



SSHRC  CRSH

Using Cross-case Study Analysis to Maximize Use in Evaluation of Research Funding Programs

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Presentation Outline

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 - Cross-case analysis
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- Conclusions
 - Benefits and limitations of the approach
 - Lessons learned for SSHRC

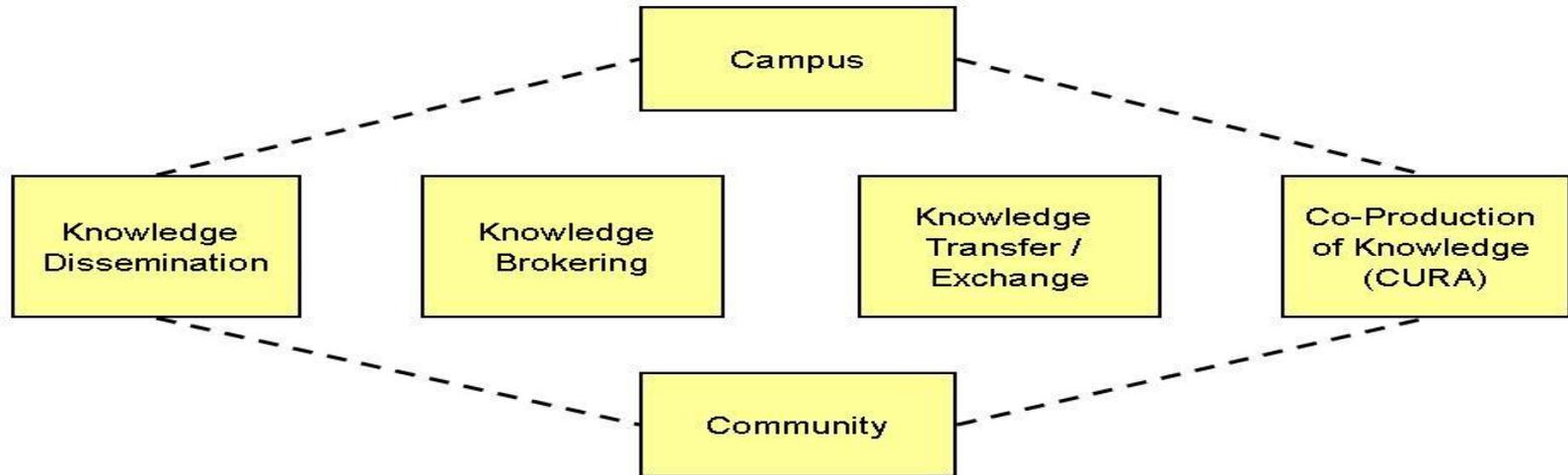
Context

- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC) mandate is to:
 - Promote and assist research and scholarship in the social sciences and humanities (SSH)
 - Advise the Minister on issues related to SSH research
- SSHRC's adoption of the term Knowledge Mobilization (KMb) was deliberate:
 - Facilitate exchange and interaction among researchers and research users
 - Make a contribution to the SSH community by supporting the mobilization of research findings, impacts and outcomes

SSHRC's Definition of Knowledge Mobilization (KMb)

- Knowledge mobilization is about ensuring that all citizens benefit from publicly funded research.
- It can take many forms, but the essential objective is to allow research knowledge to flow both within the academic world, and between academic researchers and the wider community
- By moving research knowledge into society, its uptake and implementation lead to intellectual, economic, social and cultural impacts of that knowledge.

SSHRC's Definition of Knowledge Mobilization (KMb)



Source: SSHRC's Knowledge Mobilization Strategy, 2009-11, www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

Evaluation Overview

- Cluster evaluation - “cross program”:
 - Focus on results of SSHRC’s investments in select KMb funding opportunities
 - 2004 to 2011 (mainly)
- Specific evaluation objectives:
 - Provide sound, evidence-based conclusions on evaluation issues → concrete actionable recommendations
 - Relevance and performance (TBS Policy on Evaluation)
 - Forward-looking - informing renewal of KMb strategy and programming



Overview of the KMb Funding Opportunities

KMb Strategic Objectives:

- Facilitating and enabling the accessibility and impact of research by increasing and enhancing the flow of research knowledge among researchers, and between researchers and knowledge users;
- Improving research connections by facilitating reciprocal relationships between researchers and knowledge users for the (co-)creation and use of research knowledge; and
- Enhancing the quality of knowledge mobilization by developing networks, tools and best practices.

