The State of *Developmental Evaluation* in the Early 21st Century

Michael Quinn Patton
October 17, 2013

1

Many different approaches to evaluation.

Developmental evaluation is only one:

with a particular niche

Developmental Evaluation

Purpose: Developmental evaluation (DE) informs and supports innovative and adaptive *development* in complex dynamic environments.

Core DE questions: What is getting developed and what are the implications of what gets developed?

DE brings to innovation and adaptation the processes of asking evaluative questions, applying evaluation logic, and gathering and reporting evaluative data to support project, program, product, and/or organizational ***development*** with timely feedback.

Who's here?

- New to DE, came to find out about it

- Know about it but not doing it

- Doing it

EVALUATION 2013
SEARCHABLE PROGRAM

Keyword in Title or Abstract:

Developmental Evaluation

Results: *38 sessions*

Themes found in AEA sessions

- Dealing with complexity and systems change
- DE in practice & action: from theory to practice
- DE applied to a specific area: human services, schools, philanthropy, extension, neighborhood initiative, conflict environments, youth homelessness...
- DE combined with other approaches: collaborative logic modeling, adaptive action, program theory, cross-disciplinary inquiry, critical incident analysis, mixed methods, navigation
- Role and position of the Developmental Evaluation

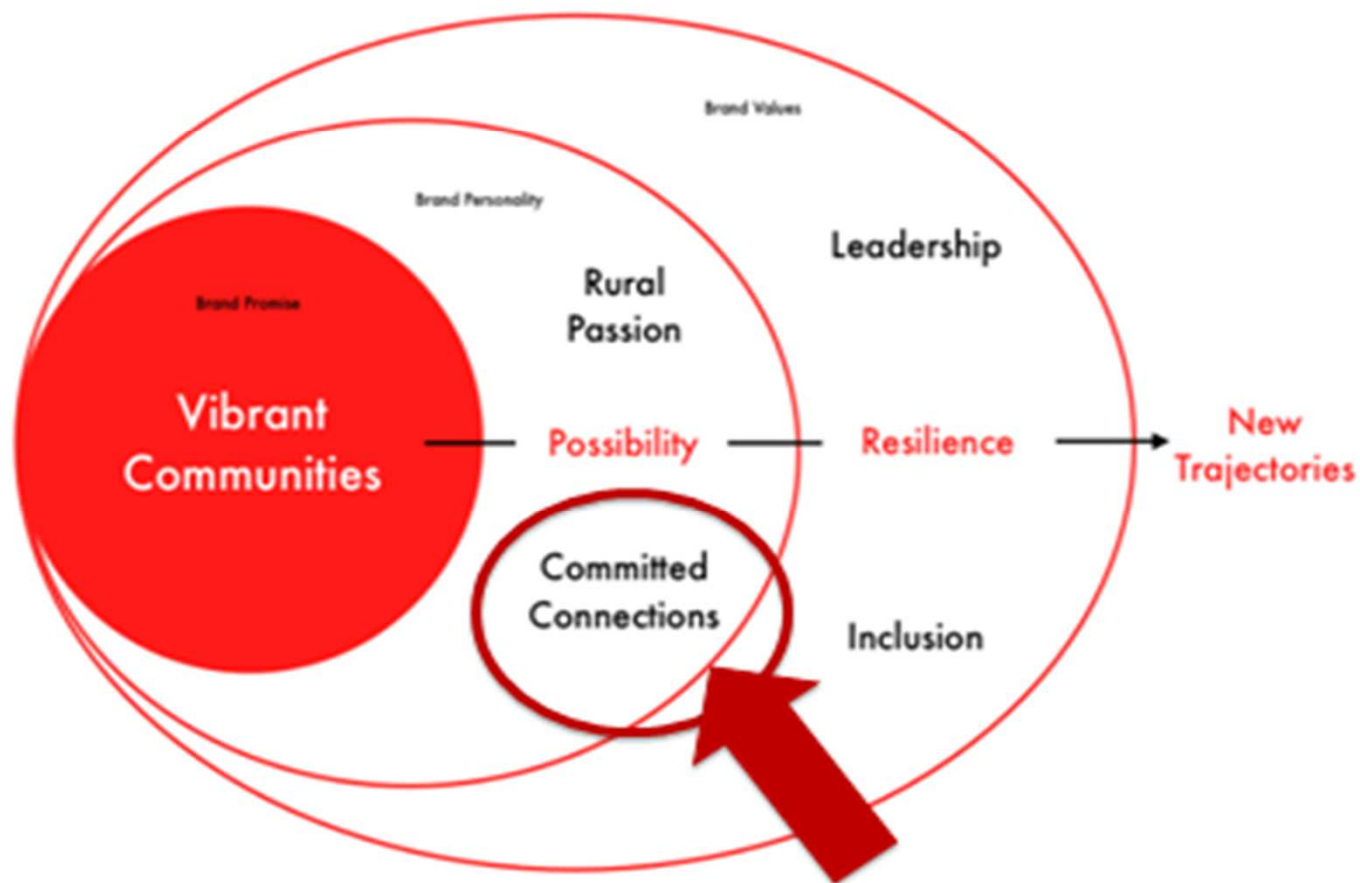# Blandin Community Leadership Program

LEADERSHIP...
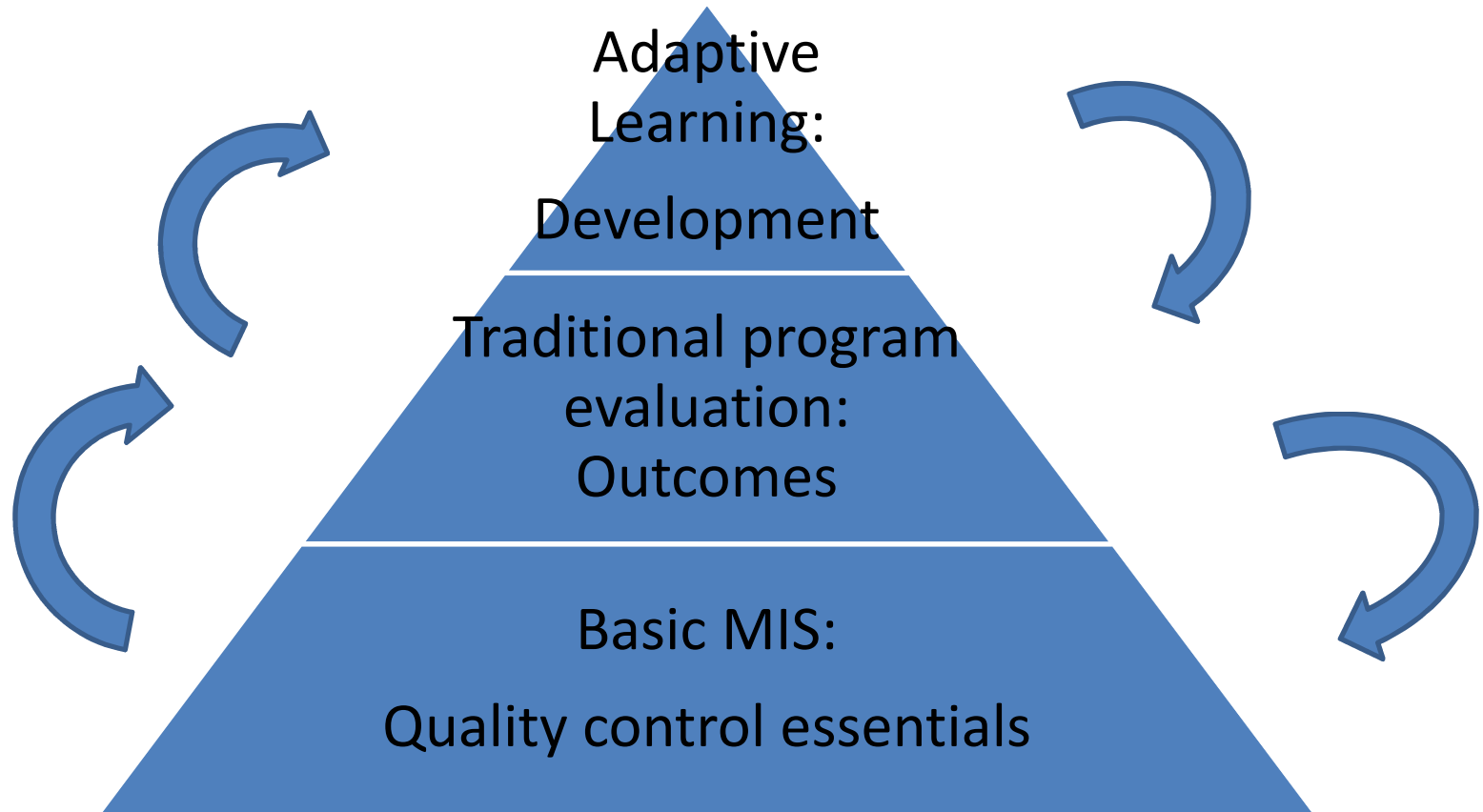
YOU HAVE TO DO
IT YOURSELF,

BUT YOU CAN'T
DO IT ALONE.

