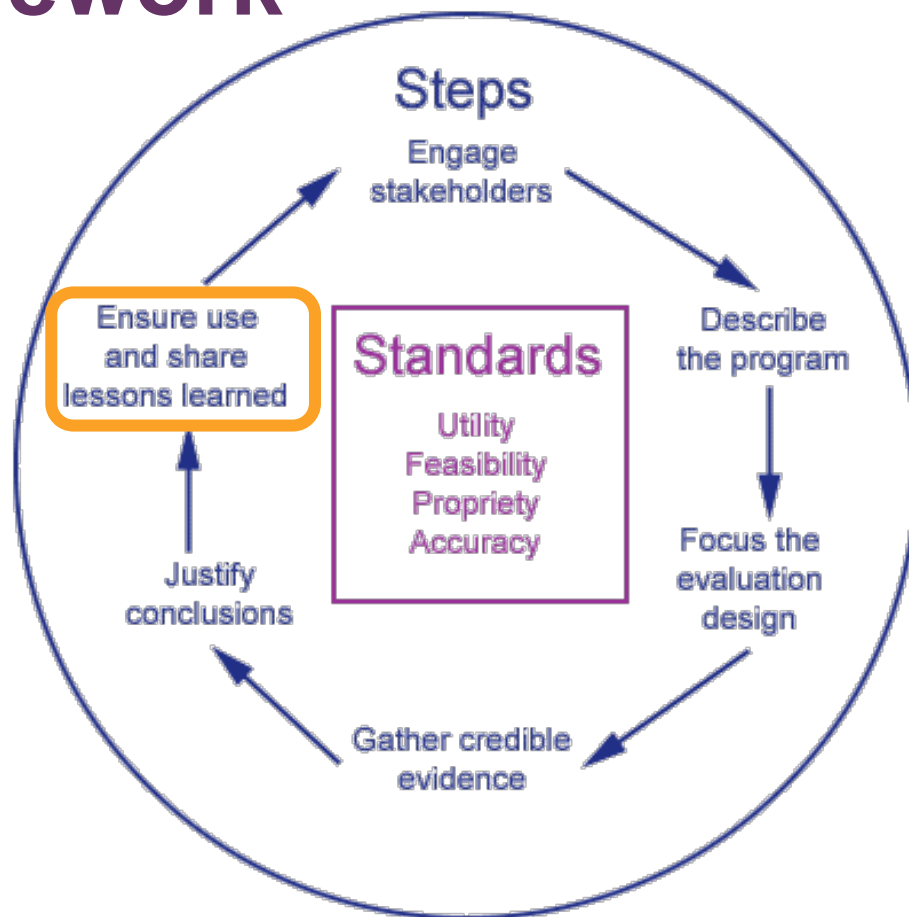# Accessing the crowd to study evaluation use and influence

