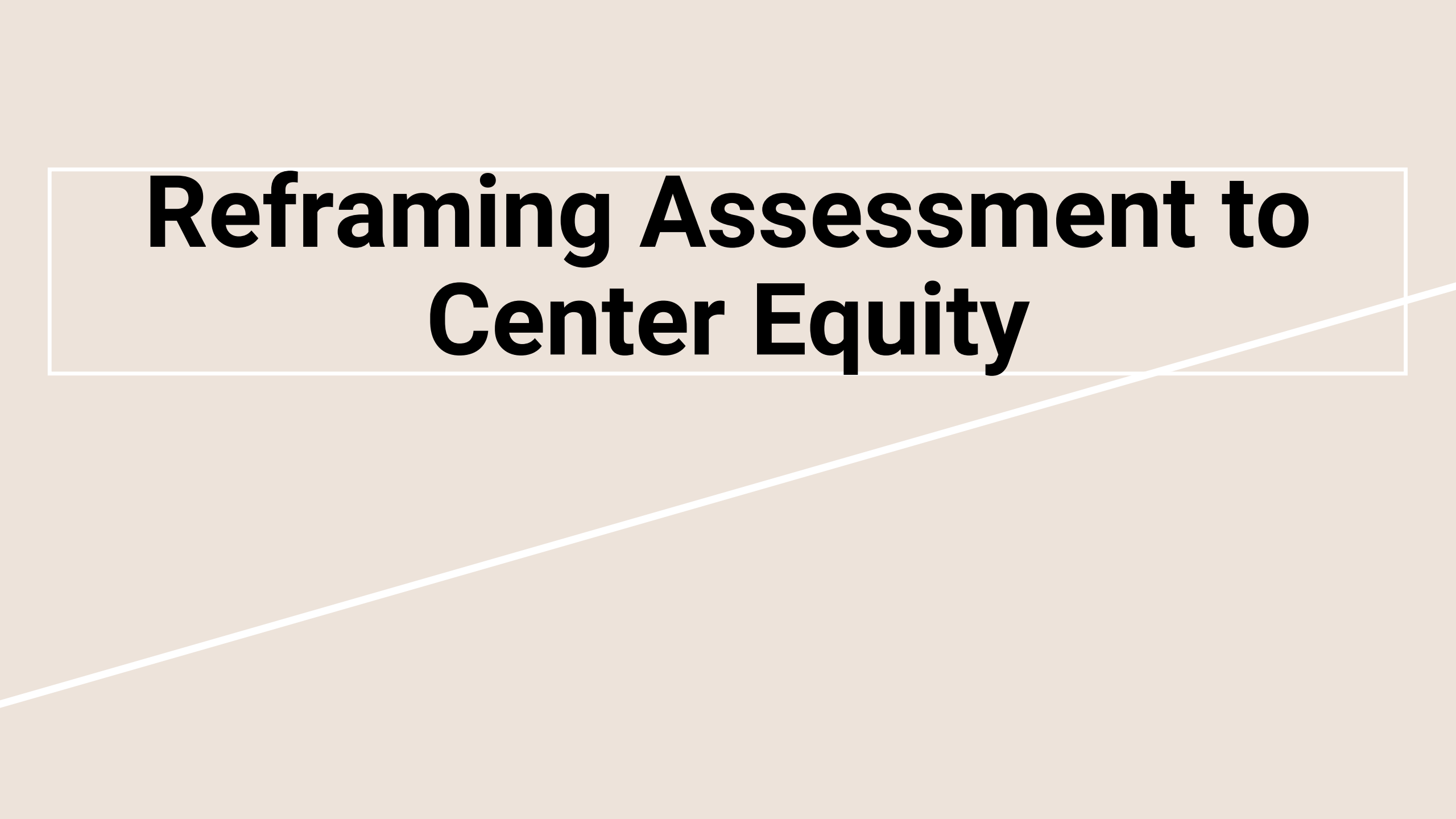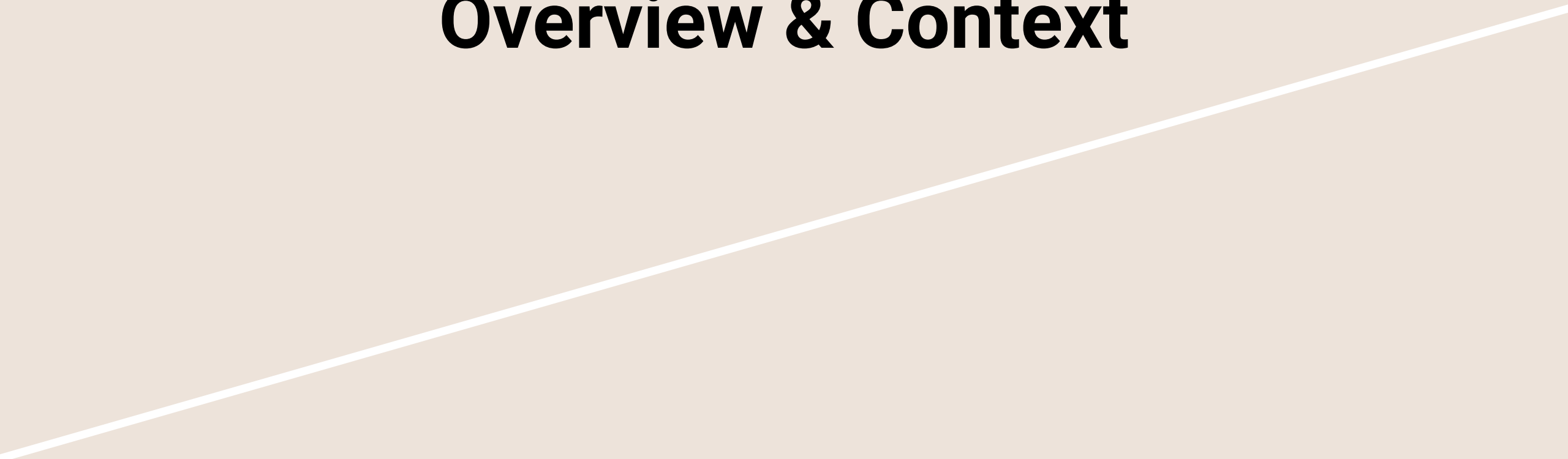# Reframing Assessment to Center Equity