Strategic Framework

Mountain of Accountability

Examples of Developmental Evaluation

AES Best Evaluation Policy and Systems Award

Recognizes work developing the best evaluation policy, integrated evaluation system, evaluation program, framework and/ or implementation of evaluation policies, systems, programs or frameworks. Also recognizes work undertaken in partnership with clients or users who have championed the evaluation and can attest to increased arising from the evaluation process or specific evaluation findings.

2013 Award Winners: Nan Wehipeihana, Kate McKegg and Kataraina Pipi of Research Evaluation Consultancy Limited (a member of the Kinnect Group), and Veronica Thompson from Sport New Zealand) for Developmental Evaluation – He Oranga Poutama: what have we learned?

Kate   Veronica   Nan   Kataraina

He Oranga Poutama Developmental Evaluation

The HOP initiative set out to develop a practical, grounded understanding of what *as Māori* looks like in diverse sport and recreation contexts

A set of core principles and concepts were developed that can be adapted in various local settings along with a system of national coordination and support to facilitate local effort.

What was developed
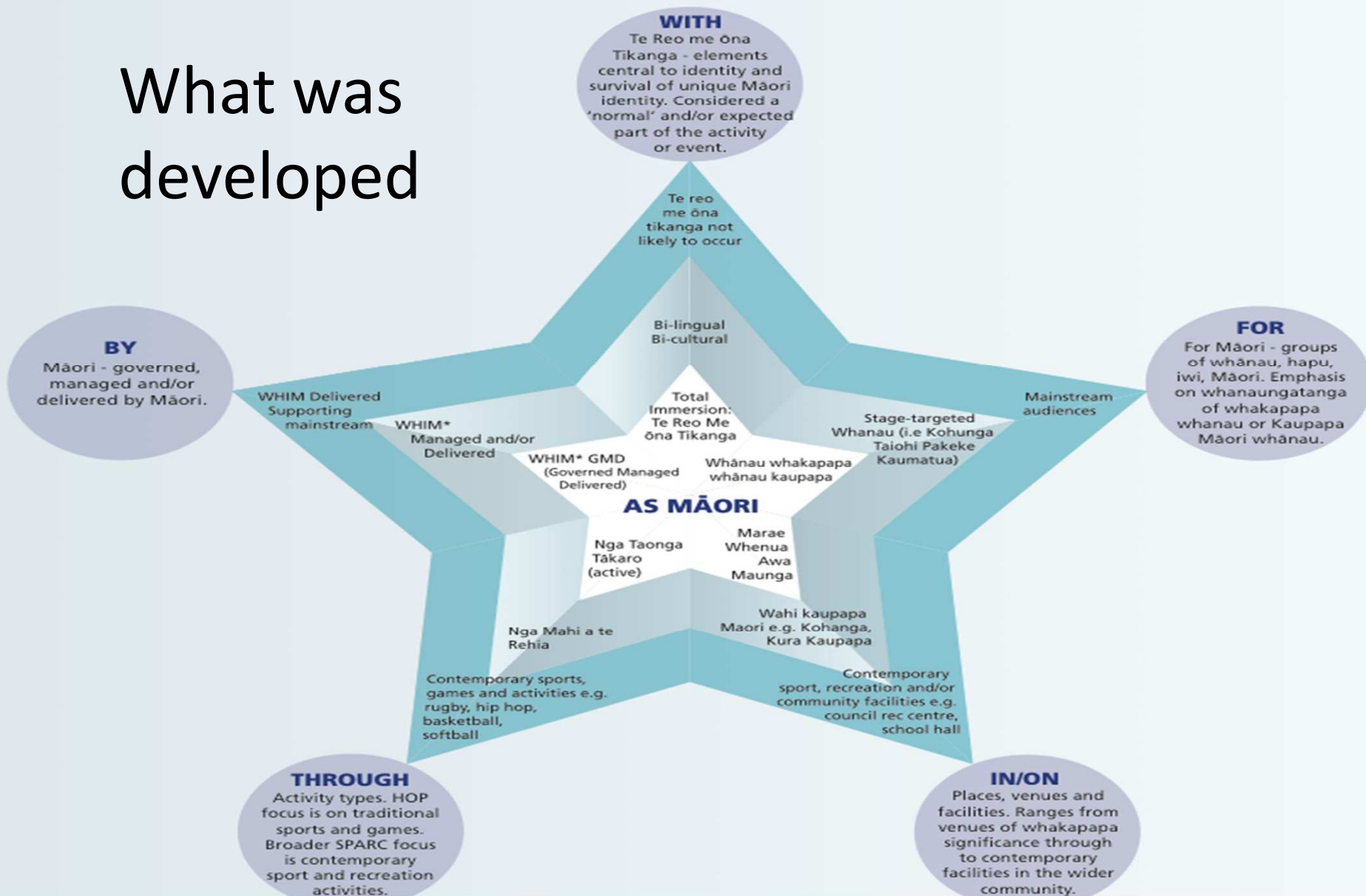
Our learning about DE

