AES Conference 2017

What is Evaluation?
Strengthening our Capital through Self-Definition

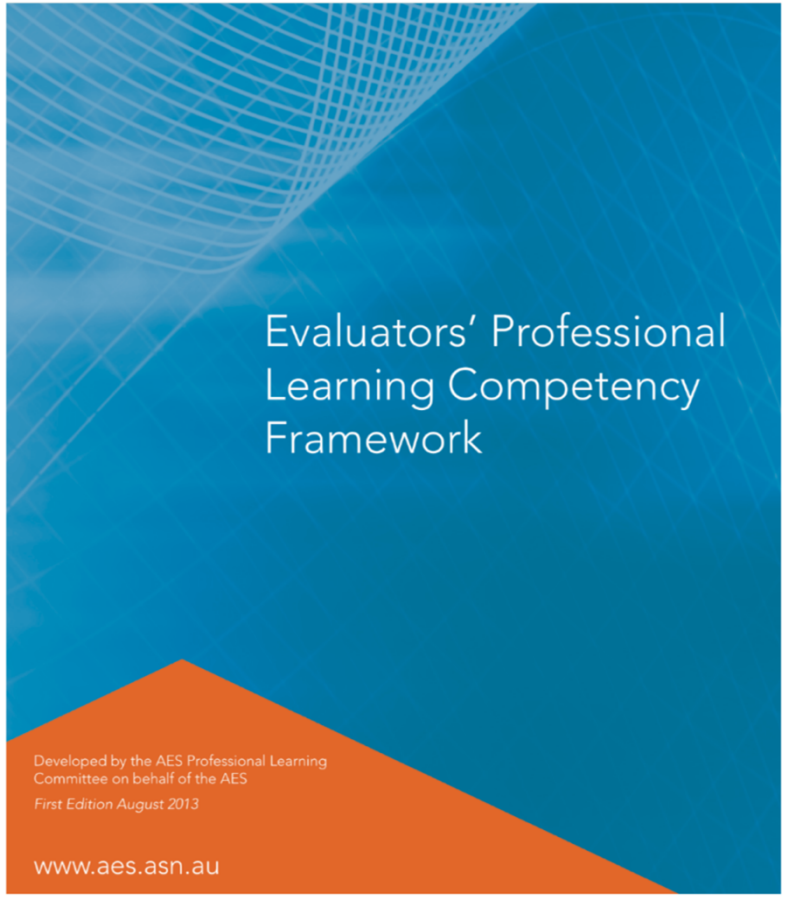
Dr Amy Gullickson

Senior Lecturer, University of Melbourne Centre for Program Evaluation

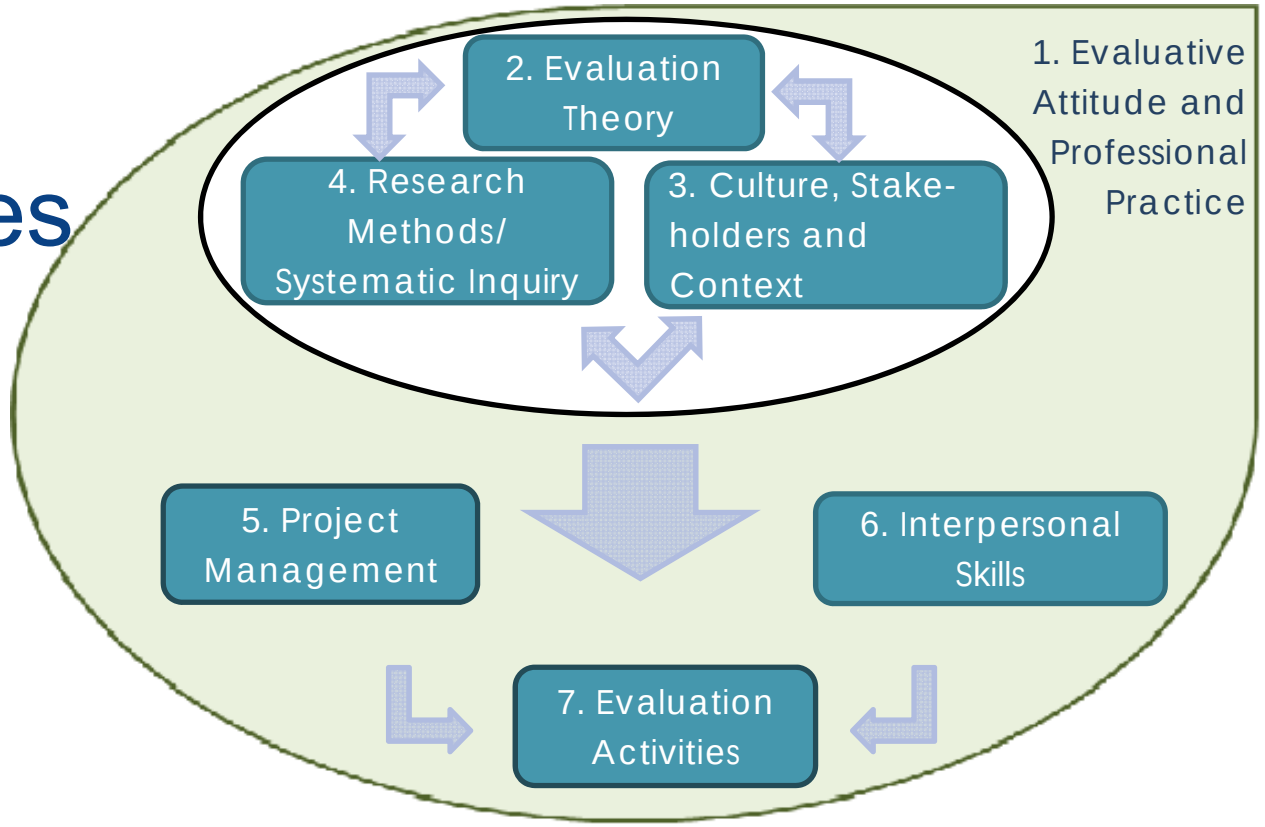
Acknowledgement of Country

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to the Elders past, present and emerging.

Current State


Evaluators' Professional Learning Competency Framework
Developed by the AES Professional Learning Committee on behalf of the AES
First Edition August 2013
www.aes.asn.au

Are all competencies equal?



AUSTRALASIAN EVALUATION SOCIETY

Evaluators' Professional Learning Competency Framework

Agenda

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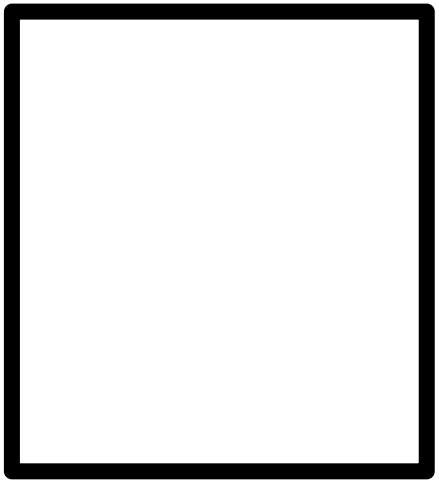
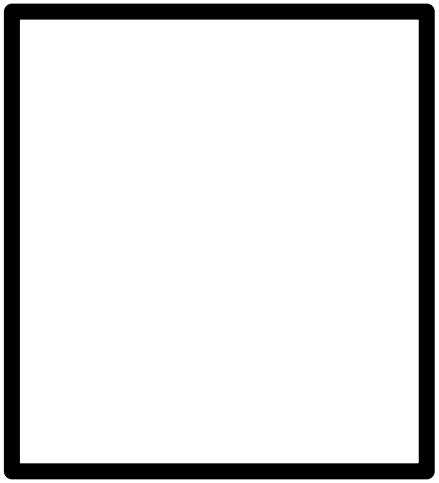
- Definitions
- History
- Benefits of embracing a differentiating definition
- The way forward

What's in a Definition?



https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/definition

What's in a Definition?



- A statement expressing the essential nature of something
- An act of determining
- A sharp demarcation of outlines or limits

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/definition

What's in a Definition?

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What's the essential nature of evaluation?

What are the boundaries that limit the act of evaluation?

What's in a Definition?

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Evaluate

1. https://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/features/word/search/?word=evaluate&search_word_type=Dictionary
1&2. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/evaluate

What's in a Definition?

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Evaluate

1. to ***ascertain the value*** or amount of; appraise carefully.
2. to ***determine the significance, worth, or condition of*** usually by careful appraisal and study

1. https://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/features/word/search/?word=evaluate&search_word_type=Dictionary

1&2. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/evaluate

What's in a Definition?

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Evaluation

- The noun form of evaluate.
- The act of ***ascertaining value or determining the significance, worth, or condition of*** usually by careful appraisal and study

1. https://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/features/word/search/?word=evaluate&search_word_type=Dictionary

1&2. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/evaluate

What's in a Definition?

