different ways and this survey is certainly not terrible, but it did not capture much related to empathy other than asking folks to rate other than the scaled question rate and connectedness with nature, which I was pretty happy to see that that is that is something that we are striving for, and that would be network. So let's Nice that we're hoping to measure that. But the other issue with this is that it's not really something we used with consistency. Most of our education programs conducted both on and off site are done by one person at our zoo. So when we are responsible for like transporting the animals, packing the animals, bringing our bio facts, making sure we got everything set for our programs, sometimes, you know, grabbing the evaluation sheet and a pen and a clipboard was kind of not the first thing on our mind. So we definitely were excited to start evaluating and have the opportunity to start evaluating through the ACE grant. But it was definitely overwhelming, seeing what other zoos have been doing in terms of evaluation. But we were very, very excited to start with the MECAP tools. Because these MECAP tools, were just invaluable resources and really, really served as excellent starting points, especially for someone like me, where I was hired to be the empathy programs evaluator without any formal evaluation training. So this, I highly, highly recommend for anybody who is interested in starting evaluation for empathy at their zoo refer to the MECAP resources, because they started if you hear my cat meowing in the background, he's asked me to go outside. They were very, very helpful in getting started. And now we were able to make some adjustments to these tools. So we made the observation scale observation survey, or sorry, observation tools, a little bit more user friendly for our team. We also kind of redesigned the camp survey, and we came up with our own activities for the MECAP action reaction, activity evaluation activity, because not all of the animals in MECAP action reaction activity are animals that limit our zoo. So we made some tools. Oh, yes, thank you, Theo for specifying what MECAP stands for. We made some tools, um, some instance action cards that were more applicable to, to the animals that live at our zoo. And then we also made some additional bio cards to use during the conservation pen pals activity, which will say we never actually got as far to the point of using them. But we were really excited to even just get the experience kind of thinking gizmo you need to go away. Mom is presenting, I'm sorry, guys. Getting some experience making new tools, you know, we've never really made evaluation tools before. So kind of getting, getting that creativity flowing was was a new, a new way to use that creativity that we hadn't really used before. No, of course, there were some challenges. And we learned that evaluation is hard. I was very, very excited personally to use evaluation tools for the first time. And that excitement was attached, at least somewhat. All of the challenges that that arose through trying to implement these evaluations, we realized how difficult it is to figure out practices that work both for our audiences and within our staff capacity. And in

particular, during at least the period of our capacity building grant changes in staffing outside of the grant presented some pretty huge challenges in terms of our capacity to evaluate in the way that we wanted to and at the level that we wanted to. And part of this kind of whole introduction and beginning evaluation experience has been learning to recognize that progress is not linear. And that is so Okay, especially at a smaller zoo, I think we really kind of get stuck on seeing what all the bigger zoos can do. They have all these people and all this money, and oh my gosh, they can do so much. It's easy. Sometimes when you're at a smaller zoo to feel like you're not accomplishing as much as you wish you could or as you wanted to. But a huge part of this whole process was just learning that that really is okay. Um, now some specific challenges that we had, with our evaluations were literacy levels, both writing and reading with that in our community, and in the state of Wisconsin, one in seven adults struggle with literacy, which means that one in seven adults struggle to understand short simple sentences and perform simple tasks. And adults with below basic literacy would have trouble filling out forms and following printed instructions. And then when it comes to children in Wisconsin, only 39% of students are considered proficient in reading. And in our school district, that rate is 20% for middle schoolers 29% for high schoolers. So this really really made written surveys very difficult to implement, and difficult to train part time or in part time staff or interns to use them. We were not I myself was not always there to provide each learner each group the verbal, outloud walkthrough of the survey that they would have need didn't, and especially when it's summer camp and things are kind of chaotic. And it was really, really hard to train our summer camp counselors, everything about their job, and then also be like, Hey, you're doing this evaluation survey thing, when ultimately they've ended up finding that many of their kids can't read or write. And that is not their focus at summer camp, their focus is not teaching kids how to read and write. So it kind of made us realize at the end of the summer, we did not really get all the data that we wanted to get because of that challenge. Other Other challenges included using the wrong scale and ends up many people don't understand how to use every ranking scale. Not everyone who didn't understand the scale spoke up, especially in summer camps. So data analysis ended up being really tough. And surveys were often incomplete. And then finally, training staff. Although I was hired to create and implement the evaluations, I was also the person delivering the programs that needed to be evaluated. So we really struggled with providing the additional training needed for part timers. So that is kind of something that we're thinking about moving forward is how can we make that fit in our schedules that we already have. But I promise all of these challenges, it is not miserable, we were able to see that we have been building empathy amongst our audiences already without realizing it. And we're able to see more clearly the successes that we that we do have, because so much of our job is feeling like we're doing a good job, but we haven't had the data or even just the quotes written down to point to it. So over the course of you know, of this grant project, we were able to note all you know, when you see Bailey in the top left looking so thrilled to be holding a bug on her popsicle stick and we get, you know, statements from parents at the giraffe feeding saying that Jabari choose like Brad Pitt, or a parent, you know, telling their child be quiet because they have big ears, we want to be nice to our friends. Or a child's like, I was walking with a kindergartner and he was going Hello chipmunk, I am so happy to see you today. So that was those sorts of spontaneous expressions were really, really awesome to be able to see and write down and be able to look back at, especially in those moments, when we were kind of feeling like we're not accomplishing as much as we want to, we can look back and I can look back at this picture of Connor on the bottom right. And remember the time that he showed Azizi, his simple toy, and then she on and he went cheese. So even when you feel like you maybe are not doing as as well as you want to, you're still there are still small wins to celebrate. And moving forward, we are going to continue these evaluation efforts. A recent site visit to Henry Vilas Zoo, you're seeing some tools that we got from them really helped give us some more clarity and as far as how to train new staff to do these evaluations. And then we are currently in the middle of what we are affectionately calling our Ico grant, or an ether gram grant. And we're going to evaluate guest engagement at our animal habitats by looking at how often QR codes are scanned and how often they

