LEADERSHIP FOR POWERFUL LEARNING

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THE POWERFUL LEARNING SERIES

The Powerful Learning manuals are designed for teachers and for school and system leaders who are embarked on a school improvement journey. The manuals describe how schools can lift student learning. The steps are drawn from practical experience, tested and refined in schools over time.

Three manuals are at the core of the series – *The System and Powerful Learning*, *Curiosity and Powerful Learning*, and *Leadership for Powerful Learning*. Together they explain how powerful learning is made real for our students through purposeful, specific changes in whole school culture, classroom culture, leadership, and teaching practice.

The series includes *Curiouser and Curiouser* and *Models of Practice* manuals which concentrate on precision in teaching practice. They stand as references for improving, planning, and monitoring professional practice, assisting us to get to the heart of the learning enterprise.
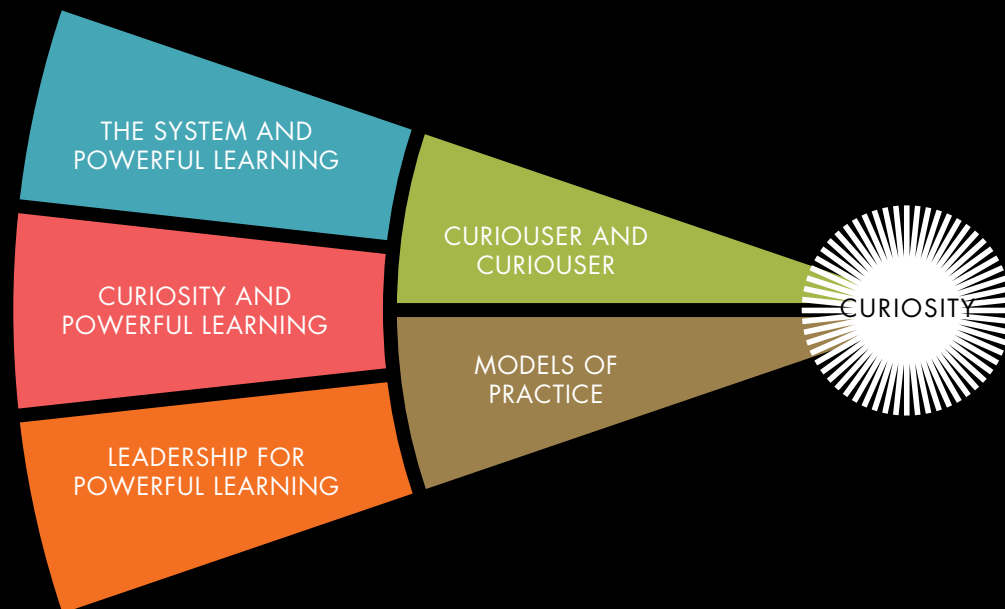
The manuals recognise that schools differ, and must differ in responding to their communities. Diversity among schools is cause for celebration, as is consistently high student learning outcomes in all schools. Each manual emphasises the collective endeavour essential to achieving curiosity driven powerful learning. Teachers work together, students become more adept at using curiosity as a learning resource, leaders communicate purpose and direction. We all monitor outcomes and adapt as we go. We are all professional learners.

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THE SYSTEM AND POWERFUL LEARNING

CURIOSITY AND POWERFUL LEARNING

LEADERSHIP FOR POWERFUL LEARNING

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER

MODELS OF PRACTICE

CURIOSITY

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LEADERSHIP FOR POWERFUL LEARNING

Our duty as educators is to create and maintain excellent schools that advance the learning of every student, that build each student's knowledge and skills about how to learn, that support them to be the best learners and the finest people they can be. *Leadership for Powerful Learning* is written with that shared moral purpose in mind.

We are all familiar with excellent new practices or programs that we introduce into our schools because we are convinced they hold exciting potential for accelerating student learning. Yet successfully implementing innovation on an enduring basis often eludes us. This manual describes an integrated set of leadership strategies necessary to make enduring changes that progressively lead to excellence in all classrooms and in all schools.

EDUCATIONAL CHANGE: TECHNICALLY SIMPLE, SOCIALLY COMPLEX

It's often said that educational change is technically simple, but socially complex. In many ways it is relatively easy to identify and describe the features and benefits of productive change in teaching or curriculum. But change in schools is not brought about by technical prescriptions or mandates from above. Change happens through and with people in the school – students, teachers, and school leaders engaging collaboratively in purposeful and productive activity. It is in the gift of leadership to create a work culture that exhibits these characteristics. The types of leadership described in this manual address the social complexity of school change, ensuring the common paradox in education of 'change yet no change' does not take hold.

We encountered the challenge of social complexity and the phenomena of 'change yet no change' when working on the Powerful Learning School Improvement Strategy in northern suburbs schools in Melbourne, Australia. In *Leadership for Powerful Learning* we share with you the know-how that emerged as we, together with our gifted Principals and teachers, sought out ways to progressively introduce enduring changes in the dynamic social environment that is part and parcel of every school.
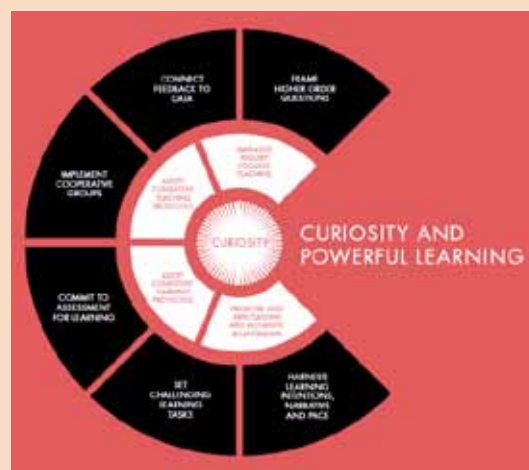
TEN THEORIES OF ACTION

We founded our Powerful Learning Strategy on:
– the School Improvement Model outlined in *The System and Powerful Learning*, the first of the three core manuals in this series
– the ten Theories of Action described in detail in *Curiosity and Powerful Learning*, the third of three core manuals in this series.

Leadership in schools – the focus of this manual – determines the local school environment in which the Theories of Action take hold and make a difference. The Theories of Action fall into two groups:
– four Theories of Action for the Whole School that enable teachers and students to do their work well
– six Theories of Action for Teachers that enable them to create classroom environments for their students that are rich in curiosity, inquiry and learning.

The Theories of Action are presented in *Curiosity and Powerful Learning* in the following order.

Four Whole School Theories of Action	
1	Prioritise high expectations and authentic relationships
2	Emphasise inquiry focused teaching
3	Adopt consistent teaching protocols
4	Adopt consistent learning protocols

Six Theories of Action for Teachers	
1	Harness learning intentions, pace and narrative
2	Set challenging learning tasks
3	Frame higher order questions
4	Connect feedback to data
5	Commit to assessment for learning
6	Implement cooperative groups

As the collaboration with our Melbourne schools developed, it became clear that the most influential of these is the second of the Theories of Action for the Whole School – *Emphasise inquiry focused teaching*.

This Theory of Action is the foundation both for high quality teaching, and for developing curiosity in our students. Teacher directed instruction that is infused with a spirit of inquiry boosts student engagement and achievement. It also happens that this Theory of Action is the most difficult to implement.

THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP

Schools in Melbourne's north were adopting the Theories of Action for Teachers. Professional learning for teachers was provided to develop teachers' understanding of preferred practices. Yet framing Theories of Action, and ensuring access to professional learning, did not necessarily mean that the 'spirit of inquiry' was realised. Nor did these steps necessarily lead to the Theories of Action becoming embedded in a school's professional practice.

What was missing? Why did our thoughtful plans fall short? We took these questions to our principals, and to colleagues who worked across many schools in the local system. In response, school leaders posed a question for us:

– What leadership strategies effectively bring people on board and expand their repertoires of professional practice for the long haul?

The Theories of Action provide a map, and professional learning provides an itinerary. But this was not enough to break the paradox of 'change yet no change'. Our school leaders were seeking ways of dealing with the kinds of social complexity that often derail school improvement. They pointed to the need for a disciplined, flexible, down-to-earth approach that would assist them to secure sustainable innovation in their schools.

STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

With their assistance we developed and deployed the styles of leadership and associated strategies described in this manual. In doing this we adopted an overarching model for school leadership that incorporated four leadership styles necessary for successful implementation:

Instructional Leadership

Adaptive Leadership

Strategic Leadership

System Leadership

In this manual we outline a discrete and practical leadership strategy for each of these styles. Taken together they provide a comprehensive set of leadership resources for shaping, embedding, and spreading productive change in each school and across schools in a network and system.

School improvement hinges on leadership that is competent in collaboratively fashioning a school culture in which evidence about learning and teaching – technical knowledge – is valued and put to work. We are concerned with leadership practice that is:

– adept at initiating and implementing change
– skilled in maintaining the direction of change over time, and in enlarging the benefits from new and fruitful ways of learning and teaching.

We take this school improvement journey in the company of our students. With you, we recognise their life chances are influenced by personal growth and academic achievement. Our shared moral purpose is to ensure that we do all we can in our schools and classrooms to broaden their life chances and enrich their worlds. In doing so, we embellish our own professional lives.

David Hopkins

Wayne Craig

WHAT'S IN THIS MANUAL?

LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

Inquiry focused teaching is fundamental to the Powerful Learning School Improvement Strategy because it releases and guides our students' curiosity. By developing their ability to manage their own curiosity our students extend their capabilities as self-directed, independent learners. This is our collective moral purpose.

However, embedding inquiry focused teaching in our schools, as we noted in the Introduction, is not straightforward. While doing this work we discovered that, by and large, leadership practices and strategies in most jurisdictions fell short of embedding pedagogic practices capable of fulfilling our collective moral purpose.

Working with our principals and school improvement teams in Melbourne and elsewhere we developed four leadership styles and associated strategies that addressed a range of challenges.

LEADERSHIP STYLES	ENABLING PURPOSES
Instructional Leadership	Develop, nurture, and embed the reform narrative about student learning
Adaptive Leadership	Create professional learning opportunities: – relevant to each teachers' development needs – aligned with the school's Priorities for Development
Strategic Leadership	Ensure consistency and rapid development by precise diagnosis of the school's progress along a well defined improvement pathway
System Leadership	Nurture system wide reform through adopting a variety of out-of-school roles and the purposeful use of networks

We explore the nature of each leadership style in this manual. Collectively, these four leadership styles have the power to define, implement, and maintain changes that bring about sustainable school improvement. Each offers something valuable yet different, and together they provide a growth continuum for all school leaders.

Before exploring the leadership styles in more detail it is important to take a more comprehensive view of school leadership in a framework that includes and links together these various perspectives.

AN EMERGING MODEL OF SCHOOL AND SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

This way of thinking about and implementing school leadership is validated in international research, such as the OECD's Improving School Leadership study which investigated this question: *'School leadership: why does it matter?'*

The OECD's investigation yielded these three responses.

At the school level	leadership can improve teaching and learning by setting objectives and influencing classroom practice
At the local level	school leadership can improve equal opportunities by collaborating with other schools and local communities
At the system level	school leadership is essential for successful education reform

Thinking about the influence of school leadership at the school, local and system levels led to the development of the School Leadership Model on the opposite page.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP MODEL

THE INNER RING – MORAL PURPOSE

The School Leadership Model exhibits inside-out logic. Leaders are driven by a moral purpose about enhancing student learning. Moral purpose activates the passion to reach for the goal and prompts leaders to empower teachers and others to make schools a critical force for improving communities.

The Model asks educational leaders to shoulder broader leadership roles. They care about, and work for, the success of their own school and other schools.

SECOND RING – REFLECTIVE DEVELOPMENT & STRATEGIC ACUMEN

Yet moral purpose is insufficient on its own. The School Improvement Model holds that the practice of our best system leaders has two characteristic behaviours and skills that bring impact to moral purpose

First, the best system leaders engage in reflective personal development, usually informally. They benchmark themselves against their peers and develop their skill base in response to the context they are working in. This means they develop their leadership capabilities in response to the particular kinds of leadership work their school needs them to do.

Second, we have observed that all the best system leaders have strategic acumen. This means they know how to translate their vision, their moral purpose, into operational principles that have tangible outcomes. They can also think simultaneously in the short term and medium term.

THIRD RING –
THREE KEY BEHAVIOURS OF
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

The attributes of moral purpose, reflective personal development, and strategic acumen are expressed in three key behaviours of instructional leaders:
– manage teaching and learning
– develop people
– develop the school as an organisation.

OUTER RING –
WORKING ACROSS SCHOOLS
FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL STUDENTS

As school leaders make progress on the school improvement journey in their own school, they increasingly assume system leadership roles. They are committed to their own school *and* to the whole system.

Outstanding leaders exemplify the aspirations and commitments embedded in the Outer Ring of our emerging model of school leadership. They work across schools for the benefit of all students.

This growing number of system leaders take their leadership work into a wider domain. They strive for equity and inclusion by acting on context and culture. They work with their communities to engender a sense of worth and empowerment. System leaders realise that to change the larger system they have to engage with it in direct and meaningful ways.
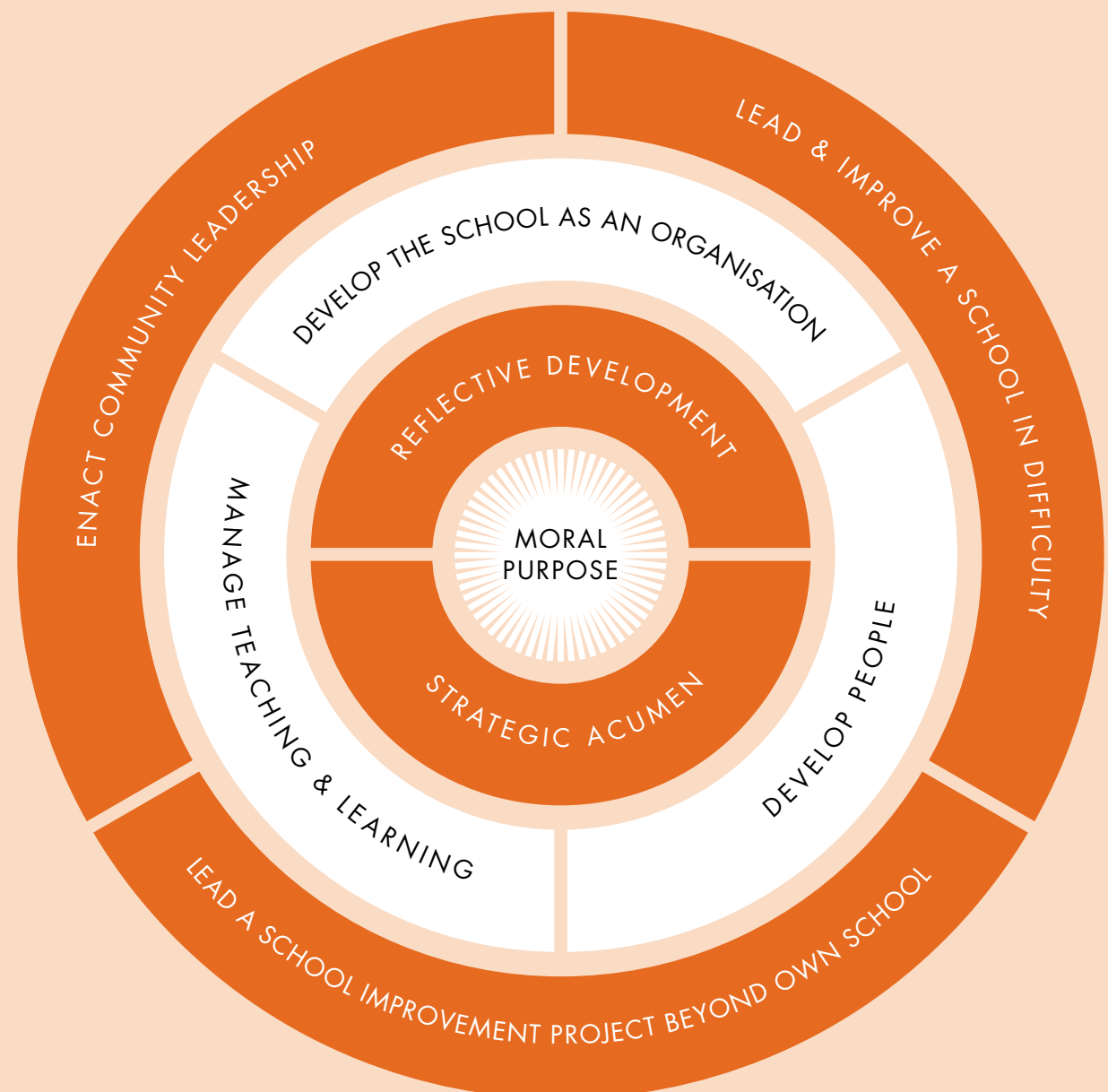
INTEGRATING LEADERSHIP AND IMPLEMENTATION

The logic behind this manual is that to pursue sustainable school improvement it is essential to integrate both leadership and implementation.

