
Project Evaluation for MSP Institute Partnerships

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What is Evaluation?

- “The systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object.”
 - The Program Evaluation Standards



Why have an Evaluation?

- To provide formative feedback to help improve the **quality** of the project.
 - To look for evidence of the project's **impact**.
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- Before an evaluation can be designed, the plan for *how* the project activities are expected to lead to the desired outcomes must be made explicit.
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- The plan should be plausible given prior research/lessons learned.
 - MSP-KMD knowledge reviews -- findings from research and insights from practice:

<http://www.mspkmd.net/>

- Evaluator may be able to provide advice as well.
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Where to Start?

- Develop a “logic model” for the project
 - The logic model links expected outcomes to project activities
 - The logic model also helps the project designers and implementers
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Developing a Logic Model

- It is an iterative process
 - Need to think about:
 - The needs of the system
 - Your goals: which needs you are targeting
 - What activities you can implement
 - Capacity
 - Available resources
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- Need to think about the connections between needs, planned activities, and goals:
 - If the goal is to improve elementary science instruction...
 - Having grade-level content workshops and providing on-going support to teachers makes sense
 - Have a scientist visit each teacher's classroom once a semester as the primary treatment does not
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Components of a Logic Model

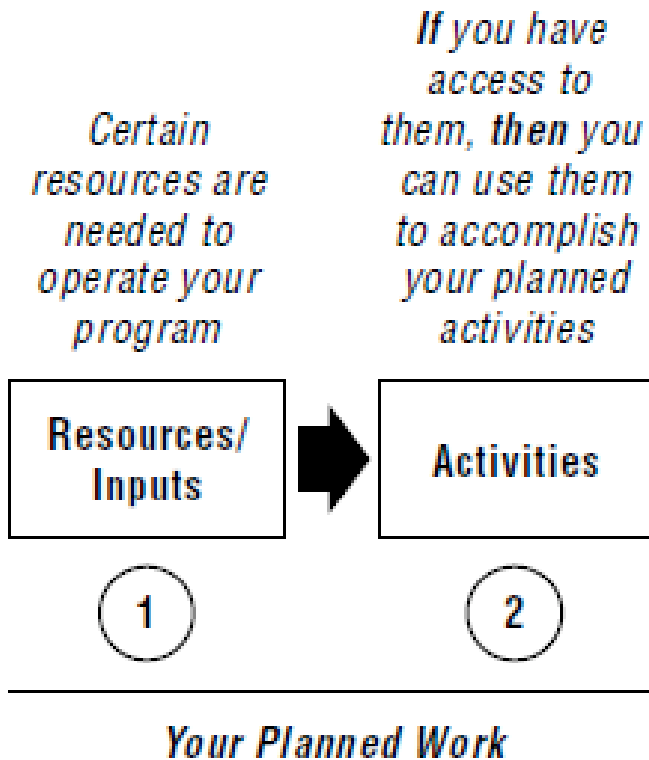
*Certain
resources are
needed to
operate your
program*