are filling out the surveys. And then the data from those surveys will be used to inform animal husbandry and keeper decisions in the future. And then we can say hey, zoo guests, you had a part in this, which is really, really cool. And then I think that's all we got. Stop sharing. Thank you, everybody.

Awesome. All right, Mary, you are next. And if you have any questions for Ryan, or any of our following presenters, please save those in your back pocket for the breakout rooms or the larger q&a at the end. Okay.

Okay, see my slides. Okay. Yes, we can. Excellent. So Hi, I'm Mary Jackson. I use she her pronouns. I am the manager of audience research and evaluation here at Woodland Park Zoo. And have been kind of exploring empathy and empathy measurement, probably since about 2015. And we are on the opposite end of Ryan, we've had an evaluation team here at the zoo for like 20 plus years. And so we're kind of coming at it from a slightly like a different lens, I'd say. And so today, I just wanted to chat a little bit. I'm glad Ryan mentioned the MECAP tools, because I'm going to talk a little bit about kind of the origin of one of the MECAP tools and sort of how we're using it, and where we hope to take it in the future. So we'll get started. So, basically back in like 2015, we were kind of grappling with this question. We got a big grant that pretty much was like great. You have to start measuring empathy. And we had a lot of folks using empathy as an outcome and Our program, so that was not new for us. So we were talking about empathy is something we're trying to achieve through our experiences for a while, but, you know, kind of trying to really measure it, and what does that mean to measure it in our settings with something new for us. And then thinking about empathy itself, you know, we just were finding when we think back to it, because we definitely approached it thinking it was gonna be a lot more simple of a concept. And, you know, we kind of learned along the way that it's not just the singular thing, right? We learned, okay, empathy is actually made up of these different constructs within this bigger umbrella, right? There's got cognitive pieces and aspect of pieces and compassion or motivational pieces, whatever you, you want to call it. So we had to start thinking about, Okay, this is a little bit more complex. And, you know, really what we came to realize is, you know, empathy is what's called a latent construct, which is just a fancy way to say, it's not something you can singularly measure directly. Similar to like, if you want to try and measure things like intelligence or values, or you know, anything like that, there's not one question you can ask or one approach that will work for everybody, it's sort of made up of all these, you know, different pieces. So we realized it can be kind of estimated through these observable and measurable indicators, right. And this is how a lot of evaluation is done. And a lot of concepts like connectedness to nature, and things like that. So, you know, we kind of built our understanding around like, you know, okay, we need to kind of break this concept down, actually more than we thought, and start pulling it apart into these pieces. And then we also, were really looking to see are there already existing things out there for us, right, that we can really leverage already. And there were. So there's a whole bunch of if I actually just saw today, there's a lit review that just came out in 2024, that has like cites over 500 different measures for empathy, I need to dive more into that one. These are just a few of the key ones, we found this is sort of like a timeline of evolution. And they all kind of stem off at the same tools, which is funny. So these are a whole bunch of different surveys that have been designed over the years that have been used to measure empathy, most often empathy towards people. So empathy towards animals is a sometimes a extra lens to throw onto it. But the challenge was, these are all things not really great to use with, like kids or audiences that have children that are not able to read and write, which is who we're really interested in. And it also if they'd had anything to do with animals almost always focused on companion animals or pets. Not often wildlife. So that was the other concept we had to kind of grapple with. And then this was the other question that came up for us as we were starting to do this, which was then okay, are we actually trying to measure

