Building a Strong Authentic Assessment Process

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Where are you in your process at this moment?

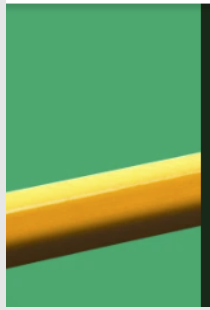
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Assessment Is Ruining Teaching

In trying to routinize education, we're losing sight of what it can be at its best.

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February 03, 2025

Against the Assessment Regime

March 28, 2024

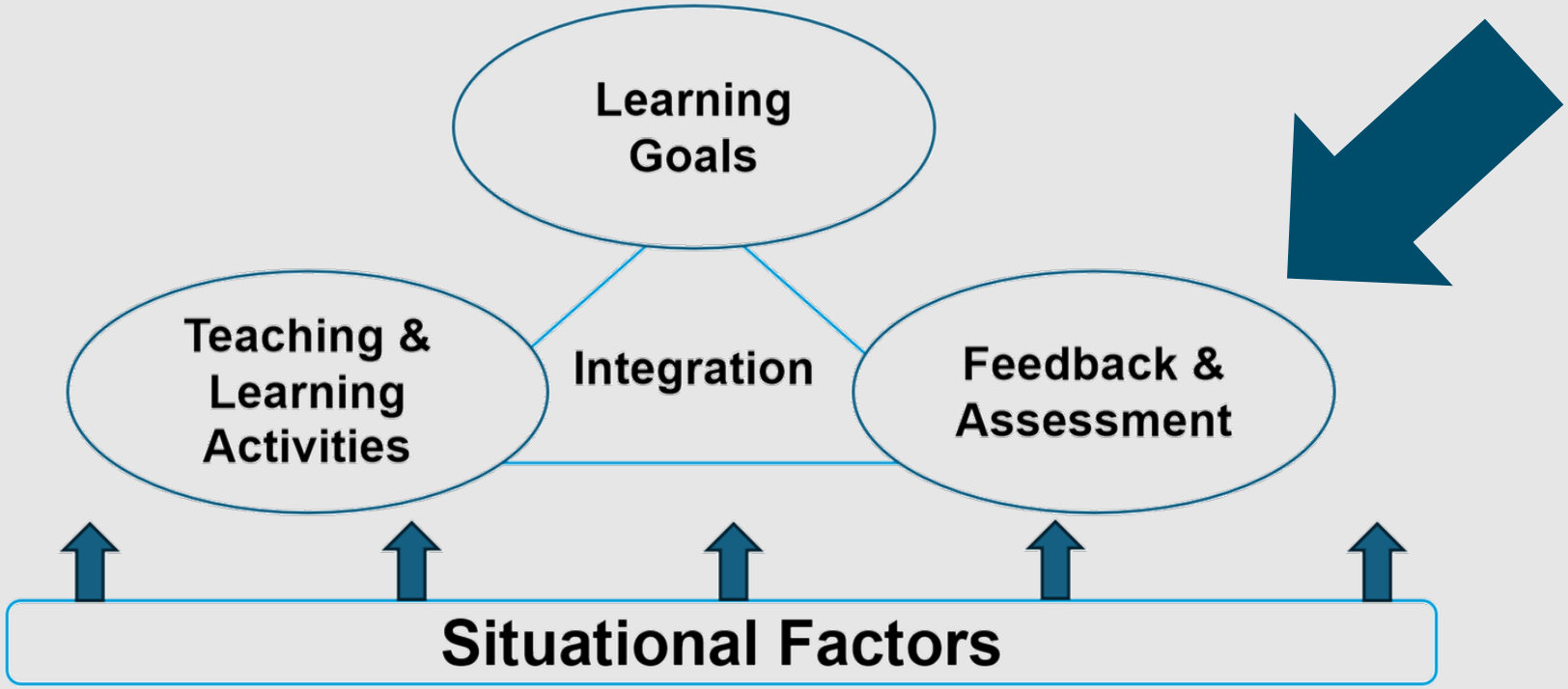
Assessment of Student Learning Is Broken

INSIDE HIGHER ED: HARSH TAKE ON ASSESSMENT... FROM ASSESSMENT PROS

May 1, 2019 - WSCUC

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Assessment is a Crucial Part of Learning