- DE is responsive to culture and cultural context
- As an evaluation approach it is a cultural chameleon in that it takes on and is sensitive to local context
- It is not method prescriptive, so it is able to sit comfortably within an Indigenous values base
- It allows evaluation to affirm and privilege indigenous language (te reo Māori), cultural practices (tikanga Māori), concepts and knowledge (whakaaro).

Innovation in Motion:

Developmental Evaluation Interim Report

The Frontiers of Innovation Initiative

Submitted to

The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

by

The TruePoint Center for Higher Ambition Leadership[1]

Evolved Theory of Change 2012: Initial Hypotheses to Guide Innovation

> Healthy Development Requires Protection *and* Enrichment

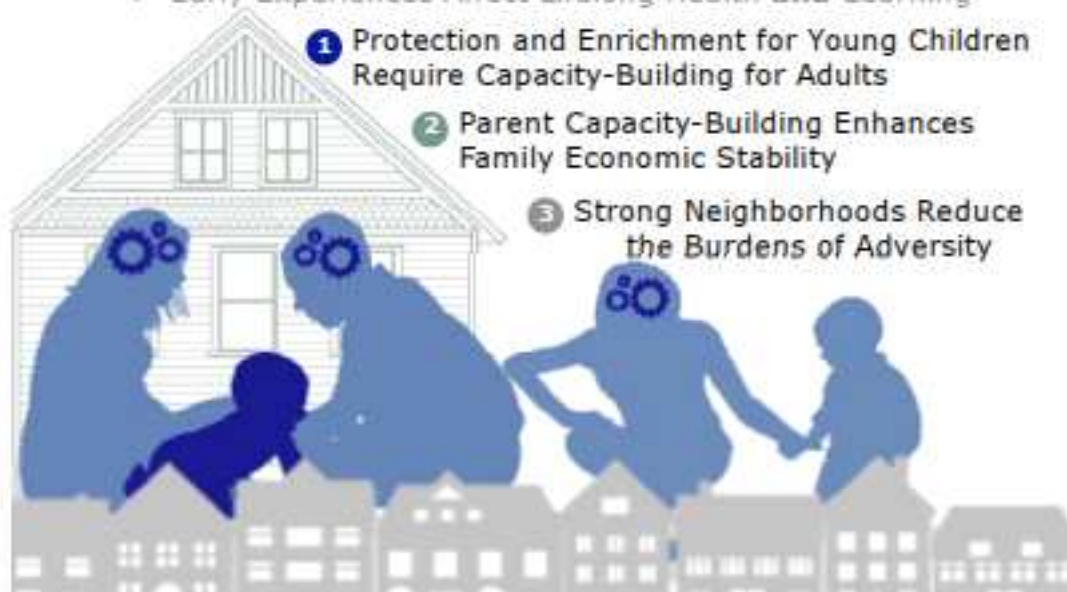> Early Experiences Affect Lifelong Health *and* Learning

1. Protection and Enrichment for Young Children Require Capacity-Building for Adults

2. Parent Capacity-Building Enhances Family Economic Stability

3. Strong Neighborhoods Reduce the Burdens of Adversity

Exhibit 1

---

[5] The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2012, May). *Minds Wide Open: An Action Strategy and Status Report on the Frontiers of Innovation in Early Childhood Policy and Practice*. Cambridge, MA. Retrieved from http://frontiersofinnovation.org/page/innovation

Figure 1:

Pathway from Family and Caregiver Capacities to Outcomes for Children (Center on the Developing Child, 2011)
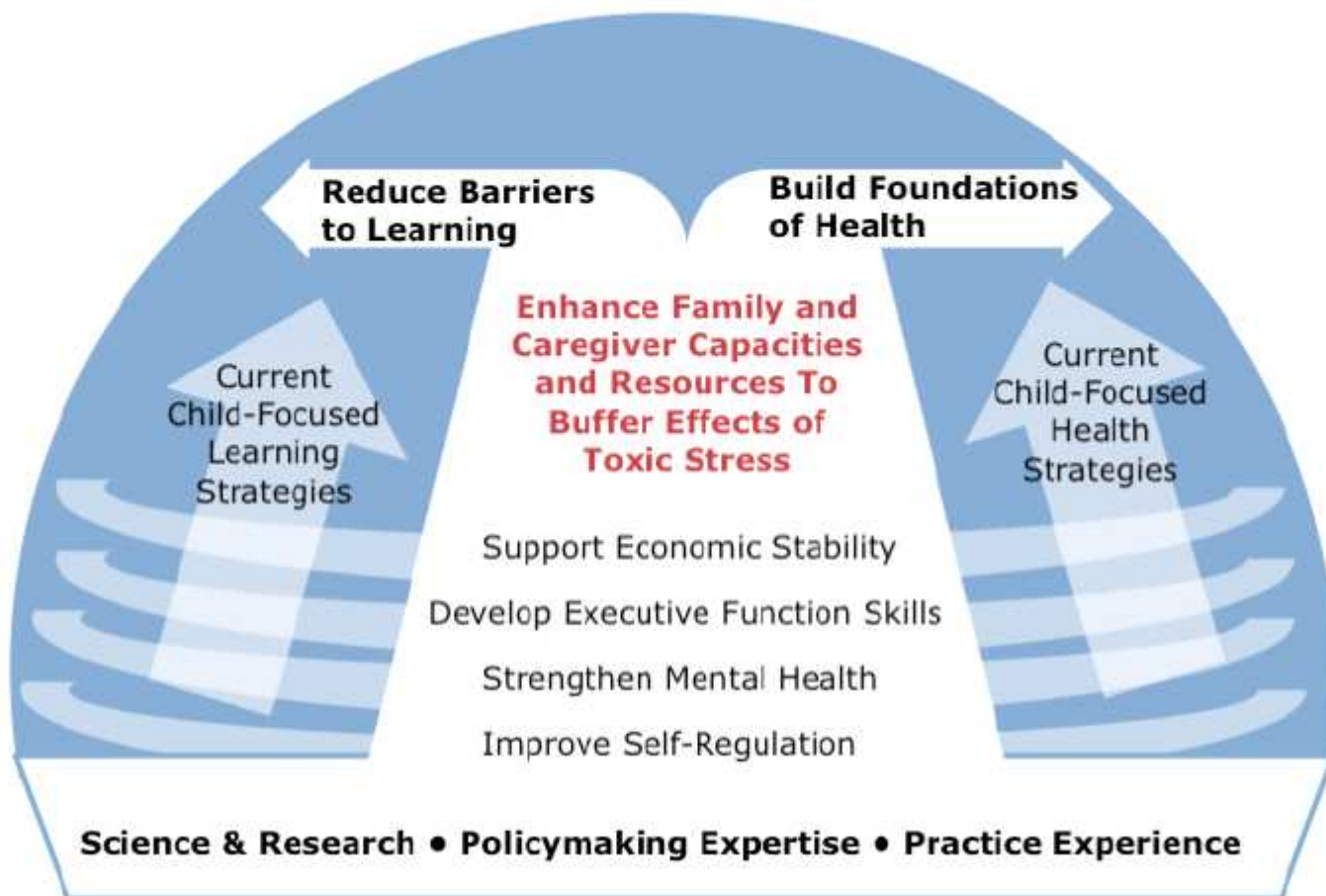
Embracing an Accelerated Approach to Innovation

Current Model

Premium on low-risk "success"
Relatively long cycle for impact
Fixed evaluation points – difficult to change course
Traditional funding model
Failure is costly in time and money

Proposed Shift in Culture

Premium on high-risk "breakthroughs"
Multiple shorter cycles for impact
Dynamic evaluation – frequent adjustments
Flexible "venture" investing
The only failure is the failure to learn

