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Applying Appreciative Assessment



Land Acknowledgement



Background and Structure

A Little About Me:

- Director of Research, Assessment and Planning
- Been in Higher Ed for 20+ years
- Background in counselling and advising
- First Certified Appreciative Advisor in Canada
- Teach on Appreciative Advising, Advising Essentials and Assessment in Advising
- Faculty at the NACADA Assessment Institute

Structure of Presentation:

- Laying the foundation
- Understanding appreciative approaches
- Appreciative Assessment:
 - Description of each phase
 - Putting into practice
 - Questions for reflection

What is your comfort level with assessment?

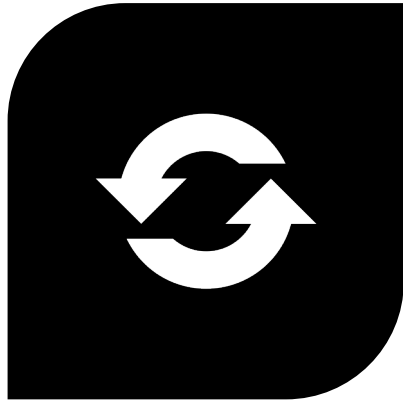
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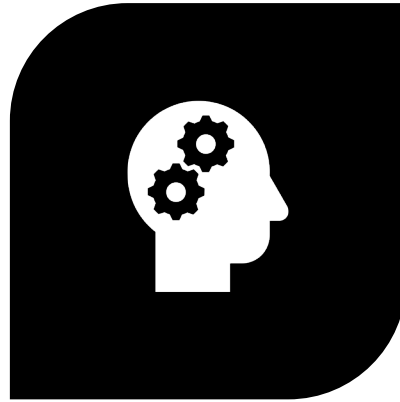
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Outcomes



UNDERSTAND THE STEPS IN
AN ASSESSMENT CYCLE



REFLECT ON HOW TO EMBED
APPRECIATIVE APPROACHES
INTO ASSESSMENT

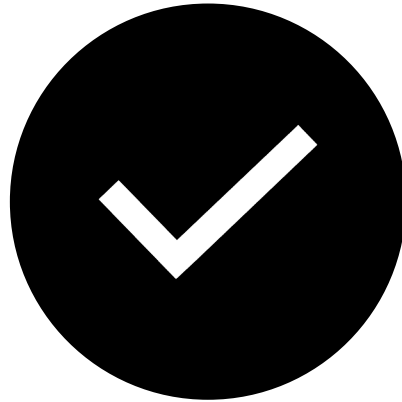


FEEL EMPOWERED TO
IMPLEMENT ASSESSMENT
INTO YOUR WORK

Some Definitions



ASSESSMENT



EVALUATION



RESEARCH

Challenges in Implementing Assessment in Student Affairs

- Lack of time
- Lack of resources
- Knowledge and skills
- Coordination of complex institutional processes
- Lack of conceptual frameworks
- Obstacles to collaboration
- Lack of trust
- Need to manage expectations

(Scott, 2018)



Appreciative Inquiry

- Developed in the 80s by David Cooperrider
- Core principles:
 - constructivist principle
 - principle of simultaneity
 - poetic principle
 - anticipatory principle
 - positive principle



(Coghlan et al., 2003).



