

WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE SAYING . . .

There are few individuals who can so deftly articulate a strong theory-into-practice orientation as does Lyn Sharratt. Why? Because she has done the work. Her credibility with the education community has been earned.

CLARITY weaves together theory, solid rationale, insights, reflective analysis, and guidance for teachers and leaders all underpinned with the “how” of practical, evidence-proven, and well-lived experiences. A topical book, CLARITY is available for practitioners who want to take their learning to new heights of understanding. A timely book, CLARITY is now, more than ever it seems, needed for the support it offers. In a noisy world, it provides an oasis of tranquility for those of us who want to reflect on proven ideas and gain keen insights as pathways to deep implementation. We need clarity on what matters most in learning, teaching, and leading.

—Avis Glaze

International Education Adviser;
Former Ontario Education Commissioner

CLARITY is practical, user-friendly, and grounded in current, evidence-based practices. Sharratt’s focus remains on teachers using student data, working together to unpack the analysis, and collaborating on interventions and strategies to improve achievement. The book includes real case studies on lessons learned and successful examples from around the world. CLARITY empowers schools and systems to build on teachers’ and leaders’ expertise in shaping and informing improvement.

—Karen Grose

Vice President, TVOntario (TVO)

CLARITY is a must-read for all educators. Built on sound research and stories from the field, the book lays out a proven process for improving learning for all students. Lyn Sharratt does an outstanding job of showing the importance of clarity and precision in school leadership.

—Ruth Mattingley

Former Senior Executive Officer, Literacy
and Numeracy Secretariat,
Ontario Ministry of Education, and
Former Superintendent of Education, Lambton Kent District

CLARITY is a great resource for practicing school leaders, those working at division level, and those aspiring to such positions. The real-life examples clearly illustrate how schools can support all learners in their journey without suggesting a simplistic, cookie cutter approach to school improvement.

—Pamela Osmond-Johnson

Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership
University of Regina

In education today it is very easy to “muddy the waters” with what are perceived as competing initiatives or new ways forward. In CLARITY, Lyn Sharratt provides the precision, alignment, and direction that are needed to see what really matters in learning, teaching, and leading. It is sure to spark ideas as practitioners put learning into action. Readers will come away with a sense that CLARITY captures a learning journey that comes not just from theory but experience lived.

—Gale Harild

Author, Educational Pathway Consultant
Ontario, Canada

In an age of increasing measurement and accountability, it is heartening to see that Lyn Sharratt brings intentional CLARITY to the real work of what matters MOST in learning, teaching, and leading – our students! At the same time, Sharratt demonstrates the impact that collaboration has on all levels of learning - teachers, leaders, students and community. Authentic examples from the field provide the reader with what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like to use precision as a tool for improvement. The vignettes, case studies, quotes and examples of practice provide us with a “mental picture” of what is possible in our own contexts when we stay the course and commit to the 14 Parameters. However, this book is more than that, it is a way to challenge and shape our individual and collective dispositions and actions in what matters most in learning, teaching and leading.

—Joanne Casey

Educational Consultant, Literary Coach, and Instructional Mentor
Queensland, Australia

Educational leaders improve learning experiences for all students when they believe and trust that day-to-day quality teaching promotes high expectations of all students; teachers’ working collaboratively; coherence between the vision of the future and daily practice; and being across all classrooms, inquiring and sharing about the learning done. These concrete actions fill schools with life, energy and successful achievement of high expectations.

—Isidora Recart

Chief Executive Officer, and

—Simón Rodríguez Espinoza

Director of Professional Development
Arauco Foundation, Chile

In her latest book, CLARITY, Lyn Sharratt continues to bring invaluable insights to education practitioners to make a positive difference for all learners. The invitation at the close of each chapter to take a deliberate pause to create clarity provides a powerful structure for practitioners to reflect upon ways to progress educational achievement in their own context.

—Maggie Ogram

Educational Leadership Coach
Osprey Consulting Ltd.

At the heart of what has instigated amazing change in Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) is Lyn Sharratt's work around the 14 Parameters. Sharratt's extraordinary contribution to our work in BCE, her resilience and demand for excellence, has been so critical to our growth. What I admire most is her commitment to all students—regardless of their circumstances—be they in Chile, the Cape, Sunnybank, or Saskatoon.

—David Greig

Senior Executive Officer
Brisbane Catholic Education

Education systems and schools operate in complex environments. CLARITY provides an explicit, practical model that can be utilized by each layer within a system – system leaders, principals, teachers, and students – to ensure that there is an unrelenting focus on what matters most: student learning. This carefully constructed text breaks through educational jargon to purposefully illustrate how clarity can be realized and evidenced in student improvement through the use of real case studies.

—Tania Leach

Education Consultant, Lecturer
Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia

Lyn Sharratt is the ultimate teacher – guiding, supporting, and challenging us to be the high-quality educators who keep every FACE at the center. The fruits of her labor are powerfully demonstrated in every school across our diocese. With this book, Sharratt brings CLARITY to us in such an inspiring way.

—Anthony Gordon

Executive Director of Education, and

—Mary-Ellen Demsey

Director of Teaching and Learning
Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes, Australia

Educational change happens when the vision and purpose of diverse stakeholders converge around students' learning. Lyn Sharratt demonstrates not only why educational improvement is important, but also how to achieve it. The narrative style and powerful

content of CLARITY will engage academics, practitioners, and everyone who cares about improving the learning opportunities of all children.

—Sergio Galdames

Chilean Educational Researcher and
PhD Candidate at the Institute of Education UCL

For over a decade now, Dr. Sharratt has been bringing clarity to educational audiences around the globe. She has now put her profound messages into print in CLARITY. Drawing on research, case studies, and front-line experience, this book draws the reader in and clearly paves the path for us, as leaders in the profession, to implement, monitor, and assess very effective and clearly described practices. CLARITY calls upon us to be reflective practitioners who are willing to learn alongside one another while ensuring the needs of each and every one of our students are met.

—Kim Newlove

Former Superintendent of Education
Saskatoon Public Schools

CLARITY

What Matters MOST in Learning, Teaching, and Leading

Lyn Sharratt

Foreword by John Hattie

Introduction by Alma Harris

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Visit the companion website at
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for videos and downloadable resources

LIST OF ONLINE RESOURCES

Note From the Publisher: The author has provided web content throughout the book that is available to you through QR (quick response) codes. To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.



Web Resources

Content may also be accessed at resources.corwin.com/CLARITY

Web Resource 1: Using the 14 Parameters as a System and School Self-Assessment Tool for Improvement

Web Resource 2: Darling Downs Template to Track the 14 Parameter Work

Web Resource 3: Organizing and Mobilizing a Learning Event—The Learning Fair

Web Resource 4: One Principal's Thoughts on Building Capacity in a Secondary School

Web Resource 5: A Professional Learning Protocol for Collaborative Assessment of Student Work

Web Resource 6: School Case Management Meeting Teacher and Participant Template

Web Resource 7: Follow-Up Case Management Meeting Template

Web Resource 8: System Case Management Meeting Facilitator's/Chair's Script

Web Resource 9: Creating QR Codes for Your Data Wall

Web Resource 10: Self-Assessing Against the Six Leadership Dimension Skills

Web Resource 11: Knowledge Building From a Principal's Perspective

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CMA:	Case Management Approach
CMM:	Case Management Meeting
CI:	Collaborative Inquiry
DC:	Demonstration Classrooms
FIL:	Fellowship of Instructional Leaders
GRR:	Gradual Release and Acceptance of Responsibility
IT:	Integrative Thinking
KO:	Knowledgeable Other
KB:	Knowledge Building
KBC:	Knowledge-Building Circle
LI:	Learning Intention
PD:	Professional Development
PL:	Professional Learning
PLC:	Professional Learning Community
SIP:	School Improvement Plan
SC:	Success Criteria

FOREWORD

In 1990, Frank Fendick began his PhD dissertation with a quote from William Cowper (1731–1800):

A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct;
The language plain, the incidents well link'd;
Tell not as new what ev'ry body knows;
And, new or old, still hasten to a close.

His thesis was a meta-analysis of *teacher clarity*, which he referred to as **clarity of speech** (so all can hear, does not use few vague terms), **organization** (starts with Success Criteria, covers all topics on post-test, reviews student work), **explanation** (explains simply and interestingly, at the right pace), **providing examples** and **guiding practice** (gives examples of how to do the work, answers student questions, gives enough time, gives feedback), and **assessing student learning** (asks questions, encourages discussions, checks work).

Fendick located 39 studies reporting 100 correlations between one of these dimensions and class achievement gain. When transposed, the correlations become approximate effects of .46 to .70 across verbal and numerical subjects, larger and smaller class sizes, for less and greater experienced teachers. These effects increased across grade levels (from .52 in elementary, .60 in secondary, to .82 in college) and were higher when rated by the students than by independent observers. They are large effects relative to other influences on student learning. Fendick provides clear evidence that *teacher clarity* is critically important and matters greatly in the learning process.

Lyn Sharratt provides the detail, the theory, and the practical applications of these important dimensions of *teacher clarity*. It seems a hands-down misère or simply common sense that if students do not understand the teacher's instructions or lessons, then there is unlikely to be much comprehension and engagement. But Sharratt's *CLARITY* is more than comprehension; it is about "being explicit about precision in practice," and she outlines the 14 Parameters of system and school improvement. The major headings are shared beliefs and understanding, the centrality

of the student, the learning of the adults working together about their impact on their students, shared responsibility and accountability, and smelling the roses where there is this enhanced impact on the learning lives of students. Sharratt articulates the 14 Parameters in detail in the book, but her watermark on each page is “precision.”

The model depends very much on “data”—but data shared with students and teachers to understand the effects of their instruction. There is an emphasis on the fidelity of planning, the implementation of assessment and instruction, and continuing to develop and refine action plans to improve the impact. Most important, collaborative work is across all teachers and leaders.

There are few schools that are excellent without an excellent leader—and a common trait in *CLARITY* is that this leader is the first among equals—leading the narrative in the school about the impact of the adults on the students, gaining—and, more important, interpreting—the data and the information from the classroom observations, and challenging the expectations of all in the school. This requires skills, and here is where Sharratt’s Professional Learning focus can enhance the leader’s role to ensure optimal CLARITY of impact—what it means, who gains this impact, and to what magnitude.

