Navigating Complexity: Building Coherence Through A Leadership for Learning Approach

Mike Maciach and Dr. Tim Stensland

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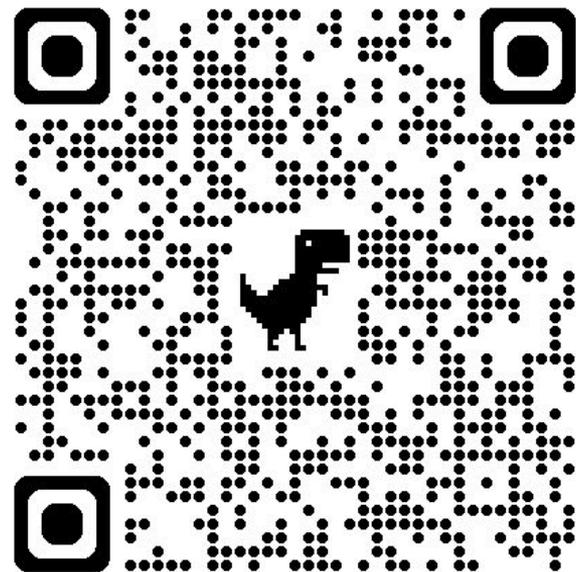# Navigating Complexity: Building Coherence Through A Leadership for Learning Approach

Mike Maciach and Dr. Tim Stensland

Have you completed the survey?

https://bit.ly/CASSLeadership2025

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As a School-Based Leader

What are you really good at?

What is an area you want to develop?

Mastering Student Centered Leadership

Being a school-based administrator is, in my opinion, one of the most impactful roles you can have. You hold the power to influence, motivate, innovate, and create possibilities for our most valuable and sometimes most vulnerable members of society: our students. ...
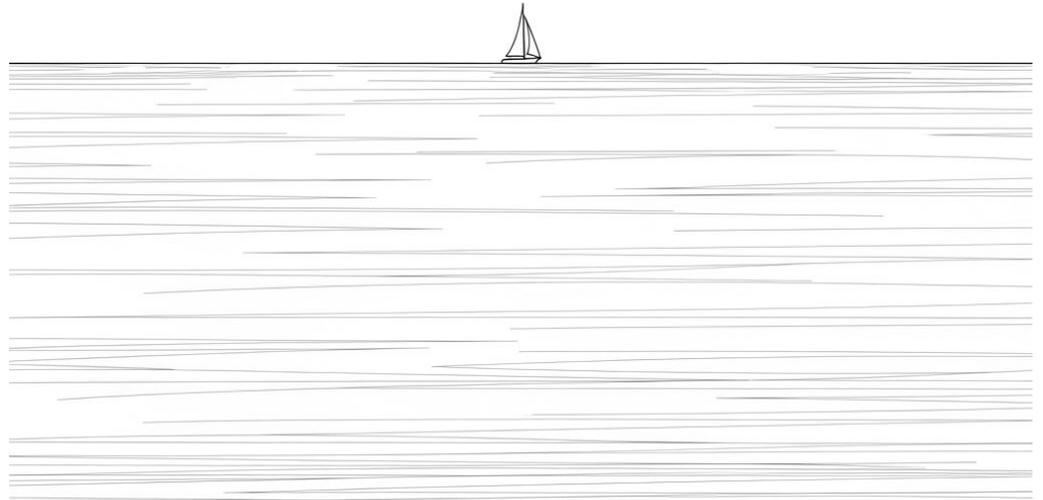
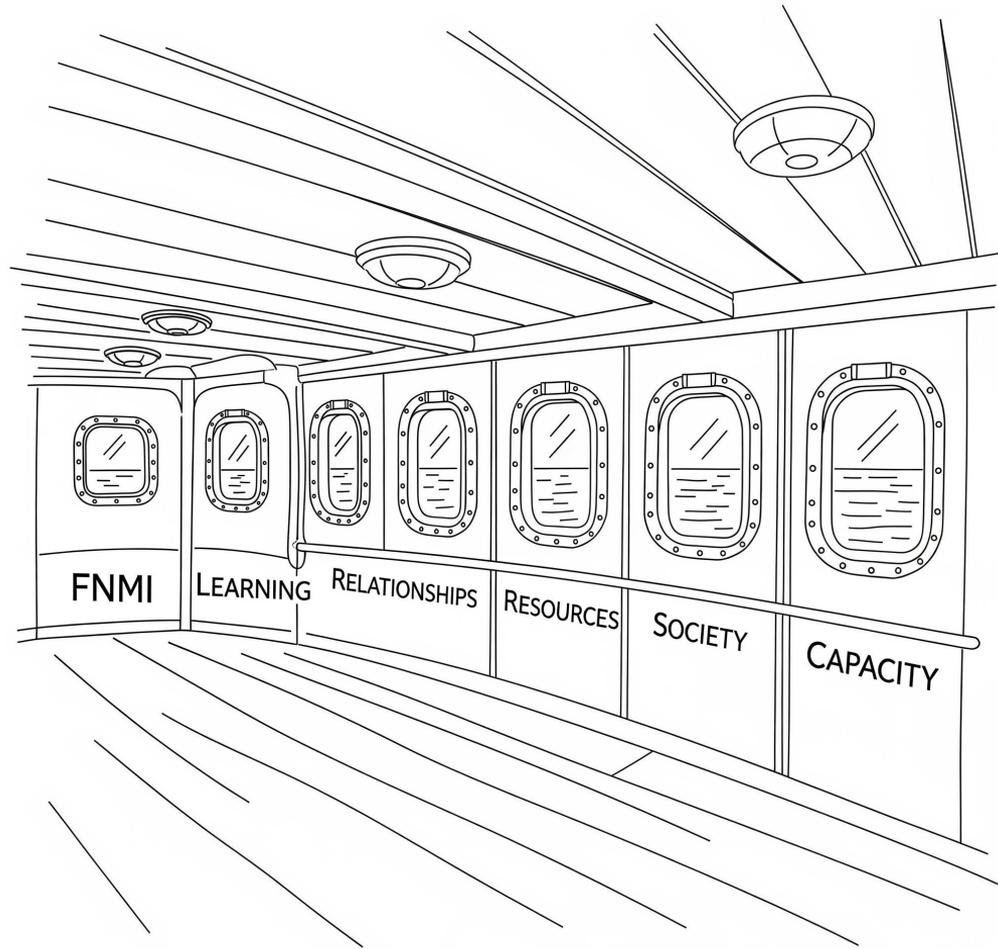MACIACH & STENSLAND

