Measuring Evaluative Thinking

Thomas Archibald, Jane Buckley &

William Trochim

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Evaluative Thinking is...*mentioned:*

"How do we build the capacity of individuals, teams, and organizations to think evaluatively and engage in evaluation practice?"

"Willingness to ask: 'How do we know what we think we know?'"

"Evaluative thinking is not just limited to evaluation projects...it's an analytical way of thinking that infuses everything that goes on."

"Reminding all of us to think evaluatively!"

"The concept of free-range evaluation captures the ultimate outcome of ECB: evaluative thinking that lives unfettered in an organization."

...but not succinctly defined
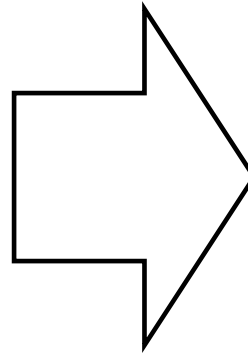
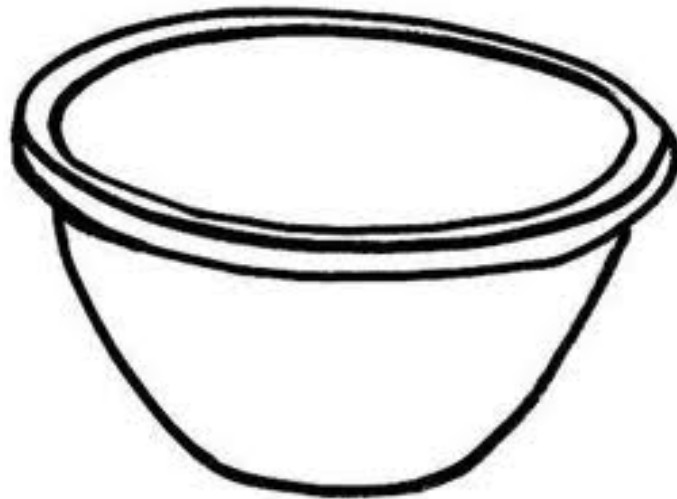# How Evaluative Thinking fits in:

Knowledge   Action
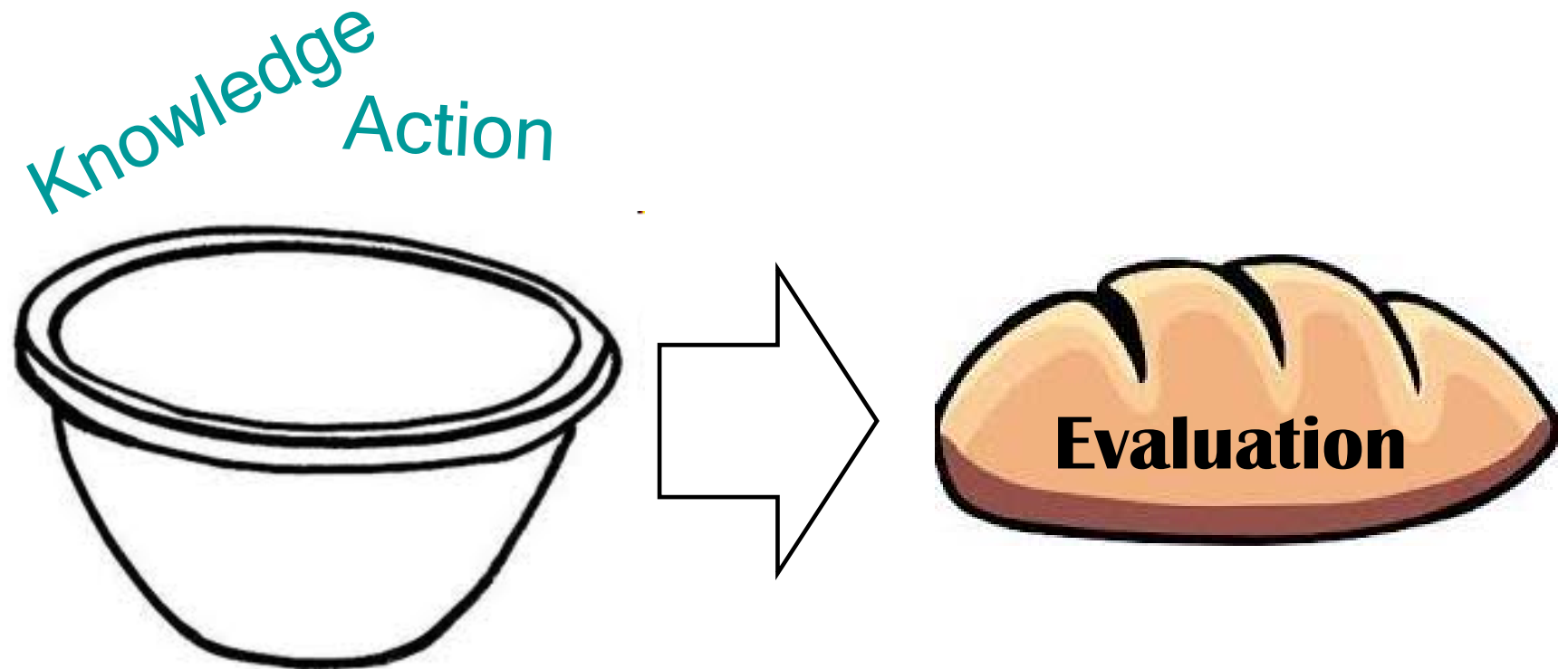
Evaluation

How Evaluative Thinking fits in:

Evaluative

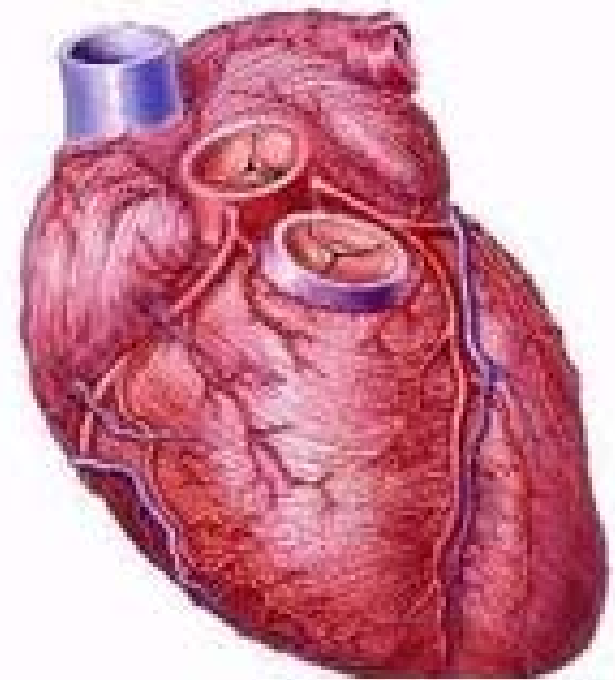Thinking

Knowledge

Action

Higher Quality
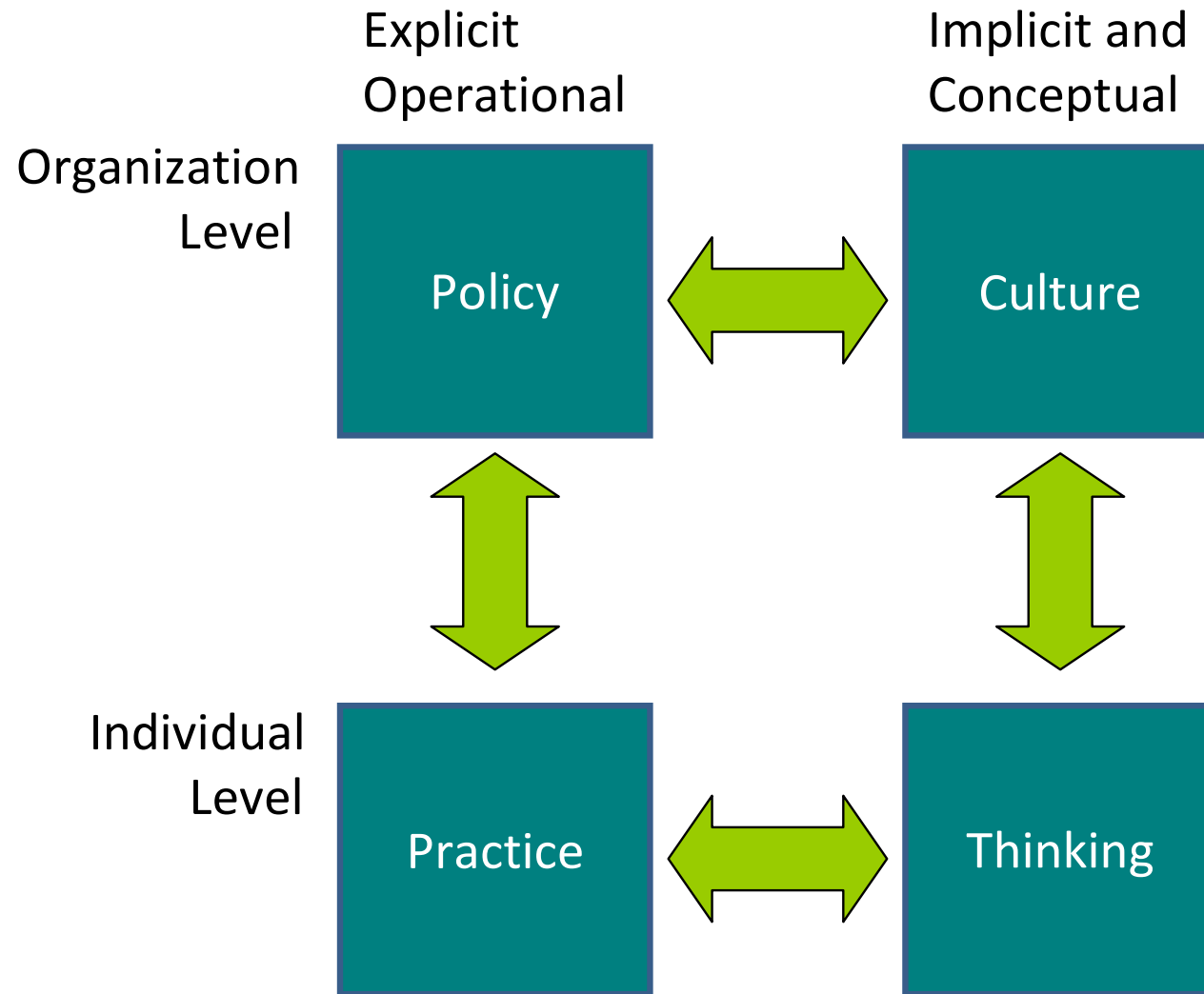
Sustained

Evaluation

We Seem to Agree that Evaluative Thinking is Both:

and

A System Level View:

Defining Evaluative Thinking

Cognitive Science —— Evaluation —— Education

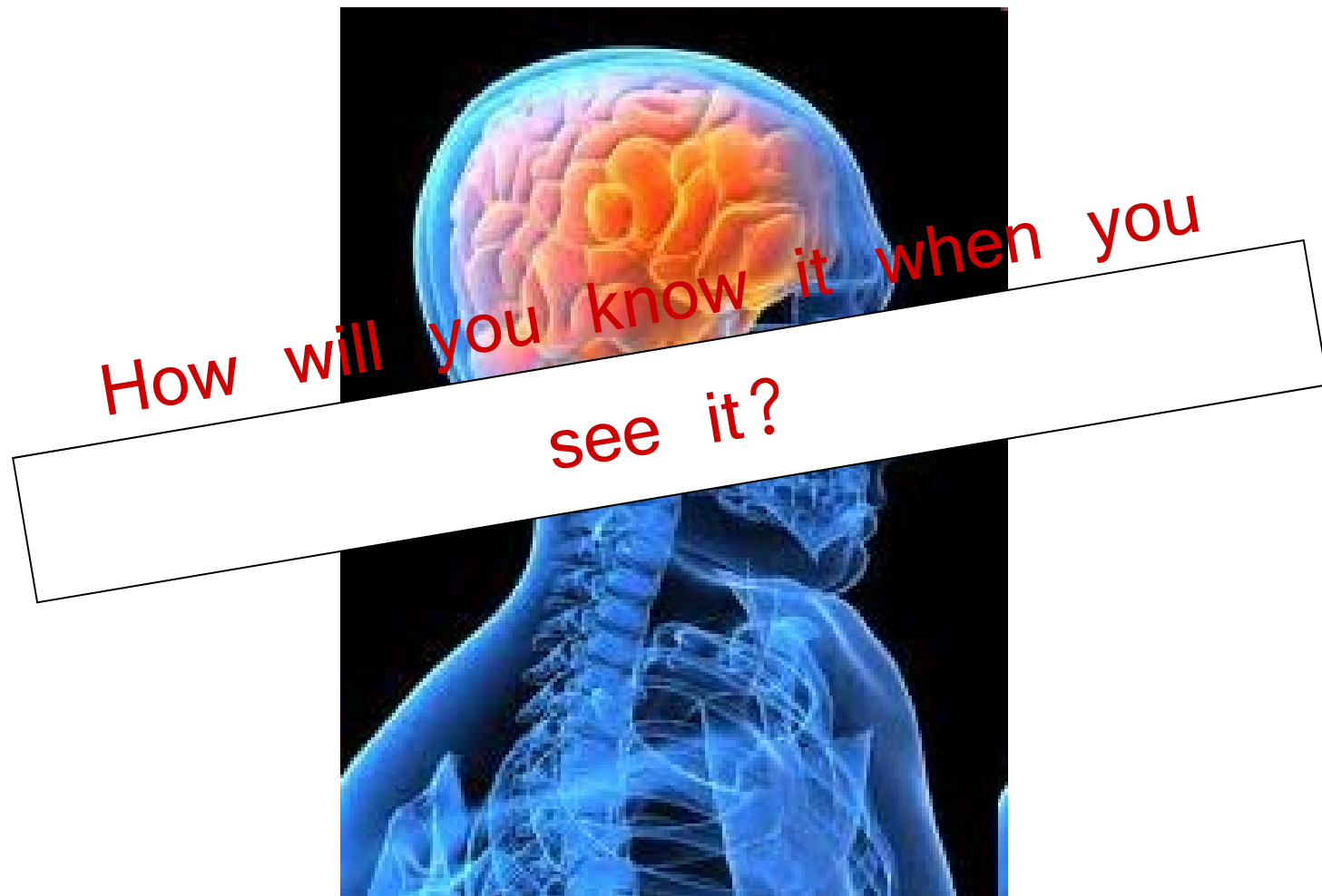Metacognition —— Evaluative Thinking —— Critical Thinking
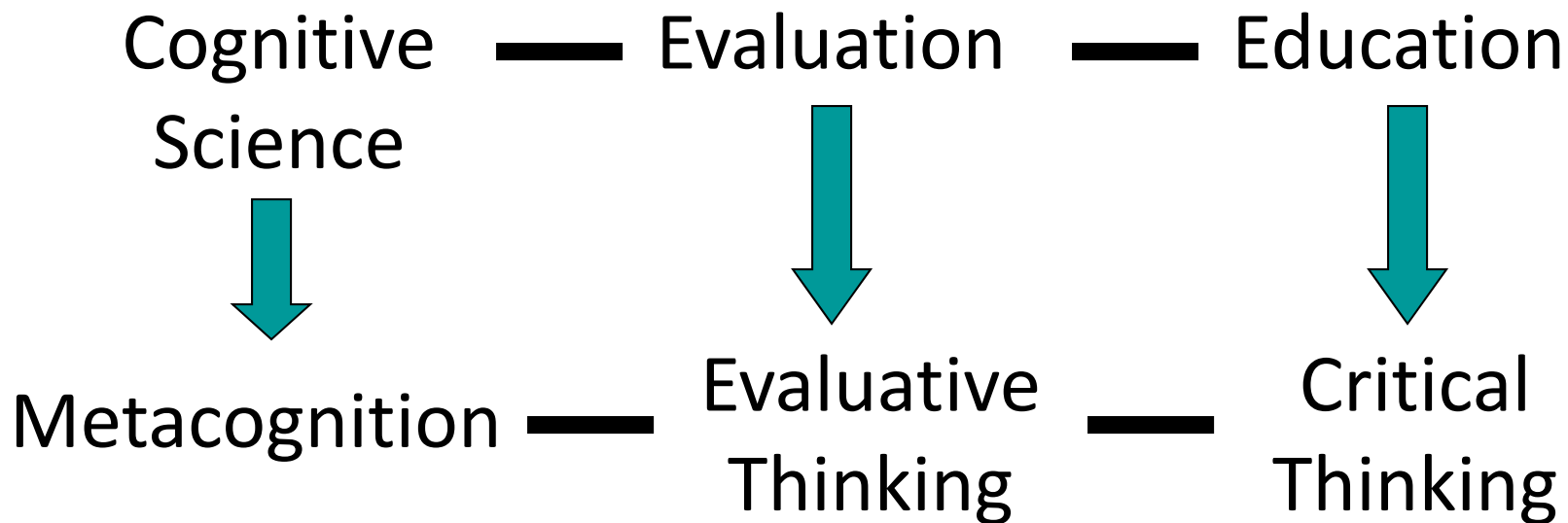
Thinking Skills

