

# DESIGNING AND MANAGING EVALUATIONS

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# Agenda for our session

- **Planning an evaluation**
  - Steps in the process
  - Ensuring quality and use
- **Hiring for and managing an evaluation**
  - What to look for, where to look
  - Setting the stage for working together
  - Managing the evaluation
  - Using evaluation processes and findings
- **Q&A**

# Planning an evaluation

Defining evaluation

Steps in the process

Ensuring quality and use

# What is evaluation?

- **Determining the worth, merit or value of something (Joint Committee on Standards, 1994).**
- **The systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming (Patton, 1997).**
- **The identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object's value (worth or merit), quality, utility, effectiveness, or significance in relation to those criteria (Worthen, et al., 1997).**

# Evaluation

- **“Evaluation uses inquiry and judgment methods, including 1) determining standards for judging quality and deciding whether those standards should be relative or absolute, 2)collecting relevant information, and 3) applying the standards to determine value, quality, utility, effectiveness, or significance. It leads to recommendations intended to optimize the evaluation object in relation to its intended purpose(s)” (Worthen, et al., 1997, p. 5).**

# Planning an evaluation – defining the evaluand

- **What, exactly, do you want to evaluate?**
  - ▣ Define the project or initiative
  - ▣ Define the stakeholders and audiences for the evaluation

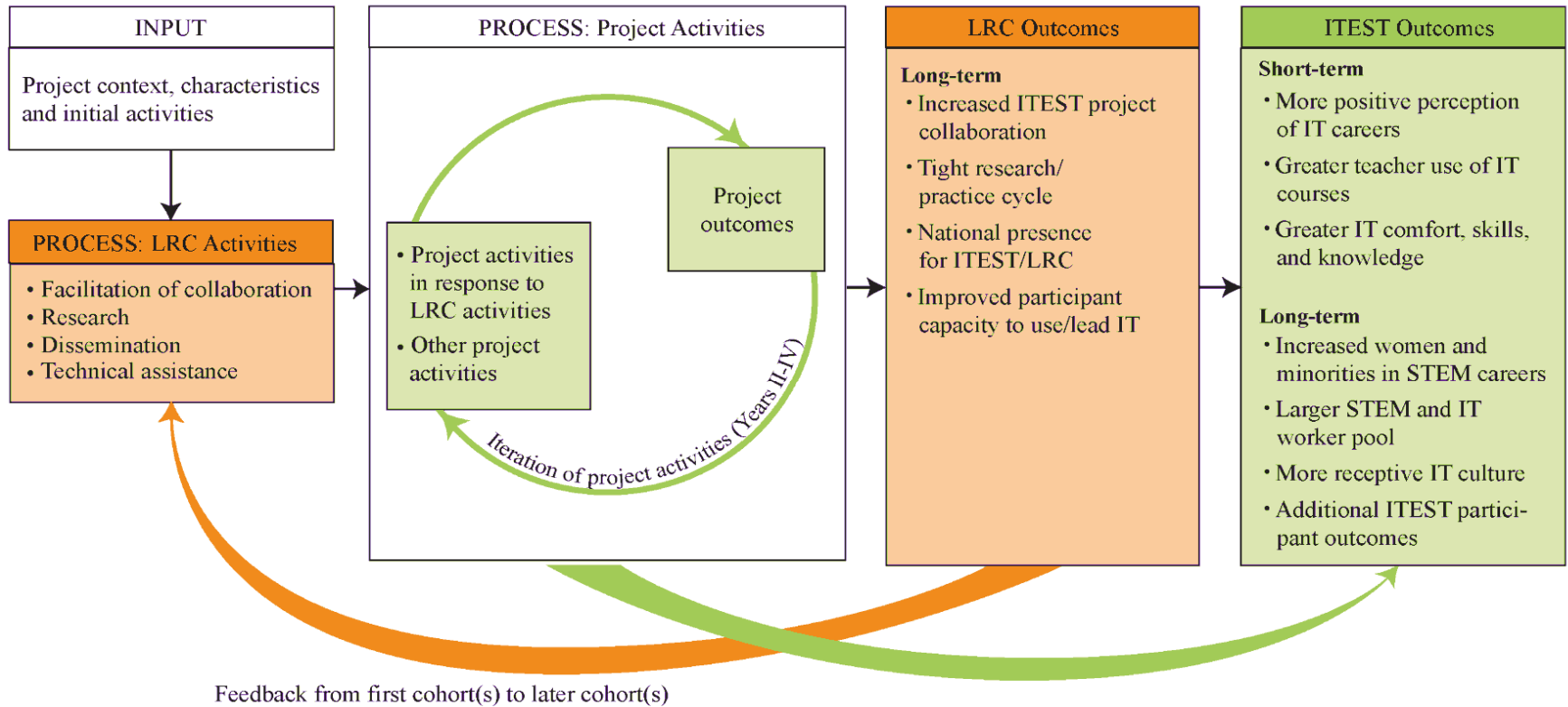
# ITEST Learning Resource Center Logic Model