empathy as a state, like the things that emerge in a situation or a trait? Because some of those surveys actually measure just like, are you just positionally an empathetic person? Right, which, so we had to kind of really grapple with that question. And we were really more interested in measuring state, like, so what's happening when they're having these experiences at the zoo. And then we did look into some of the early childhood kind of measures, right, and there were some out there like the kids empathetic development scale is one, which have been used successfully with kids. The challenge with these were, they take about an hour to implement with a child, because they're usually do kind of really long qualitative interviews. And that also wasn't really going to work for us at the time of what we were really looking looking at to measure. So that kind of brought us to this collaboration we had with MECAP, which was defined in the chat. And I don't think the definition even matters anymore. We all just know it as MECAP at this point. But I have to, you know, shout out to all these folks on the slide. It was a collaboration between these three orgs. And really there were like, and there's even other people that I'm not listing on here, but there are a lot of folks that were involved in kind of developing these measures for MECAP. But the one I wanted to kind of focus on was the observational assessment. So we did see there were observational frameworks in existence, but a lot of them are kind of in education settings like formal Ed, classroom settings, or healthcare settings was really common. We weren't finding any that kind of really fit us and what our needs were. However, we also knew when we talked to folks, people could describe sort of, in some ways what they felt like it looked like when they saw it in their program audiences, right. So there was still sort of these like nuggets, but they weren't yet in a way where we could capture them easily. And so we decided We really wanted to, you know, work on coming up with an observational tool that could be used. And then along with that, we also really thought we don't, what can we do to make sure we minimize bias, or subjective kind of judgment, right? Because, like, for example, something like this, like, it's easy to ascribe emotions to things, right. So like, I think that's a really pissed off looking map, or a very happy cheese grater. This pareidolia effect, right, which is where like our brains are programmed to see emotions in things, even if they're not really there. Because we're just that's what, you know, how we're sort of programmed to relate to one another. And sometimes the things that we would say maybe don't have emotions. So we didn't want to create something where we were just replicating this, like, I'm just, you know, I'm using my own lens to kind of assume someone is feeling a certain way. So we tried our best to kind of make it as systematic as possible. And the way we did that was we, you know, did some literature review, we did a lot of conversations, this was back before zoom, by the way, so I was like, it's a phone. It's an old phone. We did phone conversations with folks. A whole bunch of folks like, I mean, really impressive people, Carol Saunders is one that really stood out, but really kind of trying to understand what does this concept mean to them when they think about our relationship between humans and animals, and care and compassion and empathy? And what does that look like? And what what factors go into that. And then we also talked to a lot of folks in working in zoos and aquariums, you know, also asking similar questions. And from that, that kind of gave us like, these list of observational expressions, right. And most of the ones that we came up with were verbal, or a few nonverbal expressions that we identified on there. I know others, us recently have been putting more effort into coming up with what are nonverbal expressions. So this is like an ever growing kind of list. But this is sort of the framework we use when we were thinking about what aspects do these fall into. And then, in the end, after all of this kind of work, it came into, I'm not going to read all of these, because I think you all can probably look at the instrument, but we basically came up with, you know, there's sort of eight or seven primary buckets that we were like, these are sort of the indicators of empathy are the big kind of categories of behaviors that sort of give us a sense that something is happening, or the guests are feeling these, you know, sentiments. And then we also added a few others, right? Because there's some that were like, are these empathy, I don't know. And it's so kind of amorphous, in a lot of ways where there's no set real boundaries for this, there's definitely a lot of, you know, cross things kind of moving in and out of the space to empathy. So we also thought about things like, you know, interest in curiosity, we wanted to include that in there. Things like self feelings of self efficacy around taking an action, that's

