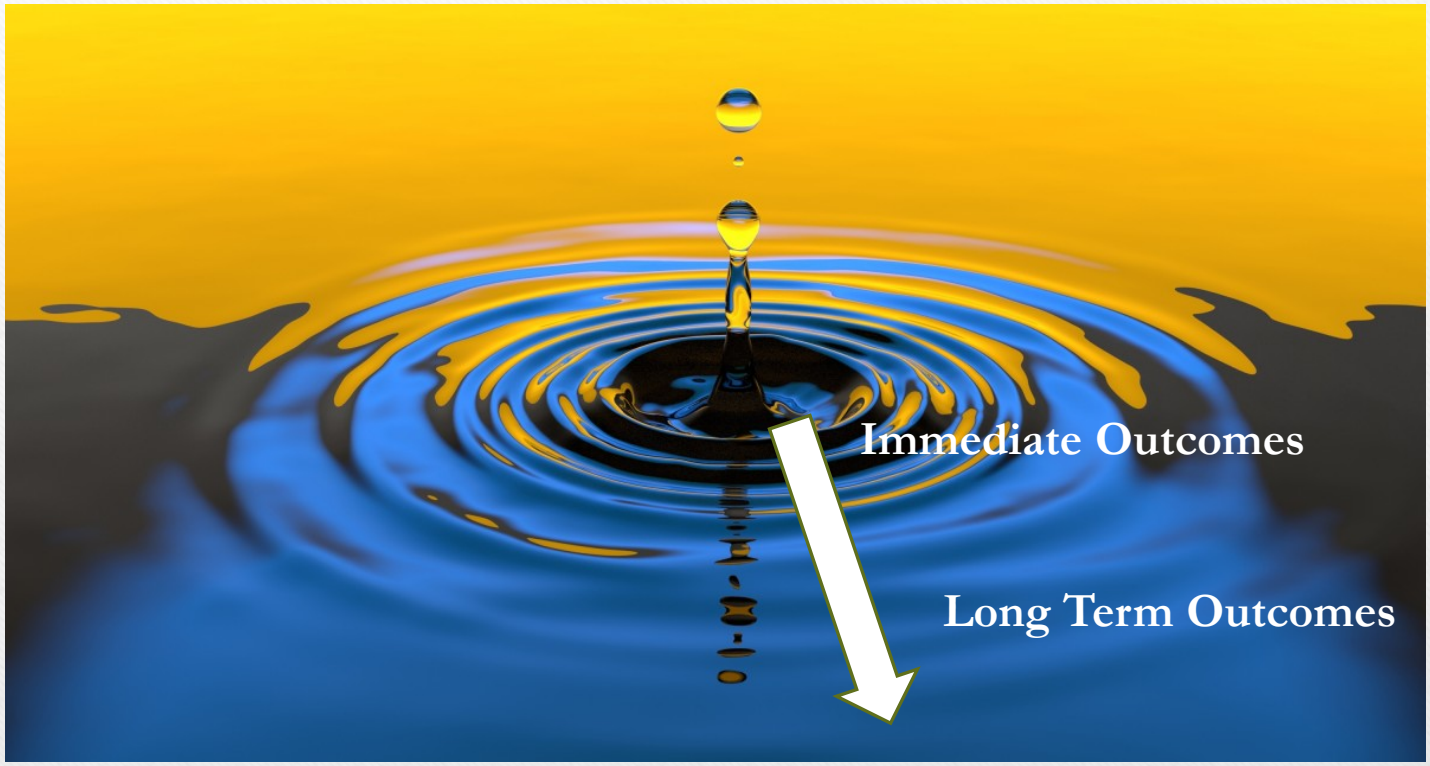
Mapping Program Theory & Evaluation

The Big Question

- How do we know we know if we are creating meaningful teaching and learning experiences?

Splash and Ripple



Coyne, K., & Cox, P. (2008). *Splash & ripple: Using outcomes to design & manage community activities* (4th ed.). Calgary, AB: Plan:Net Limited and Strathcona Research Group.

