



Better and Worse: Evaluating the Unevaluatable

Metanoia August 2015

Glenda H. Eoyang, PhD
Executive Director
Human Systems Dynamics Institute

How will we work together?



- » Turn judgement into curiosity
- » Turn conflict into shared exploration
- » Turn defensiveness into self-reflection
- » Turn assumptions into questions



Why HSD? *See Systems*



Good Evaluation	Good Consulting

Why HSD? See Systems



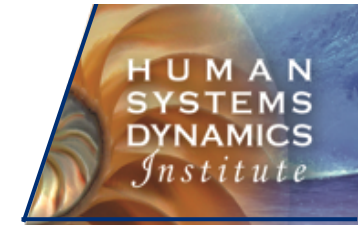
Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function

Why HSD? See Systems



Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function
Predictable future	Unknowable future

Why HSD? See Systems



Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function
Predictable future	Unknowable future
Global or local focus	Global and local focus

Why HSD? See Systems



Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function
Predictable future	Unknowable future
Global or local focus	Global and local focus
Whole is the sum of parts	Whole not the sum of parts

Why HSD? See Systems



Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function
Predictable future	Unknowable future
Global or local focus	Global and local focus
Whole is the sum of parts	Whole not the sum of parts
Replication	Innovation

Why HSD? See Systems



Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function
Predictable future	Unknowable future
Global or local focus	Global and local focus
Whole is the sum of parts	Whole not the sum of parts
Replication	Innovation
Independent or dependent	Interdependent

Why HSD? See Systems



Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function
Predictable future	Unknowable future
Global or local focus	Global and local focus
Whole is the sum of parts	Whole not the sum of parts
Replication	Innovation
Independent or dependent	Interdependent
Silos	Networks

Why HSD? See Systems



Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function
Predictable future	Unknowable future
Global or local focus	Global and local focus
Whole is the sum of parts	Whole not the sum of parts
Replication	Innovation
Independent or dependent	Interdependent
Silos	Networks
Competencies	Adaptive capacity

Why HSD? *See Systems*



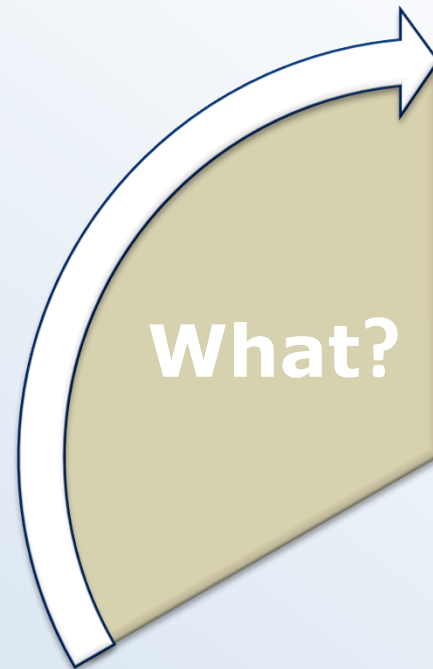
Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function
Predictable future	Unknowable future
Global or local focus	Global and local focus
Whole is the sum of parts	Whole not the sum of parts
Replication	Innovation
Independent or dependent	Interdependent
Silos	Networks
Competencies	Adaptive capacity
Control and manage	See, understand, influence

