



Improving School Culture in Simulated Workplaces

Improving School Culture in Simulated Workplaces: Workshop Series

Improving School Culture in Simulated Workplaces

Workshop 1: Introduction to School Culture Improvement

Introduction to school culture improvement

Workshop 1 Agenda

Welcome

Opening activity: If my school were an animal

Positive school culture and why it matters

About the Simulated Workplace school culture survey

Using a continuous improvement approach

Who leads and participates in school improvement

Looking ahead to Workshop 2

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Opening activity: If my school were an animal

Talk with your neighbors in groups of three or four and complete this sentence:

If my school were an animal, it would be a (an) _____ because _____.



Introduction to school culture improvement

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Positive school culture and why it matters

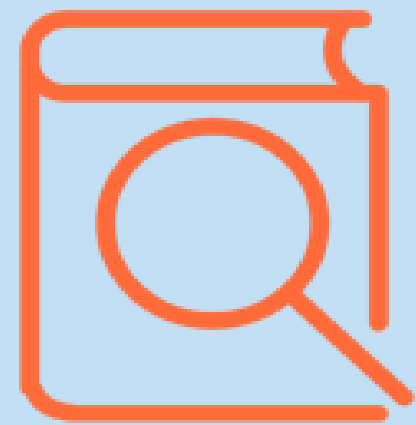
About the Simulated Workplace school culture survey

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The importance of positive school culture



Definition

School culture is the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that arise over time from how people treat and feel about each other, as well as how the school community faces challenges and celebrates successes.

Everyone in a school community contributes to school culture—including students, families, teachers, counselors, coaches, and administrators.

(Peterson & Deal, 2009)

The importance of positive school culture



For **students**, positive school culture is associated with increased:

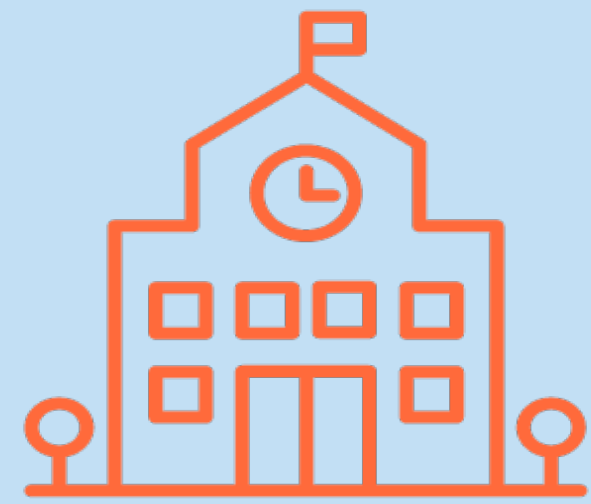
- Achievement,
- Attendance,
- Engagement and empowerment, and
- Social-emotional learning.

For **teachers**, positive school culture is associated with increased:

- Job satisfaction,
- Commitment, and
- Collaboration.

(Anderman, 1991; Collie et al., 2012; Ellis et al., 2018; Geier et al., 2008; Hixson et al., 2012; Kemple et al., 1999)

The importance of positive school culture



Sources

Positive school culture arises from:

- High expectations for students.
- Intentional, meaningful staff relationships.
- Trust and respect for student and family voices.
- Openness to constructive criticism.

(Certo et al., 2003)

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Simulated workplace school culture survey



- West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) administers the survey twice a year.
- Administrators, instructors, counselors, and students in career and technical education (CTE) programs statewide complete the survey.
- The survey provides a snapshot of the overall culture of the school and points to strengths and opportunities for improvement.

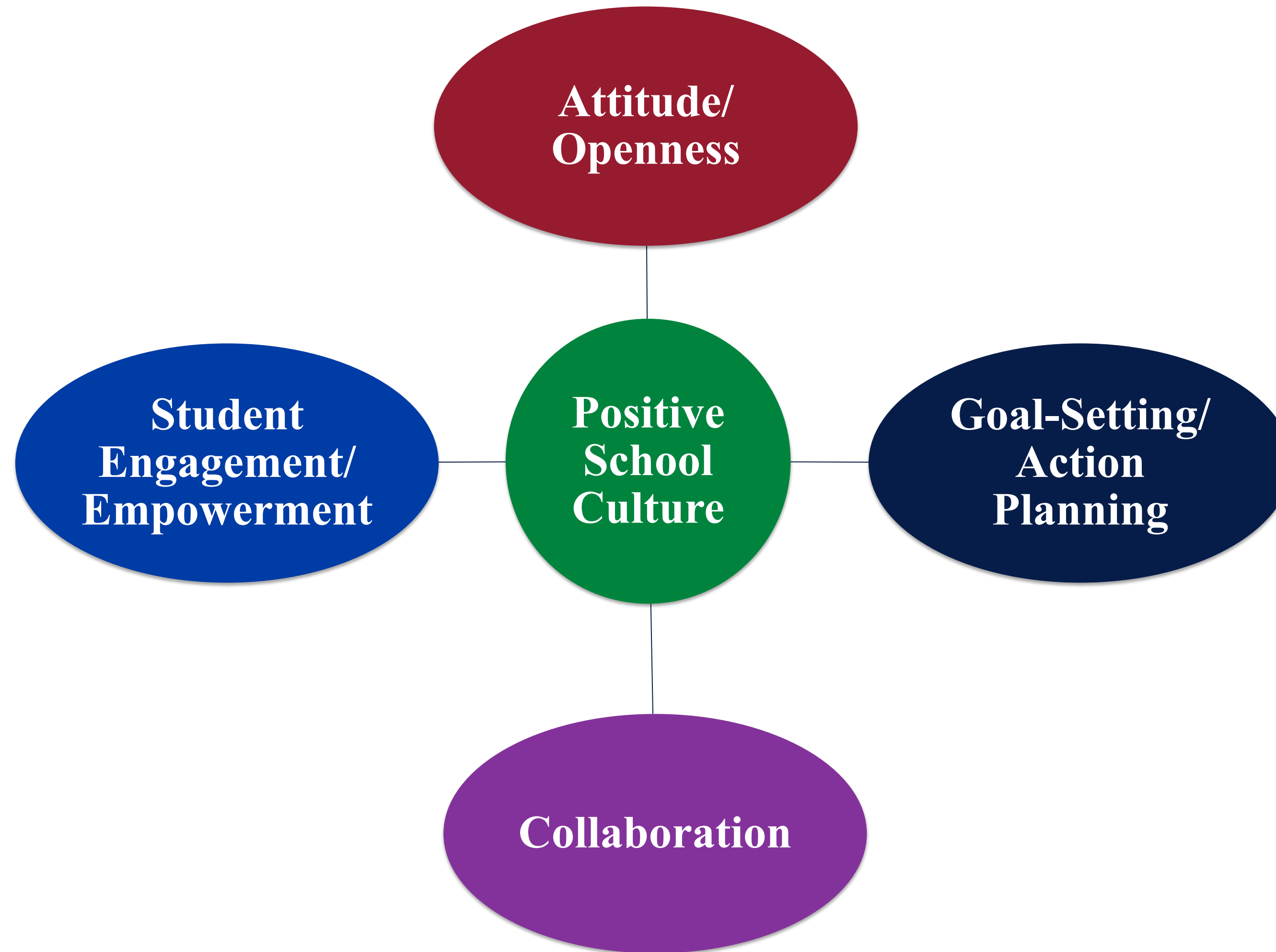
Key constructs of school culture *(Who Took My Chalk?™)*

- These constructs are based on 15 years of research.
- They are interrelated and relate to teacher and student outcomes
- They all promote 21st century skills and can promote high-quality interactions between teachers and students.



(Biscoe & Peters, 1997; Brunstein, 1993; Cohen, 2002; Fine, 2010; Gratch, 2000; Jayson, 2004; Kato, 2009; Latham & Locke 1979; Locke et al. 1981; Morisano et al. 2010; Nicholson & Tracy, 1982; Radar, 2005; Taylor & Fratto, 2012)

Four survey constructs of positive school culture



Survey constructs with examples

Student engagement/empowerment



- Students have a say in how their Simulated Workplace programs are run.
- Students take ownership of their learning process and work.
- Students work with teachers to evaluate their work and discuss how to improve.
- Students contribute to creating a positive learning environment.

Survey constructs with examples

Goal-setting/action planning



- Students contribute to setting personal and class-wide or program-wide goals.
- Students' courses help them set and achieve goals.
- Students get better at setting and achieving their goals.
- Students' Simulated Workplace experience helps them make career-related decisions.