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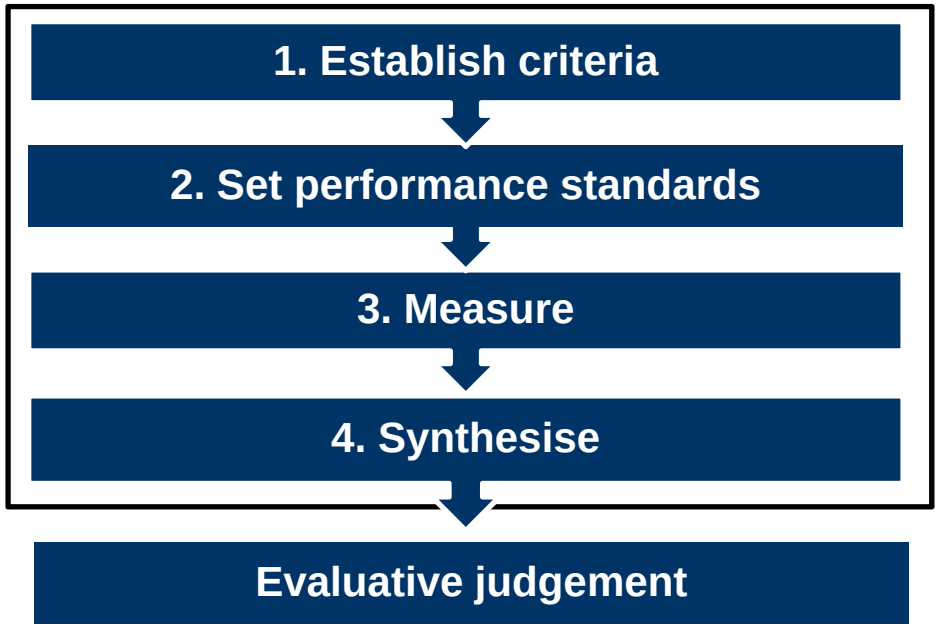
Valuation



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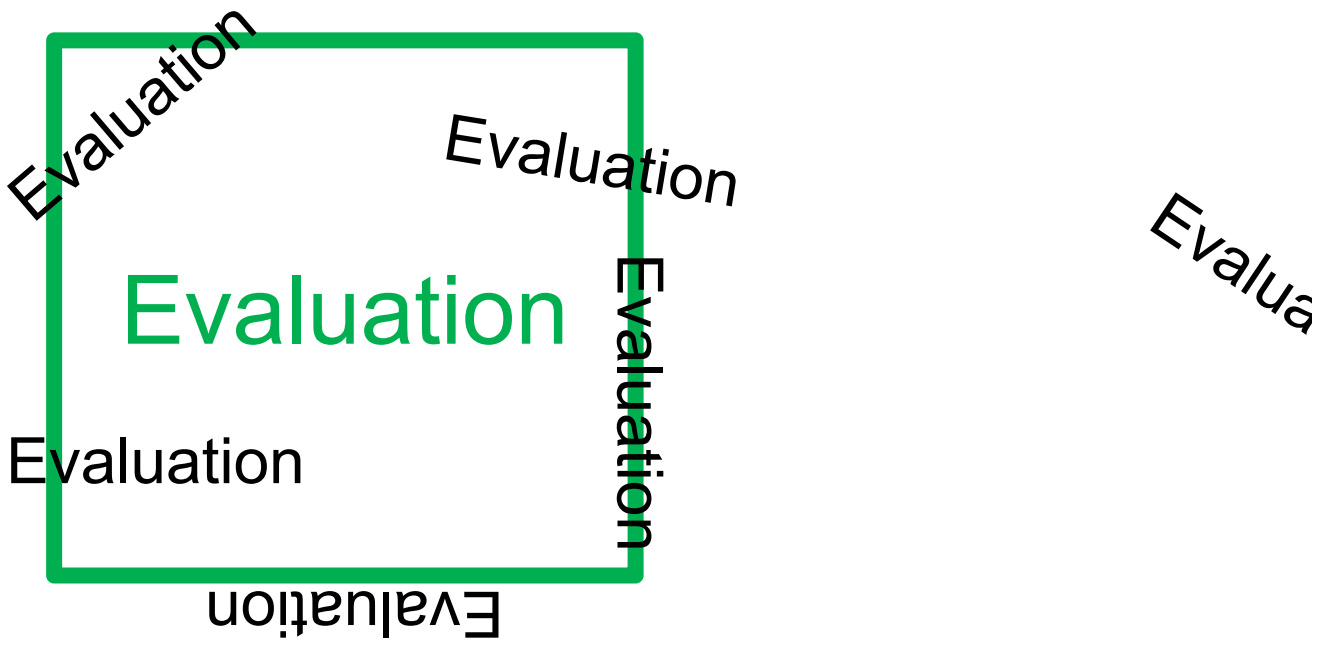
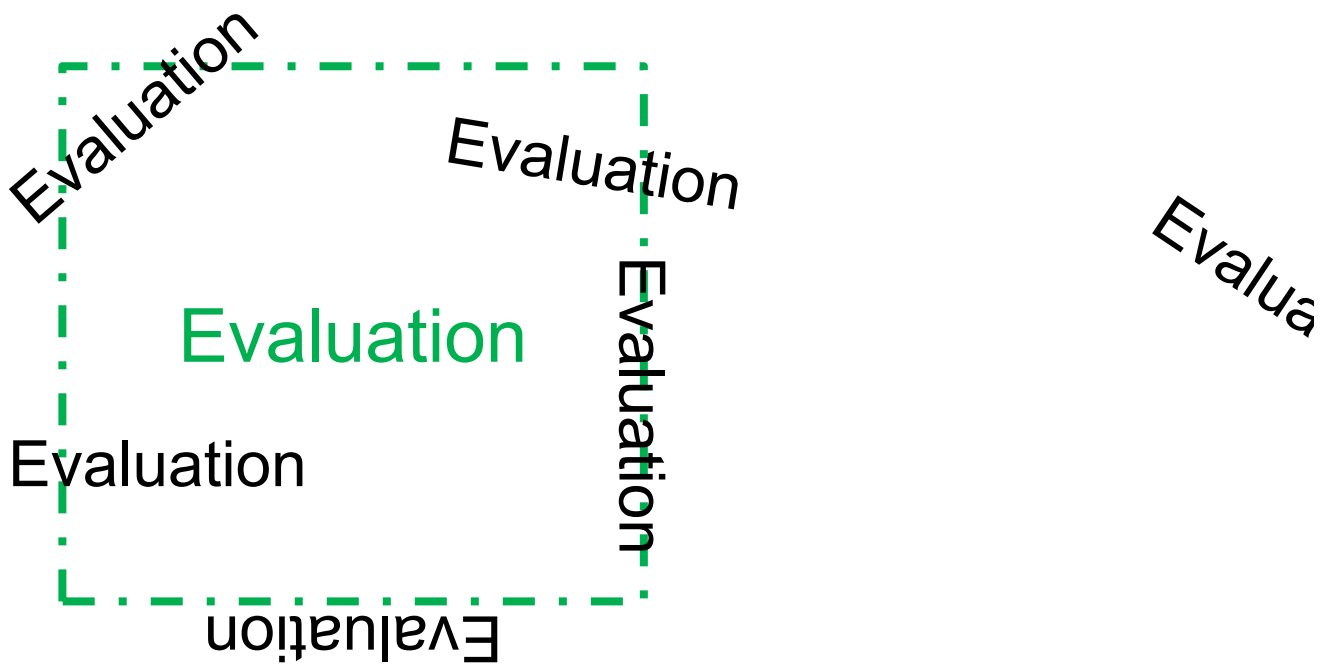