Why HSD? *See Systems*



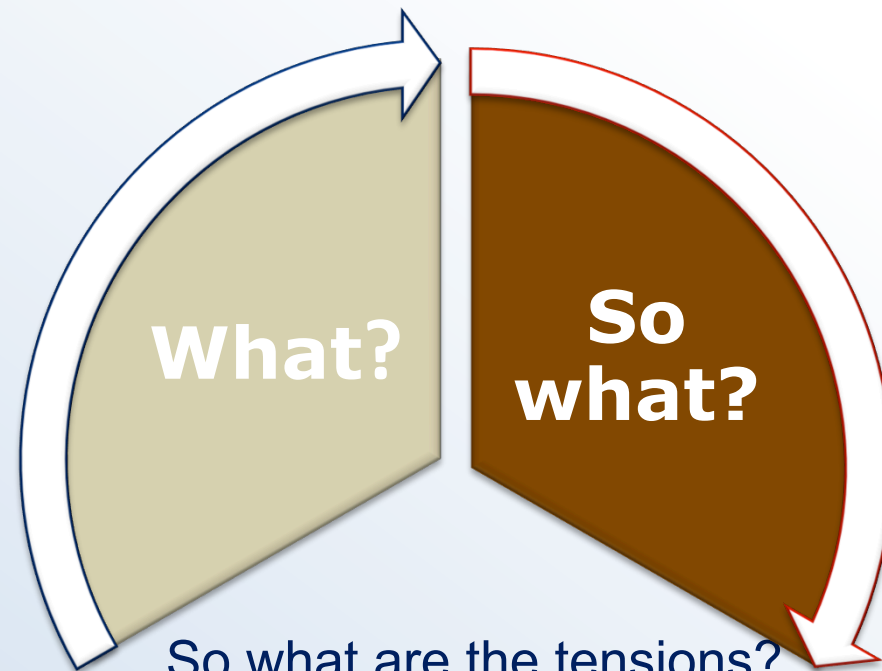
Good Evaluation	Good Consulting
Value and worth	Fit for function
Predictable future	Unknowable future
Global or local focus	Global and local focus
Whole is the sum of parts	Whole not the sum of parts
Replication	Innovation
Independent or dependent	Interdependent
Silos	Networks
Competencies	Adaptive capacity
Control and manage	See, understand, influence
Right answer	Adaptive Action

Adaptive Action



What are current patterns?
What do you observe?
What surprises you?
What happened before?
What are people saying?
What is the research?
What . . .

Adaptive Action



So what are the tensions?
So what is important?
So what options do we have?
So what does success look like now?
So what . . .

Adaptive Action

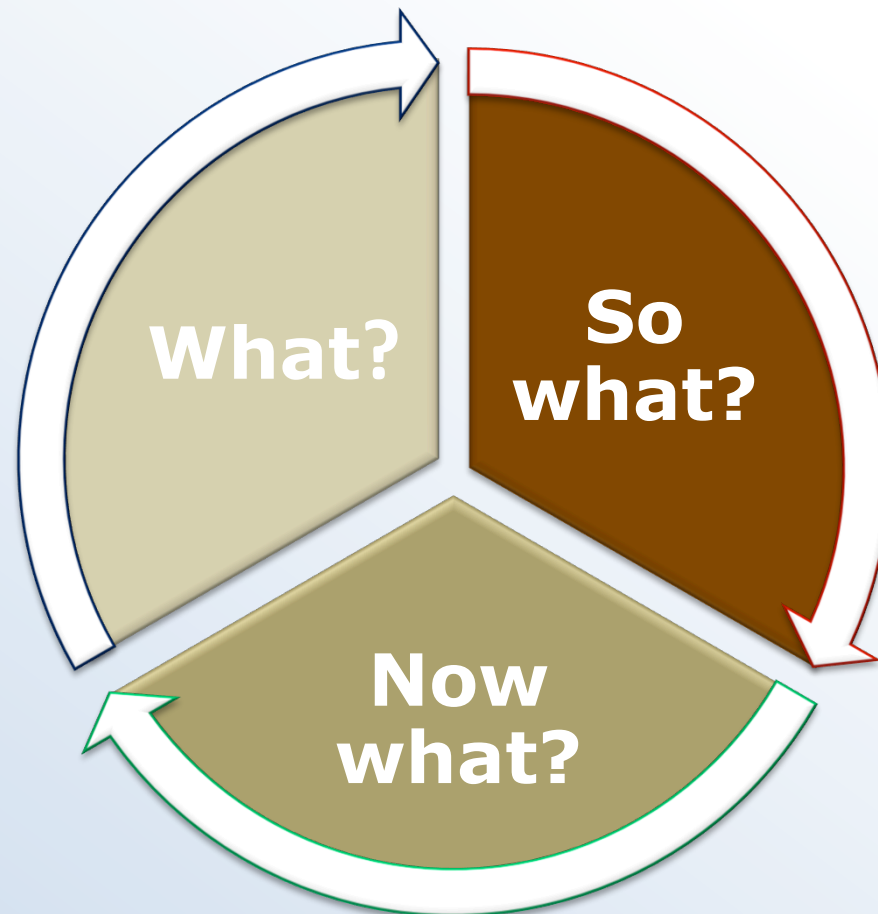
Now what will we
do?

