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Leading with Quality: An Immersive Journey into Continuous Improvement

2026 Summer Institute

Day 1



Welcome



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Agenda



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Day 1

Welcome and Connector

Case Study Analysis

Defining Quality and Mapping SVCU
Strengths and Weaknesses

Bridging to Individual Contexts

Closing

Reception and Dinner



Flaticon



About BranchED

2024-2025 Year in Review



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2024-2025

OUR YEAR IN
—————→ REVIEW



Norms of Engagement



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- Be present in the moment
- Take an inquiry stance
- Assume positive intentions
- Stay in your persona during case study work
- Value multiple perspectives
- Be willing to be changed by what you hear
- Have FUN!





What We Ask of You



As a Sponsored Participant

- Full attendance and active engagement.
- Developmental Feedback
- After the institute:
 - Apply what you have learned
 - Submit an implementation and impact document (QAS Playbook)
 - Participate in office hours as needed
 - Participate in 2, 1-hour, virtual sessions, to share how you have applied your learning, lessons learned, successes, and opportunities





Materials and Resources



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<https://bit.ly/4dsHJGi>

2026 Summer Institute

Resources


Day 1

Summer Institute Roster




Download Now

GA 8 Graphio Handout




Download Now

SVCU Case Study



Download Now

Persons Activation Protocol



Download Now



QAS Playbook

BUILDING COHERENT SYSTEMS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN
EDUCATOR PREPARATION



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TOOL 1: Beginning the Work – Initial QAS Self-Assessment

Before engaging in a deep examination of the seven QAS elements, teams should complete a rapid self-assessment (see below) to surface initial perceptions, assumptions, and areas of confidence or concern. This activity is intended to create a starting point for reflection rather than a final judgment about the strength of the system.

The purpose of the self-assessment is to:

- surface differing perceptions across stakeholders,
- identify areas where evidence may be limited or inconsistent,
- establish an initial picture of system strengths and vulnerabilities,
- and prepare teams for deeper analysis during the institute.

Teams are encouraged to approach the activity as a reflection tool rather than an audit.

Suggested Team Norms

- Focus on honest reflection rather than consensus.
- Distinguish assumptions from evidence.
- Be willing to revise perceptions as learning deepens.
- Treat disagreement as useful information about how the system is experienced.

Likert Scale:

1 – Not in Place; 2 – Emerging/Inconsistent; 3 – Established but Not Aligned; 4 – Coherent, Consistent, Effective

Teams should rate each element based on their current experience and understanding of the system, recognizing that ratings may shift after deeper analysis and discussion.

INITIAL QAS SELF-ASSESSMENT			
QAS Element	Rating	Confidence in Rating	What makes us say that?
	1-4	High – Moderate - Limited	
Defining Quality			
Evidence & Data Systems			
Analysis & Decision-Making			
Continuous Improvement			
Governance & Accountability			
Stakeholder Engagement			
Culture			

Reflection Prompts for the Self-Assessment

For each element, discuss:

- What evidence supports this rating?
- How confident are we in this rating?
- Where might our perceptions differ across stakeholder groups?
- What information may be missing?

**COMPLETED ON DAY 3 OF THE
INSTITUTE**

Implementation & Impact

TOOL 2: QAS Implementation & Improvement Plan

Use this template after reflecting on the seven QAS elements to identify a focused improvement priority, clarify ownership, and define how progress and impact will be monitored over time.

Complete this collaboratively as an institute team. Teams are encouraged to [engage](#) multiple perspectives, identify areas of alignment or disagreement, and work toward a shared understanding of priorities, evidence, and next steps.

Program / Institution:

Date:

Participants:

Step 1: Identify Your Priority Element

Which QAS element represents the highest-leverage opportunity for improvement in your system?

Priority Element:

Why did your team select this element?

What system challenges, risks, or recurring concerns make this area a priority?

Step 2: Define the Problem Clearly

What specifically is not working as intended?

Describe the issue as clearly and concretely as possible. Avoid listing activities that are missing. Instead, focus on the system condition or challenge you are trying to improve.

