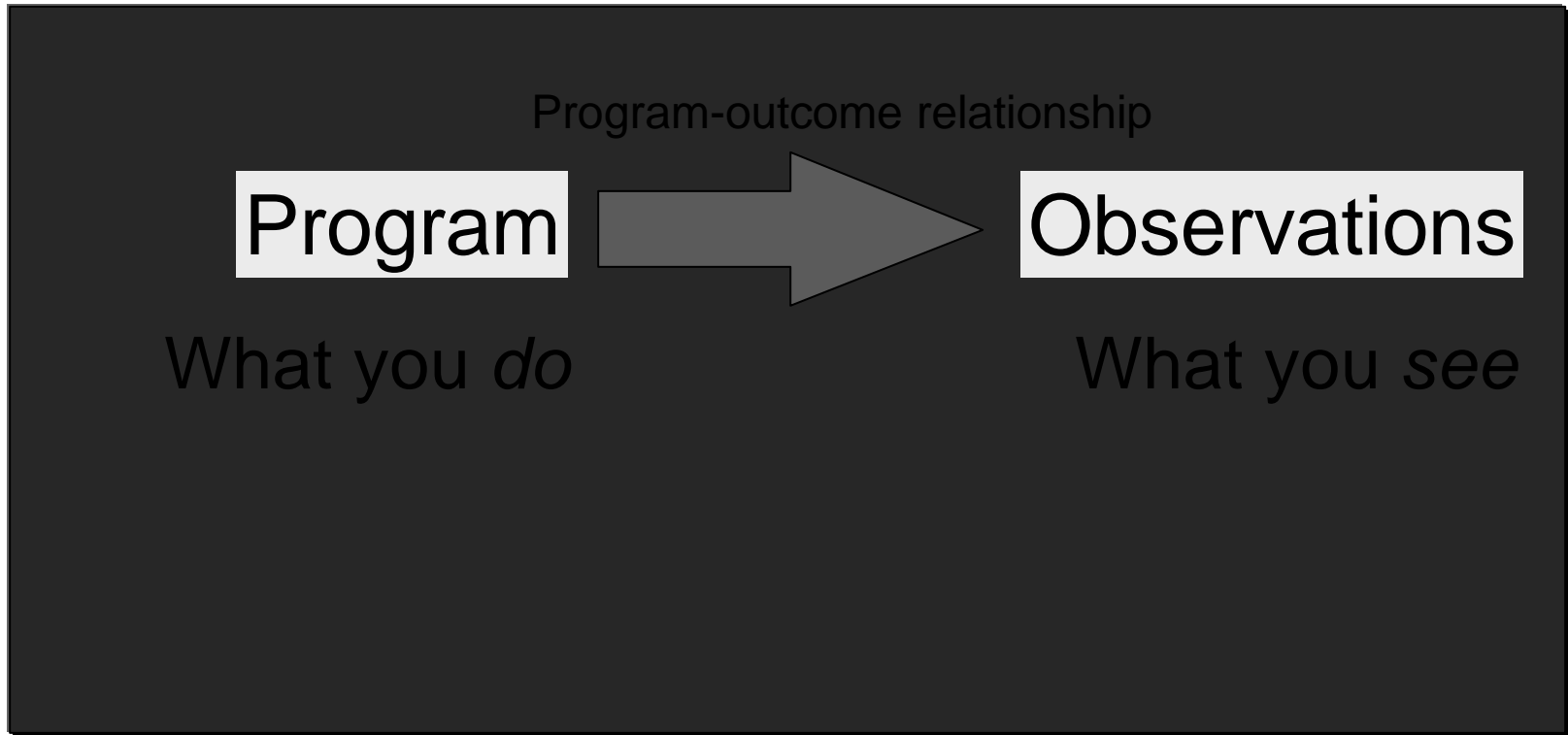


Evaluation Research

Source: Trochim, M.K. 2001. The Research Methods Knowledge Base. Atomic Dog Publishing.