Now what will we
communicate?

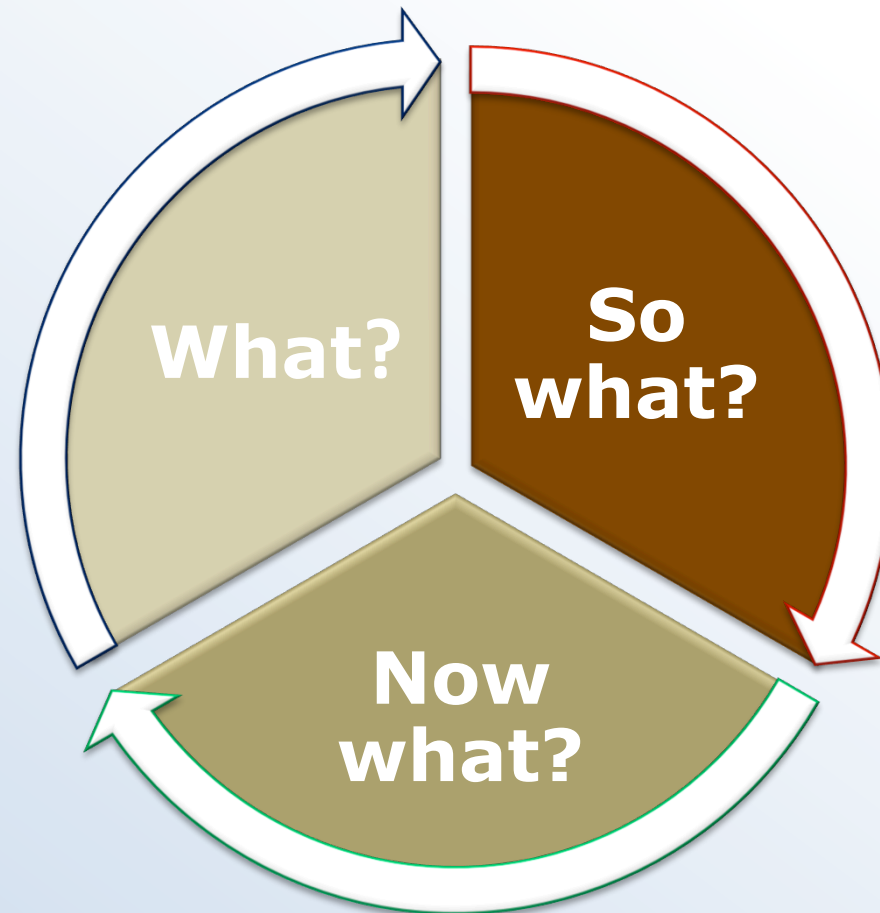
Now what will we
measure?

Now what will we
look for next?

Now what . . .



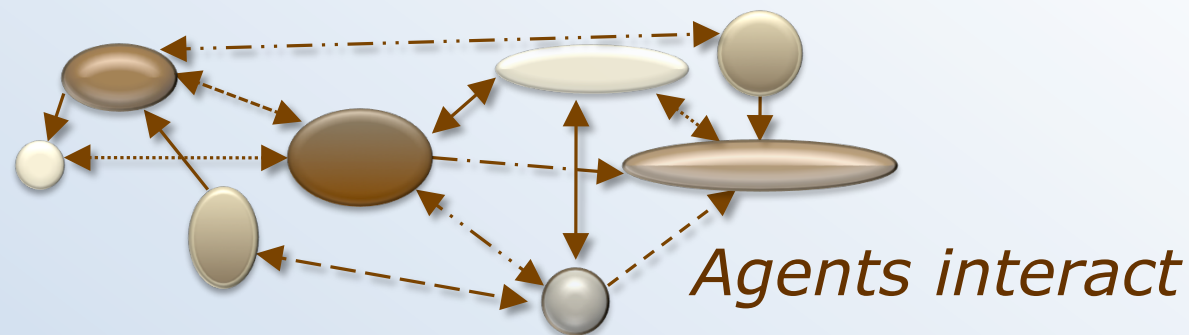
Adaptive Action



Complex Adaptive System (CAS) Self-Organizing System



A collection of individual agents who have the freedom to act in unpredictable ways, and whose actions are interconnected such that they produce system-wide patterns.