Overview & Context

When you think of equity-minded or equity-centered assessment, what comes to mind?

Defining Terms

Diversity: the fact or quality of being different (a *fact*)

Inclusion: including people from all groups (an *action*)

Equity: fairness and justice for all (an *intention*)

Social Justice: to act to foster a just society with fair and equitable treatment (an *intention + action*)

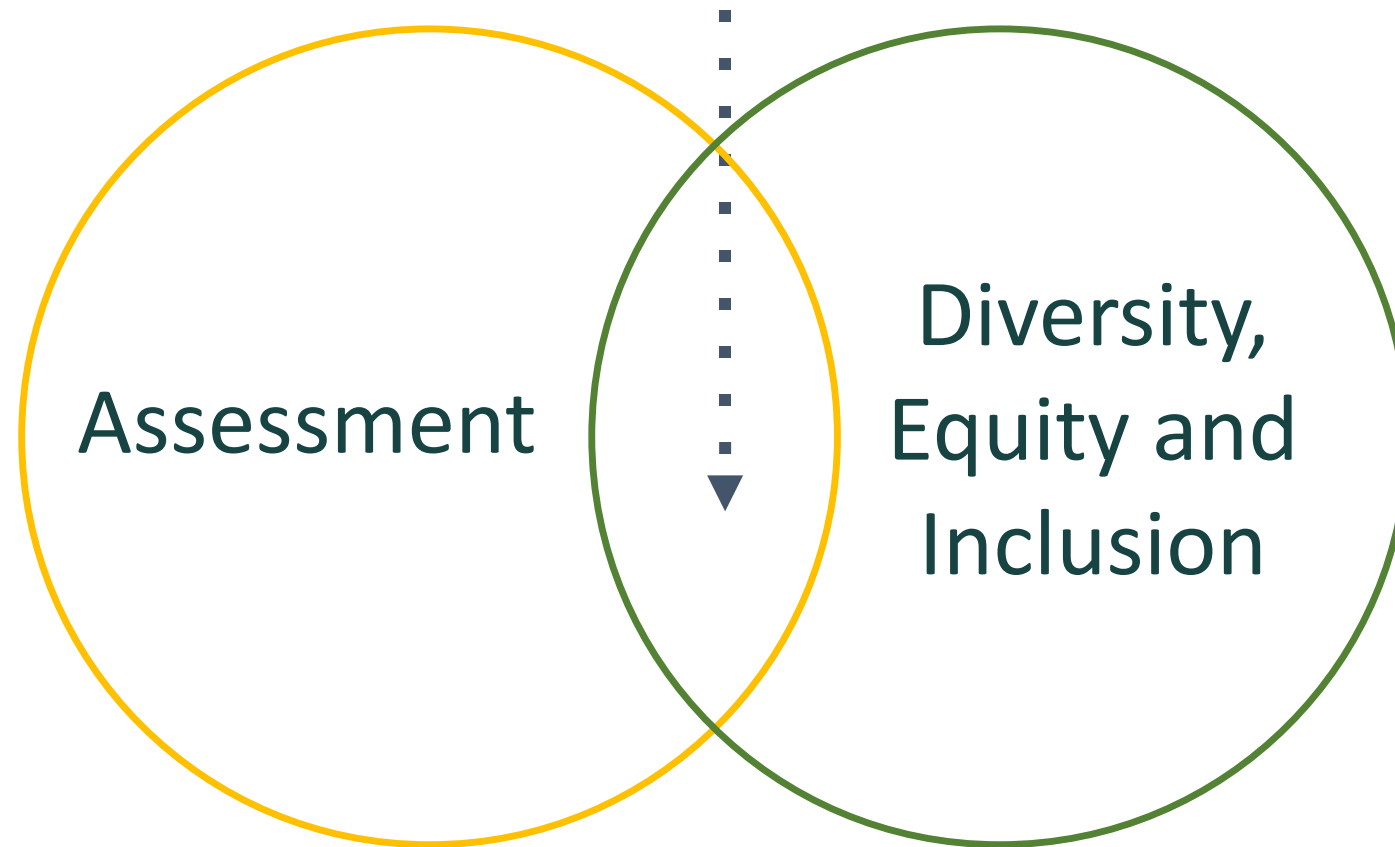# Why Integrate Equity into Assessment?