Format for today

Leadership Lens/ Theory

Real examples of strategies/tools to:

- Make it
  - Easier
  - Efficient
  - Smarter
  - More manageable

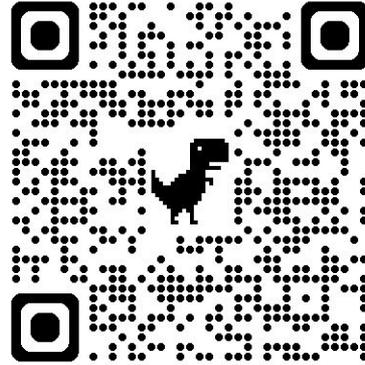MACIACH & STENSLAND

Leadership
Point of View

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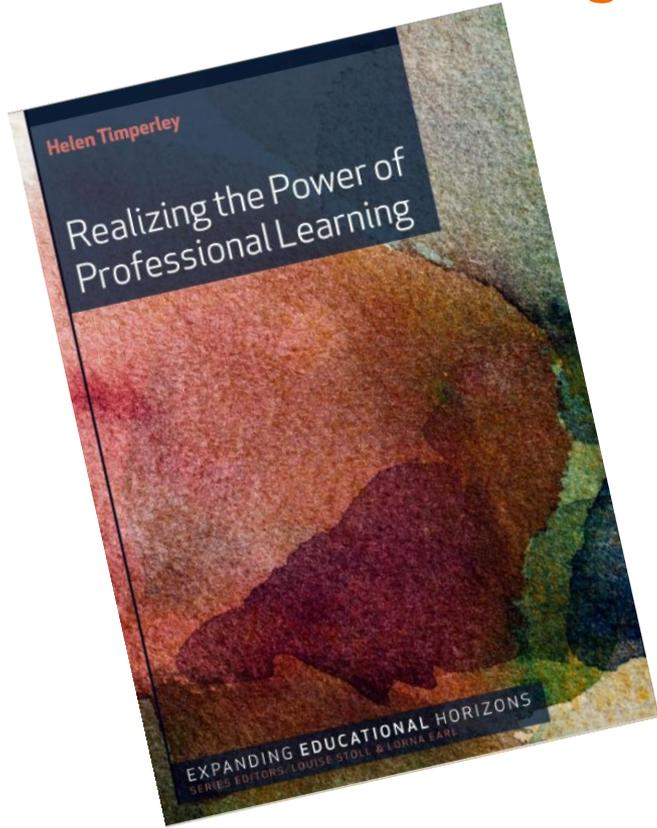
Many Lenses

