



# Words Create Worlds:

Using Appreciative Inquiry and the Power of Stories for Strategic Thinking

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## Presenters:

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1



## PRESENTERS:



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2



## AGENDA

1

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

2

Using AI for Strategic Thinking and Program Design

3

Lessons Learned

3



Appreciative Inquiry is a process that  
*“inquires into, identifies, and further  
develops the best of ‘what is’ in an  
organization in order to create a better  
future.”*

Coglan, Preskill, Catsambas, 2003

4



## RELEVANCE OF AI

As evaluators, we help others to define and answer key questions, generate insights, and identify actions to inform their next steps in program design and improvement.

Using AI, stories generate valuable data and provide a foundation for engagement in sensemaking, relationship building, innovation, and buy-in.

5



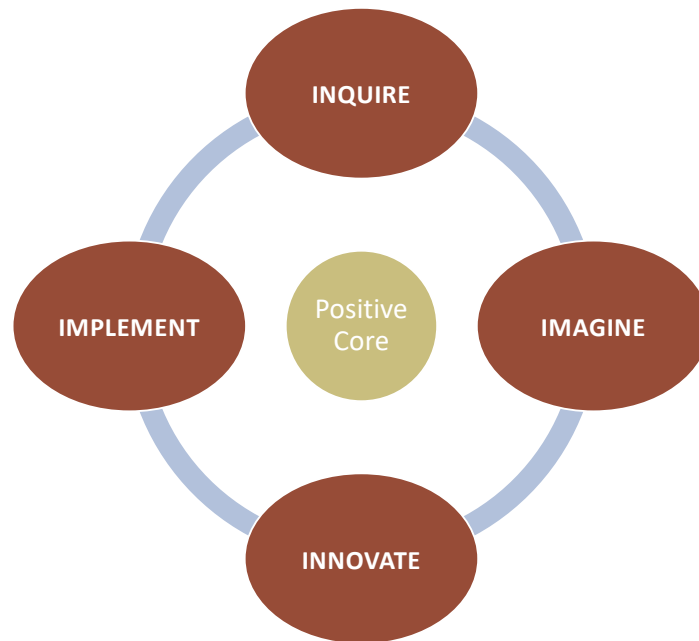
*Appreciative Inquiry is based on a  
deceptively simple premise:  
organizations grow in the direction of  
what they repeatedly ask questions  
about and focus their attention on.*

