

# Evaluating Program Strategies

Tom Brock

Achieving the Dream Strategy Institute

January 25, 2005

---



# Why Conduct Program Evaluation?

---

- To learn whether students are benefiting from a new policy, curriculum, or service
- To identify areas for improvement
- To meet accountability requirements

# Two Types of Program Evaluation

---

## 1. *Process or Implementation* Evaluations:

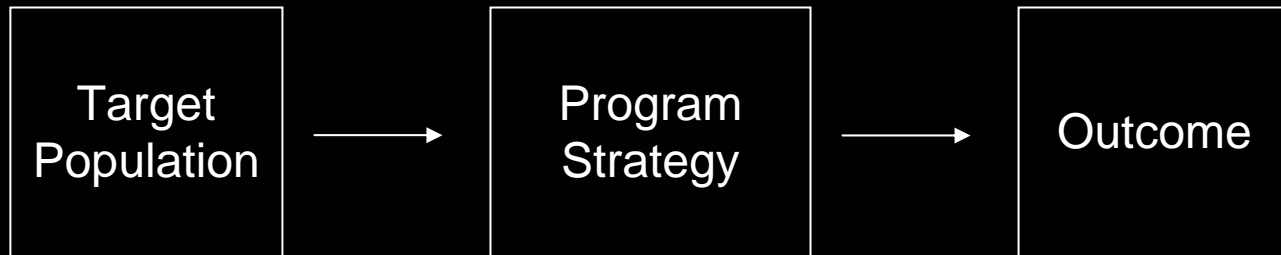
- Examine program operations and outcomes.
  - How are services being delivered?
  - How are students faring?

## 2. *Impact* Evaluations:

- Examine the program effects.
  - Are students better off because of the program?

# Basic Model for Process Evaluation

---



# Key Questions for Process Evaluation

---

1. How many students are eligible for the program? How many are actually served?
2. What are the characteristics of program enrollees?
3. Who are the staff running the program? Are they adequately trained? Is there an adequate number?
4. Are program services delivered as intended?
5. How intensive is the program? How many students complete? How many drop out?
6. What do students and staff say about the program? How is it helping, and how can it be improved?