AEA Guiding Principles; Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004; Scriven, 1991; AES; Poth, et al., 2014

What's in a Definition?



AEA Guiding Principles; Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004; Scriven, 1991; AES; Poth, et al., 2014

Crane 1998: Evaluation as public grazing area

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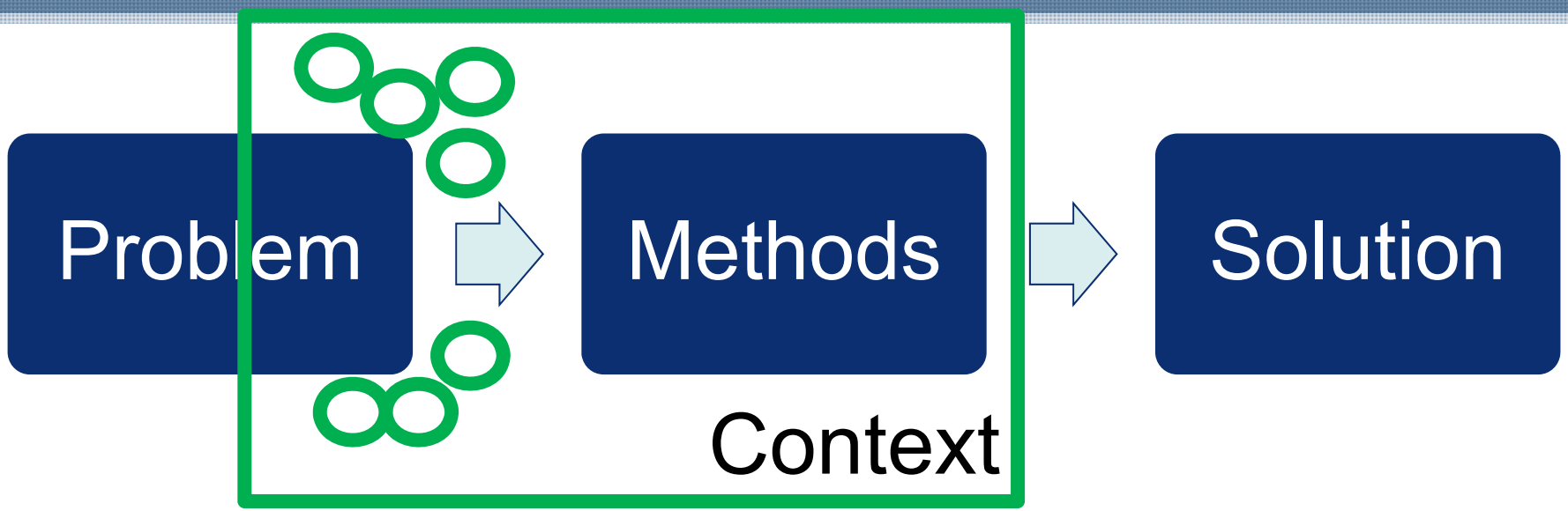
How did we get here?

