Programs and Evaluation

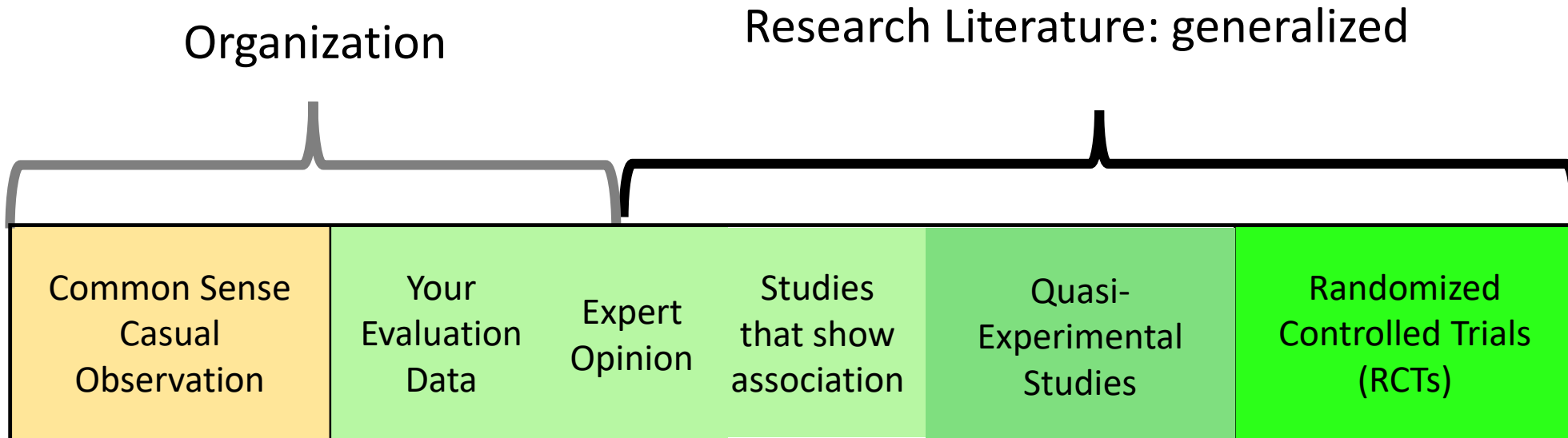UNM Evaluation Lab

2023 Summer Institute

24 July 2023

Learning Objectives

- Appreciate the ***value*** and ***limitations*** of different data collection designs to **inform** your logic model and theory of change

- Reflect on the evidence you have for your program

Why?

The YEP activity will ask you to think about how your program helps you achieve your stated outcomes? This informs your Logic Model and Theory of change

Different ways of collecting data produce different evidence

Organization

Research Literature: generalized

| Common Sense Casual Observation | Your Evaluation Data | Expert Opinion | Studies that show association | Quasi-Experimental Studies | Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) |

Why do we care?

- Casual observation can be wrong, because people (all of us!) tend to remember what stands out, which can be the exception

- If your program has been tested in the research literature it <u>might</u> be **Evidence based or evidence informed.**

- That means you know it works!
    - There might be evaluation tools out there for you
    - You have evidence you can show in your grants!
   - It can inform your theory of change: why does my program work?

What if there's no research about my program? (or can't find it!)

- That's ok. You are not alone!

- Evaluation is here to help!

- There are resources online. We'll share those with you.

- Plus remember, your experience IS data! We'll help you build your skills to help you collect more systematically.