Appreciative Advising Model

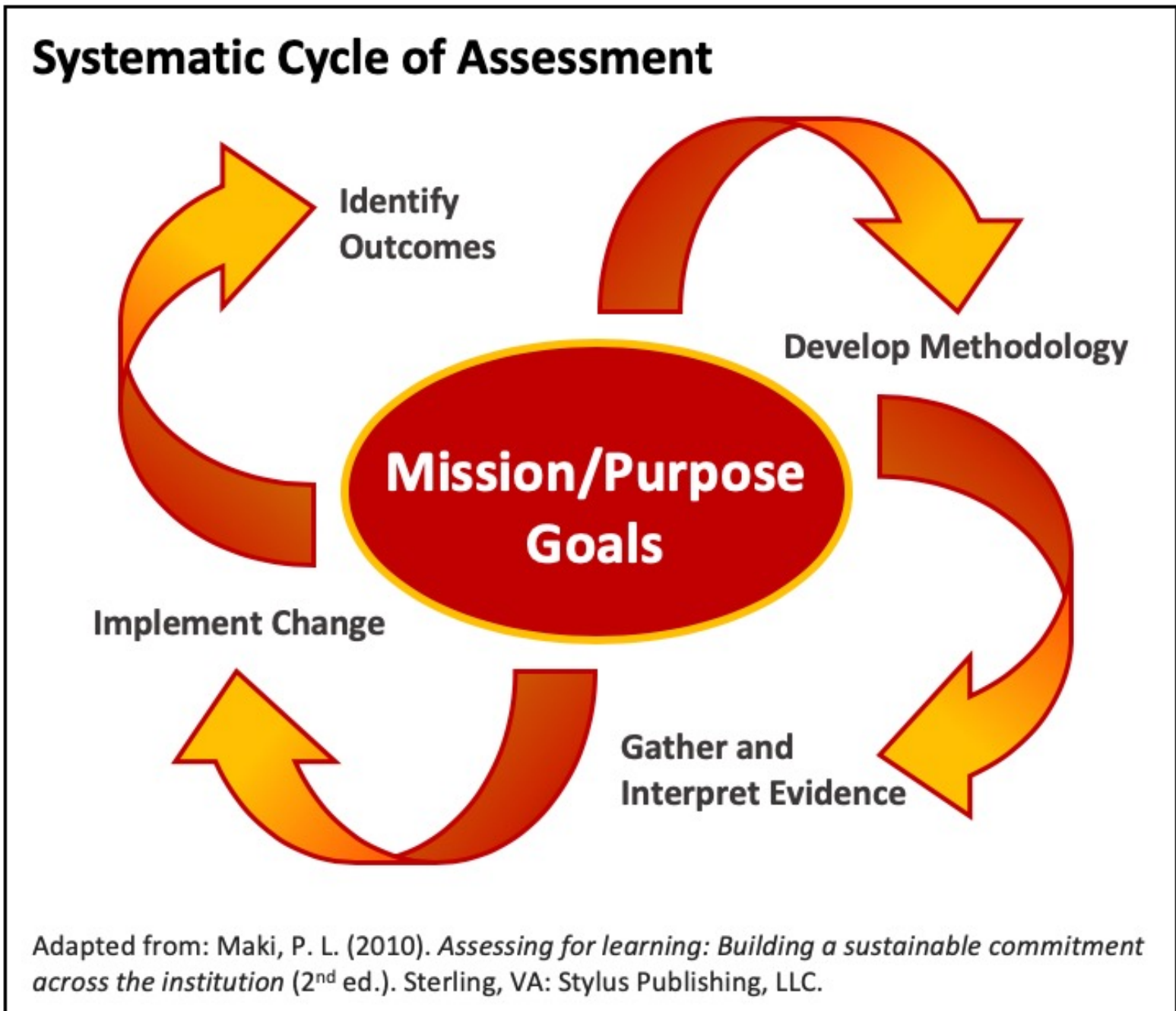
(Bloom et al., 2008)

Why Use an Appreciative Model in Assessment?

- A model that is already familiar to many.
- Builds conditions that promote growth and change by enhancing learning.
- Ensures that the assessment process is collaborative and highly participatory.
- Provides us with a common language to talk about assessment.
- Allows us to focus on what we are doing well, imagine what could be, and devise assessment plans that are actionable.
(Coghlan, et al., 2003)



Assessment Cycle

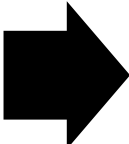




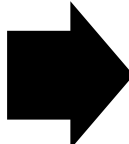
Applying the Concept of the Appreciative Advising Model into Assessment

Disarm – Vision, Mission, Values

Consider how to
demystify the
assessment process.



Embrace imbedding
assessment into our
work.



Define (or refine)
the vision, mission,
and values of the
program, office, or
unit.

Putting into Practice

- Creation of an assessment committee of engaged and passionate staff who can help to explain concepts and processes to others throughout the Division.
- Clearly define any new, unclear, and potentially confusing terminology used in your assessment plans and measures.
- Be clear about the language used when developing your measures.
- Identify the purpose of your assessment while considering relevant partners.