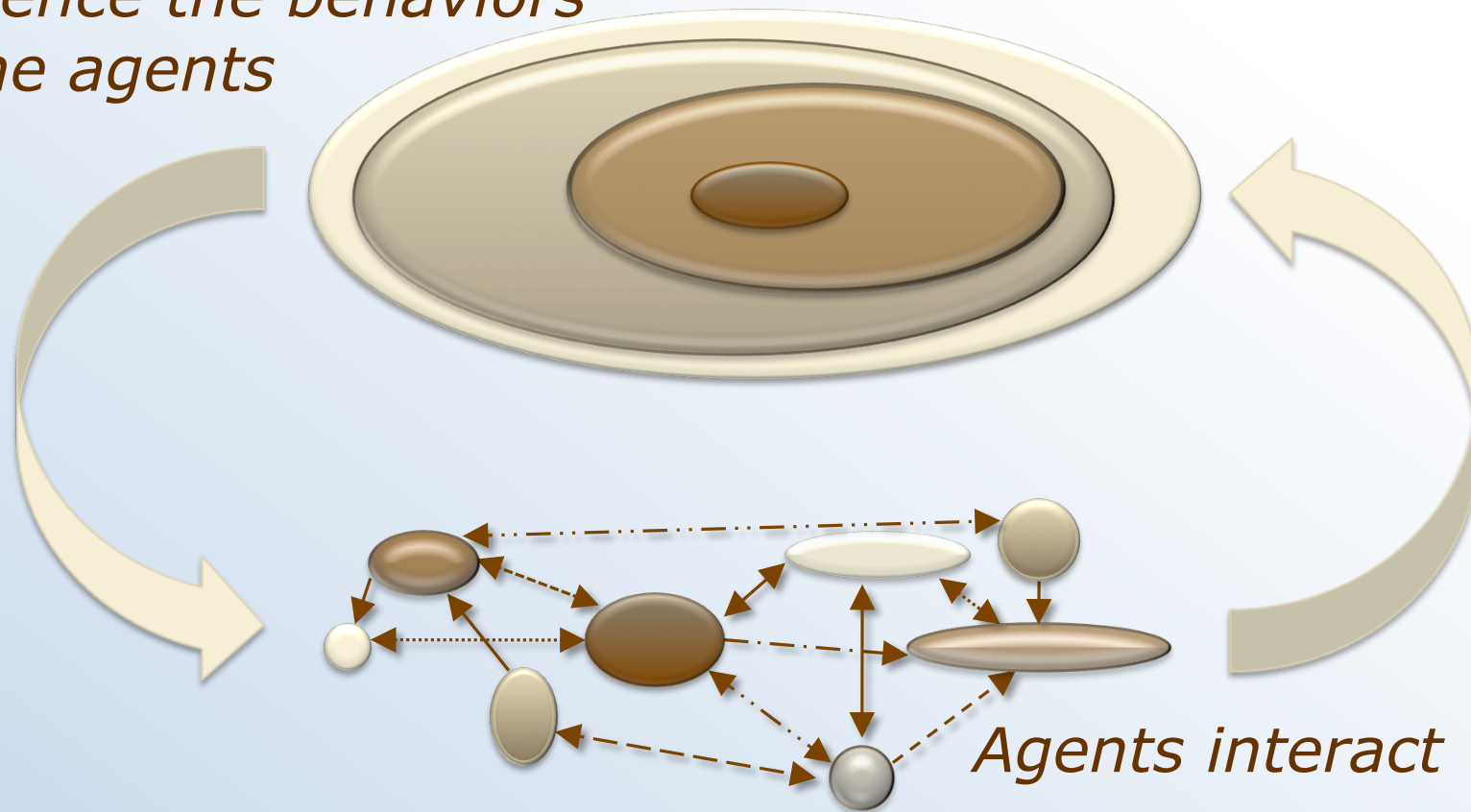


Complex Adaptive System (CAS) Self-Organizing System



Those system-wide patterns, in turn, influence the behaviors of the agents

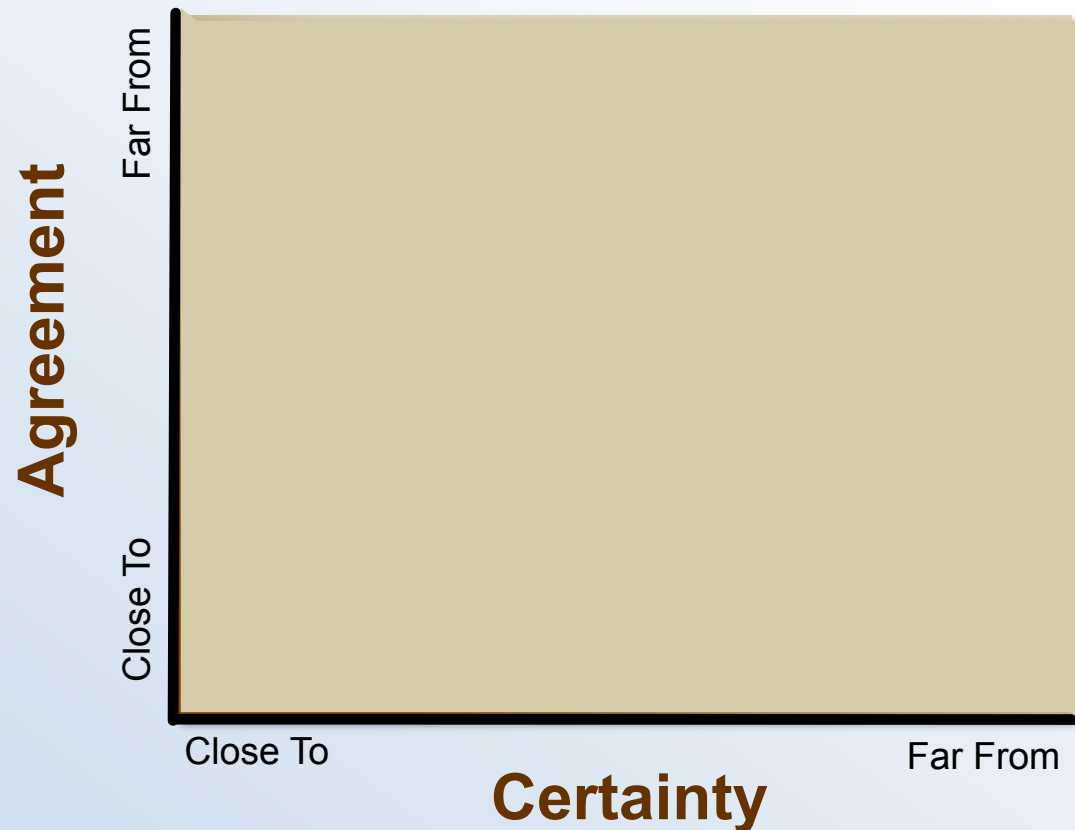
