

Connecting Research & Practice

Workshop on the Role of University Centers in Collaborative Governance

Co-Sponsored by
Policy Consensus Initiative and the Ruckelshaus Center

Seattle, Washington
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Bill Leach, Research Director
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California State University, Sacramento

Three Models for Connecting Research and Practice at University Centers

- Collaborate with traditional academics on campus
- Collaborate with “pracademics” on campus
- Hire a PhD to lead a research program in-house

Practical Roles for Researchers at University Centers

- Project evaluator
- Consultant on assessment design
(surveys, interviews, data analysis)
- Surveyor of the literature (formal lit reviews,
informal consultation, personal librarian)
- Subject-matter expert
- Coach for practitioners who publish or present
- Mediator btwn. practitioners & outside researchers
- Liaison to campus, national organizations, etc.

Challenges for Researchers at University Centers

- Maintaining impartiality
 - ▶ Strategy: contract out
- Getting practitioners' attention
 - ▶ Strategy: build a mission-driven, learning organization
- Funding

Connecting Research and Practice: A Traditional Academic's Perspective

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Three Models for Connecting Research and Practice at University Centers

- Collaborate with **traditional academics** on campus
 - I'm a traditional academic (Political Scientist)
 - Working in a school with pracademics and academics
- Collaborate with “pracademics” on campus
- Hire a PhD to lead a research program in-house

Strategies for Involving Traditional Academics

- Long-term research programs
 - The primary focus of research universities
 - Long time frames decrease immediate relevance
- Short-term research projects
 - Smaller pieces of larger research programs
 - Practical relevance easier to identify
- Practical applications of previous research findings
 - Work of pracademics and practitioners

Example: Measuring the performance of collaborative efforts

- Research problem – Supporters of collaboration often assume that process is what matters (i.e., “good processes will produce good results”).
- Research question – Does collaboration produce better social and environmental outcomes than other governance processes?
 - Bill Leach, et al., have provided much evidence collaborative processes improve social capital
 - But what about environmental improvement?

Example: Measuring the performance of collaborative efforts

- Long-term research programs – answering this question requires 5-10 years of academic research (which we are just beginning)
- Short-term research projects – numerous case studies of specific collaborative efforts (within a larger research design) that may inform practice
- Practical applications of findings – Likely none for 5-10 years (but may include BMPs)

Strategies for Working with Traditional Academics

- Long-term research programs
 - Fund primary research, or help researchers find funding
 - Convene research conferences
 - Speaker series to create a social network of academics, pracademics, and practioners
 - Encourage practitioners to work with academics in designing research protocols for gathering data, monitoring collaborative efforts, etc.
- Short-term research projects
 - Most of the above
 - With emphasis on funding and working with practitioners
- Practical applications of findings
 - Invite academics to provide state-of-the-field knowledge

Summary Points

- Traditional academics face different incentives than pracademics and practitioners
 - But they aren't incompatible or insurmountable
- Find ways for academics and practitioners to work together in the research design phase of long-term research programs
 - They could learn from each other, and thereby design studies better up front
 - Practitioners might buy in and become de facto research assistants in the field
 - Pracademics could serve as a social bridge

What kind of help do you want?

- Topic, focus
- Scope, length (defined? open-ended?)
- Nature of working relationship
(one-shot? ongoing?)

Steve Page, Evans School, Univ. of Washington

Where is it available?

- Universities – Bill's different types of university sources
- Outside consultants
- In-house expertise
- Elsewhere?

Assess the Supply of Help

- How capable and available are your prospective partners?
- Make sure you get the help you need – NOT just what prospective partners have to offer

