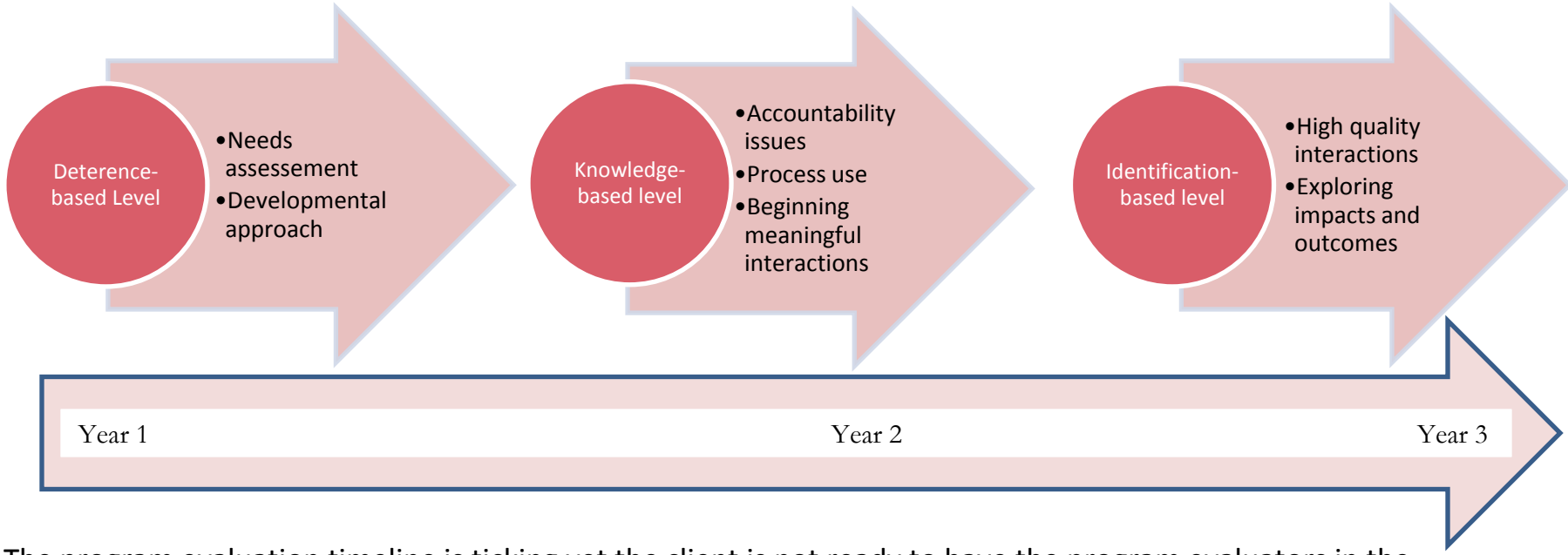
Building Trust as an Imperative in Conducting Meaningful Program Evaluation in a School District



The program evaluation timeline is ticking yet the client is not ready to have the program evaluators in the district! The district represented in this figure is under the continuous improvement category. At the start of the program, about half of the schools in the district are under academic watch. The district is rated to be in continuous improvement for a number of years. There are serious academic improvement demands and economic challenges in the district, not to mention competing personal stresses on teachers and administrators. And specifically, teachers are wary of evaluators. Clearly, building trust is foremost before even introducing the federally funded science improvement program to teachers. These three levels of trust considerations prompted vital adaptations to program implementation and evaluation. Specific adjustments to the evaluation activities and different evaluation approaches/foci were adjusted to the developing trust levels in the district.

On-going Development Toward Emerging Identification-based Level of Trust

Continued project work and negotiation of trust and relationships within the organization pave the way to a more systemic infrastructure that is proving helpful in the sustainability of school improvement efforts in the district. As of this date, this district is now rated "effective" by the state based on the improved performance of the students and the organization through the period; specifically, the science achievements of students improved by more than 10%. The project team is now actively working with the district in seeking additional grant funds to support the shared work.

Contact: University of Cincinnati

- Imelda Castañeda-Emenaker, EdD, Email: castania@ucmail.uc.edu; Tel: (513) 556-3816
- Ted Fowler, PhD, Email: fowlertw@ucmail.uc.edu; Tel: (513) 403-7443
- Kathie Maynard, MA, Email: sundk@ucmail.uc.edu; Tel: (513) 556-2023