Problem
Methods
Solution

Problem
Methods
Solution


Problem
Methods
Solution
Context

Crane 1998: Evaluation as public grazing area

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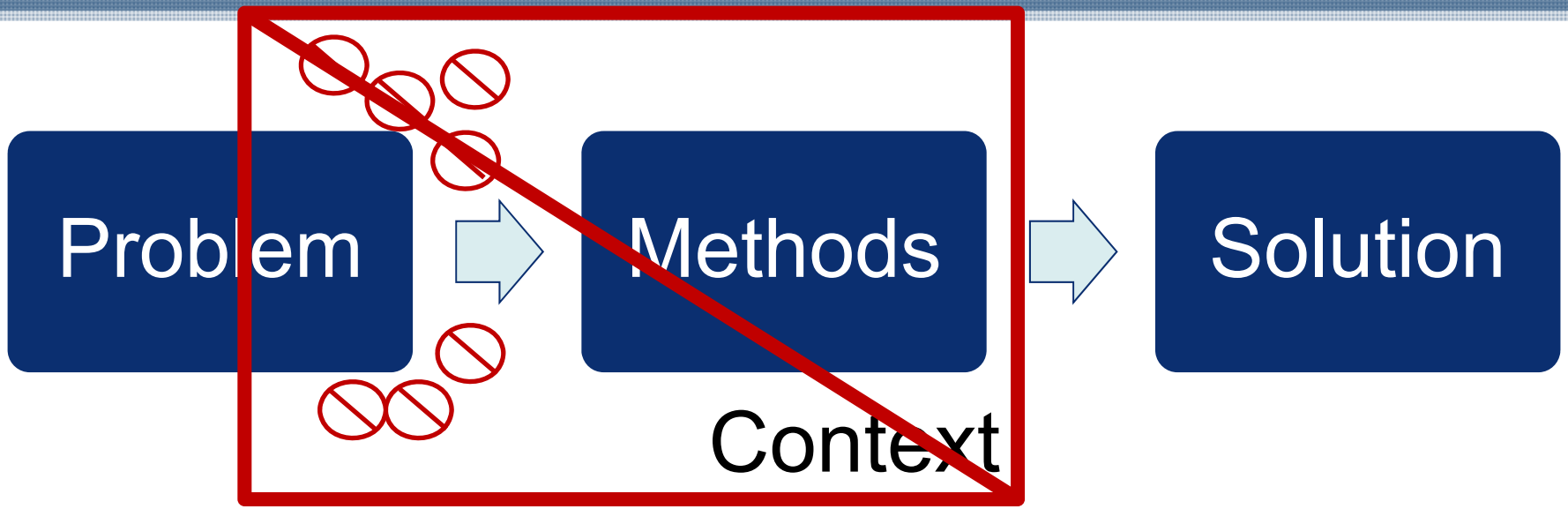
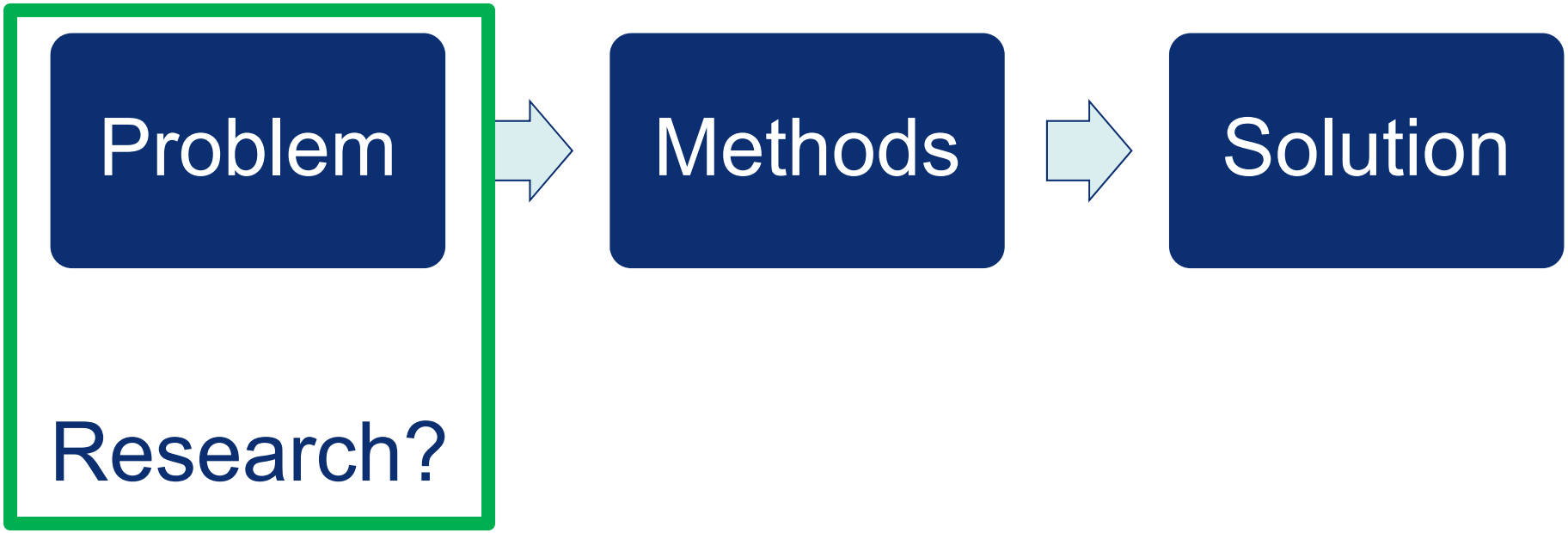
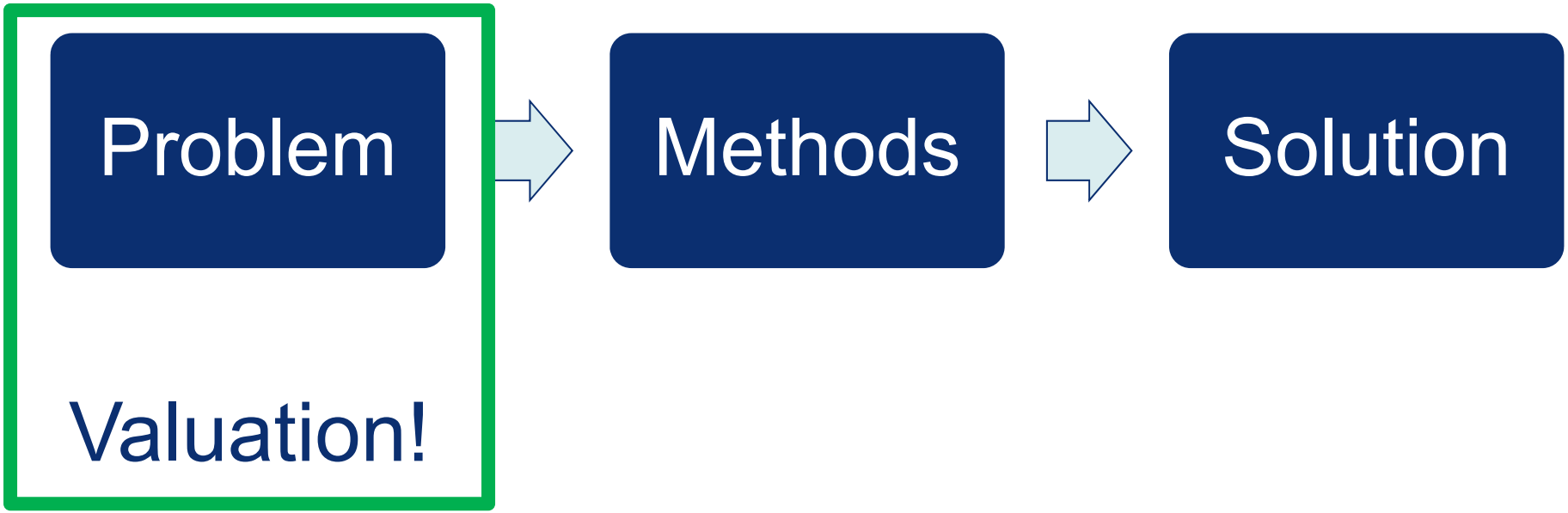