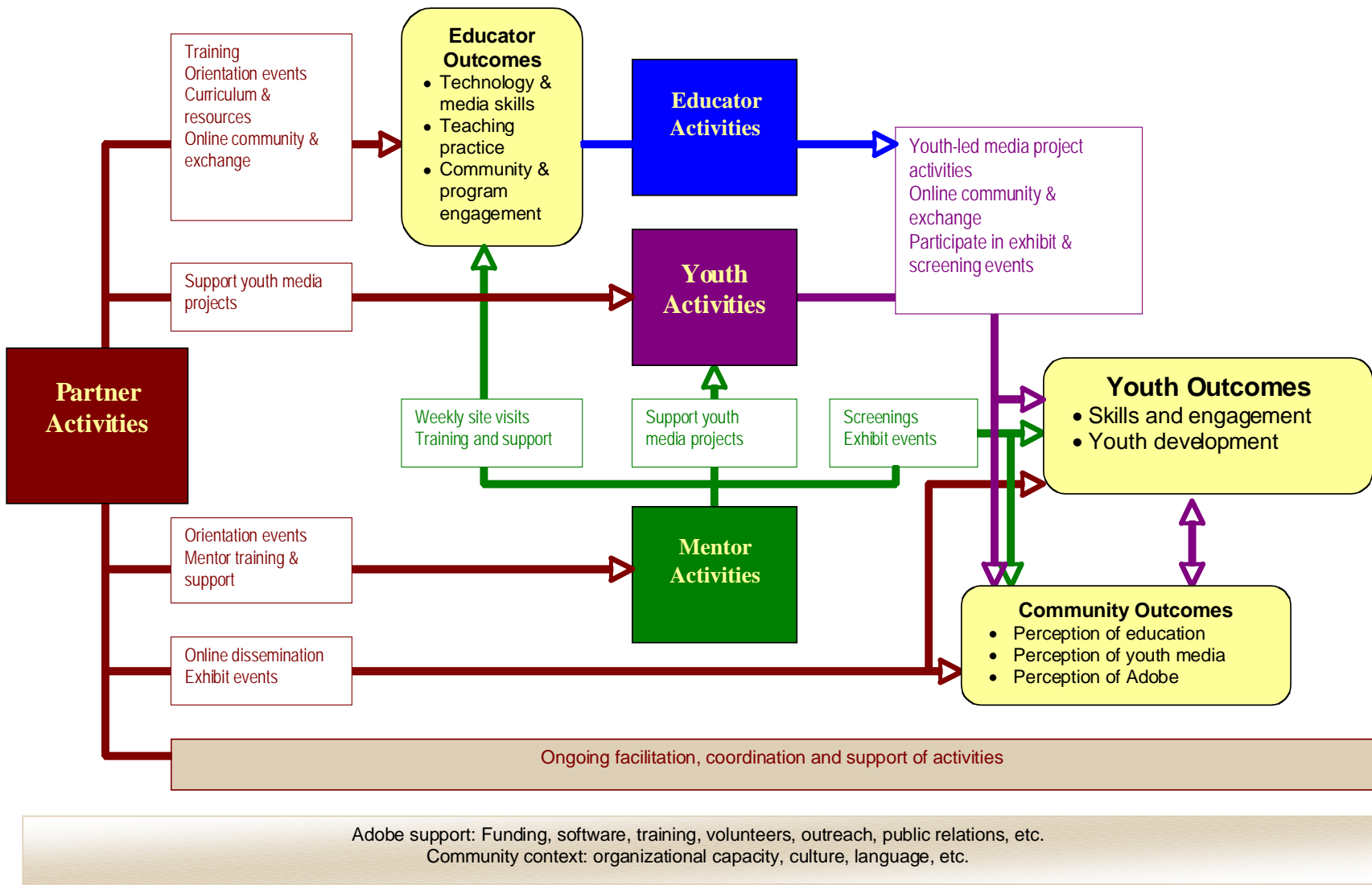
## Broader Community and Social Context Characteristics