Different ways of collecting data produce different evidence
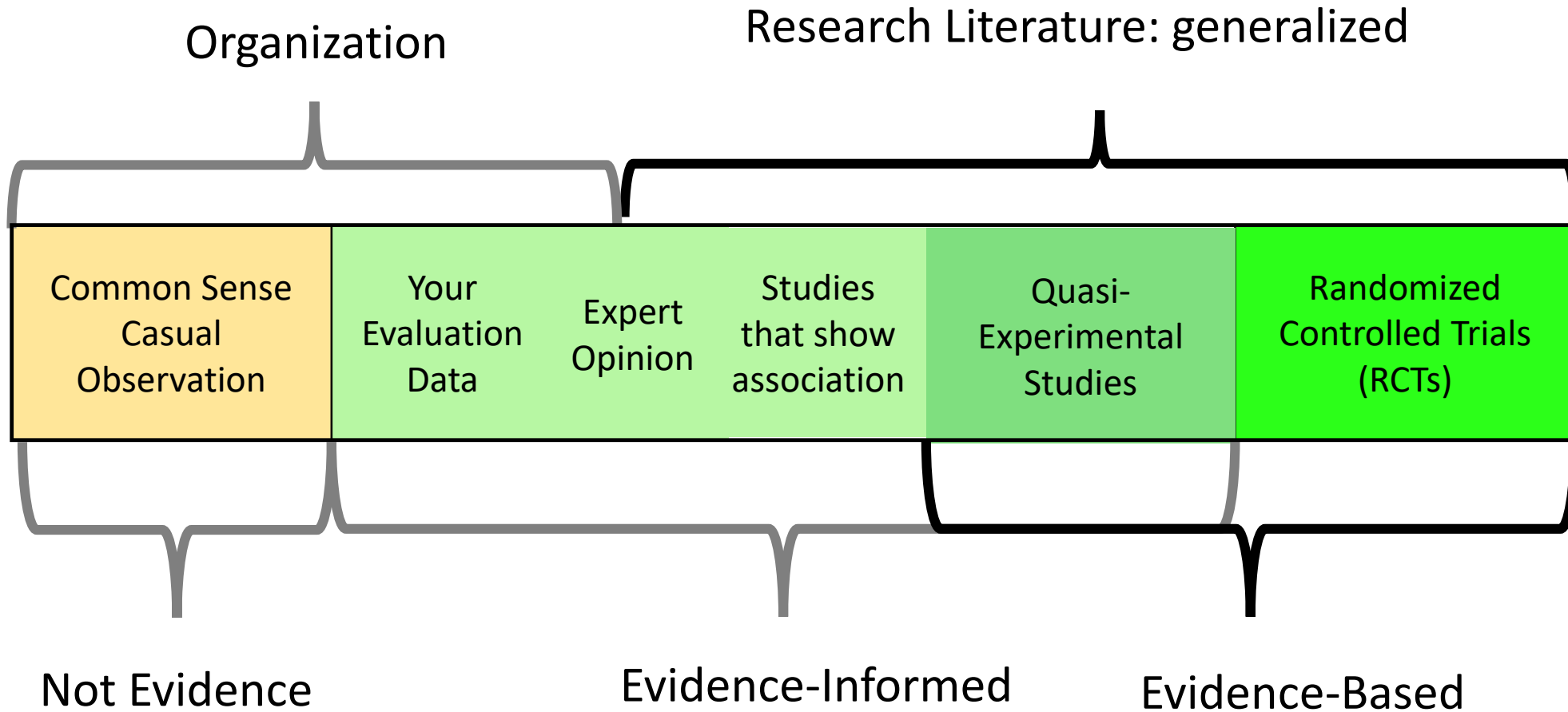
Randomized control trials (RCTs) designed to show **causal relationships**
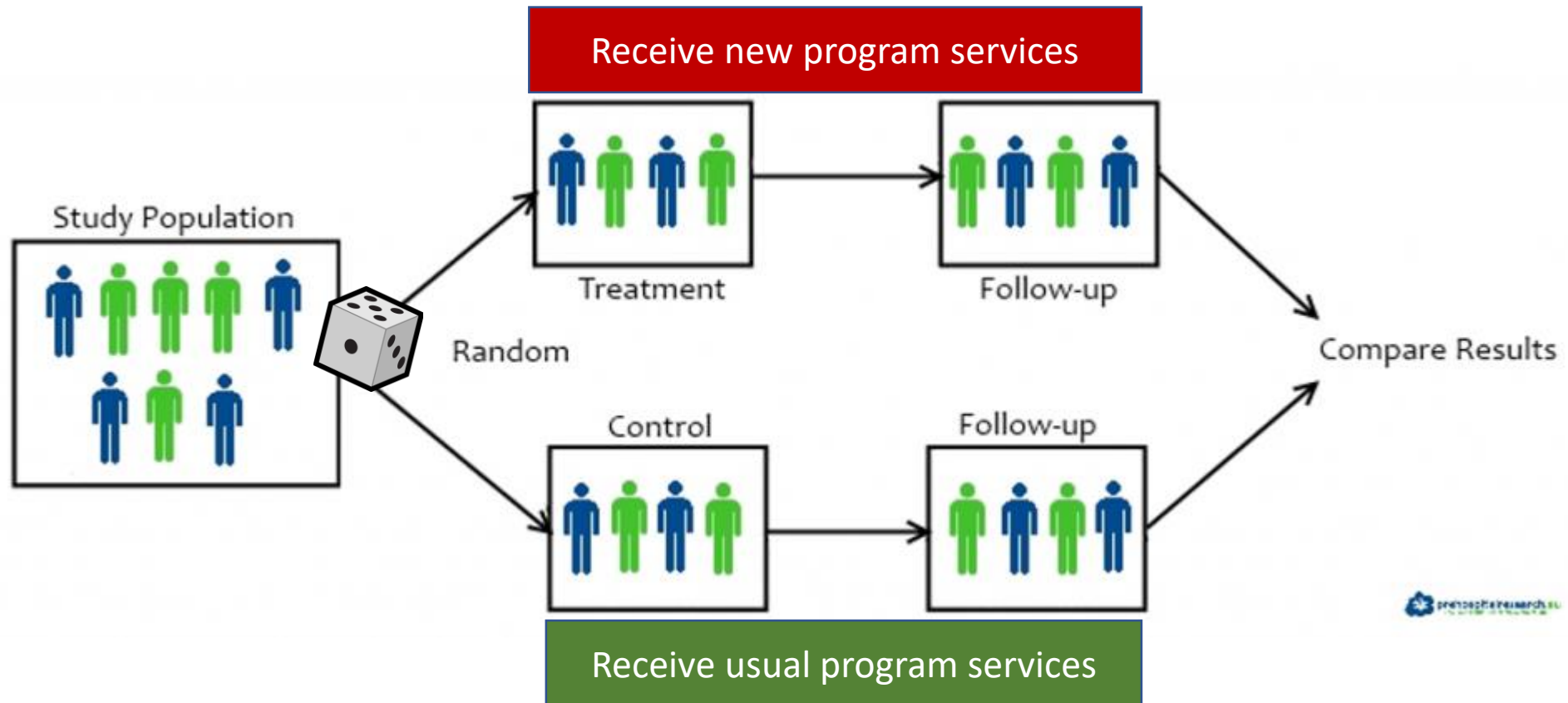
Why *not* having random assignment is problematic