Program Theory

the program's "….plan of operation, the logic that connects its activities to the intended outcomes, and the rationale for why it does what it does"

the program plan, blueprint, or design

the program conceptualization

Rossi, P. H., Freeman, H. E., & Lipsey, M. W. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach* (7th Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Program Theory

1. Program Impact Theory
2. Program Utilization Plan
3. Program Organizational Plan (Logic Model)

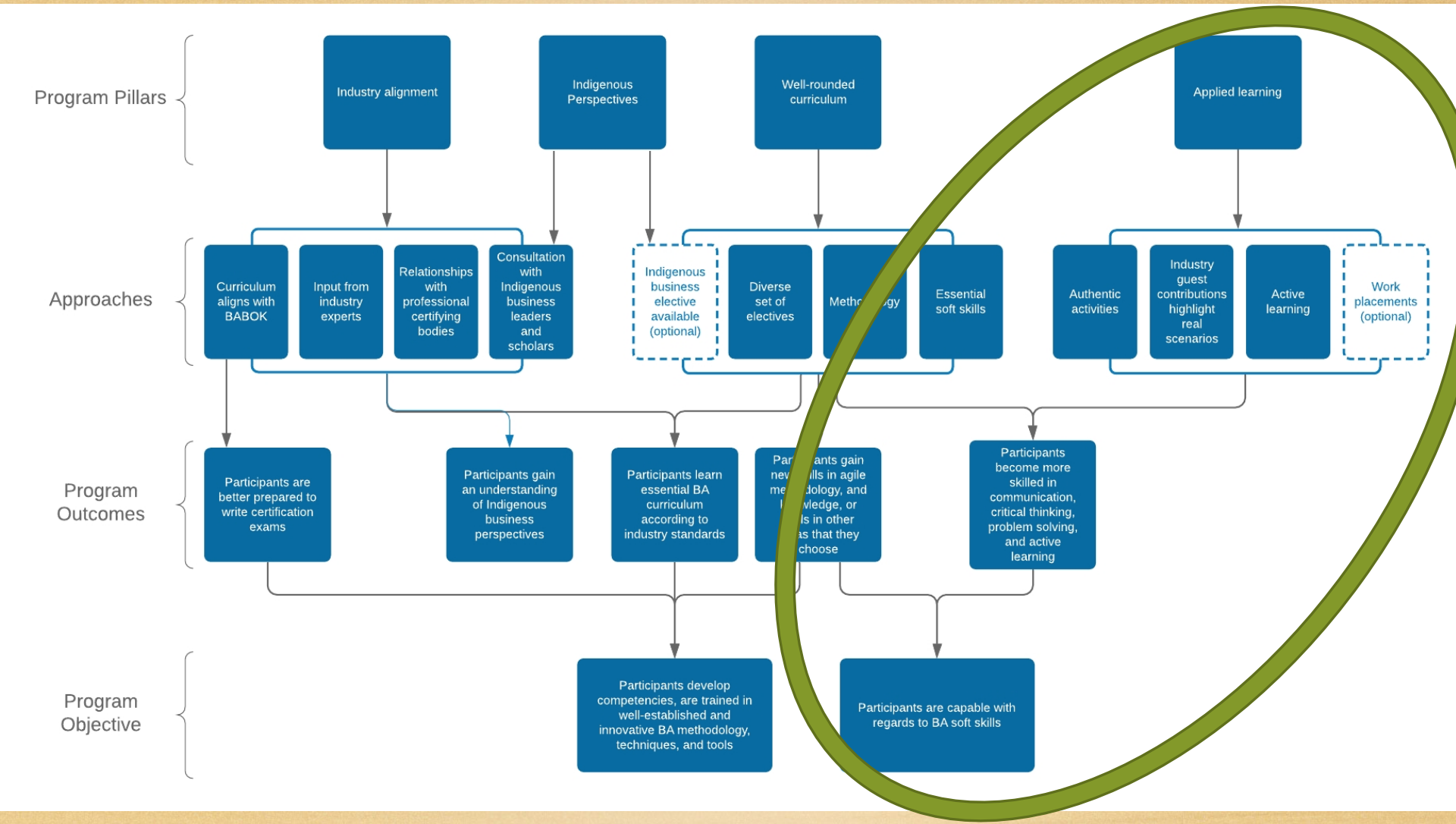