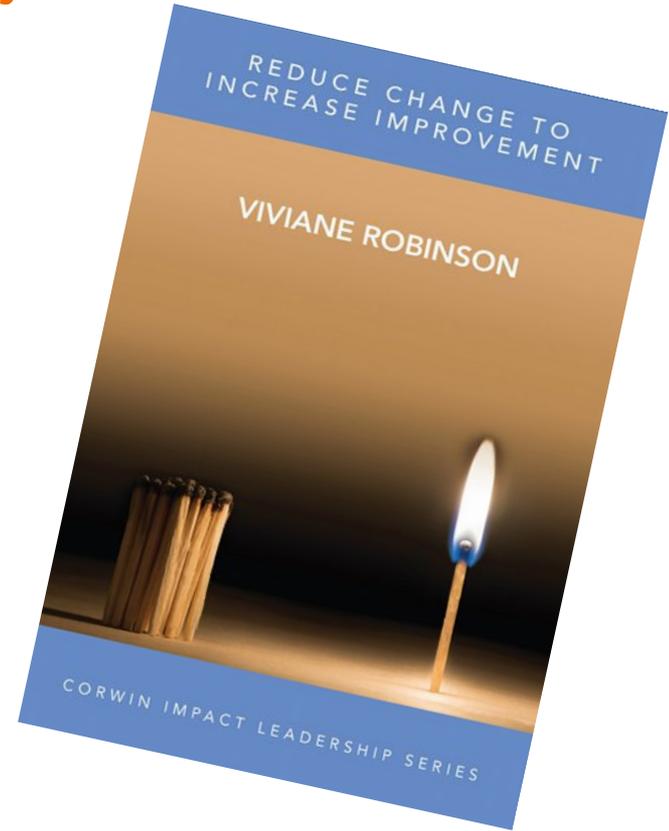MACIACH & STENSLAND

Why - Leadership for Learning

Limited time, space, and attention and multiple demands from community, society, government, and the larger division that can chip away from your focus on student learning.

A focus on leadership for learning is a way to ensure you keep student learning at the forefront of your agenda.

Acknowledging the Complexity for Leaders

Helen Timperley
Realizing the Power of Professional Learning
EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL HORIZONS
SERIES EDITORS: LOUISE STOLL & LORNA EARL

Comparison Podcast - AI generated

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REDUCE CHANGE TO INCREASE IMPROVEMENT

VIVIANE ROBINSON

CORWIN IMPACT LEADERSHIP SERIES

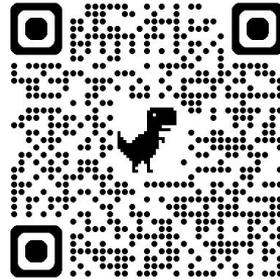Timperley, H. (2022). Adaptive expertise and evaluative thinking in leadership

Why A Leadership for Learning Approach?

- Leaders have limited time, space, and attention for themselves, and for how they manage and lead the their time, space, and attention for the staff.
- Leaders must focus on efforts that create an impact on student learning.
- How do principals have the greatest impact on student learning?
  - Leading teacher learning and development
  - Ensuring quality teaching
  - Establishing high goals and expectations (Robinson, 2012)
- But,
  - Where do you spend most of your time?
  - What gets your attention?
  - What do you create space for?

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Leadership for Learning Approach - Learning vs Knowing

Key - being open to learning. Establish a learning mindset.

"Becoming experienced then, is not about knowing all there is to know in advance of a situation" Ted Aoki, but rather being attuned to what is present in every situation and responding accordingly.

Learning to do the right things in the setting where we work, rather than asserting what we know when we start the work (Elmore).

Model this for your staff. They too need to be open to reflection, changing approaches and finding new ways when something is not working.

Champion the Shift in Focus - Student Learning

Then

- What is happening in a classroom?
- What the teacher is doing
- Management of classroom
- Assessment for accountability
- Teaching is Private
- Self- improvement

Now

- What has the teacher designed for learning?
- What the students are learning
- Engagement of learners
- Assessment to improve student learning
- Teaching is visible and public
- Improve in the company of peers

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BIGGEST IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

Teachers have the largest impact on student learning

Principals impact is indirect

Judge Leadership by the impact on students, not on adults

Learning is the lens for examining practice

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GOAL - Improve Instruction/Learning

The top-performing schools recognize that the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction, (McKinsey & Company, 2010)

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Point of leverage for leaders. Robinson measured the impact!