What other than the boys-only environment might have led to positive outcomes?

Boys Class Boosted Scores - APS Cuts Fifth-Grade Experiment, Citing Tight Budget

Albuquerque Journal (NM) - October 9, 2010

Author/Byline: Copyright © 2010 Albuquerque Journal By Hailey Heinz Journal Staff Writer

Section: Front Page

Page: A1

The boys who were enrolled in Reid Nunn's all-boys classroom last year have some pretty clear ideas about why their test scores improved.

"There were no girls to ruin the fun," said Aaron Wright, 11.

The boys were part of a teaching experiment at McCollum Elementary School, in which Nunn taught a boys-only fifth-grade class and used boy-centric teaching methods: lots of competition, books about adventure, breaks for physical training and male guest speakers every week.

The good news is that the boys' scores on the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment jumped dramatically after they had been in the class.

The bad news: Albuquerque Pub- lic Schools is discontinuing it because budget constraints have led to larger class sizes at McCollum.

Nunn's class last year had only 16 students, while this year he is teaching a coed class of 26. Parents had to opt into Nunn's boys class, and the district couldn't risk the cost of a smaller classroom if a full roster of students didn't sign up, APS spokesman Rigo Chavez said.

The academic improvements are undeniable:

80 percent of the boys were proficient readers at the end of the year, compared with 66 percent at the start.

Math proficiency jumped from 26 percent to 60 percent.

In both math and reading, 6 percent of students were in the "beginners" category at the start of the year, while none was in that category at the end. The number of "advanced" students doubled in both subjects, from 6 percent to 12 percent.