Disparate 6-Year Graduation Rates

- Asian American (74%)
- White (64%)
- Hispanic (54%)
- Pacific Islander (51%)
- Black (40%)
- American Indian/Alaskan Native (39%)

National Center of Education Statistics (2019)

Syracuse Graduation Data 2021

- Female – 87%
- Male – 78%

- Non-Pell, Subsidized Strafford – 85%
- Non-Pell, Non-Stafford – 83%
- Pell – 78%

Office of Institutional Research

Syracuse Graduation Data 2021

- American Indian or Alaska Native – 86%
- White – 84%
- Hispanic or Latino – 82%
- Race/ethnicity unknown – 82%
- Asian – 80%
- Black or African American – 77%
- Two or more races – 73%

Office of Institutional Research

Long Term Impact of College Degree

- $35,000 – median annual salary with high school degree
- $55,700 – median annual salary with bachelor's degree

- $207,000 difference in 10 years
- $828,000 difference in 40 years

Long Term Impact of College Degree

- More likely to hold a job
- More likely to be healthy
- More taxes paid
- More likely to vote
- Less likely to be on public assistance

Ma et al., (2019)

Why else should we integrate equity into assessment?

Equity-Centered Assessment Context

Self

Organization

Systems

Model for Advancing Equity

Recognize | Disrupt | Reframe

theequitylab.org

Equity-Centered Assessment
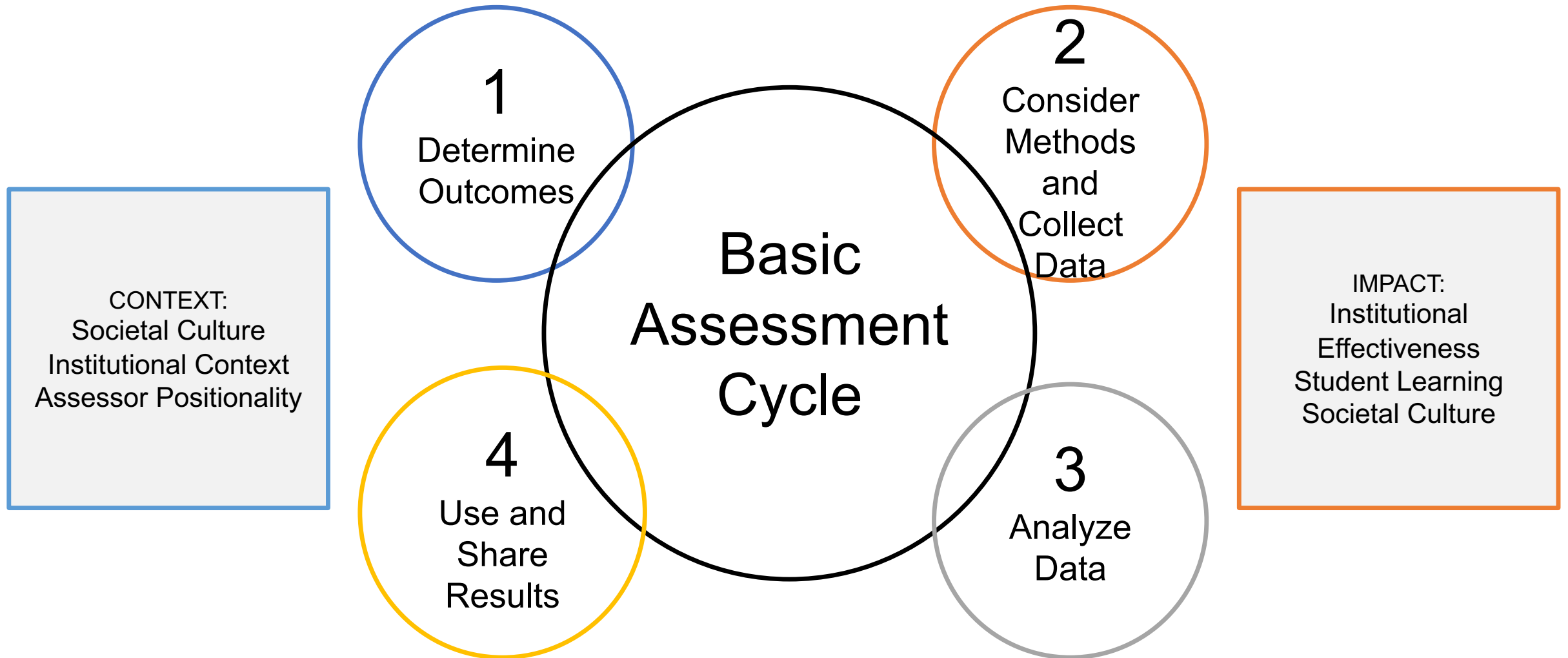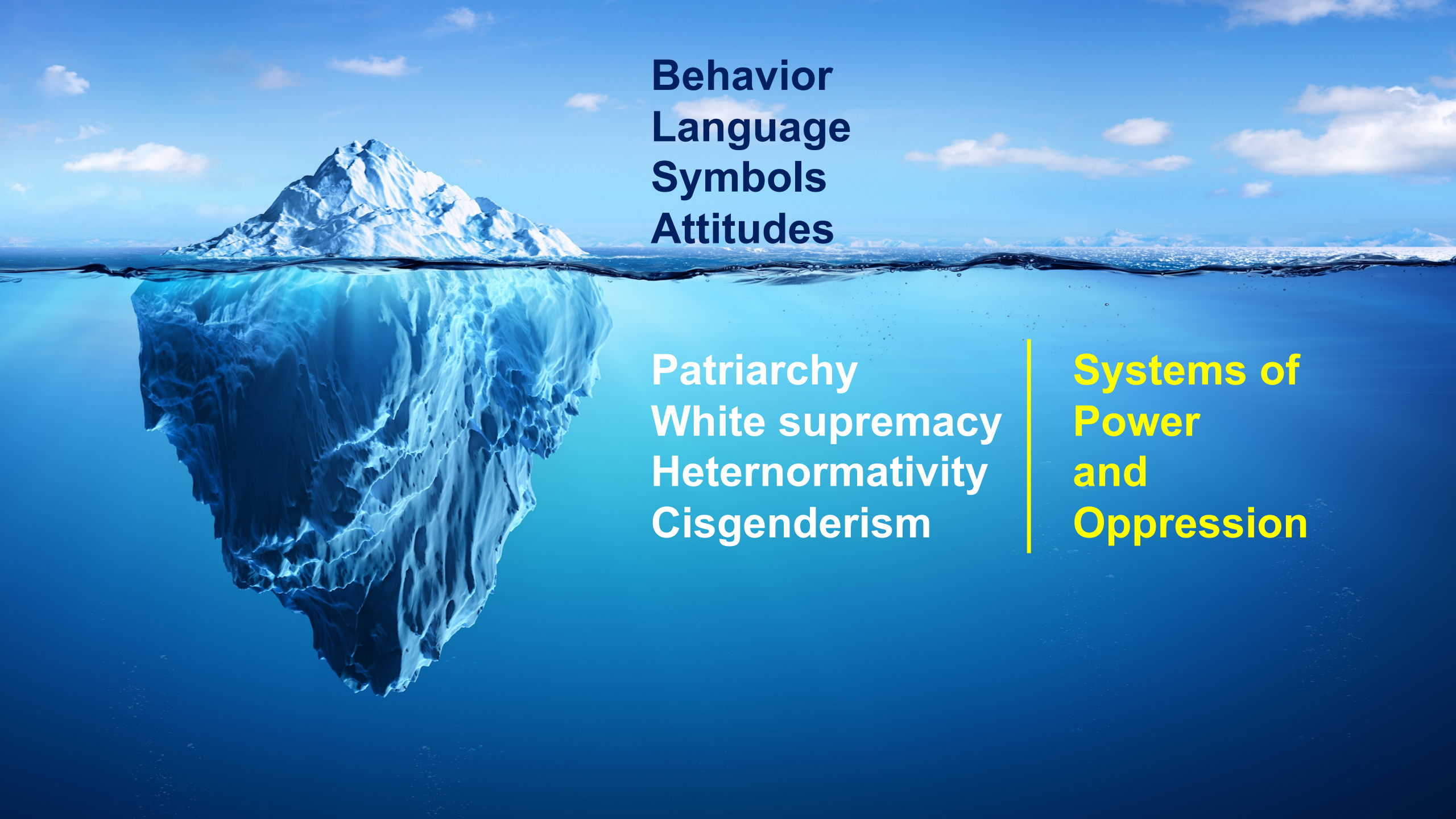
Equity Pause
How might your identity influence how you implement assessment?