**Resources/
Inputs**

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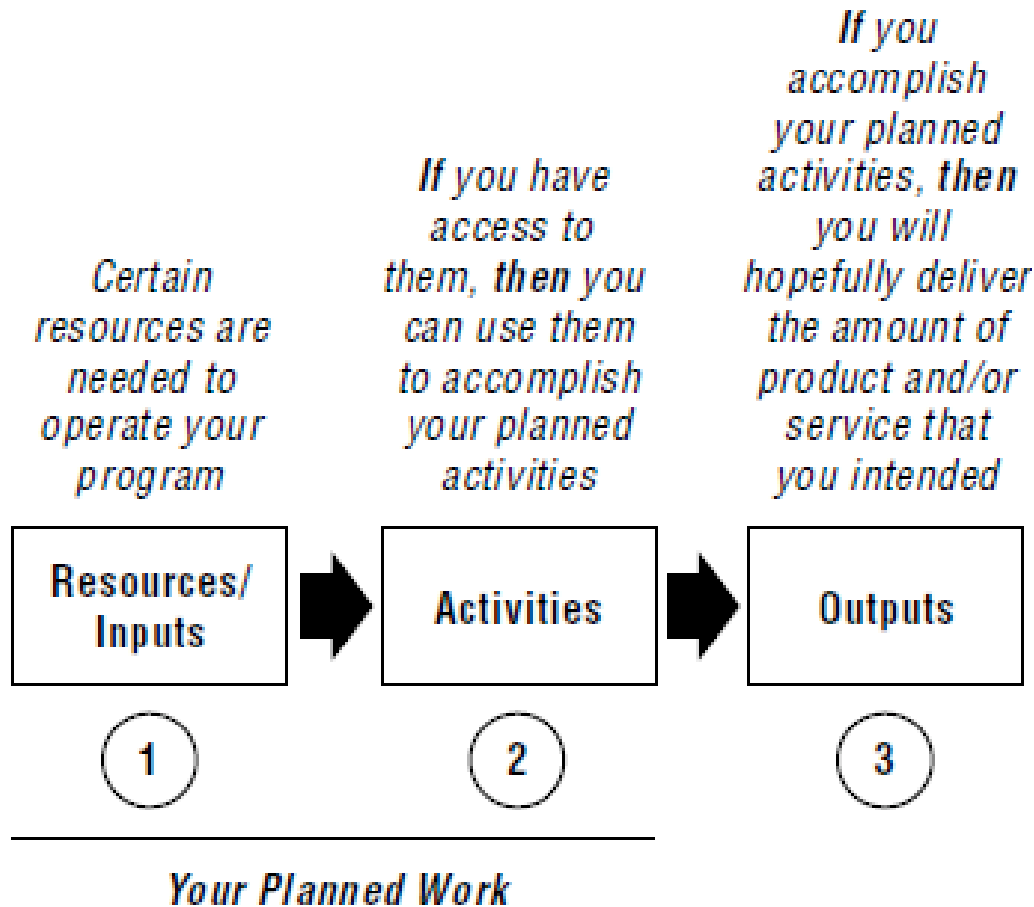
- *Logic Model Development Guide (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004)*