Throughout, Sharratt puts FACES to the message of precision in this book, from students sharing in the construction of Success Criteria, collaborative planning before teaching, assessment and instruction waterfall charts, to walking with Lyn as she works in schools throughout the world.

One of my concerns is that Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are plentiful, but too often they fail to have much effect as the focus of many PLCs is wrong. Too often, PLCs are about the “nice” stuff—curricula, difficult students (never difficult teachers), resources—and not about the “right” stuff—what does impact mean in this school, how would we know we are attaining this impact, and how can we work together to help each other understand how we think about what we do, appreciate, and mean by impact on the learning lives of students? All these require the precision of CLARITY that weaves its message on every page of this book.

This book is judicious, clear, succinct, the language plain, the incidents linked. Yes, everybody knows about teacher clarity, but too often students do not experience clarity. Thus, this book is for all, new or old, and there is no necessity to “hasten to a close.”

—**John Hattie**, Creator of Visible Learning
Laureate Professor at the University of Melbourne, Australia

PREFACE

CLARITY is being explicit about precision in practice through research done, experiences lived, and knowledge gained from collaboratively working side by side to improve the outcomes for all students. CLARITY of expectations is reflected by equity and excellence in every system, in every school, and in every classroom.

I began the work on explicitly bringing CLARITY to my improvement research as a practitioner, first by modeling a belief that *literacy is everyone's business*, and second by demonstrating in practical ways that distinctive moral imperative. This book is about *the what and the how*—the practical, tangible ways of bringing CLARITY to increasing all students' achievement. Bringing CLARITY to expected, effective practice *is everyone's business!*

My leadership journey to realizing CLARITY in delivering effective practice began by stating the obvious: **illiteracy is unacceptable**. The percentage of illiterate citizens currently around the world is too high. Astonishing as it may seem in the 21st century, 12% of the world's population is considered functionally illiterate, with only basic or below-basic literacy levels in their native languages. Seven hundred eighty-one million people across the globe still cannot read or write. One hundred twenty-six million youth, worldwide, are illiterate (International Literacy Association, 2018).

The absolute need to achieve “every graduate a literate graduate” compels me to think not simply about the right of all students to read, write, do mathematics, and to think critically, but about “the how” of how to achieve this worthy goal. We have a moral imperative to increase levels of literacy around the world, starting in our classrooms. Hence the beginnings of CLARITY. I define literacy as the development of a continuum of skills, knowledge, and dispositions that prepare all learners for a changing world community. It **begins** with the fundamental acquisition of skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, representing, responding, and in mathematics. It **becomes** the ability to understand, think critically, apply new knowledge and skills, and communicate effectively and creatively in all subject areas in a variety of multimodal, multimedia ways and for a variety of purposes (adapted from York Region District School Board, 2007).

As John Hattie said in his Jack Keating Memorial Lecture in June 2016,

Literacy and numeracy remain the critical bases of any educated person, and while many would (correctly) argue that these are attributes of narrow excellence; they are the building blocks of the wider excellence many aspire toward. Literacy and numeracy are capabilities which facilitate higher learning, not necessarily ends in themselves. (2016c)

Canada considers both equity and excellence in determining a clear path forward in learning, teaching, and leading. Ontario, Canada's largest and most diverse province, supports that focus. It should be no secret why Canada's 15-year-olds ranked #2 in reading, #4 in science, and #5 in collaborative problem solving in the worldwide 2015 PISA survey. Our nation is resolute in its determination to reduce the percentage of the population who are illiterate.

To that end, this book is about the CLARITY needed—that teaching is informed by learning about learning, underpinned by CLARITY of foundational literacy skills and being supported by consistent, persistent, insistent leadership. We remember:

- Hope is not a strategy!
- Don't blame the kids or the parents.
- Our work is all about learning: having relevant assessment data that improves instruction for all—every student, every day.
- It is critical to have a laser-like focus on every FACE in order to increase achievement.
- Prepackaged, purchased solutions don't work. What works? Teacher and leader capacity building for assessment that informs instruction.
- It's not random acts of self-improvement or "Choose Your Own Adventure" that improve schools or systems. What works is relentless, focused direction. Leadership commitment to "the work" matters. Leadership commitment to equity and excellence matters. "The standard you walk past is the standard you accept" (Chief of Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison AO, Australia, 2013).
- Leaders must be present and "in the moment" continuously.

Ontario educators focus on precision in classroom practice and building collaborative cultures, where co-learning is valued as the format for collective capacity building. As that requires both technical (first-order) and cultural, embedded (second-order) change, this means that collaboration is about purposeful work focused on what can influence students' growth and achievement.

We know first-order changes (structural frameworks and organizational structures) are foundational but do not represent silver bullets for change in themselves, unless second-order changes (adaptive changes to implement a pervasive culture of learning) focused on impact are embedded (Planche, Sharratt, & Belchetz, 2008; Sharratt & Planche, 2016). Educators everywhere need to move to making second-order changes that promote precision in practice and measure increased student achievement. You will find guidance for **how to do this** throughout this book.

A precondition for improving schools is the existence of a culture focused on learning in which professionals

- talk about practice
- share their “craft knowledge” as co-learners and as Knowledgeable Others
- conduct Learning Walks and Talks in classrooms daily
- support and celebrate each other's successes unconditionally

Without purposeful culture, no meaningful improvement—no Professional Learning, no curriculum development, no teacher leadership, no student self-assessment, no co-teaching, no parent involvement, and no sustainable change—is possible (Barth, 2006).

Empowerment, recognition, satisfaction, and success in our work—all in scarce supply within our schools globally—will never stem from “going it alone” as a masterful teacher, principal, or student, no matter how accomplished one is. The culture must lead to engagement; engagement must move those involved to empowerment. Success comes only from being an active participant within a masterful group of colleagues. Leaders and teachers teaching with and learning from each other is the only answer (Barth, 2006).

The contents of this book are divided into the three “big ideas” that reflect the flow of my thinking: Part I: Learning (Chapters 1, 2, 3); Part II: Teaching (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7); and Part III: Leading (Chapters 8, 9, 10), a progression that provides CLARITY for me and hopefully for you.

During 2016, 2017, and 2018, thousands of teachers and leaders participated in Professional Learning sessions with me on system and school improvement, during which I had opportunities to ask the classic knowledge-building and Collaborative Inquiry questions:

1. Given what you know now, what are you still wondering about?
2. What are you thinking you can do with the knowledge you have gained?
3. To what can you commit tomorrow to make a difference for each student?

Each chapter begins with a sample of these Wonderings that identify the *what* and introduce the *how*. All chapters conclude with a Deliberate Pause to Create CLARITY and participant Commitments that are meant to establish CLARITY of first- and second-order changes necessary to achieve our collective goal of all students progressing toward at least one year's growth for each year of school (Hattie, 2012). Further resources for the text can be found online at **resources.corwin.com/CLARITY**.

Throughout the book, I have co-written vignettes and case studies and captured quotes from my colleagues. My narrative co-authors are gifted and talented teachers and leaders who make the theory of the 14 Parameters for improvement come to life in their detailed descriptions of what constitutes successful practice. They are practitioners who do this work and reflect on it every day, providing CLARITY for all of us.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Practitioners highlighted in this book through their honest and reflective quotes, vignettes, and case studies exemplify the FACES of CLARITY. They are the model teachers and leaders, too many to mention here, who strive to ensure all learners are improving beyond what was ever thought possible. I wish to thank them, my many colleagues from across the globe, who have become such good friends over the years of our work together. Your gifts of knowledge about teaching and learning have had a huge impact on my thinking and have contributed to this writing. Your skills, professionalism, wisdom, warmth, and generosity of spirit are reflected in every chapter. You inspire me to write about your accomplishments.

Thank you to Professor John Hattie, whose continuing work and writing is a constant source of reflection, energy, and confirmation of my own thinking. It causes me to ponder and wonder, “What if?” His formidable research affirms the text in this book and the work of so many in making learning visible for students, teachers, and leaders.

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University of Toronto. She has worked in four school districts across Ontario as a school superintendent, superintendent of curriculum and instruction, administrator, curriculum leader, and K–10 and Special Education teacher. Lyn has taught all elementary grades and secondary-aged students in inner-city and rural settings. She has analyzed and commented on public policy for a provincial trustee organization, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association; has taught preservice education at York University and master's and doctoral students at University of Toronto and Nipissing University; and has led inservice professional development in a provincial teachers' union head office. Lyn is a widely published researcher and author. She is lead author, with Michael Fullan, of *Realization: The Change Imperative for Increasing District-Wide Reform* (Corwin, 2009) and *Putting FACES on the Data: What Great Leaders Do!* (Corwin, 2012, published in English, Spanish, and Arabic). Lyn is lead author of *Good to Great to Innovate: Recalculating the Route K–12* (Corwin, 2015) with Gale Harild and of *Leading Collaborative Learning: Empowering Excellence* (Corwin, 2016) with Beate Planche. *CLARITY: What Matters*

MOST in Learning, Teaching, and Leading (Corwin, 2019) is her fifth book that reflects all of her work across the globe from 2009–2019. As well as an author and practitioner working in remote and urban settings worldwide, Lyn is an advisor for International School Leadership with the Ontario Principals' Council; is an author consultant for Corwin Press; and consults internationally, working with system, school, and teacher leaders at all levels in Australia, Canada, Chile, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. She works tirelessly, focusing her time and efforts on increasing each student's achievement by working alongside leaders and teachers to put FACES on their data, taking intentional action to make equity and excellence a reality for *all* students. Visit her at www.lynsharratt.com; Twitter @LynSharratt; and on LinkedIn where Lyn owns the "Educational Leadership" LinkedIn group made up of 69,000+ members. Search for Lyn's "Good to Great to Innovate" video on www.thelearningexchange.ca. There you will see her speaking in Ontario about the leadership it takes to achieve system and school improvement.

IN MEMORIAM

Melanie Greenan was an outstanding doctoral student in my cohort of EdD students at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Canada. Mel became a treasured friend. She was an insightful school leader and a critical thinker as a system consultant who worked at the elbow of teachers and leaders, as a vice-principal in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, and as a student achievement officer across Ontario at the Ministry of Education. Mel was a Knowledgeable Other to whom so many of us turned for her wisdom, wit, faith, and inspiring spirit. She gave me extremely helpful feedback on the work in this book. Totally unforgettable. Mel passed away in August 2017. She was a tenacious fighter in battling cancer and never gave up the fight—and that is how she lived every part of her life. Mel was and remains a true role model for us in Ontario. We all miss her.

