EXPLORING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN **RESEARCH** AND **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Eval Café (30 May 2016)
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THE PROBLEM

Questions and discussions concerning the difference between **research** and **evaluation** have occurred on EVALTALK since 1998 on an annual basis (Mathison 2008:183) – and this very question was asked during an Eval Café in July 2015.

> *In my fieldwork as an evaluator, I frequently encounter a lack of awareness about the essence of evaluation, in general, and the difference between evaluation and research, in particular (Levin Rosalis 2003:2)*

In this presentation I will discuss 3 questions in response to the larger question concerning the difference between research and evaluation

1. What do “research”, “monitoring and evaluation” mean?
2. What does “research” have in common with “evaluation”? How are they different?
3. What does an evaluator need to know that is different to a researcher?

RESEARCH

DEFINING “RESEARCH”

The Frascati Manual is the internationally recognised methodology for collecting and using Research and Development statistics.
It defines research as follows:

Research and experimental development (R&D) comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.

https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/applying/frascati/

TYPES OF RESEARCH

Basic research is experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundation of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view.

Applied research is also original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective.

https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/applying/frascati/

TYPES OF RESEARCH

- **Pure basic research** is experimental and theoretical work undertaken to acquire new knowledge without looking for long term benefits other than the advancement of knowledge.
- **Strategic basic research** is experimental and theoretical work undertaken to acquire new knowledge directed into specified broad areas in the expectation of useful discoveries. It provides the broad base of knowledge necessary for the solution of recognised practical problems.
- **Applied research** is original work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge with a specific application in view. It is undertaken either to determine possible uses for the findings of basic research or to determine new ways of achieving some specific and predetermined objectives.

http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/22E4C184CA111129CA25697E0018FD78?opendocument

MONITORING

DEFINING “MONITORING”

Everyday notion of “monitoring” = checking/ measuring/ close observation/ “policing”/ “supervising”

Everyday examples:

- Monitoring the patient’s blood pressure
- Monitoring your weight
- Monitoring household expenditure
- Monitoring the employee’s productivity

Monitoring – in everyday life – is the close (even continuous) and systematic observation (“surveillance”) of an object.

DEFINING "PROGRAMME MONITORING"

Programme monitoring is defined as "the **continuous** process of examining the delivery of programme **outputs** to intended beneficiaries, which is carried out during the execution of a programme with the intention of immediately correcting any deviation from operational objectives" (Kellogg)

Programme monitoring is the **repeated**, reliable and standardized measure of programme inputs, activities and **outputs** (Mouton).

Programme monitoring is primarily a descriptive activity. Monitoring is best seen as part of the **evaluation** process

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *MONITORING* AND *EVALUATION*

But what is the relationship between the notions of "monitoring" and "evaluation"?

Is monitoring an activity where we simply describe what we observe or measure and evaluation – as the word suggests – is an activity where we make value judgements (that go beyond description)? It is not as simple as this.

On the basis of monitoring certain phenomena or actions (including programme activities) we certainly do make value judgements.

In addition, when monitoring is done in relation to targets it can be seen as evaluative.

If the patient's blood pressure is too low or too high we conclude that "the person is at risk" (which is an evaluative statement and nor merely descriptive). If household expenditure is too high, we conclude that "we have to cut back on certain luxury items". Such value judgements then may translate into a new course of action or intervention.

EVALUATION


Evaluation
OUTSTANDING
Excellent
Very Good
Average
Below Average

THE ORIGINS

Interest in evaluation arose in the United States because research was not sufficient to meet the demand for a systematic examination of what was going on in the field…

Since then, new systems and methods of looking at projects, which differ from those of conventional research, have been used, breaking from the conventional stream of research (Rossi & Freeman, 1982). These systems and methods were not only new in their approach but were also called by a different name: “evaluation” (Rossi & Wright, 1984; Tyler, 1942)

The demands on the evaluators and evaluation in general changed from examining operational and measurable aims in the 1950s to producing useful information for the decision-makers and even to shaping the actual intervention in the 1970s (Nevo, 1989; Scriven,1967; Stufflebeam et al., 1974)

Levin-Rozalis M

(2003:2)

DEFINING "EVALUATION"