- Gervase Bushe

6



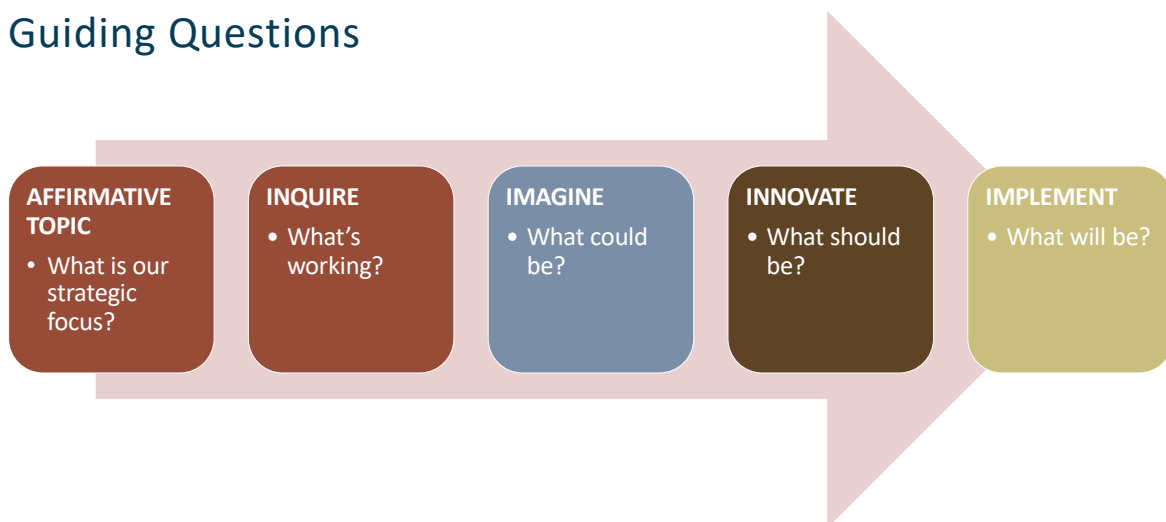
## 4 “I” Framework



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## Guiding Questions



8



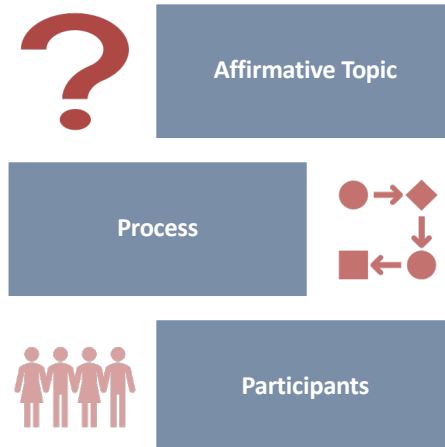
# Using AI for Strategic Thinking and Program Design

A Demonstration of EvaluATE's Process

9



## Planning our AI Approach



10

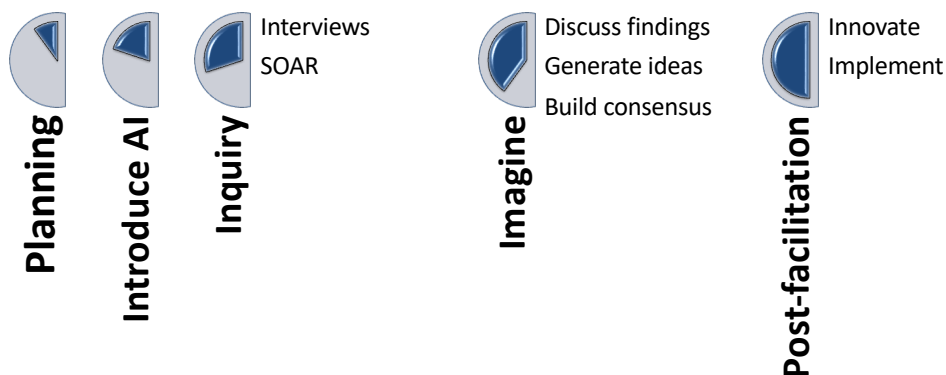


How can EvaluATE best move forward  
with a clear, shared mission and goals to  
guide decision-making, organizational  
learning, and project activities?