To Jim

Who is always beside me as a guide, mentor, and best friend.

Your tenacity and positive spirit inspire me.

With Love,

Lyn

INTRODUCTION

Occasionally, a book comes along that stops you in your tracks. This is such a book. Written with passion and purpose, the expertise and experience of the author simply shines through every page. This is a timely book, particularly as the educational discourse in recent years has tended to be preoccupied with big data and international comparisons, largely overshadowing the micro-world of the classroom. It is an important book because it reminds us that teachers have the biggest impact on students' learning (Hattie, 2009) and the work that they undertake, collaboratively, can have a profound influence on the way teachers and students interact.

The mantra of this book is CLARITY, defined as “being coherent and intelligible.” Around the world we see far too many examples of education policy that does not meet these two core principles. For teachers, the policy making process can be remote, obscure, and sometimes highly contestable. The imperatives for educational change are often very far removed from the realities of the classroom (Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen, 2017) and factors such as poverty, inequality, and inequity are often discounted in the policy rush for better performance (Harris & Jones, 2010; Harris, Jones, & Huffman, 2017). The educational landscape is littered with failed initiatives and failed promises of better schools and better outcomes. The key reason for this resides in a significant disconnect between policy makers and the profession. This broken link means that professional expertise and professional leverage are often sidelined in policy making and implementation.

There is a growing evidential base that posits an alternative of thinking about educational change and reform (Evers & Kneyber, 2015). This approach puts teachers in the driving seat of improvement, innovation, and change and calls upon their collective expertise to shape and inform policy decisions (Zhao, 2018). This shift in responsibility and accountability positions teachers at the center rather than the periphery of educational reform. It gives teachers voice, authority, and agency to create and innovate in ways that they know will make a positive difference to learners.

In many ways, this book is a clarion call to action asking us to appraise how teachers work together, to be most effective, and to have the greatest impact on learners. This is not an overly abstract or theoretical book, but it is a grounded and evidence-based treatise on leading successful classroom change. As Kurt Lewin famously said, “there is nothing so practical as a good theory,” and this book is replete with practitioner-based theorizing and embedded practical knowledge.

COLLABORATION MATTERS

At the heart of this book is a focus on professional collaboration and the engagement of teachers in focused, purposeful collaborative activities with the core aim of improving student outcomes. Recently, other writers have referred to the importance of “collaborative professionalism” in the pursuit of school and system improvement (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2017). It could be argued that these two phrases mean the same thing, but in fact, there are important differences. The first emphasizes “professional,” placing importance on the norms of professional engagement, trust, and interdependency that are necessary for professional collaboration. The second emphasizes “collaborative,” which implies that the nature of collaboration, the form it takes, its intentions are significant contributory factors in generating shared professional practice or *professional capital* (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The differences may be subtle, but they are important as they imply alternative starting points in initiating, supporting, and sustaining teachers’ collaborative practice.

In *CLARITY*, the existence of a collaborative culture of learning is described as the Third Teacher. Not only is this insightful, but it absolutely encapsulates the power and potential of shared professional engagement and its impact on the classroom environment. The classroom is, and should be, a second home for students, particularly those at risk. It should offer a safety net, a sanctuary, and a safe place to learn. The emphasis in this book on the learning environment as the Third Teacher and the way it describes the construction of such a learning environment is the book’s core strength. It is a timely reminder that what happens in the classroom is critically important to the young people who learn there; it is their second home and it is their Third Teacher. The evidence also clearly shows a positive classroom environment is no accidental matter but the net result of the care, attention, and purposeful scaffolding by teachers.

14 PARAMETERS

The key to a positive classroom environment is encapsulated in the 14 Parameters that are at the heart of this book. As the author notes, the 14 Parameters “were present to high levels within systems and schools and where leaders focused on them, system and school leaders and teachers increased students’ growth and achievement. Where they were not found, or only some were found, or where system and school leaders did not focus on them, there was no or very low improvement in student outcomes.” The book shows that incorporating all 14 Parameters is one of the ways of building the capacity for Professional Learning and system learning.

The Parameters are also value based and driven. At the core of this book is a deep conviction that all students can learn and an authentic moral stance founded on principles of equity and equality. Each Parameter is explained and explored in this book, based on evidence and substantiated knowledge. These Parameters are not just some loosely coupled whims but are based on the author’s lifetime of experience in supporting school and system improvement. These are grounded, verified, and proven approaches to school-level change and improvement.

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

There is a great deal of international literature that reinforces the importance of leadership in securing school and system improvement (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). The educational leadership field is replete with study after study emphasizing how school leadership can make or break productive organizational change. In this book, leadership is also center stage in the amalgam of strategies and approaches that contribute to positive learning outcomes for students. Parameter #4 is principals as “lead learners” with a key responsibility “to work alongside teachers at Professional Learning sessions, modeling and monitoring effective and expected practices as learning leaders, always looking to find the evidence of those practices that most benefit student learning. Principals use data, collaboratively with all staff, to inform school planning, to select resources, and to co-lead assessment practices that inform instruction for all students in their care. In other words, instructional leaders.”

Generally, within the research literature, there is considerable agreement on the broad nature of instructional leadership as well as a clear understanding about its impact on key school and student learning conditions (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). In general, instructional leadership is defined as strategies and actions carried out by the principal and other school leaders to support and strengthen teaching and learning quality. Instructional leaders have been described as “strong, directive leaders” who accept responsibility for results and are able to improve teaching and learning processes in the school (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Thus, attention to instructional leadership practices would seem appropriate and helpful in steering a path toward classroom improvement.

In short, the emphasis on instructional leadership in this book is, again, timely and prescient. There are two important points that are reinforced: first, that the leadership focus should be explicitly on improving learning and teaching and second, that this can only be achieved through shared or *distributed* leadership practices (Harris, 2014). CLARITY, in the way this book describes it, will only be achieved through the coherent selection and implementation of certain practices and the collective intelligibility to focus on the right things. Without the support of the formal leadership, this is unlikely to happen and any efforts in this direction will be derailed. We already know more than we need to about the centrality of school leadership in the pursuit of better outcomes for learners and equality for all students in all settings. The real challenge now is to make this happen, not just in some schools but all schools.

CODA

CLARITY is not just a practical guide; it is an uplifting account of what can be achieved when professionals work together in a supportive, focused, and meaningful way. It demonstrates that change may appear technically simple, but it is fraught and culturally complex. The core message in this book is the importance of “learning, teaching, and leading with persistence, insistence, and consistency that results in CLARITY of purpose and practice.” It reminds us that improvement is a shared responsibility and that collective and sustained professional effort is much more likely to bring successful improvement than individual and isolated endeavor.

There is no simple recipe for school and system improvement, but there are some key principles or Parameters. In this book, Lyn Sharratt,

in her inimitable way, presents the practical tools to realize the goal of lasting classroom change and transformation. She provides CLARITY in a cluttered educational world overflowing with quick fixes, gimmicks, promises, and dubious evidence.

Ultimately, Lyn is clear about *who* matters most of all and ensures that students are at the epicenter in her model of change. A long time ago, I met Lyn in Ontario. The years may have passed but her passion remains fixed, her moral purpose is unquestionable, and her practical wisdom is irrefutable.

—**Alma Harris**, Author of *Distributed Leadership Matters*
Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy, University of Bath



PART I

Learning

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CLARITY

The 14 Parameters: A Learning Framework



Wonderings...

1. How can we break down assumptions and perceptions to ensure we target the right things?
2. How can we work collaboratively in an evidence-based way to improve student outcomes?
3. How can we differentiate professional development on pedagogy to meet individual teachers' needs?
4. How can we implement the 14 Parameters strategically, so staff won't feel overwhelmed?
5. How can we build, maintain, and sustain momentum for continuous improvement?

What are you, the reader, wondering?



Figure 1.1



This graphic, displayed throughout the book, depicts the 14 Parameters. The graphic is a visual representation of how the parameters—when all are applied together—can exponentially increase the achievement of all students. You will see examples of this in the many case studies and vignettes in this book. The parameters are discussed and defined, not in order, but when a “big idea” is related to a particular parameter. The dial in the middle of the circle points to a specific parameter as it is being discussed. Encompassing the parameters is the wrap-around concept of establishing a culture of learning at every level of a system: classroom, school, district, state. I call that culture of learning the Third Teacher.

THE THIRD TEACHER: CREATING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE OF LEARNING

After parents and teachers, the classroom environment is **the Third Teacher**. Paying attention to the teaching and learning environment is a critical first step. The learning space becomes a strategic tool in promoting creativity, originality, perseverance, risk taking, learning from mistakes, problem solving, resolving conflict, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Thus, careful consideration and **co-construction** of the Third Teacher with students is extraordinarily important.

What is created to put on the walls, who creates it, and where it is placed tells a lot about the teacher's understanding of the iterative process of leading and learning in the classroom. Learning to critically observe this aspect of instruction is best accomplished by "walking the walls" in many classrooms, looking for evidence of students' thinking.

Intentionally co-constructed learning spaces and walls are quite different from cluttered ones in which scaffolds for students may be irrelevant, overwhelming, disorganized, and distracting rather than supportive. From observing literally thousands of classrooms, asking students questions about their learning, and watching them refer to the walls, I have a strong belief that a heightened sense of ownership results when teachers and students co-construct the learning environment, agreeing on displays of visual prompts to track learning. Displayed student work must be central so it can be quickly referenced as a targeted, focused response to students' needs at "just the right time." No prepackaged, purchased, or laminated materials can do that.

Classroom walls that become interactive learning spaces and show evidence of use move from being "pretty" to being "pretty useful." Materials on classroom walls that have not been used by students in two weeks (my rule of thumb) need to be revised or culled as they become stagnant wallpaper instead of students' and teachers' pedagogical documentation. Before they approach the teacher when they are stuck, students learn to refer to the Third Teacher prompts or scaffolds that are available to them in the learning space, such as,

- co-created **anchor charts**
- deconstructed **Learning Intentions**
- co-constructed **Success Criteria**

- co-developed Learning Walls with “big idea thinking” signposts along the way
- co-designed **Bump-It-Up Walls**
- collaboratively annotated student work using strong and weak examples
- co-defined acceptable behaviors and collective learner community responsibilities

These scaffolds in classrooms are the Success Criteria that indicate to leaders, principals, and colleagues who do Learning Walks and Talks (see Chapter 9) that students in the classrooms are living in meaningful, supportive learning spaces and that teachers have a fundamental understanding of both the learning that should be happening and how the Third Teacher can be a supportive colleague.

