



Towards Useful Evaluation in the FSI School of Language Studies

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June 25, 2021

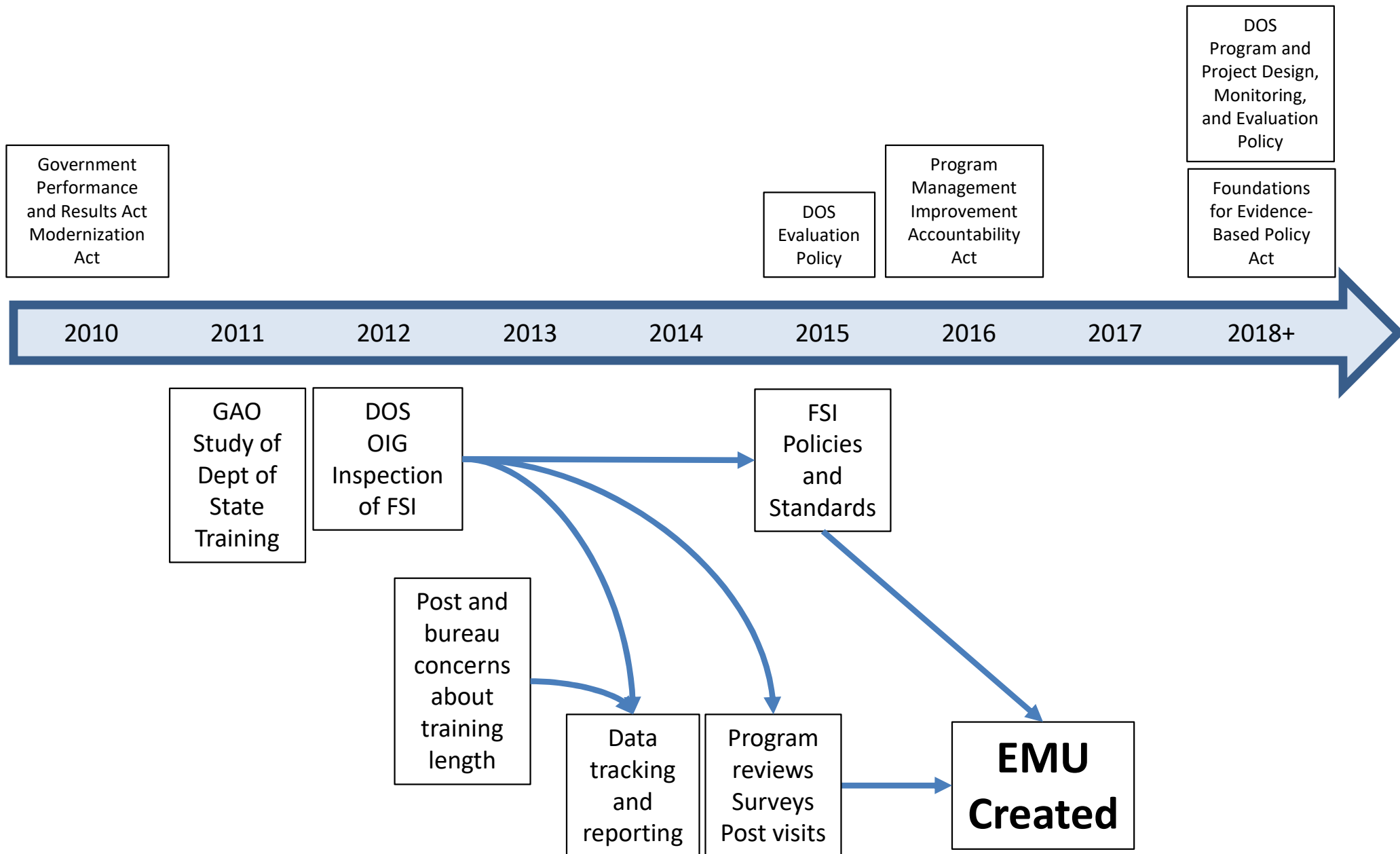


- Offers course instruction in over 70 languages, with course length and curricula targeted at range of language proficiencies, from basic to advanced, and specialized programs from native- and near-native-speaking Language and Culture Instructors
- Co-creator of speaking and reading language proficiency rating scales used throughout the U.S. government; offers tests in over 100 languages
- Active within U.S. government interagency community of language trainers and testers; Frequent benchmarking on language instruction with academia and external foreign affairs agencies



government presentation
contact level make important
official language U.S. mission
people skill work
social month talk prepared
information staff post give interview visa
security meeting event help job speak
conversational training spain english
audience conduct fsi daily host good
country made embassy ability gave
day goal consular officer america
applicant time question
communicate

We help SLS staff use evidence
to better understand and develop their
programs.