Questions for Reflection

Are students included throughout the process?

Is the primary purpose and goal clear, understandable and aligned with strategic documents?

Why is this important?
Why do we need to know this info?

Are varied voices and identities included throughout the cycle and as part of the assessment committee?

How is transparency built-in and throughout the process?

Discover – Identify Outcomes



Opportunity to create the reality of the assessment project through language and conversation and to identify the best of “what is” .



Share our stories and to use that as the foundation of the assessment plan. Use this as the time to envision what the ideal result will look like.



Consider different ways of knowing and ensure the processes are not solely embedded in colonist practice.



Time to envision the focus and underpinnings of the project, based on those who are involved.

Putting into Practice

- In your assessment plan include any theories and practices that ground your work. Include a brief description of each so that the reader will be able to understand the relevance to what you are assessing.
- Consider how you can include different ways of knowing into the assessment process.



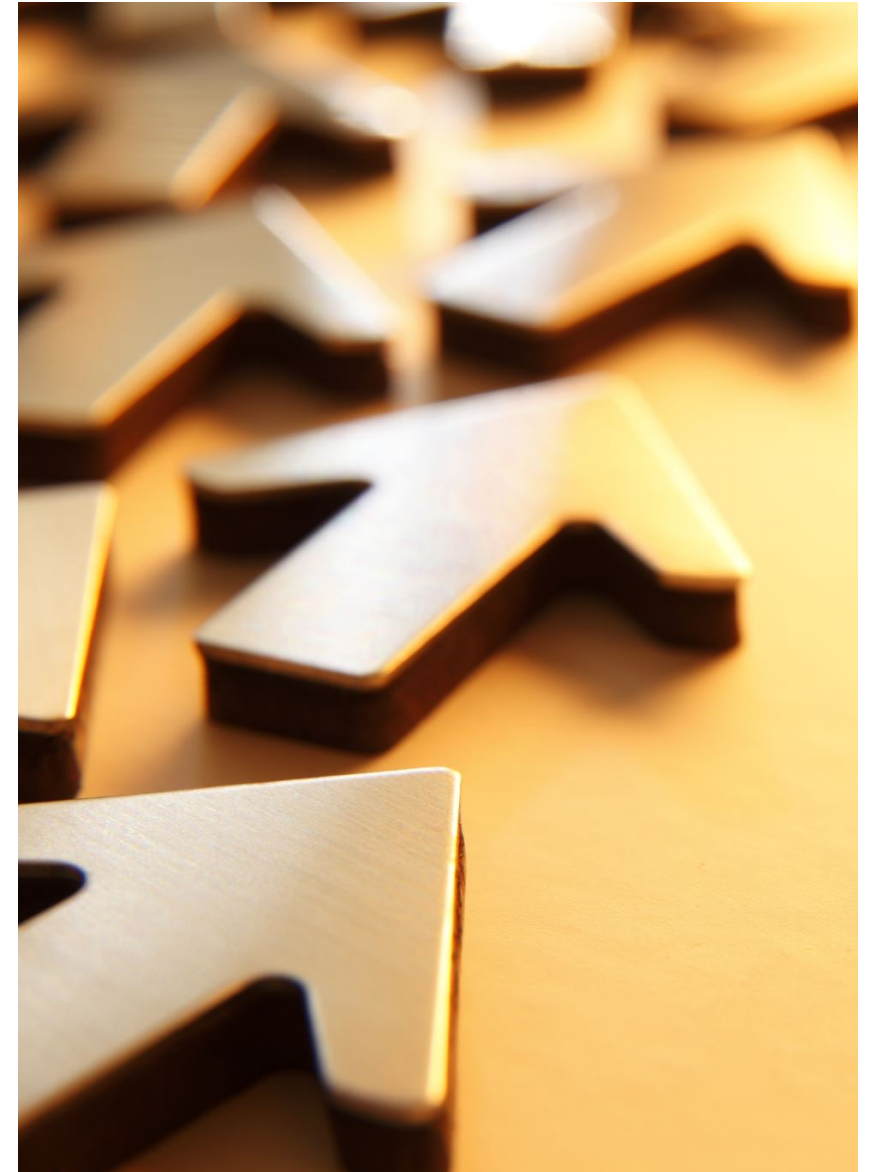
Questions for Reflection

- With what lens were these concepts created? Whose voices are represented and whose aren't?
- What knowledge structure is this based on? What methods are valued and what methods are often ignored, therefore also ignoring the lived experiences of many of our students?
- What data is readily available? What story does it tell? What is missing?
- What do we hope to know as a result of conducting the assessment?