not necessarily empathy. But it's important for what we're trying to do, recognizing animals with their own agency, right. So those kinds of things aren't necessarily empathy themselves, but we knew were important. And then so with that, we basically I just wanted to touch on sort of how we've been using this tool. So we'd have our list of empathy indicators. Luckily, at this time, training wise, it wasn't as much of a barrier because it's just me and one other person implementing the tool, obviously, the more people you have using the tool, a little challenge, more challenging it is to make sure it's being used consistently. But the way we used it, and originally was sort of to compare across our programs, we had three investment animal programs that we were used, using at the time, they all kind of had different elements, and some similarities. They all use live animals, some had early childhood audiences, some more for full public programs, and some focused out in the community rather on site. And they had different topics, but we were really kind of curious to see, you know, how do they compare? And we're always really interested in like, are we giving opportunity in our programs for people to express empathy, because we really want to make sure we're giving them chance to like practice these skills while they're here. And then just quickly, kind of some of the results we found with some of our comparison using this tool, right? So this is just like instances of observing this at three different programs. Well, three programs multiple times so you can see how many times on each of the top and we were kind of quickly able to see differences, right? Like care for animals came out by far the most. We had to unpack that one a little bit as to what are you know, what about that program? is sort of providing the as opportunities for a guest to express empathy. In the since then we also were, we unpacked a little bit about it wasn't early childhood audience. And there's times where we tend to use some of these practices, I think a little bit more with certain audiences and others, and we found perspective taking was one at the time that, in particular, people are more comfortable having young audiences do than older audiences, and things like that, we also found their inconsistencies and how you're kind of sharing out behaviors or caring actions you can do to follow up those kinds of things. So even just in this kind of table, you know, we were able to kind of discuss with some of the program teams a little bit about their programs, and sort of like what some of the differences are that were happening. And then just quickly, I will, I do want to say, this is not a perfect tool, there's a lot of limitations to this tool, and observation in general. So 10, we tend to try and use multiple methods. So we'll try and use observations, ideally, maybe observations of the presenters themselves, and like, if we're using the practices, and you know, if we're not using the practices, it's hard to say we expect that expressions empathy. And then last week, would you know, like a survey or something, we try to also provide some way for the guests to actually tell us a little bit more about what they're experiencing. So we're not assuming, however, we don't always have the luxury to do all of these. So sometimes we pick and choose, and sometimes we do really go with the observations. And then lastly, I just want to say we are in the process, we've made some updates to this tool, Theo has done a great job of turning it into an app based option. So definitely talk to Theo, if you're interested in getting that access to that, or I think there's more information of how to use it on a tablet, so you don't have to do the paper pencil. And then, I don't know, hopefully, in the breakout group, I'd really be curious if anybody is interested to talk about like, we really want to, I know a lot of folks have tried using this and made their own tweaks to it to make it better and work for you. And we've made our own updates over the years internally at our org. So I know we're interested in sort of iterating and creating sort of a 2.0 or 3.0 version of this tool sort of based on everything we've been learning. So if you're interested to talk about that, I would love to have you hop into my breakout room. But yeah, that's about all I have to say.

This was Mary. Um, all right. Yes. ZSM folks, take us home.

Okay, just going to do screenshare.

Can everybody see? Okay.

We can see like the full PowerPoint app. So we do see the slide, but we also see like your little slide bar on the side and stuff like that. Perfect. That's fine.

So hi, I'm Shana Hillard. And I'm

Katherine Nevilee. Most people call me Katie, though.

I use she her pronouns, same here. And we are presenting unlocking insights from AB message testing and animal care language.

So just a quick about us. So I work for them Waukeee county zoo, which is the art that can like the county portion of our operation. And I do evaluation and audience research. And then,

and then yep, I am. I was hired initially as our evaluator and Empathy Project Coordinator for a grant that we received from the ACE for Wildlife network. And I focus primarily on evaluating our public programming. And I also manage our collection of bio facts. So we're just gonna go over a little bit. Oh,

I'm so sorry. We can't see the slides transitioning.

Oh, oh, that's weird. Yeah, that is very weird. Okay.

They just changed. I am not sure what you did differently. But we now see the slide for the background. We couldn't see any of the transitions prior if you were doing any,

it was just, it was a photo of both of us. That's okay. We can just keep, keep going. So we're going to talk about the background of our evaluation here, the methodology for our projects, the results of the project, and then its impact on future futures, do programming and other things here at the zoo. So a little bit of background, I know that it was requested some of the questions that you had sent ahead of time. So evaluation has been happening at the zoo from the county side for quite a while. Yeah.