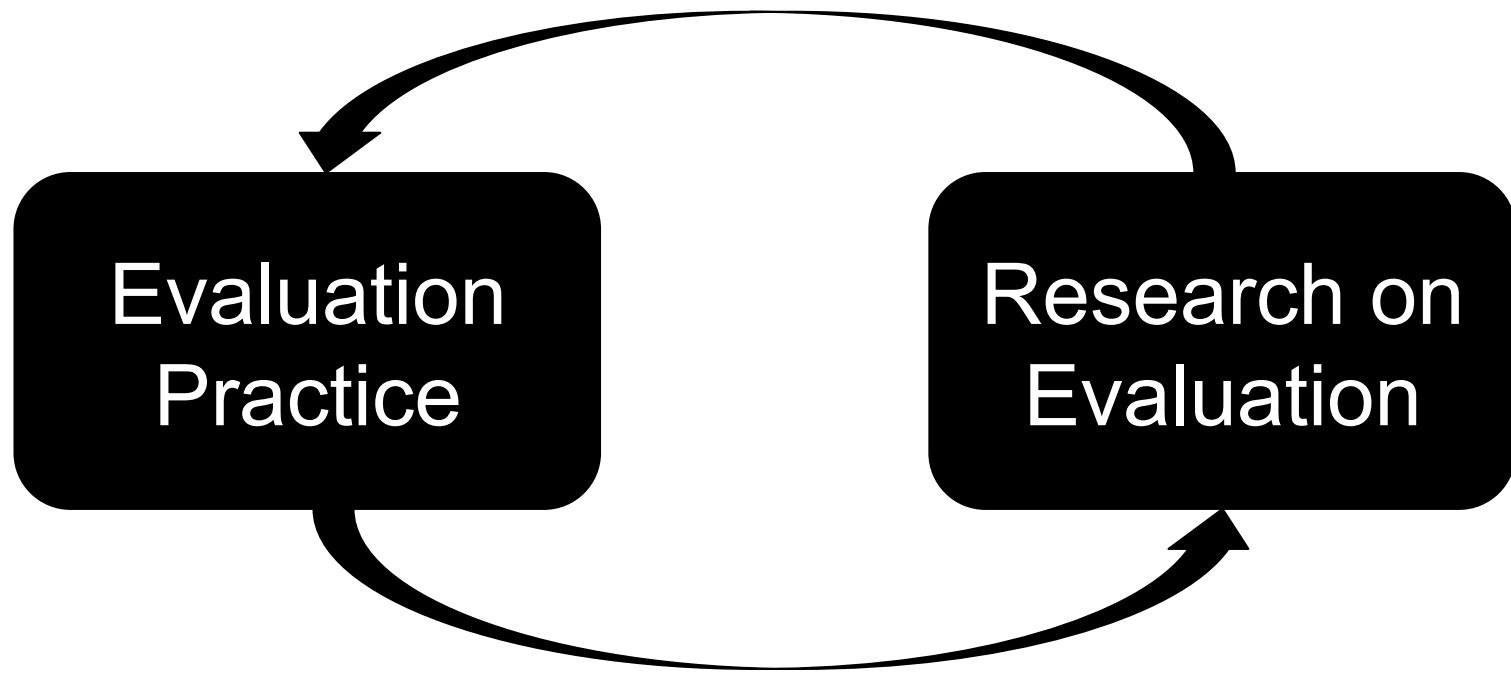Samantha Langan
Sarah Mason

CDC Framework

Evaluation Practice
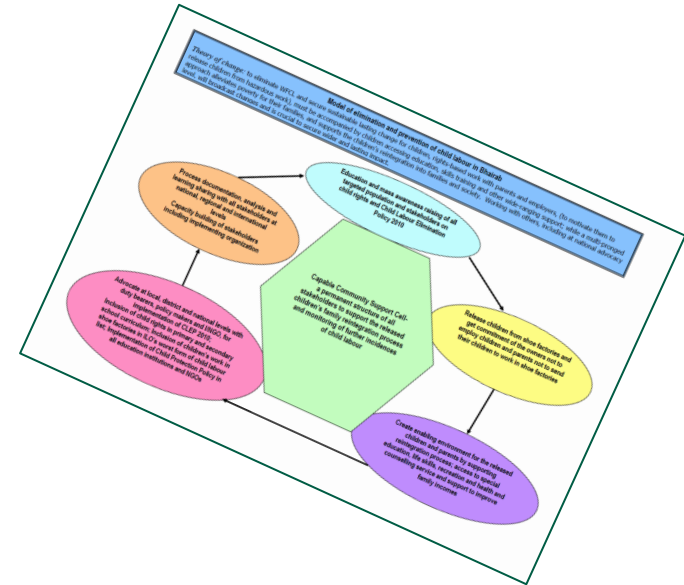
Research on Evaluation
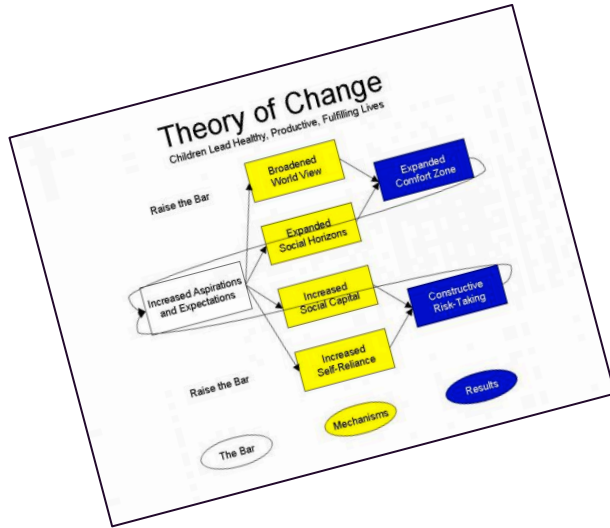
The MTurk Crowd
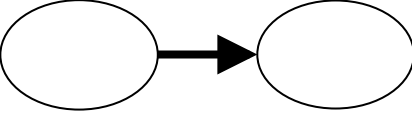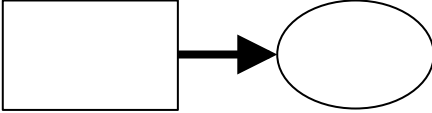
