



Creating A Culture of Continuous Improvement

Presenter: Dr. Nancy Bolz

nancy.bolz@cognia.org

Date: May 30, 2024

Learning targets



Define culture and key components



Identify the importance of being mission-driven



Identify how evidence informs quality



Examine the use of Standards for the self assessment

Knowledge is Opportunity



Cognia comes from cognition

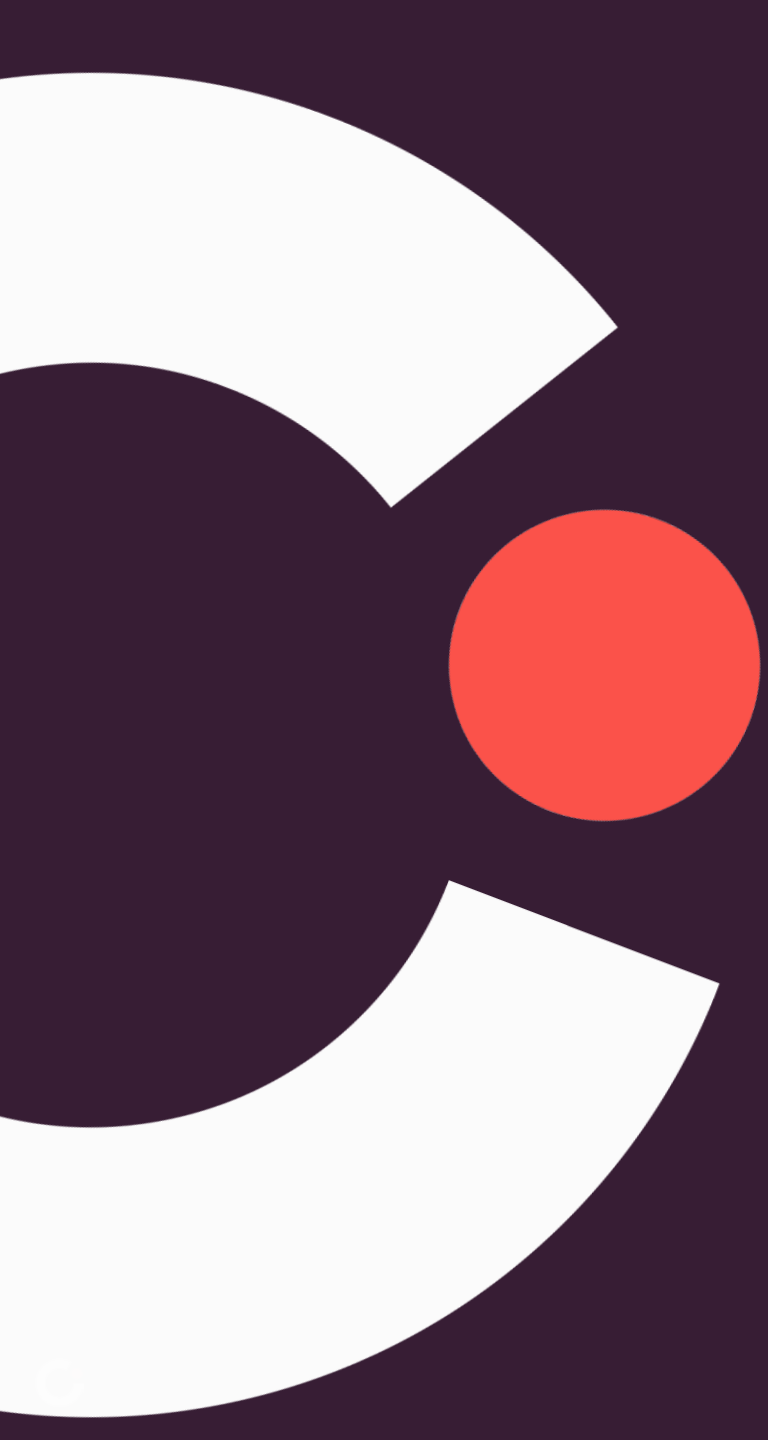
Cognia is a global nonprofit that has the knowledge to help schools improve outcomes for all learners.