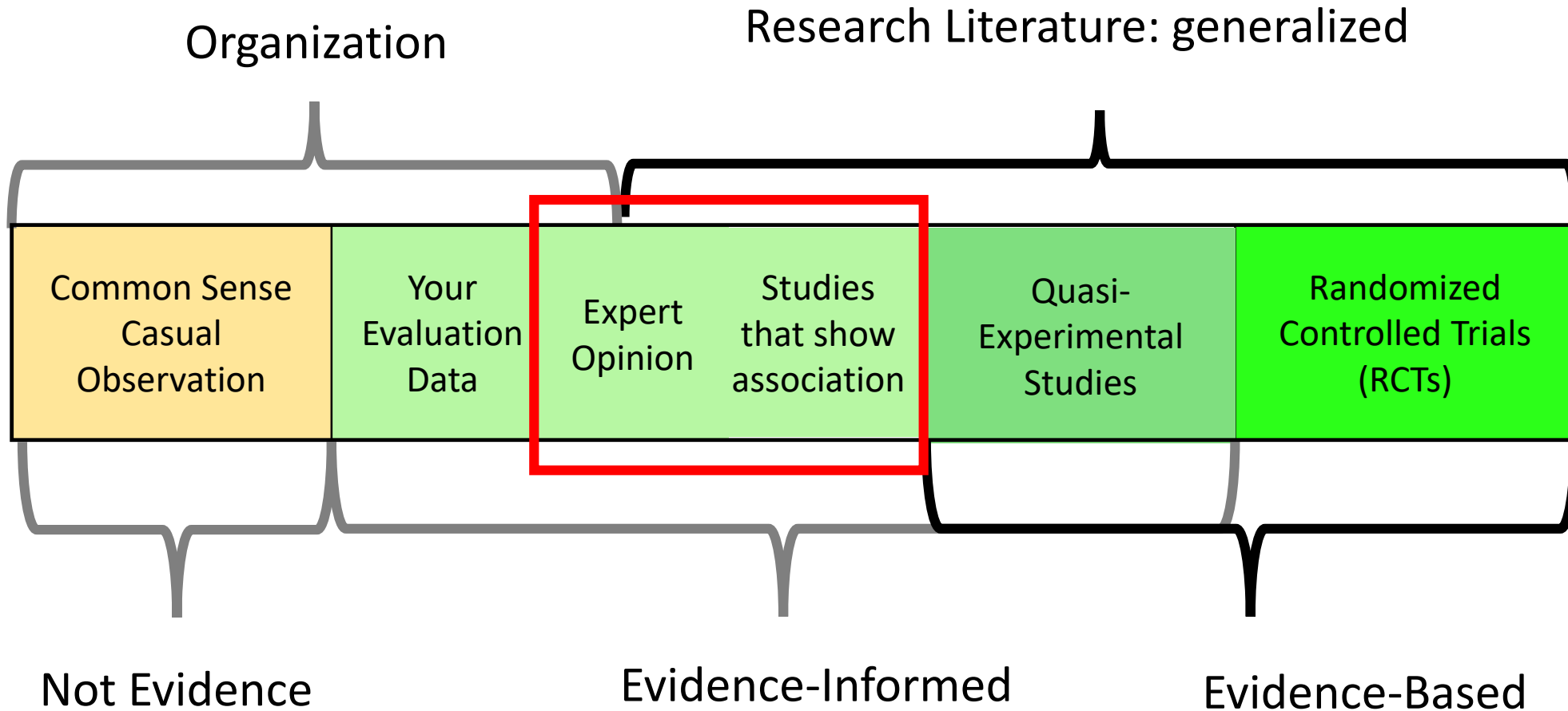# Was it the boy-only environment?
Or something else?

- Parents signed kids up

- Teacher sounds amazing

- Small class size

- Compared to what? How did kids in other classrooms do?