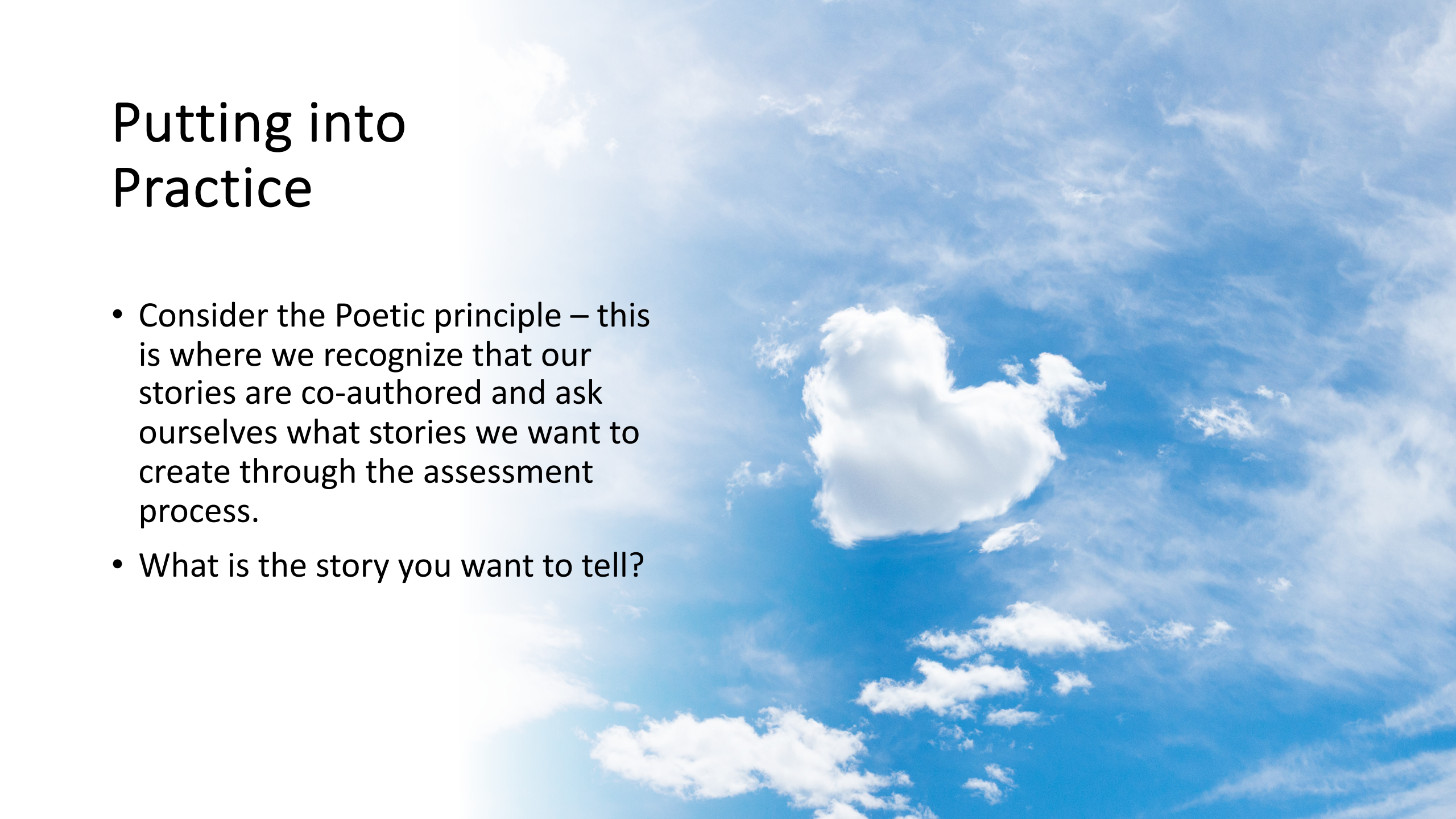
Dream – Map Outcomes

- Dream is the time to envision what the assessment will look like, prioritize activities, develop benchmarks and outcomes (learning, operational and programmatic), visualize the intended impact(s) and results.
- This is where practitioners can engage in the process of envisioning what might be and how the data will be used to make positive changes.