CULTURE

Equity Pause
How might culture influence how you implement assessment?

Scholarship and Framework

Overview of Scholarship

- **Responsive evaluation** (Jackson, 1935)
- **Culturally competent evaluation** (Merryfield, 1985, Symonette, 2004; SenGupta, et al., 2004)
- **Feminist assessment** (Shapiro 1992; Brisolara & Whitmore, 2002)
- **Inclusive evaluation** (Mertens, 1999)
- **Multicultural evaluation** (Hopson, 2004)

Overview of Scholarship

- **Culturally responsive evaluation** (Hopson, 2009; Hood et al., 2015)

- **Bias-free assessment** (Popham, 2012)

- **Critical assessment** (DeLuca Fernandez, 2015; Prince, et al., 2017; Magnus, et al., 2018; Benjes-Small et al., 2019)

- **Socially just assessment** (McArthur, 2016, Dorimè-Williams, 2018; Henning & Lundquist, 2018, Zerquera et al., 2018)

Overview of Scholarship

- **Decolonizing assessment** (La France & Nichols 2010; Cram, 2016; Cushman, 2016; Nelson Barber & Trumbull, 2017)

- **Mindful assessment** (Watts, 2016; Consilio & Kennedy, 2019)

- **Culturally responsive assessment** (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017)

Overview of Scholarship

- **Culturally relevant assessment** (Singer-Freeman et al., 2019)

- **Anti-racist assessment** (Inoue, 2019)

- **Healing-centered assessment** (Jankowski, 2020)

- **Equity-centered assessment** (Lundquist & Henning, 2020, 2021; Henning, et al., 2022)