Evaluation Research



Definitions of Evaluation

- Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the worth or merit of some object.
- Evaluation is the systematic acquisition and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some object.

Evaluation Strategies

- Scientific-experimental
- Management-oriented systems
- Qualitative/anthropological
- Participant-oriented

Types of Evaluation

- Formative
- Summative

Formative Questions

- What is the question (definition and scope)?
- Where is the problem?
- How serious is it?
- How should the program be delivered to address the problem?
- How well is the program delivered?

Summative Evaluation

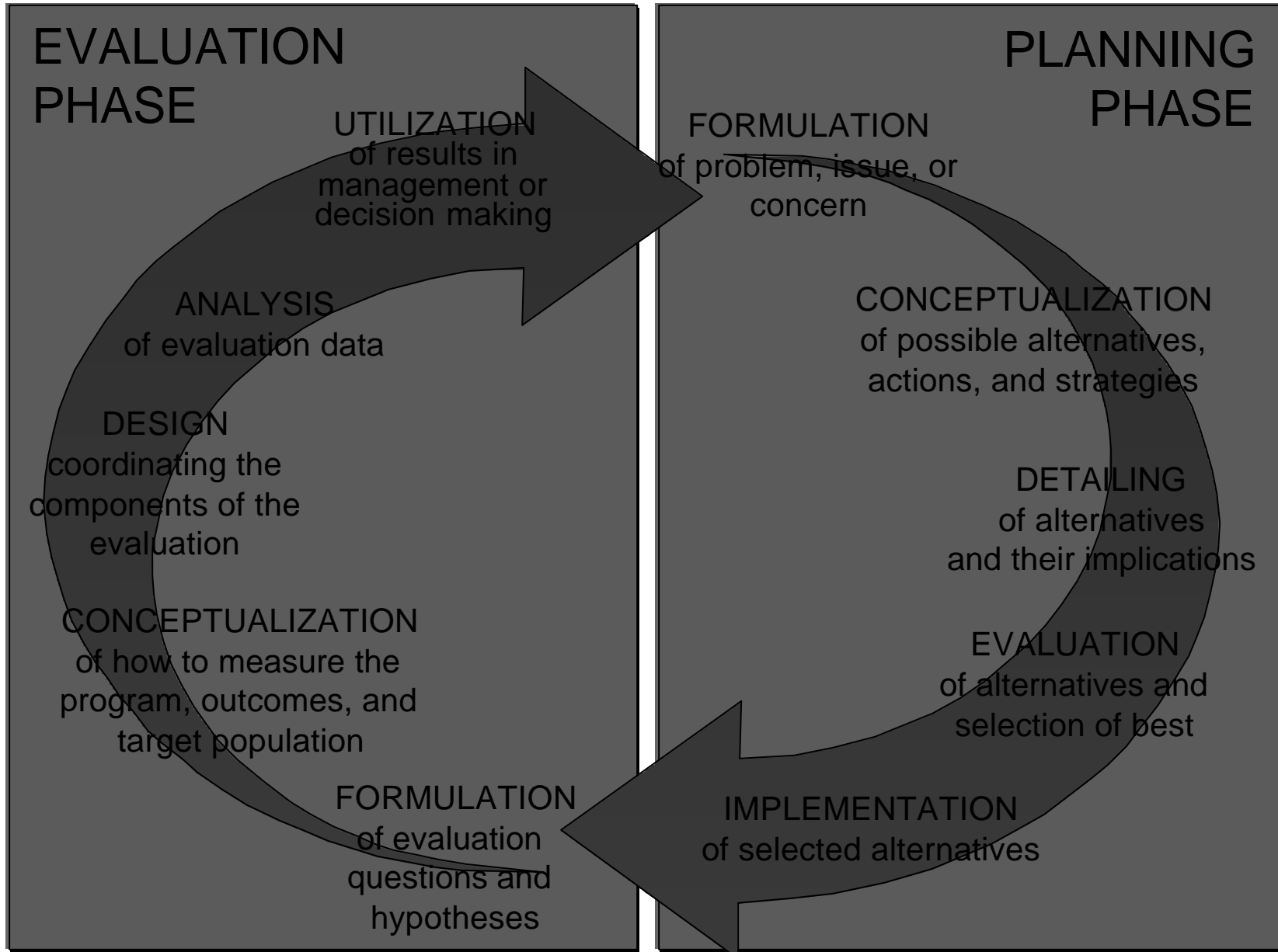
- Outcome evaluation
- Impact evaluation
- Cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit
- Secondary analysis
- Meta-evaluation