Every learning space in schools and in systems must be scrutinized for risk-free environments that promote curiosity, wondering, thinking, questioning, inclusivity, and risk taking. These same criteria apply to the culture of learning established in system and school meetings: welcoming environments that invite people to take risks, **fail fast**, and feel safe to think out loud without being thwarted and/or dismissed. Crafting the cultural aspect of the Third Teacher is everyone’s responsibility. It underpins every parameter in our research. In the absence of a safe learning culture, very few will be brave enough to speak up and speak out without fear of retribution. Consideration of the Third Teacher is necessary at every level—the system, the school, and the classroom—and is reinforced in the bookends: Parameters #1 and #14.

INTRODUCTION TO THE 14 PARAMETERS

In *Realization: The Change Imperative for Deepening District-Wide Reform* (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009) and *Putting FACES on the Data: What Great Leaders Do* (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012), we unwrapped our research neatly summarized as the 14 Parameters of system and school improvement, displayed in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 The 14 Parameters of System and School Improvement

1. Shared beliefs and understandings
 - a. All students can achieve high standards given the right time and the right support.
 - b. All teachers can teach to high standards given time and the right assistance.
 - c. High expectations and early and ongoing intervention are essential.
 - d. All leaders, teachers, and students can articulate what they do and why they lead, teach, and learn the way they do.
(Adapted from Hill & Crévola, 1999)
2. Embedded Knowledgeable Others
3. Quality assessment informs instruction
4. Principal as lead learner
5. Early and ongoing intervention
6. Case management approach
7. Focused Professional Learning at staff meetings
8. In-school meetings—collaborative assessment of student work
9. Book rooms of leveled books and multi-modal resources
10. Allocation of system and school budgets for learning
11. Collaborative Inquiry—a whole-system approach
12. Parental and community involvement
13. Cross-curricular literacy connections
14. Shared responsibility and accountability
 - a. We all own all the FACES!

Our research established that when these 14 Parameters were present at high levels, in systems and schools where leaders focused on them, the system, school leaders, and teachers increased students' growth and

achievement. If they were not found, or only some were found, or system and school leaders did not focus on them, there was no or very little improvement in student outcomes (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). We learned that incorporating all 14 Parameters at high levels was achievable in every school that focused and committed to understanding how all interweave to support each other (see Figure 1.2). We also reported that hundreds of leaders helped us to coin three words—Knowledge-ability, Mobilize-ability, and Sustain-ability (see Chapter 9)—as the initial three of six leadership dimensions that school leaders must demonstrate in order to bring about needed, sharply focused changes to the system and school performance (Fullan & Sharratt, 2007; Sharratt & Fullan, 2012).

Our research continues to be well-received as highly impactful descriptions of not only *what* must happen in systems and schools but *how* to make it happen. I have introduced the 14 Parameters and established their ongoing use in many large, small, urban, and rural districts in several countries across the globe with measurable success. I challenge and encourage system and school leaders to be continually vigilant by

implementing and continuously reviewing the 14 Parameters to ensure they and their teams of leaders and teachers are doing the best they can for *all* students—and to never default to what is comfortable, easiest, or status quo. The tools enabling teachers and leaders to become more precise in the work to improve student achievement are embedded throughout this book. To begin, explore **Web Resource 1: Using the 14 Parameters as a System and School Self-Assessment Tool for Improvement** with your teams of leaders and teachers, to determine how well you are doing against the proven 14 and to identify next steps.

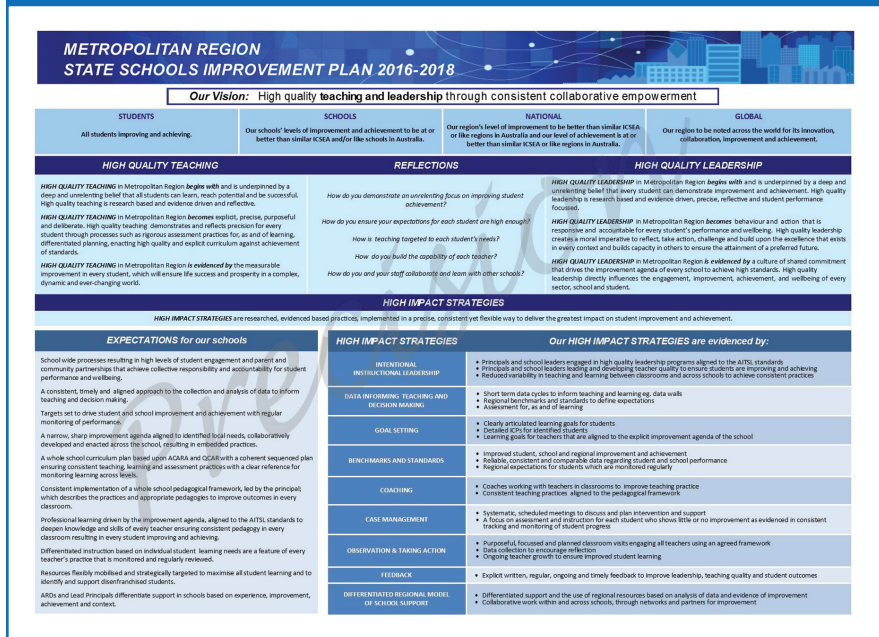


Web Resource 1:
Using the 14
Parameters as a
System and School
Self-Assessment Tool
for Improvement.

ACHIEVE CLARITY USING THE 14 PARAMETERS

In my work with system and school leaders developing high-impact improvement approaches, the 14 Parameters have consistently proven to work—across contexts—in countries, states, districts, and schools, each with differing variables. In our early work together, leaders in Metro Region Queensland implemented the 14 Parameters and simplified their System Improvement Plan to include a one-page document with the imprinted **watermark** “Precision” (see Figure 1.3). I emphasize a

Figure 1.3 Precision Watermark Underpinning System Improvement Plan



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one-word watermark that is subtly visible beneath the text on the page as an ever-present descriptor that defines the system and what it stands for. The watermark is the reminder of their collective passion and determination to increase all students' growth and achievement by teaching with "precision" in every classroom.

FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE

Can you define your vision on one page? What is your one-word watermark? Take a minute and jot a note to yourself. List the characteristics that will help you define your watermark. What one word describes the measurable and observable high expectations you have for your classroom, school, or system?

Dr. Liam Smith, executive director of the School Improvement Unit, Department of Education and Training in Queensland, writes,

A pre-condition to improving student learning outcomes is whether the leadership team and staff members have a clear understanding of the school's improvement plan—the what and how—and have developed clear Success Criteria for measuring their collective and individual successes. Individual members of the leadership team must be able to articulate their roles and responsibilities in relation to the improvement agenda and they must have collectively developed accountability mechanisms to ensure each team member is able to regularly reflect on and report back their progress to the other team members. Teachers in highly successful schools, then, are able to articulate and demonstrate through their teaching practice the intent of the improvement plan and are able to monitor how they are working toward the fulfilment of the plan. (personal communication, 2017)

Successful, high-focus systems and schools understand the “simplicity” (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012) of the 14 Parameters; however, the less successful see only the complexity. Mark Campling (personal communication, 2017), regional director, Metro Region, points out that he and his high-performance, results-oriented team are focused on the following:

- using research-informed practice as found in the 14 Parameters (Chapter 1)
- scrutinizing data to take precise action that is differentiated to the needs of each school and student (Chapter 2)
- setting precise performance targets for each student using Data Walls and case management meetings (CMMs) across the system (Chapter 7)
- providing unrelenting, differentiated support for leaders, teachers, and students (Chapters 4 and 5)
- empowering leaders in collaborative networks at every level (Chapter 3)
- establishing clear governance structures and transparent decision-making processes (Chapter 9)

Given these precisely targeted strategies, it is not surprising that this high-performance leadership team has outperformed most public schools in Australia.

We developed the 14 Parameters, or integrated performance characteristics, from our research into why similarly supported schools showed different trajectories—dramatic, sustained improvement in achievement; slow to no improvement; or widely variable year after year. The most successful were assessed as “highly focused” against the 14 Parameters; the less successful were “low focused” (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009, 2012). The process of using the 14 Parameters as a reflective tool for improvement is ongoing and responsive to feedback and new information to move a system and its schools forward together.

UNPACKING THE 14 PARAMETERS

The following is a brief synopsis of each parameter, with a discussion of the impact of collaborative formal and informal leadership roles at every level.

Parameter #1: Shared Beliefs and Understandings

This parameter is number 1 for a reason: it is *the vision*. We must believe the following:

- a. All students can achieve high standards given the right time and the right support.
- b. All teachers can teach to high standards given time and the right assistance.
- c. High expectations and early and ongoing intervention are essential.
- d. All leaders, teachers, and students can articulate what they do and why they lead, teach, and learn the way they do. (Adapted from Hill & Crévola, 1999)

It is impossible to lead a team without establishing a shared vision of common beliefs and understandings as these are foundational to systems and schools as learning organizations (Sharratt, 1996). They must be revisited at every opportunity as the evidence of student achievement

is gathered and reviewed. Whenever there is a conflict, team members need to revisit these beliefs because the four dimensions of Parameter #1 are the glue or first principles that must be present within every system and school. System and school leaders together with teachers must be driven by a deep belief that all students can achieve high standards given the right time and the right support. Similarly, leaders must believe and expect that all teachers can learn to teach to high standards when given the right assistance. It is expected that leaders, teachers, and students can articulate why they do what they do and why they lead, teach, and learn the way they do. To me, this is the equity issue, that, when embraced, leads to equity and excellence. With staff turnover a reality everywhere, at least annual renewal of the shared beliefs among returning staff becomes an ongoing culture-building opportunity that provides a solid platform of consistency in welcoming new team members. Continuously refreshing Parameter #1 as the vision establishes shared beliefs and understandings, which is a must before the improvement work can have an impact.