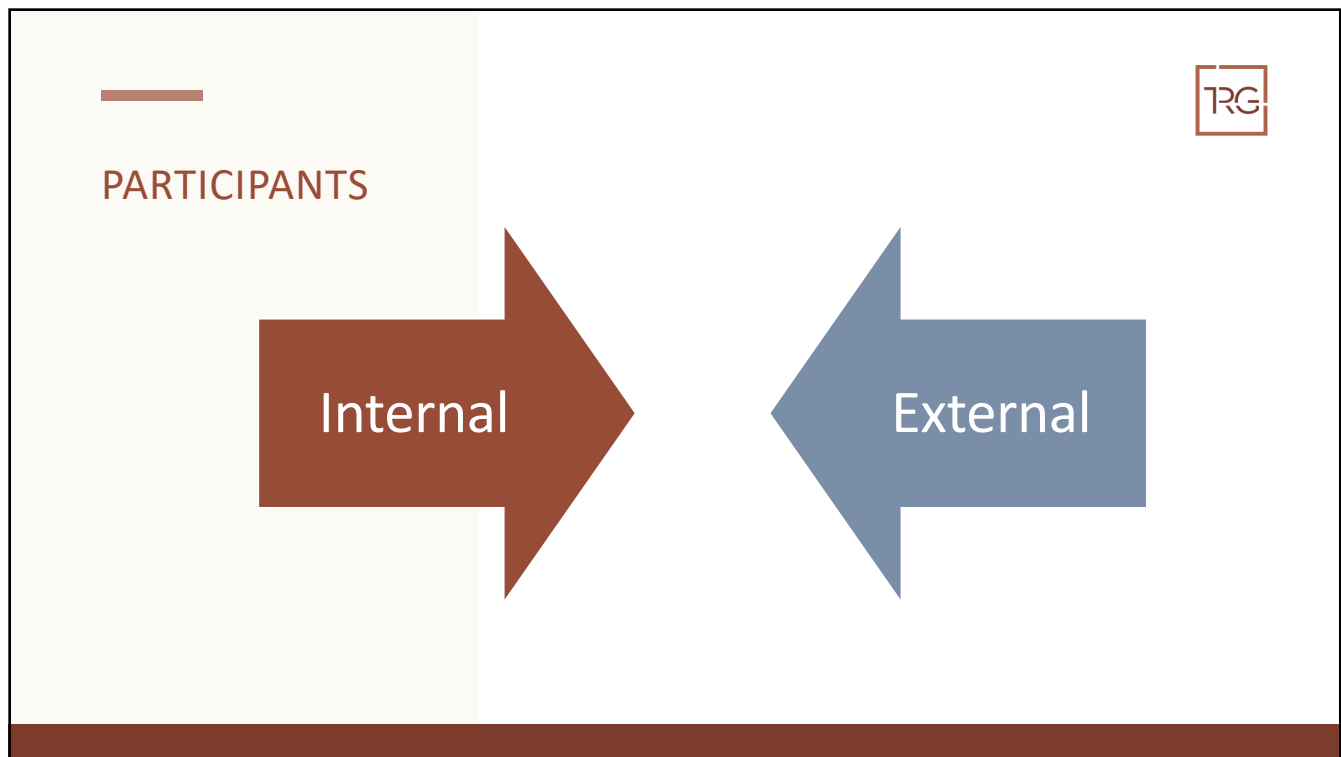
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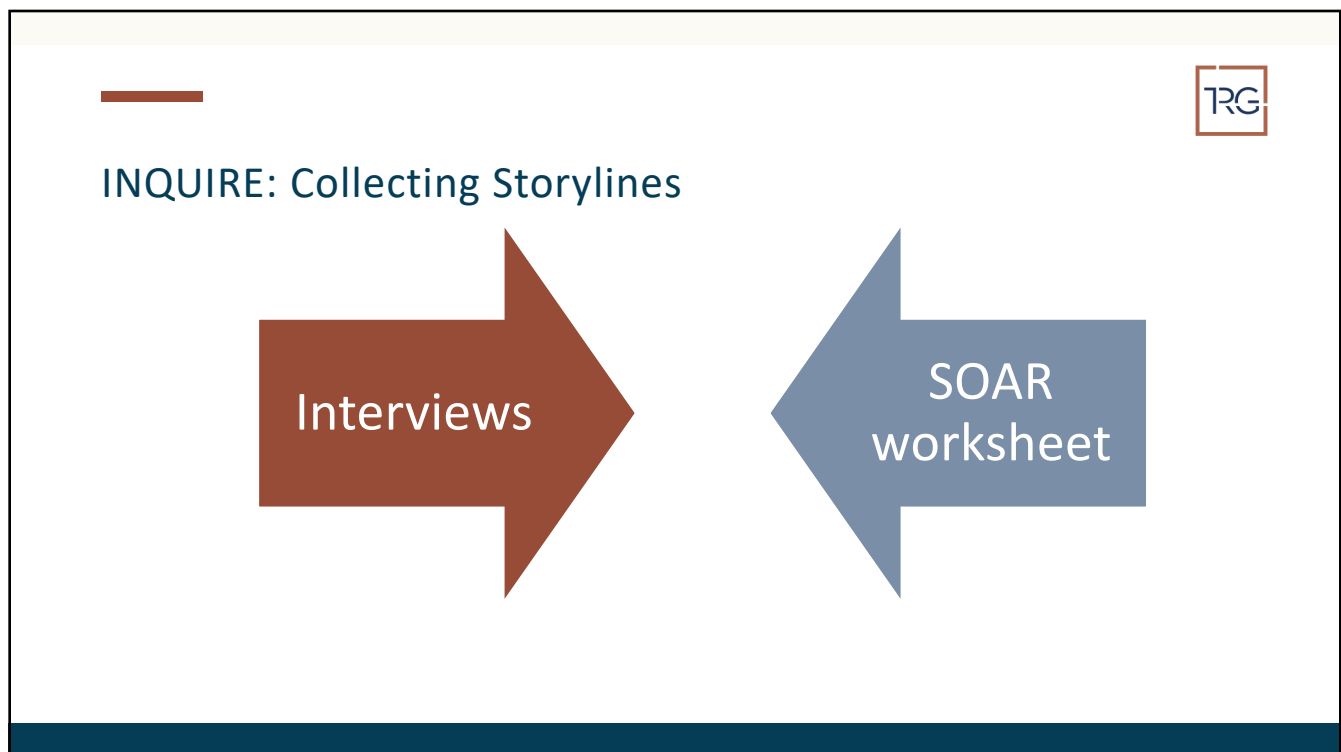
## Process