We emphasised the importance of implementation in the Introduction. Implementation is a touchstone for leadership practice that we return to often in the following pages.

The School Leadership Model described on pages 4-5 offers a shared way of thinking and speaking about what drives and characterises leadership practice in schools. It draws directly on the strong evidence we have about the vital connection between school leadership and school improvement. The Model is an advance organiser for the rest of this manual. We have found that the Model provides school leaders with a framework both for action and understanding. It sets out:

– the purpose of school leadership
– how the leadership strategies we describe complement each other.

Each of the leadership styles we examine in this manual is nourished and improved by the beliefs, professional practice, and skills situated in the School Leadership Model's Inner Ring – Moral Purpose, and Second Ring – Reflective development and strategic acumen. They are the wellsprings for the four leadership styles we unpack in the following pages.

Our unpacking focuses on the observable, disciplined leadership practice that appears in two rings of the School Leadership Model:

– The Third Ring – Three key behaviours of instructional leaders
– The Outer Ring – Working across schools for the benefit of all students.

The scheme we use in the following pages is set out in the table below, which also identifies the implementation tool we propose for each leadership style.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP MODEL		LEADERSHIP STYLE	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
Third Ring	Manage teaching and learning	Instructional	Five phase framework
	Develop People	Adaptive	Infrastructure for Professional Learning
	Develop the Organisation	Strategic	Improvement Pathway
Outer Ring	Work across Schools	System	Networks

This scheme allows us to:

– explore with you a comprehensive approach to school leadership
– suggest practical strategies to assist with aspects of implementation that are crucially important in our school improvement journeys.

We begin our exploration with Instructional Leadership.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
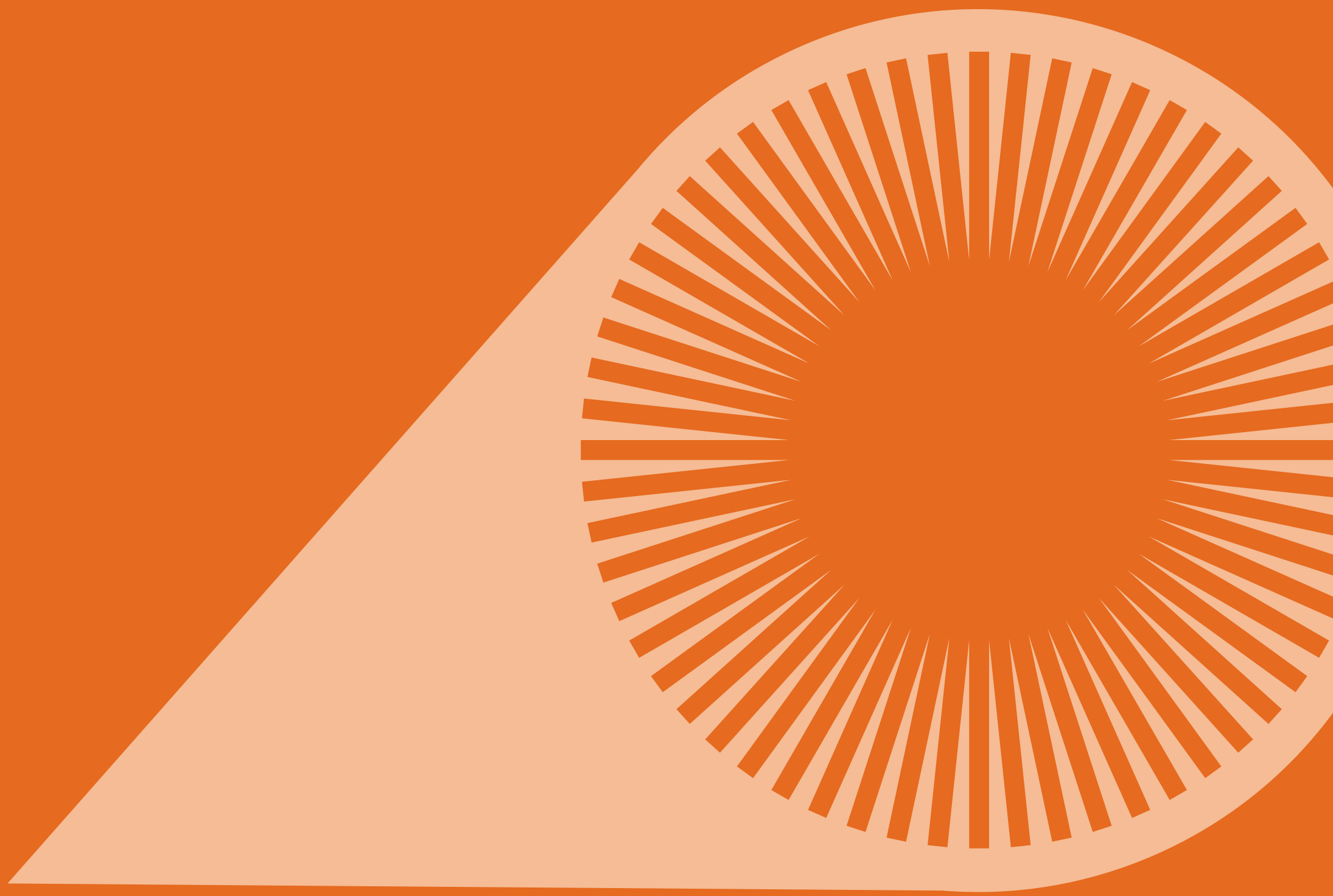
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

We need to remind ourselves occasionally that school leaders make a very real difference to student learning and achievement. Because their influence is usually indirect it is often difficult to link their actions directly to student outcomes. Fortunately the research on the link between leadership and learning has developed recently, and rapidly.

The work of Ken Leithwood and colleagues is particularly important. They have captured the concept of Instructional Leadership, defining it as 'the behaviours of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students.'

In *Seven Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership*, Leithwood and colleagues offered a detailed characterisation of the influence of school leaders on student learning. The claims are set out below.

SEVEN STRONG CLAIMS ABOUT SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

1 **School leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning.**

2 **Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices.**

3 **It is the enactment of these basic leadership practices – not the practices themselves – that is responsive to the context.**

4 **School leaders improve pupil learning indirectly through their influence on staff motivation and working conditions.**

5 **School leadership has a greater influence on schools and pupils when it is widely distributed.**

6 **Some patterns of leadership distribution are much more effective than others.**

7 **A small handful of personal 'traits' (such as being open minded, flexible, persistent and optimistic) explain a high proportion of the variation in leader effectiveness.**

In their research for the Wallace Foundation, Leithwood and colleagues defined four Instructional Leadership practices closely associated with powerful learning and enhanced student outcomes. They form the repertoire of basic leadership practices we have elaborated through our own school improvement work. Note that the first of these practices – setting direction – relies on strategic acumen which resides in the School Improvement Model's Second Ring. The other three practices constitute the Model's Third Ring.

Set direction	Ensuring that the school's vision sees every learner reaching their potential. Translating this vision into a whole school curriculum and high expectations.
Manage teaching and learning	Ensuring a high degree of consistency by planning, implementing and using specifications of practice. Supporting innovation in teaching practices that enable personalised learning for all students. Expanding the repertoire of teaching practice to include high leverage practices that influence the learning of all students.
Develop people	Enabling students to become active learners. Creating a school that operates as a professional learning community for teachers.
Develop the organisation	Creating an evidence based school and an effective organisation. Participating in collaborative networks that build curriculum diversity, professional support, and extended services.

These leadership practices make a material difference in schools. They are practices that assemble the tools a school needs for the journey that puts powerful learning in the hands of all students.

We have worked with instructional leaders to shape, test, and revise a Five Phase Implementation Framework that gives more precision and sustainability to Instructional Leadership. The Framework is described on pages 9-16.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP – FIVE PHASE IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

As part of the Powerful Learning School Improvement Strategy in Melbourne's north we used instructional rounds to enhance the pedagogic leadership capacity of principals and teachers. Through observing teaching and learning in classrooms, instructional rounds provided precise data about what is working, and what needs to change.

Instructional rounds in many schools provided the data that helped us articulate the ten Theories of Action outlined in the Introduction to this manual. Taken together, the Theories of Action lead to deepened curiosity in students, demonstrated by both enhanced learning capabilities and enhanced learning outcomes.

FIVE CONDITIONS FOR ACHIEVING AN INQUIRY FOCUS

The objective of the second Whole School Theory of Action is to achieve inquiry focused teaching across a school. Our challenge was to understand why this was the toughest Theory of Action to implement. We found five interlinking conditions that seem to be in place when schools realise the desired objective.

The five conditions are shown below. It is useful to note that conditions 1-4 are purposefully directed at changing the work structures in a school. We will explore this when we consider condition 5 in greater detail (see page 16).

FIVE CONDITIONS FOR ACHIEVING AN INQUIRY FOCUS

1. Embed the story of the curiosity journey

2. Select the key pedagogic strategies that promote inquiry

3. Place professional learning at the heart of the change process

4. Achieve consistency in inquiry focused teaching practice

5. Culture changes and develops to embrace inquiry

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIVE CONDITIONS

We also found that it is most effective to follow a sequenced or phased implementation plan for these conditions – condition 1 is the platform for achieving condition 2, condition 2 is the platform for achieving condition 3, and so on.

We found that most schools were implementing some of the Theories of Action (condition 2) through linked professional development activity (condition 3). However, fulfilling these two conditions often had superficial or variable impact.

The spirit of inquiry was reliably embedded as daily practice across the whole school (condition 5) only when there was:
– a shared narrative about learning apparent across the whole school (condition 1)
– consistency in inquiry focused teaching practice (condition 4).

This led us to deal with each condition as one phase in a sequenced developmental process.

When working at scale with many schools we found it necessary to develop and implement frameworks that assisted them to:
– achieve and maintain each of the five conditions
– more precisely monitor the impact of each condition after its implementation.

The five Phases, corresponding to each condition, are described in the following pages. We also suggest monitoring frameworks schools can use to initiate and maintain action that achieves an inquiry focus – the Theory of Action with the greatest impact.

PHASE 1
Embed the story of the curiosity journey

PHASE 2
Select the key pedagogic strategies that promote inquiry

PHASE 3
Place professional learning at the heart of the change process

PHASE 4
Achieve consistency in inquiry focused teaching practice

PHASE 5
Culture changes and develops to embrace inquiry

1 2 3 4 5
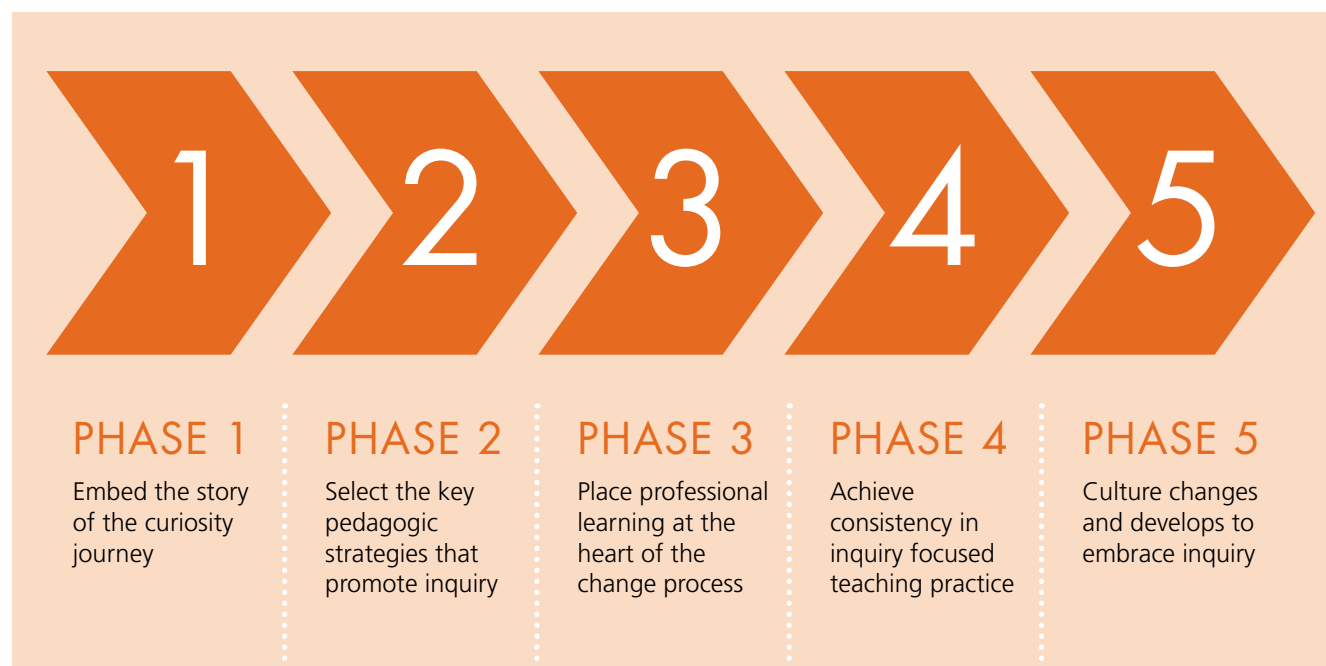
PHASE 1:
EMBED THE STORY OF
THE CURIOSITY JOURNEY

It is a leadership task to develop and introduce a narrative, or story, which describes the way we think about and enact teaching and student learning in the school. The story is informed by detailed strategic planning. Over time the story is embedded in the school, guiding our interactions, plans, and practice.