Shoulder Buddy Talk

- How would you define “culture” as it relates to an educational institution?
- Can you “sense” the culture when you walk into a building? If so, how?





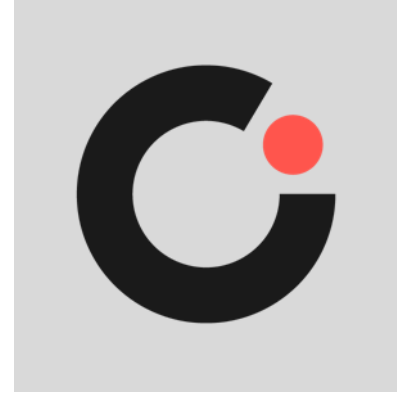
Culture — “the way
we do things around
here.”

“Shaping School Culture: Pitfalls,
Paradoxes, and Promises”
Kent Peterson & Terrence Deal

Discussions

- If you were to describe a high-quality school, what two words would you use? Please click [here](#) and enter your words/phrase.
- In your opinion, what are the most important things you need to consider for continuous improvement?
 - Mission / Culture / Leadership / Context





Cognia Continuous Improvement System

Continuous Improvement System

Reflect, evaluate, and adjust

- Determine action effectiveness
- Hold collaborative discussions to discuss results
- Make decisions to continue or change action

Imagine the possibilities

- Gather data to understand current reality
- Identify trends to imagine the future
- Determine the connections between current reality and future trends

Build momentum and capacity

- Implement the strategies
- Monitor and adjust action
- Ensure stakeholder participation

Communicate with stakeholders

- Share what you've learned with your stakeholders
- Collaborate to determine priorities
- Ensure the vision aligns to priorities