Examples:

- Stakeholders use inconsistent definitions of candidate readiness.
- Evidence is collected but rarely used collaboratively.
- Improvement efforts are fragmented across committees.
- Clinical feedback varies significantly across supervisors.

Step 3: Identify Supporting Evidence

What evidence suggests this is an area of need?

Examples of evidence may include:

- candidate performance trends,
- employer or completer feedback,
- accreditation findings,
- observation data,
- stakeholder perceptions,
- audit results,
- meeting artifacts,
- or recurring implementation concerns.

Evidence Sources:

SUBMIT JUNE 26, 2026

TOOL 3: One-Year QAS Impact Reflection & Evidence Summary Template

This one-year reflection template is intended to help teams look back on implementation and examine impact over time. Unlike the planning tool, which focuses on actions and responsibilities, this reflection tool emphasizes evidence of change, lessons learned, and priorities for the next cycle of improvement.

The purpose of this process is not simply to document activities, but to examine whether the work led to meaningful improvement in system functioning, alignment, decision-making, candidate preparation, or stakeholder outcomes.

Teams are encouraged to focus on:

- evidence of change,
- lessons learned,
- implementation challenges,
- sustainability,
- and next steps for continued improvement.

Program / Institution

Date Submitted

Participants Contributing to This Reflection

Section 1: Original Priority Area

Which QAS element did your team prioritize following the institute?

Why was this area selected?

Section 2: Actions Implemented

What actions, strategies, or structures did your team implement?

Briefly summarize the work completed.

Section 3: Evidence of Change

What changed as a result of this work?

Describe any observed changes related to:

- system coherence,
- evidence use,
- stakeholder engagement,
- governance,
- collaboration,
- candidate preparation,
- clinical practice,
- decision-making,
- or organizational culture.

Section 4: Evidence Sources

What evidence supports these conclusions?

Examples may include:

SUBMIT APRIL 30, 2027



Institute Goals



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01

Develop a
Systems-Level
Understanding
of Quality
Assurance

02

Build Skill in
Data Informed
Inquiry and
Continuous
Improvement

03

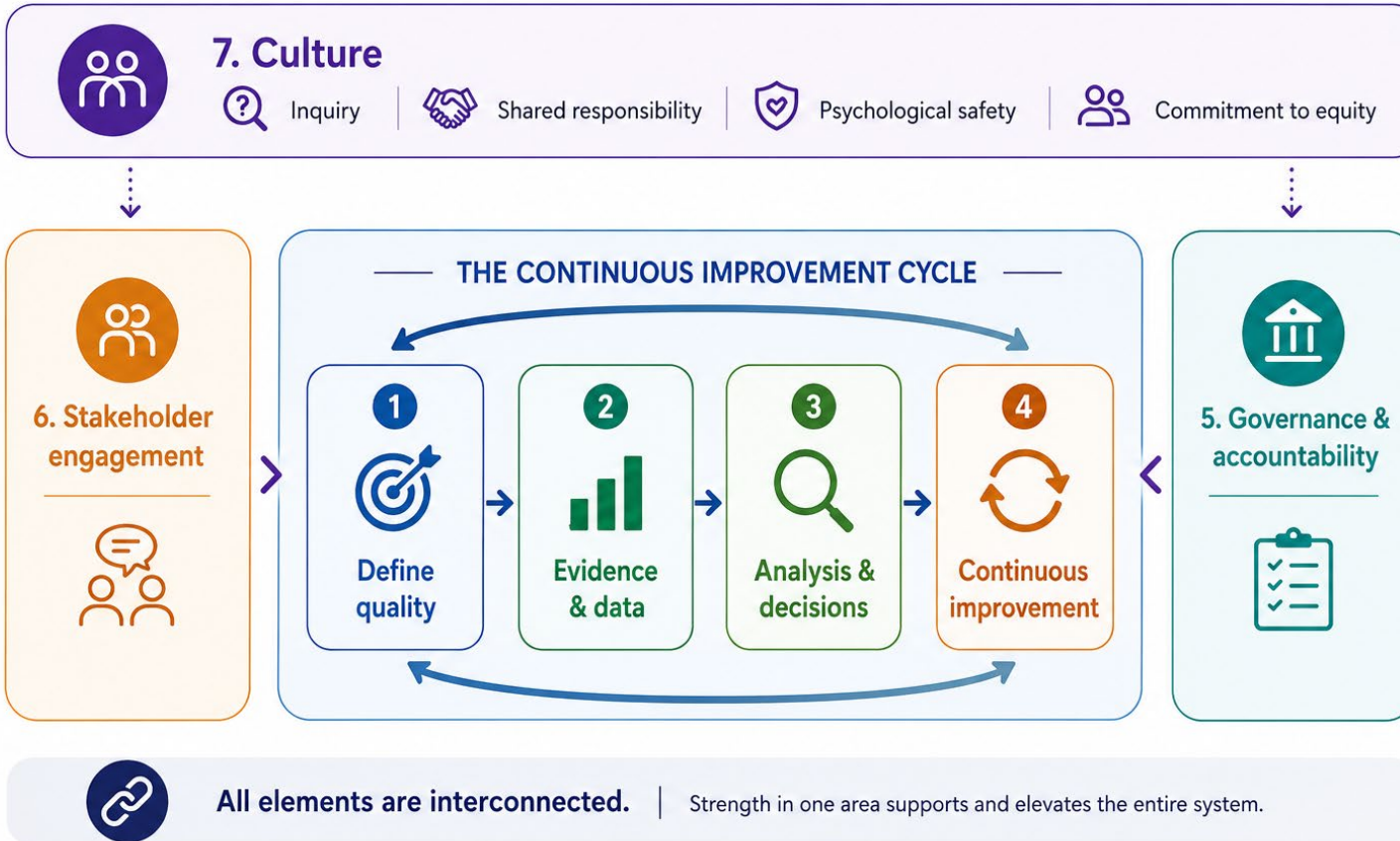
Build
Organizational
Capacity for
Coherent
System Design