MPR Associates, Inc. Evaluation of LRC

Central Research Agenda

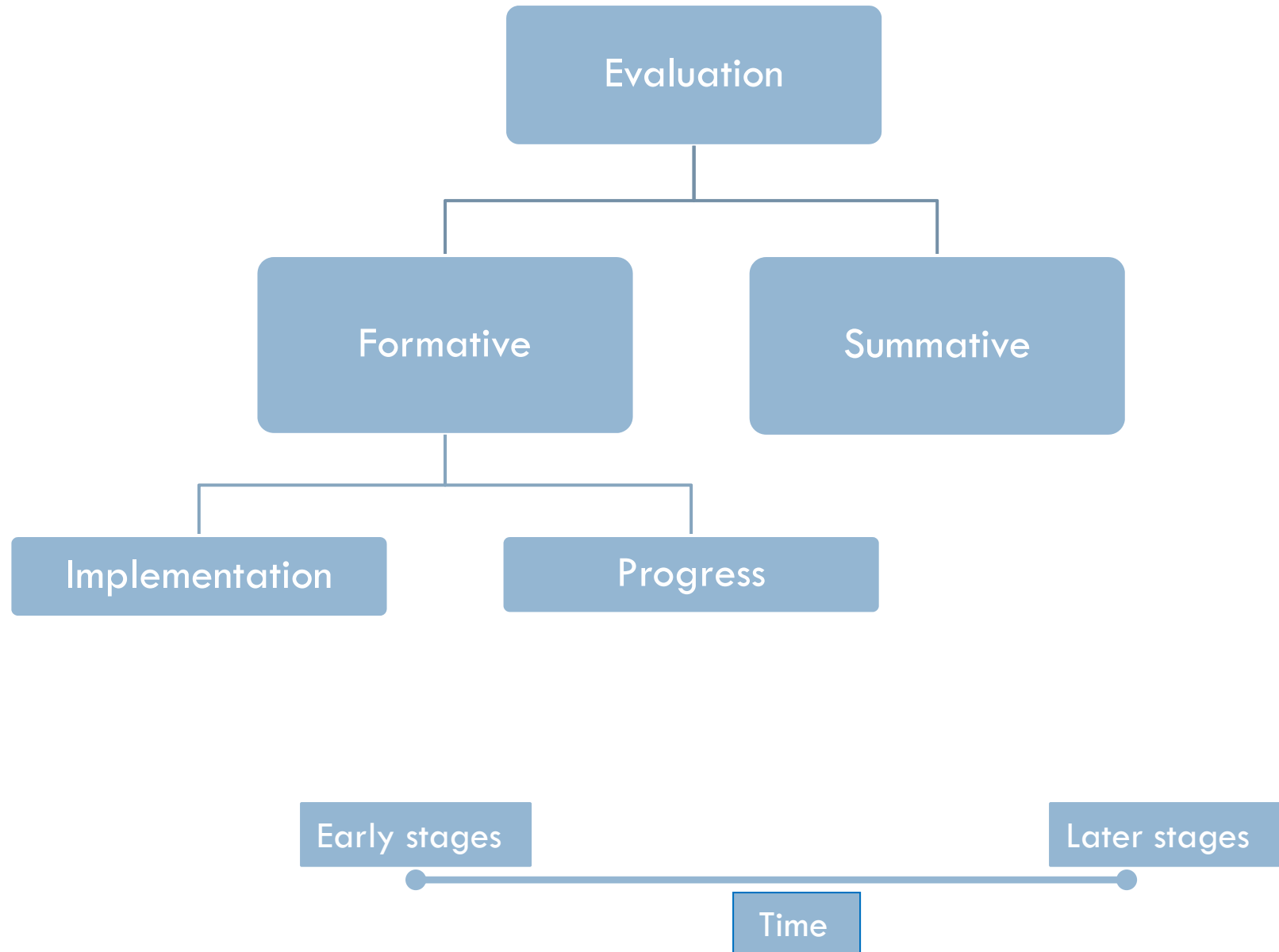
### Project Evaluations





# Planning an evaluation – purpose and development of questions

- **Why do you want to evaluate? For what purposes?**
  - ▣ Define what you want to learn from an evaluation
  - ▣ How will results be used? By whom?
  - ▣ What decisions will be made based on evaluation findings?
- **What questions do you want answered?**



Formative Evaluation – Improve	Summative Evaluation – Prove
Provides information that helps you improve your program. Generates periodic reports. Information can be shared quickly.	Generates information that can be used to demonstrate the results of your program to funders and your community.
Focuses most on program activities, outputs, and short-term outcomes for the purpose of monitoring progress and making mid-course corrections when needed.	Focuses most on program’s intermediate term outcomes and impact. Although data may be collected throughout the program, the purpose is to determine the value and worth of a program based on results.
Helpful in bringing suggestions for improvement to the attention of staff.	Helpful in describing the quality and effectiveness

# Planning an evaluation –data collection

- **What information do you need to answer the questions and to make decisions?**
  - ▣ What evaluation design will best get you that information?
  - ▣ What types of data?
  - ▣ From whom? When? How often?
- **Which assessments will give you the best information for your needs?**

# Planning an evaluation – findings and use

- **What criteria or standards do you have for your findings?**
  - ▣ What constitutes strong evidence for program success?
- **Who will use the findings and for what purpose?**