Problem
Methods
Solution
Context

Problem
Methods
Solution


Problem
Methods
Solution
Research?


Problem
Methods
Solution
Valuation!

Problem

Research

Valuation

Problem

What's in a Definition?

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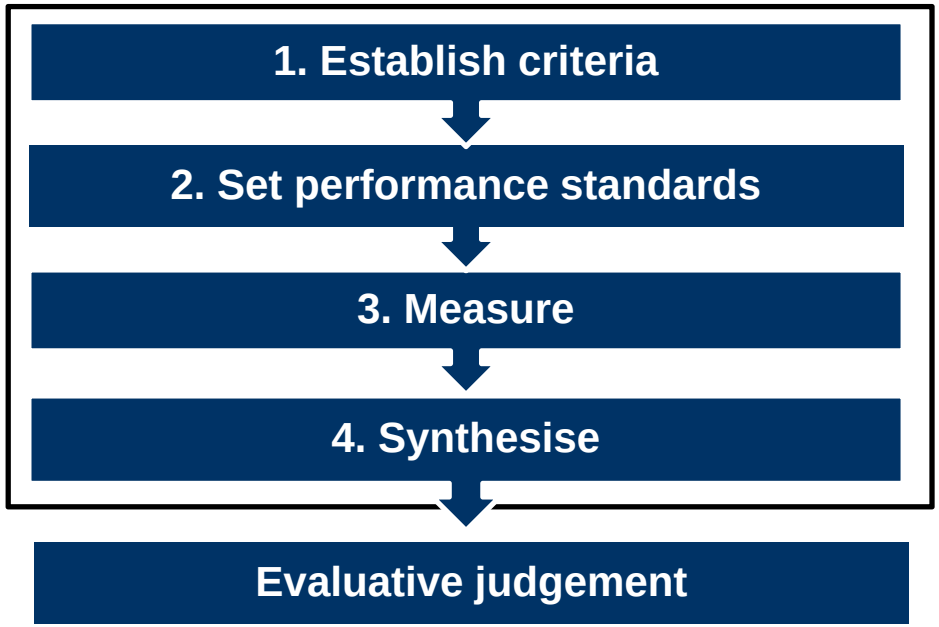
Valuation / Evaluation