GAO: Government Accountability Office
DOS: Department of State
OIG: Office of Inspector General

What is evaluation?

...a mode of inquiry in which stakeholders in (language) programs collect, learn from, and use evidence toward programmatic actions and decisions. *(Davis & McKay 2018)*

What is *useful* evaluation?

Evaluations should be judged by
their usefulness and their actual
use.

(Patton 2008)



EVALUATOR



1. What my mom thinks I do



2. What my friends think I do



3. What program stakeholders think I do



4. What the program directors want me to do

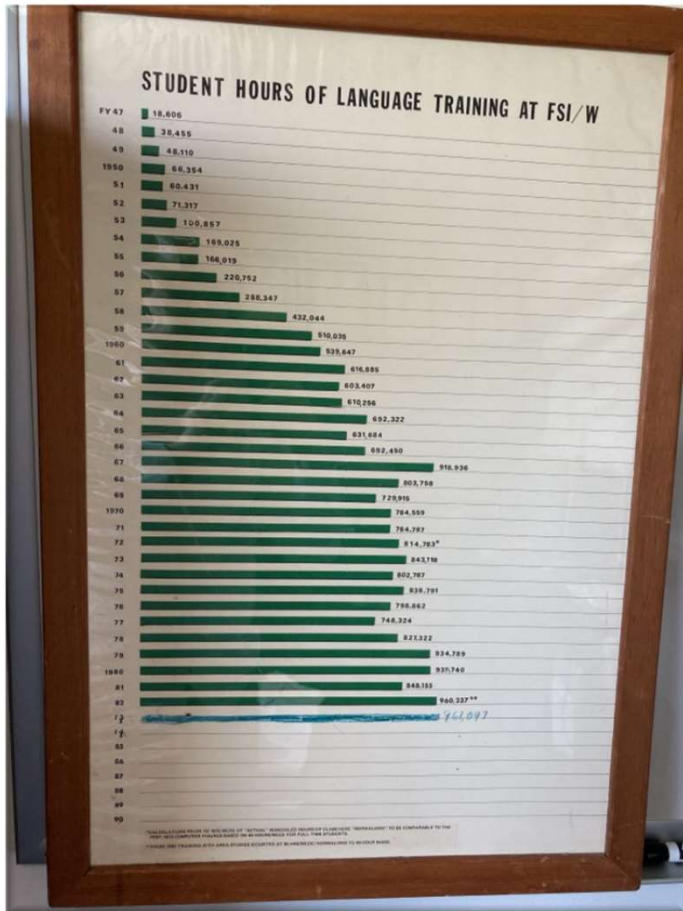