Example 1: Using the crowd to refine program theory visualization
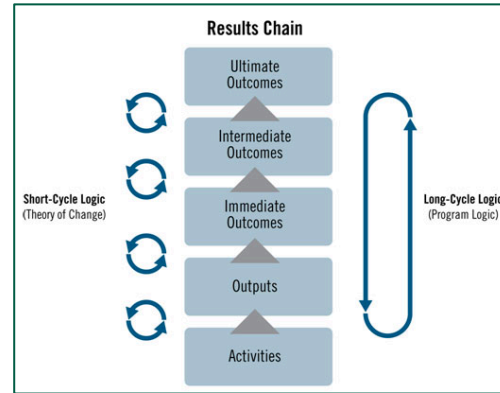
Control (Same, Solid, Single, Symmetrical, Non-Controversial Program Focus)
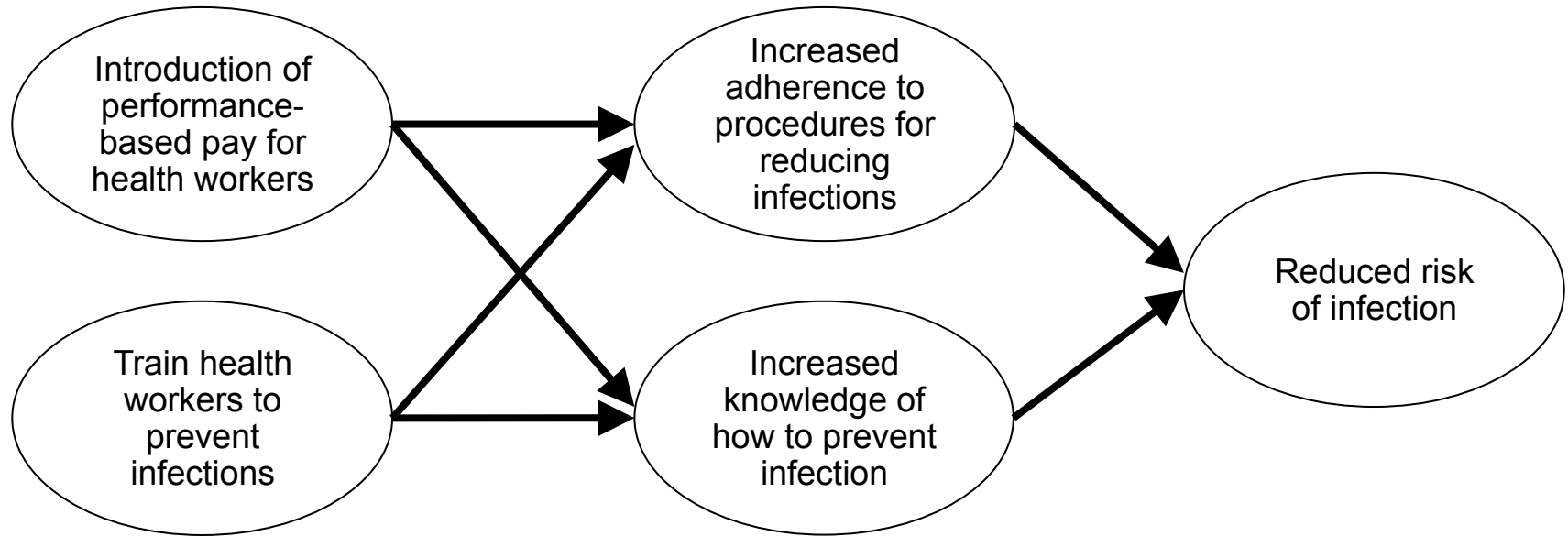
Does altering…effect comprehension of a program?