Evaluation research is *the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualization, design, implementation and utility of social intervention programmes.*

(Rossi. Lipsey and Freeman 2004:2)

Evaluation is the systematic **assessment** of the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy, **compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards** as a means of contributing to the **improvement of the program or policy**. (Weiss, 1975:4)

VALUE OF EVALUATION

Bad is bad and good is good and it is the job of evaluators to decided which is which (Scriven,1986)

Society requires a science of **valuing** because it requires systematic, unbiased means of knowing if it products, personnel and programmes are good. (Scriven,1981)

It is crucial to see that the evaluation point of view is not the manager's point of view, and it is not simply the consumer's point of view; it is a point of view which should stand above identification with either of these parties, but make clear to each the importance of the other (Scriven,1980)

PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

When we evaluate a programme (or anything else for that matter) we basically make a judgment of the evaluand with reference to certain evaluation criteria or principles such as:

- Relevance (the right or appropriate thing to do)
- Effectiveness and Impact (achieving the correct results)
- Efficiency (achieving results with optimal resources)
- Value for money (achieving the right results [value] given the available finances [money]
- Sustainability (actions that have lasting effects)

(OECD DAC 2009)

POSITIVE FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY MONITORING AND EVALUATION STUDIES

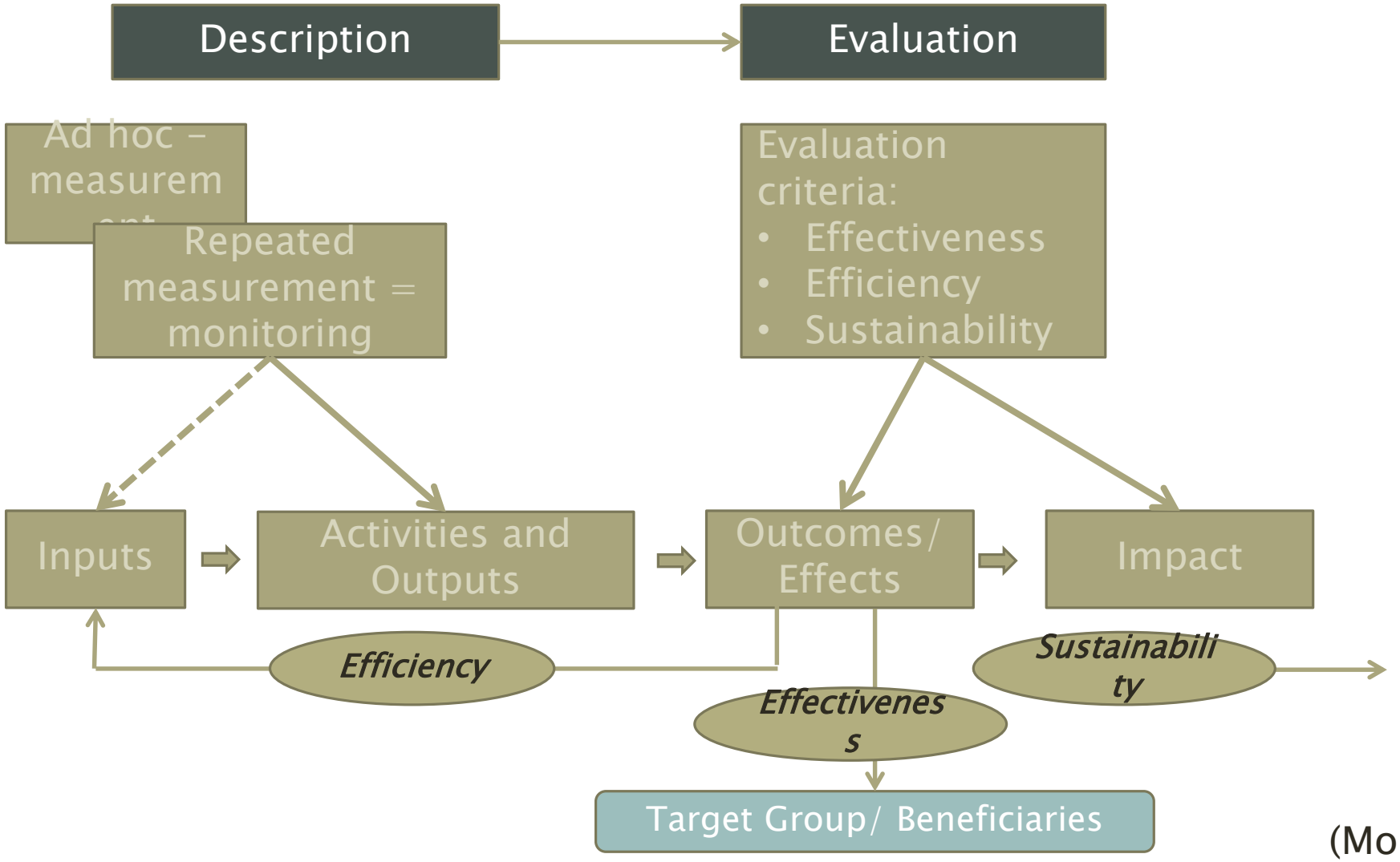
Formative functions = evaluation findings inform and direct improvement of a programme (mostly before implementation and early stages of implementation);