5. What my adversaries think I do

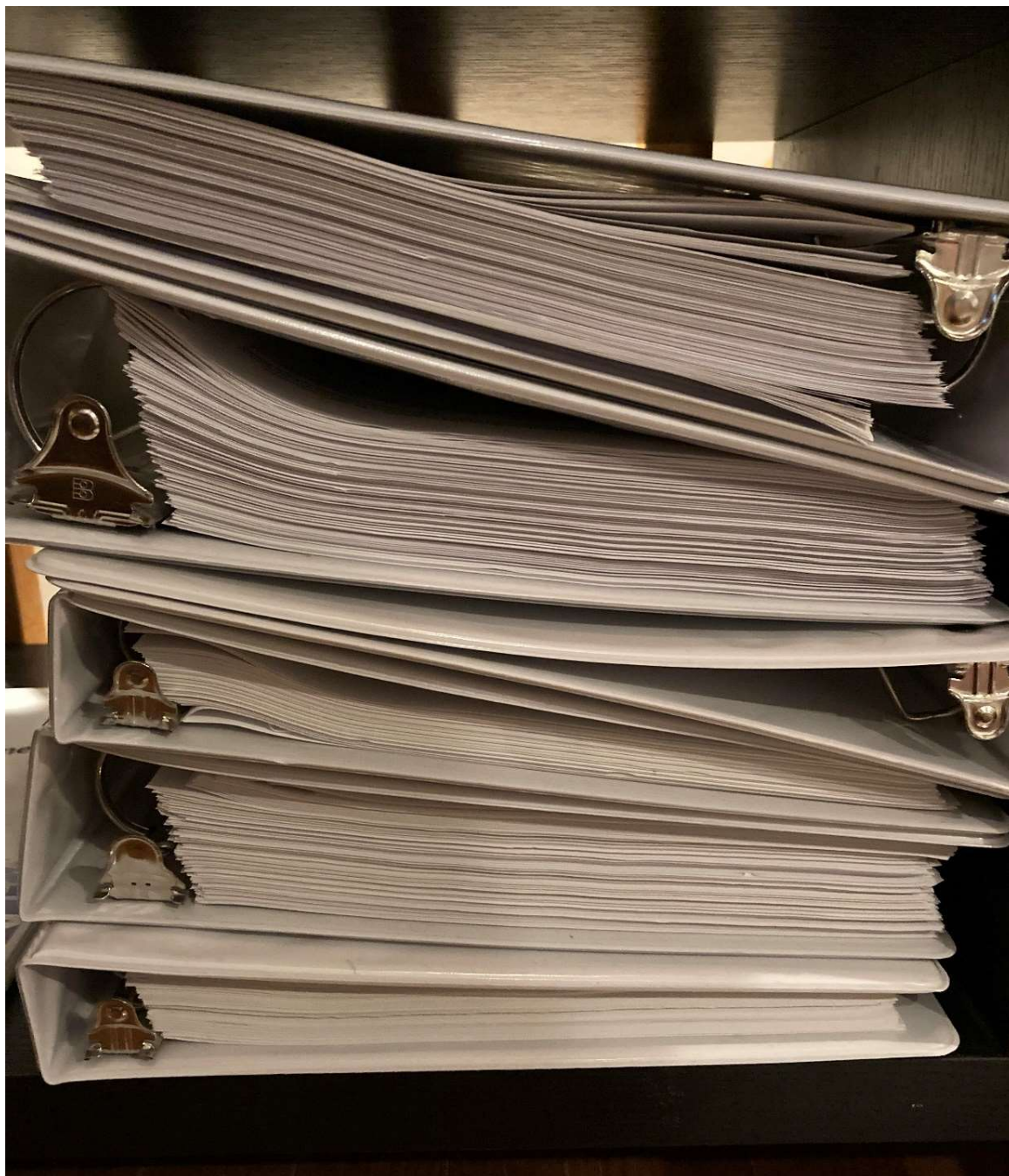


6. What I really do

What can prevent evaluation from being useful?



- No shared understanding of what evaluation is and is not
- Evaluation questions unclear or undefined
- Data not aggregated or easily accessible
- Focus on inputs and outputs, not outcomes
- Compliance instead of use



How to make evaluation *useful*

Start with specifying what **specific people** are going to **do** with the evaluation...

Plan the evaluation to ensure those specific things happen...

So that they happen.

(AELRC Useful Evaluation Workshop 2015)