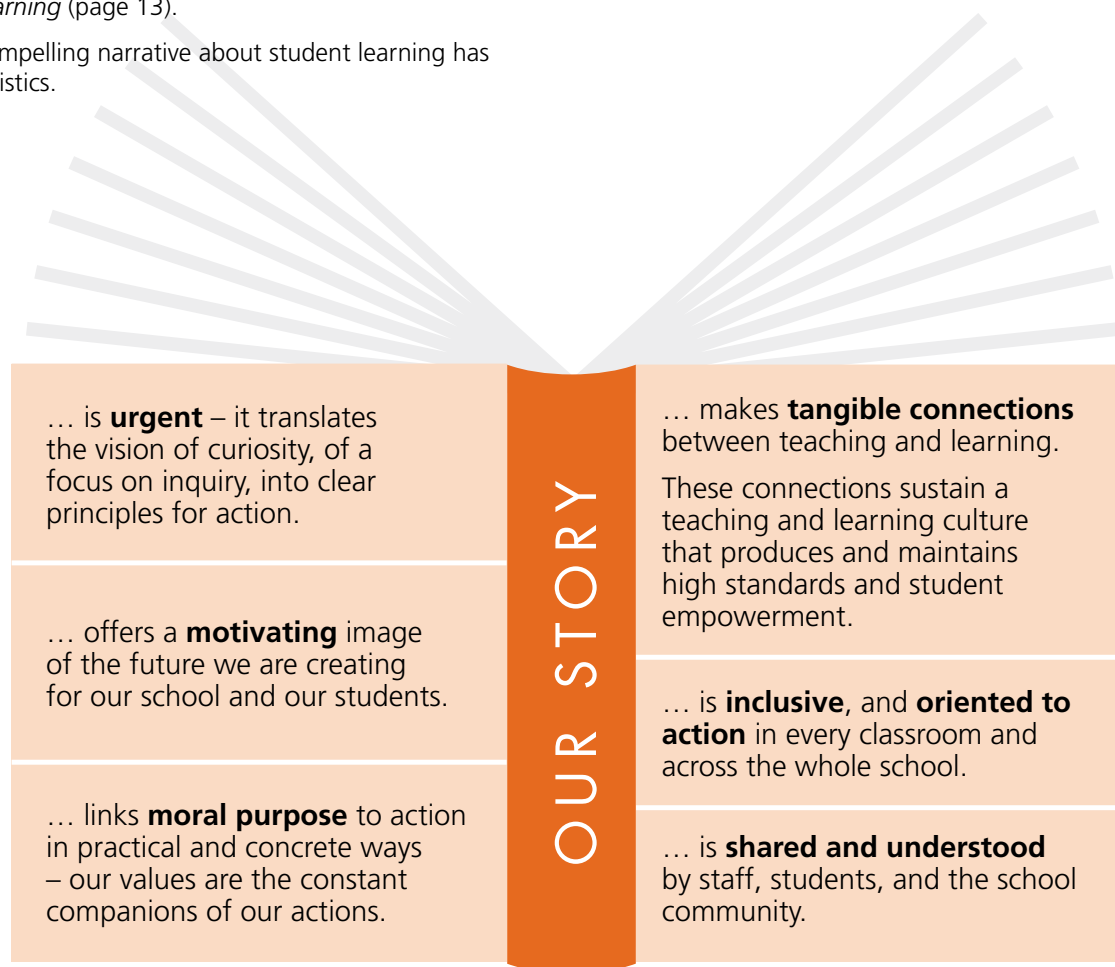Leaders must determine how to align system and school narratives. We discuss the strategic purpose, and structure, of system and school narratives in *The System and Powerful Learning* (page 13).

A strong, compelling narrative about student learning has six characteristics.

OUR STORY

… is **urgent** – it translates the vision of curiosity, of a focus on inquiry, into clear principles for action.

… offers a **motivating** image of the future we are creating for our school and our students.

… links **moral purpose** to action in practical and concrete ways – our values are the constant companions of our actions.

… makes **tangible connections** between teaching and learning.

These connections sustain a teaching and learning culture that produces and maintains high standards and student empowerment.

… is **inclusive**, and **oriented to action** in every classroom and across the whole school.

… is **shared and understood** by staff, students, and the school community.

PHASE 1 MONITORING FRAMEWORK – THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PATHWAY

The narrative a school adopts is sensitive to three factors.

FACTORS DRIVING THE NARRATIVE	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE
An honest diagnosis	The school undertakes a thoughtful appraisal of current orientations to student learning
A desired outcome	The school embraces an ambitious and achievable orientation to student learning
A clear plan	The school frames and implements actionable strategies for getting to the desired outcome.

The basis for developing the narrative is the school's position on the School Improvement Pathway. A summary of the Pathway is on the facing page. The complete Pathway is on pages 25-28.

The School Improvement Pathway is a common framework that assists school leaders and teachers to diagnose current orientations to student learning, and from that diagnosis to map a pathway to excellence. What excellence means for each school evolves continually. We must adapt the school's narrative and improvement plans so they remain relevant to changing context. Ongoing adaptation is facilitated by regularly reassessing where the school is situated on the School Improvement Pathway.

The Pathway specifies five improvement dimensions:
– Curriculum
– Teaching
– Learning
– Assessment/data and accountability
– Leadership.

The characteristics summarised on the opposite page often typify school performance on the Pathway continuum from 'awful to adequate', 'adequate to good', 'good to great', and 'great to excellent'.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PATHWAY: WHERE DOES YOUR SCHOOL STAND?

Use this summary table to plot the current position of your school on each dimension of the School Improvement Pathway. Add notes that further or better describe your school's current practice.

Once you have charted your school's standing you can begin to develop your school improvement narrative. These questions may assist as discussion starters:
– Where are we now?
– What objectives do we have for each dimension?
– What will we do to move from where we are to where we want to be?

IMPROVEMENT DIMENSION	AWFUL TO ADEQUATE	ADEQUATE TO GOOD	GOOD TO GREAT	GREAT TO EXCELLENT
CURRICULUM	Individual teacher interpretation	Limited differentiation	Literacy & numeracy focus Curriculum breadth evident	Inquiry & integration are priority modes for curriculum design & delivery
TEACHING	Inconsistent practice	Consistent practice Often focussed on whole class teaching	Theories of Action are used across the whole school Peer observation is valued highly	Teachers increasingly exercise autonomous professional judgementå
LEARNING	Serendipitous	Focus on basics Improving management of feedback & evidence of student progress	Evidence that learning protocols are beginning to empower students Emphasis on learning skills	Learning is personalised & intellectually challenging High levels of self-efficacy among students
ASSESSMENT/DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY	Non-existent	Emerging systems for capturing & analysing data	Performance data increasingly guides lesson planning & triggers student support interventions	Achievement & performance expectations are well defined, understood, & monitored across the whole school
LEADERSHIP	Lacks relevance & influence	Emerging capability Yet to secure consistent approaches to teaching, assessment, & behaviour	Strong, credible school narrative targets expertise & lifelong learning Distributed leadership is evident	Leaders actively advance innovation within the school & across the school system

PHASE 2:
SELECT KEY PEDAGOGIC STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE INQUIRY

High leverage Theories of Action related to student learning are selected and implemented strategically and operationally.

A high leverage Theory of Action	… advances learning capabilities and student achievement
	… has almost immediate impact on the school's teaching and learning practices
	… lays the foundation for the next steps in the school improvement journey

For example, at the start of their school improvement journey many schools select the first of our six Theories of Action for Teachers.

HARNESS LEARNING INTENTIONS, NARRATIVE AND PACE

WHEN we harness learning intentions, narrative, and pace so students are more secure about their learning, and more willing to take risks

THEN achievement and understanding will increase and curiosity will be enhanced.

We believe that by making learning intentions and learning outcomes explicit, each student has more control over their own learning, and can contribute more effectively to learning outcomes for the whole class.

Selecting this Theory of Action at the start of the school improvement journey makes sense for many reasons, including these:

– harnessing learning intentions impacts on student expectations and engagement in every classroom
– it lays the basis for differentiated task setting and peer assessment, both of which powerfully enhance student achievement and learning
– over time, differentiated task setting and peer assessment influence how the narrative of the curriculum evolves within the school
– the narrative about curriculum moves from simply covering content to encompass sequential, integrated problem solving activities that deepen both content knowledge and learning skills.

Curiosity and Powerful Learning, one of the manuals in this series, provides more detail about this Theory of Action.

PHASE 2 MONITORING FRAMEWORK – FRAMING A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A three-year school improvement planning framework is used to construct a School Improvement Plan that steers implementation of a Theory of Action and monitors its impact. The framework provides both guidance and evidence for:

– building the narrative
– ensuring priorities are selected that produce short term gains
– laying the foundations for the next phase of the school improvement journey.

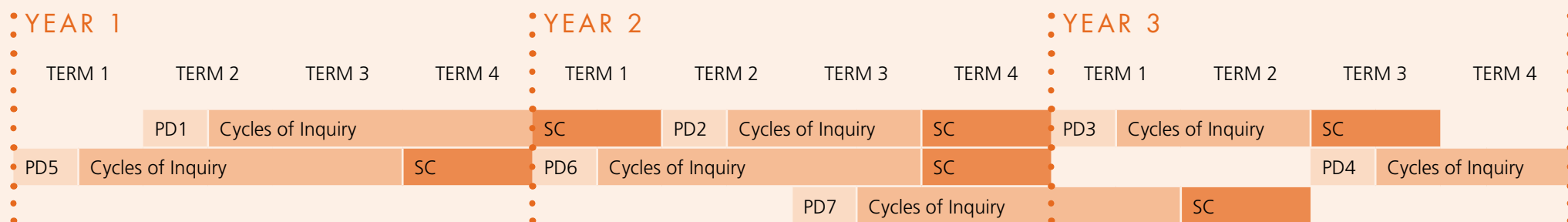A School Improvement Team is responsible for implementing the School Improvement Plan.

The School Improvement Plan identifies a manageable number of **Priorities for Development**. The priorities are distributed across three years, pay close attention to sequencing, and come with realistic yet ambitious timeframes.

Each priority has three action components that are facilitated, managed, and monitored by the School Improvement Team:

1. Interactive, reflective **Cycles of Inquiry** that elicit feedback from teachers and students. Importantly, Cycles of Inquiry are designed to support teachers through the implementation dip (see inside back cover).
2. Regular reporting (every five weeks or so) to teachers and school leaders about progress on each priority, outcomes from Cycles of Inquiry, and overall progress.
3. Thorough, transparent **Success Checks** conducted at the end of the planned implementation period for each priority.
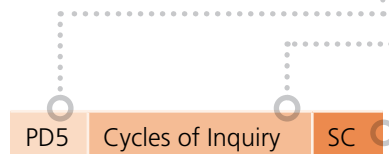
The framework for a School Improvement Plan, incorporating these elements, is shown below. Planning is extensively discussed in *The System and Powerful Learning*, one of the manuals in this series.

| PD5 | Cycles of Inquiry | SC |

YEAR 1				**YEAR 2**				**YEAR 3**			
TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4

PD1 Cycles of Inquiry — SC — PD2 Cycles of Inquiry SC — PD3 Cycles of Inquiry SC
PD5 Cycles of Inquiry SC — PD6 Cycles of Inquiry SC — PD4 Cycles of Inquiry
PD7 Cycles of Inquiry SC

PD – Priority for Development   SC – Success Check

PHASE 3:
PLACE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AT THE HEART OF THE CHANGE PROCESS

Professional learning is, and must be, placed at the heart of the change process. Well structured professional learning is essential for managing the social complexity that can interfere with securing the changes essential for school improvement.

We need to set aside the idea that professional learning occurs by 'going on a course', or by classroom observation that is hierarchical and evaluative. We need to accept a distinctive break with traditional professional learning approaches.

Developing and deepening professional practices that have a predictable impact on student learning and achievement occurs only through forms of professional learning that:
– are disciplined by clear definitions and protocols
– emphasise non-judgmental peer observation and support through professional learning teams (small groups, often a triad of three teachers, that collaborate regularly).

A characteristic of high achieving schools is that performance development and management are based on teacher portfolios of practice examples. The portfolios draw on:
– precise specifications of practice
– protocols that guide implementation of those specifications
– peer observation and peer coaching teams.

This approach to performance development and management is a hallmark of securing change in teacher practice from the inside-out. It is an approach that explicitly supports teachers to extend their repertoire of high value teaching practices through collaborative exploration and feedback. They learn by doing.

By contrast, 'top-down' approaches to change impose teaching practices through hierarchical direction. Top-down approaches assume that telling teachers what they must do is an effective substitute for learning by doing linked to feedback and collaboration. This is magical thinking that fails to account for how we learn as adults.

There are six principles to keep in mind when designing professional learning activity. The intent behind these principles, depicted below, is that professional learning must lead to changed practice which has a direct bearing on enhanced student achievement.

SIX PRINCIPLES FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DESIGN	
DESIGN PRINCIPLE 1	Allocate dedicated space & time to: – enhancing teacher inquiry – creating a professional practice
DESIGN PRINCIPLE 2	Use evidence from research and practice to develop teaching models that impact on student learning
DESIGN PRINCIPLE 3	Study the impact of teaching models on student learning – use collected data formatively and habitually
DESIGN PRINCIPLE 4	Invest in school based processes, both deductive and inductive, that extend teachers' repertoires of high value teaching practices
DESIGN PRINCIPLE 5	Link classroom focus with whole school development, and embed pedagogic innovation in curriculum plans
DESIGN PRINCIPLE 6	Use emerging professional practice as a basis for networking & system wide capacity building

On the page 14 we present a peer coaching as a model for high impact professional learning. Knowing the theory behind a new practice is only a starting point. Teacher behaviour is the key to sustainable changes in practice. Peer coaching that incorporates the design principles listed above offers rich, structured opportunities for observing and enacting new practice. It is a practical and powerful means of responding to the social complexity of change.

PHASE 3 MONITORING FRAMEWORK – PEER COACHING

School improvement asks school leaders and teachers to tackle complex problems in collaborative ways. This way of working calls on the Adaptive Leadership style which we unpack on pages 17-22. Support in the classroom using peer coaching is a high impact collaborative strategy for assisting teachers to meet the adaptive challenges that school improvement brings to their practice.

Peer coaching has a direct bearing on enhanced student learning, enabling teachers to extend their repertoire of teaching skills and to transfer those skills to diverse classroom settings. Peer coaching offers remarkably effective professional learning.

The table below sets out effect sizes for different professional learning designs. (Effect sizes are explained on page 7 of *Curiosity and Powerful Learning*. Higher effect sizes reflect research evidence of higher impact.)

The research evidence is strong. Stripped to its essence, Joyce and Showers work shows that it is *coaching* – teachers coaching teachers who have experienced the same training approaches and practice – which ensures the enhanced knowledge and skills of teachers translates into improved achievement for students.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: EFFECT SIZES FOR TRAINING OUTCOMES BY TRAINING COMPONENT			
Training components and combinations	**Knowledge**	**Skills**	**Transfer of training**
Information	0.63	0.35	0.00
Theory	0.15	0.50	0.00
Demonstration	1.65	0.26	0.00
Theory + Demonstration	0.66	0.86	0.00
Theory + Practice	1.15		0.00
Theory + Demonstration + Practice		0.72	0.00
Theory + Demonstration + Practice + Feedback	1.31	1.18	0.39
Theory + Demonstration + Practice + Feedback + Coaching	**2.71**	**1.25**	**1.68**

Adapted from Joyce and Showers, 1995

The impact of peer coaching is maximised when six elements are included in the professional learning design. These elements draw in the design principles outlined on page 13.