Putting into Practice

- Consider the Poetic principle – this is where we recognize that our stories are co-authored and ask ourselves what stories we want to create through the assessment process.
- What is the story you want to tell?





Questions for Reflection

- How can the assessment process be used to recognize and disrupt inherent biases?
- What past successes does the historical data show? How can these successes be built upon?
- What is the story that we want to tell?

Design – Develop your Methodology

- Decide what assessment measures will be implemented, how to include multiple sources of evidence and consider how the data can be meaningfully disaggregated.
- Question generation is a key component of the Design phase. This is when we can put the anticipatory principle into action. Meaning, the way we frame questions determines the responses we receive.
- Deficit-based questions will focus on deficit results; strengths-based questions will provide an asset-focused perspective.



Putting into Practice

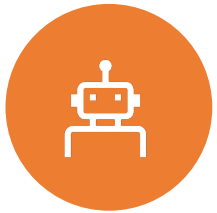
- When considering the development of questions, whether it be for a survey, focus group or learning circle, consider the components of asking positive, strengths-based questions.

Questions for Reflection

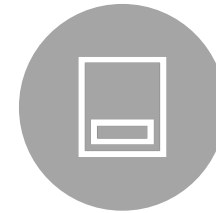
- What story is the data telling? Does it harm/perpetuate bias/reinforce negative stereotypes?
- Have the questions been reviewed through different lenses?
- How are we including asset-based questions?
- Are the measures both quantitative as well as reflecting the student voices through qualitative measures?

Deliver – Gather and Interpret Evidence

- Data collection and analysis
- Identifying resources needed to implement the desired change



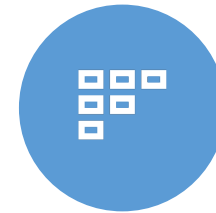
Which outcome(s) do you want to measure?



How will you know if a student has achieved the outcome? What does achieving the outcome “look” like?



What is it that you are trying to measure?



What interventions are you putting in place?

Putting into Practice

- Goal is for everyone to be able to understand the data and use it.
- Include students as part of the analysis and have them provide feedback on draft reports.
- Be clear and transparent with the data you have, and don't have.
- Fully label graphs and charts so the reader can easily understand them.
- Include headers and footers, while clearly describing the findings.
- Clearly define terminology and scope while making sure the data is digestible to different audiences.
- Identify any gaps the measure or even the researchers may have.

(Adams & Doyle, 2020).



Questions for Reflection

- Is the data digestible for different audiences?
- What data is missing? Has this been explained clearly?
- How will the data be shared with different audiences and groups?

Don't Settle – Implement Change

Making data-based decisions and closing the loops is central to the Don't Settle stage. It is also where you will engage in the process of positive restlessness.

“By shifting to a state of positive restlessness within a culture of inquiry, positive impacts can be felt earlier, and the organization can be mobilized to take advantage of opportunities in a timely fashion” (D’Souza, 2021, p. 100).

Putting into Practice

- Celebrating your successes
- Sharing the results of the assessments can be another way of celebrating what has been accomplished and highlighting strengths to be built upon. When you share results, be sure it is in areas where people are most likely to see it, whether it be via social media posts, on a website, or even shared on bulletin boards in our office spaces.

Questions for Reflection

- What are the strengths and opportunities the assessment has revealed?
- What are the future designs and priorities?
- How can the strengths that have been revealed through the assessment be built upon?
- How will the recommendations be prioritized to meet short, medium, and long-term goals?



Summary

- Let's revisit:
 - Lack of time
 - Lack of resources
 - Knowledge and skills
 - Coordination of complex institutional processes
 - Lack of conceptual frameworks
 - Obstacles to collaboration
 - Lack of trust
 - Need to manage expectations



Thank you!

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