Assessment can tell us about student learning at the:

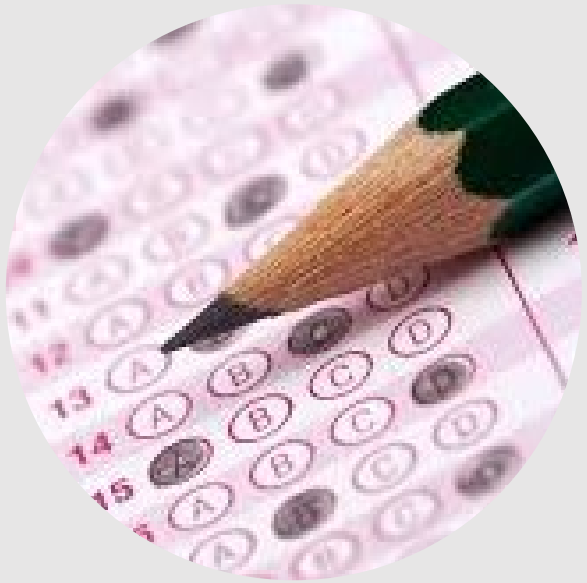
- **course level**
- **program level**
- **institution level**

Dee Fink, *Integrated Course Design*, IDEA Paper #42

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What Story Are You Trying to Tell?

Different questions require different evidence.



value RUBRICS

CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

For more information, please contact value@aacu.org

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Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	Milestones 2	Benchmark 1
Explanation of Issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence *Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion*	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of Context and Assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's Position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated but is simplistic and obvious.
Conclusions and Related Outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

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Why VALUE Rubrics?

The Catalyst (2006): Spellings Commission challenged higher ed to provide evidence of student learning.

The Response (2007-2009): AAC&U convened faculty teams across 150+ institutions to create rubrics that would provide evidence of student learning and improve teaching practices.

The Process: Faculty examined existing rubrics, established 5-6 dimensions per outcome, tested and refined based on feedback.

The Result: 16 rubrics, flexible by design, designed for authentic assessment using student work.



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VALUE Principles and Assumptions

Assess learning outcomes using authentic evidence (actual student work).

Learning develops over time, becoming more complex as students progress academically.

Valid assessment data guide planning, teaching, learning, and improvement.

Key Assumptions

- Student work completed in courses most likely represents their *best and most motivated work*.
- Focus of assessment should be on what *students can do* (not what they cannot)
- *Transparent* expectations about learning is critical to the learning-teaching process
- The *expert judgment of instructors* should be relied on to evaluate student learning

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CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

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Definition

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
Explanation of Issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
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CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

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The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 16 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Framing Language

This rubric is designed to be transdisciplinary, reflecting the recognition that success in all disciplines requires habits of inquiry and analysis that share common attributes. Further, research suggests that successful critical thinkers from all disciplines increasingly need to be able to apply those habits in various and changing situations encountered in all walks of life.

This rubric is designed for use with many different types of assignments and the suggestions here are not an exhaustive list of possibilities. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of text, data, or issues. Assignments that cut across presentation mode might be especially useful in some fields. If insight into the process components of critical thinking (e.g., how information sources were evaluated regardless of whether they were included in the product) is important, assignments focused on student reflection might be especially illuminating.