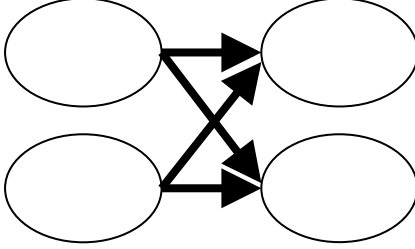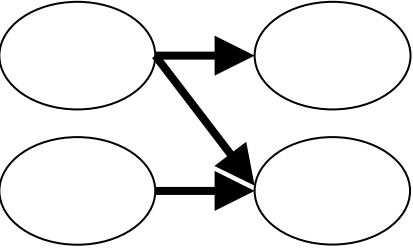|	Control	Treatment
Shape		
Arrows		
Feedback Loops		
Symmetry		
Program Topic	Non-Controversial	Controversial

Methods

Qualtrics Survey

Randomized Control Trial

>300 Participants

Heat Mapping
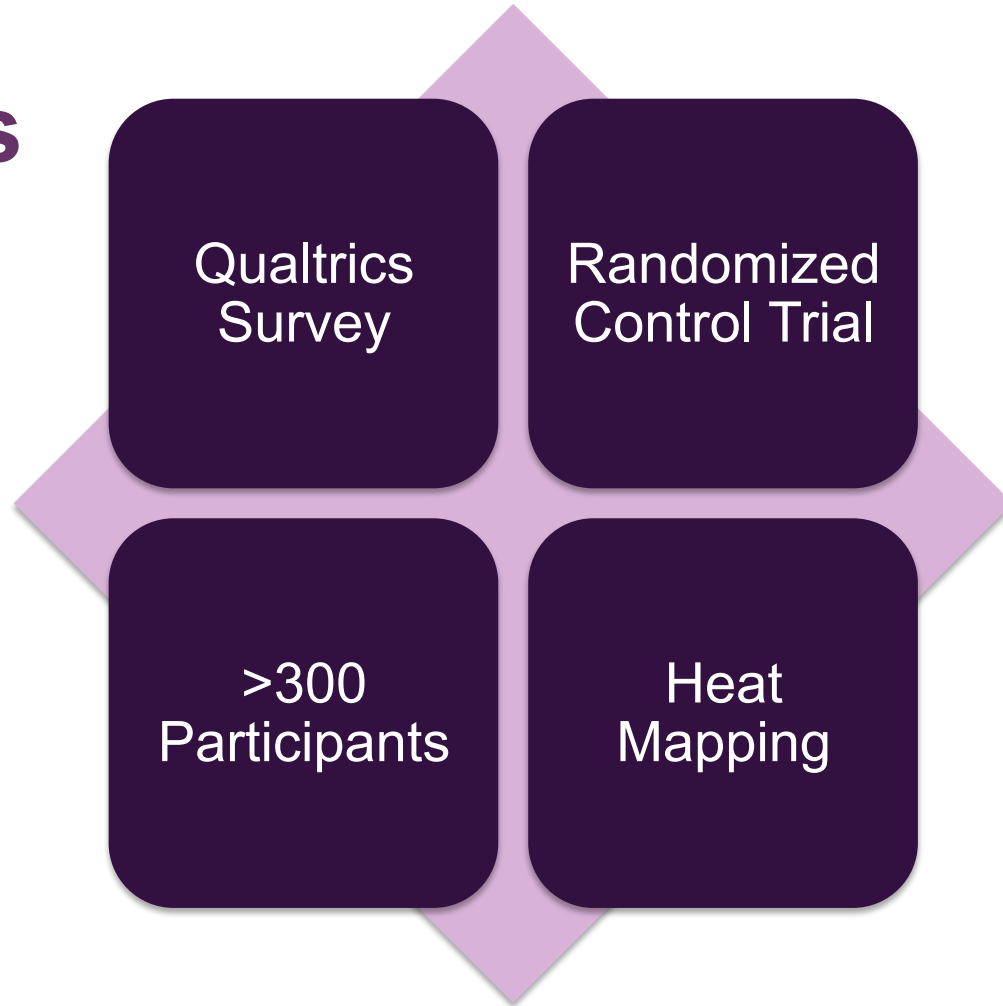
What is the program's most essential activity?