Survey constructs with examples

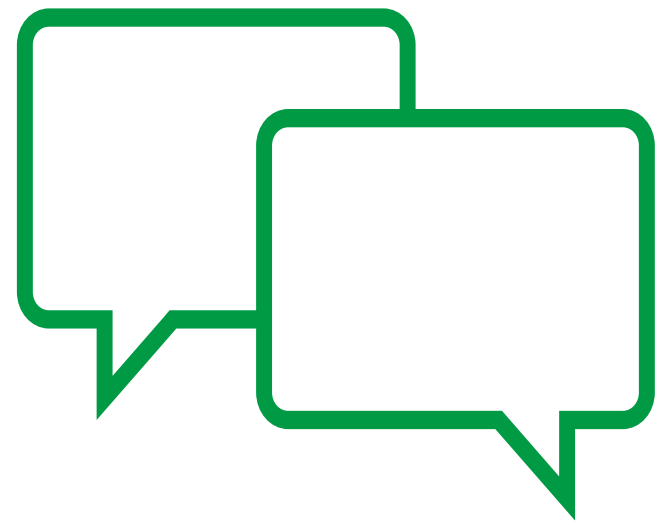
Attitude/openness



- Students find their work to be meaningful.
- Students feel comfortable learning unfamiliar things.
- Students see how their work connects to their future careers.
- Students celebrate success in their work.

Survey constructs with examples

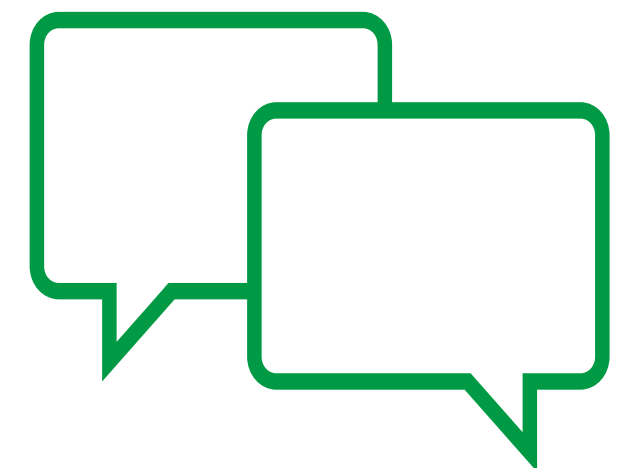
Collaboration



- Students work together to plan and do work.
- Students see the difference their contribution makes to the team.
- Students learn from peers and help peers learn.

Key constructs: Group discussion

- Which example statements align with strengths of your own school culture? Why do you think that?
- Which example statements reflect something your school could improve on? Why do you think that?
- How do the example statements you associate with strengths and areas for improvement relate to how you characterized your school when selecting an animal at the start of this workshop?



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Positive school culture and why it matters

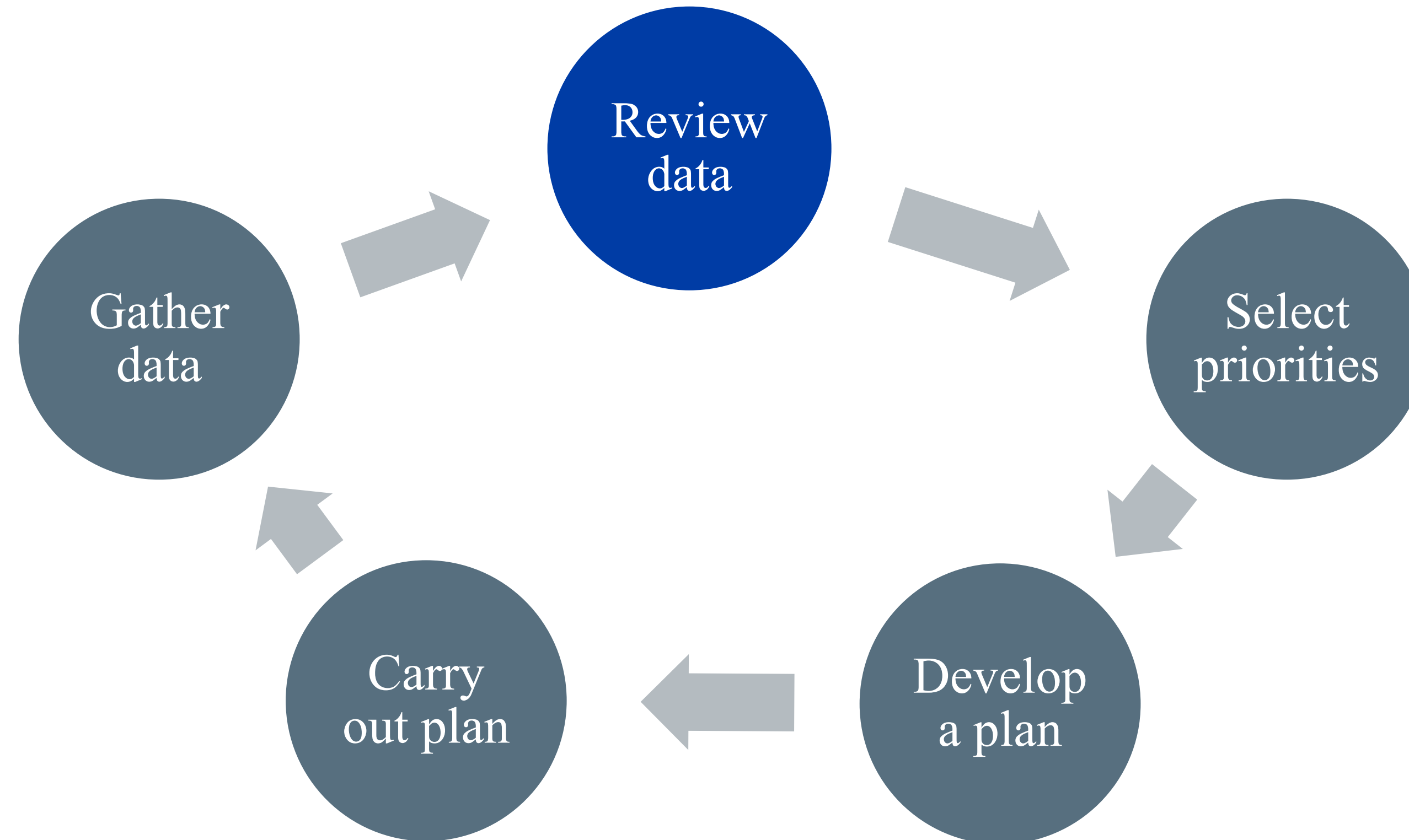
About the Simulated Workplace school culture survey

Using a continuous improvement approach

Who leads and participates in school improvement

Looking ahead to Workshop 2

Using a continuous improvement approach



(Bryk et al., 2015)

How the school culture surveys inform school improvement efforts

- Gather different perspectives on a given topic.
- Provide objective, anonymous basis for more in-depth discussion.
- Measure change over time.



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Who leads and participates in school culture improvement?



- Are a variety of leaders with different roles involved (including teachers, students, counselors)?
- Are leaders from the full range of Simulated Workplace programs involved?
- Are people with a range of experience involved, such as teachers at different career stages, and/or students from different grades?

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Questions?



Looking ahead to Workshop 2

Objectives for our next workshop:

- Review and discuss state and school-level school culture survey results.
- Practice making accurate statements about the survey results.
- Interpret the data-driven statements to celebrate strengths and begin to identify areas for improvement.