Parameter #2: Embedded Knowledgeable Others

An expert teaching team is necessary. Leaders and teachers must “attach” themselves to a Knowledgeable Other; every school must have at least one respected and respectful master teacher who has time during the day to *co-teach* with classroom teachers. These Knowledgeable Others are instructional coaches who have time purposefully scheduled during the school day to work alongside classroom teachers, supporting focused work on assessment that informs instruction. Knowledgeable Others must have strong interpersonal skills to build relational trust while co-laboring with teachers (Sharratt & Planche, 2016). Selection on the basis of this proven and reference-evidenced characteristic is key to successful deployment of the role. *Only after being certain* the person has strong interpersonal skills do selectors consider the candidate’s other evidence-proven skills in leading instruction, assessment, and managing change. It is crucial to be deliberate about possessing relational skills because Knowledgeable Others plan, scaffold, and facilitate Professional Learning through group processes such as lesson study, co-teaching cycles, and the collaborative assessment of student work (see Chapter 8). They must be seen as critical members of the school leadership team. Having a Knowledgeable Other, part time in every school, is key to moving a system forward as consistent messages can be delivered when all Knowledgeable Others and their principals participate in learning

sessions together and are then expected to deliver the same Professional Learning in their schools. This creates the coherence in improvement messages needed across a system and in a school.

Parameter #3: Quality Assessment Informs Instruction

This parameter is about the need for pervasive high-impact classroom practice. Evidence-proven, high-impact practices, like using ongoing assessment data that differentiate instruction, are embedded in the planning for daily, uninterrupted literacy and numeracy blocks of instructional time or in specific subject classes where every lesson features a literacy skill and teachers embed assessment *for* and *as* learning practices (see Chapter 4), to inform their next steps for instruction. Thus, data today is instruction tomorrow. The Knowledgeable Other's timetable aligns with the literacy block at the elementary level and with that of teachers most in need of instructional support at the secondary level. Knowledgeable Others use the **Gradual Release and Acceptance of Responsibility** (GRR) model to ensure precision in practice. The GRR is a pedagogical framework designed to teach all students how to make meaning, gain conceptual understanding, and communicate effectively, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Parameter #4: Principal as Lead Learner

System and school leaders attend, participate, and are “present”—learning together. They *work alongside* teachers at Professional Learning sessions, modeling and monitoring effective and expected practices as learning leaders, always looking to find evidence of those practices that most benefit student learning. Principals use data, collaboratively with all staff, to inform school planning, to select resources, and to co-lead assessment practices that inform instruction for all students in their care. In other words, instructional leaders

- put FACES on the data and take action to make a difference for each and every student;
- acquire a deep understanding of effective classroom practices by participating in ongoing Professional Learning Community (PLC) work focused on data and driven by professional Collaborative Inquiry about high-impact practices;

- take part, with their leadership teams, in system learning sessions and plan how they will replicate the learning back in their schools, always focused on the FACES of students; and
- conduct Learning Walks and Talks daily in classrooms, collecting evidence of students' thinking and teachers' use of cutting-edge practices to increase their students' achievement because they know that learning happens in the classroom, not in their offices (see Chapter 9).

Parameter #5: Early and Ongoing Intervention

Intervention is critical in the early years, but it is not limited to them and it must be ongoing throughout the grade levels. Individual student need is determined by the ongoing scrutiny of a variety of assessment data. Intervention is not a purchased program; there is no one intervention program that will “fix” students. Intervention is most effective when it is sharply focused on individual learning needs; money for human and material resources is best spent in the early years, when the foundations for learning are developed and shaped. However, intervention practices must be seen by the system and schools as an ongoing, central resource with which teachers can collaboratively engage and from which they can learn. A structured, collaboratively planned approach by all teachers (e.g., classroom, special education, Reading Recovery, English language learner, and support teachers) is necessary to design and deliver units and lessons with an integrated co-teaching approach to supporting *all* students. All teachers must strive to become intervention teachers capable of teaching all students (see Chapter 7).

Parameter #6: Case Management Approach

Putting FACES on the data using the case management approach is a two-pronged process: (1) prevention: the co-construction of **Data Walls** allows staff members to stand back and discuss students' areas of need, to set targets, and to decide what is possible for each FACE, and (2) intervention: **case management meetings** (CMMs) in which a teacher presents one student at a time, through a work sample, to a *problem-solving forum* focused on supporting the classroom teacher with a recommended instructional strategy to try. It requires school leaders and teachers to come together as co-learners. Data Walls and CMMs precisely determine

next steps to meet the differentiated learning needs of teachers and students in each school. At the system level, Data Walls and CMMs mirror those at the school level, precisely determining next steps in providing differentiated resourcing and Professional Learning in each school across a system (see Chapter 7).

Parameter #7: Focused Professional Learning at Staff and Professional Learning Community Meetings

Using meeting times for Professional Learning builds teacher and leader **collective capacity** and develops a common language across all learning areas. Starting with data, teachers who are Knowledgeable Others and leaders *together* provide the Professional Learning needed at staff meetings, at division meetings, and during Professional Learning Community (PLC) time (see Chapter 3), modeling a culture of learning—the Third Teacher—that reflects clear expectations about precision in practice. Rather than spending precious meeting time on operational issues, leaders relegate them to emails or shared sites so that *learning* is the focus of all meetings. During meetings it is the capacity of the group that is built, as well as a collective understanding of the vision for the improvement work. Meeting times are spent talking about and sharing impactful teaching strategies. It is key that classroom teachers share leadership in planning and designing their Professional Learning, to ensure they are learning what they think they need to learn and to create commitment to and ownership of their learning. As Campbell et al. (2016) stated, “Teachers value Professional Learning that is relevant and practical for their work; ‘job-embedded’ should not mean school-based exclusively as opportunities to engage in and with external expertise as these sources of professional development matter also” (p. 8). Across their Canadian case study interviews, a key finding they reported was the importance of Professional Learning that is teacher- and leader-driven. Their findings support the critical importance of Parameter #7.

Parameter #8: In-School Meetings—Collaborative Assessment of Student Work

It is often noted that the greatest variation in teaching in a system is not between schools; it is between classrooms in the same school. To reduce that variation, evidence of learning through student work samples is

used in regular, ongoing **co-teaching conversations** in which teachers collaboratively determine how to

- sharpen their use of assessment data, every minute, to drive precise instruction;
- broaden their individual and collective instructional repertoire;
- challenge assumptions in a respectful way;
- improve immediate Descriptive Feedback strategies;
- move students from one level of work to the next and beyond expectations.

This powerful collaborative assessment of student work process begins when teachers and leaders gather at their Data Wall and begin to “wonder why” they are seeing a worrying trend, spike, or individual student with an issue. At regularly planned meetings to discuss the literacy and numeracy achievement of individual students, staff, facilitated by Knowledgeable Others and leaders,

- co-develop common assessment tools,
- collaboratively assess student work,
- give one another evidence-based feedback,
- co-create curriculum-based exemplars in order to reduce variation in practice among classrooms.

Collaborative processes such as the case management approach, lesson study, the Co-Teaching Cycle, and Collaborative Inquiry are used by leaders, Knowledgeable Others, and teachers to promote ongoing rich discussion about changed classroom practices and their evidence-informed impact on student learning.

Parameter #9: Book Rooms of Leveled Books and Multi-Modal Resources

Resources that support differentiated instruction are compiled and organized in a multimedia room or resource center for teachers’ access to just-right, just-in-time resources. These high-quality, multi-modal resources

reflect the diversity of the community, meet a range of abilities and needs, and address a range of student interests. They are easily accessible and support teachers' implementation of the curriculum at students' point of need. Processes are established for regular auditing of system and school resources by leaders and teachers to sustain quality assurance of resources and refresh understanding of what is available to teams of like-grade teachers. For example, in-school and cross-school dialogue leads to a deeper understanding of what constitutes a high-quality literacy resource that promotes critical literacy skills and results in "teachable moments" that empower critical thinking by all students.

Parameter #10: Allocation of System and School Budgets for Learning

Principals and leadership teams intentionally allocate budget items for resources that address instructional needs revealed by school and classroom assessment data. Leaders can articulate why they are doing what they are choosing to do. Equity of outcomes for all learners is assured through budget resourcing (human and material) to support learning and learners. Some centrally retained funds are available to flexibly and responsively apply resources to meet emerging learning needs. Frequently, system needs are *collaboratively triaged*; that is, needs are prioritized so that support is allocated (to schools and teachers) using data, not by applying resources equally. Firsthand situational knowledge is based on the ever-present vision of increasing all students' achievement.

Parameter #11: Collaborative Inquiry—A Whole-System, School, and Classroom Approach

Every system or school meeting begins with a review of data, searching for the impact of actions taken on previously identified issues. Questions about the data are the basis of SMART goals. Collaborative Inquiry (CI) questions follow and are developed by system leaders, principals, and groups of teachers to test pedagogical approaches they feel will enable instruction to elevate student achievement to meet their collective SMART goals. Development of CI questions is deliberate using a structured, collaboratively planned approach; it is not left to system teams or schools to independently create their own processes because "being systematic" counts. The CI learning cycle (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009, 2012;

Sharratt & Harild, 2015) in Chapter 3 is a model for collaboratively interrogating the data in a knowledge-building process. The model results in coherent, reportable pedagogical documentation that must be shared across the system and schools to ensure knowledge utilization and mobilization by all (Sharratt, 1996). Professional CI allows teachers and leaders to investigate the cause and effect relationship between their practices and the evidence of student learning. CI is one example of job-embedded Professional Learning that involves a structured process of turning continuous teacher inquiry into high-impact classroom practice. Teachers and leaders work collaboratively to design specifically focused questions arising from issues identified in their system, school, and classroom assessment data. The system supports the work of school teams by providing funds and offering Professional Learning sessions focused on how time is spent on collaborating and on developing the necessary research skills to do the CI work. At the end of the research cycle, inquiry teams make available reports documenting their learning journeys and findings. Systems find ways, such as the Learning Fair, discussed later in this chapter, to celebrate the learning and mobilize the knowledge gained across schools. Being involved and comfortable with professional inquiry leads to teachers replicating that process for students in classrooms (see Chapter 6). Engaging students in processes to uncover their wonderings and excite their inquisitiveness results in empowered student learning of the curriculum content.

