



TRANSITIONS

From Research to Decision Making

A Knowledge Transfer Experience in Education

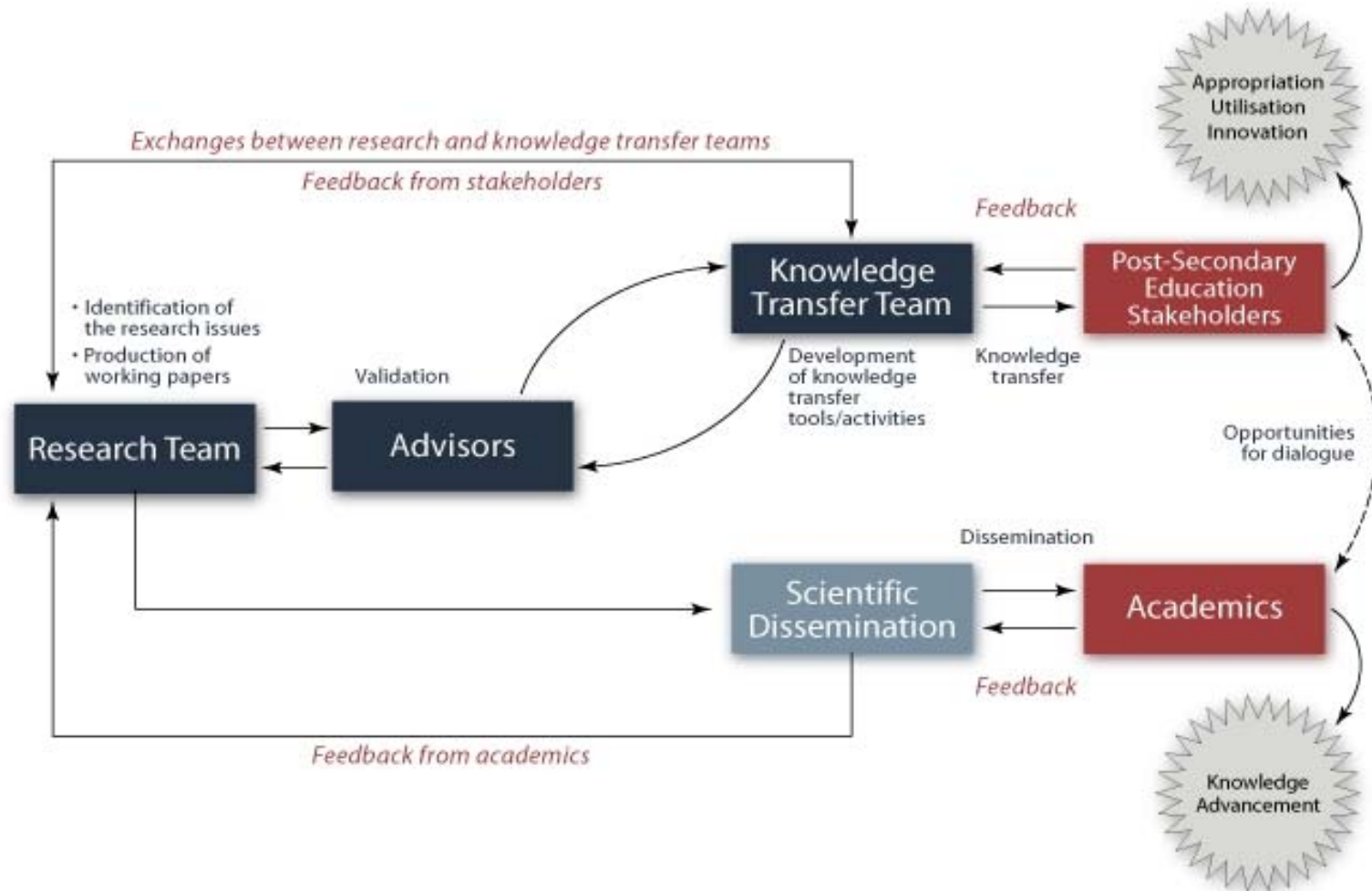
Presentation Objectives

- **Presentation of the Transitions Project**
- **Brief theoretical overview of knowledge transfer towards decision-makers**
- **Brief look at inspiring knowledge transfer practices**
- **Presentation of the knowledge transfer approach in the Transitions project**