12



13



14

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1

PAST

2

BEST

3

IDEAL  
FUTURE

15

SOAR Worksheet

Prompts to guide reflection on EvaluATE products, events, and team members.

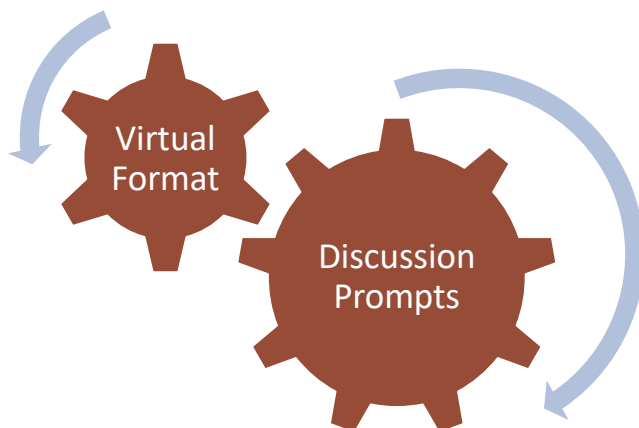
<b>STRENGTHS:</b> What are EvaluATE's greatest strengths? What makes EvaluATE unique? What are EvaluATE's greatest achievements in the last three years?	
<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b> What are three opportunities on which EvaluATE should focus? How might EvaluATE best meet the needs of its stakeholders?	
<b>ASPIRATIONS:</b> What is the preferred future for EvaluATE? To what should it aspire?	
<b>RESULTS:</b> How would you know that EvaluATE is succeeding? What measurable results would indicate that EvaluATE is on track to achieve its objectives?	