Parameter #12: Parental and Community Involvement

System and school leadership teams work toward establishing strong community-home-school relationships (see Chapter 2). Research indicates that parent and community involvement increase all students' achievement. Schools build strong relationships with parents by keeping them informed about their children's progress and by involving them in the why and how the school is teaching literacy skills, for example, in every subject area. Parents, caregivers, and the broader community are helped to understand how they can support their children and are continuously invited to provide input into annual system and school plans for improvement. Then, when these plans are drafted, they are shared once again. Parents and the broader community are seen as *partners in decision-making processes* focused on growth and achievement for all students (Sharratt & Harild, 2015).

Parameter #13: Cross-Curricular Literacy Connections

System and school improvement requires a definitive focus on literacy and critical thinking skills across all subject areas, woven into rigorous, cognitively demanding performance tasks. The components of balanced literacy instruction allow teachers to support students to develop meaning-making skills in all subject areas. Assessment data determine what literacy skills each student will need to develop in order to access a subject's curriculum content; however, teachers in all content areas can further students' achievement by modeling the skills, sharing in the making of meaning, guiding students toward independence, and monitoring their independent work using the Gradual Release and Acceptance of Responsibility model in all subject areas (see Chapter 5). Adopting that model, schoolwide, enables literacy development, for example, in every subject area, affording the opportunity for differentiated instruction.

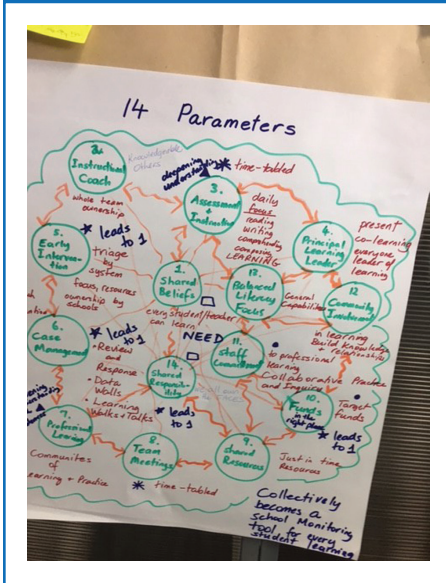
Parameter #14: Shared Responsibility and Accountability

Parameter #14 is the “bookend” parameter to Parameter #1. Leaders care about the schools down the road as much as they do their own. Thus, *everyone is responsible* and *accountable* for every learner within and across schools in a district and a state. That is, everyone knows and can clearly articulate the system, school, and classroom priority because SMART Goals and CI questions are aligned, clear, precise, intentional, and published. Everyone sees himself or herself as responsible for achieving the goals and accountable for the learning that results from their implementation. Intentional procedures and processes encourage system- and schoolwide shared responsibility and ownership for student learning (see Chapter 9 and Conclusion).

POWER LIVES IN THE INTERSECTION OF THE 14 PARAMETERS

Acknowledging shared responsibility develops a culture that encourages continuous professional improvement. Triangulation of data informs the Professional Learning needed in districts and schools and impacts the allocation and selection of resources. Districts disaggregate standards-based assessments, delivering them to leaders' and teachers' desktops to put individual FACES on the data to assist in the development of improvement plans

Figure 1.4 Understanding the Intersection of the 14 Parameters Is Critical



Source: Lyn Sharratt, Brisbane Catholic Education, 2017.

and collaborative actions. Through the co-construction of Data Walls, principals, leadership teams, and teachers can name at-risk students individually, and through CMMs they can clearly articulate what they are doing for each one.

School staff members work on finding and sharing the results of CI questions. Principals and teachers conduct Learning Walks and Talks daily to look for evidence-proven, agreed-upon assessment and instructional strategies discovered through their CIs. Systems host evidence-based Learning Fairs for all school teams to share their CI journeys that highlight student improvement data. System and school leaders and teachers learn from each other by having this forum to mobilize knowledge of “What works?” “What doesn’t?” and “What did we do differently?”

This information is documented, curated, and shared on internal system websites. Schools also host their own Learning Fairs for parents and the community to keep them well-informed of progress.

None of the improvement work progresses smoothly unless the bookends—Parameter 1: Shared Beliefs and Understandings and Parameter 14: Shared Responsibility and Accountability—are in place for each and every student. The process of using the 14 Parameters is ongoing, reflective, and responsive to feedback and new information to move systems and their schools forward together; the intersection of all 14 Parameters, as illustrated in Figure 1.4, ensures that system and school improvement will occur.

HOW TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTING THE 14 PARAMETERS

Although the 14 Parameters may seem complicated, systems and schools begin simply as follows:

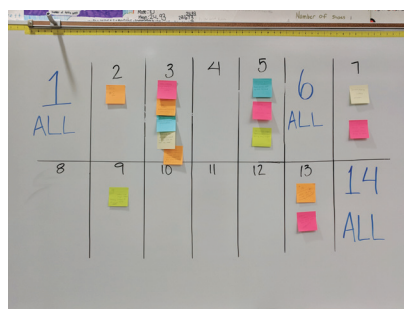
- using their data to consider their areas of immediate need
- selecting two or three of the Parameters as immediate goals to be actioned, in addition to Parameters 1, 6, and 14, which are always the nonnegotiables
- developing an action plan with benchmarks and timelines to progress the work of implementing the selected Parameters in addition to the three nonnegotiable Parameters, as depicted in Figure 1.5

Using data to select areas of immediate need enables professionals in educational systems to collaboratively focus their work to further develop their collective capacity. Once these areas of need are transparent, teams select the parameters that are likely to be most impactful in addressing student need. With success in the two or three selected first, teams can move toward their next collaboratively selected priority within the 14, and the next, until they are

self-assessing as “high” against all 14 Parameters. We can demonstrate that student achievement has increased under this collective professional enterprise more than it has in systems we have examined where schools have worked individually, “choosing their own adventure” (adapted from Sharratt & Fullan, 2009, 2012). The 14 Parameters represent a “system-ness approach” to improvement for every FACE. System-ness demands that everyone is responsible and accountable (Parameter #14). System-level educators are not just part of the background noise in system and school improvement. Rather, they exercise essential leadership, with school leaders, to build collective capacity throughout systems for teaching and learning improvements (Honig et al., 2010, in Watterston & Kimber, 2017).

The case study schools and systems highlighted throughout this text show that astonishing progress is possible when focused on the 14 Parameters for improvement. Systems and schools that align their work with these 14 areas make a difference to increasing all students’ achievement. How can leaders not afford to reallocate the time when many large

Figure 1.5



Source: Lyn Sharratt, Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese, 2017.



Web Resource 1:
Using the 14
Parameters as a
System and School
Self-Assessment Tool
for Improvement

and small diverse systems and schools that have done so are successfully raising student achievement levels?

SELF-ASSESS YOUR SYSTEM AND SCHOOL PROGRESS USING THE 14 PARAMETERS

Instructional coach Tracey Petersen and I developed a matrix of expected outcomes when using the 14 Parameters as the lens to self-reflect, measure, and ensure that all students' achievement is progressed and sustained.

The first page of the matrix is displayed in Figure 1.6; the entire System and Self-Assessment Tool using the 14 Parameters as the lens to determine improvement is available online as **Web Resource 1: Using the 14 Parameters as a System and School Self-Assessment Tool for Improvement**.

FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE

As you view the complete matrix online (Web Resource 1), note how you might use it to establish the vision or set an improvement goal that focuses on taking action at every level of your system and schools. How will you know that leaders, teachers, and students can express what has improved and *why* it has improved, using evidence?

CREATE AN ACTION PLAN FOR SYSTEM AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Effective leaders at every level have a clearly articulated vision; a short, sharply focused plan; and a clear line of sight to every classroom. They relentlessly follow up on codetermined, widely known system, school, and classroom nonnegotiables, using the 14 Parameter Framework to assess ongoing improvement. This takes leaders who are consistent, insistent, and persistent, as discussed in Chapter 9. Figure 1.7 illustrates the precision in practice developed and implemented with integrity by system leaders in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes. The action plan in Figure 1.8 (see p. 34) provides CLARITY and incorporates scheduled timely follow up. These leaders hold each other accountable for increasing all students' achievement.

Figure 1.6 First Page of the 14 Parameter System and School Self-Assessment Tool for Improvement						
The 14 Parameters	Assessment literate learners	Teaching with a literacy focus K–12	Early leveled literacy K–2	Instructional coaching cycle	Collaborative Inquiry	Leadership skills and behaviors
1. Shared Beliefs and Understandings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students can achieve high standards given the right time and the right support. All teachers can teach to high standards given time and the right assistance. High expectations and early intervention are essential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe that assessment literacy is foundation of quality teaching & right of every student Demonstrate belief that students are partners in learning Empower students to own their learning Articulate how the assessment literacy of teachers and students is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create the right Learning Intentions and Success Criteria (SC) to ensure that every student can achieve Open up critical thinking to be “A”-level thinking to all students Articulate the processes in every subject area used to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know that what happens in Kindergarten predicts secondary school graduation Witness literacy explicitly taught in a joyful learning environment Embrace that early literacy includes oral language, reading, writing, viewing, representing, mathematics, and critical thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-plan how to deconstruct Learning Intentions from curriculum and co-construct Success Criteria with students that opens critical thinking (“A”-level thinking) to all learners Articulate and demonstrate how teachers’ capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect continuously on data to inform Collaborative Inquiry (CI) that is grounded in evidence of student learning to progress the teaching Examine and co-assess student work as evidence of learning Stay true to the CI cycle with operating norms, protocols, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build consensus with all staff about shared beliefs and understandings Model the consistent belief that all teachers can learn to teach and all students can learn, given the right time and assistance Articulate the above vision; provide rationale why teachers, students do what they do every day

(Continued)

Figure 1.6 (Continued)

The 14 Parameters	Assessment literate learners	Teaching with a literacy focus K–12	Early leveled literacy K–2	Instructional coaching cycle	Collaborative Inquiry	Leadership skills and behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All leaders, teachers, and students can articulate what they do and why they lead, teach, learn the way they do every day (adapted from Hill & Crévola, 1999). 	<p>built through collaborative learning processes</p>	<p>move from curriculum expectations addressed in Learning Intentions, through SC and Descriptive Feedback, to rich assessment tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an effective balanced literacy approach to ensure all students are reading with fluency and comprehension by the end of Grade 1 • Expect that students will progress in literacy learning in alignment with the expectations for their grade level • Articulate how the three cueing systems are used as a tool to target book introductions and instruction within early leveled reading 	<p>is built by assessing individual needs through the 4 C's Cycle: Co-Planning, Co-Teaching, Co-Debriefing and Co-Reflecting</p>	<p>a structured, collaboratively planned approach to inquiry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model and monitor high expectations for all learners • Ask, continuously, if the expectations are set high enough • Ask, "Is the teaching aligned to the curriculum expectations?" and "How has the teaching caused learning?" • Participate in CI alongside teachers

Figure 1.7 Wilcannia-Forbes Education Services Action Plan



2017 Education Services Team ACTION PLAN

Rationale:

This Action Plan is intended to prioritize and track the work of the Wilcannia-Forbes (WF) Education Services team following the ongoing Professional Learning during 2017–2019.

