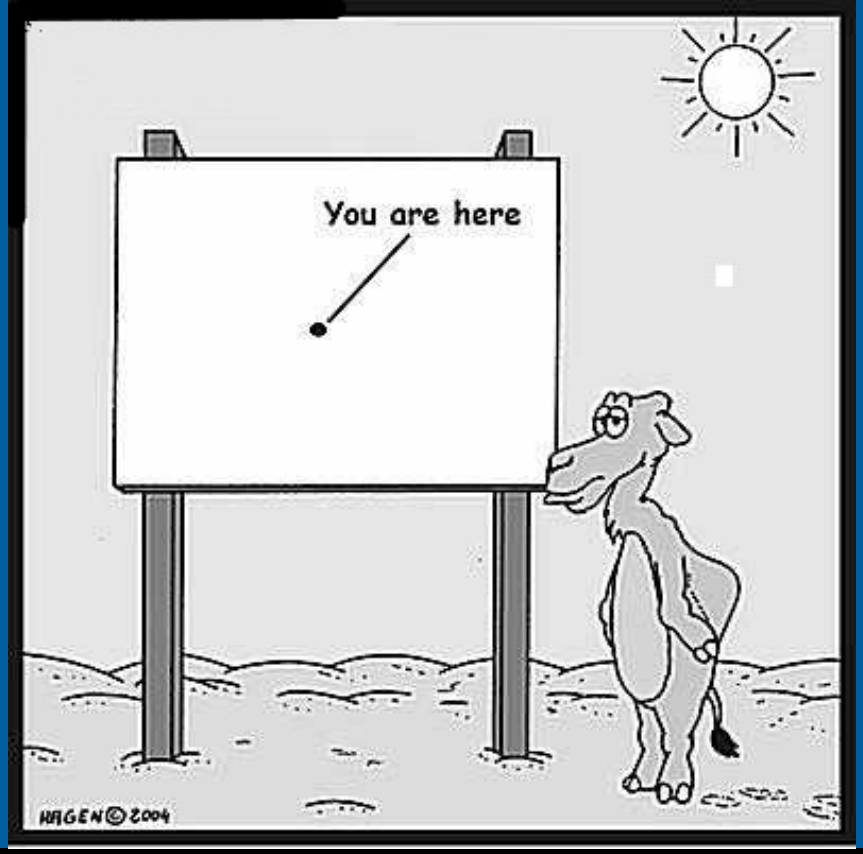

WHY EVALUATE?
WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT & MOST COMMON TYPES OF EVALUATION?

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Social Research and Demonstration Corporation
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What is evaluation?

- The process of determining the merit, worth or value of something.

Scriven M. Evaluation thesaurus. Sage Publications, 1991.

- A process undertaken for purposes of improvement, decision making, enlightenment, persuasion.

Shadish W, Cook T, Leviton L. Foundations of program evaluation. Sage Publications, 1990.

- Using systematic, data-based inquiries about whatever is being evaluated.

American Evaluation Association (www.eval.org), 2004

An evaluation has to be:

- specifically designed to address the questions being asked and the nature of the intervention being evaluated;
- stakeholder-focused!

Why evaluate?

Because you want…

…the answers to evaluation questions

- Is our intervention achieving what was planned?
- Will this change in the future/if implemented somewhere else?
- For whom is it working?
- Is it working as intended? What drives this?

…to share lessons learned across locations and client groups

…to avoid erroneous, expensive conclusions and decisions

…to justify funding

Evaluation adapts to its context depending on its purpose

Each evaluation

- uses different methods,
- works in different settings,
- engages with varied populations,
- engages with different types of data,
- faces specific constraints on time,
- requires expertise and
- consumes resources: both human and financial.

Types of evaluation

Formative	Summative
Needs Assessment	Outcome
Implementation Evaluation	Impact
Developmental	Performance monitoring
Rapid cycle	Cost-benefit/ cost effectiveness

Types of Formative evaluation

Formative

- **Needs assessment** focuses on the justification for the program in relation to the scope and scale of the problem to be addressed;
- **Implementation evaluation** determines the extent to which a program has been carried out as planned;
- **Process evaluation** looks at the specific steps or processes involved in program delivery.