Connecting Research and Practice: A “Pracademic’s” Perspective

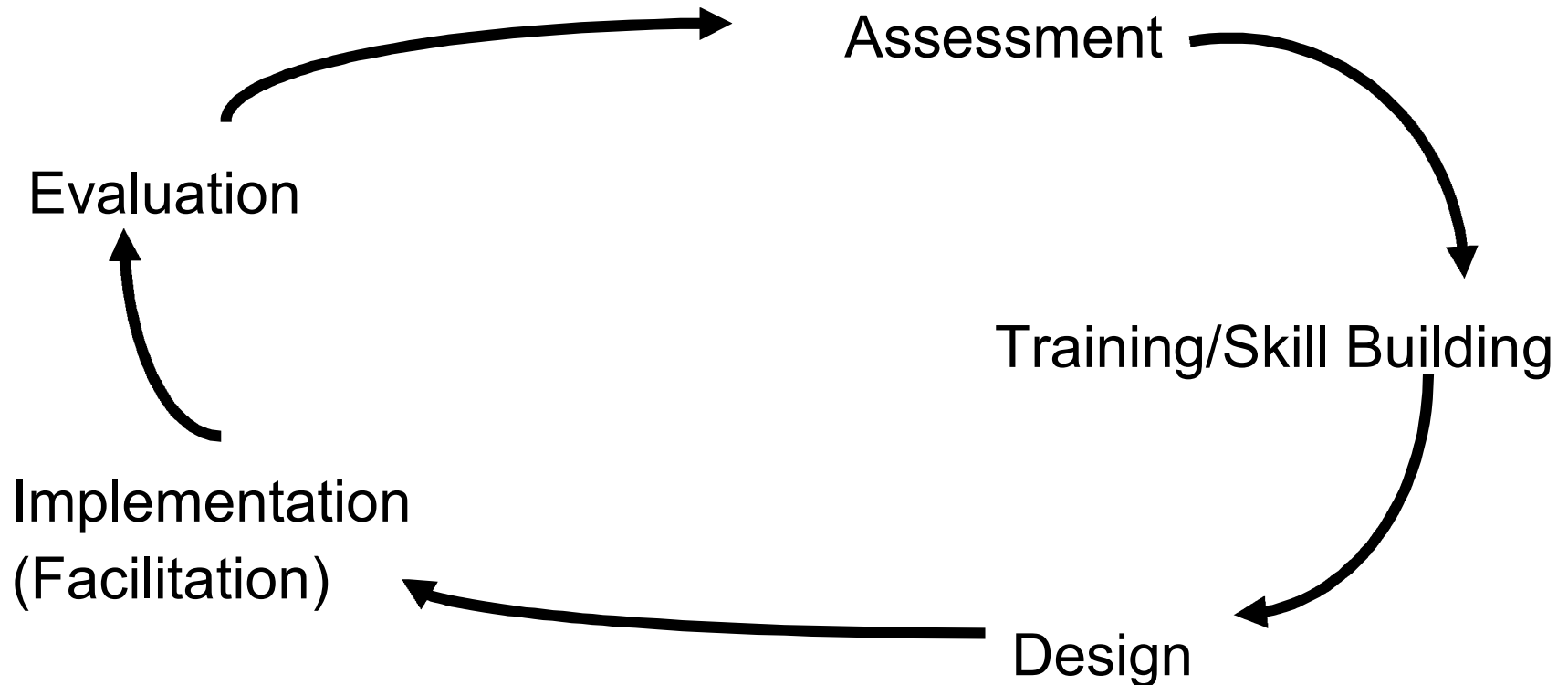
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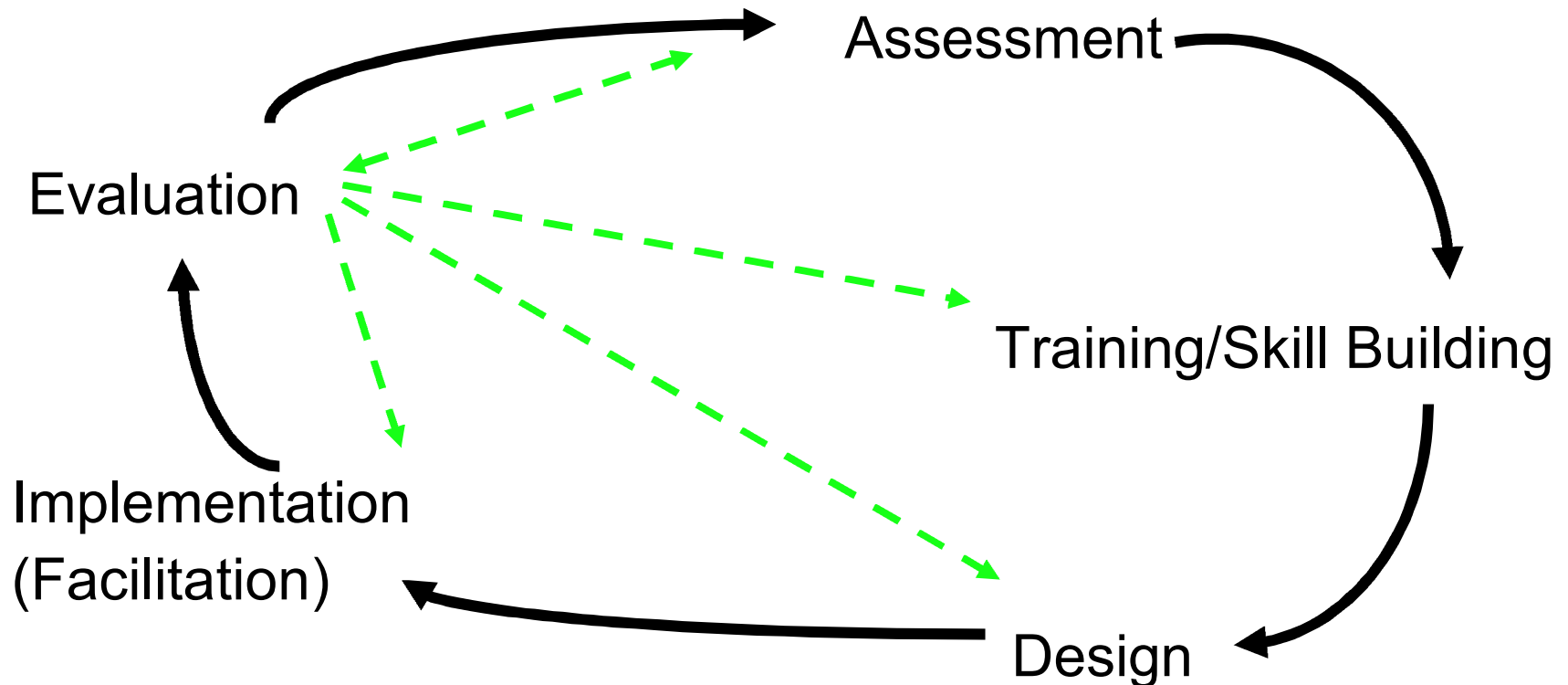
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Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Five Phases



Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Five Phases



Key Question:

What can university researchers (and universities) do to integrate research and practice about multi-stakeholder processes (such as community-based collaboration)? What role is appropriate?

“Pracademic” Research and Practice:” Some Models/Examples

Model One: The university does everything

Case: Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area

- Research activities included assessment interviews, post-workshop surveys, content analysis of comments.
- University faculty performed or directed all project phases and tasks

Models/Examples

Model Two: University project team with role differentiation

- Cases: Allegheny NF and Bridger-Teton NF
- Some university faculty conduct assessment, training, design, and facilitation.
- Other university faculty lead data collection and evaluation.
- All team members participate in team decisions and data analysis.

Models/Examples

Model Three: University project team with role distinction

- Case: Wentachee NF and Gifford Pinchot NF (Cispus AMA)
- Some university faculty/staff conduct assessment, training, design, and facilitation.
- Other university faculty/staff handle data collection and evaluation.
- No role overlap – facilitators play no part in evaluation and evaluators do no influence other phases.

Models/Examples

Model Four: University assesses, designs, facilitates, agency evaluates

- Case: Oregon DEQ/INR Mixing one Workshop
- University faculty conduct assessment, design, and facilitation.
- Agency personnel evaluate and analyze data.

Other Models?

- Universities provide assessment and training; others facilitate and evaluate (e.g., RSM/MCR)
- Universities provide design, facilitation, and summarize data (e.g., EPA Tribal Leaders' Summit)

Other Approaches?

- University / practitioner partnerships?
- Community / university partnerships?
- Self-funded university research?
- and?

Regardless of the model or approach:

- Role responsibilities should be clear
- Impartiality should be maintained
- Conflicts of interest should be avoided