- Questioning
- Reflection
- Decision Making
- Strategizing
- Identifying Assumptions

Evaluative Attitudes

- Desire for the truth
- Belief in the value of evaluation
- Belief in the value of evidence
- Inquisitiveness
- Skepticism

Identifying Indicators of E.T.

How will you know it when you see it?

Indicators of Evaluative Thinking

Posing Thoughtful Questions

Describing and Illustrating Thinking

Actively Pursuing Deeper Understanding

Believing in the Value of Evaluation

Seeking Alternatives

Capturing Indicators of E.T.

Thinking

Doing

Self Report

Observation

Capturing Indicators of E.T.

Evaluative Thinking Inventory

ID #:

Please read each of the statements below and check the appropriate box t[hat]
described by each statement. Consider how you think and act in both pr[...]

	Very Frequently	Frequent[ly]
1. I pose questions about assumptions and claims made by others.		
2. I am wary of claims made by others without evidence to back them up.		
3. I reflect on assumptions and claims I make myself.		
4. I offer evidence for claims that I make.		
5. I describe my thinking to others.		
6. I am interested in understanding the logic behind things.		
7. I use models and/or other diagrams to clarify my thoughts.		
8. I use models and/or other diagrams to communicate my thinking to others.		
9. I seek evidence for claims and hypotheses.		

Evaluative Thinking Observational Checklist

Date:

Event/Meeting:

Number of people in group observed:

Name of observer:

- As you observe a meeting or other event, scan up and down this checklist as needed to **check the appropriate box** that corresponds with **the frequency and quality with which the group demonstrates the indicator** described in the item.
- This tool can be used to observe and collect data **on a group as a whole, or on an individual.**
  - If observing an individual, there should be one observer for every individual.
  - If observing a group, if one or two individuals dominate the conversation and thus affect your ratings, please mention that in the notes section.
- **Take additional observational notes as needed**—these notes can help you decide what box to check and can support your decision during subsequent analysis.

1. Poses questions about claims and assumptions.

Frequency:	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasion-ally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Never	Notes:
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Quality:	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Bad	Very Bad	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

2. Reflects on self-generated claims and assumptions.

Frequency:	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasion-ally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Never	Notes:
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Quality:	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Bad	Very Bad	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Macro-level Indicator	Observational Checklist	Inventory
A	1	1
A	1	2
A	2	3
A	2	4
B	3	5
B	3	6
B	4	7
B	4	8
C	5	9
C	5	10
C	6	11
C	6	12
D	7	13
D	7	14
D	8	15
D	8	16
E	9	17
E	9	18
E	10	19
E	10	20

Capturing Indicators of E.T.