List of Priority Actions

1. All stakeholders clearly articulate system priorities with a laser-like focus on the priority of literacy, including numeracy.
2. Go deeper into 2nd order change to ensure precision in assessment to inform literacy instruction.
3. Central Education Office (CEO) staff model alongside teachers using Lesson Study and the 4 Cs model.
4. Build all teacher and leader capacity in teaching reading/writing and numeracy by identifying strong practitioners who deeply understand their impact in classrooms and using them to demonstrate best practice.
5. Data will drive differentiation in human and material resourcing in schools, resulting in agile ways in providing support where it is needed.
6. Regular and ongoing communication between CEO teams to ensure alignment and laser-like focus on the priority of literacy.
7. Model what we expect of schools.

Focus Area	Timeframe	Details of Tasks to Be Completed	Key Person/s	ACTIONED
CEO Data Wall—where are the pockets of excellence? Who are our most vulnerable students? Schools?	Term 2, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris and Prue to gather examples of potential Data Walls to share with the team Simone will have Kindergarten Data reading levels to present at next meeting. 	Simone Prue Chris	Completed as of 29/5/17 Physical Data Wall Updated for Term 2. 24/7/2017

(Continued)

Figure 1.7 (Continued)

Focus Area	Timeframe	Details of Tasks to Be Completed	Key Person/s	ACTIONED
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prue to purchase bi-fold display board for use. • Follow up discussions at planning day on Monday 15th May • Oversee/review the process <p>ONGOING ITEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of Kindergarten (K) reading levels at the end of each term • Data Wall: Adjust co-constructed Data Wall to reflect reading levels 	<p>Suz/Chris Simone Chris Simmy/Prue Natalie/Deb</p>	<p>Nat to put update in Principals' Bulletin Board about our Data Wall</p>
Professional Learning (PL) on administering Running Records accurately for all teachers	Term 2 Week 4/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PL opportunity for all Ed Services team and Focus Teachers • Reading expectations updated Shared beliefs among team are consistent; Reading expectations reflect both Accuracy/Comprehension across all schools. • Compare and contrast various Reading Assessment Benchmark Kits and present back to team in Term 4 	<p>Natalie Suz/Mary-Ellen Natalie Ange & Prue</p>	<p>WF Expectations—to be finalized</p> <p>Nat to update schools via Principal Bulletin Board and email Focus Teachers</p>
Develop School Action Plans to focus work being actioned in schools	Term 2 Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulus Paper completed for sharing at Principals' Meeting 16/5/17 <p>ONGOING ITEM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular follow-up and check-ins with Ed Services team—review school discussions from Principals' Meeting Record of the author's work to date in schools 	<p>Deb Natalie/Deb</p>	<p>Completed at Principals Workshop 16/5/17</p> <p>Ongoing check-ins</p>

Focus Area	Timeframe	Details of Tasks to Be Completed	Key Person/s	ACTIONED
Review Sharratt's Instructional Coach role compared with our Focus Teacher Role	Term 2 Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karen O'Malley to email author for copy of her Role Description Updated Role Description completed after Focus Teacher Workshop 	Natalie Ange	Ange and Nat to confer and finalize what is not included in Role Description
Establish networking groups for Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3	25 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning meeting for 2018 Education Officers to each take responsibility for a key learning stage 	Education Services Team	Discussion 25th October, 2017
Ed Services writing a Literacy Strategy	Working on it from present time Initial Draft September 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared Beliefs & Understandings (Parameter#1) document to be developed A subcommittee of Literacy Strategy Group to work on a Literacy Strategy paper to discuss with author as our Critical Friend Literacy Strategy group to meet outside of Ed Services meeting—develop a Literacy Strategy e-FOLDER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st meeting 22 June (9–12) Initial draft paper to be brought to Ed Services Team meeting September 4 (Term 3—Week 8) 	Education Services Team	<p><i>Good to Great to Innovate</i>, Sharratt & Harild, 2015 — team encouraged to refer to text in developing Literacy Strategy;</p> <p>Literacy Strategy Group reconvene</p> <p>29th August 2017, 9–10 am</p> <p>Simmy to scan and upload to folder</p>
Develop PL to deliver to Focus Teachers reflecting author's work	Term 2 Week 5 Term 2 21st June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility of systemwide Professional Learning day in 2018 with author 14 Parameters Professional Learning - for Focus teachers 	Natalie Ed Officers	<p>Nat has flagged with Mary-Ellen.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Suz has uploaded.</p>
Regular Principal's Bulletin Board Updates	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular check-ins and updates via Principals' Bulletin Board and standing item at Principals' Meeting to inform schools of Ed Services actions 	Natalie	Ongoing

Source: Mary-Ellen Dempsey, 2017.



Web Resource 2:
Darling Downs
Template to Track
the 14 Parameter
Work

An additional monitoring framework for following up this improvement work, used in Darling Downs South West Region, can be found in **Web Resource 2: Darling Downs Template to Track the 14 Parameter Work.**

The following case study demonstrates how a leader in a large urban and rural district used the 14 Parameter Framework to co-create an action-oriented improvement plan that led to impressive school improvement results. As you read, note the cluster work does not follow Parameters 1 to 14 in sequential order, but the leader aligns them with the ongoing work and the language of improvement developed internally.

CASE STUDY: USING THE 14 PARAMETERS AS A TAKE-ACTION TOOL

The Queensland government's Department of Education and Training (DET) is made up of seven education regions with the metropolitan region, covering the area of capital city Brisbane and the Brisbane Western Corridor to the west, including the city of Ipswich, located about 40 kilometers from Brisbane Central Business District.

Many of the families in the Ipswich area cluster of primary schools are low-income earners and at high levels of social disadvantage. Not only do school staff teams provide education, they offer social and emotional support to students and intervention programs to counter serious student behavior issues at all grade levels. Student performance data sources have consistently presented as very low and have been flagged "red" for "below national minimum standard" in national testing programs. Attracting high-quality beginning and experienced teachers has been challenging due to the poor reputation of schools in this area.

The Ipswich cluster, supported by Assistant Regional Director Helen Kenworthy, consists of 25 primary schools, 798 teachers, and 12,065 students. Kenworthy's role is to support principals and schools to improve performance and outcomes for all students. Coming from her deep belief in Parameter #1, that every student can learn given the right time and right support, her vision from the start was "to make a difference in the lives of the students in Ipswich." Together with school leaders, Kenworthy focused on the Region's goal: "to ensure all students reach National

Minimum Standard in Grade 3 with a specific focus on indigenous student achievement being monitored and known personally by each ARD.”

Focus for Kenworthy and her colleagues is driven by their *Metropolitan Region State Schools Improvement Plan (SIP) 2016–2019*. The initial one-pager of their comprehensive plan is displayed in Figure 1.3. The SIP plan identifies nine high-impact strategies that positively impact student improvement and achievement:

- intentional instructional leadership (Parameter #4)
- data-informed teaching and decision making (Parameter #3)
- goal setting (Parameter #1)
- benchmarks and standards (Parameter #14)
- coaching (Parameter #2)
- case management (Parameter #6)
- classroom observation and taking action (Parameters #3, #4, and #14)
- ongoing feedback (Parameter #3)
- differentiated model of school support (Parameters #5 and #6)

Nineteen of the 25 schools in Kenworthy’s cluster agreed to focus intensely on the following:

- using data to drive instruction (Parameter #6)
- early and ongoing intervention (Parameter #5)
- Professional Learning at staff meetings (Parameter #7)
- building leader and teacher capacity for focused literacy assessment and instruction (Parameters #3, #4, and #14)

School cluster meetings were led the same way a principal would lead Professional Learning at staff meetings, ensuring there was a sustained focus on literacy assessment and instruction (Parameter #3). The agenda for every cluster meeting was an unwavering focus on (1) analyzing data

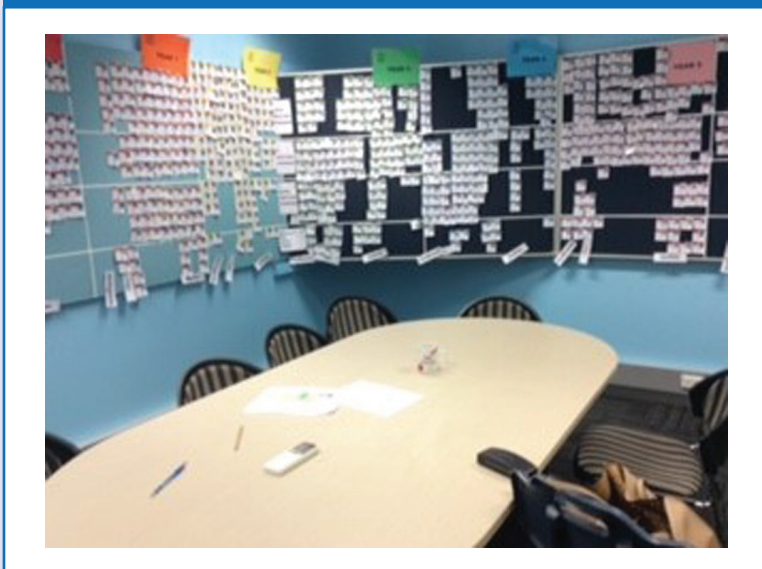
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and (2) reading *Putting FACES on the Data* (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). Two cluster meetings were held in each of the four school terms, a total of eight per year, and an additional series of fortnightly workshops was also provided with a focus on developing a school reading framework and reading program.

The focus of Kenworthy's work in schools was centered on putting FACES on the data. Every school was supported to develop a Data Wall that put FACES on reading data and raised awareness that student achievement was not as high as it should be. The region's expected reading benchmarks were included on every Data Wall and provided a standard of achievement that was the goal for each grade level. Their mantra became, "a year's worth of learning in one year" (Hattie, 2012). School Data Walls, as shown in Figures 1.8A and 1.8B, were used by schools to monitor and track individual student progress to ensure every student was making predicted and expected progress.