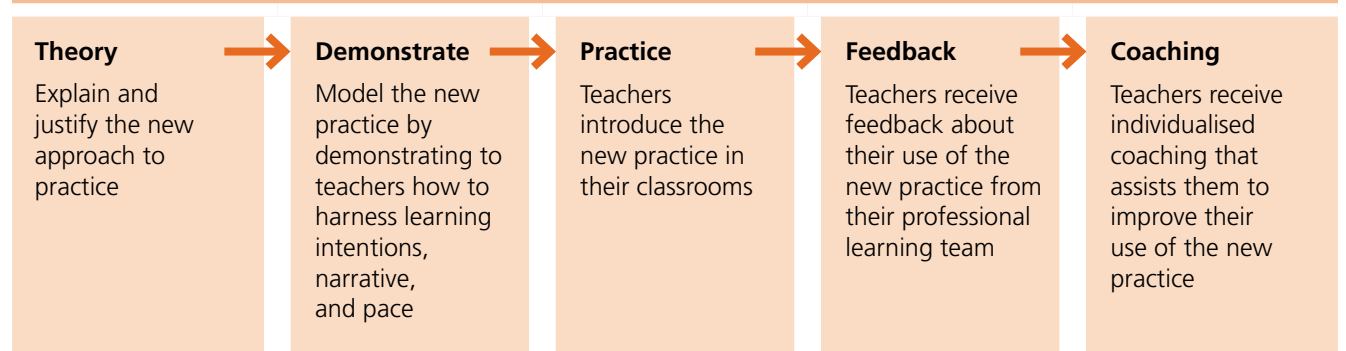| SIX DESIGN ELEMENTS THAT MAXIMISE THE IMPACT OF PEER COACHING	
DESIGN ELEMENT 1	Curriculum, teaching, and assessment form the content of professional learning
DESIGN ELEMENT 2	Professional learning prioritises understanding and skill development, and school based groups use specific models to help attain transfer of training
DESIGN ELEMENT 3	Clear protocols, precise specifications of practice, and peer coaching guides are consistently used to scaffold and guide peer observations of teaching practice
DESIGN ELEMENT 4	Peer coaching teams are small – two, three, or four members
DESIGN ELEMENT 5	All school leaders and all teachers participate in both training and practice
DESIGN ELEMENT 6	Formative study of student learning, informed by data collection about student learning, is embedded in the process

A PEER COACHING MODEL

Use the Joyce and Showers peer coaching model, outlined below, to plan and monitor the sequencing of professional learning activities. The model supports implementation of all ten Theories of Action described in *Curiosity and Powerful Learning* by dealing respectfully and directly with the social complexity of school change. Peer coaching goes to teachers, in classrooms, and supports them to adapt their practice.

A school might adopt as a Priority for Development the first Theory of Action for Teachers – 'Harness learning intentions, narrative and pace'. Here is how the peer coaching model connects the Theory of Action and professional learning.

THEORY OF ACTION FOR TEACHERS: 'HARNESS LEARNING INTENTIONS, NARRATIVE AND PACE'				
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STAGES				
Theory	**Demonstrate**	**Practice**	**Feedback**	**Coaching**
Explain and justify the new approach to practice	Model the new practice by demonstrating to teachers how to harness learning intentions, narrative, and pace	Teachers introduce the new practice in their classrooms	Teachers receive feedback about their use of the new practice from their professional learning team	Teachers receive individualised coaching that assists them to improve their use of the new practice

PHASE 4:
ACHIEVE CONSISTENCY IN INQUIRY FOCUSED TEACHING PRACTICE

As leaders we consciously set out to achieve the school's vision of how teachers and students will use curiosity as a learning resource. Our intent is to infuse every classroom with the spirit of inquiry. These outcomes fundamentally depend on closely implementing the precise specifications of practice that accompany each priority for development in the School Improvement Plan.

Leaders commonly adopt four deliberate strategies to ensure the specifications of practice are *observable* in the school.

By focusing on consistency, and by tightly aligning activity across the whole school, leaders energise and sustain inside-out school improvement. In particular, leaders establish and defend school structures that reinforce professional accountability *between* teachers. Vertical accountability 'up the management line' is insufficient for an inside-out approach to school improvement.

In underperforming or 'coasting' schools both consistency and alignment are often missing. Incremental tightening is the leader's task at hand, and is essential for reducing within school variation of learning outcomes.

Some words of caution. Top-down approaches are useful if schools are dysfunctional or badly underperforming. However, top-down and inside-out approaches can collide. On the expectation that a system or school leader intends to transition from a top-down approach to an inside-out

LEADERS ENSURE SPECIFICATIONS ARE…	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE
Pervasive	They are observable across the whole school and in each classroom.
Precise	They are stated explicitly so that precise implementation is achievable, and is supported as necessary by coaching or other interventions.
Monitored	Close implementation monitoring occurs through Cycles of Inquiry and regular reporting – see Phase 2 Monitoring Framework, page 12.
Embedded in day to day operations	They are directly and explicitly supported by robust and highly reliable school structures.

approach, then over time it is important to:
– rebalance the top-down emphasis on vertical accountability structures so that support is apparent for emerging (and often fragile) episodes of professional learning that underpin inside-out change
– shift from autocratic or charismatic forms of leadership to distributed and professionally empowered forms of leadership.

PHASE 4 MONITORING FRAMEWORK – LEVELS OF USE

Hall and Hord's 'Levels of Use' framework assists school and system leaders to plan and monitor implementation of high leverage teaching practices that directly and positively influences student learning. The Levels of Use framework describes teacher behaviours that align seven levels of engagement with new practices.

The framework is used to:
– identify the current relationship between teachers and a selected teaching practice innovation
– plan implementation of an innovation across the whole school
– monitor progress and amend implementation plans.

LEVELS OF USE	0 NON-USE	1 ORIENTATION	2 PREPARATION	3 MECHANICAL	4A ROUTINE	4B REFINEMENT	5 INTEGRATION	6 RENEWAL
Behaviours associated with the level of use of a teaching practice innovation	No interest shown in the innovation. No action taken. *'This isn't a priority for me.'*	Begins to gather information about the innovation. *'I'm reading up about it, but not convinced it will work in all my classes.'*	Begins to plan ways to implement the innovation. *'I'm talking about this practice with my colleagues and thinking about how to use it in my science lessons.'*	Concerned about mechanics of implementation. *'There's a lot planning involved with this practice. It eats into my time for other important work.'*	Comfortable with innovation and implements it as specified. *'I've got this practice working quite well in junior science classes. I'll introduce it in my other classes now.'*	Begins to explore ways for continuous improvement. *'My students will get more out of this practice now that I've introduced a self-assessment rubric.'*	Integrates innovation with other initiatives. Sees it as adding value. Collaborates with others. *'I've built a good understanding of how this works. I'm coaching two teachers who are new to the school in how to use it.'*	Explores new and different ways to implement innovation. *'We can use cooperative groups more effectively in this practice. We're working on that in my professional learning triad.'*

PHASE 5:
CULTURE CHANGES AND DEVELOPS TO EMBRACE INQUIRY

Phases 1-4 are purposefully directed at changing the work structures in a school. It matters greatly how we focus, organise, strengthen, and monitor the work of teachers and students. Work structures create and sustain an enabling environment. They are the practical expression of a reliable culture underpinned by:

– respect for disciplined action

– a professional ethos that values curiosity and inquiry.

There is good reason for an initial focus on school structures. As Andy Hargreaves, from the Lynch School of Education at Boston College, puts it:

> *… it is not possible to establish productive school cultures without prior changes being effected in school structures that increase the opportunities for meaningful working relationships and collegial support between teachers. The importance of … restructuring, therefore, may be less in terms of its direct impact on curriculum, assessment, ability grouping and the like, than in terms of how it creates improved opportunities for teachers to work together on a continuing basis.*

The key message is that a first step in attaining cultural change in a school is to establish the structures into which the desired culture grows and is sustained. Existing structures are the product of the existing culture. It is unrealistic to expect that a new culture can take hold if it is grafted on to existing structures.

The interactions between the Phases 1-4 prepare the ground for Phase 5 – a culture of teaching and learning in the school that prizes the spirit of inquiry. It is this cultural attribute that underpins high standards and deeper levels of curiosity and learning.

PHASE 5 MONITORING FRAMEWORK –

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP
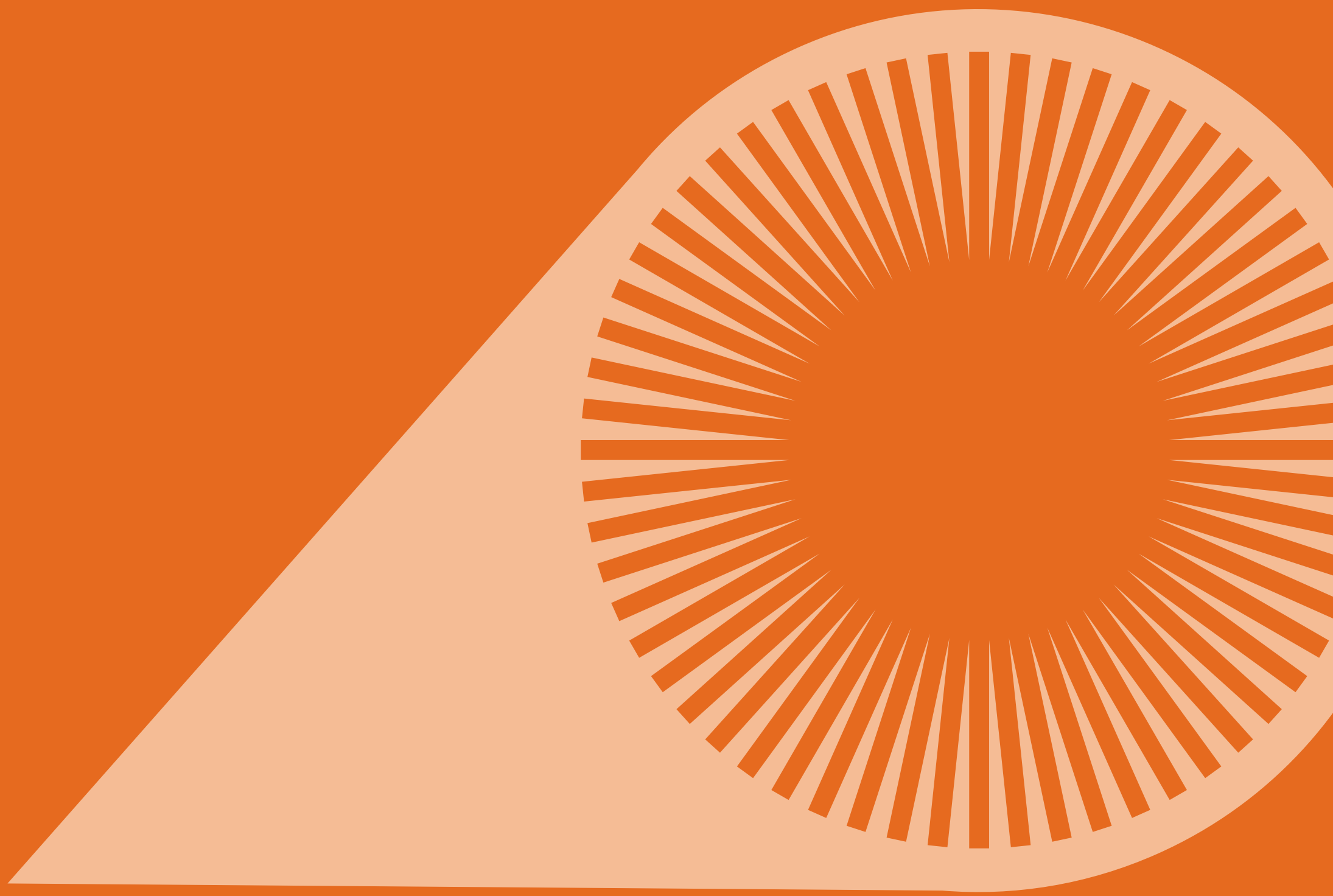
ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

Instructional Leadership practices are necessary to ensure pedagogic change. However, they may be insufficient. We have found that at times there are two other dynamics that leaders must grapple with:

– responding to the resistance that results from the personal and professional challenges faced by educators who engage in pedagogic change

– creating a work culture or 'infrastructure' that welcomes and sustains change in the repertoire of teaching practice.

To navigate resistance and social complexity we must look to broader conceptions of leadership. Adaptive Leadership is particularly helpful as a navigation aid for leading school improvement.

In 1994, Ron Heifetz of Harvard University drew a valuable distinction between adaptive challenges and technical problems.

An adaptive challenge is a problem situation for which solutions lie outside current ways of operating. Tackling adaptive challenges requires leadership and increasing levels of collaboration. Adaptive Leadership is adept at responding to adaptive challenges that require fundamental changes to work organisation, work structures, culture, and objectives.

This is in stark contrast to a technical problem for which the know-how already exists. Resolving a technical problem is simply a management issue.

LEADERSHIP AS ADAPTIVE WORK

Technical Solutions

Adaptive Work

System Leadership
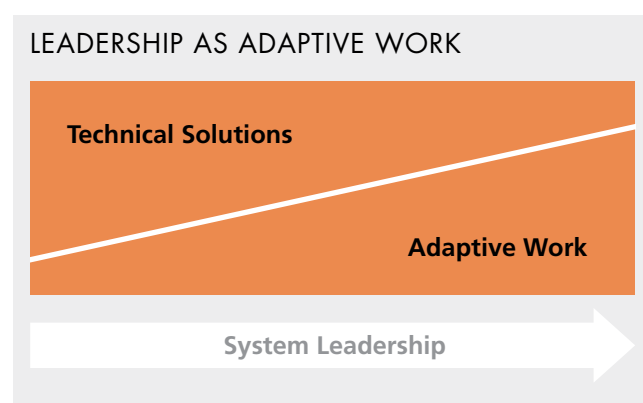
Technical problems are solved by applying existing know-how. Adaptive challenges introduce gaps between where we stand now and where we want to be. To close the gap we will require more than existing know-how.

Among the skills of adaptive work is the leader's ability to discern how old habits detract from our efforts to secure change. Often we force technical solutions onto adaptive problems and find that the changes we introduce fail to endure – and familiar ways of going about our work reassert themselves.

FROM PRESCRIPTION TO HIGHLY COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The more demanding challenge is to move from prescription (a top-down approach) to enduring change in highly competent professional practice (an inside-out approach). Making that move involves working through the social complexity of change and requires close attention to building teacher capability.

Ultimately, Adaptive Leadership and adaptive work require us to reflect on our shared moral purpose as educators. Drawing again on Heifetz' words (2003):

– adaptive challenges demand learning, because 'people are the problem' (and the solution!) and progress requires new ways of thinking and operating.

– mobilising people to meet adaptive challenges, then, is at the heart of leadership practice.

– ultimately, adaptive work requires us to reflect on the moral purpose by which we seek to thrive and demands diagnostic inquiry into the realities we face that threaten the realisation of those purposes.

We have found that the priority outcome from such 'adaptive reflection' is an honest diagnosis of how well our existing culture and beliefs are suited to making considerable progress towards realising our moral purpose.