16





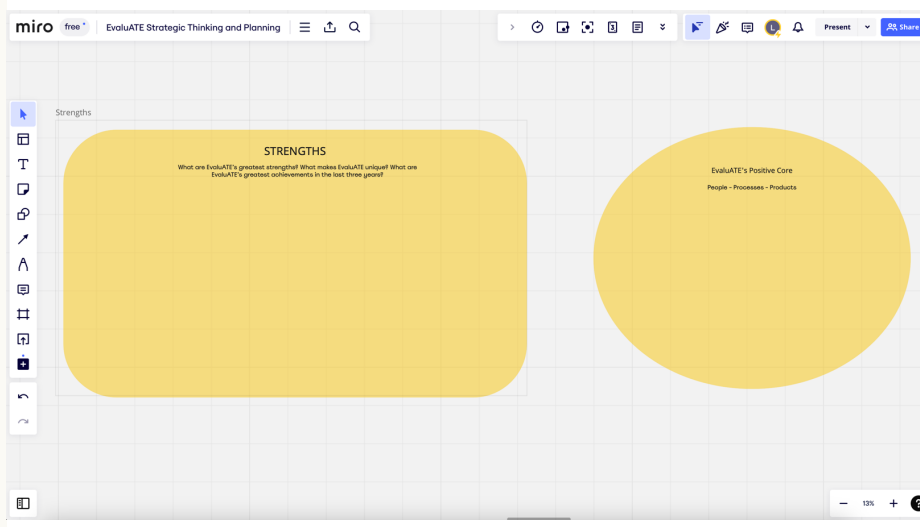
## IMAGINE: Finding the Story



17



## IDENTIFY STRENGTHS & POSITIVE CORE



18

IDENTIFY  
STRENGTHS &  
POSITIVE  
CORE

TRG

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Strengths

Positive Core

19

SORTING  
OPPORTUNITIES

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Opportunity Matrix

20

10

SORTING  
OPPORTUNITIES

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Opportunity Matrix

21

MISSION  
STATEMENT  
MAD  
LIBS

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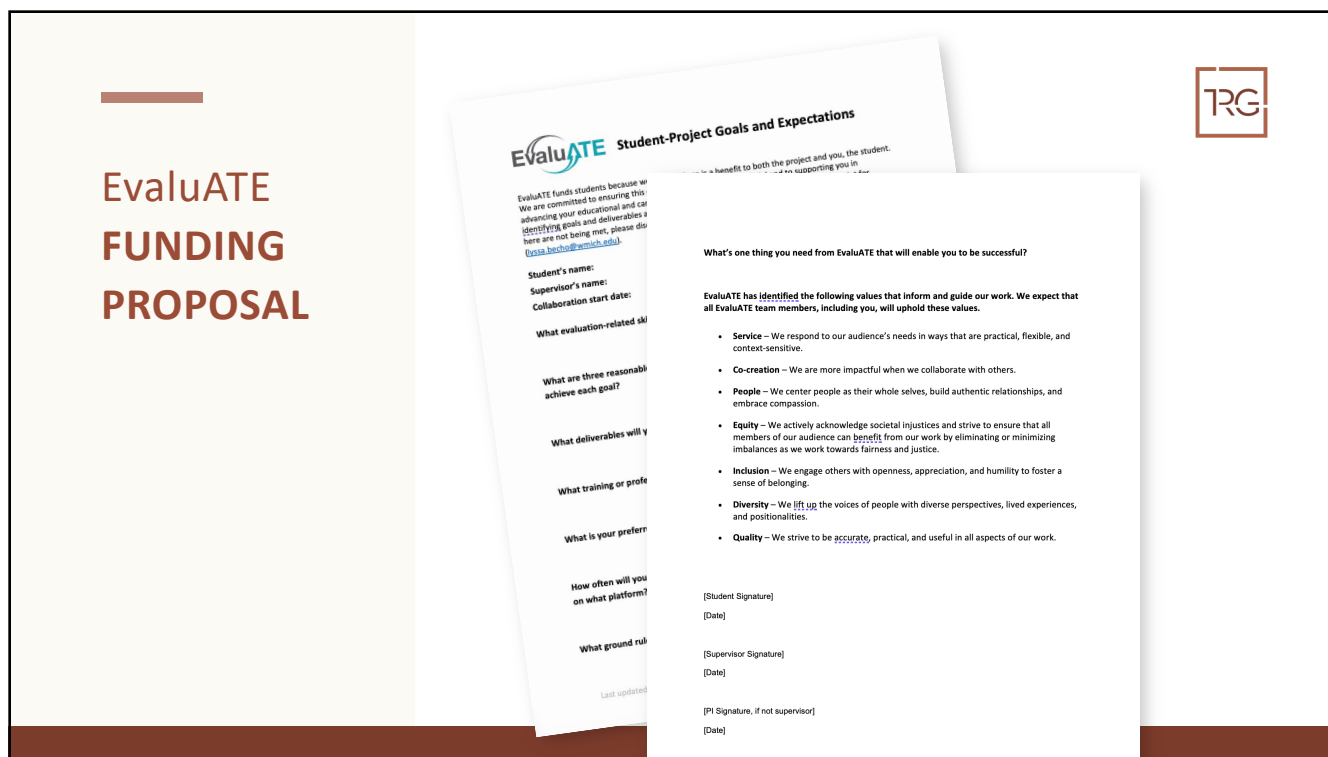
Mission Statement - Why does EvaluATE exist?

