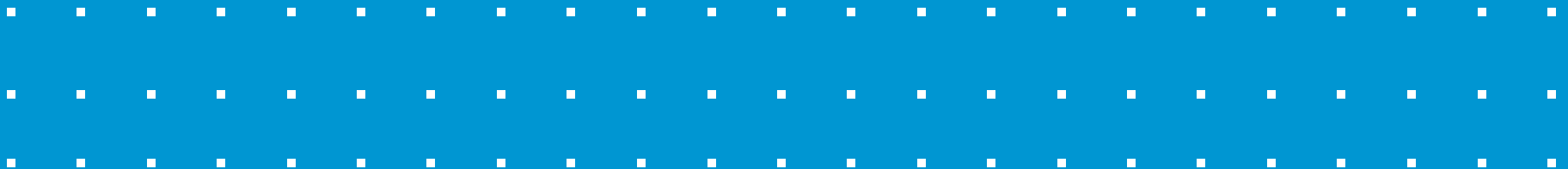




# Mixed Method Evaluations: Opportunities and Challenges

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# Overview

- Goals and objectives
- Definitions
- Potential and opportunities
- Challenges
- Future directions

# General types of evaluations

Type of Evaluation	Recognizable Features
Experimental Net Impact Analysis	Random assignment; control group
Quasi/non-experimental Net Impact Analysis	Multivariate statistical modeling; comparison group(s)
Cost-Benefit/Cost-effectiveness Analysis	Cost analysis, ROI
Performance and Outcome Analysis	Program outcome analysis and performance measurement; participant tracking; statistical simulations
Implementation & Process Analysis/Implementation Science	Field-based organizational analysis; program and service descriptions; observational analysis; surveys; qualitative & quantitative analysis

# Definitions

- Quantitative analysis plus qualitative analysis in an impact evaluation
  - Impact analysis plus process analysis
  - Impact analysis plus implementation analysis
- But also...
  - Experimental plus non-experimental or quasi-experimental analysis of impact
  - Performance analysis
  - Embedded studies with different but complementary methods
  - Multisite, multiple time period studies

# Potential and Opportunities

- Strengthens causal impact analysis
  - Create program and process measures and variables to include in impact analysis. Inform replications
  - Strengthen external validity by extrapolating from one or more studies
  - Support replicability. Define context, settings, treatment and practice details
- Informs practice and programs
  - Expand adoption of evidence-based approaches
  - Improve performance metrics. Refine measures; promote continuous performance improvement and sustainability
  - Analyze organizational dynamics (e.g., systems change, innovation diffusion)
- Improves theory refinement and building
  - Set priorities for future research and evaluations
  - Support method development (e.g., meta-analysis, Bayesian analysis, implementation science)

# Challenges

- Resource limitations
  - Some very labor intensive methods (e.g., field-based implementation analysis; participant baseline and follow-up surveys)
  - Dominant components (e.g., RCTs with surveys) often crowd out other design components
  - Impact analytic models rarely can include (many) program variables
- Limited academic acceptance
  - Dominant methods and disciplines take priority
  - RCTs over QEDs, meta analysis, implementation analysis
  - Quantitative over qualitative
  - Reaction to RCT dominance
- Under-developed common standards for some methods
  - Theoretical frameworks
  - Variable specifications
  - Analytic methods

# Future Directions

- Seize the opportunity the current emphasis on evidence-based policymaking presents
  - Institutionalize a culture of evaluation for public policy decision-making
    - ❖ Federal evidence-based policy priorities (e.g., “Evidence” Act) encourages and mandates rigorous evaluations and evidence-building in every department
  - Facilitate the adoption of evidence-based practices
    - ❖ Inform the growing demand for utilization-focused and practice-oriented evaluations
  - Establish standards beyond RCTs
    - ❖ The “next generation” of federal evidence-based clearinghouses include technological and methodological standards for various methods and designs

# Future Directions (cont.)

- Accelerate methodological development
  - *Incorporate, and continue to develop, mixed methods for both external and internal validity (e.g., meta-analysis, Bayesian methods, integrating implementation variables)*
  - *Improve both quantitative and qualitative mixed implementation analysis*
  - *Refine frameworks, models, & methods for participatory and utilization-focused studies (e.g., research-practice partnerships, continuous program improvement)*
  - *Share measures, variables and validated survey constructs (e.g., baseline instruments, variable definitions, implementation analysis frameworks)*
  - *Strengthen graduate school training (e.g., cross-disciplinary mixed method instruction)*



# Information and Contact

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