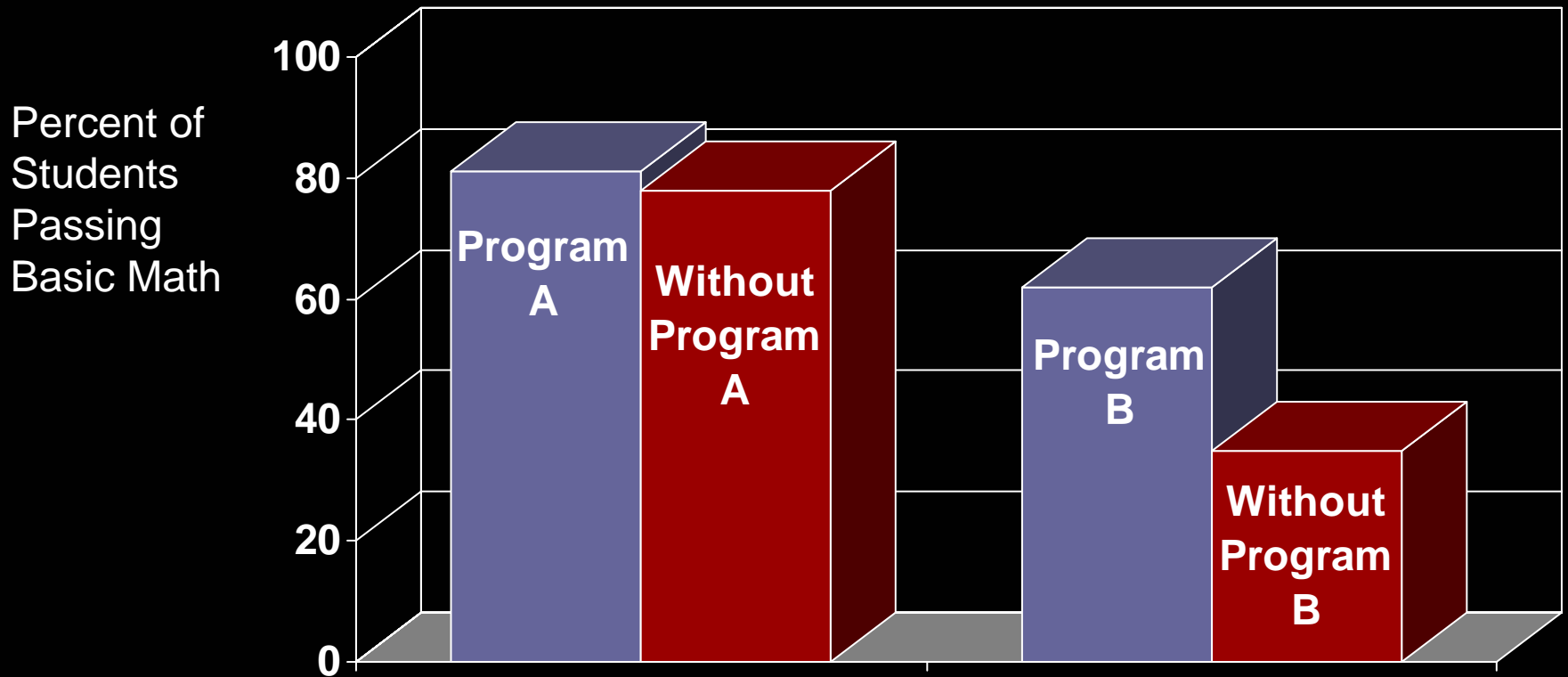
# Selecting Outcomes for Evaluation

---

- Should be closely tied to program objectives.
- Should be easily obtained and quantifiable.
  - *Example:* College institutes new curriculum to improve basic math skills skills.
  - *Possible outcomes:*
    - Number of students who pass designated courses or competency tests.
    - Number of students who move from basic to higher-division math courses.

# Measuring Outcomes Is Not the Same as Measuring Impacts

---



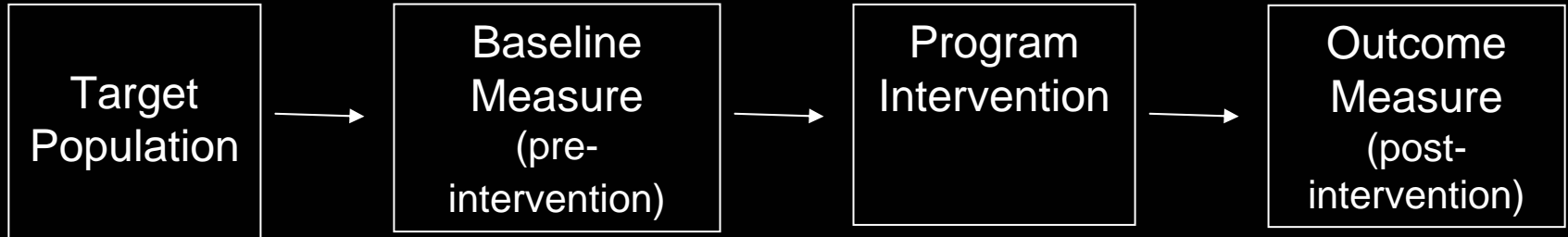
# All Impact Evaluations Are Comparative

---

- How students performed before and after participating in a program
- How students who received services performed relative to students who did not receive services