Summative Questions

- What type of evaluation is feasible?
- What is the effectiveness of the program?
- What is the net impact of the program?

The Planning-Evaluation Cycle

The Planning-Evaluation Cycle

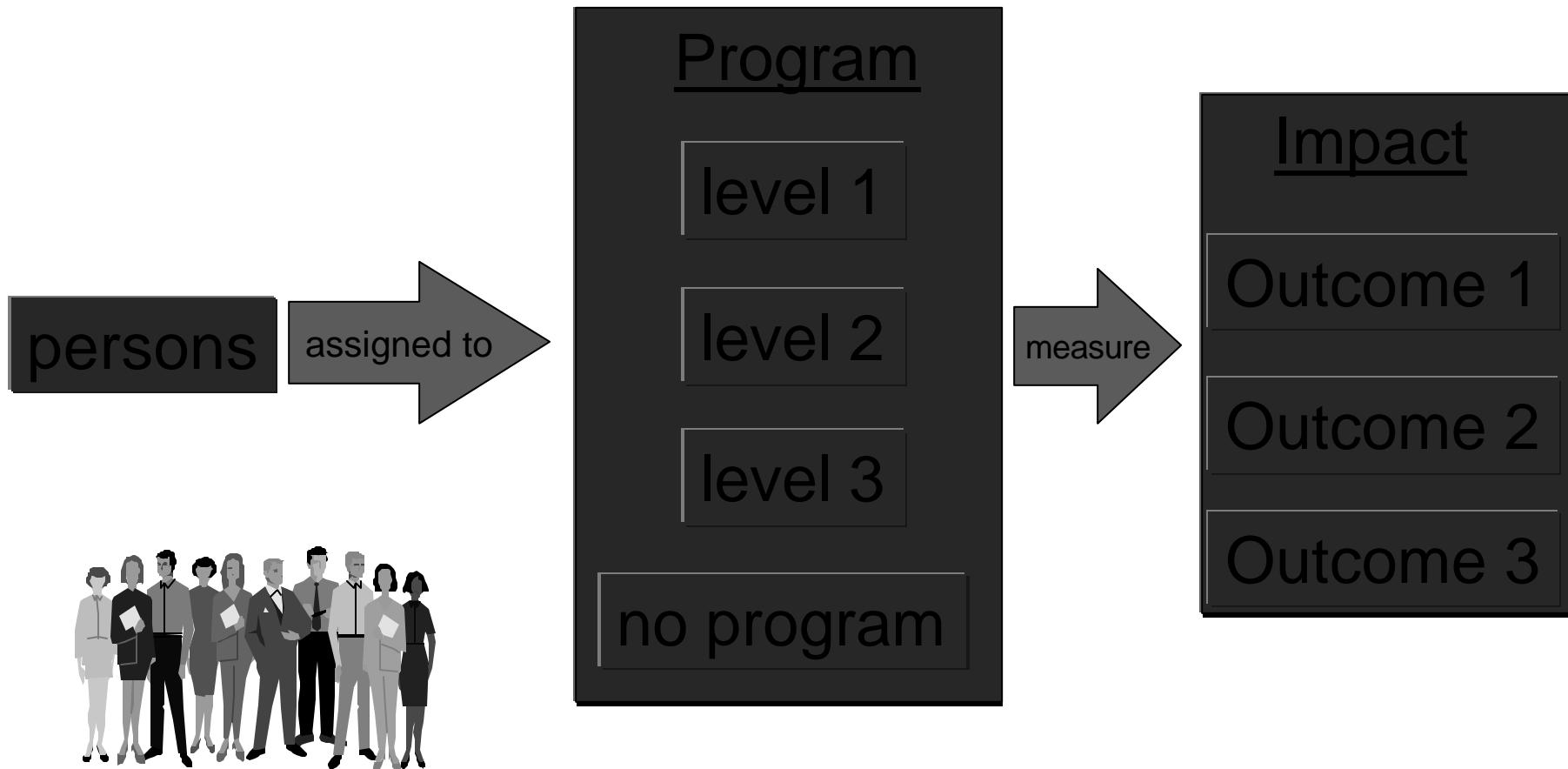


The Basic Program Evaluation Model

Basic Evaluation Model

A model in which persons or other units that the program is expected to affect have been assigned to levels of the treatment (including, perhaps, no treatment) and subsequently some outcome variable or variables are measured that are expected to show the impact of the treatment

Basic Evaluation Model



Developing an Evaluation Culture

Why an Evaluation Culture?

- Evaluation should be *imbedded* in our activities (nonintrusive).
- Evaluation should be approached from a systemic position.
- Evaluation should be normative.
- Evaluation should be value oriented.

The Evaluation Culture Will Be *Action Oriented*.

- Actively seek solutions to problems
- Experimental -- willing to try new approaches to problems
- Cycle of supposition-action-evidence-revision
- Not acting for action's sake -- attempting to assess effects of actions

The Evaluation Culture Will Be *Teaching Oriented.*

- Emphasizes the unity of formal evaluation and everyday thought
- Understandable to nontechnicians
- Encourages involvement from all participants
- The “learning organization”
- Encourages experts to teach us about their technical side

The Evaluation Culture Will Be *Diverse and Inclusive*.

- Problems are systemic, interconnected, and linked to social issues.
- The evaluation culture recognizes that all stakeholders are needed to achieve solutions to complex problems.

The Evaluation Culture Will Be *Participatory and Responsive.*

- More than just lip service -- methods for involving stakeholders
- Problems and their definitions not defined by an exclusive elite