System-wide patterns emerge



Dynamics in CAS



Know when your changes are in the zone of emergence



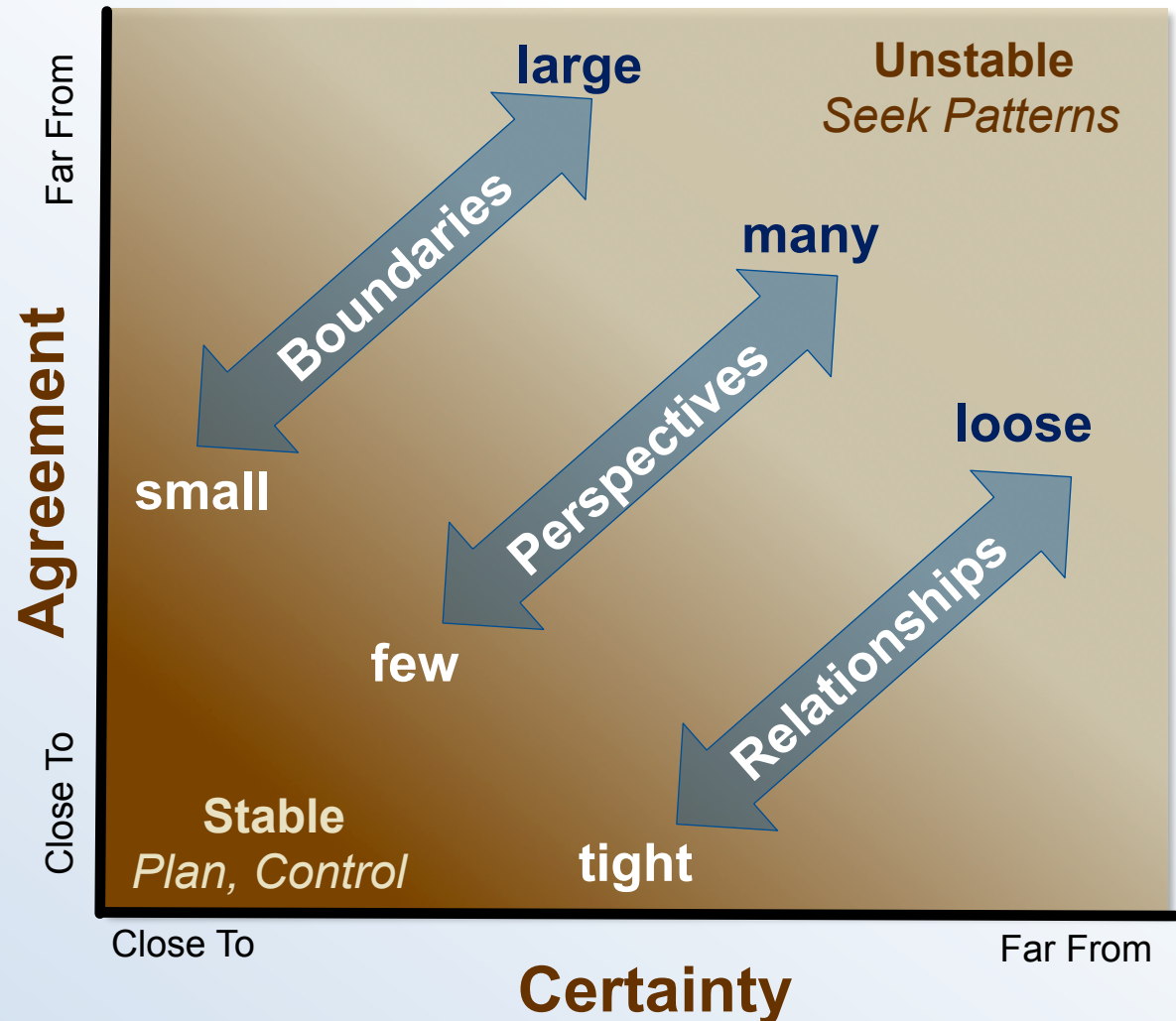
Patterns on the Evaluation Landscape