And then the position originally was at The Zoological Society, there's one other person that had it before me, and then they switched over to the zoo side. So then I've been doing this job for about six years now, almost seven.

And this is my second year here. And so we've we've come this good split between, like the guest facing portion, and then the public program facing portion. But Katie and I collaborate on on several different topics. And this is the one that I think has been the most fruitful with, like results. Yeah, so

when it's really expanded our capacity at the zoo, as well. So it was just me and an intern before so.

So our methodology of the data that we collected was done during our family free days. So that is a day where admission is open to everybody in the county and around surrounding areas. And we did it from 10am to 2pm. We did this so that we could get the widest demographic possible. And also those days tend to be very busy. So we knew we'd have a good sampling of people for, for us to collect data from. So every word pairing, we did 50 guests, and we approached every third guest, and we estimated the age brackets. So we have three different categories that we used. So we had youth, young adult, sorry for adults, and then an elder. And then all ages were allowed to participate, including children when their adult was present. Do you want to back up and talk about what you were testing? Yeah. So what we wanted to test, the big question that we had was, when I was initially hired back, you know, two years ago, we were looking at Preferred vocabulary in our organization, and what words we wanted to use over others in things like curriculum writing, in signage, in social media posts. And so what we decided to do was something called a bee testing, to talk to guests about which words that they preferred and what their reasoning was. So some of the word pairings that we tested, were treat versus food, sick versus under vet care, in the wild versus in nature, tank versus aquarium, and toy versus enrichment. And the reason that we wanted to do this is because other zoos had already started to do this work. And we're trying to phase out some of these words that were less empathetic, or maybe were incorrect in their, in their usage. So this is an example of two sentences that we would have used. These sentences were placed on a board where people would have the chance to look at both of them. Or we would read them out loud if they had a reading barrier, or maybe they were low sighted, or if they were a young child that couldn't read. And then we simply asked them whether they preferred sentence A or sentence B, we would record the answer. And then we would ask them, why they preferred one over the other. So this one, literally, the sentences are literally the same. We just replaced in nature with in the wild.

And then in that. And that particular example is really interesting, because they were kind of tied, so we had to collect some additional data. But the one that ended up winning out was in the wild 54 to 46. Yeah,

so some of them were pretty, like will show the the data, but some of them were, there was a clear winner. And other times, it was more of a like, there was not a real statistical significance in one over the other. But for our results, we decided to highlight just a couple of them that we found the most interesting. So I'll let Katie talk about this one because she worked really hard on this. Oh, okay.

So toy versus enrichment was an interesting case, because overall, most people preferred enrichment because they thought it sounded like to include includes more items. The only instance where toy was preferred was with our youth respondents. So that's something that we would consider for education programming.

So here's just some we collected some qualitative quotes as well. So some people said it sounds more like education and engaging toys or just for fun. That was an adult have said that, and then someone said it made it seem like they were getting the care that they need. It's more sophisticated. So we took those into, into consideration as well, when we were presenting our findings. This one, though, I think was the most interesting result that we had. So this is treat versus food. And you can see, overall, most people preferred treat over food. And you can see the age breakdown here. But what was most surprising about this was the reasoning people gave for why they prefer treat over food. So if we look at some of the qualitative feedback, a bunch of people, one person would say it and we thought, oh, that's an odd statement. But then two or three more people would say it and then another person, or they said, food makes it sound like you withhold the food to make them cooperate. And if they do it, then they get a treat. treats or positive reinforcement. And then using food sounds like you are withholding. The sentence in question was, if the elephant presents its ear, for a blood draw, they get a treat, or something similar to that. And people came away with the assumption that if we use the word food, that, that their nutritional, their nutritional, like, quantity for the day was lessened, because they did not do the behavior as opposed to something supplemental that they got for displaying a positive behavior. So that's something that we were able to correct in the moment and say, Oh, no, no, no, that's not, that's not what happens. But if that were on a sign, we would maybe not know, people would kind of just internalize that and walk away. And we might never know that that was the the feeling that they had when they read that sign. So some of our key takeaways, there were certain unexpected negative connotations to some of the word pairings. So like, again, the treat versus food. People wanted a balance to be struck between using correct scientific terms and gentler alternatives. That came up a lot when we asked people about put to sleep versus humanely euthanized. There were a lot of adults that said, well, humanely euthanized is the correct term, but it sounds really cold and clinical. And they said that they would use the term put to sleep when they were talking to their children about it, which again, helps inform us about how we speak to our younger age bands about when an animal's life ends. And then when word pairings were close, we used estimated demographic information to help inform our decisions. And then the guests were really excited to participate in this. People, it was like a really quick way to get their opinion. And even though we only asked every third person, there would be people that would come to like, give us their opinion, whether we asked them or not. And some people would just do like the quick walk by and they'd like clock what we were doing, and they just say A and then they just keep on walking. So people were really helpful and wanted to participate, even though even if we didn't ask them to participate. So some of the preferred language examples going forward. This will help impact our education program and events. So like the language that we use when we're talking to people at outreach events, versus the language that we use to talk to our three year olds in the bears program, all of that is affected by the data that we got from this, from this set of set of word pairings. It affects how we talk to people on social media and communications. You know, we've had some animals pass away since we started this work. And did that affect how we spoke to people on social media about what happens when an animal is no longer alive here at the zoo? And then interpretive graphics and signage? So how are we using what we learned to help inform the signs that people are reading and passively taking that information in? And that's all we have for today. And yeah, we're looking forward to if anyone joins the group, I want to I really would be interested to hear what other types of things