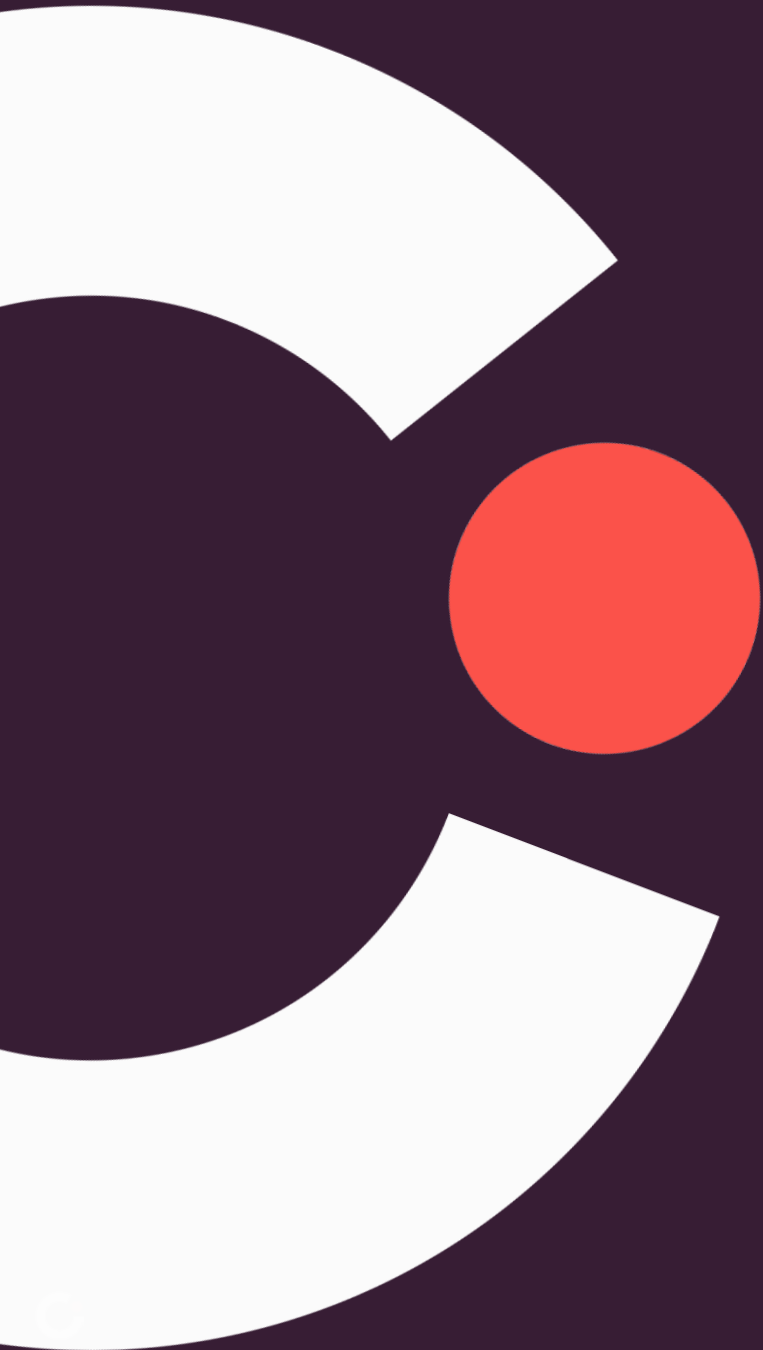
Initiate the journey

- Engage in training
- Build acceptance and stakeholder buy-in
- Deploy the plan

Plot the journey

- Align priorities with goals
- Develop a plan to improve and sustain practices
- Identify strategies to fulfill the priorities





Mission-Driven

CI Must Be Aligned to the Mission!

Examples of
Belief
Statements?

Key Components

- Vision - STUDENT-centered expectations for future
- Mission - purpose of the SCHOOL
- Belief Statements – Putting the “meat on the bones” of the mission and vision for a broader understanding