Summative functions = evaluation findings reduce risk through recommendations about discontinuation of funding or downscaling of funding or (positively) replicating and up scaling support for programmes

Strategic functions = evaluation results properly constructed and report can assist management in prioritising investment, managing risk better and facilitate learning.

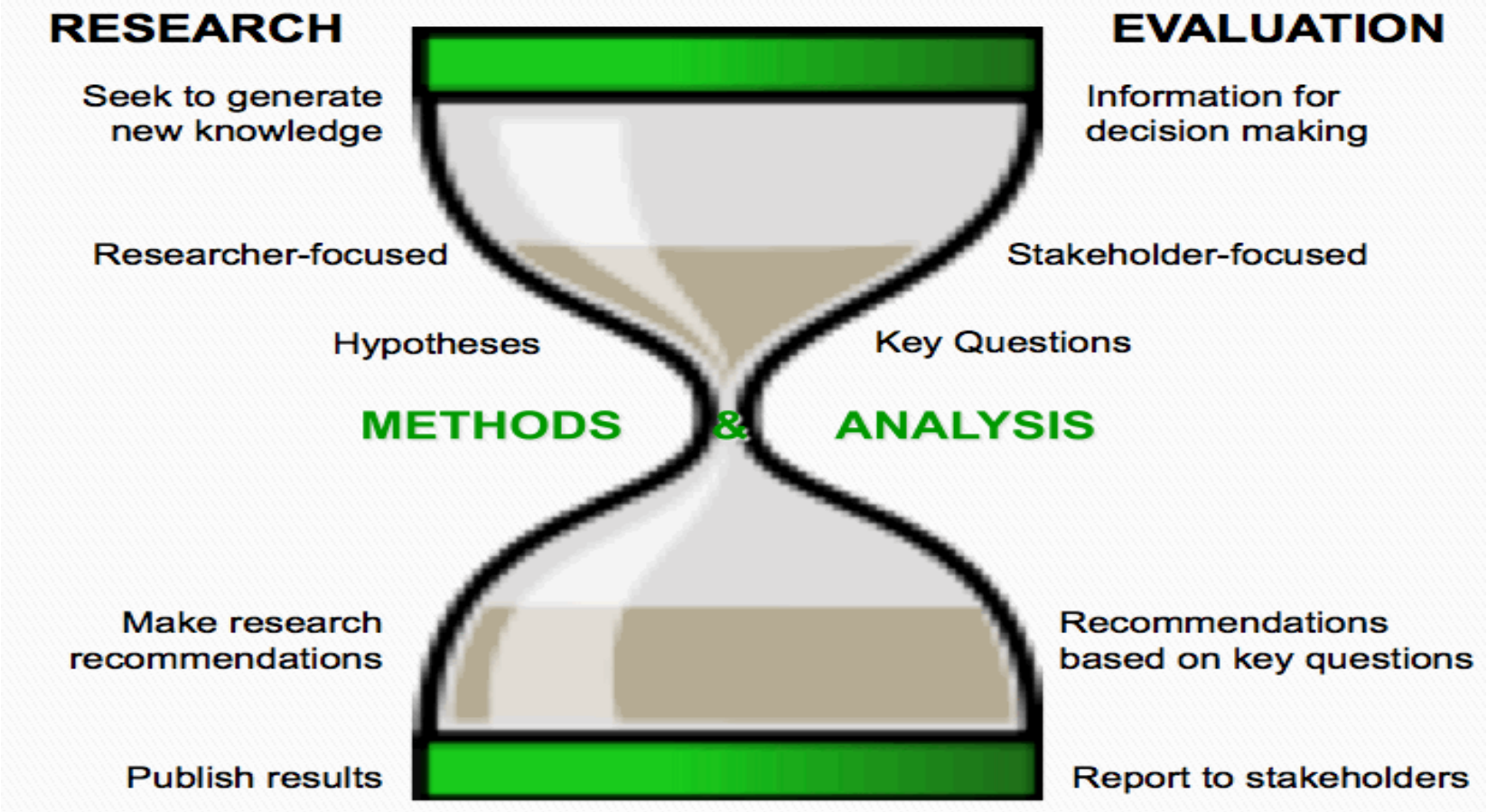
Learning functions = evaluation studies can assist in gaining more insight about human behaviour and social change and especially what kinds of programmes are more likely to produce positive impact and under what conditions.

ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROGRAMME "MONITORING" AND "EVALUATION"



(Mouton)

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES



This contribution is from the aea365 Daily Tips blog, by and for evaluators, from the [American Evaluation Association](#).

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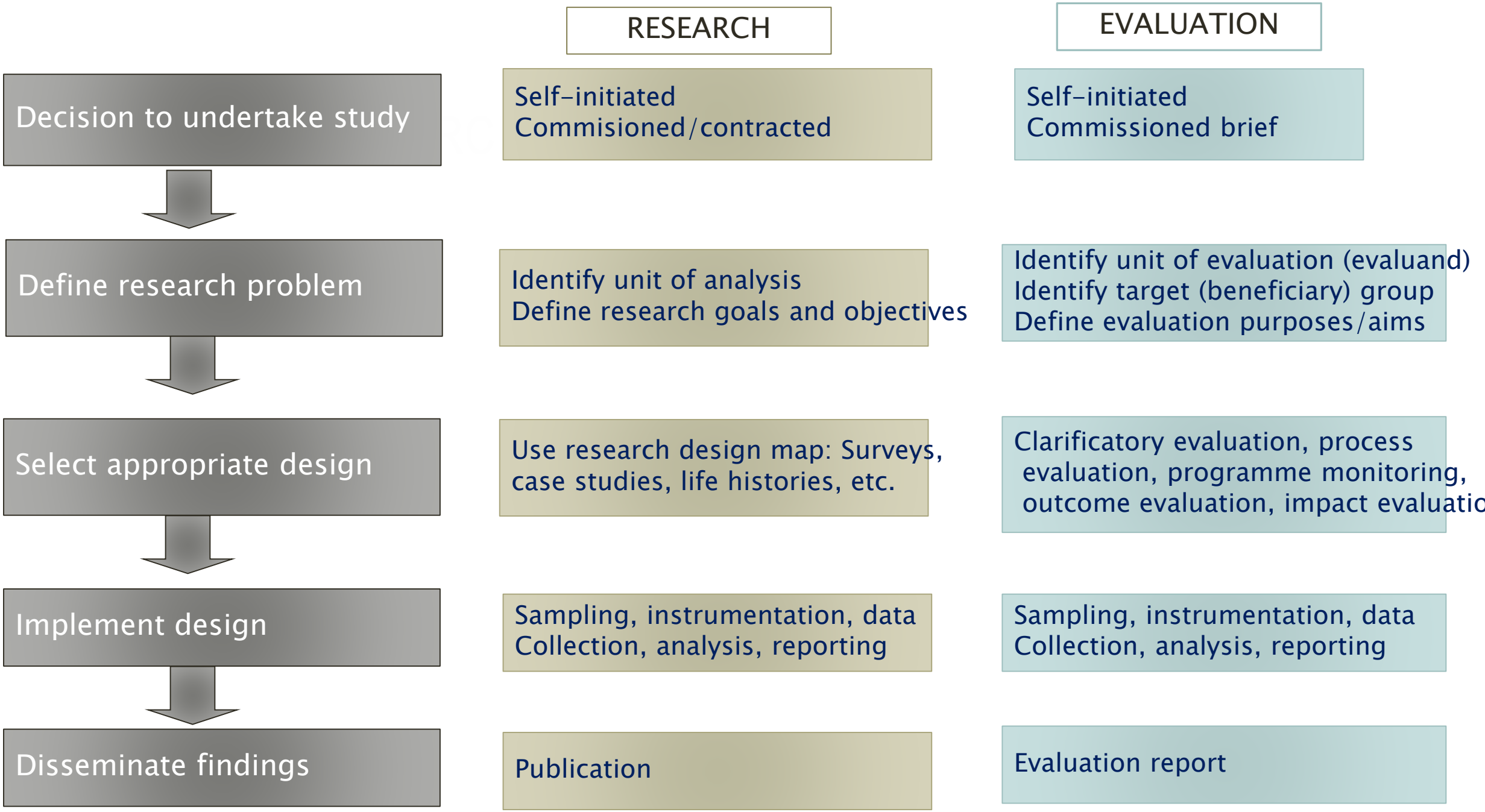
RESEARCH
EVALUATION
Decision to undertake study
Self-initiated
Commisioned/contracted
Self-initiated
Commissioned brief
Define research problem
Identify unit of analysis
Define research goals and objectives
Identify unit of evaluation (evaluand)
Identify target (beneficiary) group
Define evaluation purposes/aims
Select appropriate design
Use research design map: Surveys,
case studies, life histories, etc.
Clarificatory evaluation, process
evaluation, programme monitoring,
outcome evaluation, impact evaluatio
Implement design
Sampling, instrumentation, data
Collection, analysis, reporting
Sampling, instrumentation, data
Collection, analysis, reporting
Disseminate findings
Publication
Evaluation report