Example process evaluation questions

- How is the program being implemented?
- How appropriate are the processes compared with quality standards?
- Is the program being implemented correctly?
- Are participants being reached as intended?
- How satisfied are program clients? For which clients?
- What has been done in an innovative way?

Types of Summative evaluation

Summative

- **Outcomes evaluation** evaluates program effectiveness by looking at any changes participants may have undergone, and the extent to which these align with intended outcomes;
- **Impact evaluation** looks at broader or longer-term net effects of a program;
- **Performance monitoring** evaluates reach and scale of program delivery according to pre-defined performance indicators or targets, and determines program capacity;
- **Cost-benefit and cost effectiveness evaluations** standardize program outcomes and impacts and compare these to program costs, to address questions of efficiency and value.

Example outcome or impact evaluation questions

- How well did the program work?
- Did the program produce or contribute to the intended outcomes in the short, medium and long term?
- For whom, in what ways and in what circumstances? What unintended outcomes (positive and negative) were produced?
- To what extent can changes be attributed to the program?
- What were the particular features of the program and context that made a difference?
- What was the influence of other factors?

Example economic evaluation (cost effectiveness analysis and cost-benefit analysis) questions

- What has been the ratio of costs to benefits?
- What is the most cost-effective option?
- Has the intervention been cost-effective (compared to alternatives)?
- Is the program the best use of resources?

Questions to ask before embarking on evaluation

- What is being evaluated?
- What evaluation questions do you want to answer?
- What are the expectations of stakeholders?
- Internal or external evaluator?
- How ready is […] for evaluation? -> Evaluability assessment -> Staging of evaluation

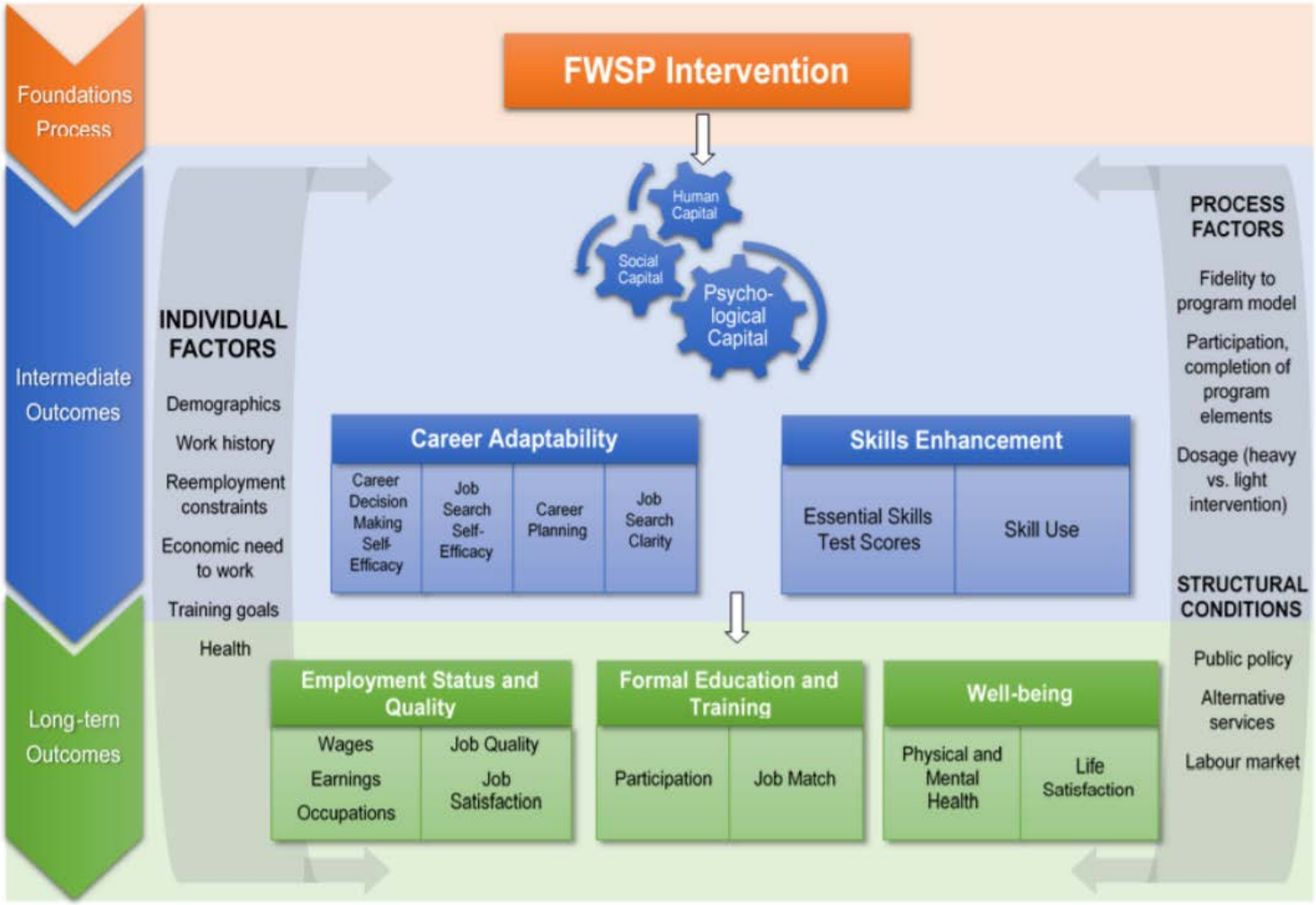
- What types of decisions will be based on the evaluation?
- What existing data can be used?
- Requirements for new data: quantitative and/or qualitative
- Communication of results