Evaluative Thinking Inventory	ID #:

Please read each of the statements below and check the appropriate box to indicate how often you do what is described by each statement. Consider how you think and act in both professional and personal settings.

	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasion-ally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Never
1. I pose questions about assumptions and claims made by others.						
2. I am wary of claims made by others without evidence to back them up.						
3. I reflect on assumptions and claims I make myself.						
4. I offer evidence for claims that I make.						
5. I describe my thinking to others.						
6. I am interested in understanding the logic behind things.						
7. I use models and/or other diagrams to clarify my thoughts.						
8. I use models and/or other diagrams to communicate my thinking to others.						
9. I seek evidence for claims and hypotheses						

Capturing Indicators of E.T.

Evaluative Thinking Observational Checklist

Date:		Number of people in group observed:	
Event/Meeting:		Name of observer:	

1. Poses questions about claims and assumptions.

Frequency:	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasion-ally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Never	Notes:
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Quality:	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Bad	Very Bad	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

2. Reflects on self-generated claims and assumptions.

Frequency:	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasion-ally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Never	Notes:
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Quality:	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Bad	Very Bad	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

3. Describes logic/thinking to colleagues.

Frequency:	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasion-ally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Never	Notes:

Learning More About E.T. in Context

Explicit Operational

Implicit and Conceptual

FOCUS GROUP METHOD

Organization Level

Policy ⟷ Culture

Individual Level

Practice ⟷ Thinking
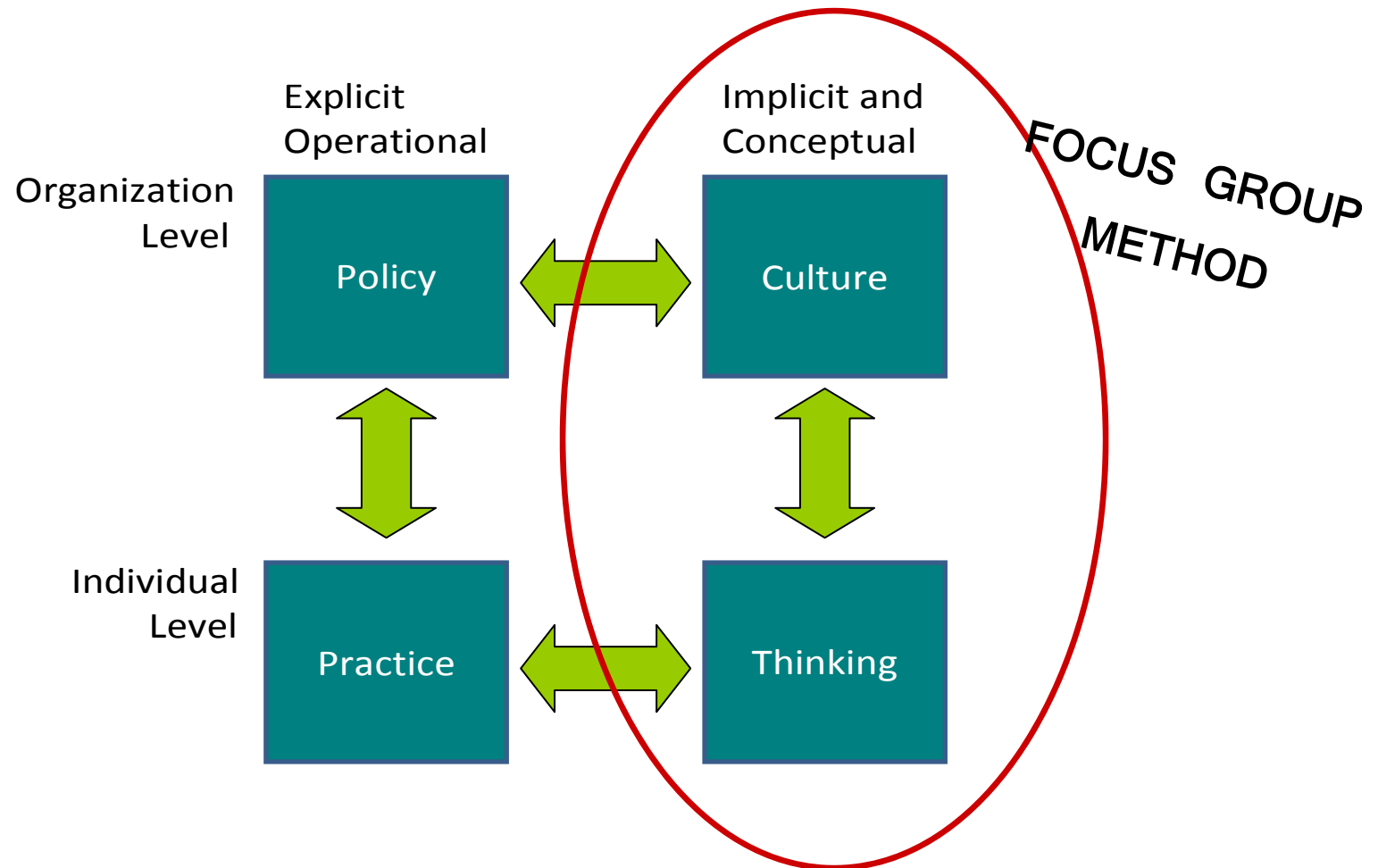
Learning More About E.T. in Context