Different ways of collecting data produce different evidence
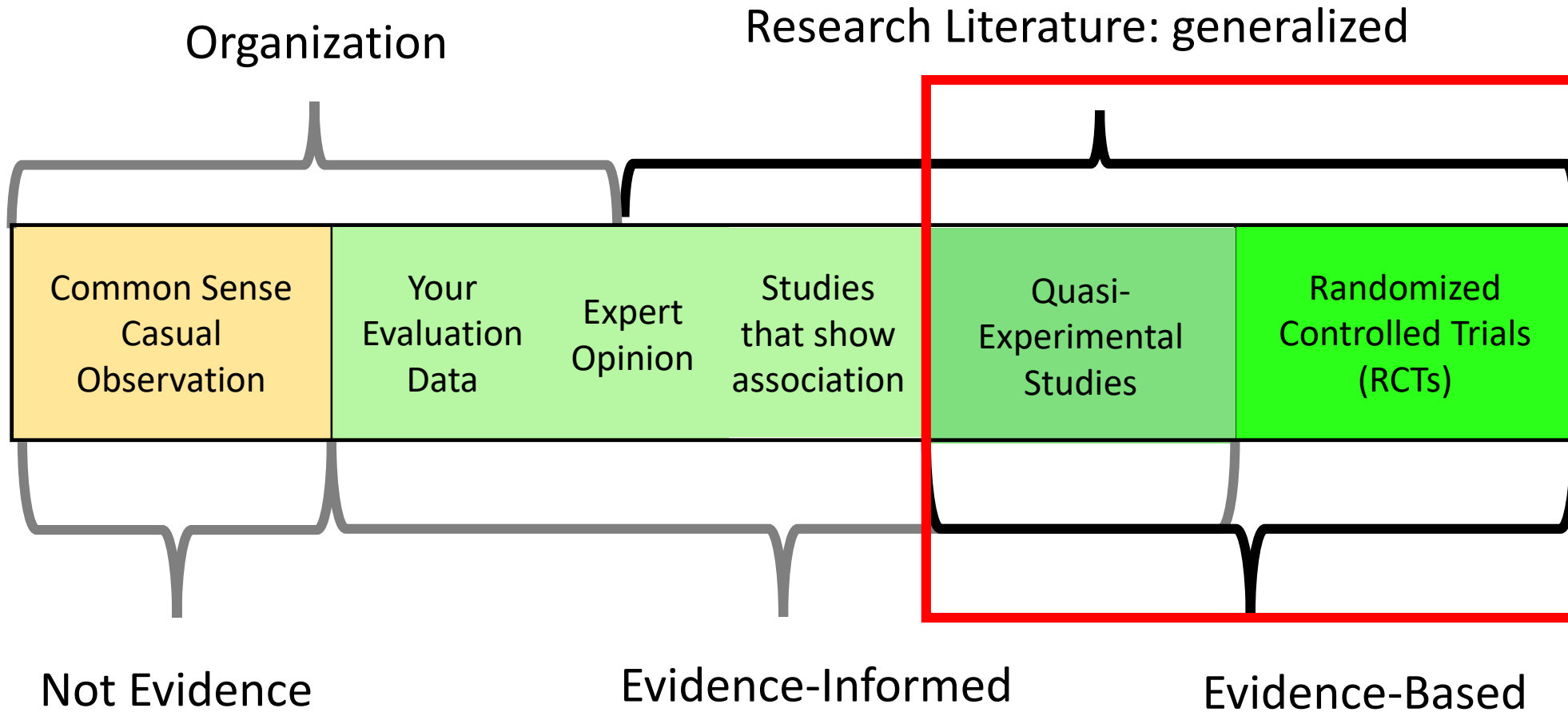
Programs that produce positive outcomes in RCTs meet the technical definition for "evidence-based"

Different ways of collecting data produce different evidence

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Not Evidence

Evidence-Informed

Evidence-Based

Observational: Show association

ACES study: adults who experienced more adverse childhood events have worse emotional and physical health.

See Felitti et al. 1998.

Felitti VJ, Anda RF, Nordenberg D., Williamson DF, Spitz AM, Edwards V., Koss MP, and Marks JS. 1998. "Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study." American Journal of Preventive Medicine 14 (4): 245-58.

Expert Opinion / State of the Art

- An expert in the field provides an overview of current understanding of the issue

- Example: Harvard Center for the Developing Child report makes the case that childhood trauma affects executive function in adults . . . suggesting that programs need to help these adults manage complex tasks.

