

*Thursday, October 16, 2008*

**THE LEARNING SCIENCES presents**

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## **ELIZABETH BABCOCK**



Director of Education and Library Collections at the Field Museum of Natural History. Before joining the Museum in 2002, Dr. Babcock worked as a research manager of user experience for an international technology consulting company, and served as the Teacher and Student Programs Director at The Field Museum. She also has experience as a communications consultant and program evaluator, developing and assessing communication strategies for diverse audiences and community outreach programs. Dr. Babcock holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Cultural Anthropology from Indiana University, and a B.A. in Psychology and a B.M. in Music Education from Northwestern University.

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## **Measuring Effectiveness at The Field Museum: Processes and Challenges?**

As a public education and research institution, measuring performance at The Field Museum has many dimensions. The Museum's scientific staff is judged on traditional academic criteria (e.g. publications), as well as participation in exhibition development and educational outreach. Admission numbers and visitor demographics are another critical indicator of success, and are linked to exhibitions and community outreach efforts. Program utilization and changes in knowledge, attitudes and skills are some of the criteria used to evaluate education programs. But perhaps the most critical area of performance at this museum, and science museums in general, is the degree to which the museum has increased the public's understanding of science. Yet, this can be the most difficult area in which to measure impact.

In this presentation, Dr. Babcock will address the challenges associated with measuring the impact of museum education and scientific outreach programs at a regional natural history museum. More specifically, she will review The Field Museum's performance indicators for marketing and audience diversification initiatives, education programs, exhibitions, and science outreach, and the successes and limitations associated with each.

**October 16, 2008  
12:00 PM – 1:15 PM  
Annenberg Hall, Room 303**