Improving School Culture in Simulated Workplaces

Workshop 2: Review and Interpret School Culture Survey Data

Review and interpret school culture survey results

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Recap of survey constructs and examples

How to review and interpret school culture survey data

Reviewing school and statewide survey results

Deciding whether to gather additional information

Looking ahead to Workshop 3

Review and interpret school culture survey results

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Review survey constructs



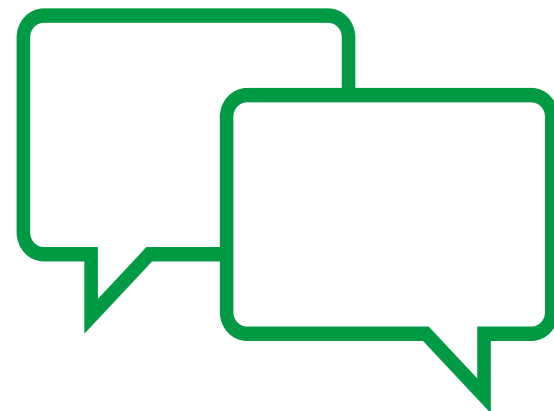
Student engagement/empowerment



Goal-setting/action planning



Attitude/openness



Collaboration

Review and interpret school culture survey results

Workshop 2 Agenda

Welcome back

Recap of survey constructs and examples

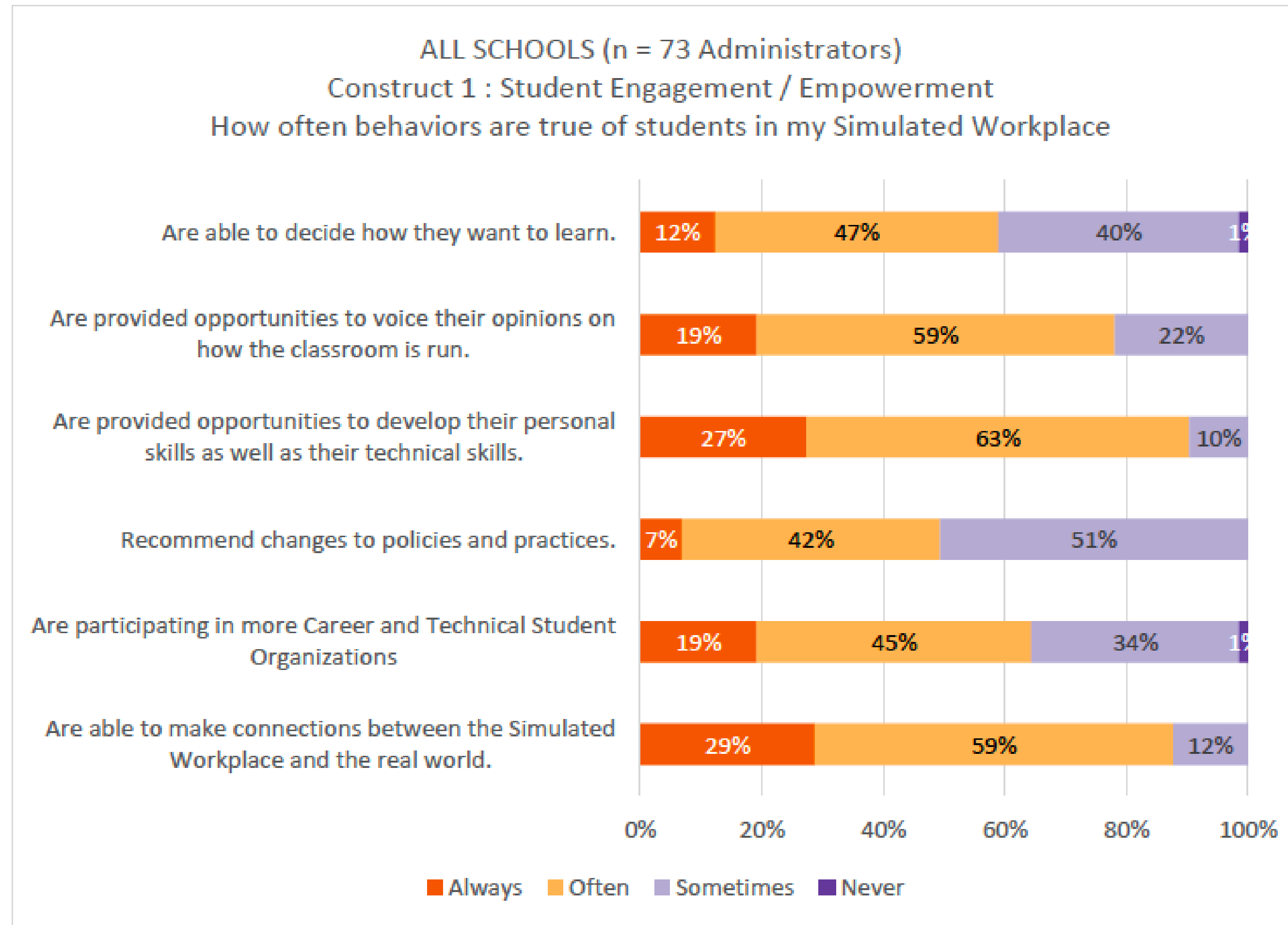
How to review and interpret school culture survey data

Reviewing school and statewide survey results

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Looking ahead to Workshop 3

Example of statewide survey results



Source: Excerpted from WVDE School Culture Survey Report: Statewide Results, 2019

Steps for reviewing and interpreting data

Reflect

Make statements about the data (don't interpret or guess why).

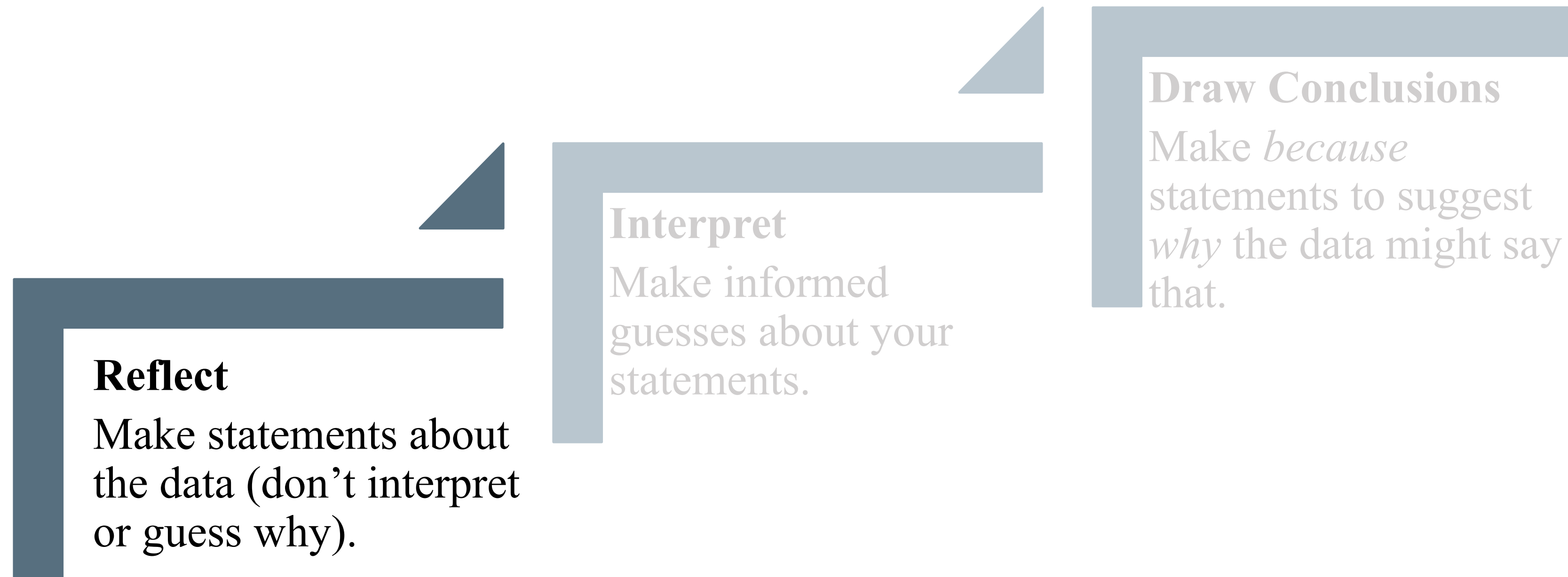
Interpret

Make informed guesses about your statements.

Draw Conclusions

Make *because* statements to suggest *why* the data might say that.