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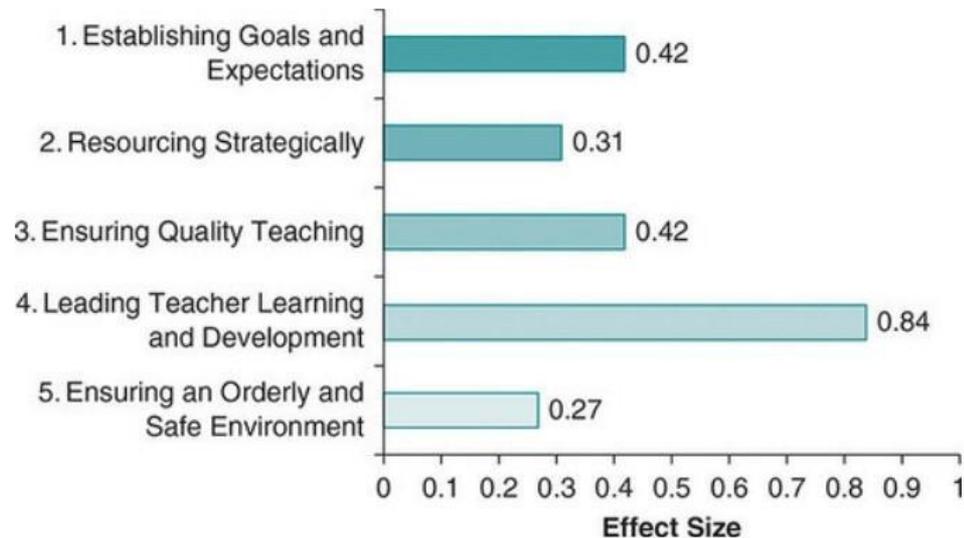
Timperley - Power of Professional Learning

Turn schools systems upside down - start with the focus on student learning.

Principals create the impact each day, all day, through their work.

Many good examples of this is managed.

- Research above
- Teacher and leadership competencies
- High School Redesign

Narrow the Focus - Strategy

But ~~9, 6,~~ 3, Competencies or ....

- **Providing Instructional Leadership** A leader **ensures** that **every student has access to quality teaching and optimum learning experiences**.
- **Leading a Learning Community** A leader **nurtures** and **sustains a school culture that supports evidence-informed teaching and learning.**
- **Embodying Visionary Leadership** A leader **collaborates** with the school community to create and **implement** the **school's shared vision for student success, engagement, learning and well-being**.

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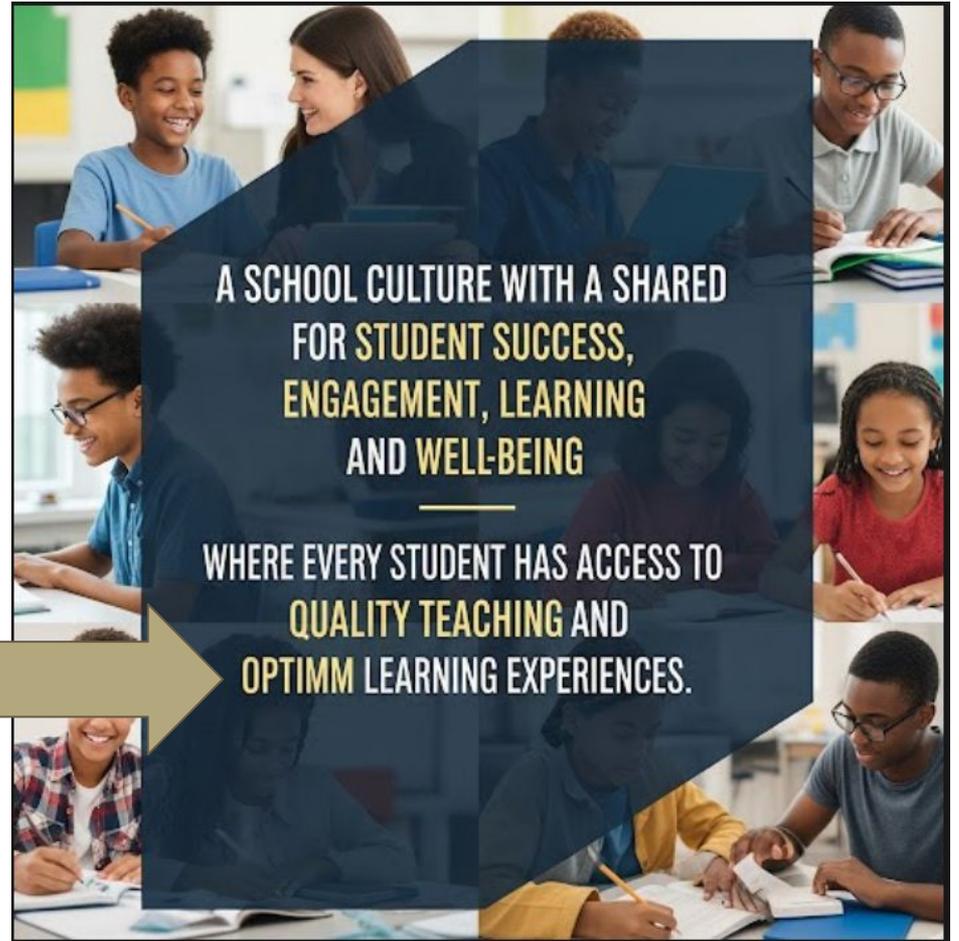
Combined? Narrowed down! Common Focus! Why?