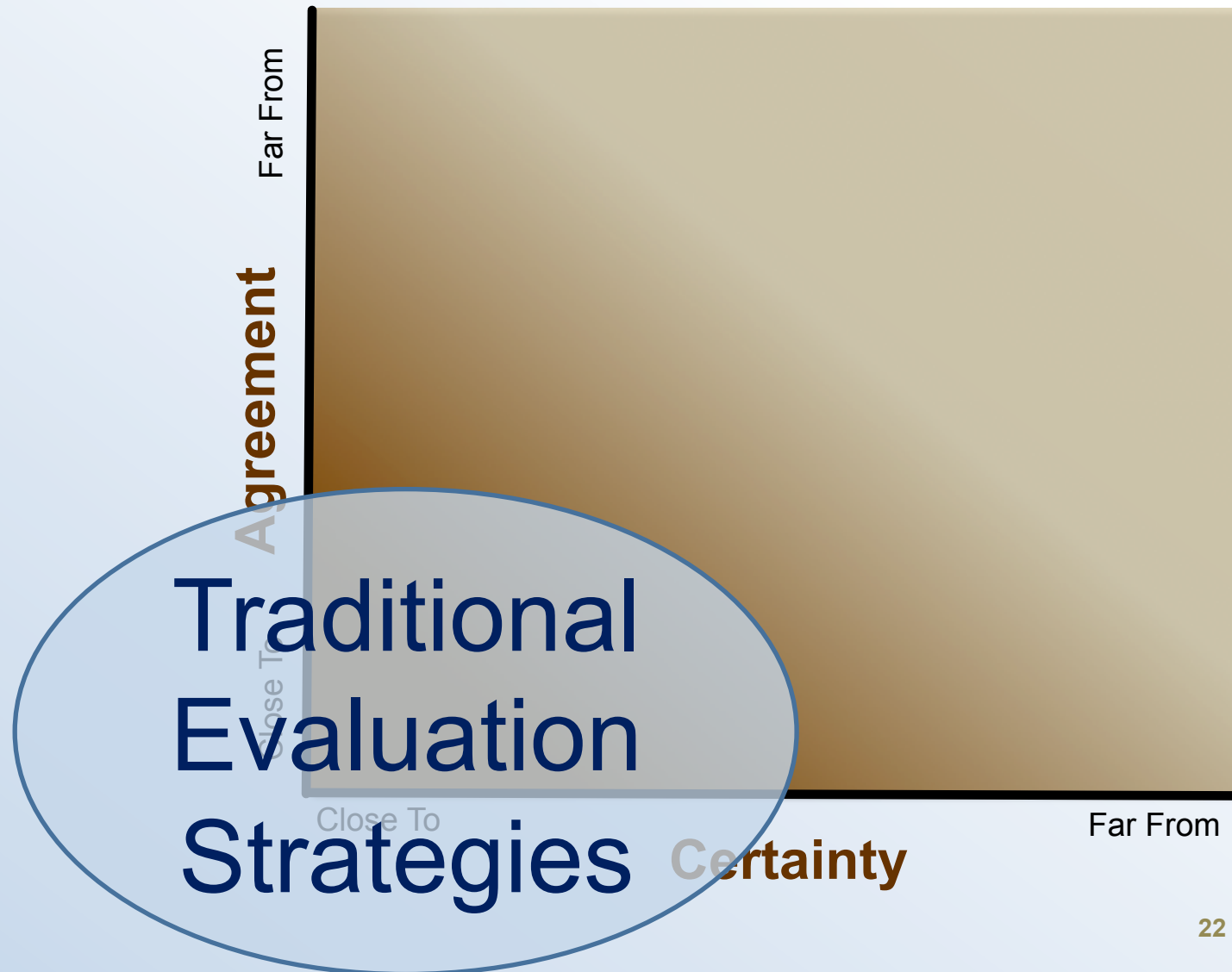
Where are you now?

Where do you want to be?

How do you get there?



Evaluation Options



Traditional Evaluation

- » Pre-determined indicators
- » Clear objectives
- » Randomized control trials
- » Outcome evaluation
- » Scorecards
- » Quantitative
- » Process measures
- » Formative and summative
- » Return on Investment
- » Hypothesis testing