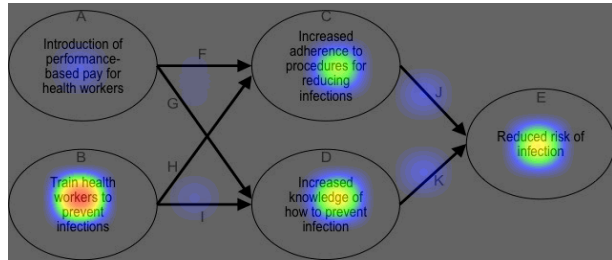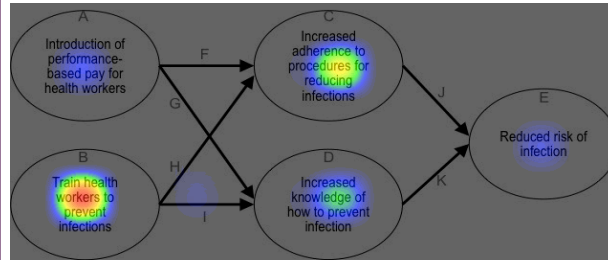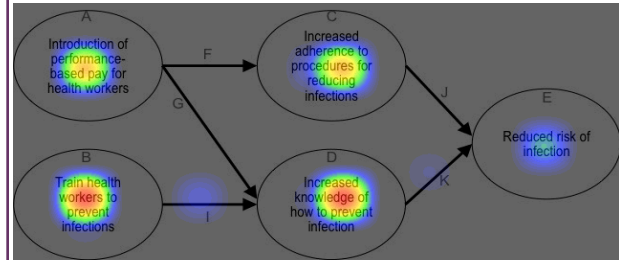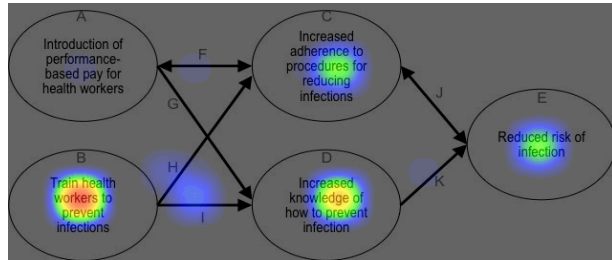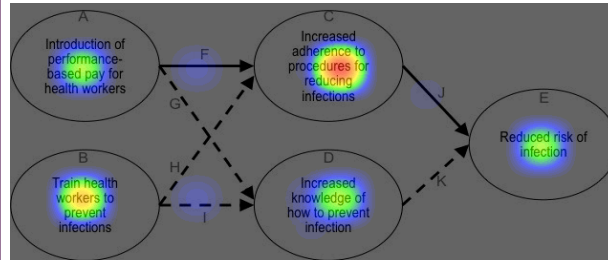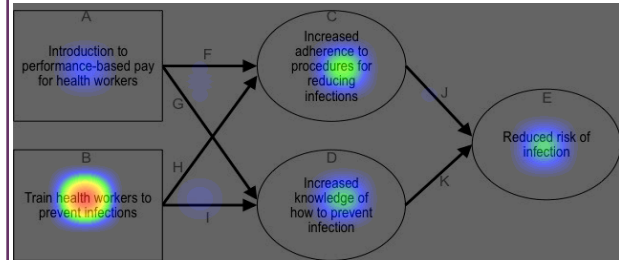
What is the program trying to achieve?
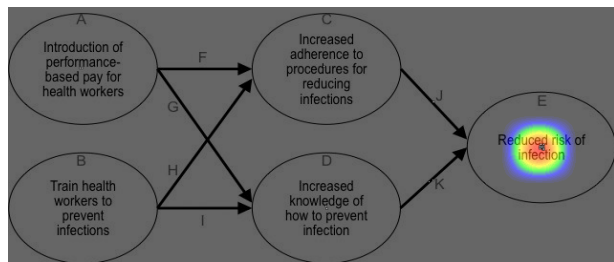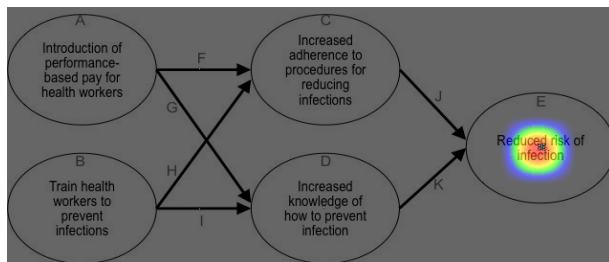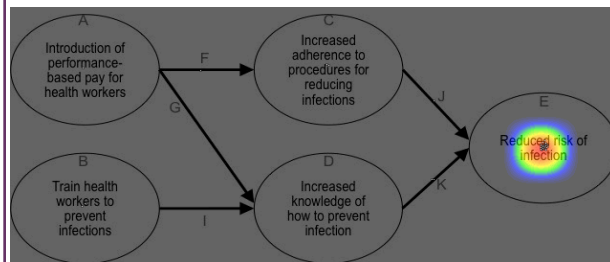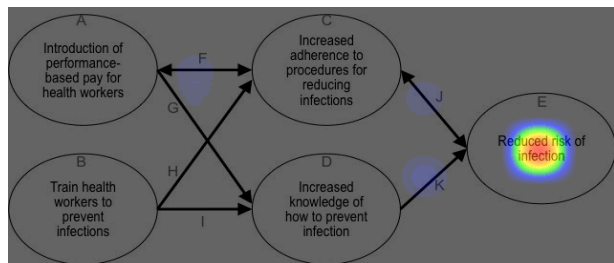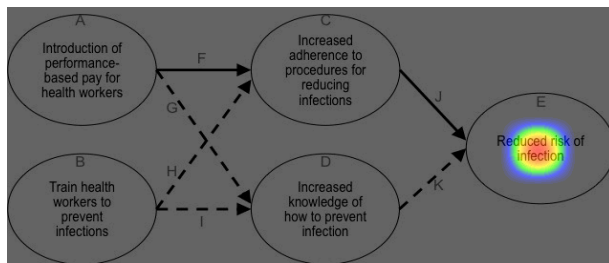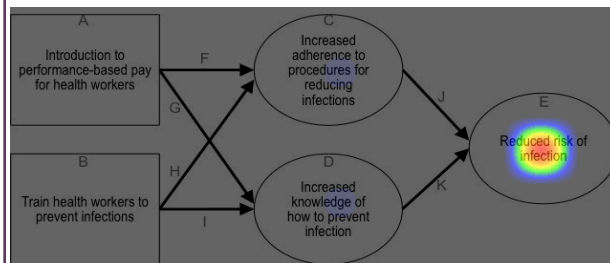