Equity-Minded
vs.
Equity-Centered

Equity-minded
- Lens for assessment
- Goal = equitable assessment

Equity-centered
- Focus of assessment
- Goal = use assessment to further equity

Framework for Equity-Minded and Equity-Centered Assessment
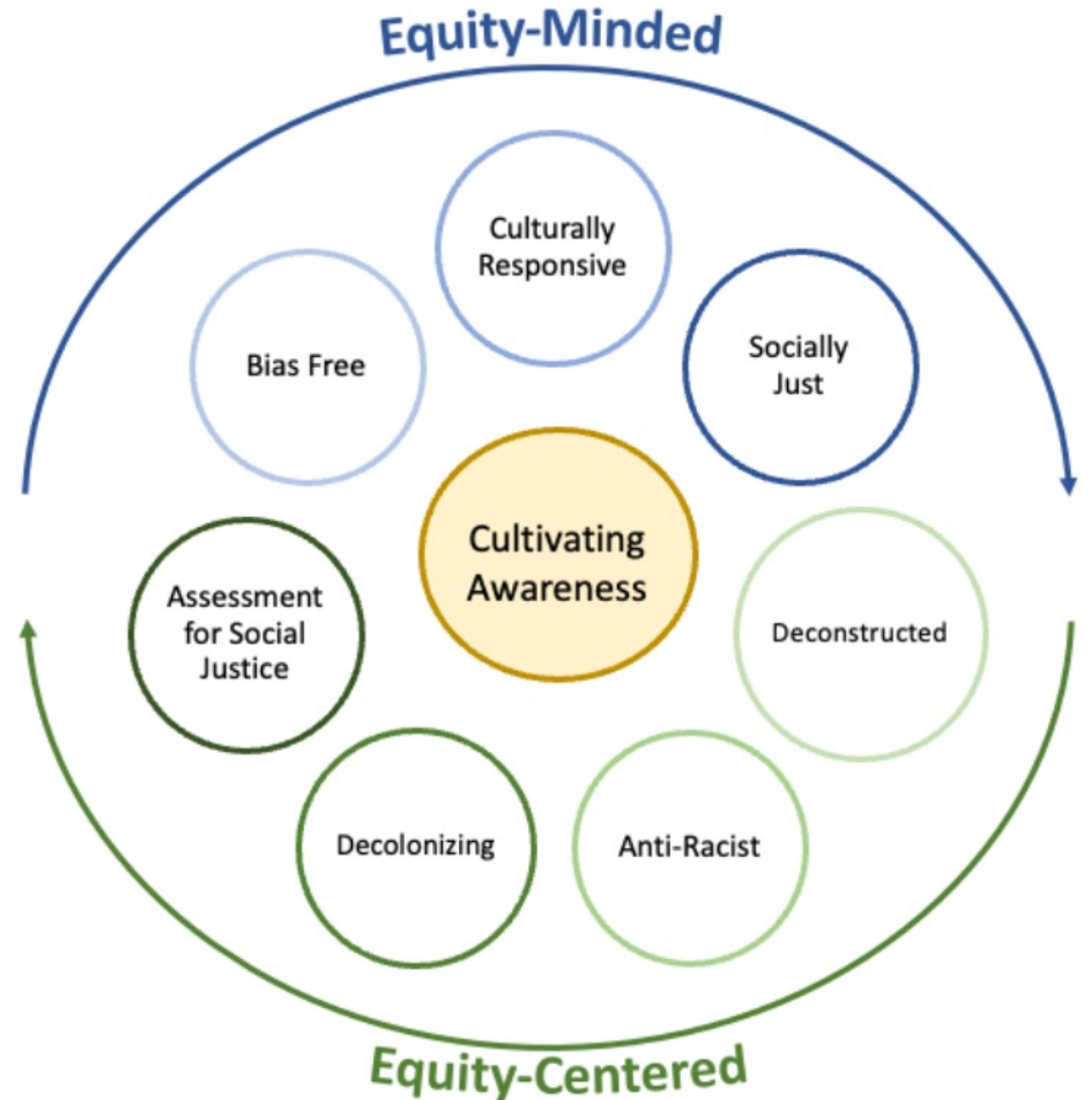
Lundquist, A. & Henning, G. (May 14, 2021). Increasing awareness and reducing harm: A framework for equity-minded and equity-centered assessment. https://www.anthology.com/blog/increasing-awareness-and-reducing-harm-a-framework-for-equity-minded-and-equity-centered-assessment

How might you use this framework?

Strategies

Outcome Development

- Review outcomes for bias

- Use non-cognitive taxonomies (e.g,.. Fink's Taxonomy) to guide outcome development or revision

- Use non-Western taxonomies (e.g,. Medicine Wheel) to guide outcome development and revision

Outcome Development

- Ensure that your outcomes framework is equity-minded and includes the experiences of marginalized populations.

- Involve students in the development and revision of outcomes

- Engage students in mapping outcomes to learning experiences

CREATE — Putting elements together to form a novel, coherent whole or make an original product.

EVALUATE — Making judgments based on criteria and standards.

ANALYZE — Breaking material into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose.

APPLY — Carrying out or using a procedure in a given situation.

UNDERSTAND — Determining the meaning of instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication.