The Transitions Project

- **A pan-Canadian project funded by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation**
- **A project with two facets**
 - Knowledge production (research)
 - Knowledge transfer
- **A multi-dimensional team**
 - Researchers: professors and students
 - Managers, decision-makers and post-secondary education stakeholders
 - Multi-level : colleges and universities

THE MECHANICS OF THE TRANSITIONS PROJECT



Research Objectives

- **Understand school inequalities with a double-focus on access and persistence**
- **Analyse the effect of different types of transitions on program choice and persistence**
- **Compare the transitions and trajectories of first-generation students with those of other students**
 - **Production of 11 research papers on the above-mentioned topics**

Knowledge Transfer Objectives

- **Facilitate postsecondary stakeholders in adopting research results for utilisation and innovation purposes by setting up knowledge transfer mechanisms**
- **Produce a research paper to document the knowledge transfer process in the Transition project**

Evolution of the Concept

■ Origins:

- 1920s: Agriculture in the U.S.
- 1950s-1960s : Transfer of technology
- 1960s-1970s: Public policymaking in the U.S.

■ Researchers in 1970s ask:

“Why does knowledge produced by social scientists have little impact on policy matters?”

The Many Appellations of the Concept

Knowledge...

- **Transfert**
- **Dissemination**
- **Mobilisation**
- **Sharing**
- **Utilisation**
- **Management**
- **Translation**
- **Diffusion**
- **Brokering**
- **Innovation**

Knowledge Utilization Models in Policymaking

- **Knowledge-driven model:** research inspires new applications and policies (the typical linear utilization of research)
- **Problem-solving model:** research is used to resolve a political problem/policy issue
- **Political model:** research is used to defend a political decision
- **Tactical model:** political inaction is justified by the status of research as “in-progress”
- **Enlightenment model:** research serves to give meaning and orientation to political issues
- **Interactive model:** decision-makers are involved in research
(Carol Weiss, 1979)

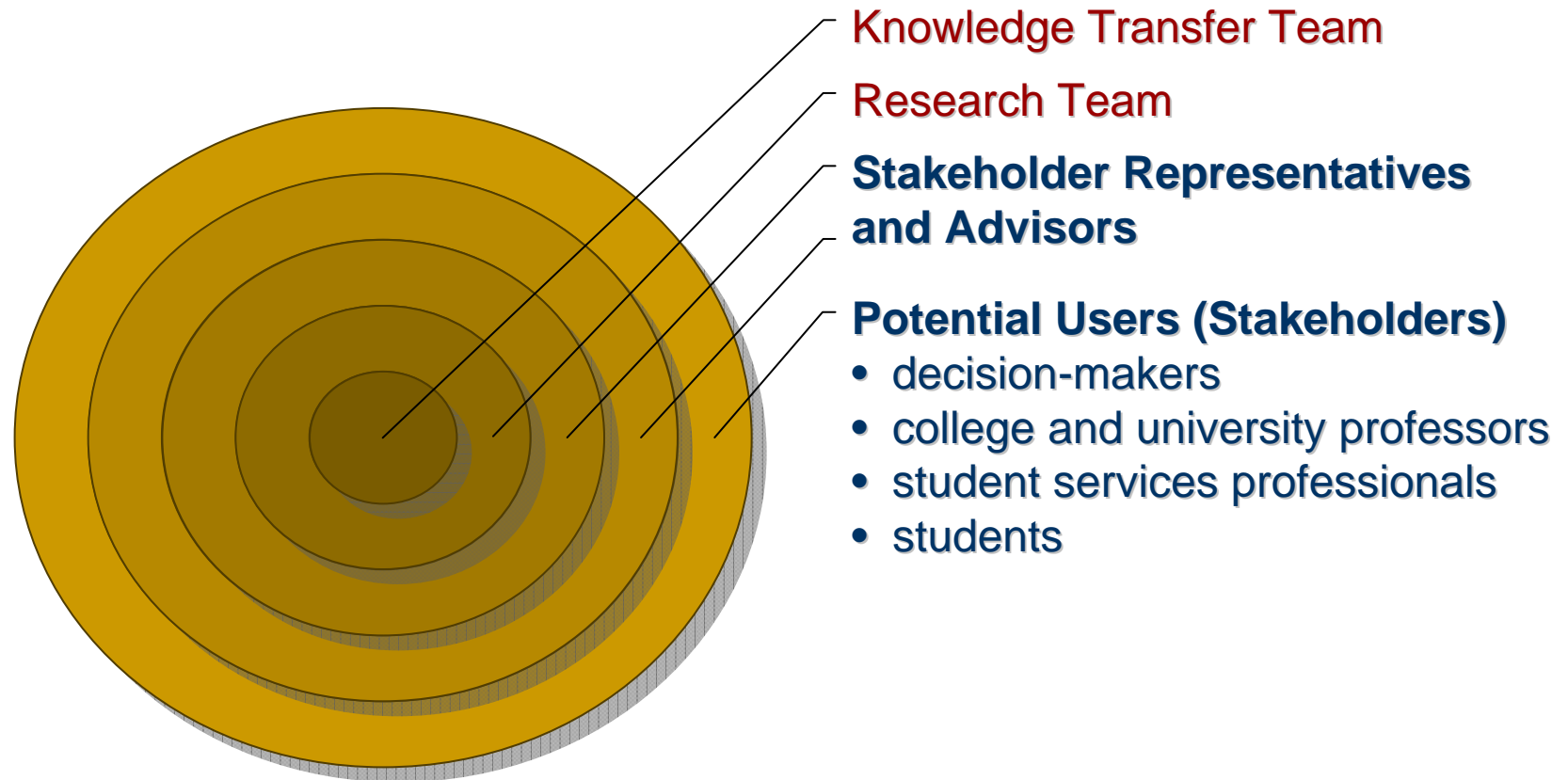
What the Case-Studies Show Us...