Evaluation users and uses in SLS

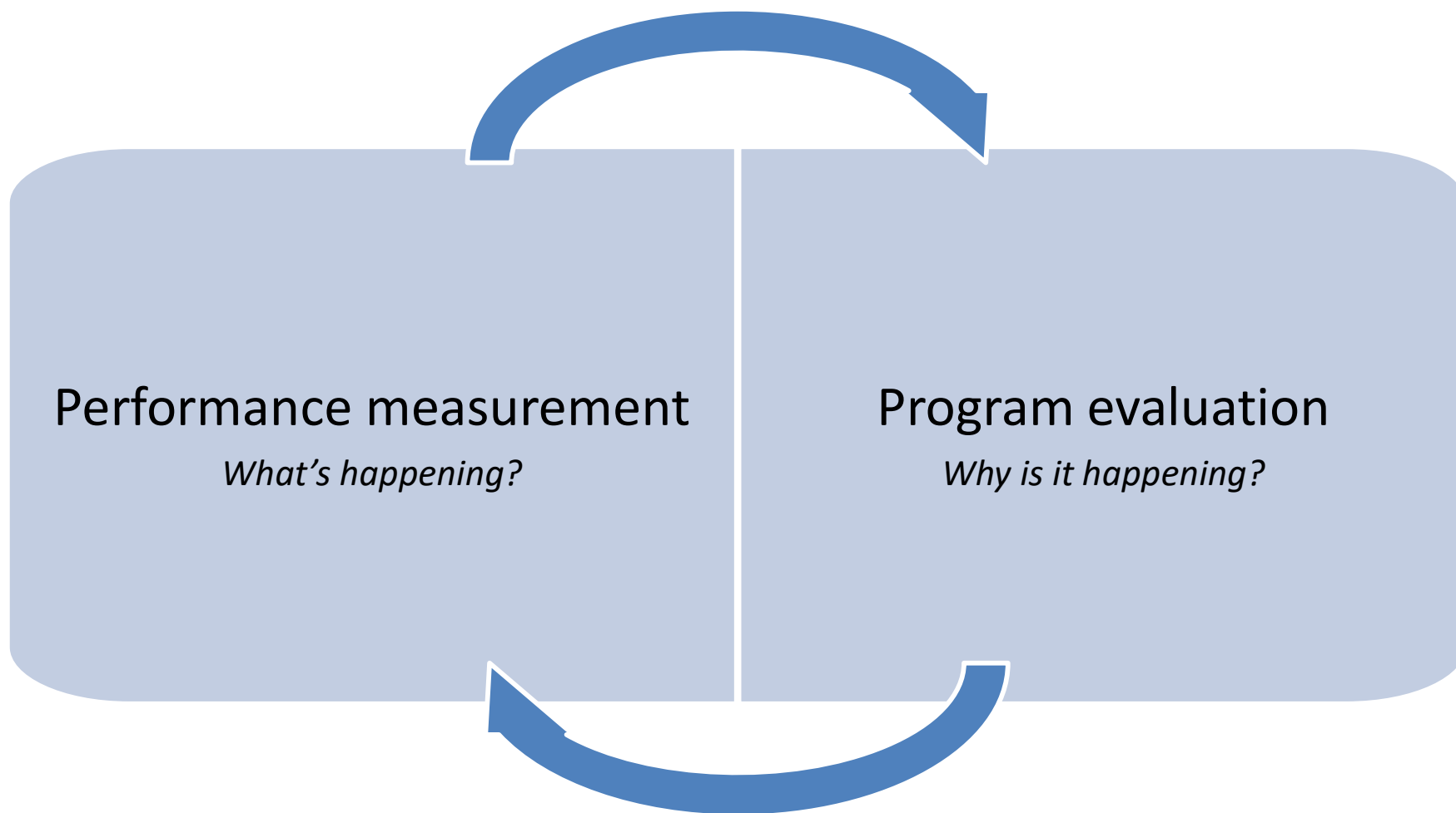
| Evaluation Uses | Primary intended users | | | Stakeholder groups | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | FSI Director, SLS Deans | Division Directors (DVDs) | Language Training Supervisors (LTSSs) | Curriculum & Staff Development (CSD) | Language Testing Unit (LTU) | Language & Culture Instructors (LCIs) | Training Specialists (TSs) |
| Improve language instruction, curriculum, and assessment to enhance the job performance of DoS employees | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Document and demonstrate effectiveness of FSI language training | X | X | X | | | | |
| Document the contribution of FSI language training to achieving DoS mission | X | | | | | | |
| Make sound policy, budget, and strategic decisions | X | X | | X | X | | |