REMEMBER — Retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory

Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning
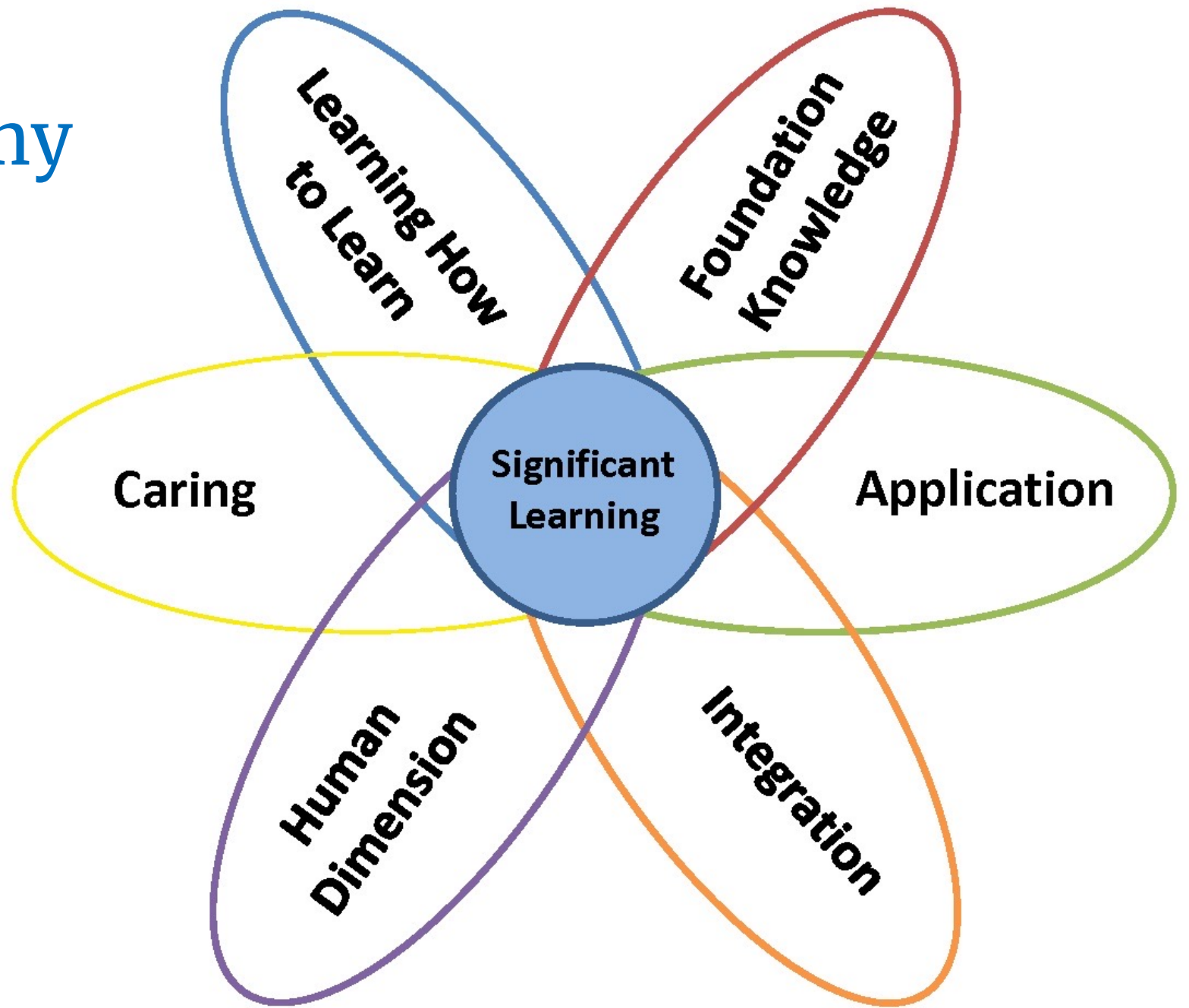
Switching from Bloom to the Medicine Wheel: creating learning outcomes that support Indigenous ways of knowing in post-secondary education

Marcella LaFever
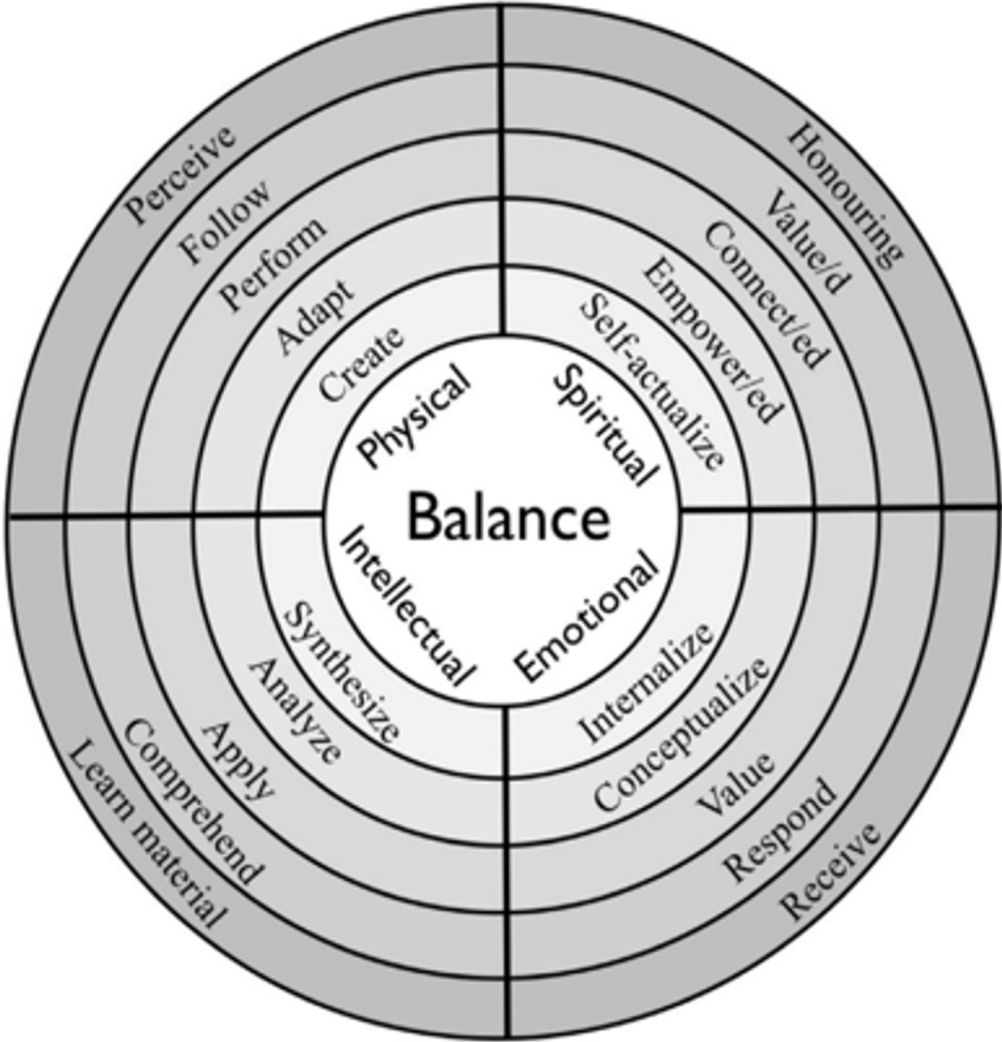
Figure 1. Four-domain framework.