Simplified narrow common focus:

A school culture with a shared vision for student success, engagement, learning, and well-being where every student has access to quality teaching and optimum learning experiences.

A dynamic school culture that actively cultivates a shared vision for student success, engagement, continuous learning, and well-being, empowering every student through quality teaching and optimal learning opportunities. (Gemini helped me)

A school culture with a shared vision for student success, engagement, learning, and well-being where every student has access to quality teaching and optimum learning experiences.

How hard is that to do?

A SCHOOL CULTURE WITH A SHARED
FOR STUDENT SUCCESS,
ENGAGEMENT, LEARNING
AND WELL-BEING

WHERE EVERY STUDENT HAS ACCESS TO
QUALITY TEACHING AND
OPTIMM LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

#2: Narrow the Focus

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Focus on Teacher Effectiveness

To meet this "competency" you need to narrow the focus on & emphasize teacher effectiveness/student learning.

There are many tools you can use:

I prefer: Friesen, S. (2009). What did you do in school today? Teaching Effectiveness: A Framework and Rubric.

Here is a link to a comparison completed by Gemini. The document is compared to 8 other frameworks and key commonalities are shared.

My Focus as a Leader…..

2. Principles of effective teaching practice

Principle 1 – Teachers are Designers of Learning

Principle 2 – Work Students are Asked to Undertake is Worth Their Time and Attention

Principle 3 – Assessment Practices Improve Students Learning and Guide Teaching

Principle 4 – Teachers Foster A Variety of Interdependent Relationships

Principle 5 – Teachers Improve Their Practice in The Company of Their Peers

What is your plan to ensure your intentions are understood for this competency?

- First staff meeting before school begins. This is your best chance
- Let them know your development area this year. Include data, include rational, principal/leadership competencies.
- Include in communication to staff, students, and community.
- Keep it top of mind, bring it up often. Talking to staff, talking to students, and parents.
- Does the school display the lens you're advocating and attending to?
- Rationalize your time, space, and attention.
- How do you protect the core learning?