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Quality Assurance System (QAS)

A coherent system for continuous improvement and candidate success



Quality Assurance System (QAS)

Elements function as an Interconnected whole.



Surprise!

BranchED Tradition

Synthesize our Learning



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Chapter Zero

<https://bit.ly/4vAH02f>



International Association for Continuing Education and Training



IACET

- International accrediting body.
- Accredits education providers that meet strict continuing education guidelines.
- IACET's standard is the core of thousands of educational programs worldwide.
- CEUs
 - Upon completion of all deliverables.





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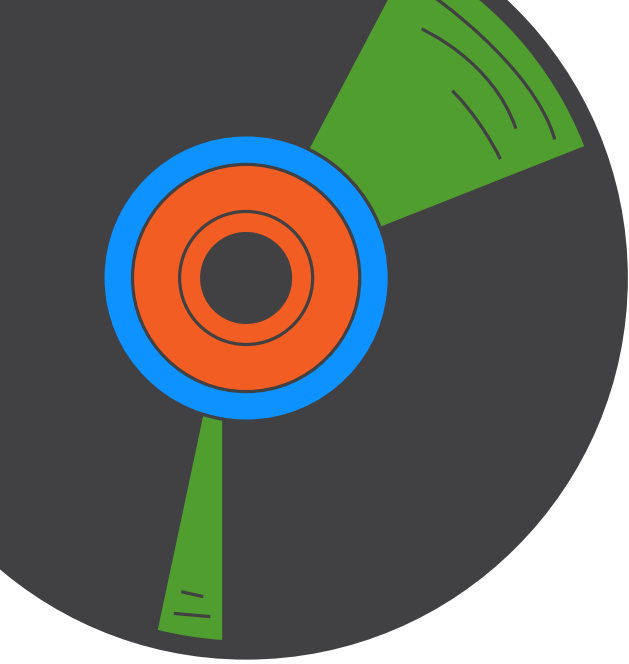
Download Now

SVCU Case Study



Persons Activation Protocol





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<https://bit.ly/2026SummerInstitutePlaylist>





Getting to Know Each Other



Connector: QAS Forecast

Review the various weather props.