What area of the program model is most confusing to you?
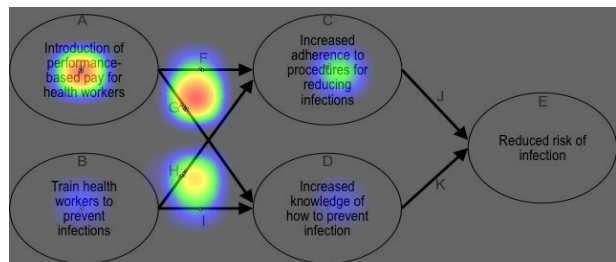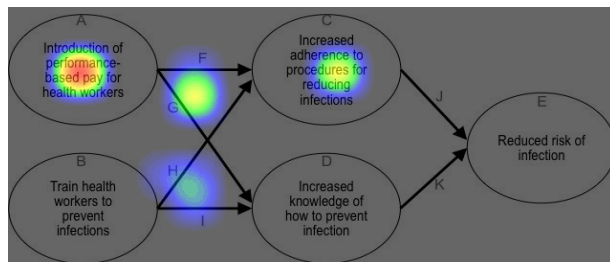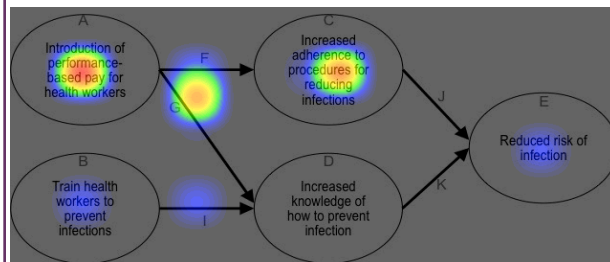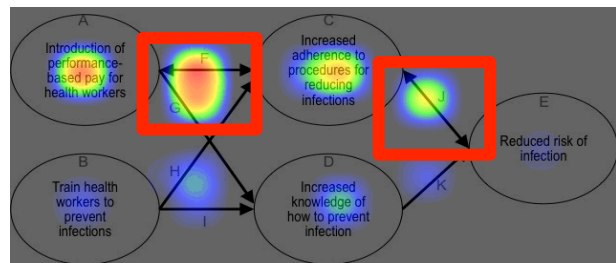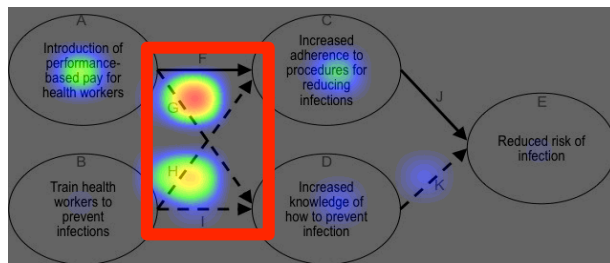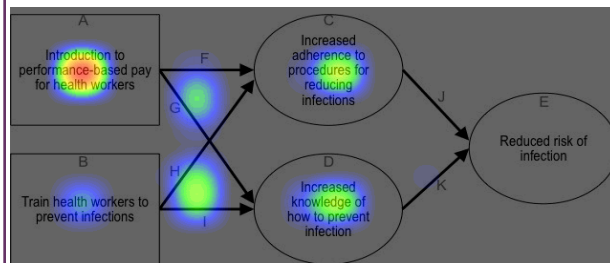
To facilitate comprehension of your program models…