1. Program Impact Theory

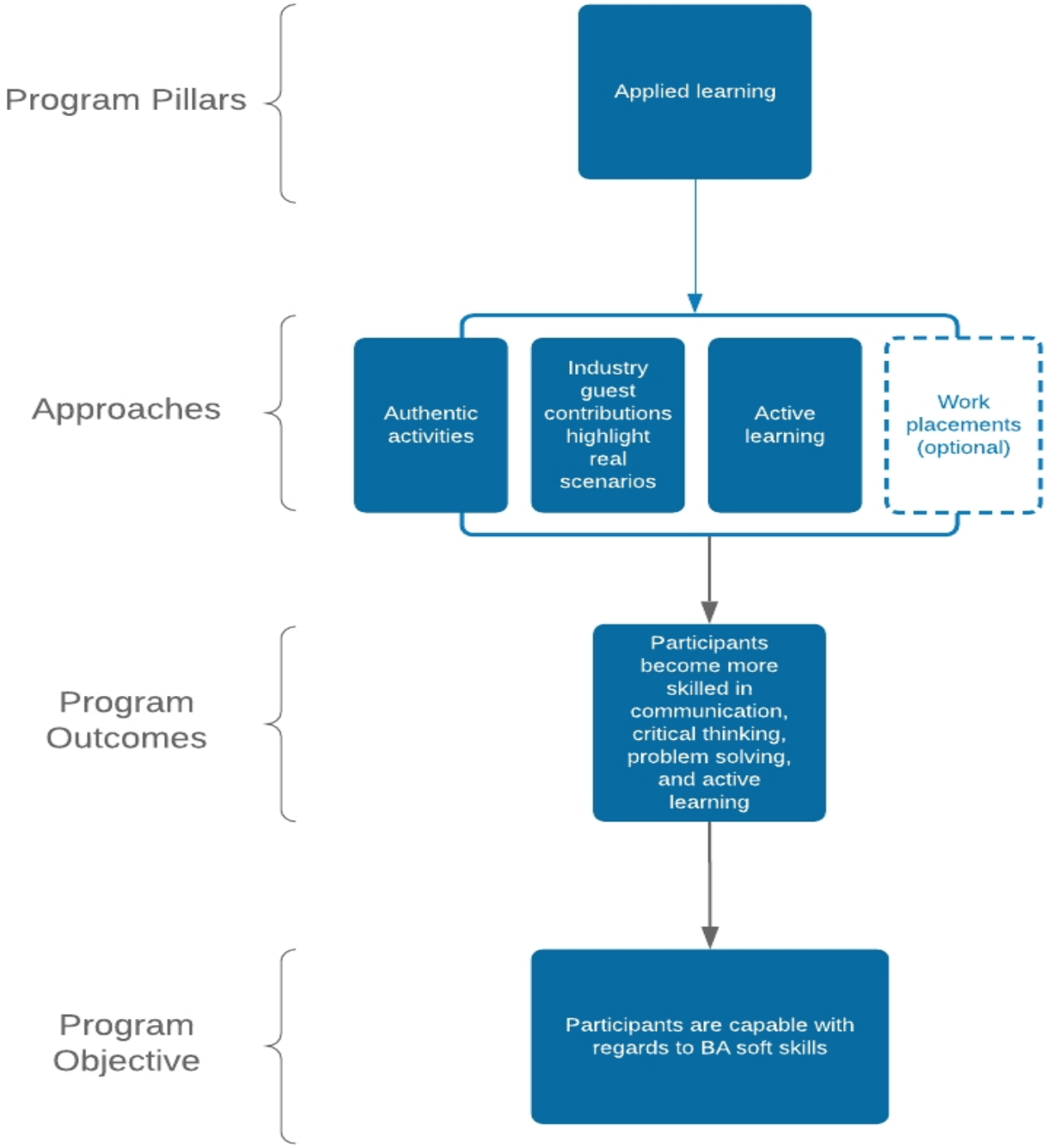
- The Program Impact Theory illustrates the anticipated impact of the program's features on participants. It links the program's pillars to the overall objectives, identifying participant outcomes within this linkage.
- The Program Impact Theory is presented as a flowchart

1. Program Impact Theory

4-tiered flowchart:

Day, R. Kumar, K., Chan, S. (2019) Increasing Program Impact Through Theory-Based Evaluation. STLHE 2019 Presentation. Unpublished.