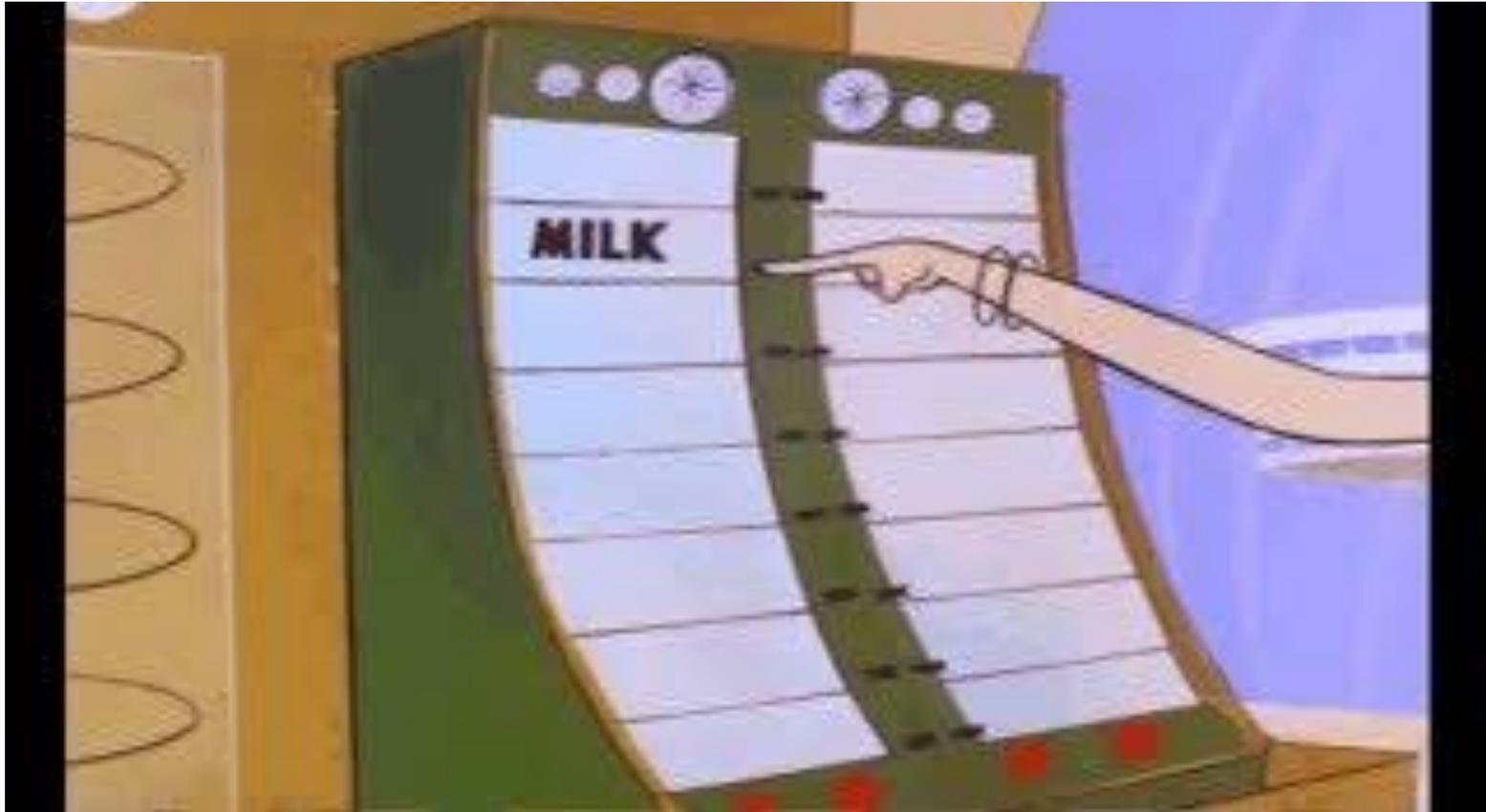# Ensuring you understand that quality teaching and optimum learning

- Classroom observations
  - Artifacts
  - Conversations
  - Observations
- Teacher planning
- Student progress meetings
- Professional learning agendas and times
- Review of student results reporting
- Many other examples: parent meetings, general conversations

Part 2

- Make it:
  - Easier
  - Efficient
  - Smarter
  - More manageable
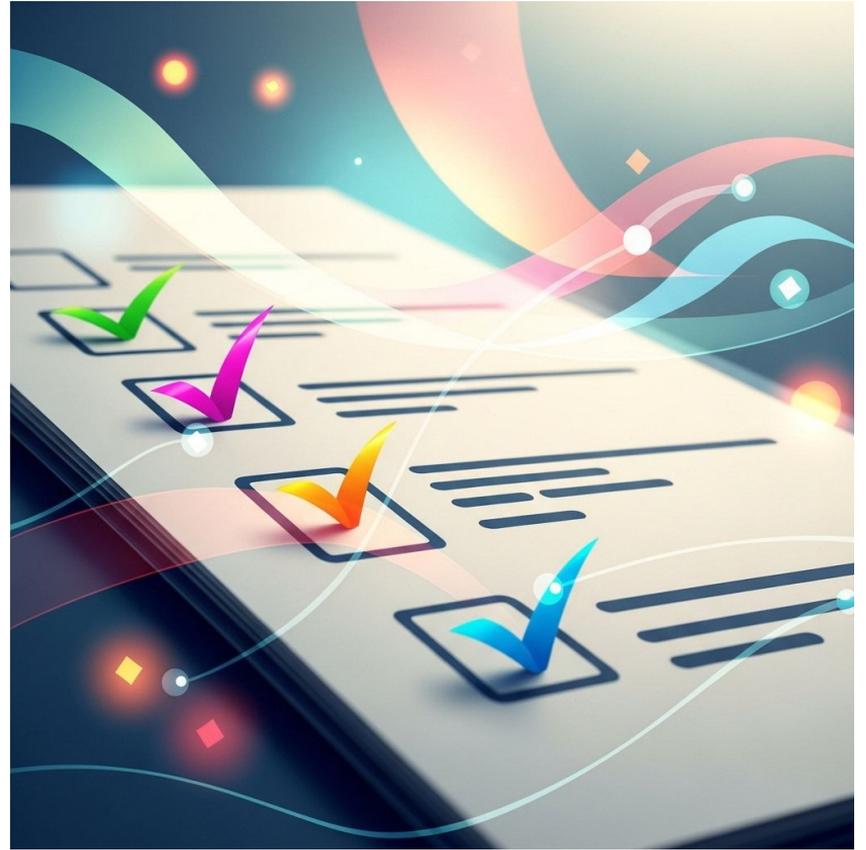
Have you ever wished you could.....