> See Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. 2016. *Applying the Science of Child Development in Child Welfare Systems.* https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/child-welfare-systems/

What evidence supports your logic model?

- Are there any RCT's?

- Are there experts you rely on?

- Are there key studies that people talk about?
    - Good idea to read them if you haven't already
    - Good to know level of evidence
    - Good to know effect sizes

- Is your evidence based on experience?
    - Are you responding to clients' expressed needs?
    - Have you tried different approaches and found one that is good? If so, think about how you know it is good.

Where to find evidence

- Website for any model or curriculum you use

    [Two-Gen Model: https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org](https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org)

- Your go-to websites for your focus area

- scholar.google.com (email Audrey and Emma with your request)

    aleanos@unm.edu & etomingashatch@unm.edu

What Works Clearinghouse

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

Washington State Institute for Public Policy

Program inventories for:

- children's mental health
- child welfare
- juvenile justice
- adult criminal justice
- adult behavioral health
- K–12 learning assistance

http://www.wsipp.wa.gov
➔ Publications ➔ Filter by Topic – Choose "Inventories"

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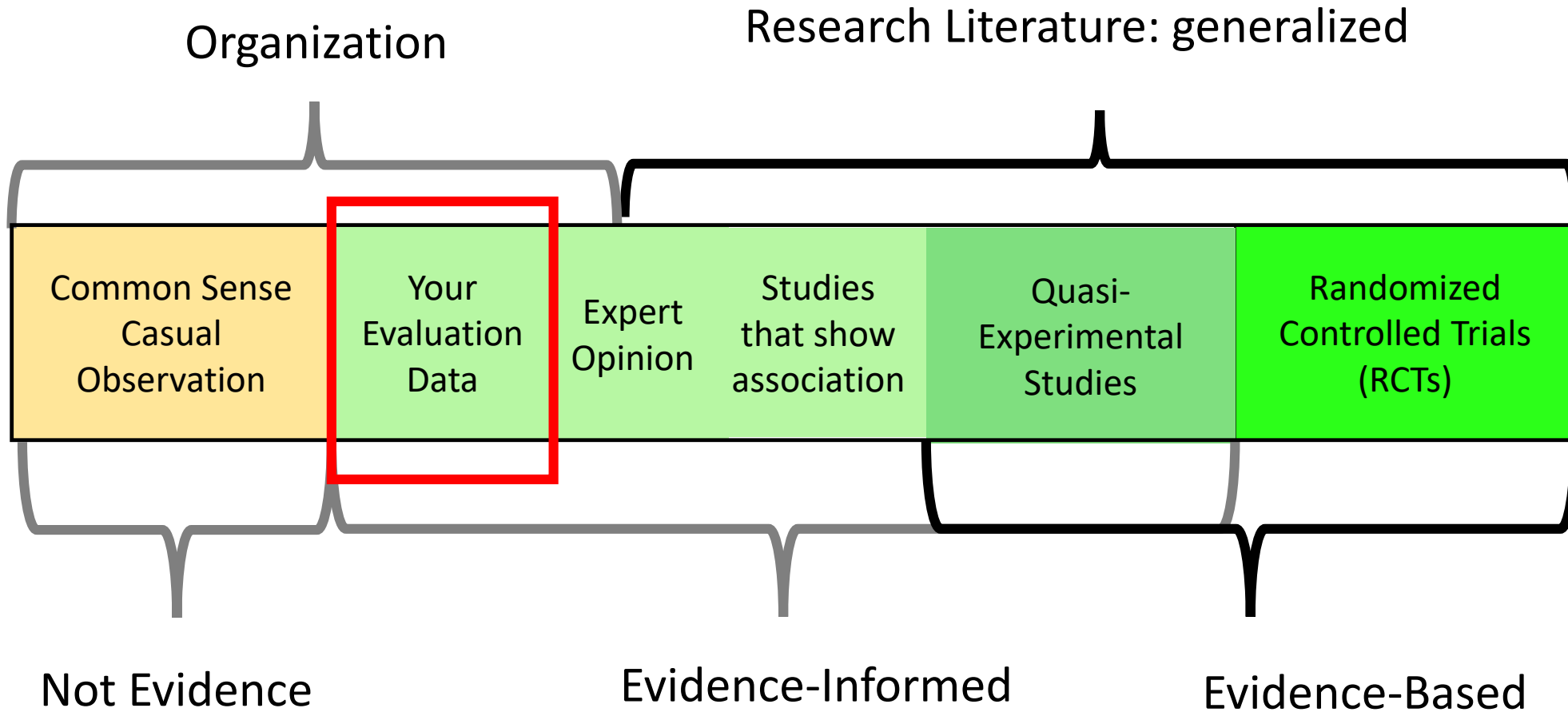
Your Evaluation Data matters!