If your current quality assurance system were a weather forecast, what would it be and why?

Share with your group and synthesize the forecast





Share Out



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Day 1 Objectives



Foundations and Systems Thinking

- Explain the purpose and interconnected elements of a Quality Assurance System (QAS).
- Use shared QAS language to describe system strengths, tensions, and breakdowns.
- Analyze the SVCU case study to identify fragmentation, misalignment, and competing definitions of quality.
- Apply foundational systems thinking concepts to their own organizational contexts.

Understand the System

**Make Sense of the
Evidence**

**Prioritize Improvement
& Action**



Pre-read On-ramp



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QUALITY ASSURANCE INSTITUTE

Case Study

At the Crossroads:

Summit Valley College of Education

*Navigating Quality Assurance in an Era of
Accountability*



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Individual → Table Group → Whole Group

Name one thing from the case that surprised you and one thing that confirmed what you already suspected.



Guess what?



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Not really 😞. You get a role to play...

Check behind your chair.



Personas



Roles/Perspectives

1. Priya Nair, Assessment Coordinator

2. Marcus Webb, Director of HR & Talent

3. Sandra Okonkwo, Associate Professor, Elementary Education

4. Javier Montoya, Mentor Teacher

5. Leila Hassan, Director of Clinical Practice & Field Experience

6. Suzana Brooks, Teacher Resident/ Candidate Representative



Stepping into the Role



Persona Activation

- Before we begin the simulation, take a few minutes with others who share your role to step into the perspective of the person you are portraying.

Before You Analyze, You Need to Inhabit

- Remember to:
 - Speak from your character's vantage point, not your own institution's.
 - Let the tension be real.
 - Your blind spot is a feature, not a bug.



Process



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Step 1: Read your persona card (3 minutes, individually)

Step 2: Individual reflection (4 minutes, quietly)

Step 3: Table share (5 minutes, in role)



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Role-Based Exploration

What's happening
at SVCU?