people think this type of evaluation was, would be good for, or if anyone has any questions about diving a little deeper into the different word pairings and what we found. So yeah, thank you very much.

Awesome. Thanks so much, All. And speaking of breakout rooms, I want to go ahead and open the rooms in just a second and you will be able to self select which presenter you would like to go to the breakout room for will be in these rooms for about 15 or so minutes. And that will give you time to ask more in depth questions and just have the kind of the smaller group discussions with your presenter of choice. After that, we'll come back into this main room. Theo has a couple of resources to share on network wide evaluation. And then we will do some lighter q&a for folks. If when I open the breakout rooms, you do not see the like option to join on your screen. Just pop in the chat what room you would like to go to. And I can go ahead and man manually. All right, welcome back, folks, apologies for my lack of technological prowess. But Theo I'm gonna pass it off to you before we do open QA.

So in the spirit of all these cool evaluation projects that we've seen, I wanted to kind of hone in on some of the evaluation resources and the opportunities that we have through the ACE for Wildlife network right now that you can access if you're, I hope, energized about doing some evaluation. So it got mentioned a handful of times already today. But we do have all of the resources that were produced by the measuring Empathy Collaborative assessment project or MECAP project, which includes observation protocols for exhibit visitors for exhibit signage, and then for program audiences and program presenters. There's also these semantic differential scales that are scaled questions, attitudes that measure attitudes towards animals, and they're those for a couple of different age brackets. And then there's some activity based evaluation, which is like the, I think that action reaction activity that Ryan mentioned, those are all available on the ACE for Wildliferscience website. And I believe we also have them on our website. And like Mary mentioned, I have gotten some of those observation protocols. Trained transferred into a program called zoo monitor, which some of you might be familiar with already. Zoo monitor is a freely available to any AZA accredited organization tool for observing animal behavior. And we realized at some point that you could use it to observe people because we're animals. And doing doing the observations in a digital tool like that save some of the time, and paper flipping and data entry and confusion that can come with doing that on paper. So that is a resource that we have available, I have some instructions for how to get started in zoom monitor, if you are unfamiliar with that tool at all, or you have it, you don't have access to that tool right now. So you can reach out to me to get a little bit of guidance on that. But they are available to and yeah, like I said to anyone at an ad organization. And one thing that we're looking to do in the future with that is we know, not just collecting data, but analyzing data can be a challenge in doing evaluations. And we're trying to get set up a little bit of a semi automated process for analyzing data that comes out of doing observations and zoomonitor. So that's a future one of my first future bits. The other thing that I would really recommend is going through our resource library on the network website. And looking through some of the projects that folks have done in the past. Most of them are on tiles labeled capacity building grant presentation, a lot of folks have done some really great evaluation work and produced really thorough reports or have produced evaluation tools already, that might be similar to what you need or might give you ideas for what you might be looking for. So that's a good place to start right now. And that's a pretty disparate set of tools, starting in the fall with some of the other toolkits that we're that we make every year as a network, we're adding on an evaluation toolkit. So we'll condense some of those tools that have been created through grant projects and start soliciting some new ones from folks in network as well and share those out in a toolkit, like we do with the conservation action toolkit, and empathy training toolkit. So look out for