- The act of ***ascertaining value or determining the significance, worth, or condition of*** usually by careful appraisal and study
- Advocated as core by Scriven (1999), Shadish (1994), Mark Henry & Julnes (2001), Crane (1998), Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen (2007)

1. https://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/features/word/search/?word=evaluate&search_word_type=Dictionary

1&2. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/evaluate


1. Establish criteria
2. Set performance standards
3. Measure
4. Synthesise
Evaluative judgement

What’s the Benefit?

Benefits

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Benefits

Benefits to Evaluation

Discrete field of inquiry

+

Unique contribution to the world

→

Emergence as a profession

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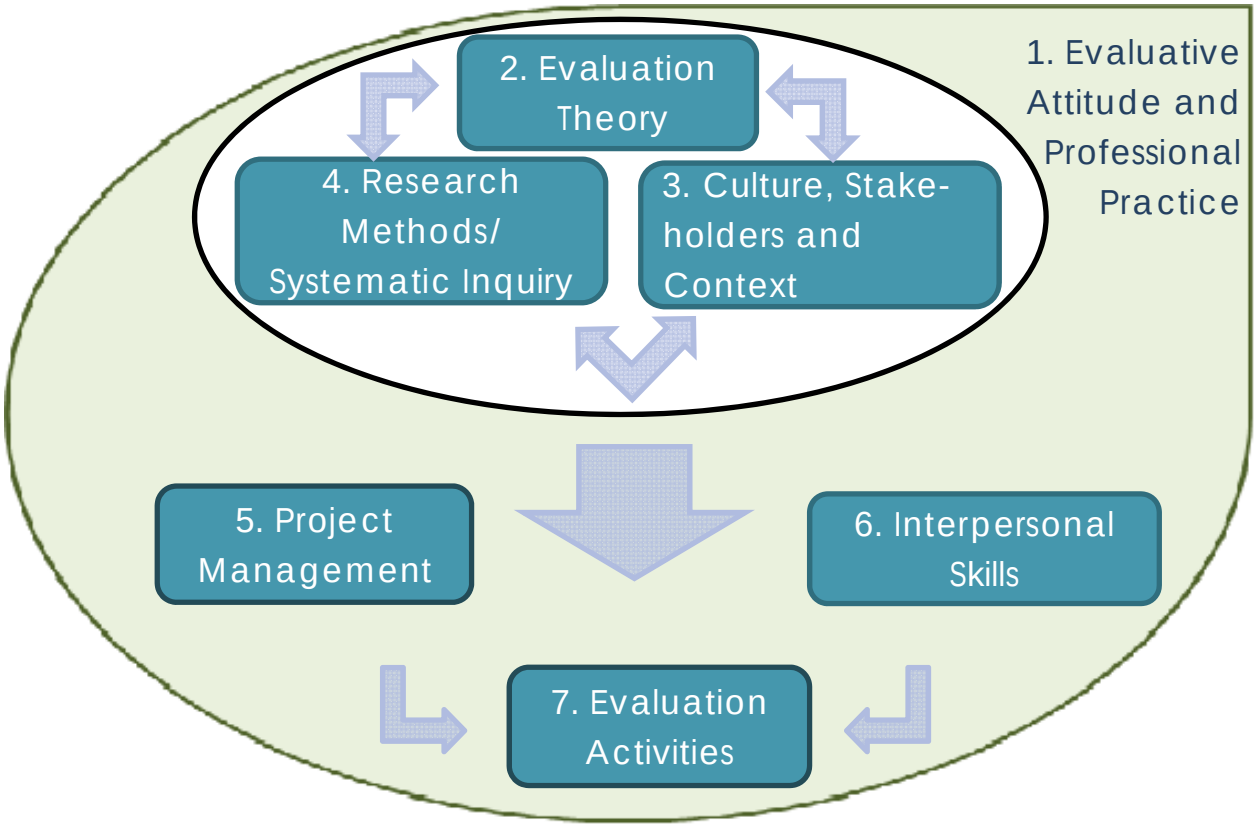
How do we get there?