Role-Based Exploration



SVCU Analysis

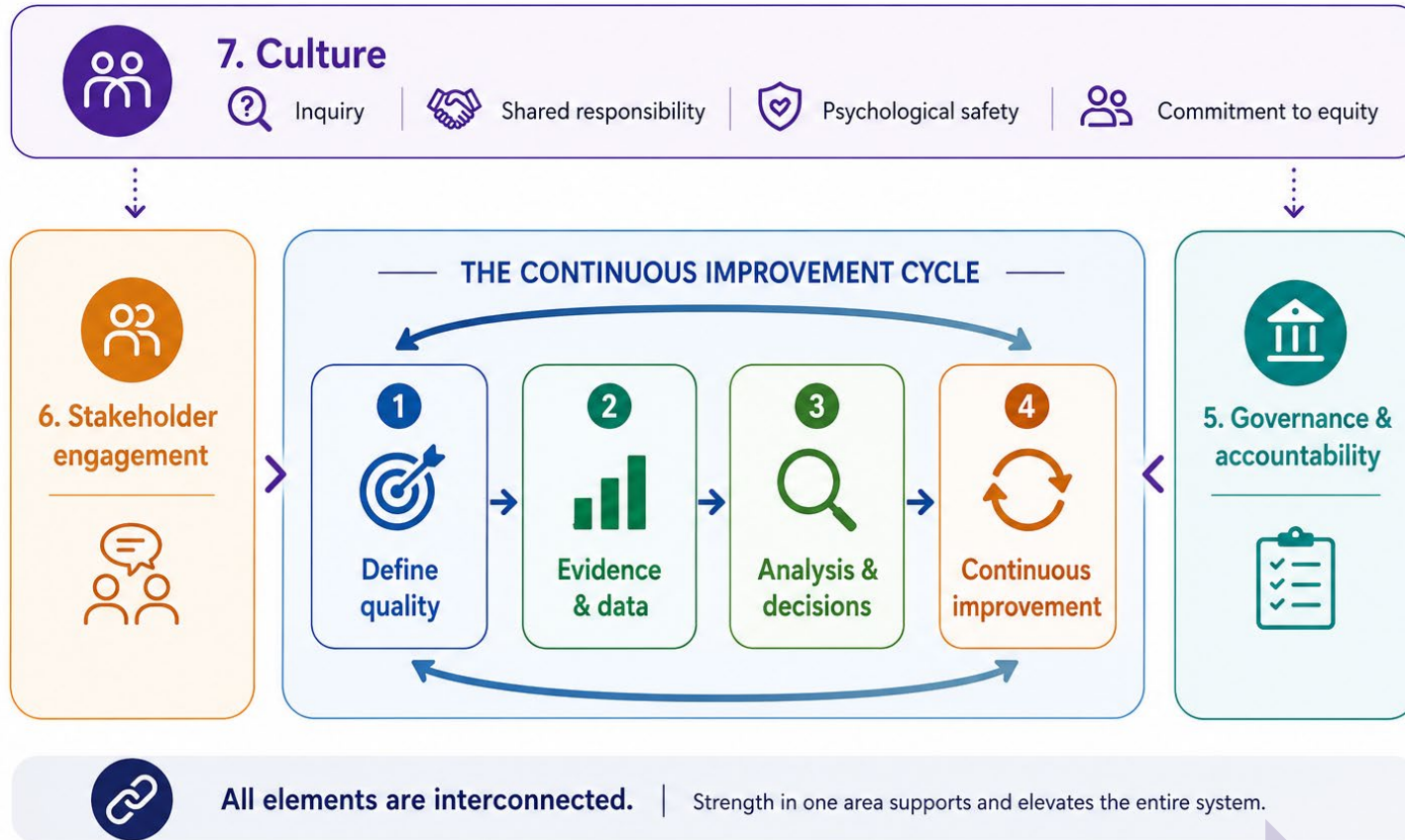
- What concerns or challenges are emerging at SVCU?
- What evidence suggests stakeholders may have different views of quality?
- Where do you notice inconsistencies, disconnects, or gaps?
- What questions do you still have?
- Capture key observations on chart paper
- Share Out

Quality Assurance System (QAS)

A coherent system for continuous improvement and candidate success



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**Experiencing
Each
Element Up
Close**

Understand the System

**Makes Sense of the
Evidence**

**Prioritize Improvement
& Action**



Quick Debrief



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Break Time!





From Elements to Interactions

We have explored the individual elements of a Quality Assurance System.

But systems rarely break down because a single element is missing.

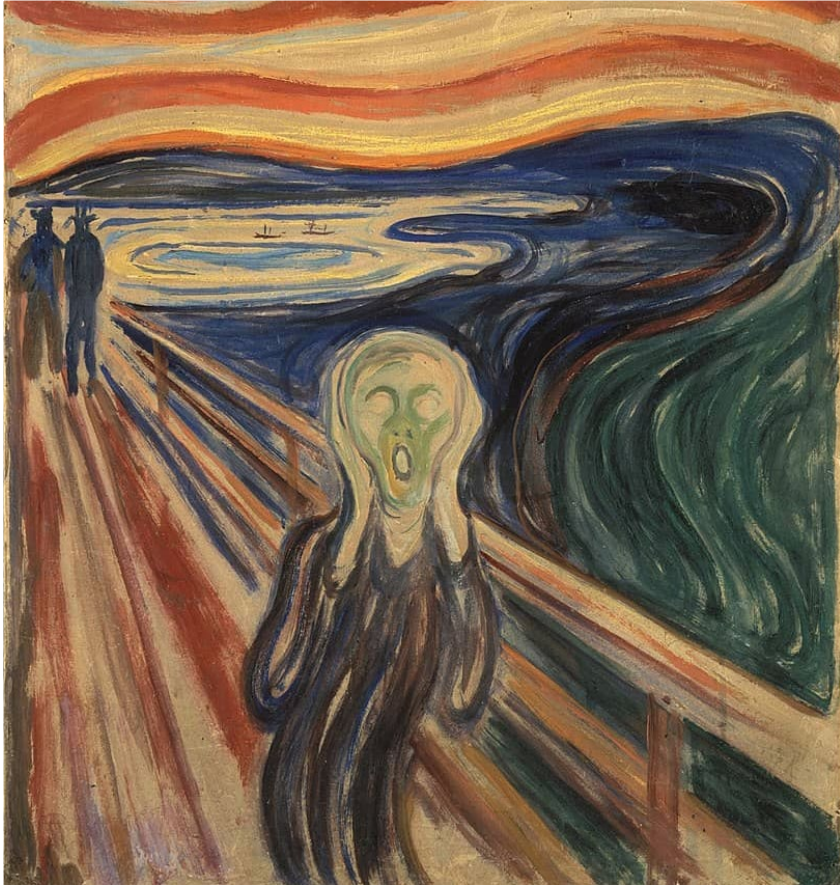
They struggle when the elements operate from different assumptions, definitions, or expectations.