Evaluative Culture & Thinking Focus Group Prompts

Date: [ ]   Number of people in focus group: [ ]

Group name or identifying information: [ ]   Name of focus group facilitator: [ ]

- This tool can be used by **external** evaluators or researchers and by **internal** program or organization staff interested in learning more about the evaluative thinking and evaluative culture of a group.
- The prompts are divided into two sets, one focused on **culture** and the other on **thinking**; in a focus group, the facilitator should go through both sets (all ten questions.)
- While there is one follow-up prompt defining what is meant by "culture" in this context, it is also expected that context-specific definitions of "evaluative thinking" and "evaluative culture" will emerge from the group through this focus group activity.

I. Evaluative Culture Focus Group Prompts

1. What does the work planning process look like in your organization?
   a. How are changes made?
   b. What motivates changes to the way things are done?

2. How often are beliefs and assumptions related to your work and goals discussed?
   a. How would you explain this pattern?

3. How often are beliefs and assumptions questioned by members of the organization?
   a. How would you explain this pattern?

Thank you!

Tom Archibald
tga4@cornell.edu

Jane Buckley
jce6@cornell.edu

William Trochim
wmt1@cornell.edu

Bloom's Taxonomy
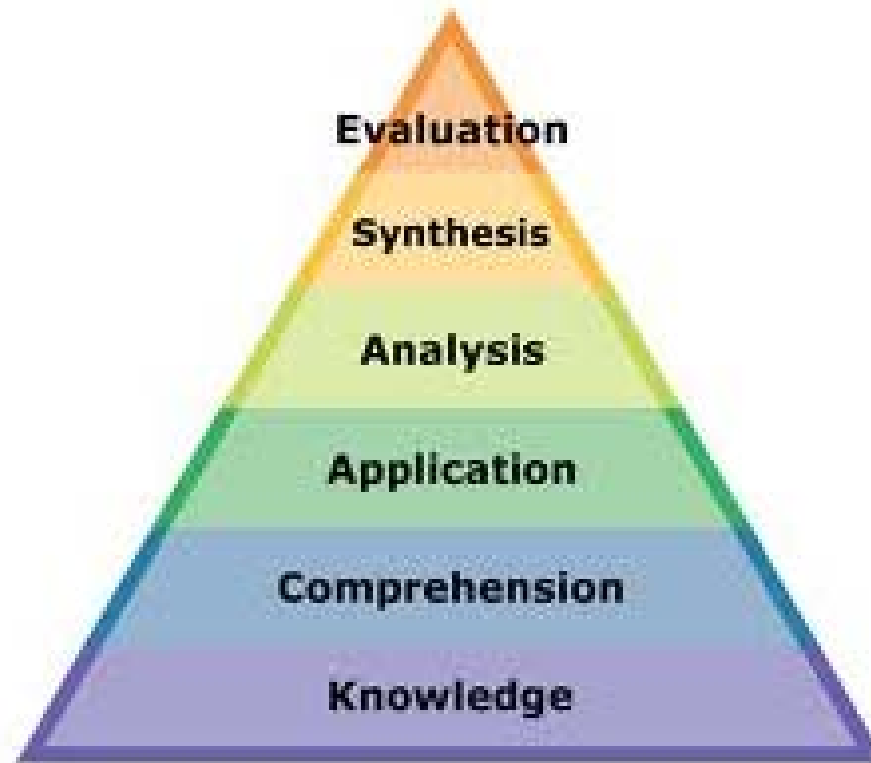
Macro-indicator	Ob. Checklist	Self-Report Inventory
A. Posing thoughtful questions	1. Poses questions about claims and assumptions.	1. I pose questions about assumptions and claims made by others.
		2. I am wary of claims made by others without evidence to back them up.
	2. Reflects on self-generated claims and assumptions.	3. I reflect on assumptions and claims I make myself.
		4. I offer evidence for claims that I make.

Macro-indicator	Ob. Checklist	Self-Report Inventory
B. Describing and illustrating thinking	3. Describes logic/thinking to colleagues.	5. I describe my thinking to others.
		6. I am interested in understanding the logic behind things.
	4. Illustrates thinking with models or other diagrams.	7. I use models and/or other diagrams to clarify my thoughts.
		8. I use models and/or other diagrams to communicate my thinking to others.

Macro-indicator	Ob. Checklist	Self-Report Inventory
C. Active engagement in the pursuit of understanding	5. Seeks evidence for claims and hypotheses.	9. I seek evidence for claims and hypotheses.
		10. I discuss evaluation strategies with my colleagues.
	6. Articulates the relationship between a proposed evaluation or research strategy and the intended claim.	11. I logically justify my evaluation strategy.
		12. I articulate the relationship between my evaluation work and my intended claims.

Macro-indicator	Ob. Checklist	Self-Report Inventory
D. Seeking alternatives	7. Suggests alternative methods for validating claims.	13. I suggest alternative explanations and hypotheses.
		14. I consider alternative explanations for claims.
	8. Demonstrates flexibility and a willingness to improvise in pursuit of understanding.	15. I am reflective about the way I do my work.
		16. I willingly make changes to the way I do my work.

Macro-indicator	Ob. Checklist	Self-Report Inventory
E. Believing in the value of evaluation	9. Demonstrates a belief that evaluation is a valuable endeavor.	17. I believe evaluation is a valuable endeavor.
		18. I try to convince others that evaluation is important.
	10. Engages enthusiastically in evaluative activities.	19. I enjoy discussing evaluation strategies with colleagues.
		20. I am eager to engage in evaluation.

I. Evaluative Culture Focus Group Prompts

1. What does the work planning process look like in your organization?
    a. How are changes made?
    b. What motivates changes to the way things are done?

2. How often are beliefs and assumptions related to your work and goals discussed?
    a. How would you explain this pattern?

3. How often are beliefs and assumptions questioned by members of the organization?
    a. How would you explain this pattern?

4. How would you characterize your understanding of your work's impacts (as an organization)?

5. How would you characterize the culture of evaluation in this organization?
    Follow-up prompt (if needed): By "culture," we mean the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization, or group.

II. Evaluative Thinking Focus Group Prompts

1. How would you define evaluative thinking?
2. What are some indicators of evaluative thinking?
3. How often do you engage in evaluative thinking related to your work?
4. How often do you question beliefs and assumptions about your work?
5. How motivated are you to seek evidence for claims about your work?