EXAMPLE OF EVALUATION TOOLS

Theory of Change

… from *Foundations* essential skills intervention

Figure 1 Theory of Change



Logic model

… from *Raising the Grade*

Revised logic model

Target group	2 + 3 NEW core components	Short-term outcomes	*New* Mid-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
New All youth	**Tech Centres** Designated space Hardware, software, Internet, eLearning resources **Academic Support** Orientation sessions for youth, families Designated time in Tech Centres *New* Homework help *RTG* website Interest-based activities, group projects Weekly check-ins *New* **Life After School** Career exploration and discovery *New Financial literacy* *New* **Mentoring** Matched mentoring weekly *New* **Youth Engagement** Safe place, structure Positive, caring relationships Opportunities to belong Positive social norms Skill building, competency development	*New Attendance in RTG* *New* Safe online practices, safety in Tech Centres *New* Academic engagement: more time spent on homework, PSE goal-setting *New* Academic skills: better study habits *New* Digital literacy: use technology to explore interests Insight about personal, career interests Sense of discovery, excitement Adequate credits and grades for PSE program of choice Career aspirations that match personal interests, goals and abilities	*New* Supportive relationships w/ *RTG* staff *New* Academic engagement: better school attendance; better grades *New* Greater confidence and resilience *New* Become digital citizens Graduate high school	**Entry to PSE** **Good career**