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Components of a Logic Model



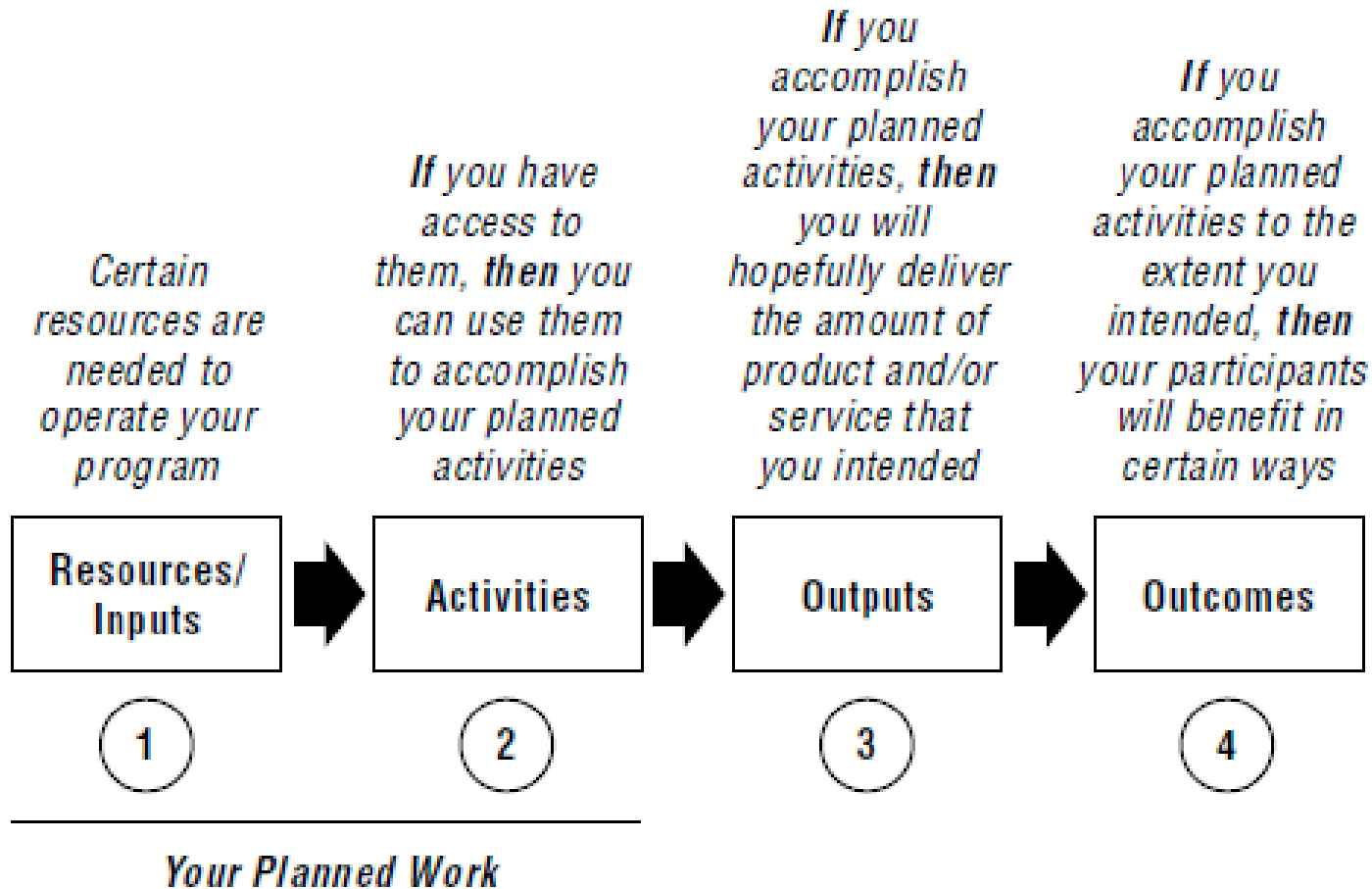
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Components of a Logic Model