Having made the diagnosis, a deeper level of leadership skill is required. We need to assist our colleagues to acquire new ways of thinking and operating, and to activate new ways of meeting adaptive challenges.

Miles (1986) listed a suite of skills that adaptive leaders will recognise as essential to their work. They have the ability to:

– generate trust

– understand and diagnose the state of the school's organisation

– plan into the medium term and see the bigger picture

– work productively in groups

– access the required technical resources and advice (such as research, good practice, and precise specifications of teaching and learning)

– give people the confidence to continue.

Adaptive Leadership helps people meet immediate, short term challenges, and supports them develop the knowledge and skills they need to navigate a continuing stream of adaptive challenges. In other words, adaptive leaders build an infrastructure for professional learning within their school using strategies like those described below.

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP –
BUILDING AN INFRASTRUCTURE
FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In an essay on the drivers of whole system reform, Canadian educational researcher Michael Fullan (2011) offers advice to system and school leaders about where to concentrate their efforts. Among other things he stresses the impact of fostering the intrinsic motivation of teachers, and of inspiring teachers to work collectively. This is the territory of Adaptive Leadership.

Intrinsic motivation is self-renewing. In *Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us*, Dan Pink suggests that intrinsic motivation leads to improved work performance and enhanced job satisfaction. It has three personally rewarding effects.

Autonomy	'I have opportunities to be self directed.'
Mastery	'I experience feelings of competence achieved through exercising my skills.'
Purpose	'I know I am contributing to the common good.'

Autonomy, mastery, and purpose are motivating, but do not occur by accident. Adaptive Leadership creates the conditions in schools that provide most teachers with high levels of job satisfaction, professional pride, and personal confidence.

Schools that value powerful learning emphasise both student learning and professional learning. Such schools develop, implement, and maintain five mutually reinforcing structures, processes, and ways of working. Investing in these five conditions builds intrinsic motivation among teachers. Each condition calls on Adaptive Leadership capabilities, and asks school leaders and teachers to do adaptive work. The conditions are shown below and more details about each condition is given on the following pages.

FIVE CONDITIONS FOR BUILDING INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AMONG TEACHERS

1	Maintain structures for scaffolding teacher development
2	Make peer coaching ubiquitous
3	Create protocols for both teaching and learning
4	Incentivise teacher teams
5	Ensure classroom observation focuses on learning

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
CONDITION 1:
MAINTAIN STRUCTURES FOR SCAFFOLDING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

On pages 10-11 of *The System and Powerful Learning*, one of the manuals in this series, we describe Organisational Capacity. We distinguish between two systems that every school must align but manage and organise separately:
– The Maintenance System
– The Development System.

Teacher development, which is central to building intrinsic motivation, falls within the remit of the Development System.

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
CONDITION 2:
MAKE PEER COACHING UBIQUITOUS

On pages 13-14 we describe the importance of placing professional learning at the heart of the change process – Phase 3 of the Five Phase Implementation Framework.

There we establish the significant impact peer coaching has for professional autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
CONDITION 3:
CREATE PROTOCOLS FOR BOTH TEACHING AND LEARNING

To improve practice we must be able to define practice. This is the work of teaching protocols. They are specifications of practice. Once defined we can share good practice, and make it common practice.

Teaching protocols are tools for improving student learning. They are guidelines for observing, analysing, discussing, and understanding teaching. They create:
– an explicit professional practice within a school
– a common discipline and focus among educators.

The Powerful Learning School Improvement Strategy uses protocols in two ways that enhance teacher repertoire and quality.

1. To build competence in discrete teaching tactics and skills

There are six Theories of Action described in *Curiosity and Powerful Learning*, one of the manuals in this series. Each Theory of Action has a teaching protocol.

Teaching tactics and skills are the teacher behaviours that make up the elements of a lesson, such as questioning and providing feedback.

2. To describe teaching models

The *Models of Practice* manuals in this series describe six teaching models that follow clear protocols. Another manual, *Curiouser and Curiouser*, also draws on teaching models.

A teaching model is an overall teaching strategy composed of a number of tactics. It is used with particular curriculum content for specific student learning purposes.

Models of teaching simultaneously define the content, learning strategies, and arrangements for social interaction that create our students' learning environments.

Models of teaching are also models of learning. Each model has a core purpose that relates to how to organise teaching, and to ways of learning.

Teachers who consistently use protocols in their professional development:
– have a shared language about teaching
– are more likely to work together
– are committed to understanding and improving the processes of teaching and learning
– put professional learning at the heart of the teaching and learning process.

CONDITION 4: INCENTIVISE TEACHER TEAMS

TEAM TEACHING

One change in practice we encourage is for teachers to work increasingly in a team of professionals that is mutually responsible for a cohort of students. The advantage of teamwork is that teachers work collaboratively, as professionals with a shared practice framework, to plan and implement how, when, and what they teach.

Friend and Cook (2000) identify 'co-teaching as a specific service delivery option that is based on collaboration.' For students, co-teaching allows for more intense and individualised instruction. Co-teaching means students at all academic levels benefit from alternative assignments and greater teacher attention in small group activities. Teachers who work collaboratively benefit from professional support and exchange of teaching practices.

Team teaching is often spoken about in a general way, simply referring to two or more teachers working in the same classroom. However, it is important to be precise about the purpose of team teaching and the kind of practice that is involved.

On this page we introduce a number of team teaching strategies, each of which serves a different purpose and calls on different kinds of practice. On the opposite page we describe Lesson Study – a form of collaborative teaching that actively evaluates innovations in teaching practice.

TEAM TEACHING STRATEGIES

There are many team teaching strategies, including those listed below.

We encourage teachers and schools to adopt the Interactive Team Teaching strategy. Whatever team teaching structure is adopted, from the outset it is critical to provide tangible support for the practice, and to clarify roles and responsibilities within the team teaching practice. Support, roles, and responsibilities include:

– providing adequate time for both planning and implementation
– developing and using methods that enable team members to hold each other accountable for agreed responsibilities and commitments
– regular assessment and discussion of team functioning in setting goals for improving teaching and monitoring student achievement
– ensuring all teachers are actively involved in teaching
– allowing all teachers opportunities to develop and demonstrate knowledge and skills.

We have found many advantages of team teaching, including:

– more effective planning
– stronger teacher-student relationships
– enhanced teacher effectiveness
– professional development is a visible part of the planning and teaching process
– built in accountability
– greater flexibility to accommodate individual student needs.

TEAM TEACHING STRATEGIES	OVERVIEW
One Teach/ One Assist	One teacher takes the lead. One teacher observes or moves around the room assisting students.
One Speak/ One Add	One teacher takes the lead. One teacher adds or questions important points as they arise.
One Teach/ One Chart	One teacher leads discussion or lecture. One teacher one writes notes on board.
Parallel Teaching	Teachers jointly plan instruction. Each teacher delivers the planned instruction to half the class.
Station Teaching	Content is divided. Both teachers instruct separate groups, teaching different content.
Alternative Teaching	The class is divided into a small group and a large group. One teacher teaches the small group and one teaches the large group.
Interactive Team Teaching	Teachers share instruction of whole group. Activities are coordinated in one lesson.

LINKING TEAM TEACHING, PEER COACHING, AND PEER OBSERVATION

Team teaching provides a structure for embedding two aspects of professional learning infrastructure:

– peer coaching, which we examined on page 14
– peer observation of teaching practice, which we explore below and in the following section.

Taken together, team teaching, peer coaching, and peer observation offer a platform for doing adaptive work. Building a sturdy platform that integrates these activities is an Adaptive Leadership task.
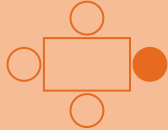
THE LESSON STUDY MODEL

Lesson Study (Hopkins 2014) is a strategy for linking classroom observation, professional learning, and school improvement. It involves a pair or small group of teachers working to improve an aspect of teaching which evidence tells them could, in turn, improve student learning and progress. In Japan and China it is a key element of teacher professional development.

The Lesson Study model is described below.

The Lesson Study model is adaptive work in action. Its strengths include that it:

– is grounded in lessons and improving hard aspects of teaching
– focuses exclusively on students' learning with progress as an indicator of success
– relies on peer ownership of research lessons
– focuses on learning not the teacher
– supports incisive observation and risk-taking
– offers multiple views of lessons, meaning more is seen and teachers have more data to 'dissect' student learning
– has impact for all children through collaboratively honing techniques and collegially sharing new approaches.

	Select focus students	The teaching team identifies the focus students for the study. The focus students may be at any point from high to low on the attainment spectrum.
	Collaborative lesson planning & observation	The team plans a 'research lesson' with a new element designed to improve the learning of focus students. One teacher teaches the lesson. The progress of the focus students is observed by the other teacher or teachers.
	Joint review, further lesson planning & observation	The team discusses the learning of each focus student – what worked as planned, what did not, and why. The team plans another lesson to address identified learning issues. Over a series of lessons the team develops techniques that strengthen learning and progress for each focus student.
	Share learning about practice	The teaching team shares their learning with other teachers via video, coaching, or a public research lesson. Students can participate at this feedback stage.

CONDITION 5: ENSURE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FOCUSES ON LEARNING

Observing teachers and teaching in the classroom plays a crucial role in supporting the professional growth of teachers, the school development process, and classroom research.

Observation is the pivotal activity that:
– links individual teacher reflection with collaborative inquiry for pairs or groups of teachers
– encourages the development of a language for talking about teaching
– provides a means for all staff to work on a school's Priorities for Development.

Observation is a signature of contemporary professional teaching practice.

EXERCISING CARE ABOUT HOW CLASSROOM OBSERVATION IS USED

As leaders, we need to implement with some care professional learning structures that rely on observation. There is an increasing association of classroom observation with various approaches to external accountability, such as performance management that links performance to rates of pay. This use of observation has unintended consequences that have seriously negative effects on the practice of classroom observation for developmental purposes. Unfortunately, associating observation with accountability:

– often creates a climate of fear – this is not too strong a word – around observation. Many teachers become fearful when observation is suggested and resist engaging in it as a formative professional experience.
– encourages a rush to judgment that creates a power imbalance between the observer and the observed. This can create defensiveness that gets in the way of development.
– creates a superficial appreciation of what constitutes an effective teaching and learning process.

## CLASSROOM OBSERVATION IS A STRUCTURE FOR TEACHER LEARNING

The Powerful Learning School Improvement Strategy endorses a positive, formative, developmental approach to classroom observation. The evidence is clear that professional practices with a predictable impact on student learning and achievement only develop through forms of professional learning that:

– emphasise non-judgmental peer observation
– provide support through teachers working together in pairs or small groups of three or four
– are disciplined by clear definitions and protocols.

Curiosity and Powerful Learning, one of the manuals in this series, includes a rubric for each of the six Theories of Action for Teachers we present. One way in which the rubrics are used is to support professional learning through peer observation. As we note on page 6 of that manual, the rubrics:

contribute to professional learning by grounding peer observation and collective reflection in what teachers and students actually do in a lesson. They indicate stepping stones from current practice to improved practice.

The rubrics follow a developmental pathway for teachers, identifying characteristics of commencing, intermediate, accomplished, and expert practice. The rubrics follow this format.
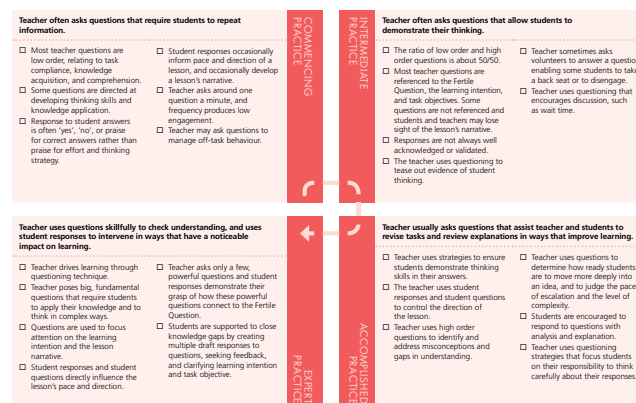
Each rubric is accompanied by a professional learning opportunity which incorporates personal reflection and peer observation about how students are learning and what change in teaching practice could improve student achievement.

## INITIATING CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Classroom observation may not be used in your school. Or it may lack a clear focus on student and teacher learning. Introducing classroom observation, or refocusing it, will call on your Adaptive Leadership capabilities and it will require adaptive work by all teachers in your school.

One approach to introducing or refocusing classroom observation is to ask teachers, in pairs or small groups, to undertake observation using a set of open questions. The purpose of these open questions is to gather data that informs a series of professional conversations about learning and teaching.

The questions below set a tone for peer observation. To respond to these questions teachers participating in peer observation need to pay close attention to what learning is happening, and what teaching practices are effective.

– Did the lesson start with what students could currently do?
– What teaching practices would make this clear?

– Was learning 'visible'?
– Did students talk about their thinking and what they need to do next?

– Could students do something at the end of the lesson that they could not do at the start?
– What teaching practices would make this clear?

– Could students connect their new learning to previous learning?
– What teaching practices would make this clear?

– Were there student miscues indicating what needs to zbe taught in the next lesson?
– Can you give specific examples of student miscues?

– What were the language demands of the content in the lesson?
– What other ways could language demands be catered for?

– Was classroom discussion effective?
– What characteristics of effective classroom discussion are you thinking of?

– Were the lesson outcomes met?
– How do you know?

– If this lesson was taught again, what adjustments could be made to the lesson plan?
– What value would the adjustments add to student learning?

– What learning occurred in this lesson?
– Given this learning, what would you plan to teach next?