What EMU does

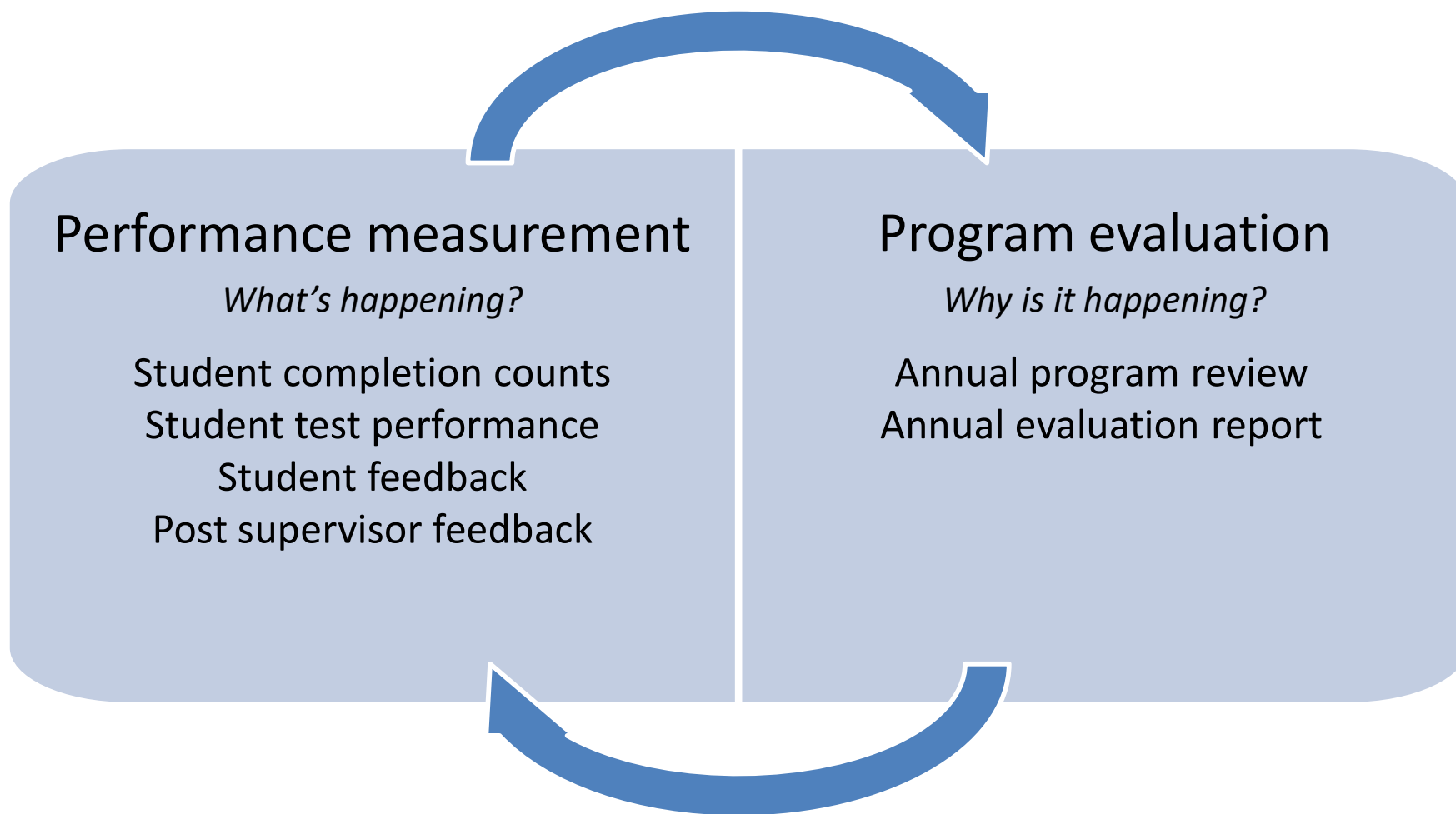
The SLS Evaluation and Measurement Unit helps SLS staff use evidence to better understand and develop their programs.

- We collect and analyze information to understand how SLS and its programs are performing.
- We evaluate specific programs to help divisions and sections be more effective.
- We help SLS staff conduct evaluation for themselves by providing advice, resources, and training.
- We maintain institutional data systems and make data readily available to SLS staff.