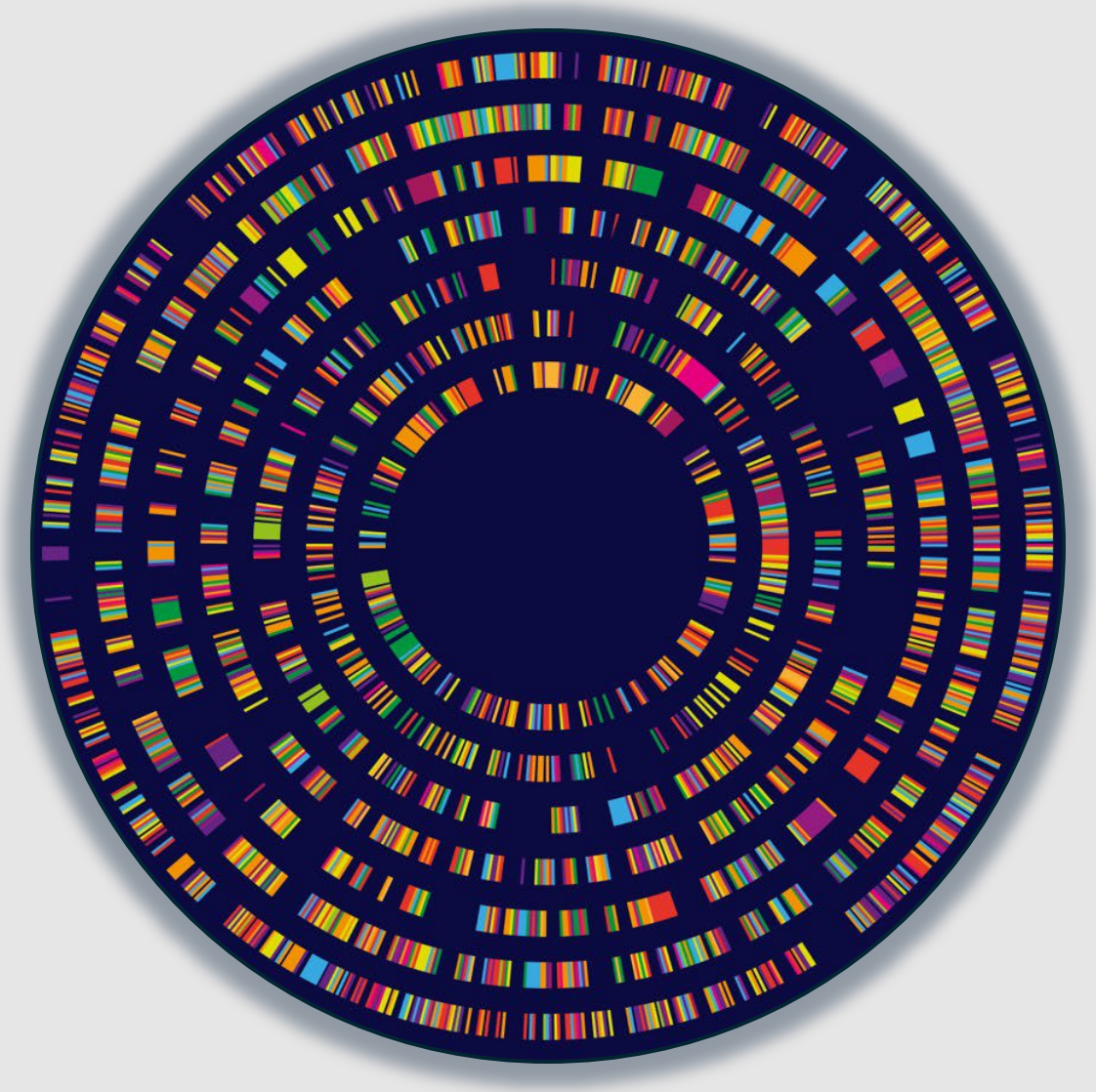
Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- **Ambiguity:** Information that may be interpreted in more than one way.
- **Assumptions:** Ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are "taken for granted or accepted as true without proof" (Dictionary.com, 2009, para. 1; www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions).
- **Context:** The historical, ethical. political, cultural, environmental, or circumstantial settings or conditions that influence and complicate the consideration of any issues, ideas, artifacts, and events.
- **Literal meaning:** Interpretation of information exactly as stated. For example, "she was green with envy" would be interpreted to mean that her skin was green.
- **Metaphor:** Information that is (intended to be) interpreted in a non-literal way. For example, "she was green with envy" is intended to convey an intensity of emotion, not a skin color.

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Implementing A Robust Assessment Process Using VALUE Rubrics