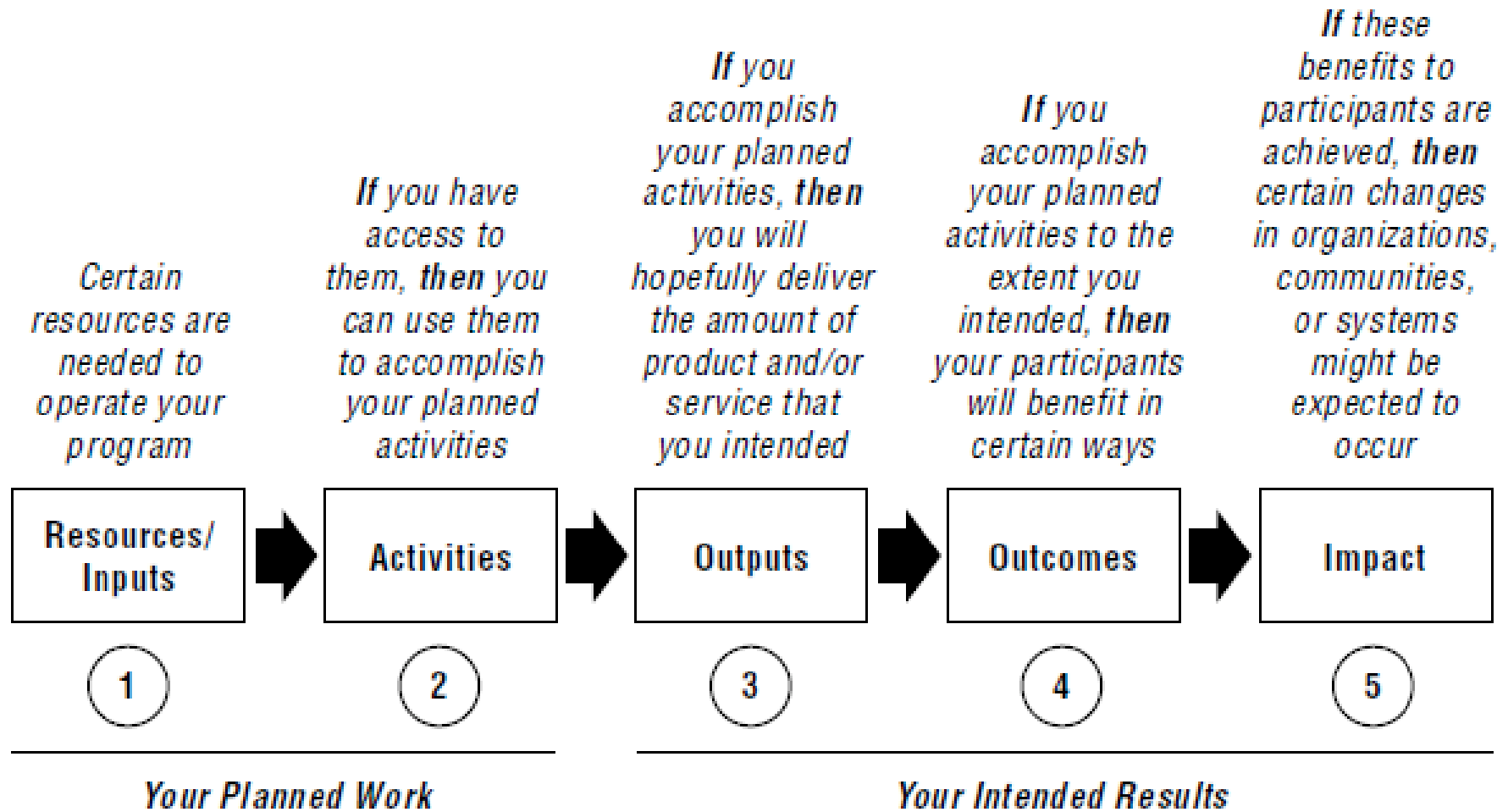
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Components of a Logic Model