# Non-Experimental Impact Design

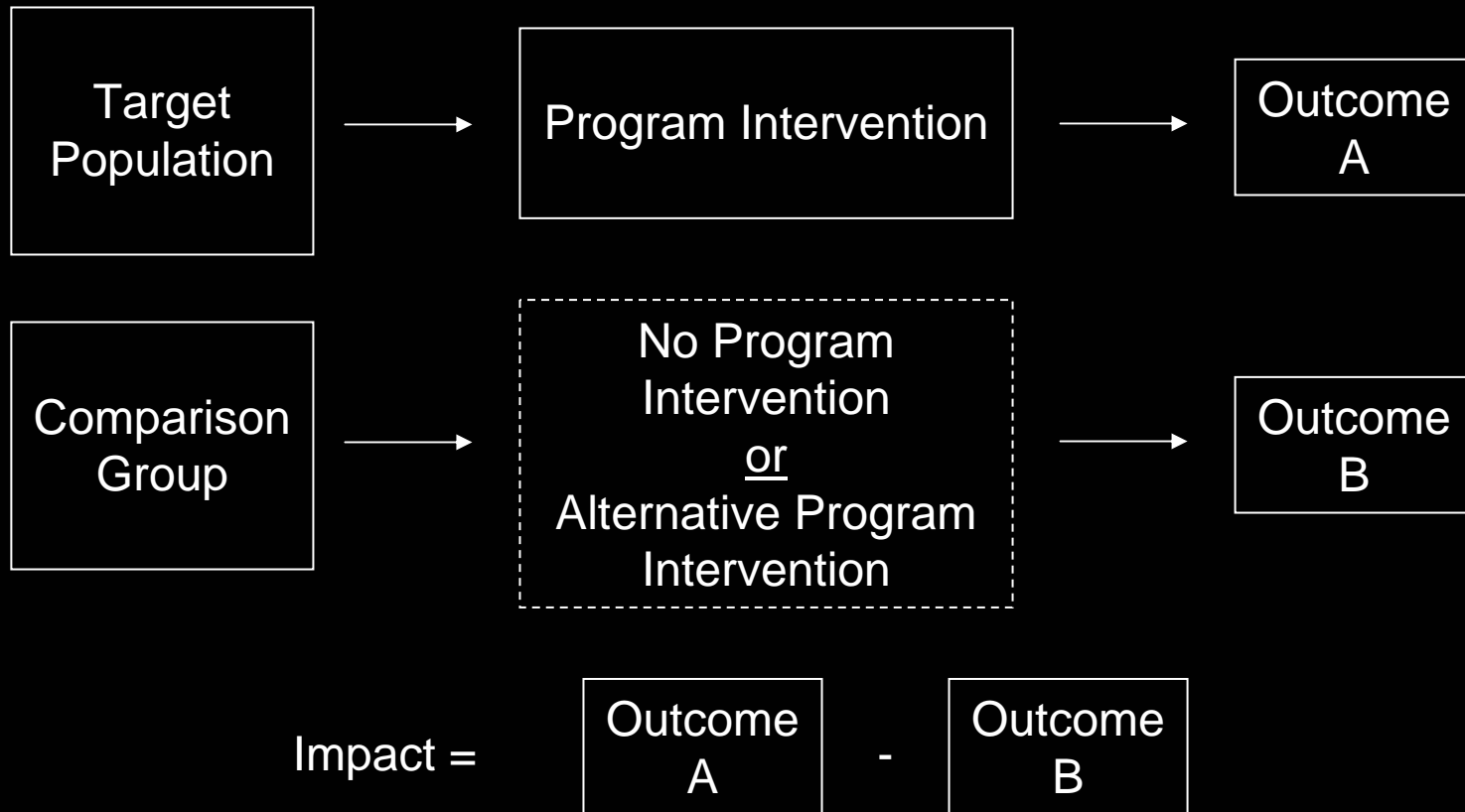
---



$$\text{Impact} = \boxed{\text{Outcome Measure}} - \boxed{\text{Baseline Measure}}$$