Keep it **simple**.

Manipulate aspects of your model when necessary, but keep it **easy to understand**.

Use **arrows mindfully**.

If you can't explain it *simply*, you don't understand it well enough.
– Albert Einstein
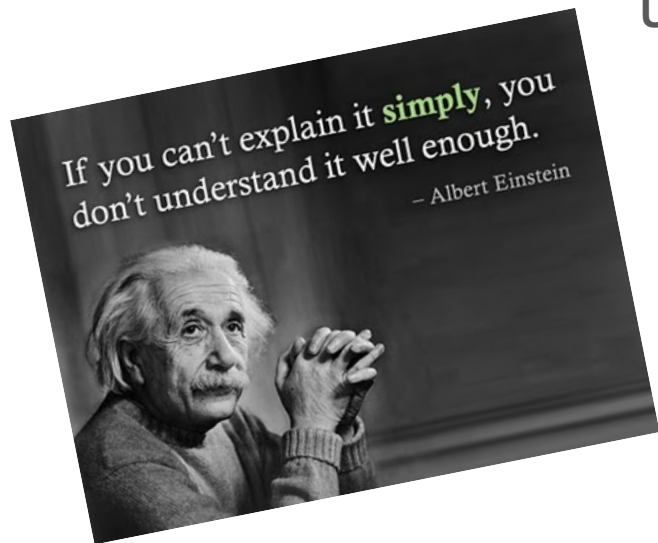
This study provides empirical evidence for how the general public may best interpret program models.

Example 2: Using the crowd to refine your reporting
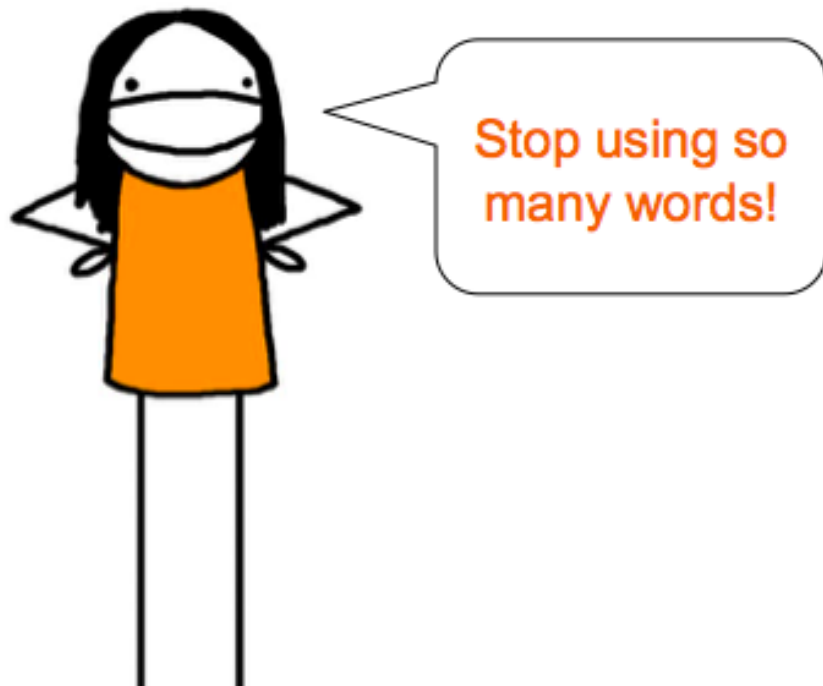
Are visual reports really more effective?