Figure 1.8 Examples of School Data Walls in the Ipswich Cluster





Source: Helen Kenworthy, assistant regional director, Metro Region.

Kenworthy participated in CMMs beside principals and teachers and provided advice and guidance about protocols, questioning techniques, teaching strategies, and follow-up support. Each CMM was held in front of the school Data Wall, and the progress of individual students and groups of students was closely monitored. One of the biggest shifts in thinking was identified in discussions about instruction. A key question was, “What do students need to learn and to be able to do to move to the next reading level?” From this understanding, the focus of the case management approach became

- What needs to be planned and taught to move this student forward?
- How will we monitor this so that this student continues to make progress?
- How will we make sure what is learned in the CMM is sustained and shared with other teachers?

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In reflecting on the number of students still on the lowest reading level (0–4) at the end of Term 3, a four-term school year, a group of Kindergarten teachers from one of the larger schools in the cluster stated,

If we had known what we know now about data and understanding individual students, looking at what the data is telling us about what students know and what our students need to know, we could have made a difference sooner. Our teaching practice has changed; every student has different needs and we really need to teach them differently. We will start earlier next year and make a bigger difference.

School leadership teams accompanied Kenworthy on Learning Walks and Talks (see Chapter 9) at other schools to observe Data Walls and CMMs in action. Schools shared their practices about how they provided intervention and monitored the effectiveness of the intervention. Collaborative learning groups were established across schools and driven by school leaders, with Kenworthy participating. Participants reflected on the progress of work in each school, shared practice, and discussed professional reading.

Supporting school leaders to develop a deep understanding of how to analyze and use student data was also a significant focus of the initial work. Data analysis experts were used to teach school leaders about national data sets, and curriculum advisors provided training and insight into how to use and interpret diagnostic reading assessment tools. A deep understanding of how to assess reading provided the catalyst for ensuring that all school leaders understood how to teach reading, and Professional Learning was ongoing to build leadership capacity in this area. The result of the above focused work is a group of highly capable, competent instructional leaders in the cluster schools who work with teachers to ensure every student is learning and achieving.

Source: Helen Kenworthy, assistant regional director, Metropolitan Region, personal communication, 2017.

IMPACT!

The outcomes of this focused work are tangible and inspiring for Kenworthy and the school leaders. After only 16 months, results for Grade 3 and 5 reading and writing improved dramatically in 18 of the 25 schools in this cluster. Their ongoing data collection indicates where their next focus and differentiated Professional Learning must be.

School leaders and teachers are proud of their work; their teaching practice has changed, and students have celebrated the improvements they have made. Kenworthy's knowledge of teaching and learning combined with her strategic and focused leadership has resulted in the following:

- dramatic changes in pedagogical practice across all the schools
- an unwavering focus on literacy
- a moral imperative to improve the lives of all students

The result is improved student outcomes in nearly all the cluster schools in only a few short months—less time than ever thought possible. These positive outcomes are having a profound effect on all schools in Metro Region and beyond.

Lessons Learned: Successful Improvement Strategies Using the 14 Parameter Framework

Kenworthy used the 14 Parameters aligned with the region's high-impact strategies, and she and her staff have learned the power of the following:

1. Having high expectations: A shared belief that every student can achieve, and an unwavering focus on teaching, learning, and knowing the curriculum (Parameter #1)
2. Using data: Knowing every student, knowing what s/he can and cannot do, and knowing what the teacher needs to teach for the student to make progress (Parameters #5 and #6)

3. Ensuring needs-based Professional Learning: An unrelenting focus at all cluster Professional Learning sessions on data, reading and writing, and the shared responsibility for this work by all members of the school staff (Parameters #4, #7, #14)
4. Differentiating support: The assistant regional director's ability to genuinely know and understand each school and each principal and then tailor support in a differentiated manner based on this knowledge (Parameter #1, #14)
5. Orchestrating collaborative learning: Through Learning Walks and Talks in each other's schools, observation and sharing of intervention strategies, collaborative discussion groups, and working together with the assistant regional director as a colleague in the work (Parameter #11)

All school leaders and teachers in the cluster of schools now know and can articulate the focus of the work and the moral imperative to make a difference in the lives of all students.

The focus for the coming years is to stay the course; the work has only just begun, with very positive results. The goal is to sustain the focus on data and deepen instructional practice to embed consistent high-impact practices in every classroom in every school (Parameters #1, #3, #6, #14). Plans are in place to focus on

- using assessment data in planning (Parameter #3),
- ensuring assessment is aligned with the achievement standards in the curriculum (Parameters #1 and #14),
- undertaking the power of teacher collaborative assessment of student work (Parameter #8) both within schools and across school groups to affirm teachers' judgment and determine Descriptive Feedback on student work,
- planning for future Professional Learning sessions focused on improving student learning (Parameter #7),

Kenworthy will continue to

- participate in the learning and leading,
- focus on working as an instructional leader with school leaders and teachers,

- enhance collaborative learning opportunities between leaders and teachers in and across schools.

This cluster of schools and the entire Metropolitan Region will continue to focus on putting FACES on their school and student data. It's an exciting journey that's making a difference!

Lessons Learned: From Working in the Field and at the Center

Lessons I have learned from being “in the field and at the center simultaneously,” working alongside leaders and teachers:

1. The 14 Parameters are powerful when considered in concert—woven together and not necessarily in lock step.
2. The case management approach (Data Walls and CMMs) is an impactful course of action and a system nonnegotiable.
3. Strategic leaders deliver clear and consistent messages.
4. System and school leaders are insistent in providing evidence that they are making a difference in the lives of their students.
5. System leaders are present and persistent in offering support and CLARITY of high expectations to ensure all schools participate and succeed.

Clearly, this CLARITY of expectation and support to uncover best practices is working. Successes are shared throughout Metro Region at dedicated times for knowledge mobilization that I call the “Learning Fair.”

THE LEARNING FAIR: MOBILIZING AND CELEBRATING SMALL AND BIG WINS

How do you celebrate and mobilize the learning gained from implementing the 14 Parameters? Once you have completed your own assessment of the 14 Parameter matrix, developed a good understanding of the 14 Parameters, completed some staff capacity-building work in CI, and established agreed-upon, high-impact strategies including the case management approach, you will want to ensure that learning across your system and schools is shared, grown, known, and celebrated.

When your system has had success, as in the case study above, you are ready for sharing successes and failures, a key component of this improvement work. “Sharratt Schools” in Catholic Education Western Australia, which have been working on improvement for three years, recently participated in an outstanding sharing opportunity called the Learning Showcase, shown in Figures 1.9 and 1.10. A Learning Fair, symposium, or showcase is an opportunity to highlight, reflect on, and celebrate the CI journey using the 14 Parameters as the tool for the reflection.

Learning Fairs are designed for knowledge mobilization. The focus of the Learning Fair is to reflect on the successes and challenges of each school’s journey and to share evidence of their actions, results, and learning, modeling what schools can continue to do internally, in learning clusters and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). This is how transformative knowledge gained in one school is transmitted and may be transformative across many schools in a system. Each school is invited to produce a 30-minute presentation that begins with members of the school team using whatever presentation tools they choose, as depicted in Figures 1.9 and 1.10. The focus is on the narrative of the school’s learning journey, not on the presentation tools.

Figure 1.9 Elementary Storefront From Learning Fair



Figure 1.10 Secondary Storefront From Learning Fair



Source: Lyn Sharratt, 2017.

For more detailed information about creating a learning event after using the 14 Parameters and inquiring into improvement, see **Web Resource 3: Organizing and Mobilizing a Learning Event—The Learning Fair.**

SYSTEM AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT REQUIRES TIRELESS COMMITMENT

The 14 Parameters are the product of initial research into the hard work that led a very large, underperforming school district to become a very successful school district—not just high achieving relative to its previous low-achieving status but against all other districts in the state. They have sustained that high achievement for more than a decade. The Ipswich cluster took the lessons learned and ran with them, developing their own meta-language. Whole states, like Ontario, or regions like Metro Region adapt the learning from integrating the 14 Parameters to create their own education powerhouses.

As we move into the next chapters on knowing the learners and professional CI, remember the impact of the 14 Parameters. Together, they are an evidence-proven toolkit



Web Resource 3:
Organizing and
Mobilizing a
Learning Event—
The Learning Fair

to carry with you in your improvement work throughout your career. Specifically, in Chapter 2, I look at the CLARITY needed in knowing the many FACES of learners, with an understanding that will enable them to learn, adapt, and achieve.

Author's Note

After an introduction to the 14 Parameters, leaders of system and school teams that I work with make an ongoing commitment to move ahead together, using the 14 Parameters as their unifying framework. At the end of each chapter in this text are some of the commitments participants have made early on this journey. Of note, these are real system and school leaders who realized, as they worked alongside me, that *they must make the time to invest in using the 14 Parameters to support, focus, and align their whole-system improvement efforts*. Each Commitment section reflects the FACES and voices of my research participants who continue to contribute to my thinking and writing.

COMMITMENT

I commit to

- being part of the team to develop the plan to use 14 Parameters with all our teachers,
- sharing the learning about the 14 Parameters with all staff members back at school,
- moving students from being engaged to being empowered,
- shining the spotlight on not only struggling students but also stuck students and students needing extending,
- incorporating more opportunities for staff to co-plan using the 14 Parameters as the framework for improvement.

Given what you have read so far, what commitments could you make for yourself and with your team?

A DELIBERATE PAUSE TO CREATE CLARITY

Can you envision your system or school team agreeing with you that they can accept the statements in Parameter #1 as part of your vision? According to your data, which Parameter after #1, #6, and #14 would be the next most important to implement to improve your student achievement results? Think about how you could get buy-in from your team to agree with your assessment. Take a few moments to note obstacles that you foresee in using the 14 Parameter framework as a self-assessment tool in your system or school. How will you solve those problems? Think about how Metro Region's leadership team created their "Precision" watermark for continuous system improvement. What would your watermark be? What evidence from the case study is there to show Helen Kenworthy's intention to move schools in her cluster along? Kenworthy had senior leader support and a systemic approach to the implementation. If you had that systemic support, can you imagine how it would roll out? What support do you need?



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