Select KMb Funding Mechanisms:

- Strategic Knowledge Clusters- \$28,093M [7 yr grants/\$300K/year]
- Knowledge Impact in Society - \$5,870M [3 yr grants/\$100K/year]
- Aid to Research Workshops and Conferences - \$26,200M [1 yr grant/up to \$50K]
- Public Outreach Grants - \$17,900M [1 yr grant/no ceiling]



Information Sources and Data Collection Strategies

Document and literature review

- Review of internal/external documents and project files (n=184)

Case studies

- Multiple-case study (n=8 cases; 6 from Strategic Knowledge Clusters (SKC) and 2 from Knowledge Impact in Society (2))

Key informant interviews

- SSHRC program stakeholders (n=10)

Review of administrative data

- Applications (n=2,931) and Awards (n=1,683) from years 2004-2011

Review of performance data

- Final research/activity reports (n=662); Mid-term reports (n=8)

Cost-efficiency analysis

- Review of program cost-efficiency



Overview of Literature on Case Study Research

- Case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research (see Cronbach & Assoc., 1980; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003; US government accountability office, 1990)
- Broader context of case study research (Yin, 2003)
 - Case studies are conducted and written with many different motives - from simple presentation of individual cases to desire to arrive at broad generalizations based on case study evidence but without presenting any of the case studies separately (e.g. a single set of “cross-case” conclusions)
 - Key applications include:
 - Illustration of certain topics within an evaluation, in a descriptive mode
 - Enlighten those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes
- Specific context of multiple case studies (Stake, 2006)
 - “What helps us understand the case?” toward “What helps us understand the *quintain*”?



Overview of Cross-Case Analysis

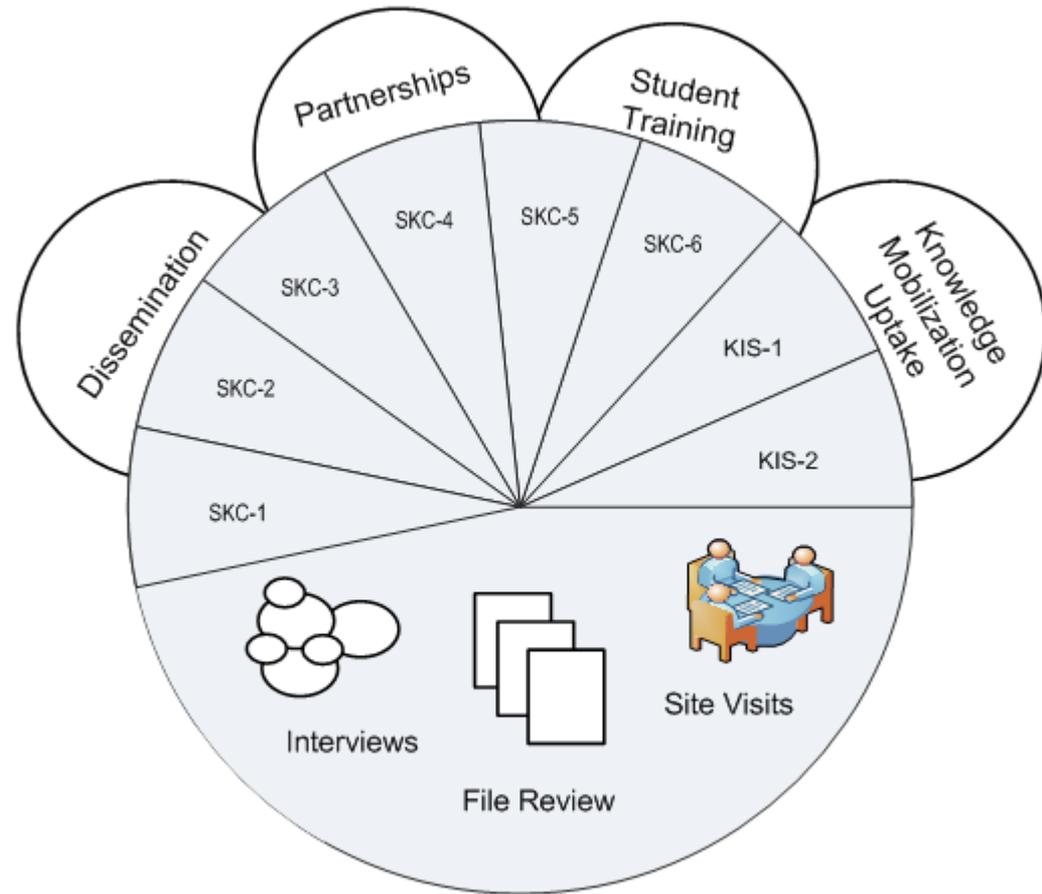
- In this evaluation, the cross-case analysis methodology was used to complement information available through the other lines of evidence used in the evaluation :
 - provide rich, in-depth information about the incremental contribution of the funding opportunities to the intended outcomes of the Knowledge Mobilization strategic framework
 - document uptake and use of mobilized research by research user partners to improve policies, programs or practices in areas of importance to Canadian society

Case Selection

- Initial review of reports submitted to SSHRC
 - Extraction of KMb data:
 - Receptor audiences
 - KMb outputs and reach
 - Training activities
 - Peer-reviewer assessment of KMb effectiveness
 - Within a range of acceptable performance at mid-term, selection to ensure balance of:
 - Discipline
 - Region/language
 - Acceptability to program staff
 - Backup cases selected at the outset
 - Three initially selected cases declined



Field Work



Adapted from *Multiple Case Study Analysis*, by Robert E. Stake. Copy 2006 by The Guilford Press.