WHO IS A RESEARCHER?

"Professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems, and in the management of the projects concerned.“

Frascati Manual, OECD, 2002

WHO IS AN EVALUATOR?

DPME EVALUATOR COMPETENCIES

Competence Dimension	Domain
1. Overarching Considerations – This Dimension is concerned with outlining the competencies relevant across the practice of evaluation. Without the development of these skills evaluation use will be limited.	Contextual Knowledge and Understanding
	Ethical Conduct
	Interpersonal Skills
2. Leadership – This is the quality of being able to champion evaluation processes.	Leadership
3. Evaluation Craft – What people need to know about evaluation and links to research practice.	Evaluative Discipline and Practice
	Research Practice
4. Implementation of evaluation	Planning
	Management
	Reporting

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- A postgraduate qualification; or
- An undergraduate degree with at least three years of documented relevant work experience.
- Applicants must submit a personal statement outlining relevant prior study, work experience and

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Outcomes

These courses enable you to:

- demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of evaluation theory and practice
- make effective use of evaluation literature and research
- apply understandings of evaluation theory and methods to a range of professional settings
- demonstrate an appreciation of professional responsibilities and ethical principles that should characterise leaders in the evaluation field.

crest

Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology

Postgraduate Studies

Monitoring and Evaluation Methods

The Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology (CREST) offers three M&E programmes - a Postgraduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation, an MPhil in Monitoring and Evaluation and a PhD in Evaluation Studies. Our M&E programme has been developed utilizing a framework of evaluator competencies which ensures that all offerings are cohesive and aligned to both national and international demands.

The key outcomes of the programme are that students who successfully complete the programme will:

have a good understanding of the history and development of M&E as a new "discipline" internationally as well as in South Africa;

have a good understanding of the main theoretical approaches and models in the field;

be able to design and conduct evaluation studies utilizing the most appropriate methods and techniques; and

have a good understanding of the professional (including ethical) and organizational considerations when managing the M&E portfolio in an organisation.