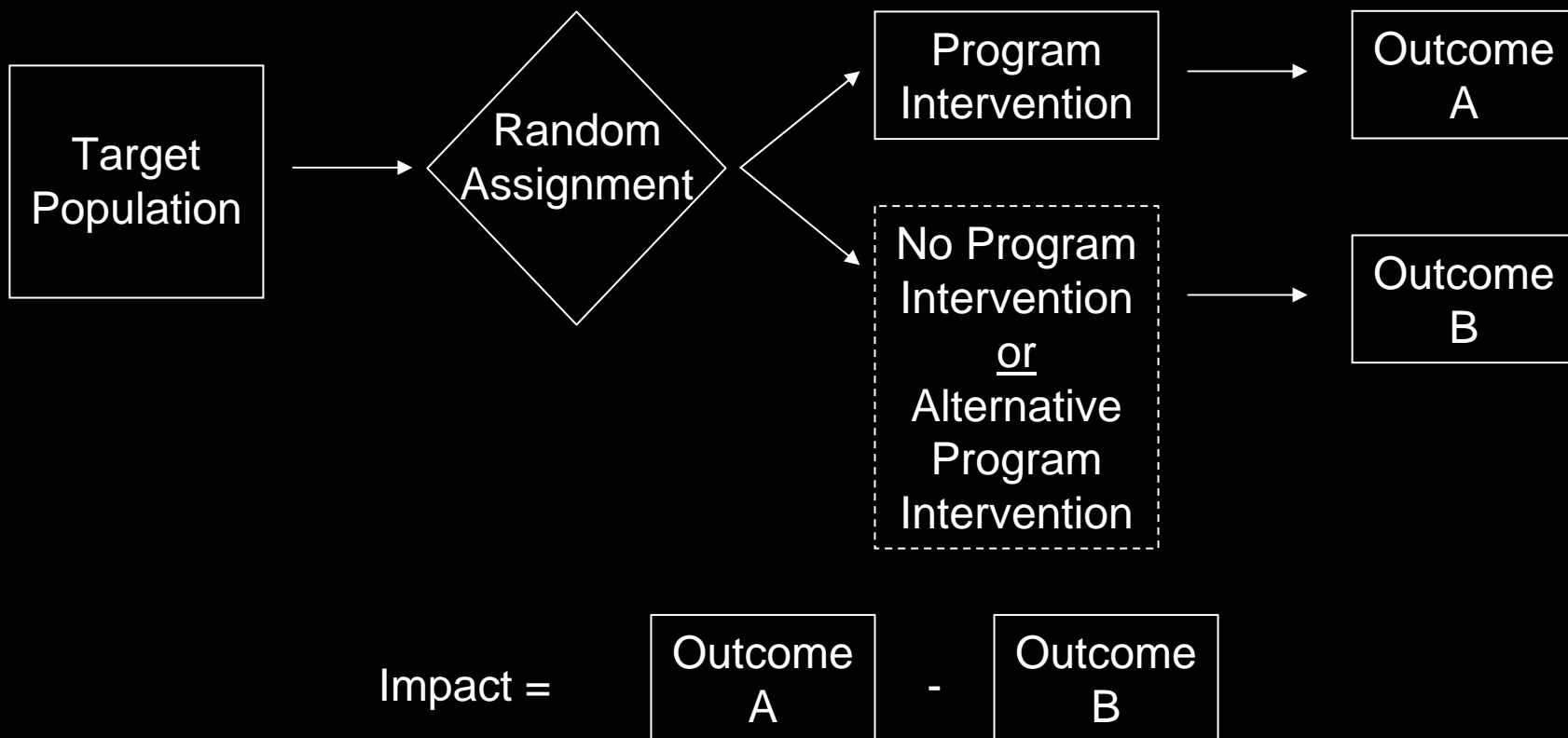
# Quasi-Experimental Impact Design

---



# Experimental Impact Design

---



# Conclusions

---

- Process and Impact evaluations answer different kinds of questions. Both are useful.
- For most colleges, process evaluations may be sufficient to know whether the program strategies they put into place are:
  - Reaching the right group of students.
  - Delivering services as intended.
  - Producing outcomes that are consistent with program objectives.
- Impact evaluations are best reserved for programs that represent “big bets” and are relatively mature.
- The choice of impact design depends on the nature of the program and the standard of evidence that is required.