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Self-Evaluation Tools in Canadian STEM Outreach Programs

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We report the results on the self-evaluation tools used in Canadian STEM outreach activities reported by representatives for English-language NSERC PromoScience programs. The approaches to evaluation are categorized such as output vs. outcome, quantitative vs. qualitative, metrics vs. surveys, and general vs. specific. While qualitative answers are useful for informing changes to the event/program in the short term, quantitative answers may be useful for analysis as data is collected over time. In general, programs tend to favour low-cost methods (i.e. simple metrics recording, brief post-event surveys) and few programs make an effort to measure their long-term impacts (i.e. track actual outcomes, not just potential outcomes). Thus, this study is more able to demonstrate which tools are common, as a potential proxy for what is effective, than demonstrate which tools are effective directly. The directions for future work are discussed.

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