Evaluation Framework

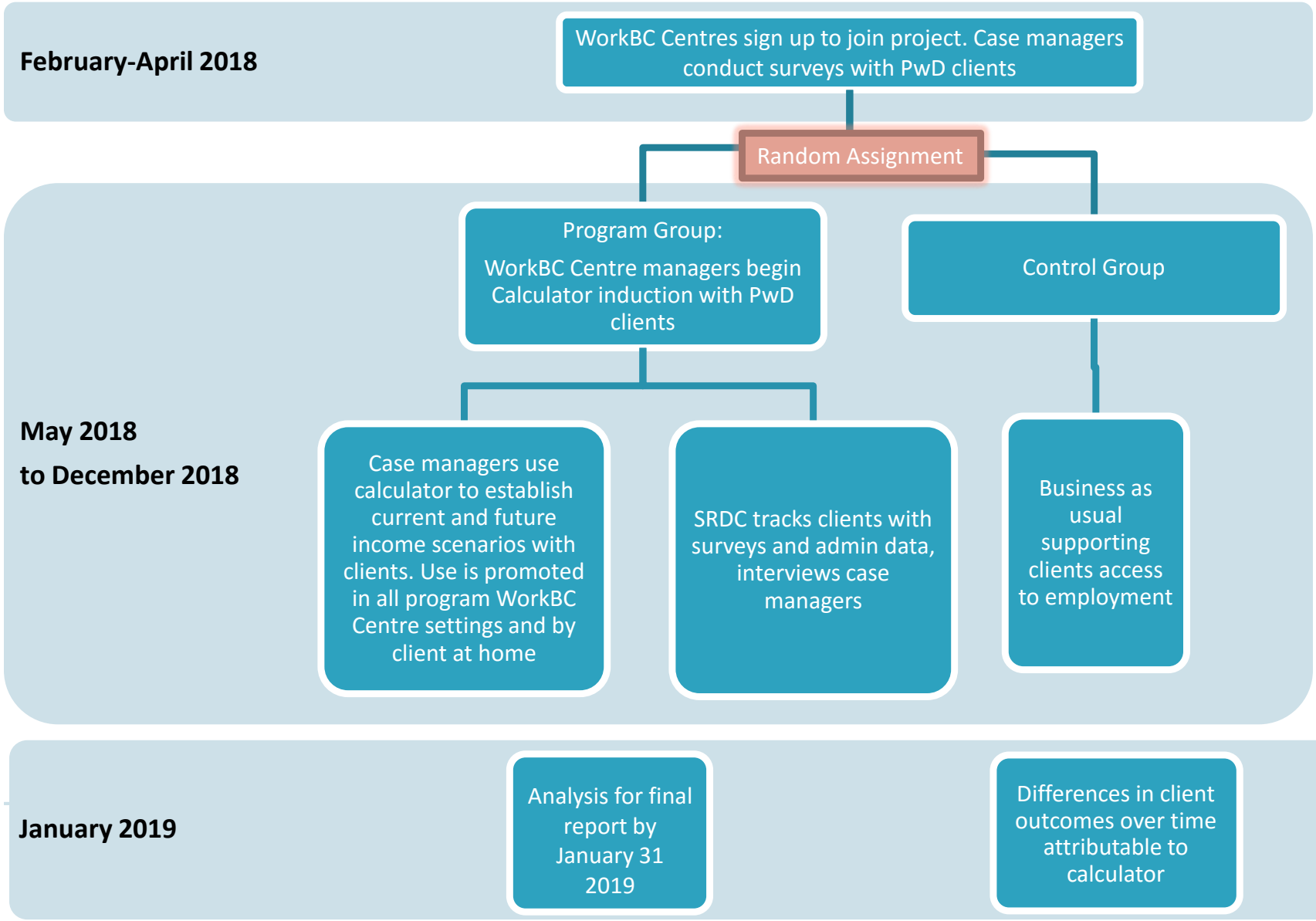
… from *Digital Essential Skills*

Appendix A: DES training program: evaluation framework

Research Questions

		Is the training model flexible and suitable for low-skilled workers who work in a diverse range of occupations?											Was the training effective in enhancing employees' digital skills and reducing organizations' digital skills gaps?					What factors affect the outcomes?					
		Flexibility		Suitability for low-skilled workers					Other implementation factors				Effectiveness outcomes					Contextual factors					
Level	Data source	Flexible access	Customizability	Website usability; navigability	Accessibility of learning content	Self paced learning	Self-directed learning	Autonomous learning	Employee intentionality - motivation, expectation	Employer intionality - expectation, support	Employee satisfaction with aspects of DES training	Employer satisfaction with aspect of the DES training	DES and other skill gains	ICT attitudes and practices	Training and education experience/attitudes	Psycho-social outcomes - job and self	Organizational performance	Aspects of DES training - Intentionality	Initial DES and literacy levels	Demographic characteristics	Extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of job	Psycho-social traits	Aspects of organization
Employee	Administrative data																	X		X			
	Self-evaluation responses												X										
	Scores		X				X						X						X				
	Pre-training research survey				X				X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
	Post-training survey	X		X	X						X		X	X	X	X							
	End-of-workshop research survey	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X									
	Canadian Academic Achievement Test																		X				
Em-ployer	Pre-training research survey									X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X					X
	Post-training research survey	X	X								X	X	X	X	X		X						
	Piloting instructor testing report			X	X			X															

Example evaluation design
… from *Calculator BC*



What are the costs of evaluating?

- The design imperative: developing the right evaluation framework
- Skills and experience needed
- Counterfactuals are not necessarily expensive
- Providing the program services being evaluated can be expensive. This is not a cost of evaluation
- Data collection for evaluation can be expensive, regardless of the validity of the design
- Erroneous conclusions and decisions can be expensive

Please keep in touch

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