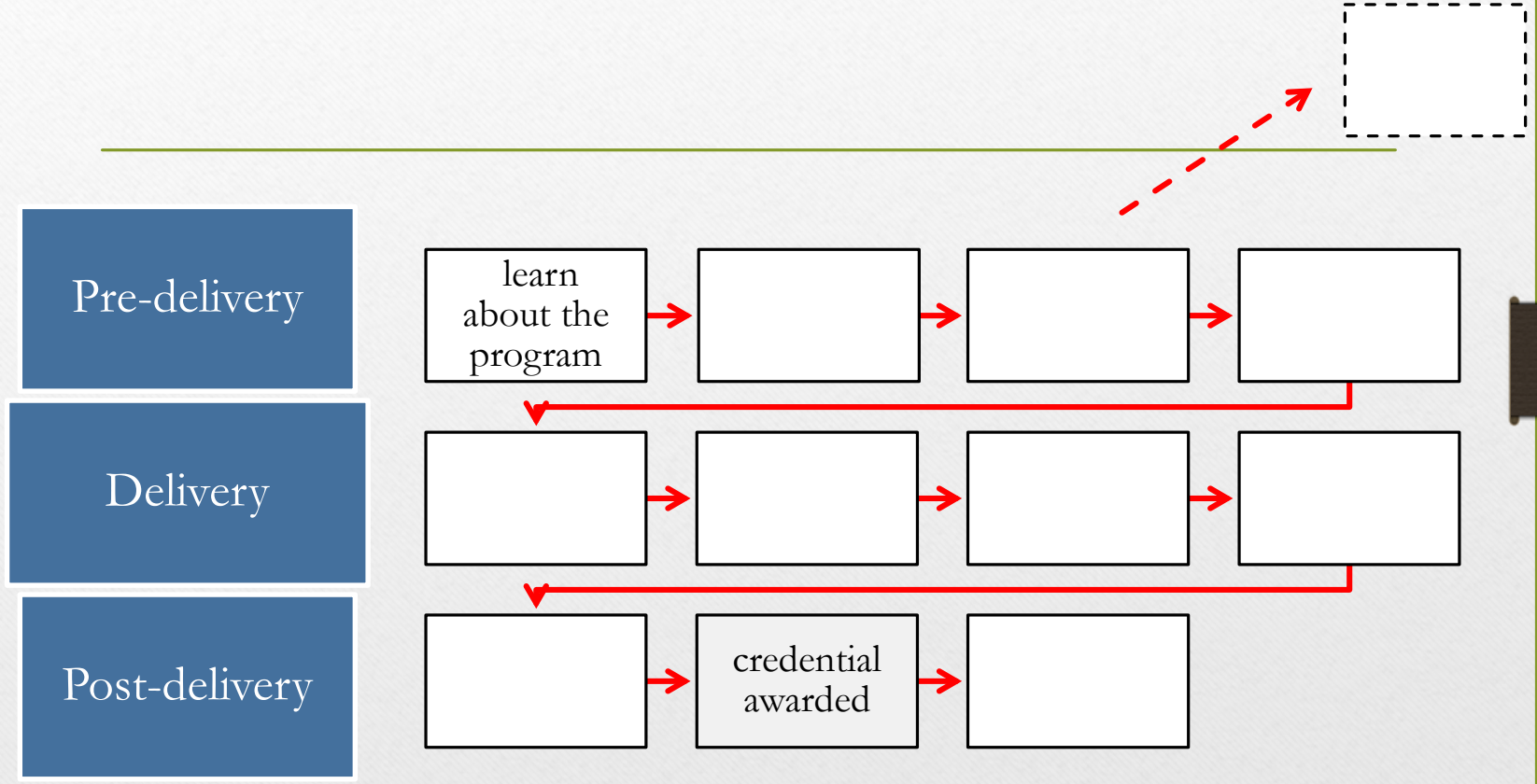

Program Pillars
Industry alignment
Indigenous Perspectives
Well-rounded curriculum
Applied learning
Approaches
Curriculum aligns with BABOK
Input from industry experts
Relationships with professional certifying bodies
Consultation with Indigenous business leaders and scholars
Indigenous business elective available (optional)
Diverse set of electives
Essential soft skills
Authentic activities
Industry guest contributions highlight real scenarios
Active learning
Work placements (optional)
Program Outcomes
Participants are better prepared to write certification exams
Participants gain an understanding of Indigenous business perspectives
Participants learn essential BA curriculum according to industry standards
Participants become more skilled in communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and active learning
Program Objective
Participants develop competencies, are trained in well-established and innovative BA methodology, techniques, and tools
Participants are capable with regards to BA soft skills


Program Pillars
Applied learning
Approaches
Authentic activities
Industry guest contributions highlight real scenarios
Active learning
Work placements (optional)
Program Outcomes
Participants become more skilled in communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and active learning
Program Objective
Participants are capable with regards to BA soft skills

2. Program Utilization Plan

- Illustrates pathways of participant engagement with the program, including the desired pathways of engagement that are expected to lead to intended program outcomes and exit points where the program may lose students.