that starting this fall. And then I believe starting in the very beginning of 2025, we'll be trying to launch some collaborative evaluation projects because we're all interested in measuring empathy and measuring empathy in our audiences and pretty similar ways. I have this spirit I live by the spirit of collaboration. I think there's so much more that we can do and learn when we're aligned in our efforts. And we're asking some of the same questions in the same way. So that will be something to look out for. And if that's something that you're interested in, let me know. And then lastly, I just wanted to plug that I am available as a resource. So I didn't introduce myself, I am the I am an evaluation specialist at the Woodland Park Zoo. And my focus is on empathy evaluation and providing evaluation support to the network. So I am here as a resource. If you have a quick question, or you need a resource, or you need help analyzing data, you need help making sense of your data. I am here for you. And we also have so many folks who now have been doing empathy evaluation for a couple of years at least. And you can find them all on the network discussion board. And anytime you have a question about how might you collect some data, has anybody done something like this? In the past, that's definitely a place that I would recommend putting that up, because there are a lot of folks who, but my experience has been once people have learned something from evaluation, they really would love for other people to know about it. Because it's really interesting, you learn some really interesting and powerful things. So we have a lot of folks who are excited to share if you have a question you want to ask. Yeah, those are just a broad overview of kind of what we've got going on so far, and what to look out for in the future.

Awesome. Um, so we have about 10 minutes left, if there are any questions that folks have for Theo, or any of our presenters today. Here is your chance to ask and get those conversations going. And if you drop them in the chat, I can go ahead and read them off if you're more comfortable doing that. But otherwise, feel free to come off of mute.

This this for Shana or Katie, we I mean, thanks for your presentation. That was really cool insight seeing those responses because you know, there's some of that we always assume, and then some are surprised by the toy versus enrichment. One, do you guys have any like helpful insight, we've just been struggling with that one, where, like, we definitely want to move away from toys and in most cases, but saying like the phrase enrichment item, so many times gets a little. It is, especially it just sounds like it's something that I mean, more people are being more familiar with the term enrichment. But that usually takes a couple extra minutes, then explain what enrichment even means and then saying that so if you guys have any insights into what anything you found with that one, if like there's something people like hearing more, that'd be awesome.

We could actually look right now because Katie has the dashboard up. Standby. Yeah, we collected the most significant qualitative feedback that we got as well. But it was clear that for age bands, like, we will probably in like our younger programming, still use the word toy, because all of the children resonated with that more. And I think that for some of the younger groups, what we have started to do is we use the word enrichment, but then we we pair it with like, a very quick example like, like we Okay, our gorillas use this Kong, like, Do you have a dog at home? Like, your dog uses the same Kong? And it's, it's their enrichment? Like they're using this activity? Do we have anything

it really depends on, like, you have to, in each context, sort of choose your words carefully. I don't think like this sentence that we use to test that particular pairing. We talked, we said the animals

here at the zoo also get plenty of enrichment, to keep them physically and mentally active. So the sentence itself sort of gave more context for the word. So I think that helped people understand it a little more.

But yeah, I mean, I think that we had like, the, the adults in that group, too, were like, they felt like toys sounded like, just it was like a frivolous thing. So I mean, like getting away from the word toy is not the worst thing. If you're talking to older groups of people, but the word enrichment when we're thinking about, like, even though more people are becoming familiar with it, when we're talking about like having like accessibility, like I think it's like, sixth grade reading level is like what we're aiming for, like that word might not be accessible for some of our like, second language learners or or for people who are like, unable to read, like at that, that sixth grade reading level? I think that using it, it's kind of like a toy that, you know, that helps with their right. You know, like, I think that using that qualifier is also fine. Like if it's what helps get the understanding across. Whereas if you just say it's enrichment, and they're like, oh, okay, and they walk away, and they have no idea why there's a cardboard box and the gorilla, like habitats, you know, like, then, you know, then what's the point of using the more accurate word, if the understanding and maybe like the empathy connection was missed, as a result of it. So sorry, that's not a clear cut one, what I would say, with younger kids,

I would think that word play in there, they, they're playing with their enrichment, or enjoying or something like that.