With a focus on innovation and access, we develop partnerships and build educational programs to honor students as they grow toward their individual potential and solve global challenges.

Context, Context, Context!

- Executive Summary for Understanding

History
Demographics
Community
Governance
CI Plan
Curriculum
Instructional Strategies
Philosophy

Personnel Management

Enrollment Trends

Do these align to your mission?



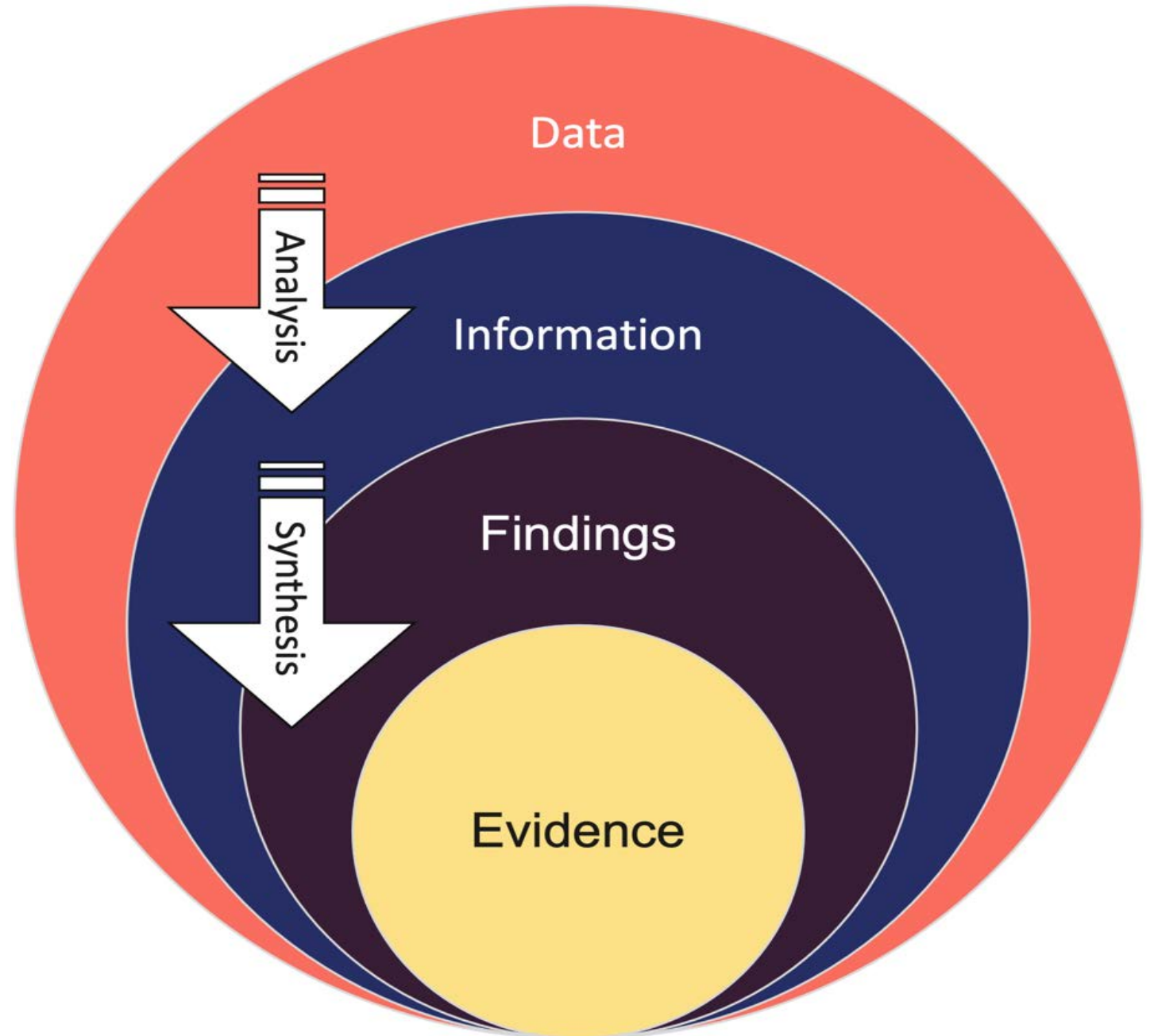
How Do You Know
Quality?