Understanding Your Leadership Day: Time, Tasks, and Priorities

What you shared:

Survey results:

The Technology Leader

Be a Visionary and a Tech Champion:

- **Model Technology Use:** Leaders should actively use technology in their daily tasks, presentations, and communication (e.g., using presentation software for meetings, observations, demonstrating new tools). This shows staff that technology is valued and embraced.
- **Communicate the "Why":** Clearly articulate *why* technology is being integrated – how it will improve instruction, support educators, enhance student learning, and prepare students for a digital world. This goes beyond simply providing tools; it's about the pedagogical benefits.
- **Inspire and Motivate:** Share examples of successful technology integration from within the school, other schools, or through videos. Celebrate teachers who are innovating with technology.
- **Stay Current:** While not needing to be tech experts, leaders should stay informed about emerging technologies and their potential impact on education.
- **Empower Educators:** Provide opportunities for teachers to experiment, learn, and share their experiences with technology. Create a safe space for genuine reflection and adjustment.
- **Provide Time and Space:** Give teachers dedicated time to learn new tools, ask questions, and collaborate on technology integration.
- **Encourage Peer Support:** Foster a culture where tech-champions can mentor and support their colleagues.
- **Create a Vision:** Formulate a clear and well articulated vision for technology integration in your school that is rooted in student learning and has buy-in from staff and school community members.

Tech Tools and AI Considerations

Division Guidelines: Know your school division's procedures and policies related to AI. Are there administrative procedures for AI? Are there specific AI tools your division recommends or subscribes to?

Data Privacy: Avoid sharing sensitive personal info or any kind of student information. Understand how your data will be collected, stored, and used. Be aware that some tools might use your input to train their models.

Accuracy: Double-check AI results for errors and biases. Understand AI's limitations and verify critical information. AI should be seen as a tool to people, not replace them. Human judgment remains essential.

Ethics: Use AI responsibly and fairly, avoiding plagiarism. Be transparent about AI use. Stay informed and report issues.

Technical: Check app permissions. Be wary of links/downloads. Keep software updated. Disable chat saving if concerned. Maintain human oversight and understand automation limits.

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Examples of Tech and AI Tools!

- ChatGPT
- Google Gemini ←
- Google NotebookLM ←
- Teacher Time Machine ←
- Magic School ←
- Pear Deck
- Brisk ←