And I think connecting it to like, immediately connecting it to something that, like they could relate to, like, if it's an older person, like, you know, not a child, like you could say, you know, just like we do our crossword, or we do Wordle every day or something, whatever to keep us, like mentally stimulated, you know, where we play board games with each other. Like, that's kind of like our, you know, like, are you in your board? Yeah, what are you doing on your bored and keep you active? And like immediately turning that back and using some of those, like, empathy, best properties? Or fun, or that kind of thing? Yeah. So I hope that helps. Yeah, that was a long, a long walk for an inconclusive answer. Oh, Ryan, you have your hand up, I

just want to I just want to pop in and say we use the word activity, we've started using activity to describe enrichment and Oceania, you just said active. That is thanks to one of our awesome adult volunteers who has been teaching our wildlife Explorers program, we have the kids learn about habitats and adaptations, and then they have to build a zoo habitat. And it's kind of a big expectation. And part of that is making enrichment. So she has started describing them as enrichment are things that provide the animals with activity so they can stay active and healthy. And then that kind of helps you can be like, like a basketball or, you know, like, when you eat, you're actively using your hands, you're not, you're not just like smashing your face in your food. So finding the word like activity, and exercise, stimulation is great. But not every kid knows what stimulation is. So big fan of saying describing it as activity. Um, instead of using the word enrichment,

I like that too, because it doesn't focus so much on the object, but on the purpose of the object, like because a lot of times,

it's not an object, right? Like, it's not always an object, it might be like our, our lions love, perfume spray. It's not a toy they're playing with, but they love to rub their face all over it. So and that's making them active, it's making them do the same activity they would do in the wild. So it's definitely a little bit broader, more broadly applicable.

Yeah, I like that go with what Ryan said. I mean, like, and that was like the, we talked about, like how many meetings we had to even get to this, like 12 sets of pairings that we initially like tested with guests. Like some of them we just could not agree on like, and we went back and forth and back and forth. And one of them we ended up testing another time. Like it was just so inconclusive that we just scrapped one word what were the different one and did a whole nother test. I think that was like, behind the scenes or something.

It was behind the scenes and

private habitat. Yeah, because we had such I don't know people were gonna come to blows over whether we could say behind the scenes or private habitat, or bedroom or whatever. But like Yeah, so

I that habitat one and I still hate it. I don't like it.

I love it. So yeah, Emily obsession by Calvin Klein. Apparently they use that in the in the wild as well to take photos of Jaguars because obsession for men is their favorite scent. Like you will get a photo of a Jaguar if you use obsession for men. So uses that in their in their marketing someday. But it's not just for human mass. You

want to win. Less you want to avoid Jaguars? Yeah, where

maybe don't go into the field reeking of obsession, because you probably won't enjoy your day. But yeah, that's a really great question, Leanne, and I think that Brian, that's a really good alternative, that if we had like, considered it, we might have tested that one at a time. It's not too late. We could still do it. But yeah. I had a question for Theo as long as I'm unmuted someone I don't remember who sorry mentioned that there would be a digital version of the MECAP. Like almost like an app version was I did I miss here that

you did not have It's. So that is what I was saying about with zoo monitor, which is an app based or website based tool, depending on how you use it. And like I said, it's available to anyone in the zoo and aquarium field at an AZA organization, for free, just lovely. And I have it set up as a collaborative

project. So there's like, the hoops, you have to jump through to get access to it because of the way that the monitor is set up. But I have written out instructions for that with purchasing thoughts and everything of how all that works that I can share with you.

That's great, because I have zoo monitor for actual, like animal projects that I'm doing. But I would love to use it for that too. I could I was having trouble finding it. So that's awesome.

Thank you. Thank you.

And we'll also put a like resource tile on the library with the zoo monitor, like instructions. And that Theo and I were talking about doing last week so that anybody in the network if you're like, Oh, yes, we talked about this thing. How do I do it, you can find it in our resource library by searching zoo monitor. So I think that was something that we were planning on putting together. But I do want to be mindful that we are at time. So thank you all for attending today. It was the first learning group we've had specifically on evaluation in a while. So it'd be incredibly valuable. If you took about five minutes to complete this survey that I just dropped in the chat. If you liked this, if you did not like this, if you want more evaluation topics, what are they? And that'll help Theo and I start planning for the end of 2024 and into 2025, to make sure that we're continuing to host relevant evaluation focused events for folks if that's something that you all are interested in. But otherwise, be on the lookout for the post of an email that will have the recordings and links to the kinds of stuff within a week or so. And we'll send that to everybody who registered as well as put it up on the discussion board and our resource library afterwards. And as always, if you have any questions about our events, or anything related to the ACE for Wildlife network, feel free to direct them to [empathy@zoo.org](mailto:empathy@zoo.org) which is the email I just popped in the chat. But thank you all for coming today. And I hope to see you all in some way shape or form later on. Thanks