Let's examine one of the most common sources of system tension: competing definitions of quality.





Defining Quality: Role Alike



Edvard Munch: The Scream

Framing the Tension

- At SVCU, everyone cares about candidate success.
- The challenge is that different stakeholders may define "practice-ready" in different ways.
- What happens when those definitions drive decisions across the same system?



Define Practice-Ready



Definition

- Individually define a practice-ready candidate.
- Share definitions in your role-alike group.
- Develop
 - One shared definition
 - Three non-negotiable indicators.
 - Ask yourself: If a candidate lacked this indicator, would I still consider them practice-ready? If the answer is no, it may be a non-negotiable.



Applying Learning to Our Context



Team Discussion

- Where do we see similar challenges in our own system?
- Which QAS element feels strongest?
- Which element creates the greatest risk or opportunity?
- Where do different stakeholder groups in our context define quality differently?
- What questions are we carrying into Day 2?



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Wrap-Up and Preview



Review

- Today we:
 - Explored the elements of a QAS
 - Examined how different definitions of quality shape systems
 - Identified strengths, gaps, and tensions
- Tomorrow we:
 - Examine evidence
 - Surface assumptions
 - Explore how data informs improvement decisions



Surprise!

BranchED Tradition

Synthesize our Learning

QAS Data Network

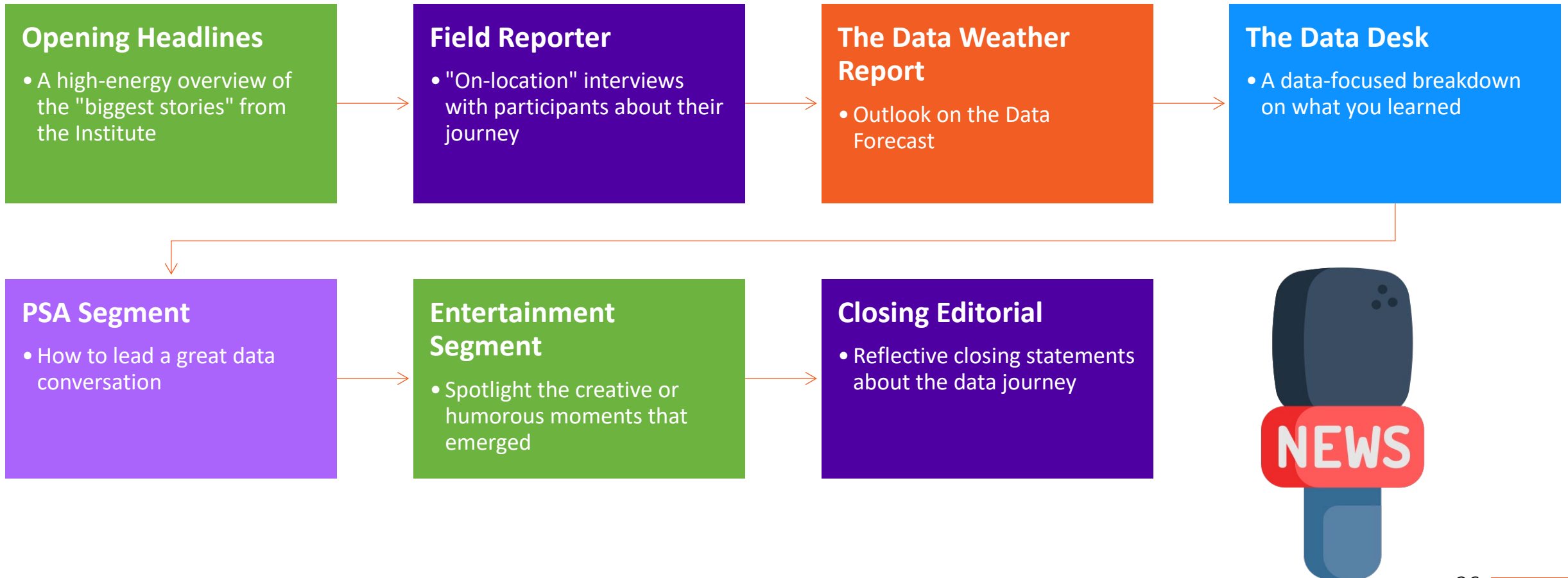




It's Data News Network



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Closing

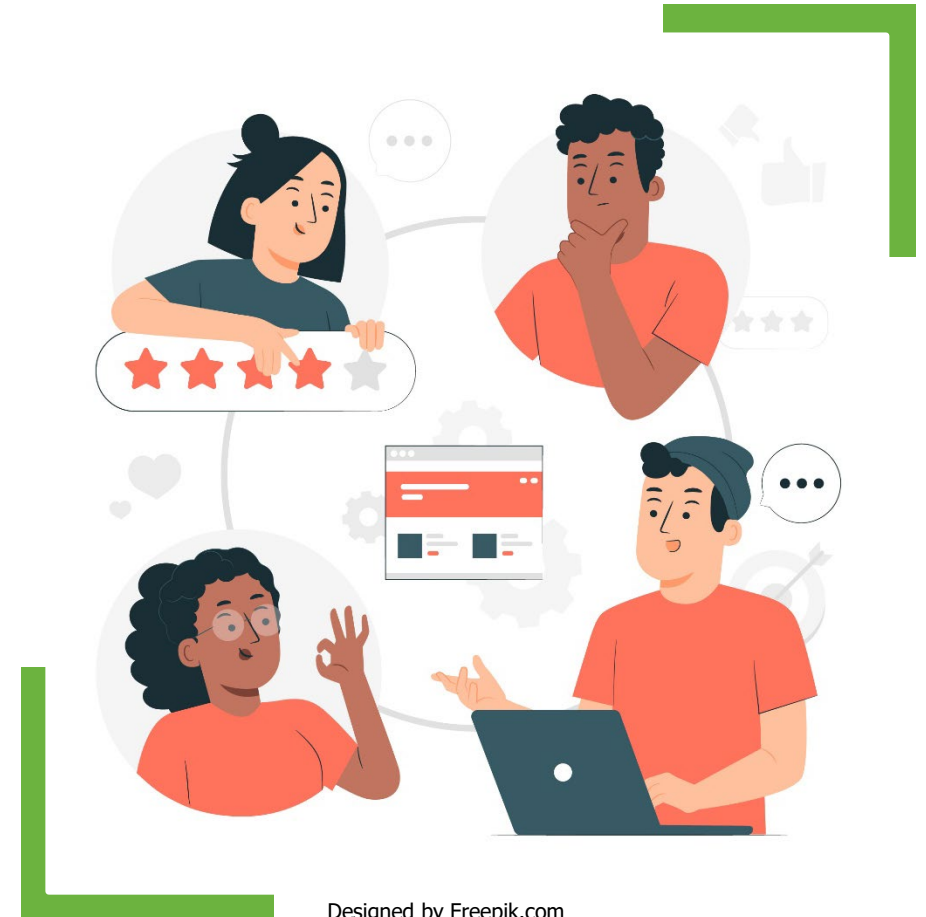


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Your Feedback is Important to Us!



<https://bit.ly/4ohIRBB>



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Reception and Dinner At the Hotel