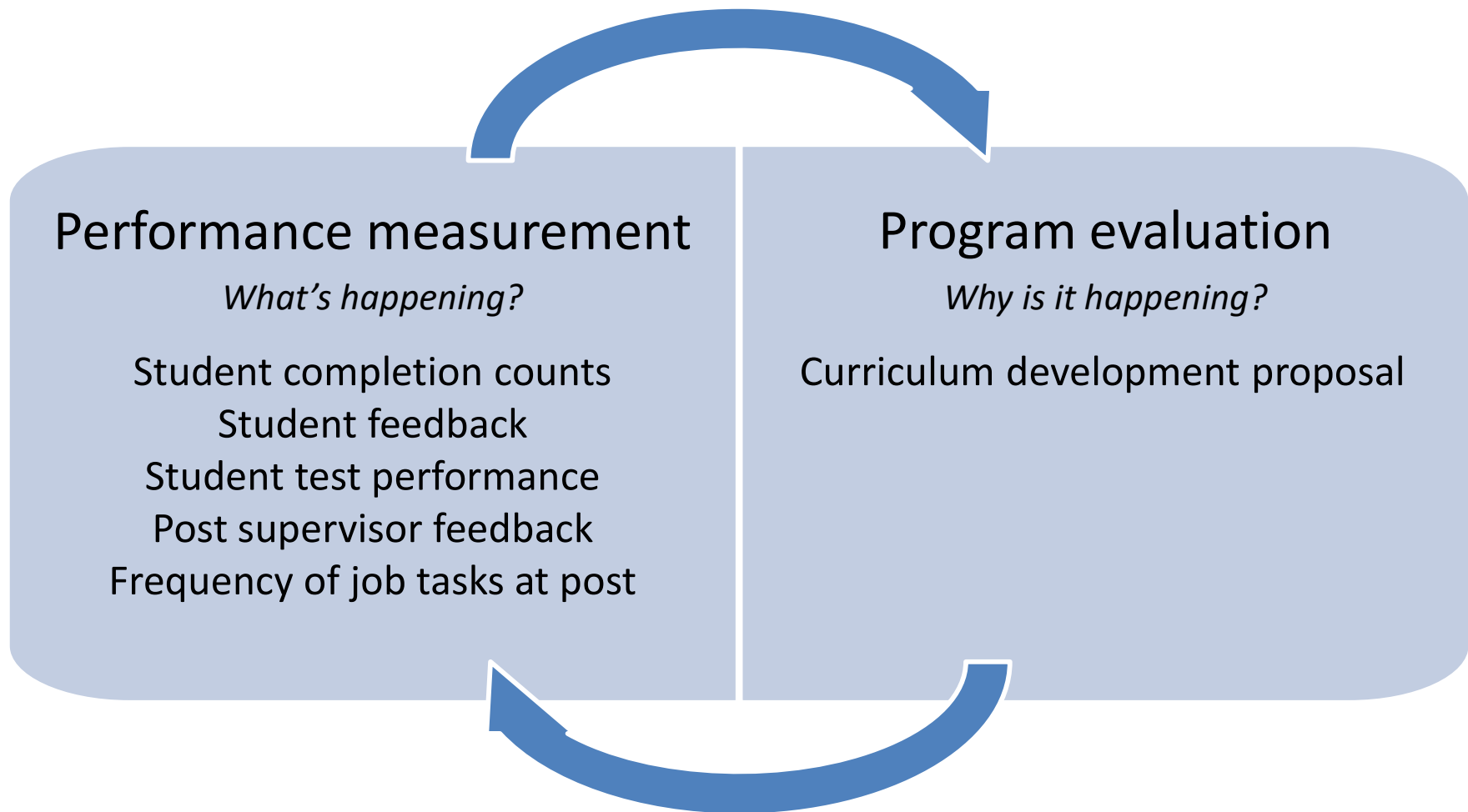
What EMU does



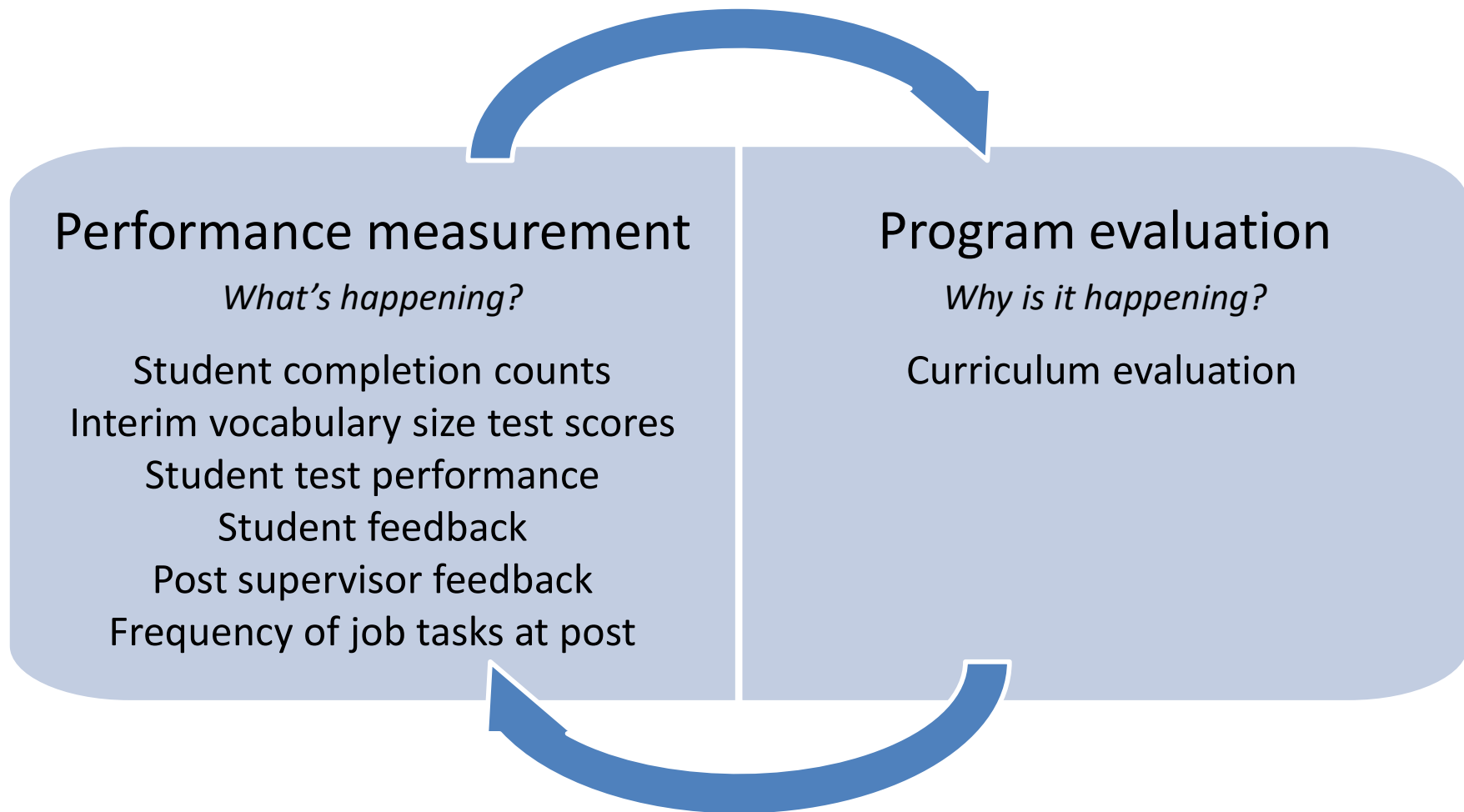
What EMU does



What EMU does



What EMU does



EMU Programs

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business process management• Knowledge management |
| Curriculum/Instruction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum evaluation• Classroom observation |
| Data Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data management• Platforms |
| Post Visits/Qual. Methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post visit support• Qualitative analysis |
| Surveys/Quant. Methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey design and administration• Quantitative analysis |
| Training and workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training design and delivery• Evaluation Specialist coordination |
| Policy and Coordination | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Review• DoS Evaluation Policy |

How we work together

| Project | User | Use | Program |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Program Review and Evaluation Report | Deans Division Directors Supervisors | Improve program Document effectiveness Demonstrate impact Make resource decisions | All |
| Hebrew curriculum evaluation | Division Director Supervisor | Improve program | Curriculum/instruction Qualitative |
| Remote language classes survey | Dean | Improve program Understand program Communicate changes | Qualitative Quantitative Data systems |
| Virtual post visits | Language training supervisors | Improve program | Qualitative Training/Workshops Policy |

Evaluation capacity

The extent to which an organization can learn from, use, and do evaluation.