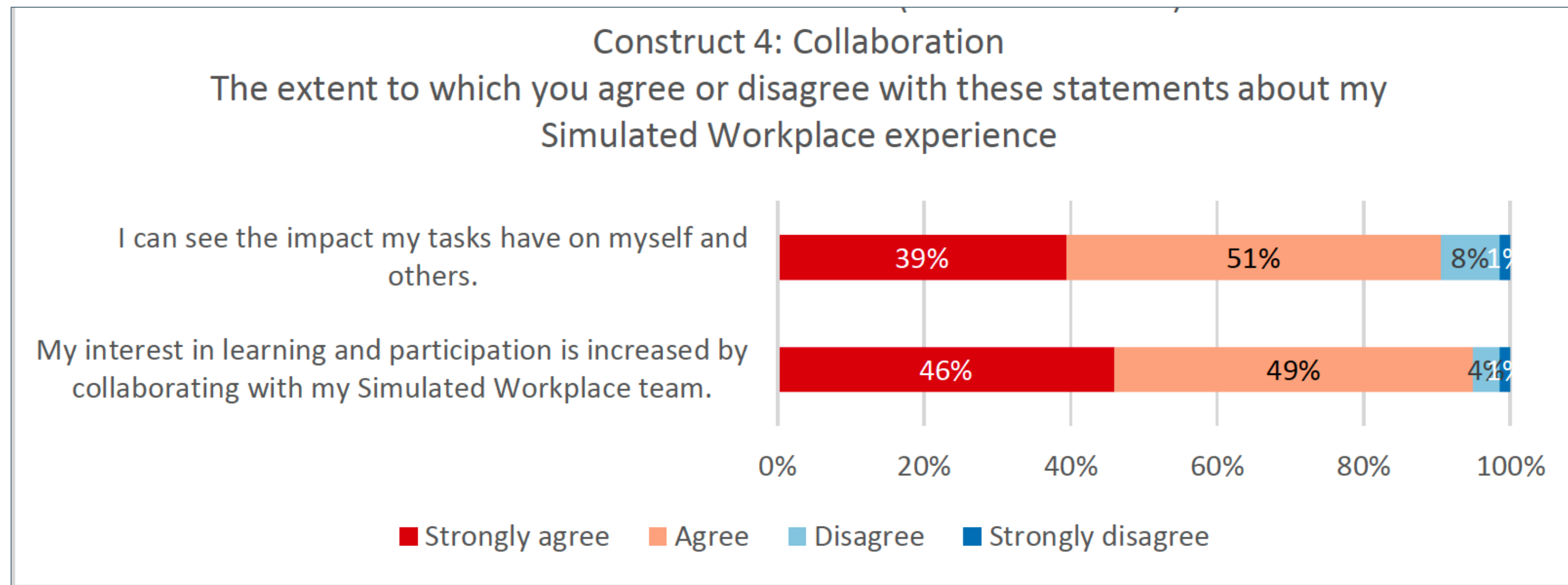
Step 1: Reflect



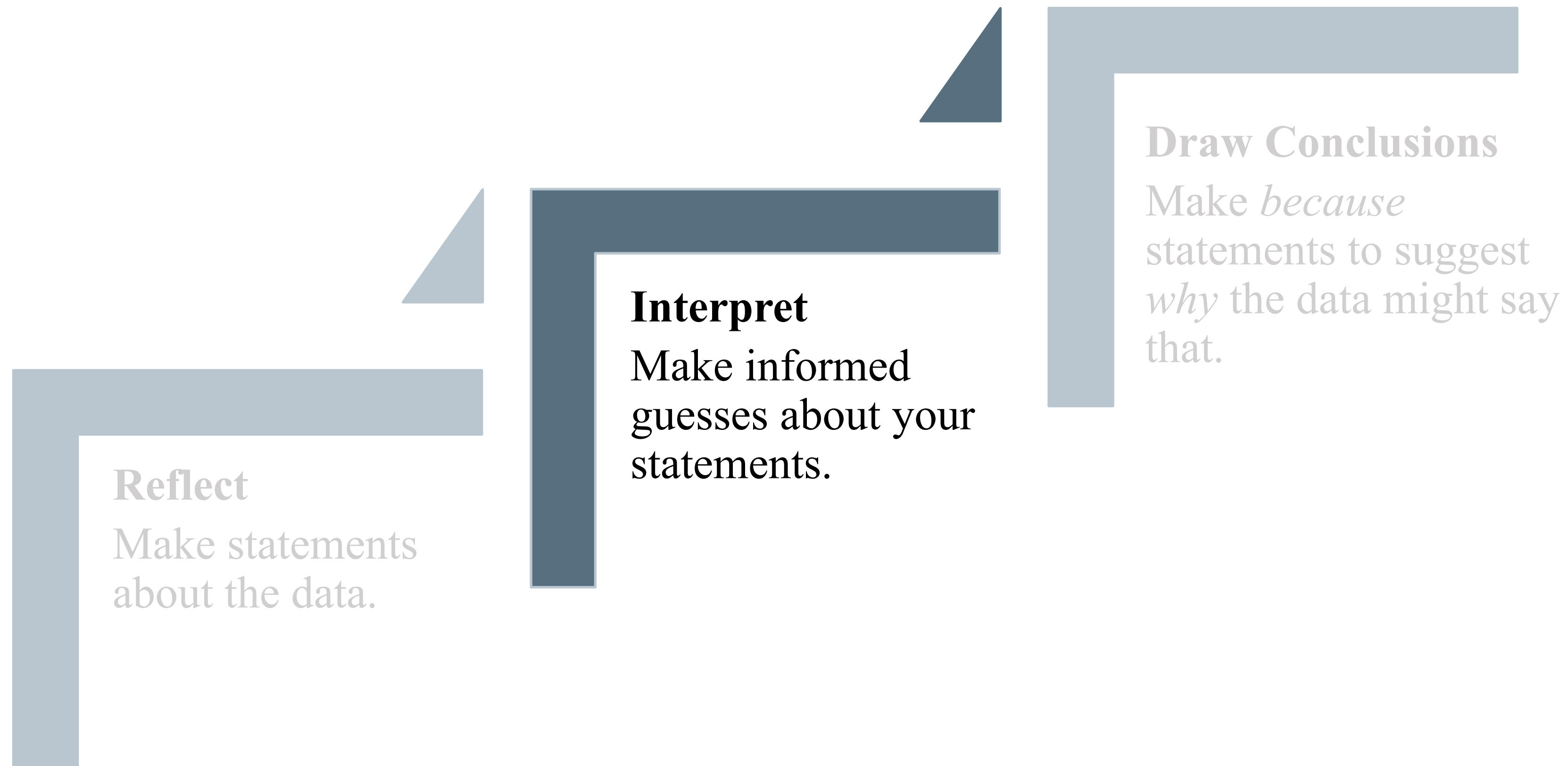
Step 1: Reflect (example)

- Make factual statements about the sample data below.

About nine in 10 students reported that they strongly agree or agree they see the impact of their tasks on themselves and others.



Step 2: Interpret



Step 2: Interpret (example)

- Make informed guesses about the statements you made.

REFLECT

About nine in 10 students reported that they strongly agree or agree they see the impact of their tasks on themselves and others.