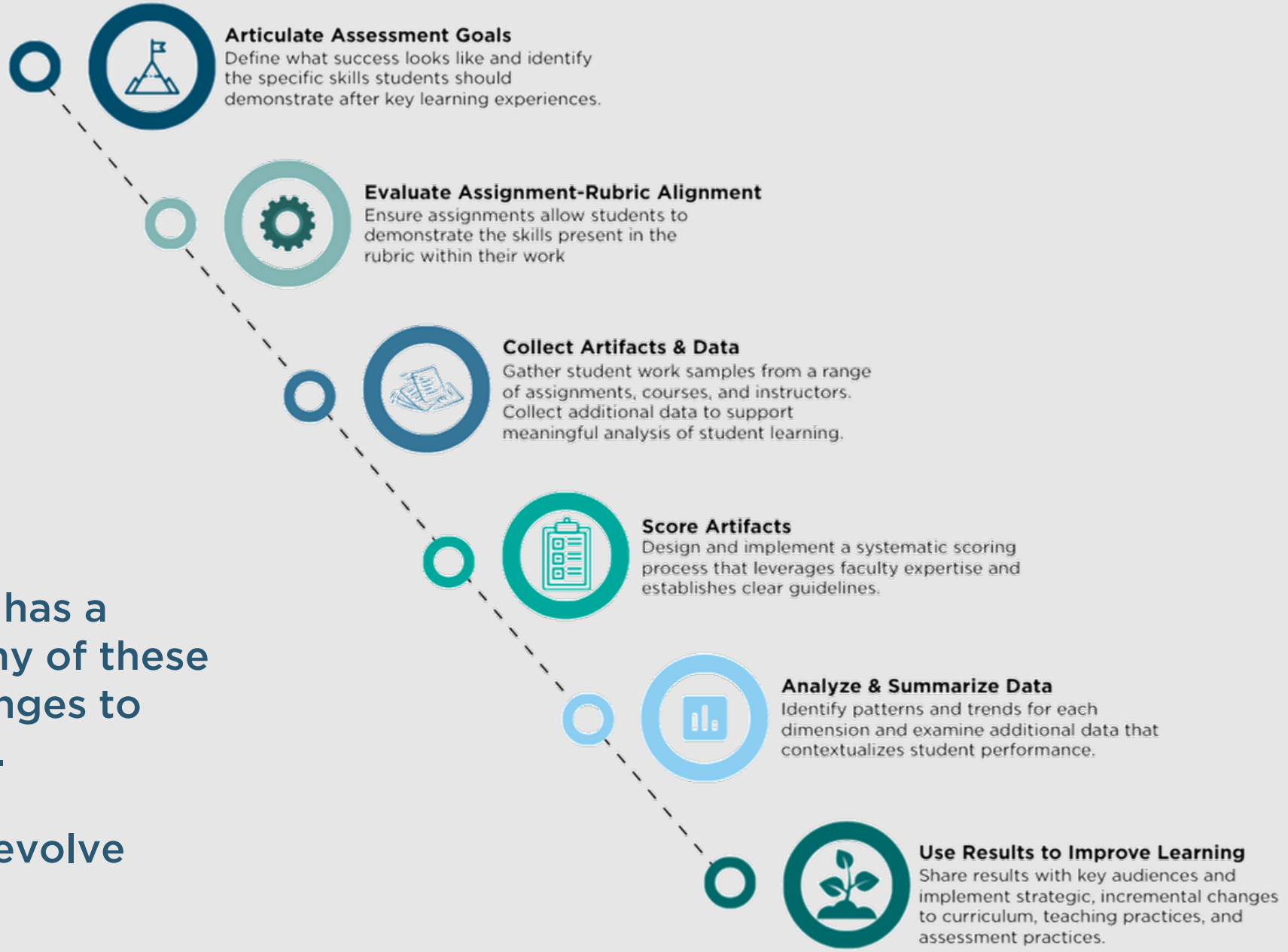
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Although the process has a procedural order, many of these steps may inform changes to previous/future steps.

The process may not evolve linearly.

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Articulate Assessment Goals

- What is your purpose for assessment?
- What outcome are you interested in assessing?
- What skills should students be able to demonstrate after certain learning experiences?
- When will students have developed these skills?
- What does success look like for the outcome?