EVIDENCE!



**KEY: Systemic & Meaningful Evidence
Leading to Action!**

Data Collection, Analysis, and Synthesis Process



Evidence Types

Documentation

Perceptions

Observations

Performance

**E
X
A
M
P
L
E
S
?**

Activity: Quality of evidence

Directions: Discuss how you would rank the following evidence from least to best quality based on the impact they demonstrate. We will respond to a poll when we return from the breakout room.

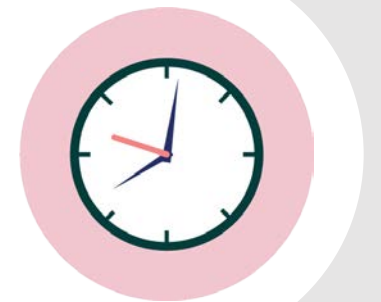
Lesson plan integrating the new student engagement strategies

Post PD learner performance data indicating performance increased after engagement strategies were implemented

Attendance sign-up sheet for teachers attending a PD session on strategies to increase student engagement

Analyzed student survey feedback data indicating learners felt engagement strategies were helpful in increasing their interest in the lesson

Duration:
5 mins





What is a Theory of Action?

What is it?

- A hypothesis
- If/then statement

What does it do?

- Guides our work
- Narrows the focus

Example

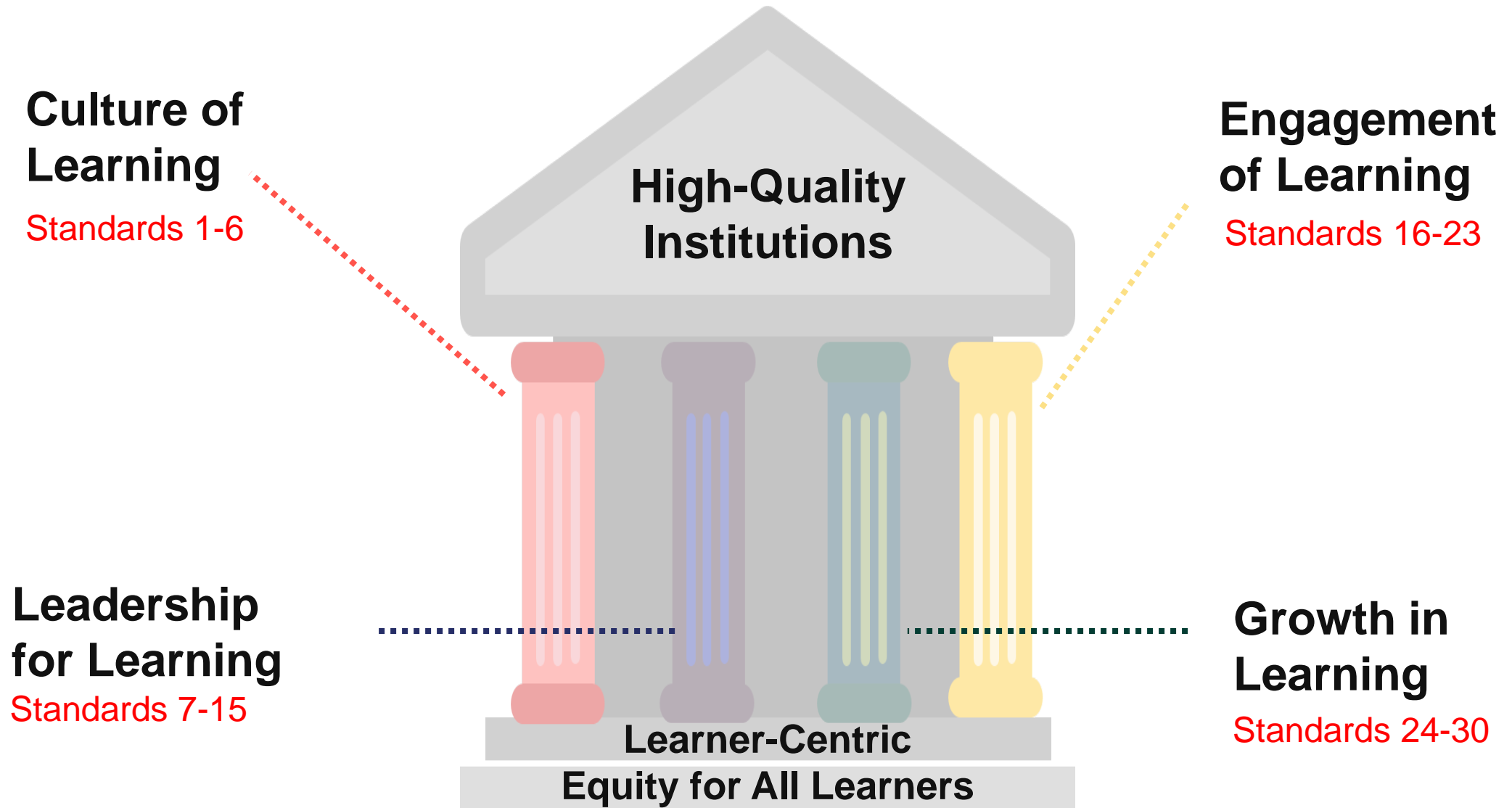
IF we improve our professional development program to help teachers engage students in learning to a greater degree,
THEN student perception and assessment scores will improve



Cognia Performance Standards

Rubric Ratings Provide Key Leverage Areas for Improvement

Key Characteristics



Focus

1. Focus on the learner
2. Role clarity
3. Learning environment
4. Learning process
5. Action research

Key Characteristic: Culture of Learning

Stakeholders are actively engaged and supportive of the institution's mission

Stakeholders are included and supported



Learner's academic and non-academic needs and interests are the focal interest

Culture of Learning

Standards alignment: 1-6

Questions to consider:

- ⦿ What evidence illustrates that the learners, families, and educators feel connected to the purpose of the institution?
- ⦿ What evidence illustrates that learners, families, and educators consistently behave in alignment with the stated values and norms of the institution?
- ⦿ What activities and other engagements reflect the mission, beliefs, and expectations of the institution?

Perceptions

Engagement

Alignment

Standard 2

Learners' well-being is at the heart of the institution's guiding principles such as mission, purpose, and beliefs.