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP
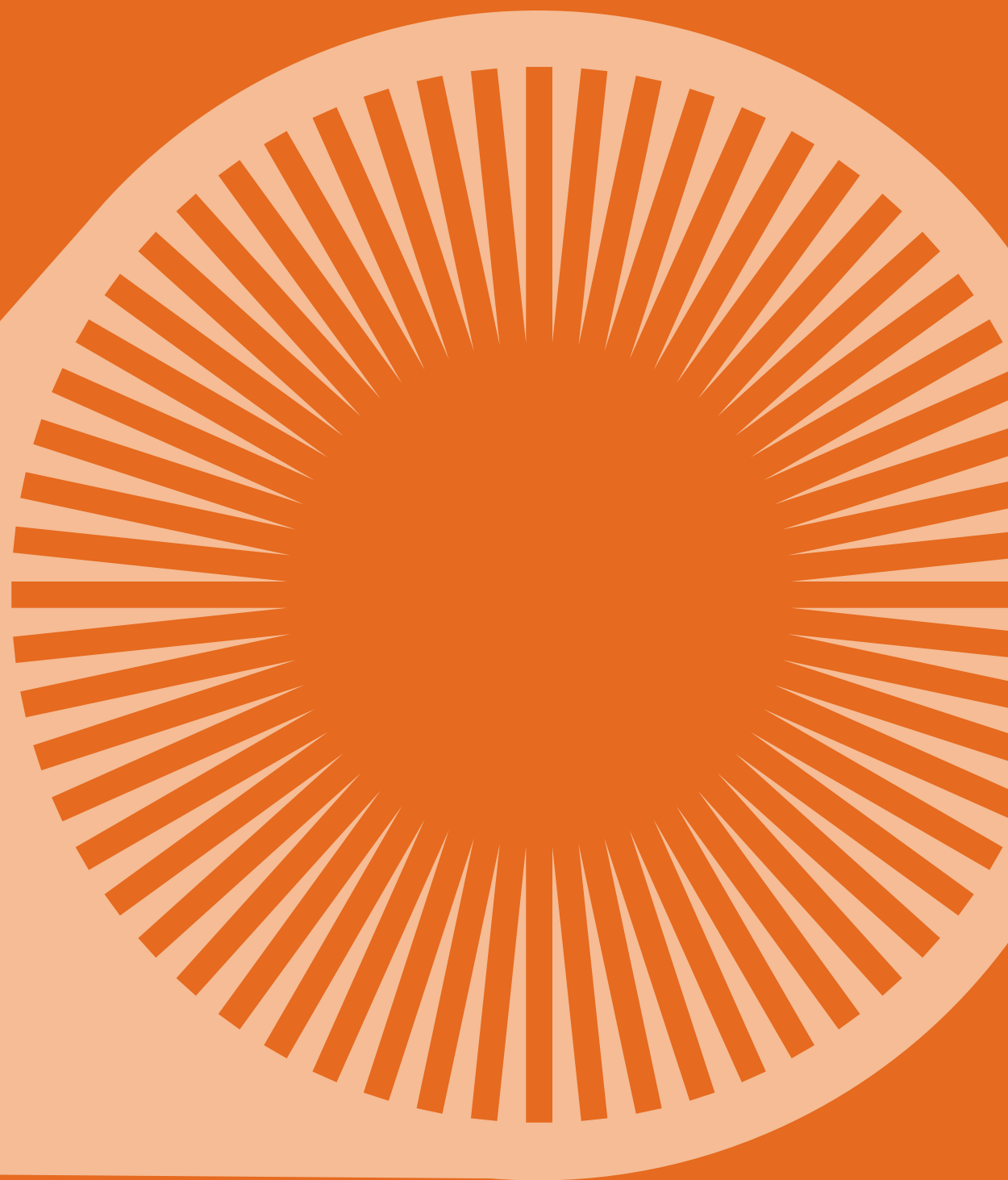
STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Our voyage continues. Schools are on an improvement pathway – a journey to excellence. The Five Phase Implementation Framework (pages 9-16) sets a course for that journey. Infrastructure for professional learning (pages 19-22) builds adaptive work capability by providing reliable ways of ensuring all teachers can learn.

Managing progress towards excellence demands thoughtful and strategic leadership. Progress requires clarity about both the starting point and what is necessary to move from that starting point to higher levels of performance. To make progress, school leaders are asked to think of the present and the future at the same time – and of course the future is less certain and concrete than the present. Making progress in these testing circumstances is best done through the practice of Strategic Leadership, which is complementary to, and mutually supportive of, Instructional Leadership and Adaptive Leadership. Strategic Leadership extends the range of skills and perspectives available to school leaders who are committed to sustainable school improvement.

Brent Davis and his colleagues have considerably deepened our understanding of the nature of Strategic Leadership. They define strategy as

a process of both looking forward to a new way of operating for the school and of developing the means of planning a journey to get there.

Their research points to five critical activities that successful strategic leaders undertake:
1. Setting the direction of the school
2. Translating strategy into action
3. Aligning the people, the organisation, and the strategy
4. Determining effective strategic intervention points
5. Developing strategic capabilities in the school.

It is to points 4 and 5 in this list, relating to strategic leadership, that we now turn attention in this section and the following section on System Leadership.

School leaders must make judgements about which strategic changes to make. They must make choices. Knowing what to do is as important knowing what *not* to do. They must back up each decision about what to do with knowing how to do it, and knowing when to do it.

THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PATHWAY

There are few tools that assist school leaders to make and refine strategic judgments. That is why we developed the School Improvement Pathway as a tool that supports more precise decision making for strategic development.

The Pathway identifies key issues that emerge along the school improvement continuum. It poses a series of questions to help progress development. These questions assist school leaders to:
– complete an honest diagnosis of their school's current performance – this is essential preparation for precise strategic decision making and planning
– prepare a plan for progress towards excellence.

Each school begins its improvement journey at a different point on the School Improvement Pathway. The performance continuum describes schools as standing somewhere along this continuum:

AWFUL TO ADEQUATE	ADEQUATE TO GOOD	GOOD TO GREAT	GREAT TO EXCELLENT

The Pathway assists school leaders to investigate performance on five improvement dimensions:
– Curriculum
– Teaching
– Learning
– Assessment/data and accountability
– Leadership.

USING THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PATHWAY

A school may stand at different points on the continuum. For example, diagnosis may reveal that leadership falls in the Good to Great range, teaching and learning fall within the Adequate to Good range, and curriculum may have characteristics that fall across two or even three ranges.

It is important to monitor progress over time for each dimension because improvement is likely to progress at different rates across each dimension. The task for school leaders is to reassess regularly where the school stands on the Pathway and to adjust strategy and planning according to evolving circumstances. The Pathway assists in diagnosis at the beginning of the journey, and during the journey.

You may elect to use the School Improvement Pathway as a framework for discussion, decision making, and planning with system leaders, your school leadership team, your school improvement team, all teachers. Knowing when and how to engage others in working with the Pathway may be among your early strategic decisions.

To support you in engaging others in diagnosis and progress monitoring, the Pathway is available in various formats: as a tear-out document on the following pages, as a poster, and as an online tool.

THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PATHWAY: AWFUL TO ADEQUATE

Schools that are moving from 'awful to adequate' lack the internal capacity to improve. To get the basics in place, and to establish the pre-conditions for success, they need a high level of external support and direction.

Improvement Dimension	Key Issues	Diagnostic Questions
Curriculum	– Usually there is no comprehensive view of the curriculum that is progressive, individualised, or inquiry oriented. – Commonly, the curriculum is an amalgam of the 'favourite things' of individual teachers, or materials they have used for some time and with which they are comfortable. – The curriculum lacks coherence and encourages little engagement from students.	– Has a curriculum audit determined how well the curriculum meets mandated requirements? – Is introduction of such materials preceded by professional conversations about curriculum that establish the rationale for change and how the change links to the school's emerging narrative? (Establishing clear curricular guidelines and scaffolding is of urgent importance. This cannot be a matter for debate.) – Is there a clear process for importing structured and proven curriculum materials where they are lacking? – Is the importance of literacy and numeracy in every classroom emphasised? – Are planning cycles implemented (like the cycle on page 8)? – Have students' views been shared with teachers as additional motivation for change?
Teaching	– Teaching is often highly individualised, inconsistent, lacking in pace and informed by the teacher's own prior experience. – Debate about teaching is not a common professional practice in the school, and teachers are allowed or encouraged to 'do their own thing'. – There is a great variation in teaching practice and consequently student progress and performance is highly variable.	– Has an audit of teaching practice been conducted and presented (without attribution to individual teachers) as a picture of the school's common professional practice? – Has the audit resulted in development of a 'good lesson' template that is the initial basis of common teaching practice? – Does the 'good lesson' reflect what research about good practice, such as the Theories of Action for Teachers? – Are there clear descriptions of what performance looks like at Commencing, Intermediate, Accomplished, and Expert levels? – Are these descriptions used as a key reference for conducting classroom observations and discussing observation data?
Learning	– Usually there is not a clear idea of what effective learning looks like. – Learning is sporadic and makes little connection to the aptitudes, experiences or ambitions of the individual learner. – As a consequence both attendance and behaviour are at low levels.	– Is a narrative being developed about the fundamental belief that all students can learn and succeed? – Is there a 'student charter' that specifies basic expectations and entitlements? – Are simple strategies in place for valuing student voice? – Is there a common behaviour protocol for managing learning behaviour (as distinct from a protocol for behaviour management)? – Have all stops been pulled out to increase student attendance?
Assessment/Data and Accountability	– The school sees itself as a victim of overly rigorous external accountability. – This defensive attitude persists even though the accountability framework has often exposed the school's weaknesses. – Inability to use feedback as part of a strategic approach to school improvement. – The school is static and there is a feeling of 'being caught in the headlights' or headlines. – Professional observation of classroom practice is seen as judgmental and punitive, and not as the key strategy for collective professional development.	– Is there a clear diagnosis of the school's current performance, based on the best available evidence? – Is the diagnosis linked to the school's emerging narrative for improvement and moral purpose, inspired by a view that 'our students deserve better than this'? – Does diagnostic data inform the school's improvement plan? – Are improvement cycles in place (like the cycle proposed on page 8)? – Has the idea been seeded for implementing peer observation against clear specifications of practice? – Is there a School Improvement Team?
Leadership	– Often senior leaders are 'part of the problem' and need to move on. They may have experienced success in the past, but are unable to meet the contemporary challenges of school leadership. – In most cases the external support they have received has not been specific, or strategic, or sustained enough, to enable real improvement. – The school is in a cycle of decline or complacency – teaching is individualised, the curriculum fragmented, and student achievement lags expectations.	– As a matter of urgency, has a leadership audit been conducted? – Have the audit outcomes been discussed with the existing leadership? – Where a transition to new leadership is necessary, are reasons for a change expressed in terms of moral purpose for the students? – Is there a process is in train to source temporary leadership capacity from experienced leaders who can establish the pre-conditions for improvement? – Is there a process is in train to ensure that high quality leaders will be appointed to provide sustained leadership for the school improvement journey?

tear-out poster

THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PATHWAY: ADEQUATE TO GOOD

Schools that are moving from 'adequate to good' are refining their developmental priorities and focusing on specific teaching and learning issues. They are building capacity within the school to support this work.

Improvement Dimension	Key Issues	Diagnostic Questions
Curriculum	– Schools may struggle to get to 'good' if they have a one size fits all approach to curriculum planning and delivery – target the middle, offer little challenge to the top, and offer little access to the bottom. – The top 20 per cent of the students is often switched off and coasting. The bottom 20 per cent is often subject to curriculum experiences that have little rigour and offer little aspiration.	– Is there an unrelenting focus on literacy and numeracy across every subject of the curriculum? – Is lesson planning sufficiently consistent so that students get a good experience, regardless of teacher or subject? – Do students know how their learning fits together and what mastery looks like? – Is learning sequenced from year to year so that it is coherent and learners can 'orientate' themselves within their learning? – Are curriculum units moderated and standardised so that comparisons between students, cohorts and teachers are reliable and useful?

Teaching	– Often teachers do more work in classrooms than the students.
	– Often there is too much whole-class teaching. This limits learning to the pace of the slowest in the group, and stops or impedes those who can make faster progress.
	– Some school leaders do not appear to have an effective strategy for disseminating new policies and best practice. This means that work to improve teaching leads to incremental change rather than swift change.
	– Teaching improvement is often held back by weaknesses in assessment and planning. This can mean that:
	  • students are insufficiently challenged
	  • teaching lacks pace because expectations are not set high enough, students are sufficiently engaged, and negative behaviour is common.
		– Is the school focussing on an intensive initial drive to reskill staff in a specific repertoire of teaching and learning approaches?
		– Is the school's focus on every teacher applying, in every lesson, effective teacher protocols that are firmly based in evidence, such as the Teacher Theories of Action – for example:
		  • Harnessing clear learning intentions and a narrative for the lesson that all students understand
		  • Setting challenging learning tasks and planning ways for all students to achieve them
		  • Framing higher order questions
		  • Connecting feedback and data
		  • Committing to assessment for learning
		  • Implementing co-operative group structures?

Learning	– Schools often lack central systems and processes that enable students to develop themselves as learners.
	– Marking and feedback are often directed at a personal level and have little task relevance.
	– Teachers infrequently use specific strategies to drive learning. Strategies are often used in an ad hoc manner. They are not understood as a means for:
	  • developing learner autonomy
	  • eliciting clear evidence of student thinking which influences planning and delivery.
		– Do all teachers adopt a range of strategies that enable them to elicit evidence of student thinking?
		– Is the evidence used as a planning aid?
		– Is there a climate in every classroom around the belief that all students can achieve?
		– Is there a strong belief system amongst teachers which holds that underperformance is never the result of student aptitude or attitude?

Assessment/Data and Accountability	– Data is often seen as a blunt performance management tool rather than as a mechanism for ensuring an ongoing dialogue about teaching and learning.
	– Line management systems often lack sufficient clarity to ensure that:
	  • data is interrogated at planned intervals throughout the academic year
	  • there is a clear accountability for this data.
		– Are systems in place for reliably tracking student progress and setting targets based on the data?
		– Are teachers enabled to use assessment information effectively to plan challenging lessons that take account of:
		  • prior attainment
		  • the learning needs of individuals and groups?
		– Is tracking data used to inform lesson planning and accelerate student progress?
		– Is feedback about, and marking of, students' work used to help them understand what they need to do next to improve?
		– Is time built into lessons to allow students to act on teacher feedback?

Leadership	– Senior leaders are often still establishing themselves as an effective leadership team. – There are pockets of good leadership practice within the school – however, senior leaders are yet to ensuring consistent practice among middle leaders – Often it is difficult to establish consistent approaches to teaching and assessment. – Often behaviour, and other issues that influence learning, are left to individual teachers and departments to manage.	– Are high expectations, high achievement for all, and high levels of accountability, communicated as part of a clear vision for the school and its students? – Does the senior leadership team work as an effective team with clear roles and lines of accountability? – Is there a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating improvement strategies? – Are systems and protocols for monitoring pupil progress and intervention being developed? – Are there effective performance management systems for all staff, and are they linked to the school's development plan? – Is there a sustained focus on improving the quality of teaching at all levels throughout the school?

THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PATHWAY: GOOD TO GREAT

'Good to Great' schools are working with specific strategies to ensure that the school remains a 'moving' school – a school that is continuing to enhance student performance and networks with other schools. There is a determined focus on sustainability and succession planning. There is a move to system teaching and system leadership that develops staff at all levels.