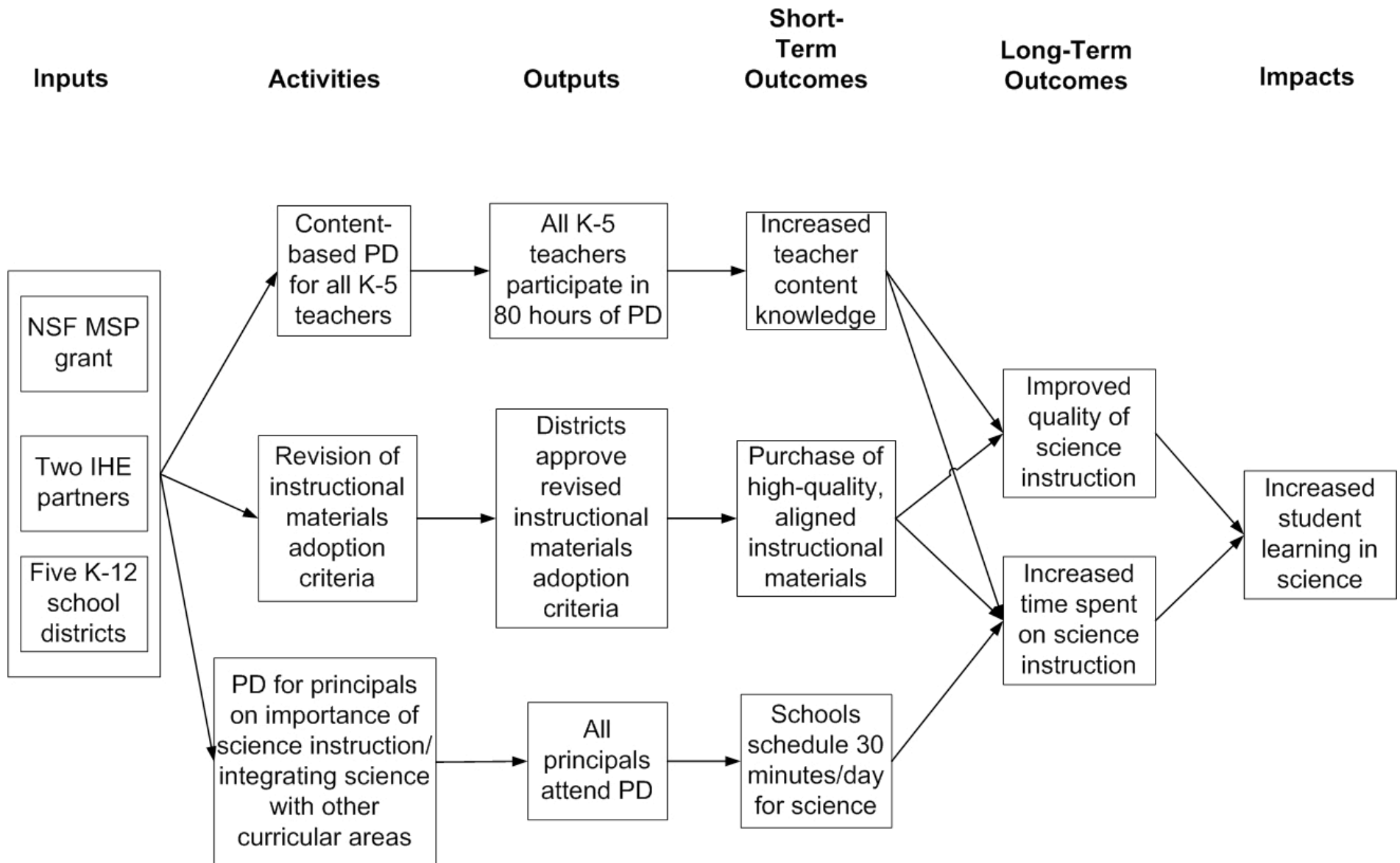
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Components of a Logic Model