Evaluation Options

Exploratory Evaluation Strategies

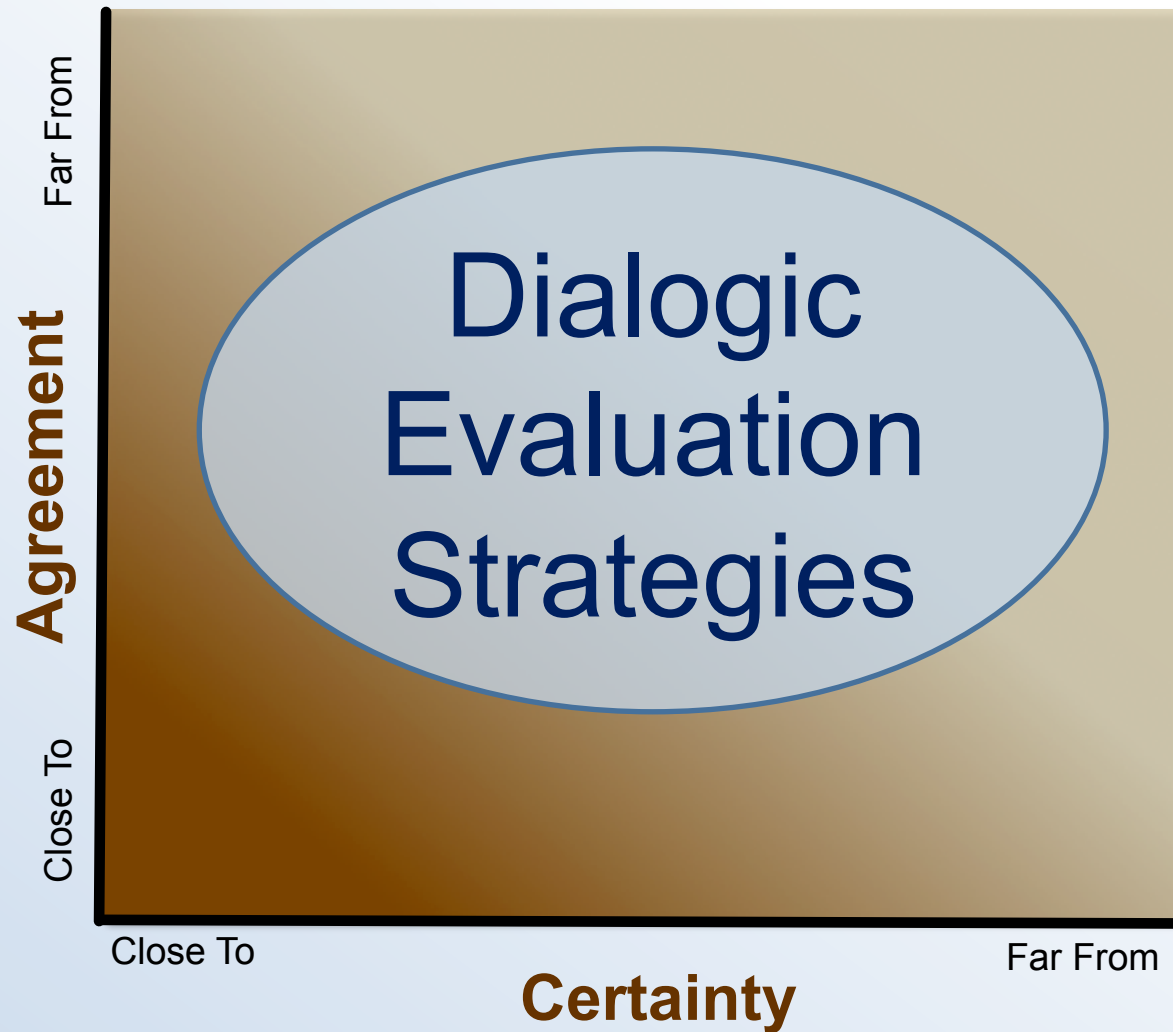


Exploratory Evaluation

- » Perpetual scan
- » Searching for surprise
- » Listening widely
- » Multiple sources
- » Open-ended questions
- » Looking for weak signals
- » Grounded theory
- » Hypothesis building
- » Organized discovery



Evaluation Options



Dialogic Evaluation

- » Interviews
- » Large group meetings
- » Storytelling
- » Observation
- » Discussion
- » Reflective practice
- » Developmental evaluation
- » Hypothesis emerging



Additional Resources



» Online:

- » Hsdlearning.org
- » Wiki.hsdinstitute.org

» Training:

- » Free monthly webinars
- » HSD Professional Certification
- » Open and custom Learning Labs
- » Eastern Mennonite University Summer Program 2016

» Books:

- » Adaptive Action: Leveraging Uncertainty in Your Organization
- » Facilitating Organization Change: Lessons from Complexity Science
- » Radical Rules for Schools
- » Simple Rules