Program **+** Measure attitudes **+** **+** Measure attitudes

Are visual reports really more effective?

Program **+** Measure attitudes **+** Visual / Text / Mixed **+** Measure attitudes

Attitude change?
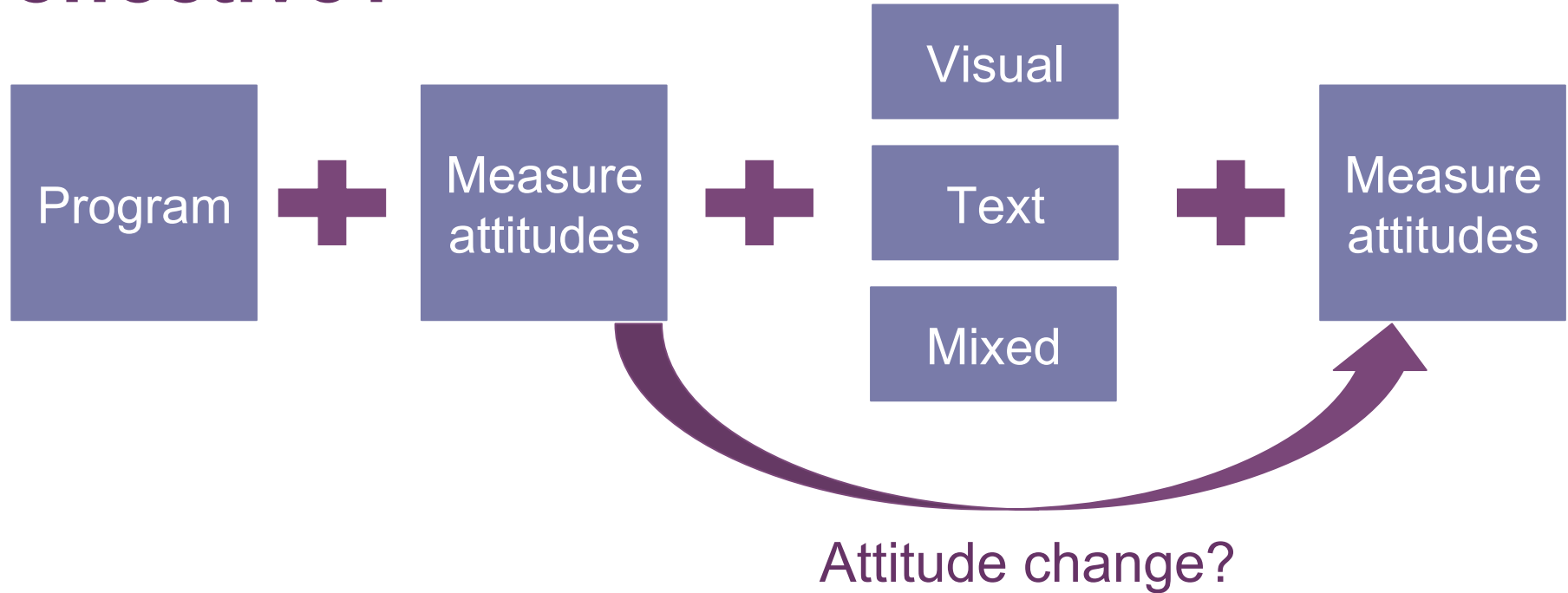
Contribution to RoE & Evaluation Practice

Visual reports **no more influential** than text reports

Visual reports led to **less positive attitudes** towards evaluation

Visual reports viewed as **less trustworthy** and less convincing

Data visualization is not a panacea.

We need further research on tailored evaluation reporting.

Benefits of crowdsourcing in this study

> 800 participants

diversity of participants

in less than 24 hours

able to manipulate content

What crowdsourcing can & can't do

CAN

- Provide access to large groups of people, quickly
- Do so in a cost effective way
- Provide a platform for experimentation and simulations
- Give you a general sense of how "the public" might respond to particular prompts or stimuli

CAN'T

- Tell you what will work in your specific context

Thank you!