- *Logic Model Development Guide (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004)*

Sample (Simple) Logic Model



Developing an Evaluation Plan

- Find an evaluator
 - “The persons conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation, so that the evaluation findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance”
 - The Program Evaluation Standards
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Key Traits of an External Evaluator

- Knowledgeable
 - content (e.g., K-12 mathematics education)
 - methodology
 - Independent
 - Unbiased
 - Track record – delivering quality services on time and within budget
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How to Find an Evaluator

- Networking, asking others in the field
- Reading evaluation reports
- On-line directory maintained by The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University:

<http://ec.wmich.edu/evaldir/evalinfo.htm>

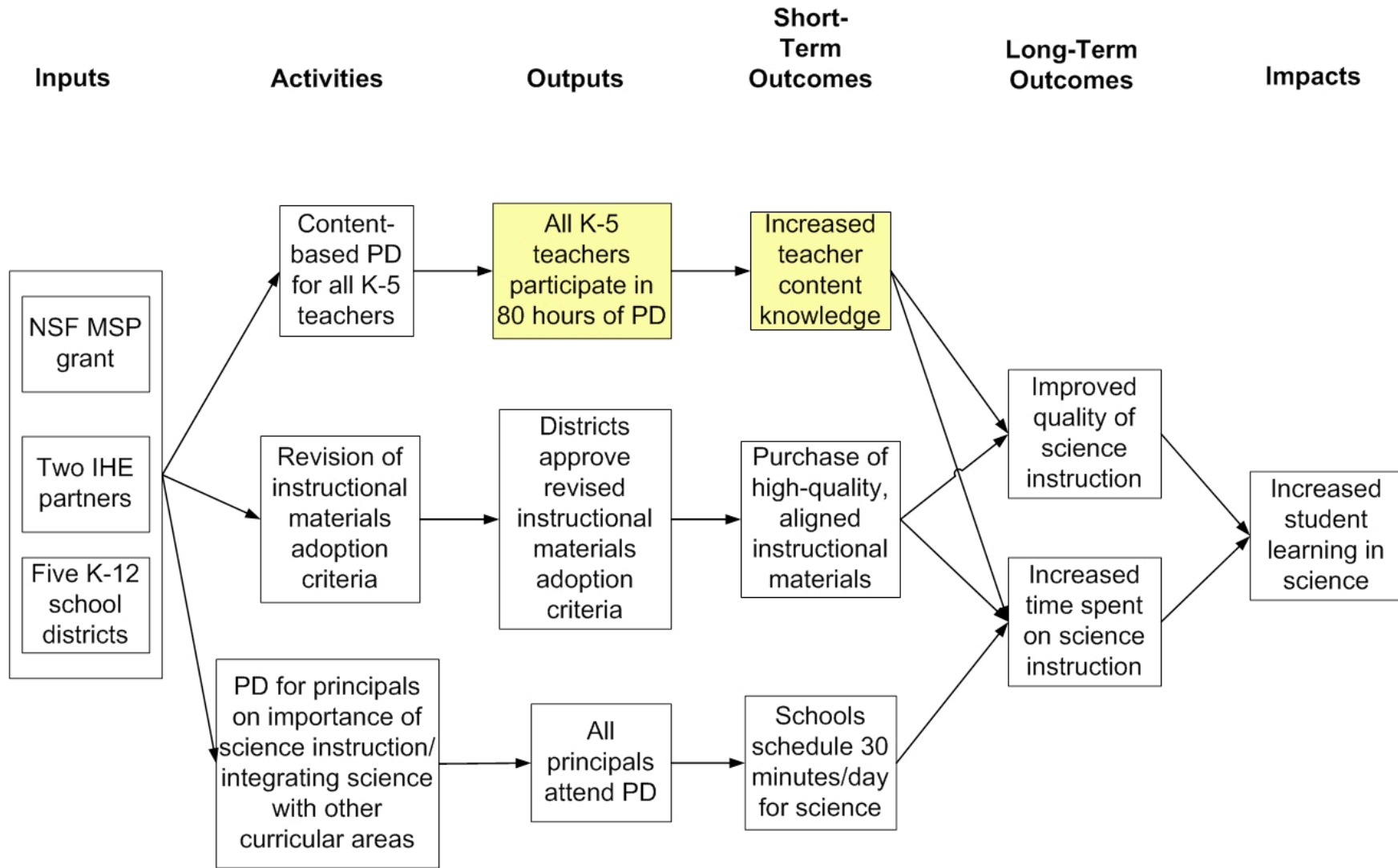
Develop an Evaluation Plan

- Several factors to consider:
 - Stakeholders' information needs
 - Opportunities for data collection
 - Constraints (e.g., costs, response burden)
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Evaluation Questions

- Evaluation questions should focus on key components of the project's logic model.
 - The arrows can be thought of as hypotheses that can be tested.
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Sample (Simple) Logic Model



Sample Questions

■ Formative

- What is the quality of the PD for teachers?
- What factors inhibit/facilitate the adoption of high-quality instructional materials?

■ Summative

- What is the impact of the PD on teacher content knowledge?
 - How has the quality of classroom instruction changed over the course of the project?
 - What is the impact on student achievement in science?
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- Answers to “summative” questions can be formative if results are available early enough in the project.
 - For example, results from assessments of teacher content knowledge and/or classroom observations may indicate a need for refining the professional development.
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Project Staff Should Also Monitor Implementation

- During NSF's LSC initiative, PIs were encouraged to visit classrooms to see how teachers were implementing what they had learned in professional development.
 - The PIs reported that teachers were using the designated instructional materials, but without adequate focus on the mathematics/science content.
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Measures/Instruments

- Evaluation questions suggest the constructs to be measured, for example, teacher content knowledge, quality of instruction.
- MSP-KMD project has a searchable database of measures of teacher content knowledge:

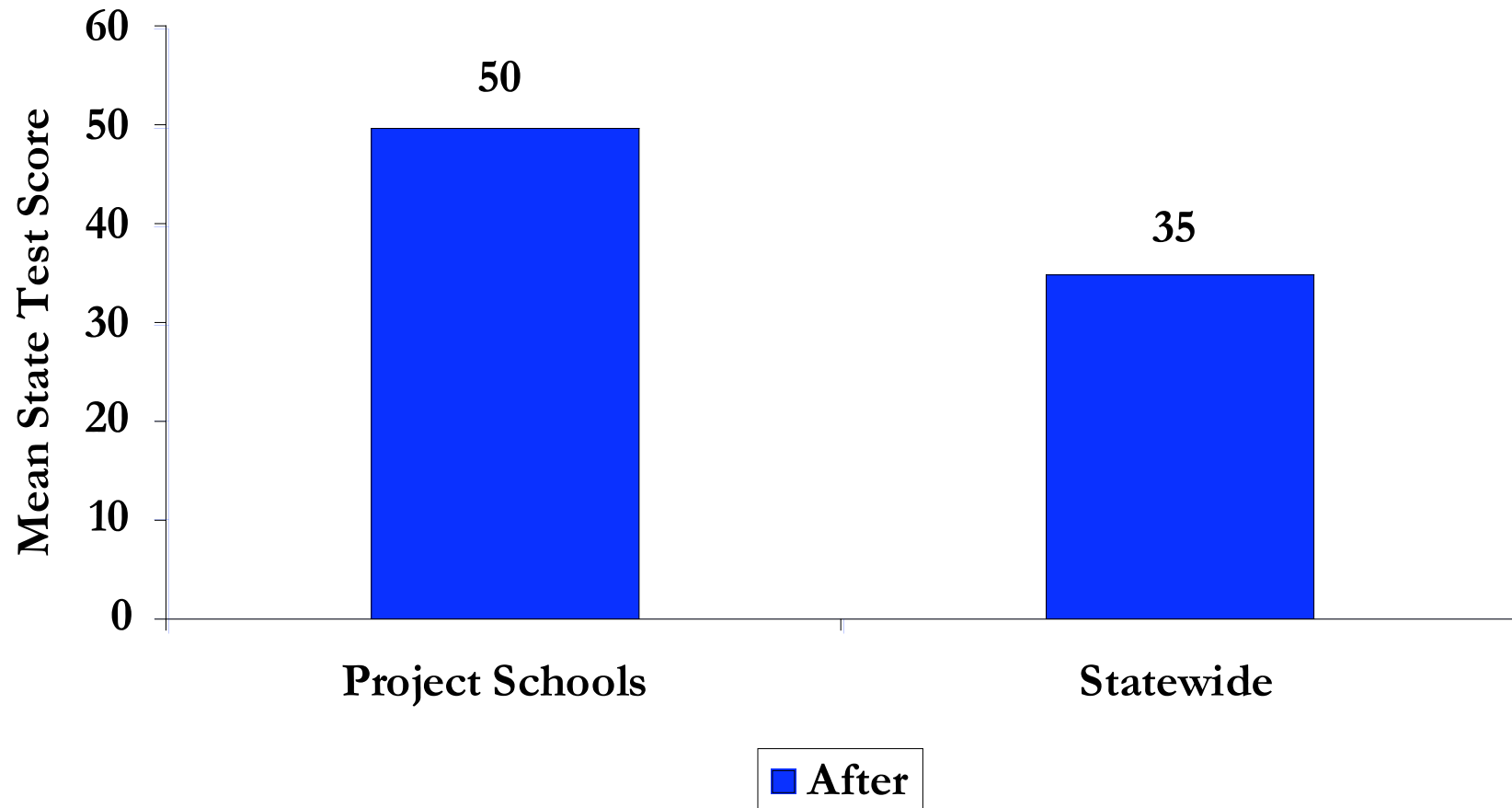
<http://www.mspkmd.net/>

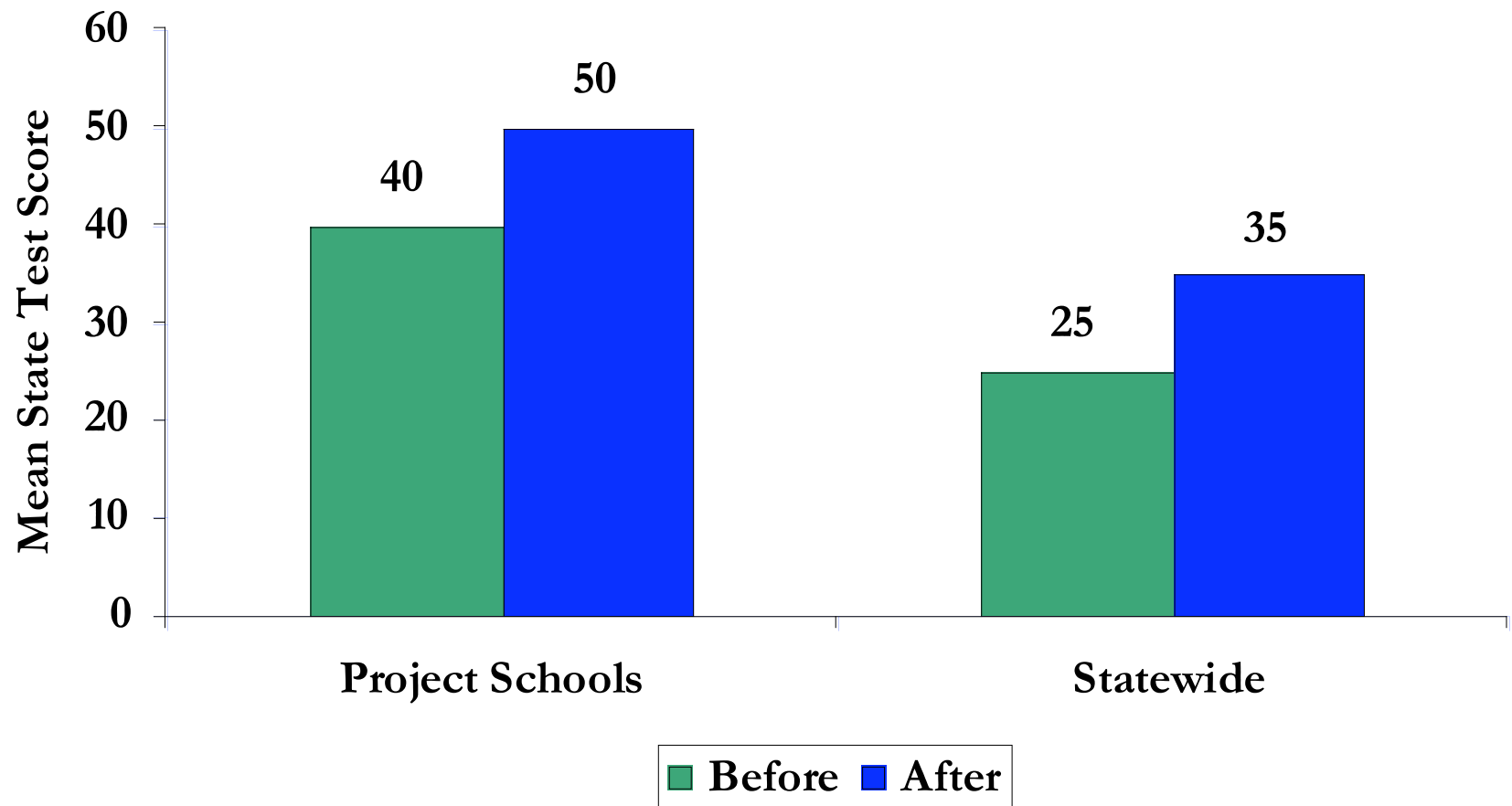
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- Need to identify instruments to measure the constructs:
 - Reliable
 - Valid
 - Credible
 - Burden and cost
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Research and Analysis Design

- Need to have a plan for collecting and analyzing data that allows you to attribute findings to the intervention.
 - Respondent groups
 - Sampling
 - Timeline (when and how often)
 - Analytic approach
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How Confident Are You that this Intervention Was Effective?





Reporting Findings

- Describe what information will be reported, when, and to whom:
 - Formative memos
 - Progress reports
 - Impact reports
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Key Points

- Evaluation needs to be integral to a project, not an afterthought
 - Plan on devoting 5-10 percent of project budget to the evaluation
 - The evaluator should be involved in the development of the proposal
 - Can offer a design critique
 - Helps ensure the evaluation plan is appropriate
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Key Points

- Likely won't be able to evaluate everything about a project – need to agree on the most important pieces
 - “The evaluation plan should directly relate to the annual benchmarks and outcome goals in the SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS section of the proposal” – MSP Solicitation
 - Keep it realistic – don't expect to find evidence of long-term outcomes right away; focus on intermediate outcomes initially
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