  - ▣ To whom should the findings be disseminated?
  - ▣ What decisions will be made based on the findings?
  - ▣ Who will do the dissemination?

# Managing an evaluation

What to look for, where to look

Setting the stage for working together

Managing the evaluation

Using evaluation processes and findings

# First and foremost

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- **Work with an evaluator early and often.**
- **Evaluators bring rigor to program thinking.**
- **Bring them in at the conceptualization stage of the project, if possible.**

# What to look for, and where

- **Characteristics of good evaluators**
  - It depends.
    - What are your questions?
    - What are your criteria for evidence?
    - What is the context of your project/program?
    - What is the content of the project?
- **Where can you find one?**
  - American Evaluation Association [[www.eval.org](http://www.eval.org)]
  - Online Evaluation Resource Library [[www.oerl.sri.com](http://www.oerl.sri.com)]
- **Checklists, Guiding Principles and Standards**

# Setting the stage

- **How do you want to work with your evaluator?**
- **Who should own the data and the findings?**
- **IRB**
- **Treat hiring an evaluator like you would hiring an employee.**
- **References, prior work, publications, etc.**

# Managing the process

- **Things will go wrong.**
- **Miscommunication will happen.**
- **The program will change, and so should the evaluation.**

# Making use of evaluation

- **Think about use from the very beginning.**
- **Plan for use before and during the evaluation.**
- **Involve stakeholders.**
- **Conceptualize use broadly**
  - ▣ Instrumental use, Process use, Conceptual use



Questions? Answers?



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