22

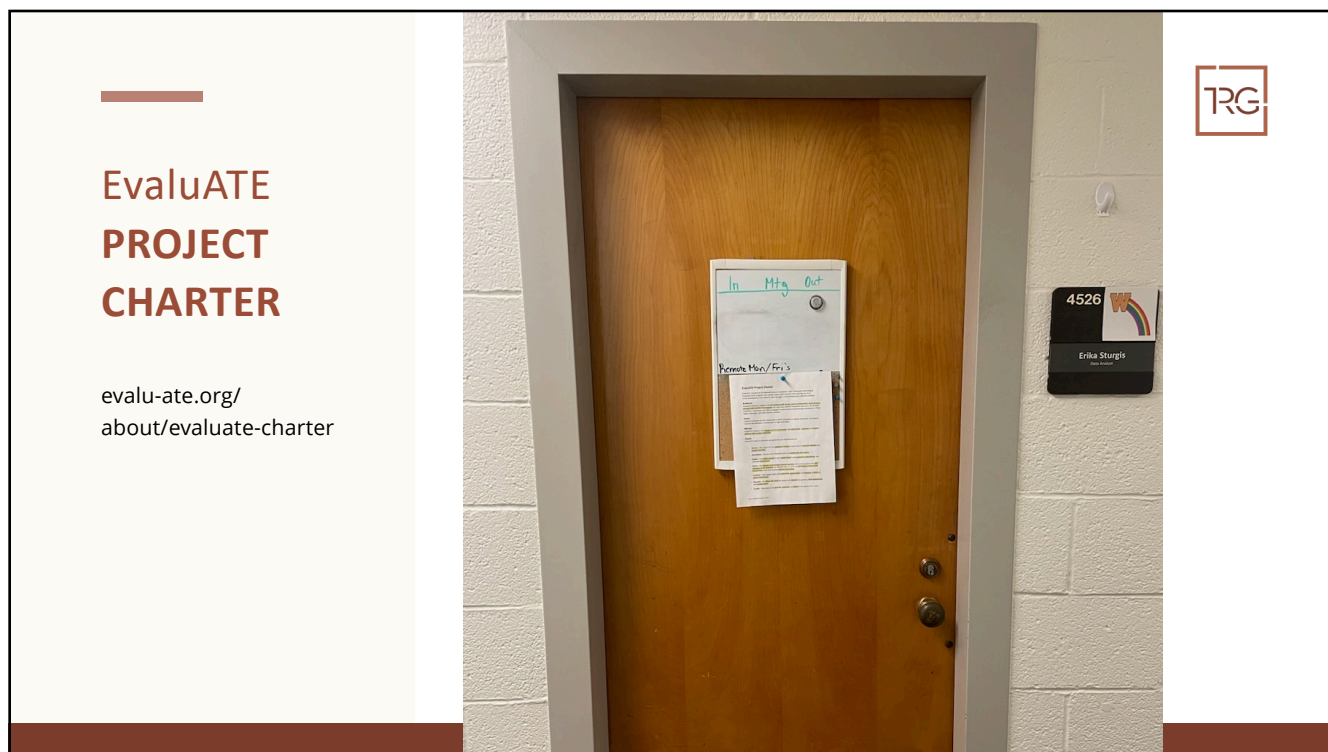


[evalu-ate.org/  
about/evaluate-charter](http://evalu-ate.org/about/evaluate-charter)





27



28



## Lessons Learned

29



## LESSONS LEARNED

- 1 The inclusionary process of AI creates team buy-in and makes the end results more meaningful.
- 2 AI is possible in a shorter time span and through virtual facilitation. Virtual white board allowed people to engage in ways that met their comfort levels.
- 3 AI is an opportunity to leverage principle-focused evaluation based on organizational values.
- 4 Not everyone is open to an AI approach, but it can be a “critical” process.

30





# QUESTIONS?

NEXT SECTION: SECTION TITLE/THEME



31



# THANKS FOR PARTICIPATING!

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32