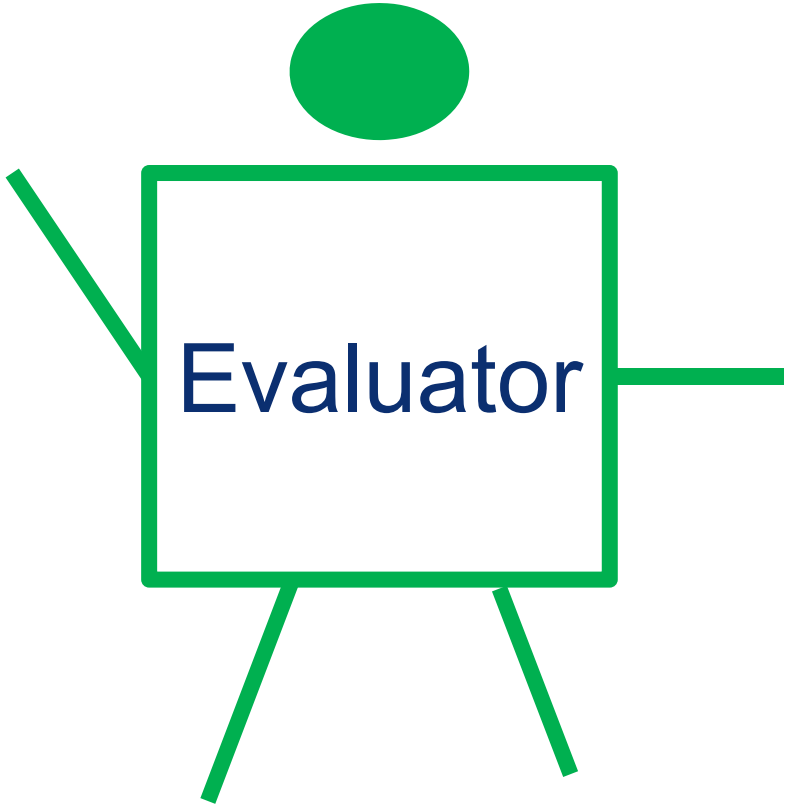
Evaluation

What skills and knowledge are necessary to be able to make determinations about value (merit, worth, and/or significance)?



AUSTRALASIAN EVALUATION SOCIETY

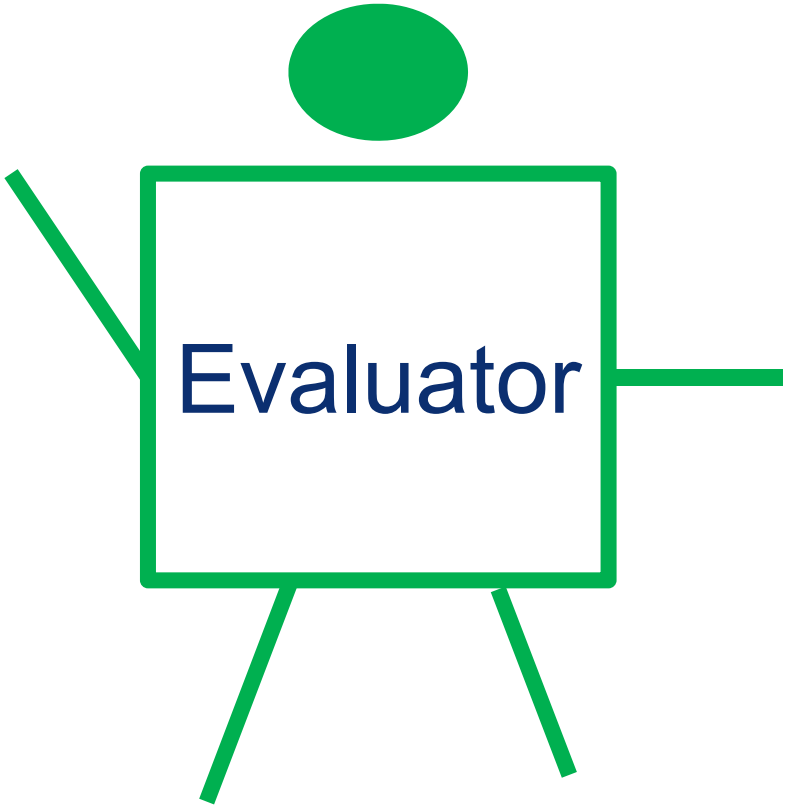
Evaluators' Professional Learning Competency Framework


Evaluator

Context
Management
Professional
Evaluation specific logic, methods, ethics and accompanying skills
Methdology (including cost analysis)
Interpersonal

- Values and valuing
- Evaluation specific operations
- Evaluation specific methods
- Normative ethics
- Other value traditions
- Warranted arguments
- Logic
- Meta-Evaluation

Levels of Performance



1. Novice
2. Competence
3. Proficiency
4. Expertise
5. Mastery

Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1980)

What's in a Definition?

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What makes a something an evaluation?

Definition

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Evaluation: the systematic determination of an object's value (e.g., merit, worth, and/or significance)[1].

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What is evaluation's unique contribution?

Stepping toward the Future

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Thank you

amy.gullickson@unimelb.edu.au

Save the dates!
Professional development workshops
March 14-19, 2018

Study with us online:
https://online.unimelb.edu.au/public-administration/evaluation
Single subjects and graduate qualifications

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