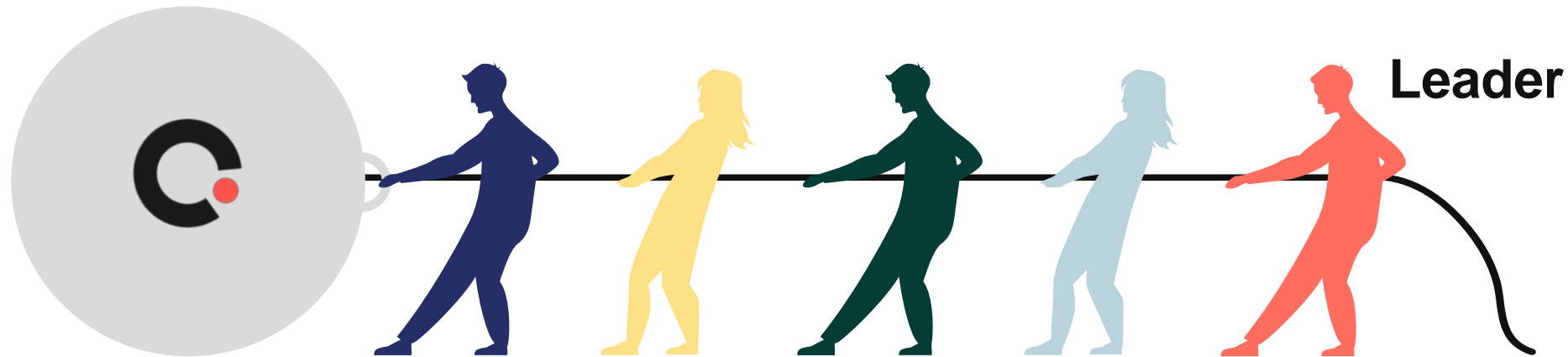
Level 3: Staff members routinely demonstrate commitment to learners' academic and non-academic needs and interests. The institution's practices, processes, and decisions are documented, and are consistent with and based on its stated values.

Standard 3

Leaders actively engage stakeholders to support the institution's priorities and guiding principles that promote learners' academic growth and well-being.

Level 3: Leaders establish and sustain conditions that regularly result in support and active participation among stakeholders. Leaders routinely collaborate with stakeholders to advance identified priorities. Institutions choose areas of focus based on analyzed data on learners' needs and consistent with guiding principles.

Key Characteristics: Leadership for Learning



**Standards
7- 15**



Model and engage in learning while supporting others to do so

Influence and impact the culture in positive ways

Communicate expectations for learning

Leadership for Learning

Standard
alignment:
7-15

Questions to consider:

- How do leaders communicate expectations for learning and monitor progress toward meeting such expectations?
- What examples of behaviors and actions by leaders influence and have a positive impact on the culture of the institution?
- How do leaders model and engage in learning?
- How is leadership distributed throughout your institution?

Standard 7

Leaders guide professional staff members in the continuous improvement process focused on learners' experiences and needs.