Spiritual Domain
(transcend self-interest)

Honouring

Definition
Conscious or aware of learning that is not based in material or physical things, and transcends narrow self-interest.

Sample verbs
Consider
Meditate on
Be aware
Seek
Open
Allow
Listen
Observe

Value/d

Definition
Building relationships that honour the importance, worth, or usefulness of qualities related to the human spirit.

Sample verbs
Empathize
Honour
Acknowledge
Balance
Exemplify
Serve
Recognize
Respect

Connect/ed

Definition
Link, build, and sustain positive relationships with someone or something [ie. community, culture, etc].

Sample verbs
Consult
Work with
Bond
Support
Relate to
Respond
Care for
Cooperate
Participate
Provide
Develop
Build

Empower/ed

Definition
Provide and feel supported by an environment that encourages strength and confidence, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.

Sample verbs
Express
Gain
Speak out about
Advocate
Act upon
Defend
Influence
Engage in
Re-imagine
Prepare
Maintain

Self-Actualize/d

Definition
Ability to honour and be honoured as a unique individual within a group, in order for each member to become what each is meant to be.

Sample verbs

Become
Self-define
Use resources
Create
Progress Reinforce
Remain
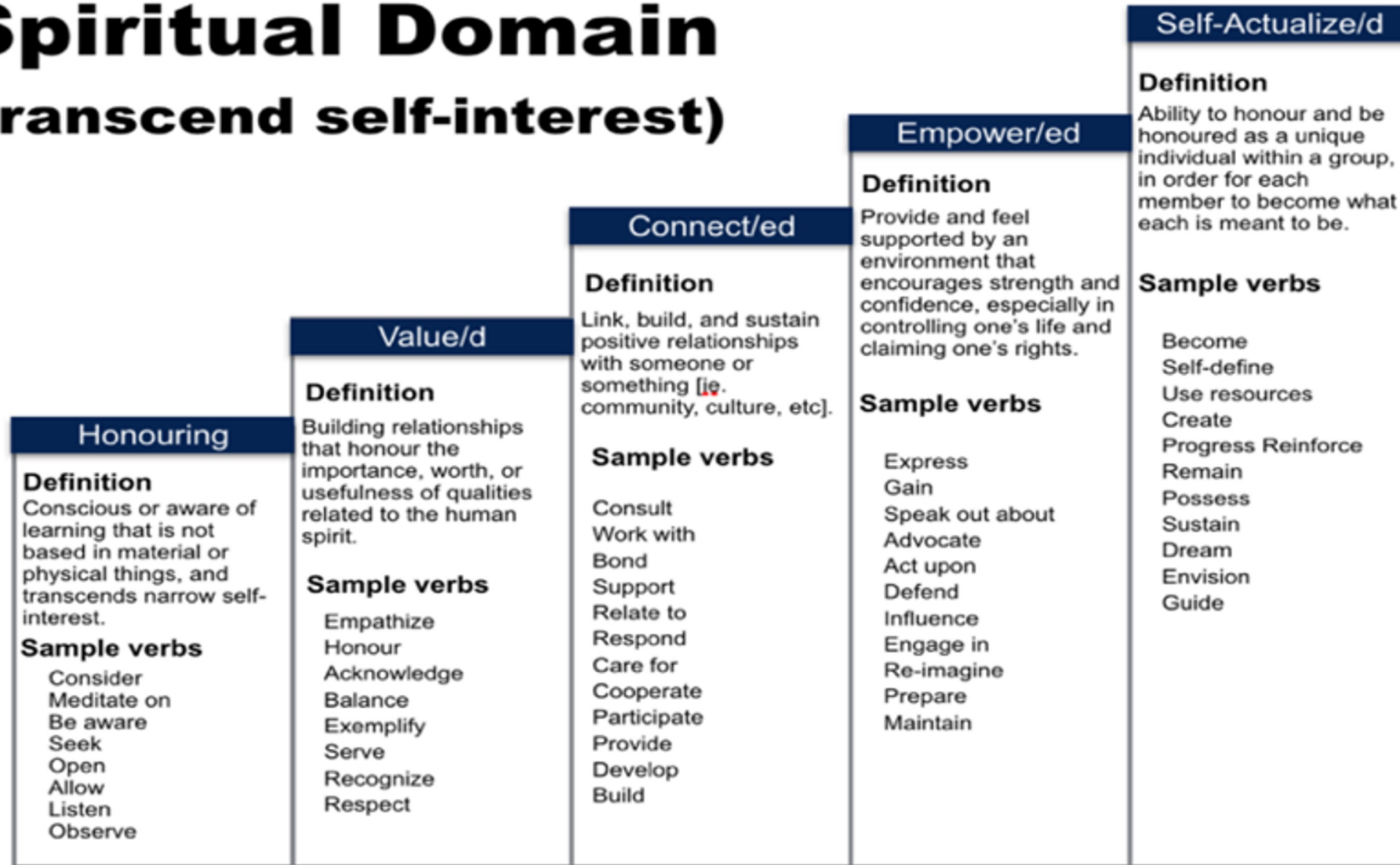Possess
Sustain
Dream
Envision
Guide