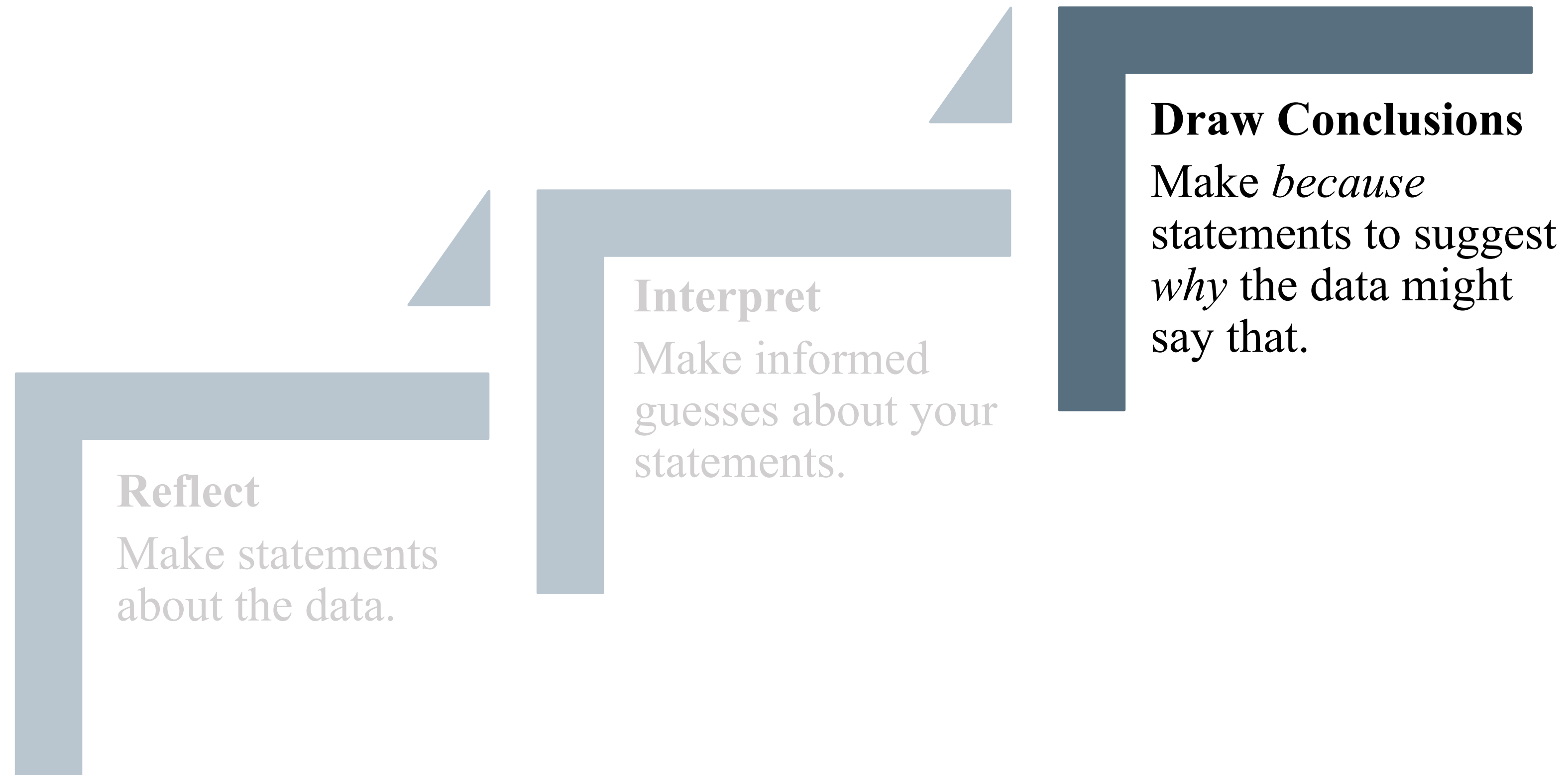
INTERPRET

It seems that a large majority of students at our school feel positive about their work.

INTERPRET

A minority of students may feel that some of their tasks are not as meaningful.

Step 3: Draw conclusions



Step 3: Draw conclusions (example)

- Make *because* statements to explain your interpretations.

REFLECT

About nine in 10 students reported that they strongly agree or agree they see the impact of their tasks on themselves and others.

INTERPRET

It seems that a large majority students feel positive about their work.

INTERPRET

A minority of students may feel that some of their tasks are not as meaningful.

DRAW CONCLUSIONS

A large majority students feel positive about the work because the tasks in most of our programs are relevant and engaging for our students.

DRAW CONCLUSIONS

A minority of students may not see the impact of their tasks because some tasks do not feel relevant or authentic.

Review and interpret school culture survey results

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Practice reviewing survey results



Process for reviewing and interpreting the data

Step 1:

Reflect

Make statements about the data (don't interpret or guess why).

Step 2:

Interpret

Make informed guesses about your statements.

Step 3:

Draw Conclusions

Make *because* statements to suggest *why* the data might say that.

Reviewing data in small groups



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- Review and discuss a question from the survey results in Round 1 small groups (20 minutes).
- Use the three-step process in your workbook to Reflect, Interpret, and Draw Conclusions about the survey item you selected.
- Record your Round 1 small group discussion in table 5 of your participant workbook.
- Switch to Round 2 small groups.
- Follow prompts in your workbook to share Round 1 results with your Round 2 group.

Reviewing data in small groups: Round 1



Process for reviewing and interpreting the data

Reflect

Make statements about the data (don't interpret or guess why).

Interpret

Make informed guesses about your statements.

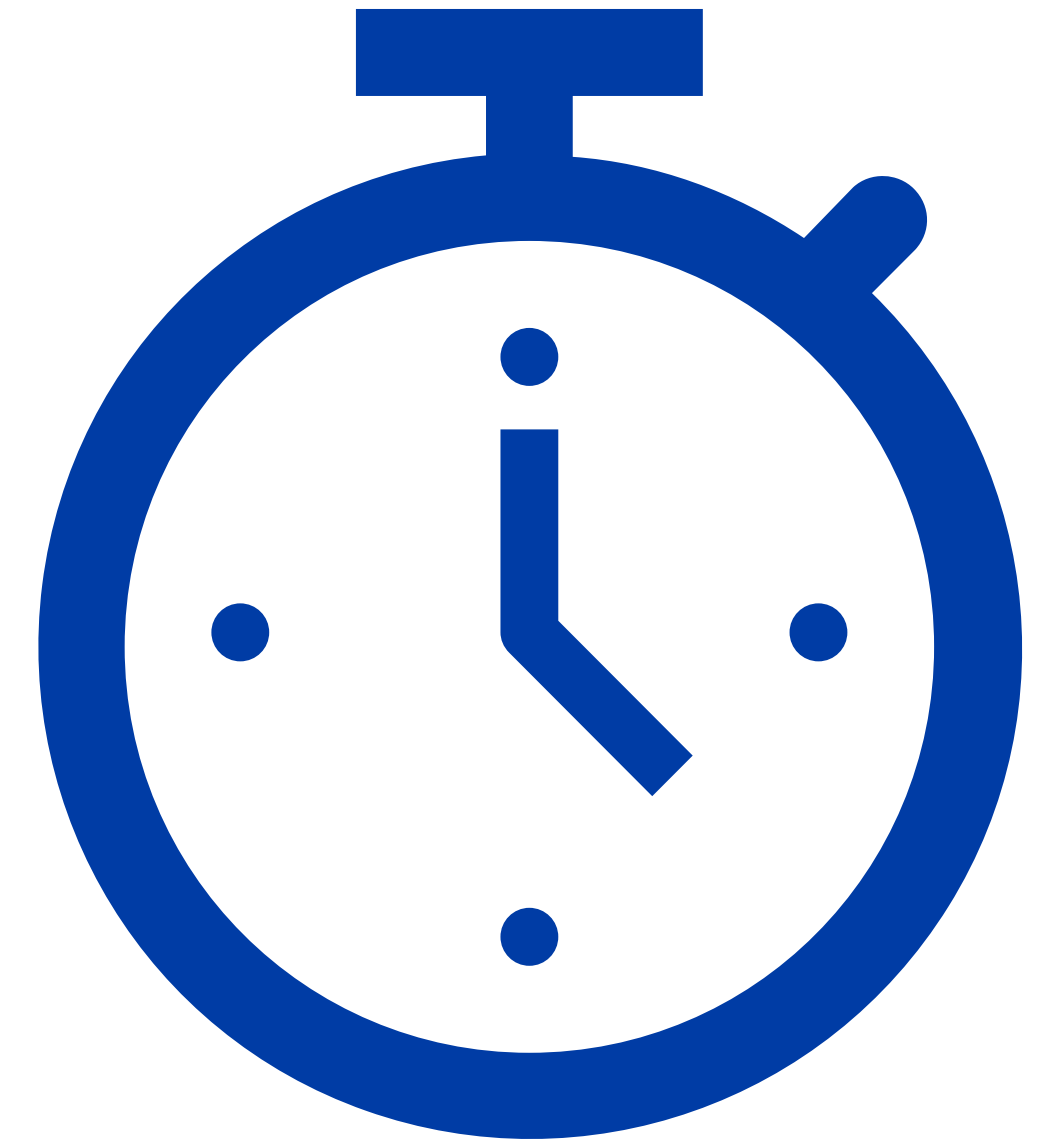
Draw Conclusions

Make *because* statements to suggest *why* the data might say that.

Five minutes left in Round 1

To prepare for Round 2 groups:

- Each participant should take notes on the Round 1 discussion to share with their Round 2 groups.
- Wrap up your discussion of the Review, Interpret, and Draw Conclusions steps.



Switch groups for Round 2

- Form new groups so you have one person from each numbered Round 1 group in your Round 2 group.
- Each Round 2 group has a complete set of numbered cards with no two cards the same.



Reviewing data in small groups: Round 2

- Each person shares what their group discussed during Round 1 (7 minutes).
- After each person has shared, discuss and take notes in response to the prompts in table 6 (8 minutes).



Reviewing data in small groups: Round 2

Discussion prompts

- What was similar about the conclusions drawn by each of our Round 1 groups?
- What was different about the conclusions drawn by each of our Round 1 groups?
- Were we confident in our conclusions, or are there additional questions we could ask to learn more?



Review and interpret school culture survey results

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Deciding whether to gather additional information

You will probably want to gather additional information if:

- Survey response rates for any group were lower than 85 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).
- You had additional questions after reviewing the survey data and you were unsure of your conclusions.
- You want to engage everyone in the school community in planning improvement work.