Capacity Building: EMU models



You consult with us but do it yourself

We do it for you

You learn to do it with us

Capacity building: Evaluation specialist training



How well did the onboarding program prepare new instructors to teach in the [language] section?

What is needed to prepare instructors to use a new curriculum?

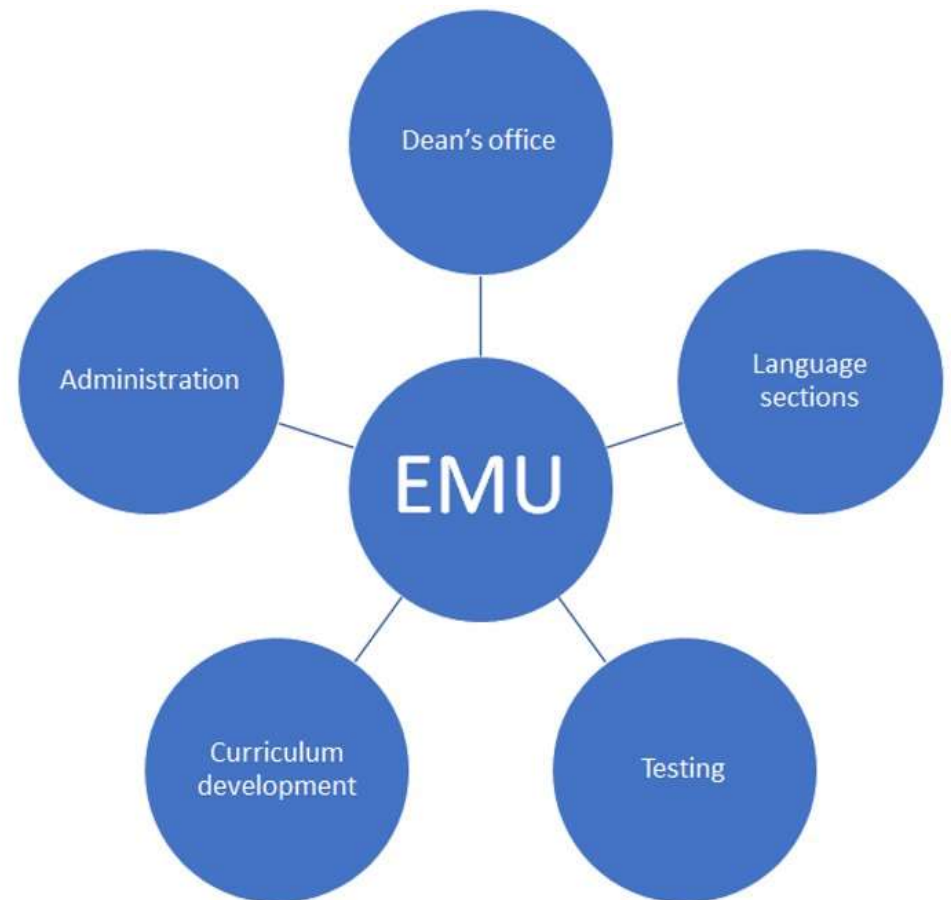
What factors might contribute to students' success or lack thereof?



How do we define EMU's success?

SLS stakeholders...

- Work with us
- Find working with us useful
- Use information and results for decision-making
- Engage in evaluative thinking and practice



- Curriculum evaluation
- Performance measurement
- Predictive analytics
- Strategic and resource planning

Best practices for useful evaluation

1. Stakeholder involvement
2. Stakeholder learning
3. Shared understanding of evaluation
4. Effective communication
5. Feasibility
6. High-quality practices
7. Strong evaluation knowledge and skills
8. Ample evaluation resources
9. Effective program leadership
10. Evaluation ownership

(Davis & McKay 2018, p. 9)

A large, faint compass rose is centered in the background of the slide. It features a circular center with concentric circles and eight primary points, each with a long, thin needle-like extension. A smaller, more detailed compass rose is positioned above the letters 'SI' in the main text.

FSI

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

THANK YOU