Figure 2. Sample verbs and progression for creating outcome statements.

LeFever, 2015

Collecting Data

- Examine and evaluate language for bias (implicit or explicit), inclusion, signals of "normalcy" or homogeneity, and supportive identity orientation.

- Engage students in determining and designing methods for showcasing their learning.

- Solicit student feedback on the questions and prompts developed.

Collecting Data

- For standardized surveys, examine the theory supporting the survey.

- Use qualitative methods

- Consider multiple methods

- Triangulate findings for robust and dynamic reporting.

Analyze Data

- Engage stakeholders in interpretation and reporting to ensure the results are representative of the voices that matter, bias is mitigated, and any deficit orientated language can be more readily identified, removed, and re-written.

- Include data for students from small populations

Analyze Data

- Engage in multiple types of data analysis (e.g., within group and across group analysis).

- Look beyond frequencies and means

- When comparing across groups, do not hold the White student experiences as the benchmark for comparison.

- Disaggregate data by populations

Share and Use Results

- Prior to data collection, identify meaningful use of results for action

- Don't use deficit language or treat White students as the norm or benchmark for comparison

- Pause to consider whose voices or experiences may not be represented in the report

Share and Use Results

- Get feedback from stakeholders on report before release

- Consider who has the power to determine if results are valid and accurate and how data reports and summaries will be written and shared.

- Actionable findings can serve as an opportunity to advance equity.

What are some other strategies?

Which strategies resonate with you?

Examples

Institutional Examples

Use equity scorecard to identify, monitor, and close access, success, and completion achievement gaps for BIPOC students (University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire)
- Type: Assessment for Social Justice
- Strategy: Set institutional equity indicators/stakeholder involvement/senior leadership

Redesigning learning and development to close equity gaps through one-unit first semester seminar (San Diego State University)
- Type: Culturally responsive
- Strategy: Targeted learning strategies for under-represented minority, Pell eligible, and First Gen students

Institutional Examples

Requirement for all academic programs to include diversity, equity, and inclusion as one of the 11 institutional learning outcomes (South Dakota State University)
- Type: Socially Just
- Strategy: Centering equity within the curriculum

Involve students in analysis of data and action planning (Utica College)
- Type: Culturally Responsive
- Strategy: Involve students throughout assessment process

Departmental/Program Strategies

Faculty using student feedback to improve programs (Portland State)
- Type: Deconstructed
- Strategy: ePortfolio assessment

Allow students experiencing intellectual disabilities to enroll and participate in its University Studies program (Portland State)
- Type: Universal Design for Learning
- Strategy: Inclusive assessment; offer a pre-baccalaureate certificate program

Departmental/Program Strategies

Allow learners to learn and practice career-relevant competencies (Capella)
- Type: Equitable assessment
- Strategy: Competency Maps

Curricular reform (Midwestern State)
- Type: Universal Design for Learning
- Strategy: scaffolding learning; collaboration; co-created learning goals

Departmental/Program Strategies

Reserved textbook usage for special populations (City College of San Francisco)

- Type: Socially just
- Strategy: data disaggregation

Student Services Examples

Including a question on an evaluation of a wellness program regarding terminology or concepts used to learn if any terms or concepts are unfamiliar or confusing
- Type: Bias-free assessment
- Strategy: Assessing for bias

Ensuring high response rates from students holding multiple identities for an evaluation of a summer orientation program
- Type: Socially just assessment
- Strategy: Representative sampling for disaggregation of data

Student Services Examples

Reviewing financial policies (e.g., disenrollment for non-payment or late fee policies) to see if students from minoritized populations are affected disproportionately
- Type: Deconstructed assessment
- Strategy: Disaggregation of data

Involving students in the revision of a weekend leadership retreat evaluation to understand inequity in the retreat
- Type: Assessment for social justice
- Strategy: Involving students/stakeholders in the assessment process

What might equity-centered assessment look like in your department and/or in your job?