(U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012)

Gathering additional information

Questions about survey findings	Where and how to find the answer	Who will take next steps and by when	How and by when to share what we learn
Note here what you learn			

Gathering additional information

Let's share what we learn with the group before Workshop 3.

- Decide **how** (for example, by email) and **by when** small groups will share what they learned with the whole group.
- When sharing, be sure to:
 - Remind the whole group of the question from table 7 that you sought to address by gathering the additional information.
 - Share the information you gathered and how you gathered it
 - Explain how the information addresses the question from table 7.
 - Explain whether the information changes or confirms the original conclusions from table 5.

Review and interpret school culture survey results

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Questions?



Looking ahead to Workshop 3

Objectives for our next workshop:

- Identify and agree on a priority for school culture improvement.
- Learn how evidence-based practices support improvement efforts.
- Review evidence-based practices in *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*.

Improving School Culture in Simulated Workplaces

Workshop 3: Identify Priorities

Identify priorities

Workshop 3 Agenda

Welcome back: Review progress and look ahead

Review conclusions from data review

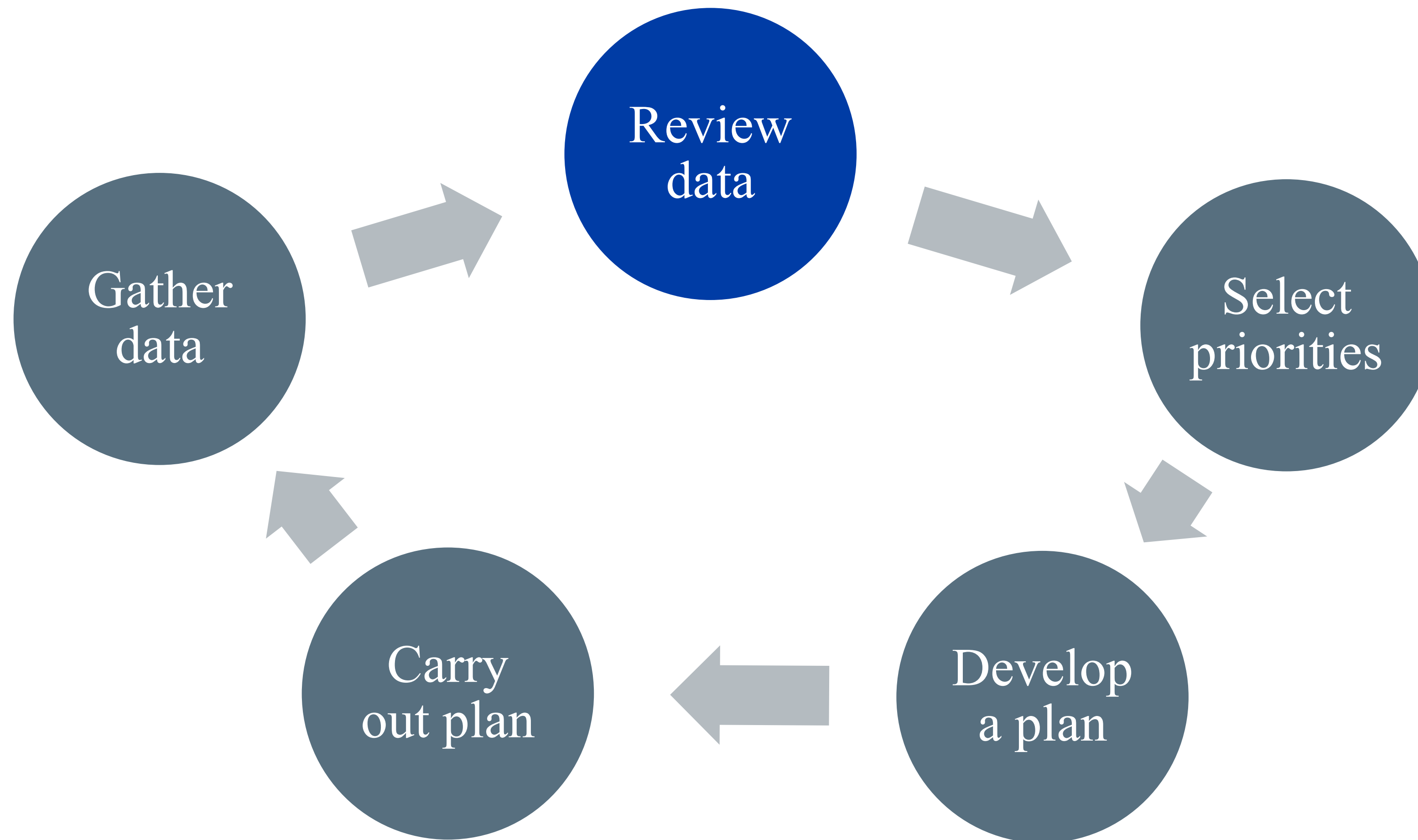
Identify possible improvement priorities

Explore and use evidence-based practices

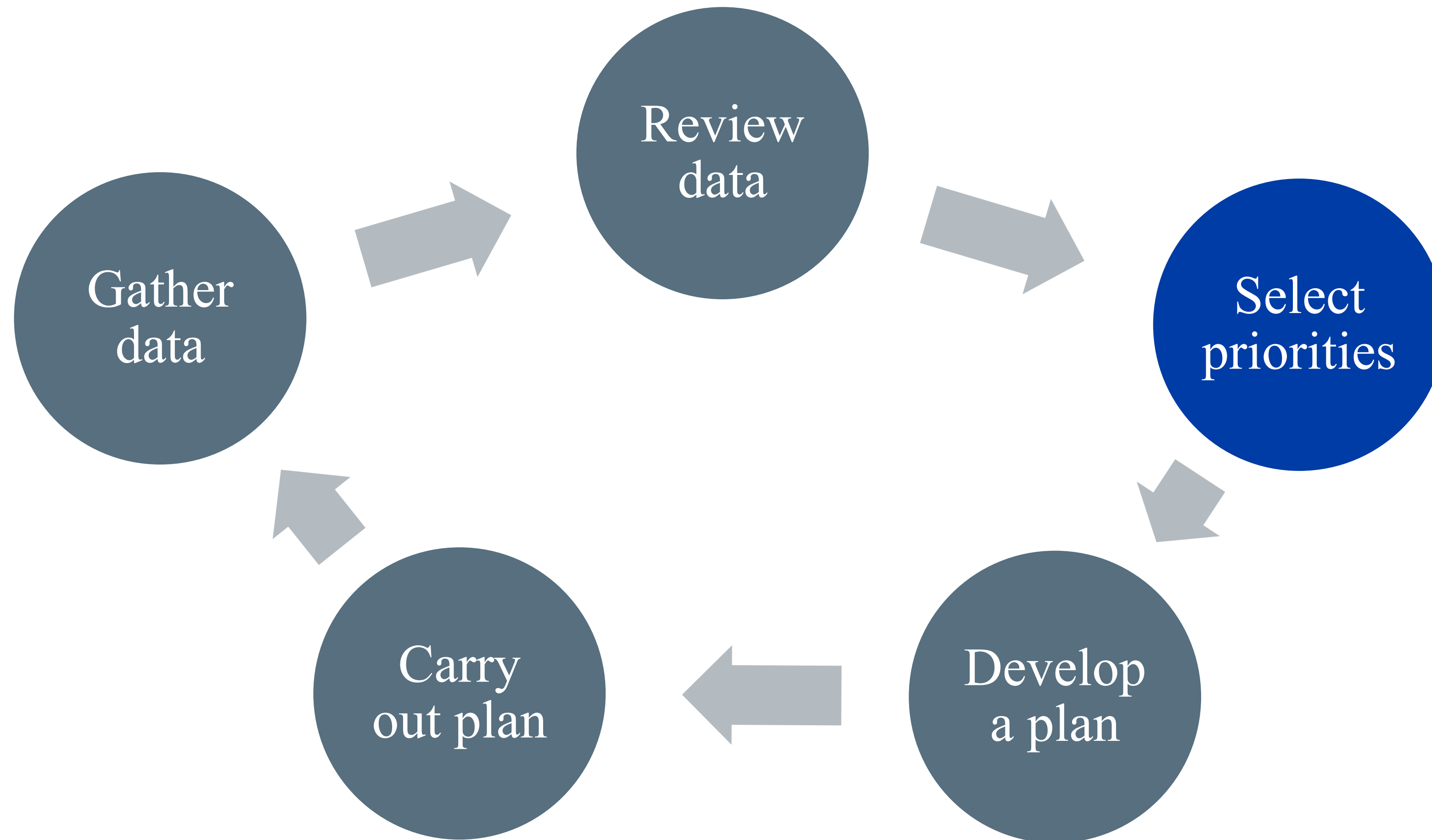
Introduce *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture:
A Guide for Educators*

Where do we go from here?