- **Dialogue between researchers and decision-makers** : a key bonus in knowledge transfer
- **Popularization** : a « must » for knowledge appropriation
- **Transfer Officers**: important bridges between policy-makers and researchers
 - Emergence of a discipline: training « interface specialists »...

Knowledge Transfer: the Two Principal Questions

- **How do we involve researchers in the process of knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange?**
 - **Decide with researchers:**
 - who is the target public?
 - what are the key messages?
 - what is the « use-value » of information?
- **How do we encourage decision-makers to make research a part of the decision-making process?**
 - **Identify with decision-makers the « investment value » of using research results in the decision-making process**

The Knowledge Transfer Partners in the Transitions Project



The Transitions Project: Starting Premises

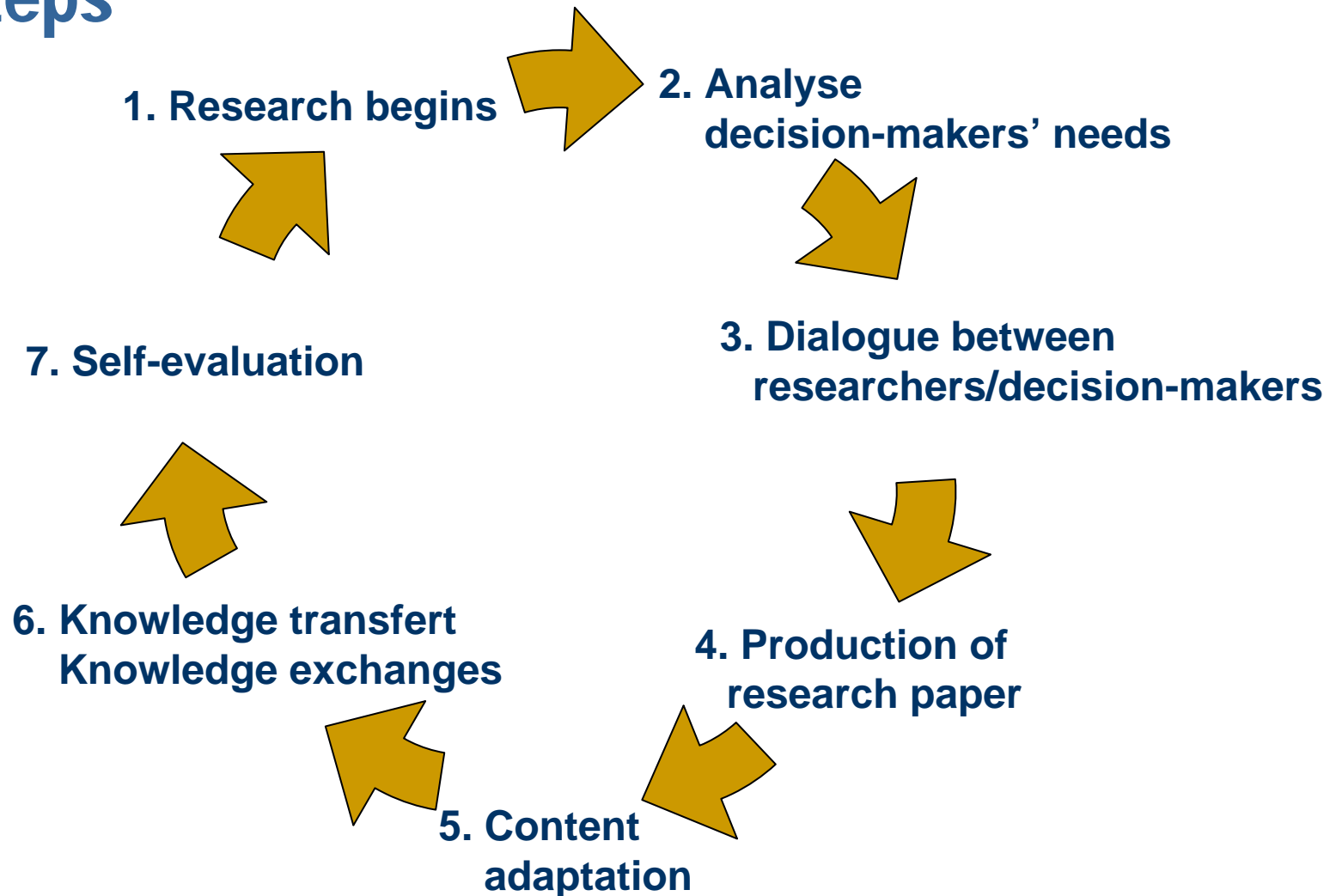
■ Data produced on:

- student pathways in Canada
- differences in postsecondary school systems in Canada
- the effects of inter-level postsecondary transitions
- first-generation students compared with other students

■ Objective : go further than knowledge dissemination

- Identification of potential users
 - Decision-makers : a « must »!
- Set up a knowledge transfer strategy that facilitates appropriation by decision-makers

Knowledge Transfer in the Transitions Project : in 7 steps



Decision-Makers Voice Their Opinion...

- **Relevance : the key to getting their attention**