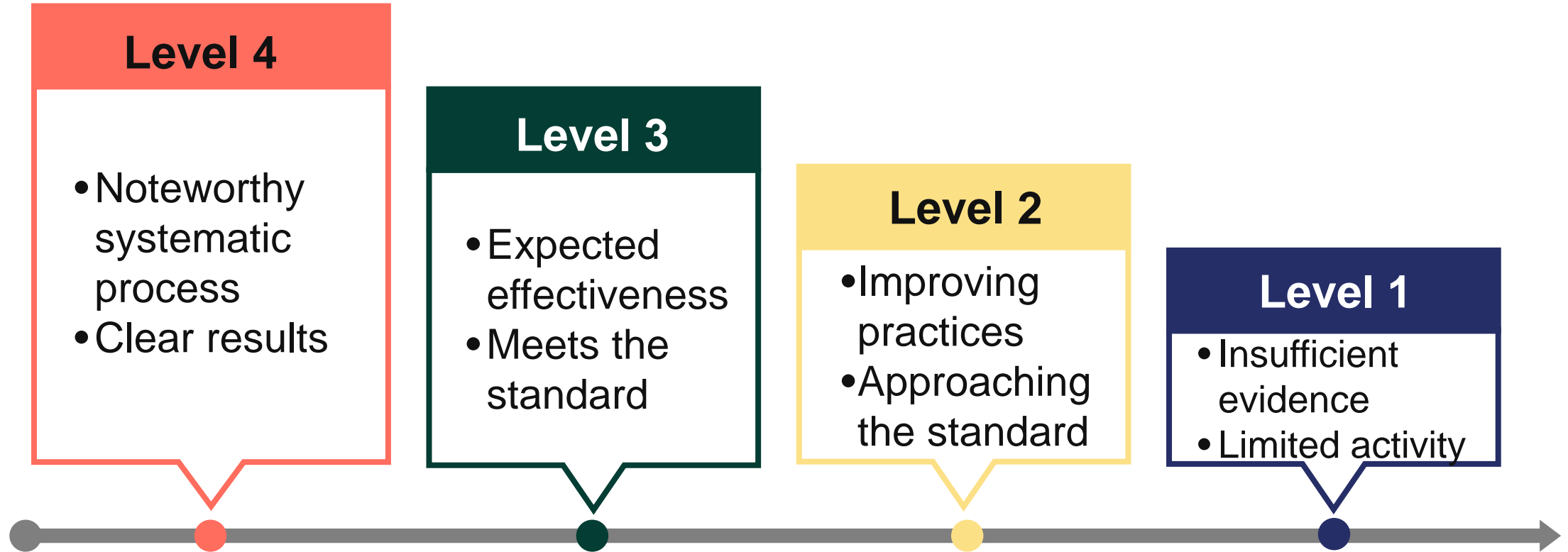
Level 3: Leaders regularly engage professional staff members in developing, communicating, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting the continuous improvement process. The continuous improvement process is based on analyzed data about learners' academic and non-academic needs and the institution's organizational effectiveness. Leaders and professional staff members routinely implement ongoing practices, processes, and decision making that improve learning and engage stakeholders.

Standard 13

Qualified personnel instruct and assist learners and each other in support of the institution's mission, purpose, and beliefs.

Level 3: All staff members demonstrate the required knowledge and skills for their positions. Staff members work cooperatively to instruct and assist learners and colleagues in support of the institution's guiding principles. Staff members' individual and collective decisions and behaviors demonstrate alignment and coherence with the institution's mission, purpose, and beliefs.

General rubric guideline





Self-Assessment and Diagnostic Leading to CI Plan

CI Plan is focused on LEARNING; Strategic Plan extends to facilities, fundraising, etc.

Overview: Self-Assessment Process

Required Analyses

- Stakeholder engagement
- Student engagement
- Student performance

These inform the Key Characteristics

Executive Summary

- Context - Unique snapshot of your institution

Self-Assessment

- Rate standards
- Compose key characteristics narratives
- Reflections
- Upload evidence in accreditation portfolio
- Submit four weeks in advance of leadership presentation

Assurances

- Compliance statements that all institutions must meet
- Written action plan for any assurances you do not meet

Self-Assessment Diagnostics:

Purpose

- Reflect a thorough self-assessment of the educational quality of the institution
- Help institutions understand their current reality
 - Address areas of excellence, needed improvement, and challenges
- Organize and maintain evidence in support of the standards and key characteristics

Self-Assessment Diagnostics components

Reflection Narratives

Reflect and identify:

- Areas of excellence
- Areas for improvement
- Challenges

TIP: This becomes systemic when you consider these holistically from every narrative!

Reflections

During your group discussion of your data and the resulting analyses, reflect on the areas you are most proud of about your institution, areas you wish to improve, and challenges your institution is facing or you feel it will be facing in coming years. Record your reflections in brief narratives (500 words or less). Here are some prompts for each reflection area to guide your writing.

Enter your responses here.

Areas of Excellence

Areas for Improvement

Challenges



Ways we support

1. Canvas course

Supports material covered in class
Additional optional activities

2. Live Accreditation support

Monthly sessions
Register on Cognia News/Events
page

3. Self-Assessment workbook

Step-by-step guide



4. Evaluator

Regular support, contact as
soon as you are notified

5. Regional office

Director

6. Conferences

Conference sessions

Learning targets



Define culture and key components



Identify the importance of being mission-driven



Identify how evidence informs quality



Examine the use of Standards for the self assessment

Questions & Answers