Review progress and look ahead: Process for improving simulated workplace culture



Review progress and look ahead: Process for improving simulated workplace culture



Identify priorities

Workshop 3 Agenda

Welcome back: Review progress and look ahead

Review conclusions from data review

Identify possible improvement priorities

Explore and use evidence-based practices

Introduce *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture:
A Guide for Educators*

Where do we go from here?

Review conclusions from data review

Your handout shows the conclusions we drew from reviewing survey data and gathering additional information.



Identify priorities

Workshop 3 Agenda

Welcome back: Review progress and look ahead

Review conclusions from data review

Identify possible improvement priorities

Explore and use evidence-based practices

Introduce *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture:
A Guide for Educators*

Where do we go from here?

Identify possible improvement priorities

Complete the sentences below.



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- Strengths: *“It's great that we already _____ so well.”*
- Areas for improvement: *“We have room to grow in _____.”*

Focusing the improvement work

Urgency

Are any priorities more urgent than others?

Specificity

Are the priorities stated specifically enough to focus our efforts?

Impact

Where can you make the biggest difference?

Timeframe

What could be a “quick win”?

Feasibility

Are any priorities easier to address than others?

Focusing the improvement work

1 = High priority
 2 = Medium priority
 3 = Low priority

Improvement area	Urgency rating	Specificity rating	Impact rating	Time frame rating	Feasibility rating

Making changes

Now that we've selected an improvement priority, brainstorm potential changes you might make to address it.



Identify priorities

Workshop 3 Agenda

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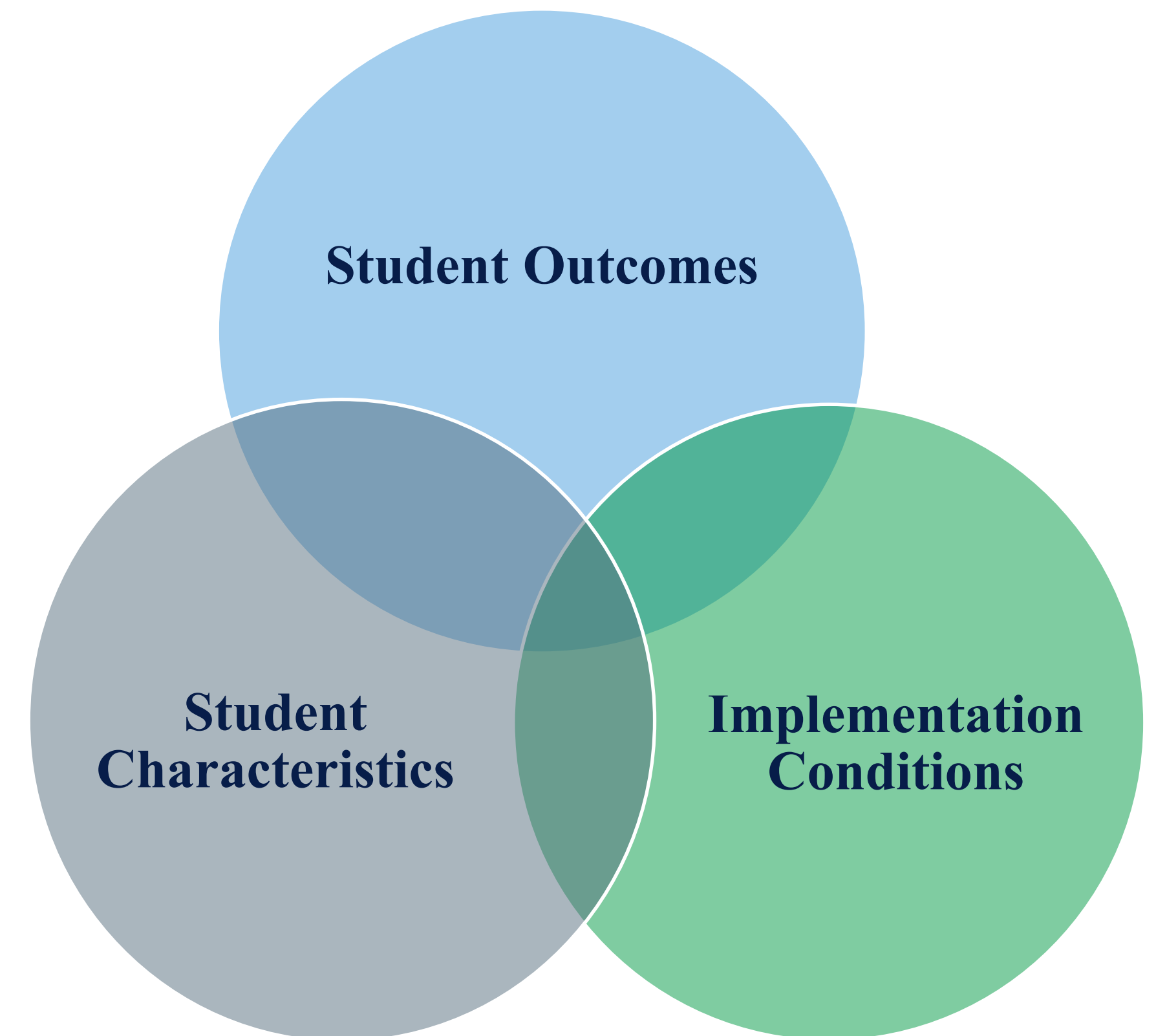
Where do we go from here?

Why does evidence matter?

Evidence matters **throughout** our work to improve outcomes.

You want to know how well a program or practice works, for whom and under what conditions:

- **Before** you adopt it.
- **While** you are doing it.
- And **after** you finish it.



About evidence-based practices

- Evidence-based practices have been tested and studied.
- Practices with *strong evidence* or *moderate evidence* of success are more likely to improve outcomes than unproven practices.

Definitions from nonregulatory guidance from the U.S. Department of Education related to the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). To learn more, see <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceusesinvestment.pdf>.

Identify priorities

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Welcome back: Review progress and look ahead

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Identify possible improvement priorities

Explore and use evidence-based practices

Introduce *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture:
A Guide for Educators*

Where do we go from here?

Introduction to *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*

- Created in partnership by the West Virginia Department of Education and REL Appalachia.
- Highlights five evidence-based practices.

The image shows the cover of a guide titled "Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators". The cover is white with a blue header and footer. The title is in a blue serif font. Below the title, there are three main sections: "Simulated Workplace Culture", "Purpose of the Guide", and "Roadmap to the Guide". Each section has a small icon and a brief description. The "Simulated Workplace Culture" section includes a quote from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The "Purpose of the Guide" section describes the survey and the guide's purpose. The "Roadmap to the Guide" section lists five evidence-based practices and their page numbers. At the bottom, there are logos for the West Virginia Department of Education, REL Appalachia, the EdVenture Group, and the Appalachian Regional Council.

Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture A Guide for Educators

Simulated Workplace Culture

Simulated Workplace programs are intended to engage and empower students and increase workforce readiness by transforming classrooms into immersive, authentic workplace environments that combine individualized student supports with rigorous training and skill-building.¹

Central to the vision of the Simulated Workplace program are educators who act as facilitators and a student-led classroom culture in which students' interests, capabilities, and learning styles drive learning.²

Purpose of the Guide

On behalf of the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), the EdVenture Group administers the annual Simulated Workplace Culture Survey. WVDE, with support from Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Appalachia @SRI International, has prepared this guide to provide educators with evidence-based practices to strengthen culture both inside the classroom and schoolwide. After reviewing survey results and identifying areas of need, educators can select the appropriate evidence-based practices in this resource guide to enhance their school and classroom culture and plan for next steps to implement these practices.

The five evidence-based practices highlighted in the guide are aligned to one or more of the culture survey's constructs and, at a minimum, demonstrate a rationale for improving student outcomes. The practices fall into two categories: creating a student-centered learning environment and providing individualized student supports in the classroom. We identified the intended audience for each practice as either Simulated Workplace teachers or administrators depending on whether the practice is intended to be implemented at the classroom level or schoolwide to strengthen culture. Educators, however, should not feel limited by these designations when selecting and adapting the practices for use in their own classrooms and schools.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) outlines four levels of evidence to support educators and administrators in choosing and implementing effective approaches, practices, and strategies that improve student outcomes. The level of evidence tells you whether a practice has been shown to be effective in similar settings. For an excerpt on levels of evidence from the U.S. Department of Education Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments see [Appendix A on page 20](#).