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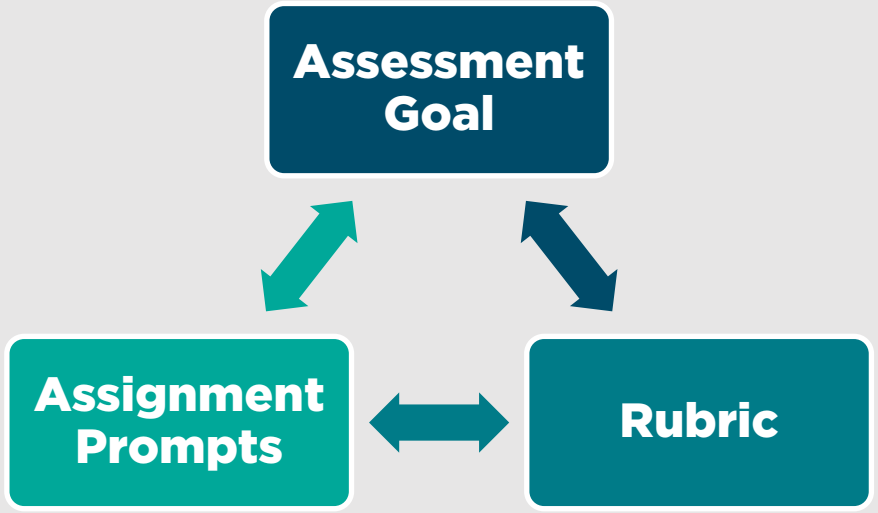
Articulate Assessment Goals

- Your assessment goal defines your target population.
- Is it feasible to assess every single student in the target population?
- Create a sampling plan.
  - Sampling method
  - Sample size
- Evaluate whether your sample is representative of the population.

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\ Alignment is key!



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Evaluate Alignment

- Alignment is key!
- Identify assignments that align with your assessment goal.
- Consider assignment characteristics:
  - Consider assignment characteristics
  - Include a range of different assignments, courses, and instructors.
- Does the assignment ask students to demonstrate skills that are present in the rubric?
  - Which dimension(s)?
  - The full range of performance levels?
- Does the assignment allow students to demonstrate their best and most motivated work?

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Collect Artifacts & Data

- Collect and anonymize student work samples (artifacts).
- Ensure each artifact has a unique identifying name.
- Remove identifying information
  - Student name
  - Course/faculty identifying information
- Collect additional data that will help you understand student learning.
  - Student characteristics
  - Assignment characteristics
  - Course characteristics

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Student Characteristics

- Demographic information that is of interest for data analysis.
- Might include:
  - Sex/Gender
  - Race/Ethnicity
  - Pell-Grant eligibility (or other SES indicators)
  - Credit hours completed
  - Other indicators of student performance (e.g., Term GPA, Cumulative GPA, SAT Score, ACT Score, course grade, assignment grade)

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Assignment Characteristics

- Assignment Name
- Assignment Weight
- Assignment Level
- Faculty Intention

Introduce *Assignment designed to introduce the outcome*		Practice *Assignment designed to afford student practice with the outcome*		Reinforce *Assignment designed to reinforce previously practiced outcome*		Mastery *Assignment designed for students to demonstrate level of mastery of the outcome*	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

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Course Characteristics

- Course Name
- Course Number
- Course Term
- Course Discipline
- Course Modality

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Collect Artifacts & Data

- Create a codebook to accompany your assessment data.
- This ensures transparency and consistency within the assessment process.
- Include:
  - Name of each variable in your data file.
  - A description of each variable.
  - Possible response options for each variable.

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Codebook Example

Student Level Variables			
Variable Name	**Description**	**Values**	**Definition**
BirthYear	Birth Year	Example: 1997	Student's year of birth, 4-digit numeric value (YYYY).
AdmissionYear	Admission Year	Example: 2016	Student's year of being admitted/enrolled in your institution, 4-digit numeric value (YYYY)
Sex	Sex	Female/Male/ Unknown	Indicates the sex as defined by the student.
RaceEthnicity	Race/Ethnicity	American Indian or Alaskan Native Asian Black or African American Hispanic Latino Multiple Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Non-resident Alien Two or more races Unknown White	The student's race or ethnicity based on the categories used in IPEDS.

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- Establish clear scoring procedures.
- Consider:
  - Who will score artifacts?
  - When will scoring take place?
  - Will there be incentives for scoring?
  - How many scorers will you need?
  - How will scorers be trained to use the rubric?
  - How much time scoring will take?
  - How/where will scorers record their scores?
  - How to examine the validity and reliability of scores?
  - How will you identify and handle inconsistent scores?

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Scoring Essentials

Follow the scoring procedures that you established.

Block sufficient time to score artifacts.

Provide all materials needed for scoring.