Developmental evaluation is designed to support long-term social innovation. It engages stakeholders in a process of evaluative dialogue, reflection, data gathering, and assessment. A distinctive aspect of developmental evaluation is that the work is carried out in partnership with the leadership and team members of the project itself, so that (a) the evaluation both contributes to and remains relevant to the evolving strategy and (b) project teams include evaluative thinking and action in their ongoing work. Thus, the Center devoted significant management and staff resources to this evaluation and, while this report was prepared by TruePoint, it draws heavily on insights and observations contributed by the project team throughout the year. Likewise, the TruePoint inquiry team itself included consultants who had no other involvement with the ECIP initiative, as well as people engaged more broadly in the ECIP strategic partnership.

Preamble

The purpose of this initiative is to stimulate innovation in policy and practice in order to improve the life prospects of vulnerable young children. The questions below are intended to track and assess progress toward this goal, and to stimulate usable learning in support of innovation. Each of the six questions should be understood and addressed in this light. In addition, it is understood that structural barriers, including barriers related to racial injustice, are a critical source of disadvantage for vulnerable children, and that the present initiative aims to apply scientific insights to identify creative, new ways to address such barriers.

Evaluation Questions

1. What has been developed by the initiative to date? What has been done, and in what way is it significant?

2. What has been discovered about how to assess progress, now and going forward, toward the initiative's core goals? How does progress to date match up against such an assessment tool? Looking ahead, how will we know we are going in the right directions?

3. How does our work to date position the initiative to catalyze significant future improvement in the lives and life prospects of vulnerable children? What are emerging as key opportunities or pathways, and key outstanding issues?

4. What unexpected patterns or outcomes, and what adaptations in planned activities, emerged during the year? What lessons applicable to the initiative's ongoing work (including resulting changes in plans) can be harvested from this experience? Are there aspects of the initiative's core "theory of change" that these lessons tend to confirm or disconfirm, and do they suggest ways to improve the theory of change?

5. What lessons have emerged to help the Kellogg Foundation advance its mission of supporting vulnerable children, families and communities? What has been learned more generally about pathways and processes leading to high-impact innovation in social policy and practice?

Evidence-based Interventions

- Summative evaluation of a single program

- Evidence-based model: Meta-analysis of multiple programs using the same model

- Evidence-based Principles: Synthesis of case studies

Youth Homelessness Initiative

- 6 agencies serving homeless youth

- Develop collaboration

- Focus of developmental evaluation inquiry together: *Shared principles*

Effective, Evidence-based Principles

➢ *Trusting relationships*

   ---Trusting relationships are critical: **Build trust.**

➢ *Journey-oriented*

   Homelessness is part of a particular young person's journey: **Understand where they've come from, where they are, and where they want to be *from their perspective*.**

➢ *Trauma-informed care*

Being on the street is inherently traumatic. Homelessness is traumatic. Moreover, most homeless youth have experienced traumatic childhood events and relationships that affect their physical, mental and emotional health. ***Provide care integrating awareness and understanding of trauma.***

Evaluating Principles

Organizational Collaboration and Learning in a Complex Adaptive System:

A Principles-Based Developmental Evaluation of the Otto Bremer Foundation's Youth Homelessness Initiative

Nora Murphy

Saturday, Oct 19, 9:50 AM to 10:35 AM

Evaluating Principles

The Evaluation of the Paris Declaration

Evaluation of the Evaluation

June, 2011

Evaluation of the Paris Declaration

Five Paris Declaration Principles

1. **Country ownership**
2. **Alignment**
3. **Harmonization**
4. **Mutual accountability**
5. **Managing for results**

DE Issues

- Budgeting for emergence and flexibility
- Staying the course
- Distinguishing DE from formative evaluation
- Fidelity

LESSONS LEARNED AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PARIS DECLARATION EVALUATION TO EVALUATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

Niels Dabelstein
Danish Institute for International Studies
Copenhagen, Denmark

Michael Quinn Patton
Founder and Director, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*
Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA

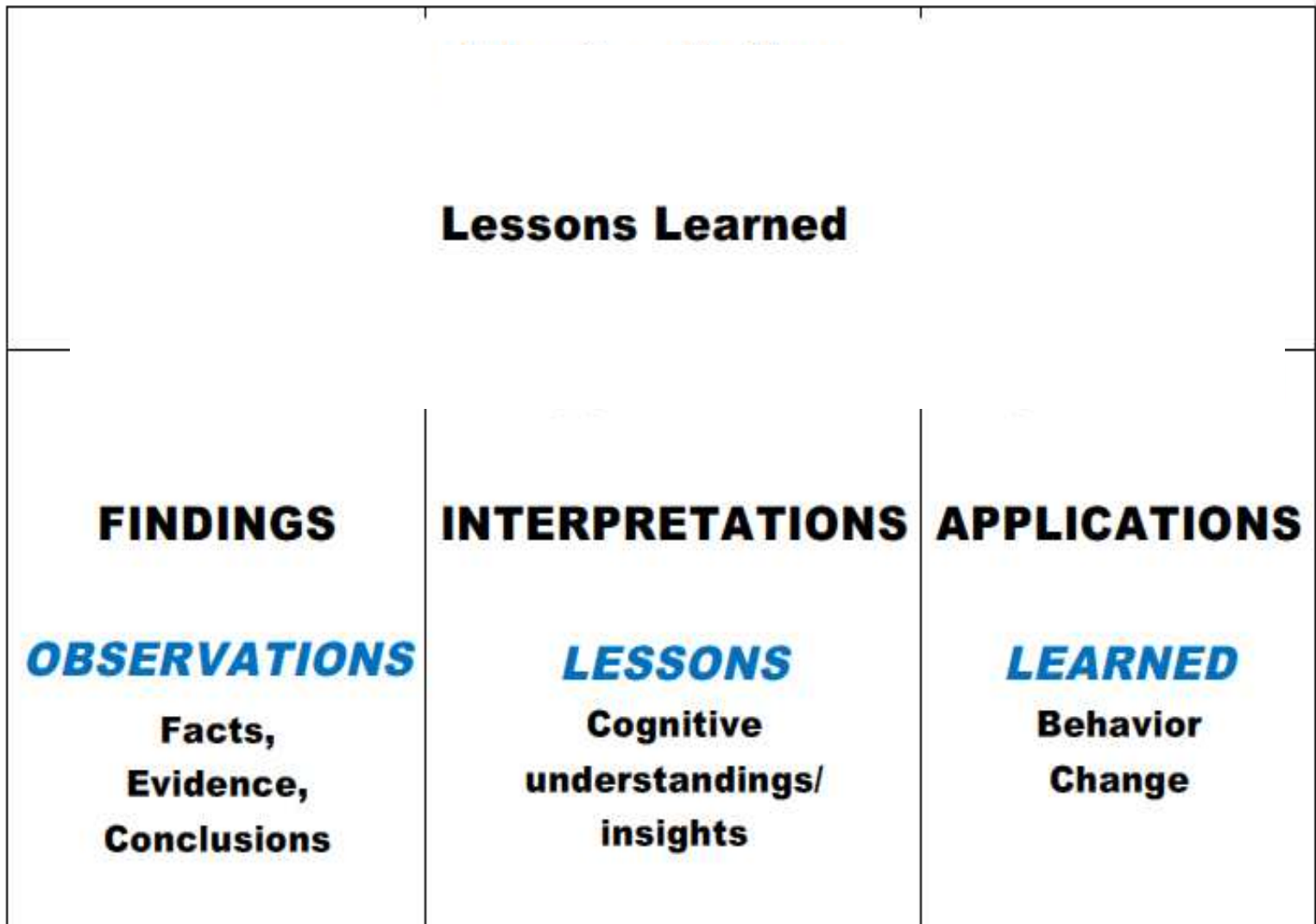http://evaluationcanada.ca/site.cgi?s=4&ss=21&_lang=en&volume=2012//3

PURPOSEFUL LEARNING

Deep learning occurs when you are purposeful in your learning. It requires a mindfulness and intention to take in data and information in an on-going manner.

- Pasteur: "Chance favors the prepared mind."

High Quality Lessons

- Empirically based – not just beliefs
- Triangulated
- Double and Triple Loop Learning
- Different from Findings
- Provide Direction -- Actionable

Lessons Learned

FINDINGS	INTERPRETATIONS	APPLICATIONS
OBSERVATIONS	*LESSONS*	*LEARNED*
Facts, Evidence, Conclusions	Cognitive understandings/ insights	Behavior Change

34

Foundation Review

Eyes Wide Open: Learning as Strategy Under Conditions of Complexity and Uncertainty