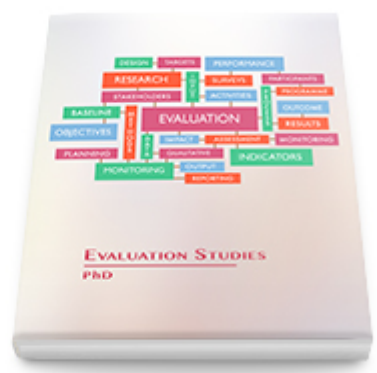
The purpose of the programme is to equip at least four categories of M&E professionals: M&E officials in government departments in African countries and abroad, programme managers from NGOs and other civil society organisations, evaluation consultants and academics who work in this field and who require a theoretical and professional underpinning in order to become the future teachers in the field.

Download brochure.

Postgraduate Diploma

MPhil

PhD



COURSE OVERVIEW

COMPULSORY

Module 1
Evaluation theory:

Current approaches and debates

Module 2

Indicators and measurement for M&E

Module 3

Data collection and data management for evaluation

Module 7

Impact assessment

Module 4
Qualitative analysis of evaluation data

Module 5

Statistics for evaluation

Module 6

Managing an M&E Portfolio

ELECTIVES

Evaluation in the public sector

Monitoring and evaluating health Interventions

African Evaluation case studies

COURSE CONTENT

MODULE 1: evaluation theory: current debates and approaches

Focus: In-depth treatment of the major evaluation approaches, including:

1. The experimental tradition (Campbell and Cook)
2. Constructivist 4th Generation Evaluation (Guba and Lincoln)
3. Utilization-focused evaluation theory (Patton)
4. Responsive evaluation (Stake)
5. Empowerment evaluation (Fetterman)
6. Realistic evaluation (Pawson and Tilley)
7. Theory-based evaluation (Wholey, Chen, Weiss)

RESEARCHERS ARE NOT EVALUATORS PER SE

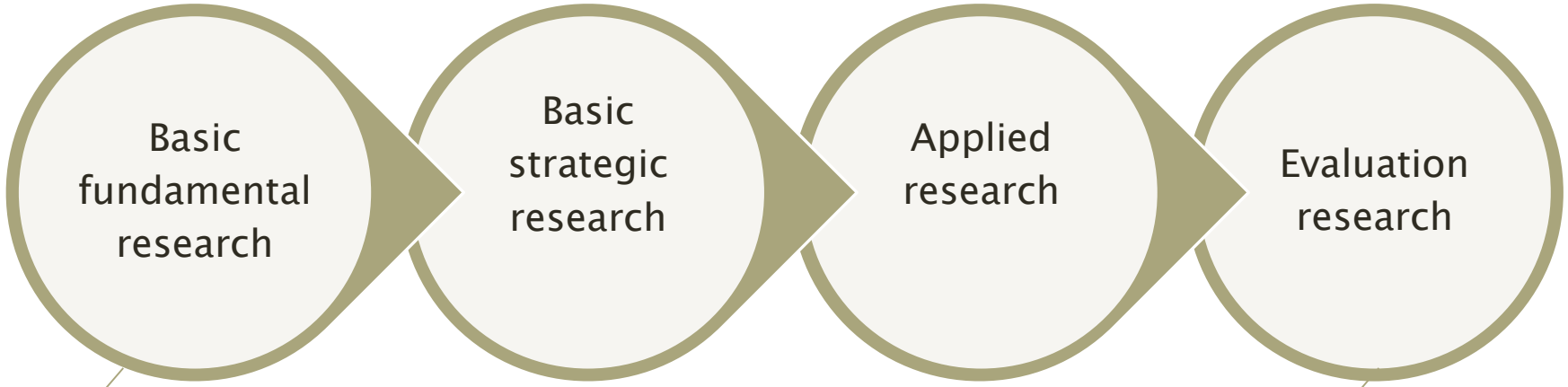
The question about differences between evaluation and research is also about what knowledge and skills evaluators need, an especially critical matter if there are unique domains of knowledge and skills for evaluators.

Evaluators are served well by having knowledge of and facility with most social science research methods, but… those are alone are not adequate, either in terms of methodological repertoire or the evaluation knowledge and skills domain

(Mathison 2008:186)

A CONTINUUM OF RESEARCH TYPES: COMMON IMPERATIVE TO SUBSTANTIATE CLAIMS

EXPLORATORY



TARGETED

How does it work?

How well does it work in real world setting?

Conceptu al

Interventi on

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