- Artifacts
- Rubric
- Method for recording scores

Provide a comfortable, quiet place for scoring.

Schedule and encourage short breaks during scoring.

Allow time for adjudication procedures.

- Flagging for review by an additional scorer.
- Scorers discussing and adjusting any discrepant scores.

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- Prepare Your Data for Analysis
  - How will you add scores to the data file?
  - Will you examine multiple scores per artifact or create a “final score” variable for each dimension?
  - Do you need to recode any responses to variables to align with your codebook?
  - Do you have all variables needed to complete your analyses?
  - How will you handle missing data?

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Analyze & Summarize Data

- Focus on the variables that will help you understand student learning within the context of your assessment goal(s).
- VALUE scores are ordinal data.
  - Categories are the main point of interest.
- Ensure you are using methods that are appropriate for ordinal data.
- Examine data for each dimension individually.
- Separate out scores of zero (no evidence).
- Present data using both tables and figures.

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Use Results to Improve Learning

- Share results with multiple audiences.
  - Accrediting Body
  - Provosts, Deans, other Administrators
  - Assessment and/or Curriculum Committee Members
  - Faculty whose assignments were sampled
  - Faculty and/or Student Senate
- Focus on the most relevant and impactful information for each audience.

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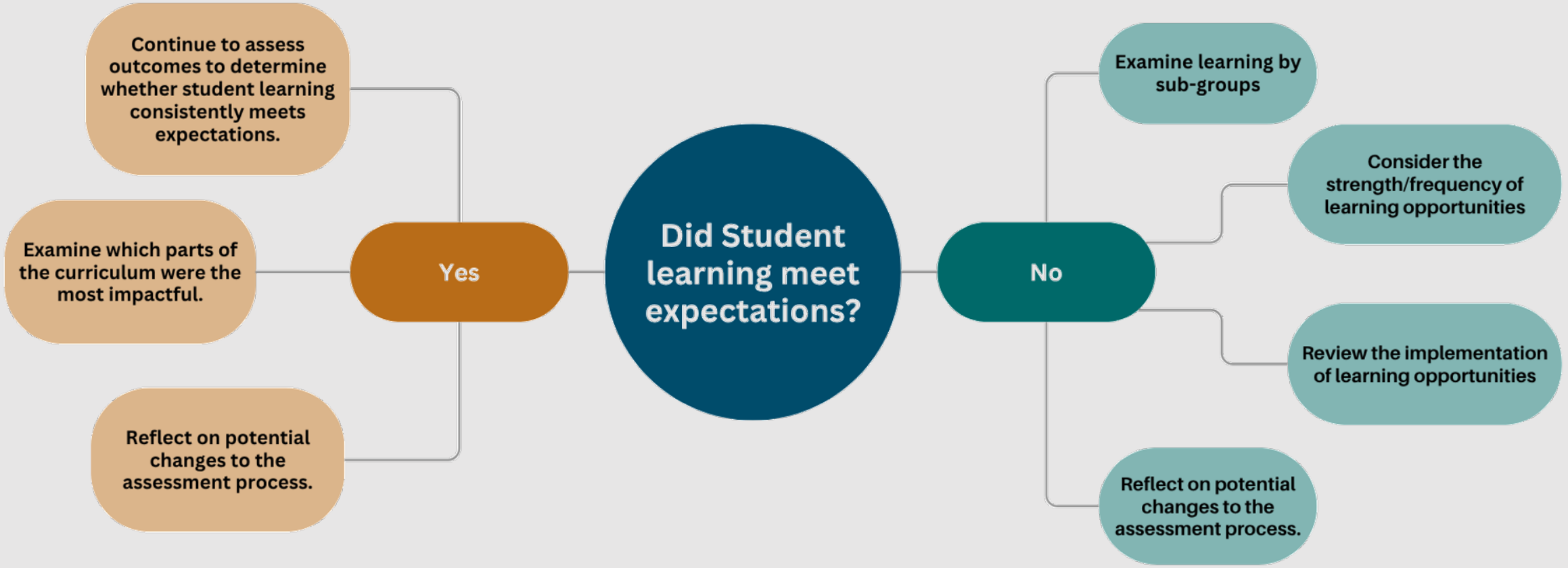


Use Results to Improve Learning

- Use results to inform intentional changes to curriculum, assignment design, and your assessment process.
- Create a plan for using your results to inform change.
  - Start with 1 or 2 changes based on your results.
  - Implement changes strategically and incrementally.
- Having a plan is important but stay flexible!
- Were there results that surprised you?