Improvement Dimension	Key Issues	Diagnostic Questions	
Curriculum	– Achievement has lifted in core subjects through intensive drilling and micro-management of the testing/examination system. – Specifically designed structures are in place to ensure English and mathematics interventions are targeted to the right students at the right time. – Often there is uncertainty about how to move to a structure that enables all students to achieve highly in all subjects. – Often there is uncertainty about how to incorporate literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, so that every teacher is a teacher of language and a teacher of numeracy.	– Is there a rigorous, research based approach to developing literacy and numeracy? – To orientate students wi thin the curriculum, do curriculum models take students from the early years through to secondary years? – Does the curriculum enable students to get to grips with the fundamental structure of each subject discipline?	– Are the core concepts in each subject discipline clearly mapped out? – Are the outcomes of assessments constantly analysed (every student every half term) to inform: • student progress • design of short term (six-week) interventions • long term reviews of the curriculum map?
Teaching	– Good schools usually have structures that ensure most teaching is consistently good and that there are no pockets of inadequate practice. – Often not enough teachers – at all levels – know what outstanding teaching looks like and how to improve their teaching with exemplary practice in mind. – Many good schools have managed to shift the focus in the classroom from teacher to student. However, students often still see the teacher as the 'font of all knowledge' and that their role as students is to 'remember' what their teachers say. – Students often have fixed views of themselves as a learner and the school does little to challenge this, accepting that a percentage of students simply cannot improve.	– Are all students treated as individuals? – Is the classroom atmosphere one of constant collaboration and support? – In the classroom and during independent study, do learners regularly work in small groups, thinking and analysing with pertinent support from the teacher?	– Are all staff engaged with a number of high-leverage development activities such as: • microteaching • observation of classroom methods • video/audio review/feedback • observing the practice of others • being observed?
Learning	– A key difference between a 'good' school and a 'great' one is the extent to which students self-regulate their own approaches to learning. – Often senior leaders have established a clear and simple model that enables all teachers to provide developmental feedback, and gives students opportunities to interact with this process. Mostly this is a teacher led and teacher initiated activity.	– Is there an explicit, consistently executed plan accepted by all staff that enables the shift from teacher to student led autonomy? – Are students actively engaged in learning behaviour that demonstrates they have high levels of self-efficacy and are willing to take risks and make mistakes? – Is the feedback students receive constantly task referenced and never refers to personal attributes?	– Do students embrace challenges, relish difficult tasks, and know how to find support? – Do students always use the language of growth and development when talking about their learning?
Assessment/ Data and Accountability	– Good schools tend to have strong systems for identifying student underperformance and intervening to ensure that students meet the expected standard. – Data is usually robust in core subjects but there is some variance in 'other' subjects. – Most teachers use performance data to plan lessons and review their impact.	– Do teachers know the target for every individual student and their progress towards it? – Do teachers ensure that each learner receives targeted support to maintain exceptional progress? – Does every student receive precise feedback about what they need to do next so that they hit their target?	– Does assessment provide a robust and valid picture of student thinking? – Do students take ownership of their learning? – Do students set precise steps for themselves to reach mastery, monitoring themselves and regulating their thinking during every lesson? – Does the tracking of students ensure the right students are targeted at the right time?
Leadership	– Good schools often fall into two categories; those that are good but are coasting, and those that are on a longer improvement journey. – Regardless of their differences, both types of school require the same leadership actions if they are to make the shift to excellence. An unrelenting focus on the quality of teaching and learning, and a no excuses culture, are central to this shift.	– Is there a new narrative that spells out the 'cultural shift' required for achieving excellence, accompanied by a clear set of values? – Does the new narrative focus on the shift from: • monitoring to development • getting the basics in place to developing expertise?	– Are the next generation of teachers and school leaders being developed and are they modelling the lifelong approach to learning that you want your students to embody? – Are members of the school's governing body being similarly developed?

THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PATHWAY: GREAT TO EXCELLENT

The signal characteristic of 'great' schools and schools that sustain excellence is the way in which they search for excellence internally, and offer support to other schools undertaking an improvement journey.

Improvement Dimension	Key Issues	Diagnostic Questions	
Curriculum	– All schools, including excellent schools, can tend to towards didacticism (the impulse to teach something) rather than inquiry (a preference for finding things out). – The key challenge is to build into the curriculum • problem solving • the application of knowledge.	– Is an inquiry focus present across the curriculum? – Does the curriculum entitlement for all students include: • leadership opportunities • adventurous activities • cultural activities? – Do teachers have time and resources to reconstruct their curriculum and schemes of work using inquiry and fertile questions as the dominant curriculum forms? (For more on fertile questions, see pages 12–13 of Curiosity and Powerful Learning, one of the manuals in this series.)	– Are research 'lesson study' and peer observation the main mode of professional development and learning? – Does the design of curricular tasks for students incorporate: • problem-solving • inquiry • sustained collaboration • appropriate scaffolding • worthwhile and intrinsically motivating products?
Teaching	– The challenges for teaching are the same as those noted below for learning. – The journey to excellence necessarily involves teachers becoming increasingly autonomous in professional judgement within an educational system dominated by external criteria and accountability.	– Are their shared understandings across the school about learning and achievement? – Do teachers have a shared language for learning and achievement through applying Theories of Action? – Is experimentation and risk taking encouraged in the knowledge that real learning lies in understanding the failures rather than the successes?	– Is joy taken in every demonstration of success? – Is optimism and celebration of achievement apparent across the whole school?
Learning	– The substantial challenge is to deepen learning in personalised and intellectually challenging ways, and at the same time respect the expectations of a mandated curriculum and external examinations. – A related challenge is how to help learners become more independent and self-directed.	– Is individual potential developed by providing: • outstanding teaching • rich opportunities for learning • encouragement and support for each student? – Are students directly contributing to the improvement process?	– Are students involved and empowered in the learning process by providing: • powerful, self-generated constructive feedback • peer assessment • induction into higher order thinking skills • autonomous forms of group and self-directed learning structures and protocols?
Assessment/ Data and Accountability	– The key issue is balancing the demands of external accountability with a work culture that prizes internal assessment and peer accountability.	– Does the school respect the external accountability framework? – Does the school ensure that it surpasses all the usual expectations and demands? – Is the school explicit, eloquent, and prolific in defining achievement with a view to igniting teacher enthusiasm, generating student motivation, and raising expectations? – Is there a similar focus for students on self-directed learning and peer assessment?	– Is the capacity for internal accountability nurtured and deepened by developing teachers' skills in a range of internal accountability strategies and practices such as: • action research • self-evaluation • triads and non-judgemental peer observation • student tracking systems?
Leadership	– The key internal challenge for leadership is to maintain vision, motivation and innovation in a school that is already outstanding. – The key external challenge is how to support other schools while maintaining the school's own performance and resources.	– 'In effective schools, school leaders disseminate eloquence' (Weick, 1985) – do leaders in your school do this? – Is an explicit part of the school leader's role to articulate the school's values, and to reinforce them at every opportunity? – Are these values embedded and shared by all school staff, students, and parents/carers? – Is the school embracing the challenge of continually raising the bar for what is possible?	– Is the school maintaining and developing outstanding leadership through distributed leadership, including student leadership? – Is the development of system leadership offering alternative curricular practices and new ways of teaching and learning? – Are teachers becoming skilled in these new processes through working alongside others in and beyond the school?

SYSTEM LEADERSHIP
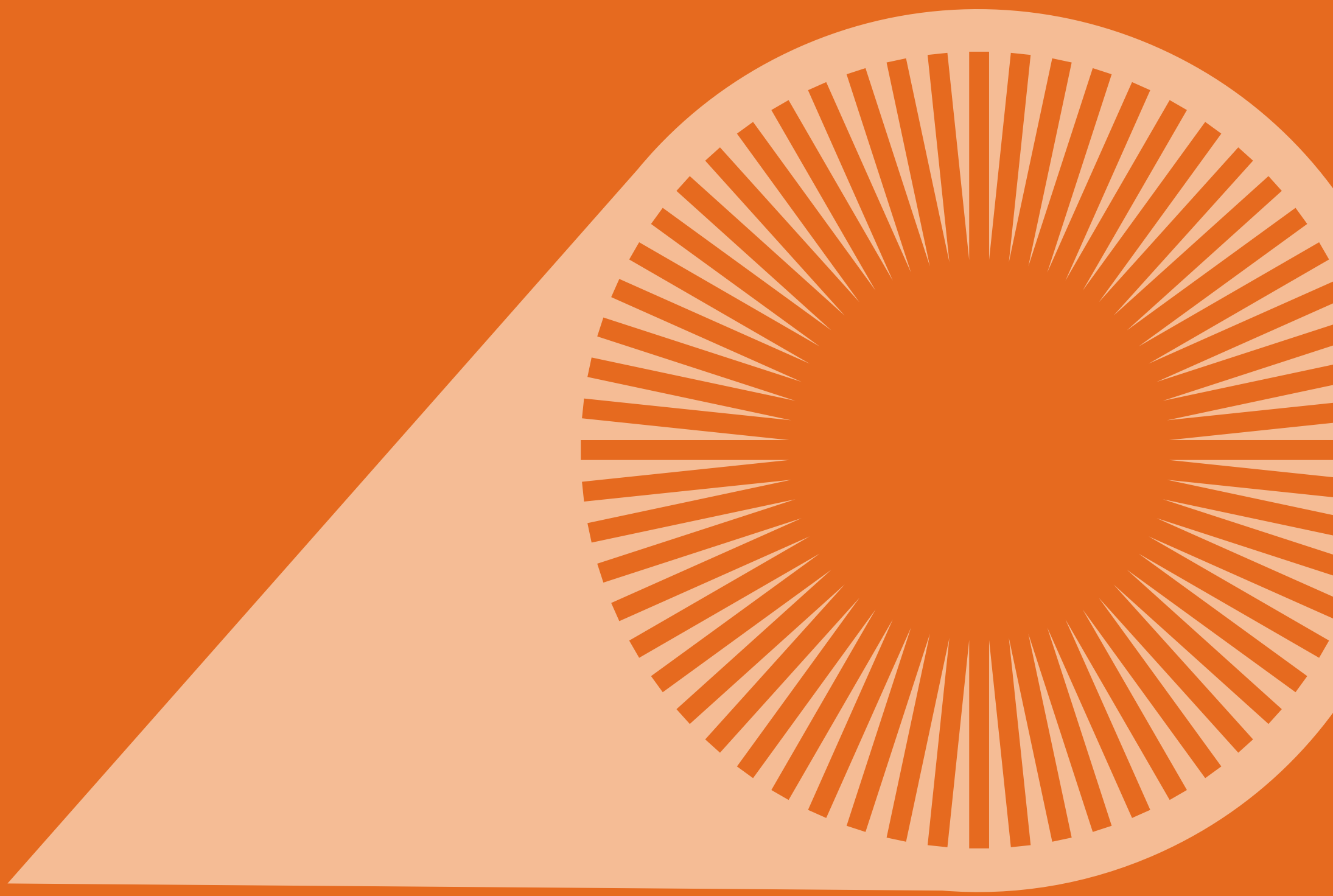
SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

We now bring together a number of themes in this manual:

– expressing the moral purpose of enhanced student achievement through **Instructional Leadership**

– embracing personal and professional change through **Adaptive Leadership** that emphasises capacity building and sustainability

– maintaining the drive towards sustainability and excellence through **Strategic Leadership** that ensures progress along the School Improvement Pathway.

Collectively, these leadership styles lead us to System Leadership. System leaders willingly accept system wide roles, supporting improvement in their own schools and in other schools.

System leadership is new and emerging practice. It embraces varied responsibilities locally and within discrete national, state or regional networks and programs. Taken together, these roles contribute to system transformation.
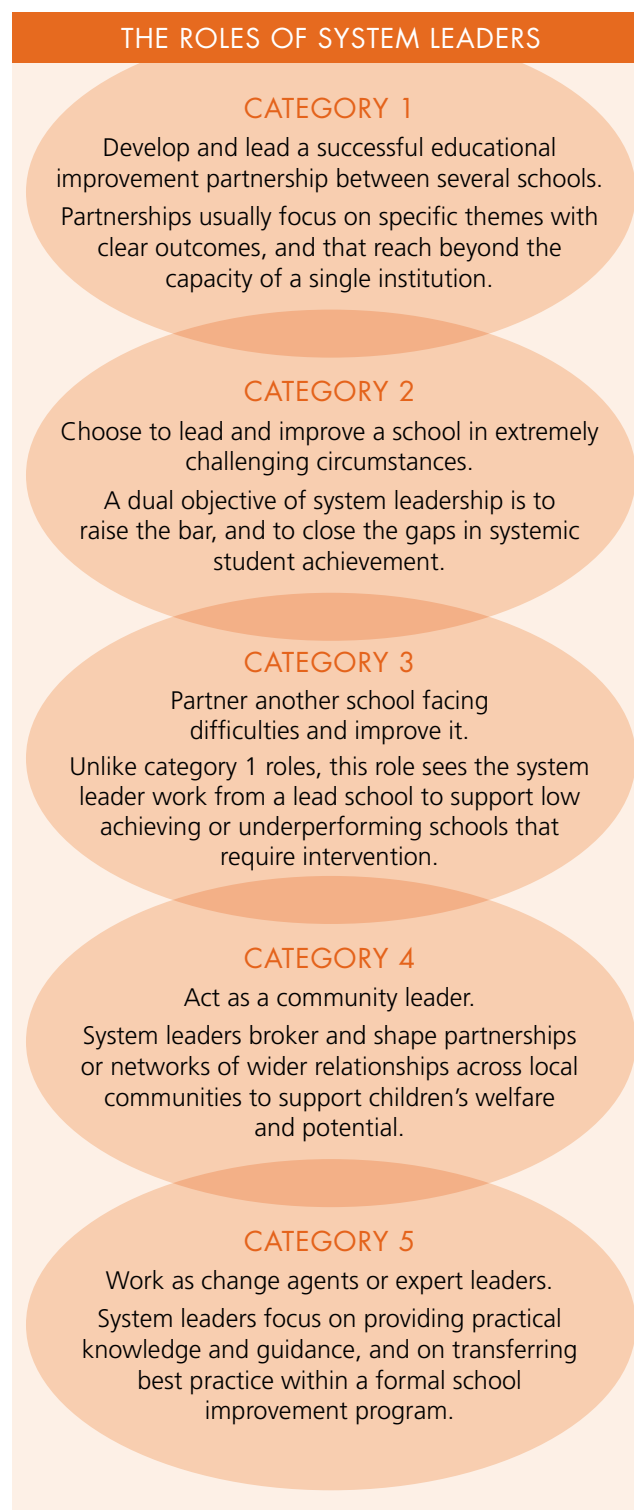
CHARACTERISTIC ORIENTATIONS OF SYSTEM LEADERS

In *Every School a Great School* David Hopkins records five striking characteristics of system leaders that differ from those found in other collaborative activity. System leaders deploy their experience, knowledge and skills to:

– actively lead improvements in others schools, and measure their success in terms of student learning, achievement and welfare

– commit staff in their own and other schools to improving teaching and learning

– lead the development of schools as personal and professional learning communities

– lead work for equity and inclusion through acting on context and culture

– strategically manage the impact of the classroom, school, and system on one another, understanding that changing the larger system means engaging with it in meaningful ways.

FIVE KINDS OF ROLES THAT SYSTEM LEADERS TAKE UP

Every School a Great School also pointed to five distinct yet overlapping categories of system leadership.

THE ROLES OF SYSTEM LEADERS

CATEGORY 1

Develop and lead a successful educational improvement partnership between several schools.

Partnerships usually focus on specific themes with clear outcomes, and that reach beyond the capacity of a single institution.

CATEGORY 2

Choose to lead and improve a school in extremely challenging circumstances.

A dual objective of system leadership is to raise the bar, and to close the gaps in systemic student achievement.

CATEGORY 3

Partner another school facing difficulties and improve it.

Unlike category 1 roles, this role sees the system leader work from a lead school to support low achieving or underperforming schools that require intervention.

CATEGORY 4

Act as a community leader.

System leaders broker and shape partnerships or networks of wider relationships across local communities to support children's welfare and potential.

CATEGORY 5

Work as change agents or expert leaders.

System leaders focus on providing practical knowledge and guidance, and on transferring best practice within a formal school improvement program.

SYSTEM LEADERSHIP – AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

System leadership is increasingly seen as a valuable store of capability and knowledge that can be applied in three ways.

SYSTEM LEADERSHIP CAN ACT AS…

A wider resource for school improvement	Taps successful leaders' capabilities by encouraging and enabling them to: – identify and transfer best practice – lead partnerships that improve and diversify educational pathways for students within and across localities.
An authentic response to the needs of low attaining schools	Strong leadership is vital to turn these schools around, but they are often the least able to attract suitable leaders.
A means for resolving, in the longer term, specific systemic challenges	Diverse challenges include: – a limited, or possibly diminishing, supply of well qualified school leaders – falling student enrolments which increasingly results in non-viable schools.