Roadmap to the Guide

For each practice, we provide a description, identify the target audience, and discuss foundations for strong implementation as well as core components of the practice. To help educators take the practices into the classroom and/or school, we provide concrete next steps to explore whether each practice is a good fit for their school or classroom, implement the practice, and continuously assess and improve implementation. We also provide additional resources to help you learn more, including examples of programs implementing these practices.

Creating a student-centered learning environment

- ▶ [Practice 1: Project-Based Learning \(PBL\) on page 2](#)
- ▶ [Practice 2: Frameworks for Authentic Questioning on page 5](#)

Individualized student supports

- ▶ [Practice 3: Career-Focused Mentoring for Students on page 8](#)
- ▶ [Practice 4: Building Strong Student-Teacher Relationships on page 11](#)
- ▶ [Practice 5: Individualized Career Planning on page 14](#)

Additional resources

- ▶ [Resources on page 16](#)
- ▶ [Glossary on page 19](#)

Appendix

- ▶ [Excerpt from U.S. Department of Education Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments on page 20](#)

1

West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | REL APPALACHIA | theEdVenturegroup | APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL

Introduction to *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*

Creating a student-centered learning environment

Project-based learning (PBL)

Collaborating on relevant, real-world challenges can support students' critical thinking, motivation, and academic achievement.

Authentic questioning

Open-ended questions can increase student talk to support critical thinking, engagement, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world situations.

Introduction to *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*

Individualized student supports

Career-focused mentoring

Strong relationships with adults outside the Simulated Workplace can increase student engagement, self-efficacy, and career readiness.

Building strong teacher-student relationships

High expectations for students, classroom norms, shared culture, and caring can support student success.

Individualized career planning

Guiding students in self-assessment to explore options can promote student empowerment, engagement, motivation and goal-setting.

Summary boxes

Target Audience: Simulated Workplace teachers

Goal: Support students' critical thinking, motivation, and academic achievement by providing opportunities for student collaboration on authentic, real-world challenges relevant to their Simulated Workplace environmental protocols.

ESSA Rating: *Promising evidence*, supported by multiple descriptive studies and at least one well-designed correlational study with statistical controls that show positive student outcomes (such as increased academic performance, collaboration, and 21st century skills as measured by the West Virginia Educational Standards Test 2, the statewide standardized test, and teacher surveys).

Survey Construct Alignment: Student engagement, Student empowerment, Goal-setting, Collaboration, Action planning

For a definition of the survey constructs, please see the [Glossary on page 19](#). For a definition of the ESSA ratings and study design methods, please see [Appendix A on page 20](#).

Foundations, core components, immediate steps

Foundations for strong implementation of PBL^{15, 16}

- Teachers who have articulated long-term student learning and knowledge-application goals and good classroom management skills.
- A Simulated Workplace program administrator who supports student-centered instruction.
- Students who have the opportunity to present a “public product” or completed demonstration.

“...students drive the process while applying project techniques, team problem-solving processes, and in turn contribute to overall productivity.”

– WVDE

Core components of PBL^{17, 18}

- The use of projects that are focused on content central to the curriculum.
- The use of driving questions to frame the project and enhance student engagement. For Authentic Questioning, for more information on driving questions.
- Projects that follow four stages: problem selection, planning, executing or producing, and presenting.
- Value for student preferences and voice.
- Teacher facilitation of student-centered projects.
- Opportunities for students to give and receive constructive feedback on their approach.
- Multiple opportunities to assess students’ content knowledge and application.

Immediate steps teachers can take to initiate or strengthen PBL in their classrooms



Visit the websites and reports in the Resources section to learn more about PBL and to locate example projects that align with your program of study.

Review and reflect on the *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*

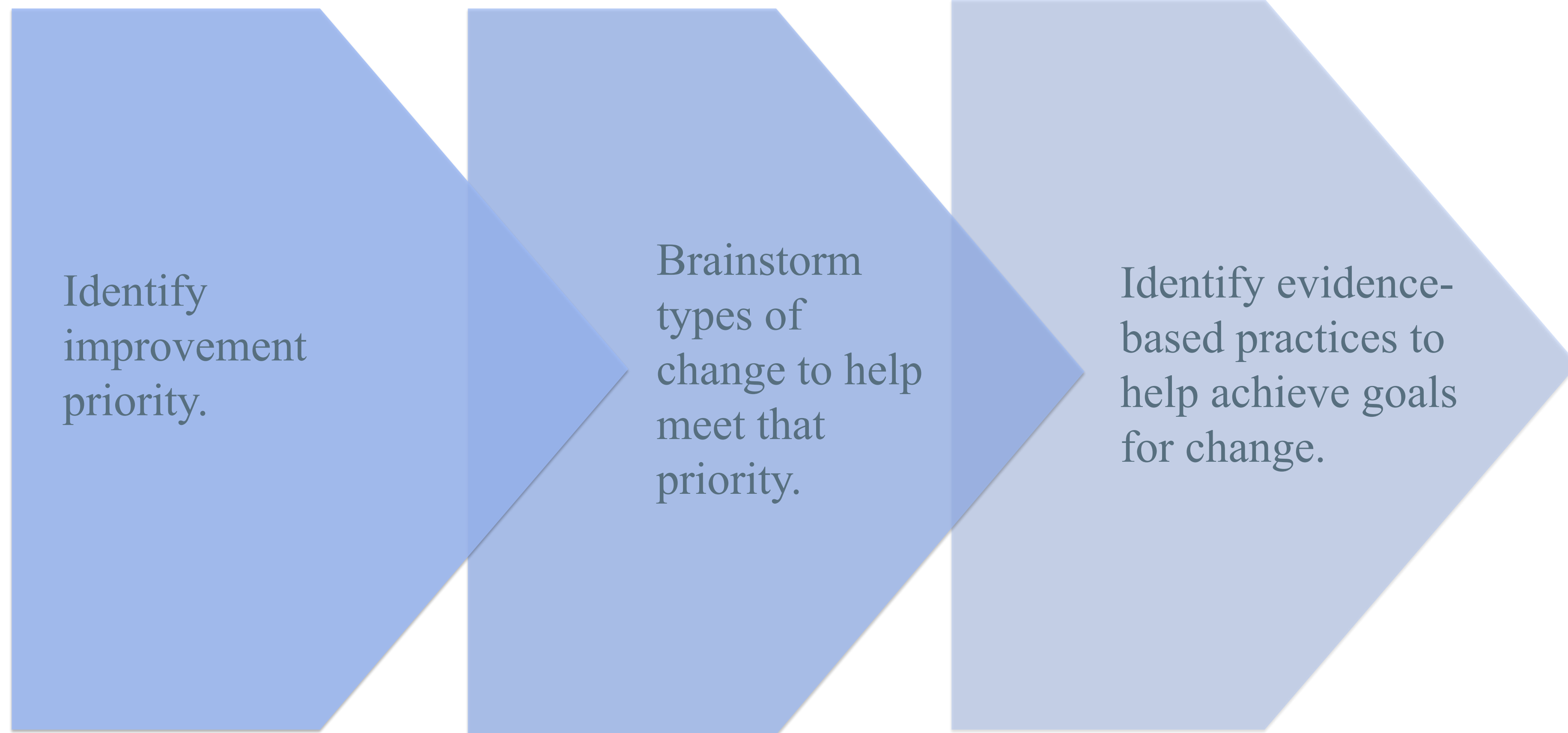
Take some time to review this document on your own.

While you are reviewing, consider:

- Which practices from the *Guide for Educators* are most relevant to the improvement priority you selected and the kinds of changes you brainstormed? Why do you find them relevant?
- If none of the practices seem relevant, how will you identify other evidence-based practices to address your improvement priority?
- If you are unable to find evidence-based practices relevant to the improvement priority, how will you decide which strategies or practices to implement?

Turn to your neighbor and share your thinking.

Review and reflect on the *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*



Identify priorities

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Welcome back: Review progress and look ahead

Review conclusions from data review

Identify possible improvement priorities

Explore and use evidence-based practices

Introduce *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture:
A Guide for Educators*

Where do we go from here?

Next steps: Supplemental materials

- Review the selected improvement focus.
- Plan for implementation and next steps.
- Review feasibility considerations.

Questions?



Thank you!



<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/>



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[@REL_Appalachia](https://twitter.com/REL_Appalachia)