2. Program Utilization Plan



Examples of Exit Points

- Learner does not finish registration
- Learner does not meet the requirements of the program and is not accepted
- Learner fails the course and does not retake it
- Learner withdraws from a course
- Learner does not register for another course in the program

3. Program Organizational Plan (Logic Model)

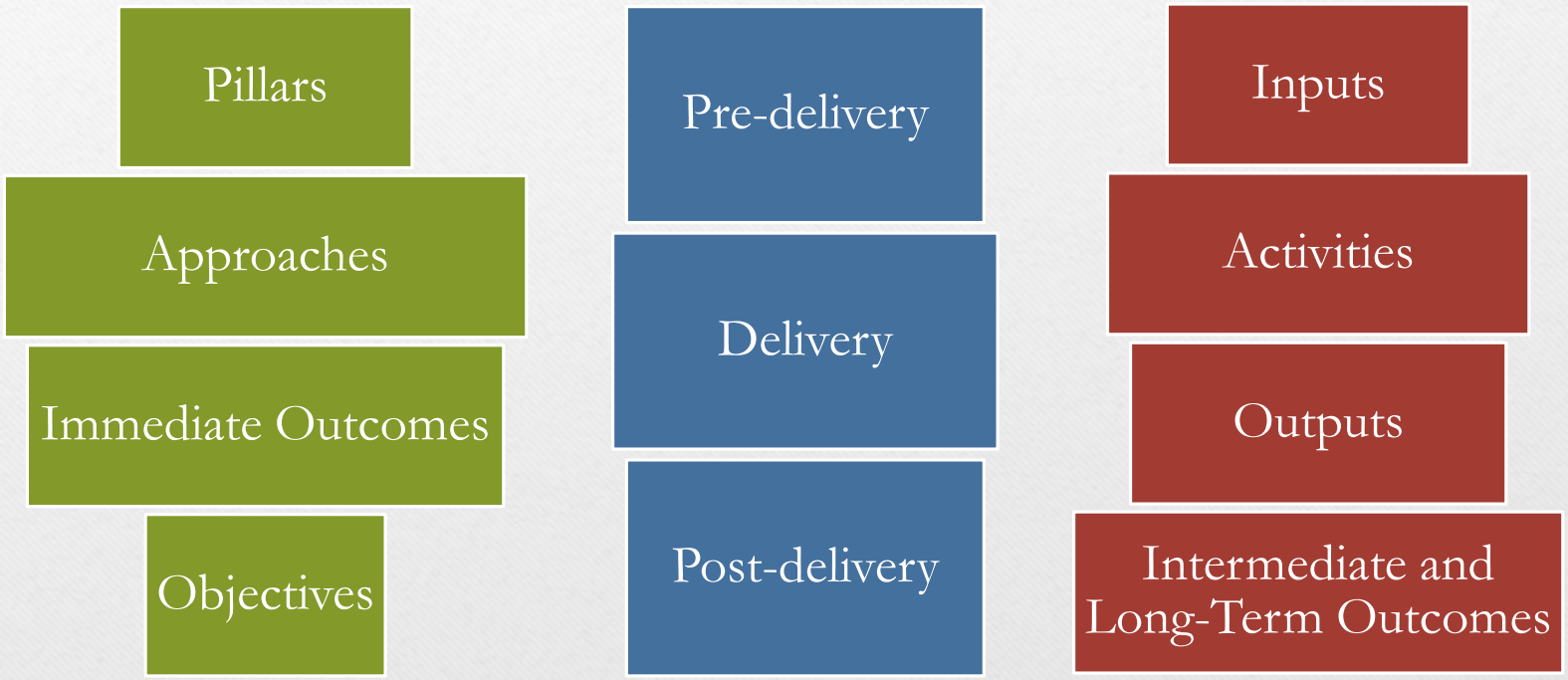
- The Organizational Plan is a high level overview of the functions and activities of the program, and accompanying resource requirements.
- The organizational plan is illustrated via a logic model, with inputs (human and physical resources; often with budgetary implications), activities (essential work that takes place via the inputs), outputs (direct and immediate results of the activities), and outcomes (benefits and ultimately impact of the program).

3. Program Organizational Plan (Logic Model)

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Immediate Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
Resources	Essential work that takes place via the inputs	Direct and immediate results of the activities	Immediate benefits experienced by learners	Benefits several steps removed from the activities	Broad and visionary program benefits

Adapted from Coyne, K., & Cox, P. (2008). Splash & Ripple: *Using Outcomes to Design & Manage Community Activities*. Calgary, AB: Plan:Net Limited and Strathcona Research Group.

Program Theory: Summary



Applications to Program Evaluation

- Visualizing how programs are intended to function identifies the underpinnings which will be starting points for assessment
- Assessment questions derived from Program Theory

References

- Chen, H. (2005). *Practical program evaluation: Assessing and improving planning, implementation, and effectiveness.* Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Coyne, K., & Cox, P. (2008). *Splash & ripple: Using outcomes to design & manage community activities* (4th ed.). Calgary, AB: Plan:Net Limited and Strathcona Research Group.
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