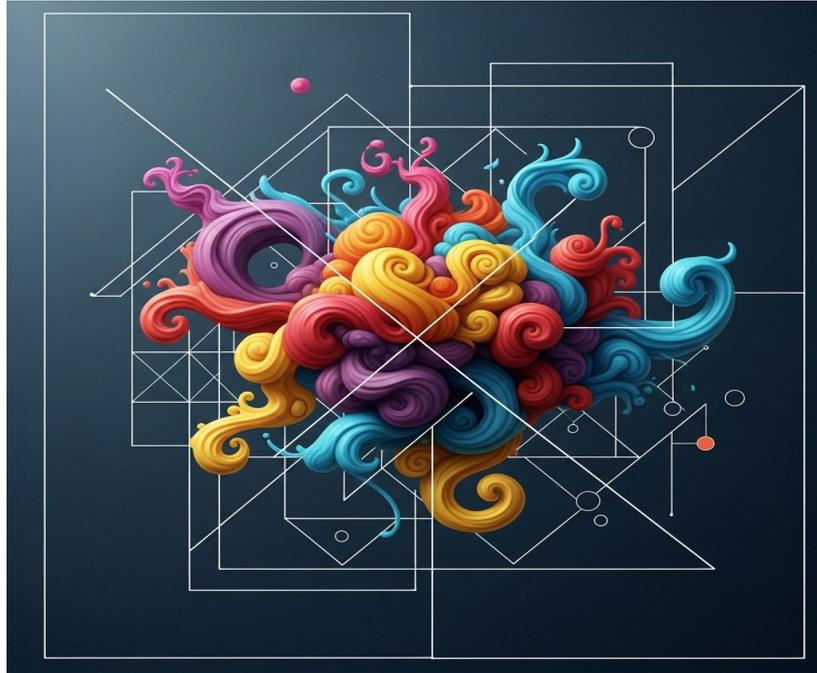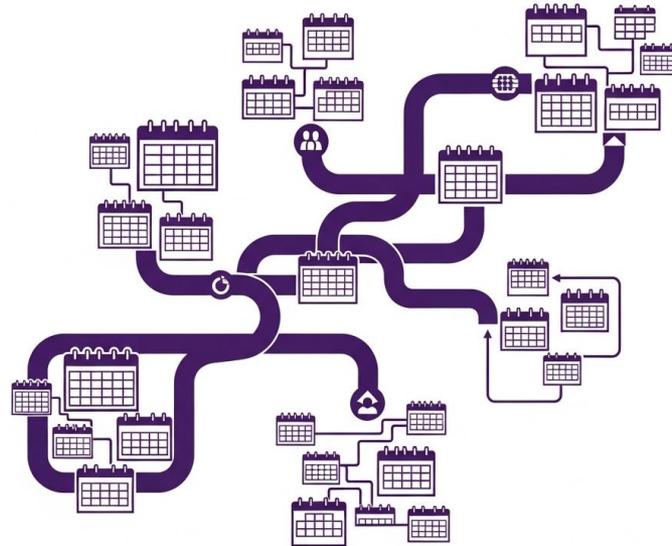# Summarising and Making Sense of Information and Data
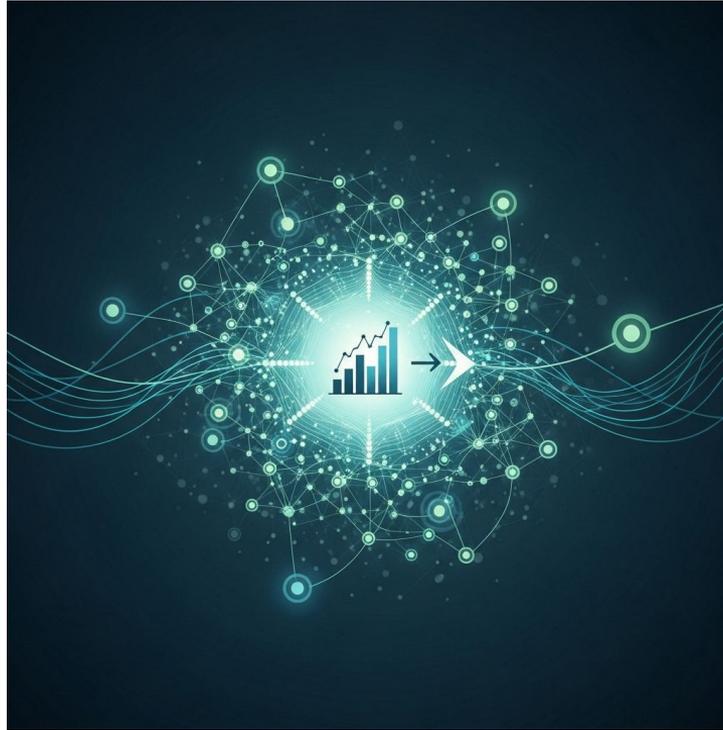
Compliance and Reporting

Understanding and Managing Budgets

Student Engagement and Discipline

Meetings, Scheduling, and Logistics Management

Communicating with Parents and Stakeholders

Professional Learning and Supports for Professional Growth

Teacher Mentorship, Evaluation, and Feedback

Classroom Planning and Preparation

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Gemini Pro 2.5 version, Google, 28 June. 2025, https://gemini.google.com/

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