- Recognizing where participation makes sense and why

The Evaluation Culture Will Be *Humble and Self-critical.*

- Recognizing limitations of individual studies
- Placing the evaluator in facilitative role -
- the “cowardly approach”
- Recognizing that decisions require more input than just fallible evaluation
- Recognizing who has responsibility for decisions in democratic societies

The Evaluation Culture Will Be *Interdisciplinary.*

- *Consciously nondisciplinary* -- moving beyond the blinders of disciplines
- Learning from the lessons of various disciplines
- Moving away from the mystification of disciplinary language/theory -- translating to broader audience

The Evaluation Culture Will Be *Honest and Truth Seeking.*

- Stresses accountability
- Stresses scientific credibility
- Holds to the goal of trying to get it right, unreachable as that is

The Evaluation Culture Will Be *Prospective and Forward Looking.*

- Anticipating where information will be needed
- Initiating low-cost monitoring information systems when we initiate programs, not later

The Evaluation Culture Will Be *Fair, Open, Ethical, and Democratic.*

- Move away from private ownership and exclusive access to data
- Encourage open commentary and debate on the results of evaluations
- Provide formal opportunities for competitive review and response

Where Next?

- Is such a culture desirable?
- Is such a culture feasible?
- If so, how do we move in this direction?

The Structure of Evaluation Research

Major Components in the Process

- **The problem (as conceptualized or experienced)**
- **The research question (theory or idea translated into operational hypothesis)**
- **The program (cause) (construct and operationalization)**
- **The units (the population and sample)**
- **The outcomes (effects) (constructs and operational measures)**
- **The design (who gets the program)**