System leaders bring together the behaviours and approaches we described in our reviews of Instructional Leadership, Adaptive Leadership, and Strategic Leadership. Effective system leaders have incorporated this broad suite of skills into a personal repertoire of leadership capabilities. They are competent in each ring of the School Leadership Model described on pages 4-5. System leaders add a skillset – the ability to generate, manage, and lead school networks in the pursuit of moral purpose. Networks are the basic units of system reform and are sites of system leadership.

SYSTEM LEADERSHIP – ENABLING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH SCHOOL NETWORKS

School networks are essential contributors to a middle tier role in school systems. In many ways networks are the critical unit of accountability. In *The System and Powerful Learning* (page 12) we make the case for a middle tier that maintains two sets of connections:
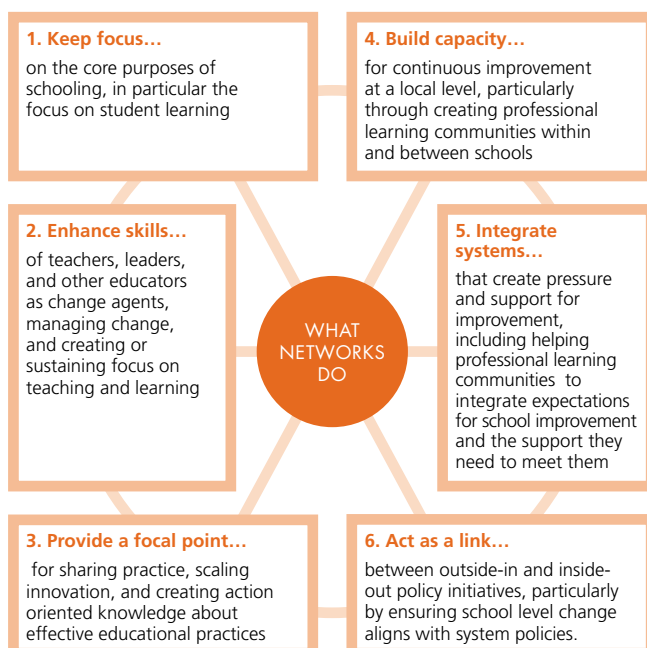
– the centre of the system to schools
– schools to each other.

Also in *The System and Powerful Learning* (page 19) we identify the middle tier, or network, leadership practices that build school improvement capacity within schools and across schools.

In this section we want to emphasise the role that school networks can play in generating, disseminating, and sustaining a focus on innovation in teaching practice, school organisation, and school engagement with their communities.
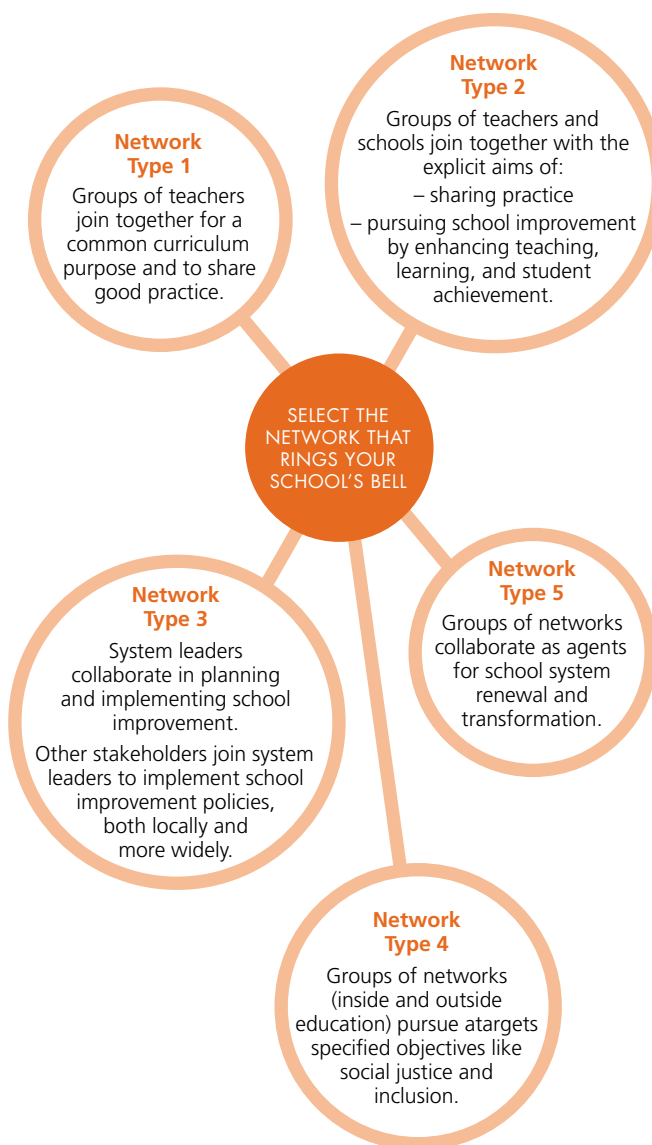
NETWORKS SUPPORT INNOVATION AND CHANGE

Hopkins (2003) notes six ways that networks act to support educational innovation and change.

1. Keep focus…
on the core purposes of schooling, in particular the focus on student learning

2. Enhance skills…
of teachers, leaders, and other educators as change agents, managing change, and creating or sustaining focus on teaching and learning

3. Provide a focal point…
for sharing practice, scaling innovation, and creating action oriented knowledge about effective educational practices

4. Build capacity…
for continuous improvement at a local level, particularly through creating professional learning communities within and between schools

5. Integrate systems…
that create pressure and support for improvement, including helping professional learning communities to integrate expectations for school improvement and the support they need to meet them

6. Act as a link…
between outside-in and inside-out policy initiatives, particularly by ensuring school level change aligns with system policies.

WHAT NETWORKS DO

FIVE KINDS OF NETWORKS

System leaders need to identify the network type best suited to advance their goals. Five kinds of networks are emerging from practice and research. These network types refer to the roles each plays in contributing to change within school systems, and in wider social systems.

Network Type 1
Groups of teachers join together for a common curriculum purpose and to share good practice.

Network Type 2
Groups of teachers and schools join together with the explicit aims of:
– sharing practice
– pursuing school improvement by enhancing teaching, learning, and student achievement.

SELECT THE NETWORK THAT RINGS YOUR SCHOOL'S BELL

Network Type 3
System leaders collaborate in planning and implementing school improvement.
Other stakeholders join system leaders to implement school improvement policies, both locally and more widely.

Network Type 4
Groups of networks (inside and outside education) pursue atargets specified objectives like social justice and inclusion.

Network Type 5
Groups of networks collaborate as agents for school system renewal and transformation.

NETWORKS DEVELOP AND TRANSFER INNOVATION

In *Education epidemic* David Hargreaves argues that system leaders must create a climate for disciplined innovation. This orientation means teachers can:

– actively engage in innovation
– transfer proven innovations rapidly within their school and into other schools.

Disciplined innovation by leading schools achieves transformation by combining two dynamic elements: 'frontline innovation' and 'transferred innovation'.

Frontline innovation	Conducted by leading-edge schools and government supported 'pathfinders'.
	They develop new ideas into original practices.
	Frontline innovation means the best schools move further ahead.
Transferred innovation	The gap is closed between the most and least effective schools by transferring proven innovations between them.

Networks provide the mediating layer for achieving transformation through developing and transferring innovation. Securing transformation through combining these elements relies on agreement within a network about four steps.

STEP 1	Teachers are clear about what is meant by 'good' and 'best' practice.
STEP 2	There is an agreed method for locating good practice and sound innovations.
STEP 3	Innovations selected for development and transfer must bring real advantages to teachers.
STEP 4	There are agreed methods for transferring innovation effectively.

Networks enable school improvement. And system leaders enable networks.

It is through applying strategic system leadership skills and behaviours that networks are established, resourced, guided, and maintained. System leaders empower school networks to invest every school with the capability to deliver high leverage pedagogies that nourish powerful learning.

LEADERSHIP AND IMPLEMENTATION – STAYING ON TRACK

Leadership for Powerful Learning highlights the overwhelming importance of leadership in realising our collective moral purpose – enhanced achievement for every student in every classroom. We have examined four complementary leadership styles, drawing on decades of accumulated wisdom and evaluation of best practice.

By combining these leadership styles we can overcome the challenge of social complexity, and the paradox of 'change yet no change' noted in the Introduction.

We deliberately link leadership and implementation, and our experience suggests leaders will meet two implementation demands:

– the predictable arrival of the implementation dip
– the need to apply evidence about teaching and learning to the choice of school improvement strategies.

Knowing we are likely to encounter these demands allows us to prepare for them.

THE IMPLEMENTATION DIP

In our Introduction we refer to the familiar cycle of 'change yet no change' – the common experience that most changes in schools and school systems falter after early implementation. Michael Fullan describes this recurring pattern as the 'implementation dip', referring to factors that become obstacles to re-learning and meaningful change.

The implementation dip is a phase of dissonance, of internal turbulence. As a teacher I hold to my established teaching practices because I know them well – at the same time I am challenged, even convinced, by evidence that my familiar practices are falling short. Changing how I teach is tough. This kind of dissonance is predictable, uncomfortable, and necessary. Research tells us that early in a change process destabilisation is probably inevitable if we are to secure long lasting change.

Change is too complex. It is rarely tidy. But we can anticipate some features. The following diagram shows three stages of change: initiation, implementation, and institutionalisation. In our experience, the stages overlap. The diagram tells us we can reliably anticipate resistance to change just after initiation and just before institutionalisation.
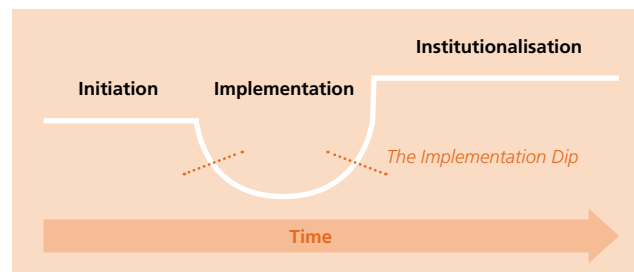
In the initiation phase buy-in to a school improvement strategy occurs when teachers are convinced change is needed and the change proposed is appropriate. When the implementation plan is circulated they see how and when proposed changes will affect them. Commitment dips when strategy becomes reality. Resistance arises because change is uncomfortable and challenging for individuals and groups.

A second predictable episode of resistance occurs when implementation moves towards institutionalisation. For new teaching and learning practices to take root they must prove their worth and survive the resistance encountered during early implementation. A deliberate step for school leaders is to change established policies, procedures, and ways of working so that new practices become part of day to day school operations – they become habits rather than seen as exceptions to how we do things in our school.

In *The System and Powerful Learning* (pages 10-11) we describe the importance of aligning, but managing separately, a school's maintenance and development systems. This is a deliberate approach to embedding sustainable change. Managing the implementation dip is essential for transforming the learning and achievement of all students. How to manage it depends on the changes your school is making, and where your school stands on the School Improvement Pathway. This manual offers ideas for supporting your teachers through the dip, include those in the box below.
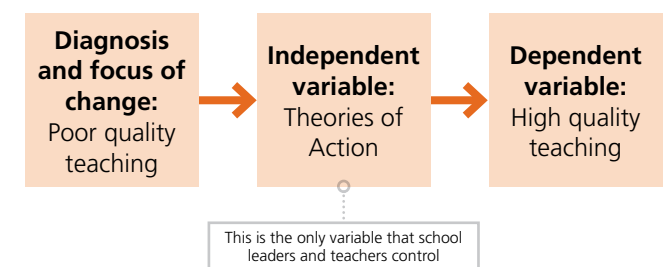
POLISH YOUR INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

We met Bruce Joyce earlier when we discussed peer coaching (pages 13-14). Joyce is a renowned education researcher with deep school reform expertise. He once advised us that for school improvement to succeed we must take time to 'polish our independent variables.' At first glance it seems strange to suggest a technical term related to experimental research designs can help us enhance teaching and learning. Yet it turns out to be wise advice.

In experimental research we change the independent variable to affect the outcome or dependent variable. The independent variable is the only variable a researcher controls. In school improvement it is the only variable school leaders and teachers control.

The independent variable comprises the strategies we employ to move from the current situation to an improved desired state. In the Powerful Learning manuals the independent variable comprises ten Theories of Action – four Whole School Theories of Action, and six Theories of Action for Teachers.

Let's take it that after a diagnostic review a school leader realises that teaching in the school is inconsistent. In response she rightly sets an improvement goal that the school will have consistent, high quality teaching – that goal is the dependent variable. Following consultation she decides to introduce the Theories of Action as a means of achieving that outcome.

| Diagnosis and focus of change: Poor quality teaching | → | Independent variable: Theories of Action | → | Dependent variable: High quality teaching |

This is the only variable that school leaders and teachers control

NAVIGATING THE IMPLEMENTATION DIP		
Embed the Story of the Curiosity Journey	Have a compelling narrative about student learning in your school – a narrative that is shared and supported	Phase 1, Five Phase Implementation Framework, page 10
School Improvement Plan	Build Cycles of Inquiry and Success Checks into your School Improvement Plan. They give teachers frequent formal and informal opportunities to hear about and discuss progress and data on the Plan's Priorities for Development.	Phase 2, Five Phase Implementation Framework, page 12
Peer coaching	Organise peer coaching for all teachers in a supported professional learning framework.	Phase 3, Five Phase Implementation Framework, page 14
Lesson Study	Empower teachers as action researchers who share their new knowledge with their colleagues.	Incentivise teacher teams, page 21

The Theories of Action make up the independent variable – the strategy the school will use to shift current performance. They are selected because we have research evidence about their capacity to produce the dependent variable – the desired outcome of consistent, high quality teaching.

To polish our independent variables we must be precise and literate about which strategies have the power to link diagnosis with improved performance. If we can link cause and effect we are better placed to avoid dead ends and unhelpful fads.

The ten Theories of Action we examine closely in *Curiosity and Powerful Learning* provide school and system leaders with polished independent variables for improving student outcomes. Implementing them effectively and sustainably depends on insightful leadership.

LEADERSHIP IS A JOURNEY

School improvement is a journey. We are certain that what is presented in the Powerful Learning manuals is not the final word. As teachers, schools, and systems engage in disciplined innovation we will learn more about how to enact our moral purpose most effectively.

School and system leadership is a journey too. If there was a simple leadership template for school and system leaders to apply to their work there would be no need for this manual. There is no silver bullet. Every school operates in a dynamic and distinctive context. Each school asks something different of its leaders. Each school improvement plan demands personal change, professional development, and organisational innovation. Leadership is about meeting those demands.

In *Leadership for Powerful Learning* we provide starting points for journeys to excellence. In combination the four leadership styles we describe provide a flexible toolkit for leaders to respond to diverse school circumstances with strategies for improving student outcomes.

The Theories of Action set out in *Curiosity and Powerful Learning*, and the leadership styles and strategies described in this manual, provide a platform for school improvement. It is a platform built on research evidence tested through practical school improvement experiences.

We can claim that the approaches to leadership for school improvement presented in this manual have proved their worth in many schools and systems. As leaders we are duty bound to learn and share the lessons of our school improvement journeys for the benefit of all our students.

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