Cross-Case Analysis

- Individual case study reports not prepared
- Analysis matrix based on evaluation framework prepared
- All case data used to synthesize a summary for each case for each indicator
- Synthesis across summary statements used to identify key findings
- Technical report essentially a large case/data/findings matrix

Excerpt from Analysis Matrix

| SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE - ACHIEVEMENT OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES (EFFECTIVENESS) | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Evaluation Question and Indicators | Case data/examples | Findings summary statement |
| 3. How effectively have SSHRC's funded KMb tools and approaches disseminated research knowledge to academic and non-academic audiences? NB: ACADEMIC AUDIENCES NOT CONSIDERED HERE | | |
| 3.2 Number and types of tools/approaches produced by project and related grants (e.g., research and other) 3.3 Number of KMb events (e.g., workshops, conferences, symposia, etc.) | A Overall assessment: Highly innovative and diversified set of tools and approaches adapted to target audiences in time, place, and mode. 1 285 tools, mechanisms (e.g., non-academic presentations, newspaper and other media articles, conference presentations) 2 75 events (e.g., meetings, seminars, expert panels and workshops, etc.) 3 3298 reached in-person, 100, 000 reached through broadcasting. 4 15 different receptor types identified (e.g., Federal government, academic and other experts, non-profits, etc.). | The case studies showed an enormous range of types of products and activities used to enact KMb. These varied in their innovativeness and their reach to various target audiences, as well as how deeply they engaged and interacted with them. They also varied in success, in that several cases reported having experimented with KMb tools or approaches that proved to be less successful than hoped. Long-term SKC grants have allowed experimentation, emergence and refinement KMb tools and approaches. The indicators requested in the Final Research Report fail to accurately capture performance on this dimension. More detail is presented under the diversity indicator. |
| | B Overall assessment: Limited diversity and innovativeness of tools being used, and little or no adaptation to a limited range of target audiences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62 tools, mechanisms (e.g., academic conference presentations, research tools, website) journal, magazine and other media articles, thematic workshops (numbers not specified) 42 events (e.g., video/teleconferences, conferences, and workshops) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 15 receptor types (e.g., academics and other experts, non-profit organizations, students, etc.). | |
| | C Overall assessment: Deep penetration of a relatively limited range of tools and approaches highly tailored to target audiences to fill, and timed to anticipate, needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 101 tools, mechanisms, vehicles (e.g., academic and non-academic presentations; publications, web site; training; media events; advisory services) 7 137 events (e.g., workshops; symposia, training, etc.) 8 3 main receptors: 1) educators; 2) school boards and districts; and 3) students (elementary and secondary). For example: Between 2007-08 and 2010-present, 1,917 teachers were trained; engaged 494 schools in NS, BC, SK, AB and MB. | |
| | D Overall assessment: Uses a co-construction approach, for which these indicators are less relevant. Moderately diverse set of tools and approaches, with some highly innovative; for others, reach to target audiences is unclear. | |

When to Undertake this Approach?

- Cross-case analysis can be considered when:
 - Focus is establishing and deeply documenting - but not quantifying - a range of possible expressions of program outcomes
 - Including less successful instances
 - Other lines of evidence only tell the performance story up to a certain point or level
- Useful elements to have in place:
 - Relevant cases are available for comparison
 - An inclusive approach with participants, aimed at filling information gaps rather than simple story-telling, is possible
 - Other lines of evidence exist

Benefits to Evaluators

- Production of a single technical report rather than a report on each case focusses resources on analysis
- Identification of patterns within and across expected outcomes
 - Also patterns of unexpected outcomes - not just case-specific anomalies
- Greater understanding of the contexts in which the cases occur, and how the contexts affect program-level results

Limitations

- Because primarily qualitative with multiple data sources, costs usually limit the number of cases
 - Making case selection criteria and process critically important: risk of discrediting because “non-representative”
- Case units can provide far more data than can be captured or used
- Not producing case reports precludes validation by cases

Lessons learned for SSHRC

- Opportunity to derive lessons that help inform current or future SSHRC initiatives
 - Organizational learning based on reflexions drawn from triangulation of evaluation findings, with strong emphasis on the case study line of evidence (“telling the story”)
 - Case study evidence shows that impact is at the level of partners and research users
 - Best practices of SSHRC-funded KMb for SSH research community
 - Focus on main dimensions of importance to management and external stakeholders
 - Generate information of use to management in its decision-making

Lessons Learned for SSHRC (cont'd)

“The grant provided extensive engagement and transformed it into something that has become very successful, responding to a very large appetite [...]”

Case study participant

Source: Case Study Technical Report

- Flexibility and responsiveness to maximize use of the evaluation
 - Case studies conducted to build on knowledge generated from other lines of evidence
 - Collaborative effort between SSHRC, the evaluation team and stakeholders (PIs) led to successful implementation
 - Continued dialogue with SSHRC programs staff and stakeholders



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Thank you !