Patricia Patrizi, M.A., Elizabeth Heid Thompson, B.A., Julia Coffman, M.S., and Tanya Beer, M.A., Evaluation Roundtable
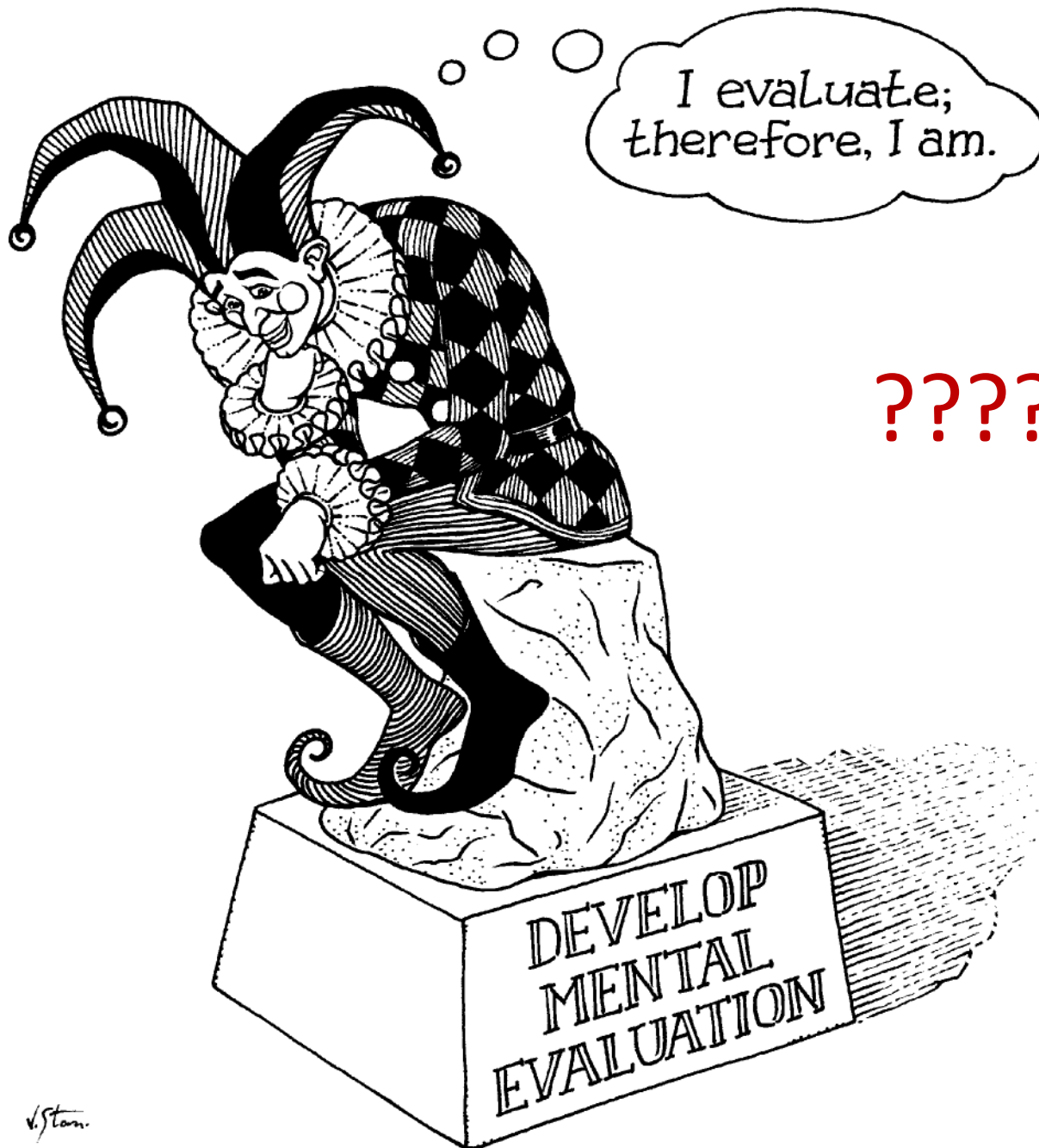
· Foundation strategy is hampered by a failure to recognize and engage with the complexity and uncertainty surrounding foundation work. This article identifies three common "traps" that hinder foundation capacity to learn and adapt: 1) linearity and certainty bias; 2) the autopilot effect; and 3) indicator blindness.

Strategies for Learning from Failure
Amy C. Edmondson
Harvard Business Review, April 2011

"The wisdom of learning from failure is incontrovertible. Yet organizations that do it well are extraordinarily rare. "