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Turning Findings Into Focused Actions



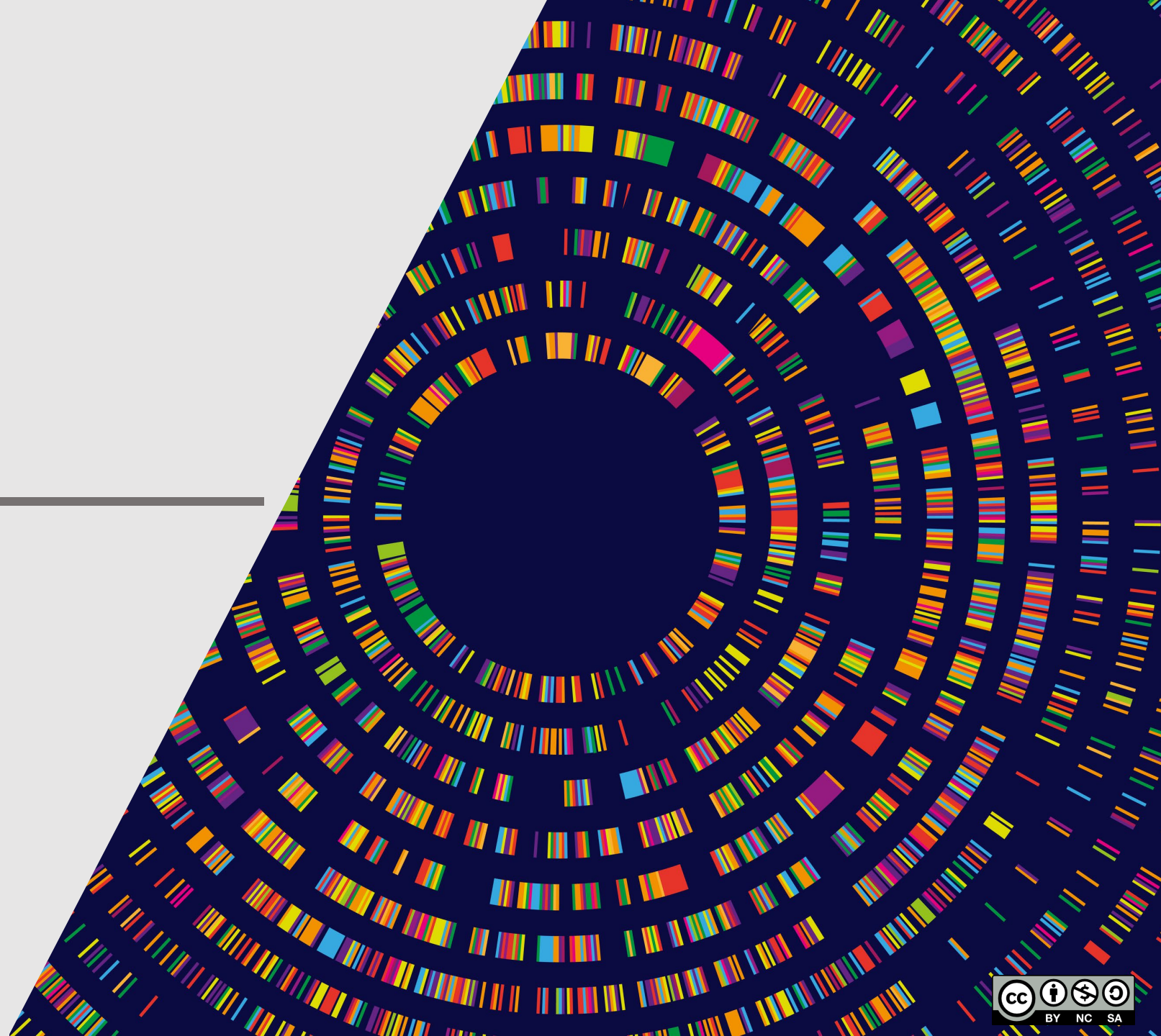
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What is one thing you will take back to your team from this session?

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Connect with me on LinkedIn!



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