For organizations who collect outcome data:

- It can provide evidence for your population, even if it is not causal.
- Results from current outcomes can help you ask more specific questions about what makes your program successful

Your Evaluation Data matters!

For organizations who are starting to collect outcomes data:

- Check out research! You can reach out to us and faculty in any university.

- Talk with your team. Here are some guiding questions:
    - How does our program contribute to achieving our outcomes.
    - How do your activities help respond to clients' needs?
    - Have you tried different approaches and found one that is good? If so, think about how you know it is good.

Questions and ideas so far?

YEP #2 - Theory of change (example)

- Clients: parents and children who have experienced trauma

- Organizational goal: Parents and caregivers engage in nurturing parenting practices

- Activity: Parent classes based on Nurtured Heart Approach

YEP #2 - Theory of change (example)

YOUR THEORY OF CHANGE

To get started with your Theory of Change, articulate why you think your program will work, supported by the evidence base.

EXAMPLE I

A. State your theory of change.

I think my program will work because . . .

> . . . parents who experienced childhood trauma can learn to recognize their triggers and become more intentional and nurturing, and less reactive as caregivers to their children. Our program promotes this restorative process is building trust by building trust, teaching parents about trauma and child development, modeling supportive parenting and attending to material needs. We developed our approach by listening to parents about what they need to succeed.

YEP #2 - Theory of change (example)

B. Our theory of change is based on the following evidence:

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. 2016. *Applying the Science of Child Development in Child Welfare Systems.* <htttp://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>.

The report recommends:

- Addressing immediate stressors by helping families with immediate needs, such as housing and food.
- Acknowledging childhood and ongoing trauma that explain "what happened" to parents.
- Building relationships with clients to build trust, create hope, and model supportive parenting.
- Helping parents learn by doing, by encouraging and facilitating positive parent-child interactions.
- Helping parents recognize their triggers and learn to pause and consider before they react.

EXAMPLE II

A. State your theory of change.

I think my program will work because . . .

> . . . children who witnessed domestic violence can learn to identify their emotions, recognize their strengths, and choose effective ways to meet their needs through the Nurtured Heart Approach.

B. Our theory of change is based on the following evidence

Clinical practice - Although there is no RCT for the Nurtured Heart Approach, it is clinically informed by the work staff are doing on a daily basis. Enlace clinicians have found dramatic improvements in children's behavior after using the Nurtured Heart Approach. Clinicians report that children in the groups where Nurtured Heart has been used have higher self-worth and inner wealth in comparison to when they come into Enlace services. For example, the children can identify positive words to describe themselves, and they can identify their emotions and communicate them more clearly.

Your turn

A. State your theory of change.

I think my program will work because . . .

B. Our theory of change is based on the following evidence/experience

1:45	-	2:15	**Theory of change**	What's the difference between a Logic Model and a Theory of Change?	Charla	
2:15	-	3:00	**The Evidence Base**	Different kinds of evidence; the technical definitions for evidence-based and evidence-informed; value and limitations of RCTs; Washington State Institute for Public Policy inventories; value of evidence-informed programs; using google scholar – Experience centered	Claudia	Center on the Developing Child 2016,* Felitti et al. 1998*
3:00	-	3:10	BREAK			
3:10	-	4:00	**Your Evaluation Plan (YEP #2)**	Articulate your theory of change and document evidence base	Charla & Claudia	
4:00	-	4:45	**Learning Community #2**	Sharing theories of change	Charla	
4:45	-	5:00	**Exit Ticket**			