 - Know the world of decision-making and identify what is relevant to decision-makers
- **A lack of time : the commonality between all decision-makers**
 - Organize presentations in a clear and concise way; get right to the point
- **Make it « concrete » : data alone are not enough**
 - Present information in the form of ideas and key-messages

Decision-Makers Voice Their Opinion (cont'd)...

- **Benchmarking : compare to contextualize**
 - Respond to a real need in postsecondary education
- **Cost-benefit : a necessary calculation**
 - Center the presentation on the « use-value » of information vs the costs
- **Correct myths and misled opinions: an important role of scientific research**
 - Dare to confront preconceived ideas with well-founded research results

What to Focus on for Successful Knowledge Transfer?

- ❑ **Personal contact**
 - **Presentations in person rather than written or internet diffusion**
- ❑ **Interactions and dialogue**
 - **Favour group meetings**
- ❑ **Implementation**
 - **Pursue the transfer process with stakeholders in institutions/organizations**
- ❑ **Recurrence**
 - **Take advantage of all opportunities to meet decision-makers with the aim of presenting relevant information**
- ❑ **Listen**
 - **Because decision-makers can take us in new directions**

Challenges

- **Knowledge transfer teams must be given a place at the heart of research teams**
- **Ways must be found to convince researchers and decision-makers that knowledge transfer is more than dissemination**
- **Knowledge transfer is a “speciality” that needs to be developed and learnt**