CREATING A POSITIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FROM WITHIN
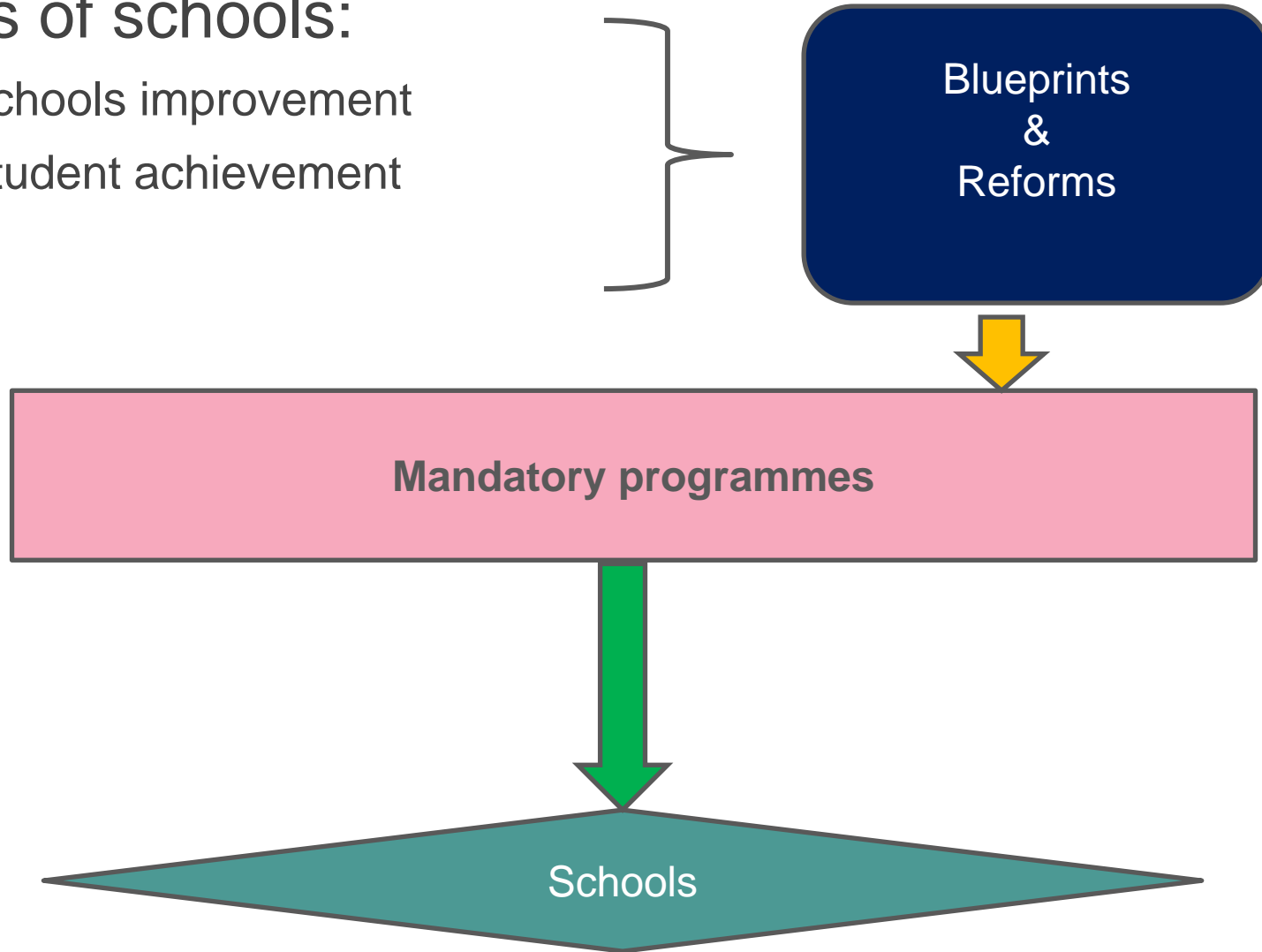
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Date: 15 June 2023
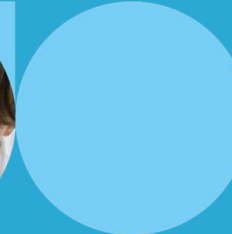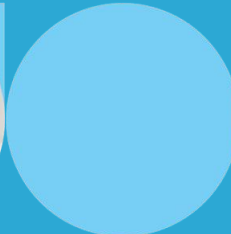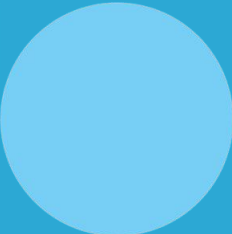
Creating a Positive School Environment from Within

- Aims of schools:
  - Schools improvement
  - Student achievement

Blueprints & Reforms

Mandatory programmes

Schools

Creating a Positive School Environment from Within

- Leads to the creation of 'list logic' (Barth 1990).

- A list of desirable characteristics of successful schools

- Clear directions and regulations to ensure such characteristics are found in the school.

- Improvement short-lived
- Suitable for solving technical problems
- Not suitable for organizations confronted with adaptive challenges –beliefs, roles, relationships and approaches to work.

Too focused on exam results and schools should teach more than scoring in exams

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Sustainable School Improvement

Sustainable improvement : Efforts to improve must be from within the school.

External reforms workshops : 'Deficiency' model leads to 'in-service' ad infinitum

Improving schools from within : Build on the strength of the of the staff and work from there.

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Factors that can Destroy Attempts at Improving Schools

1. Relationship between administrators and teachers.
2. Relationship among teachers.
3. Formal teacher evaluations
4. The loss of creativity

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Factors that Lead to School Improvement

1. Collegiality
2. Communities of learning
3. Foster higher order thinking skills
4. Collaborative leadership (Distributed leadership)
5. Instructional leadership
6. Transformational leadership

Collegiality

- Collegiality is the existence of high levels of collaboration

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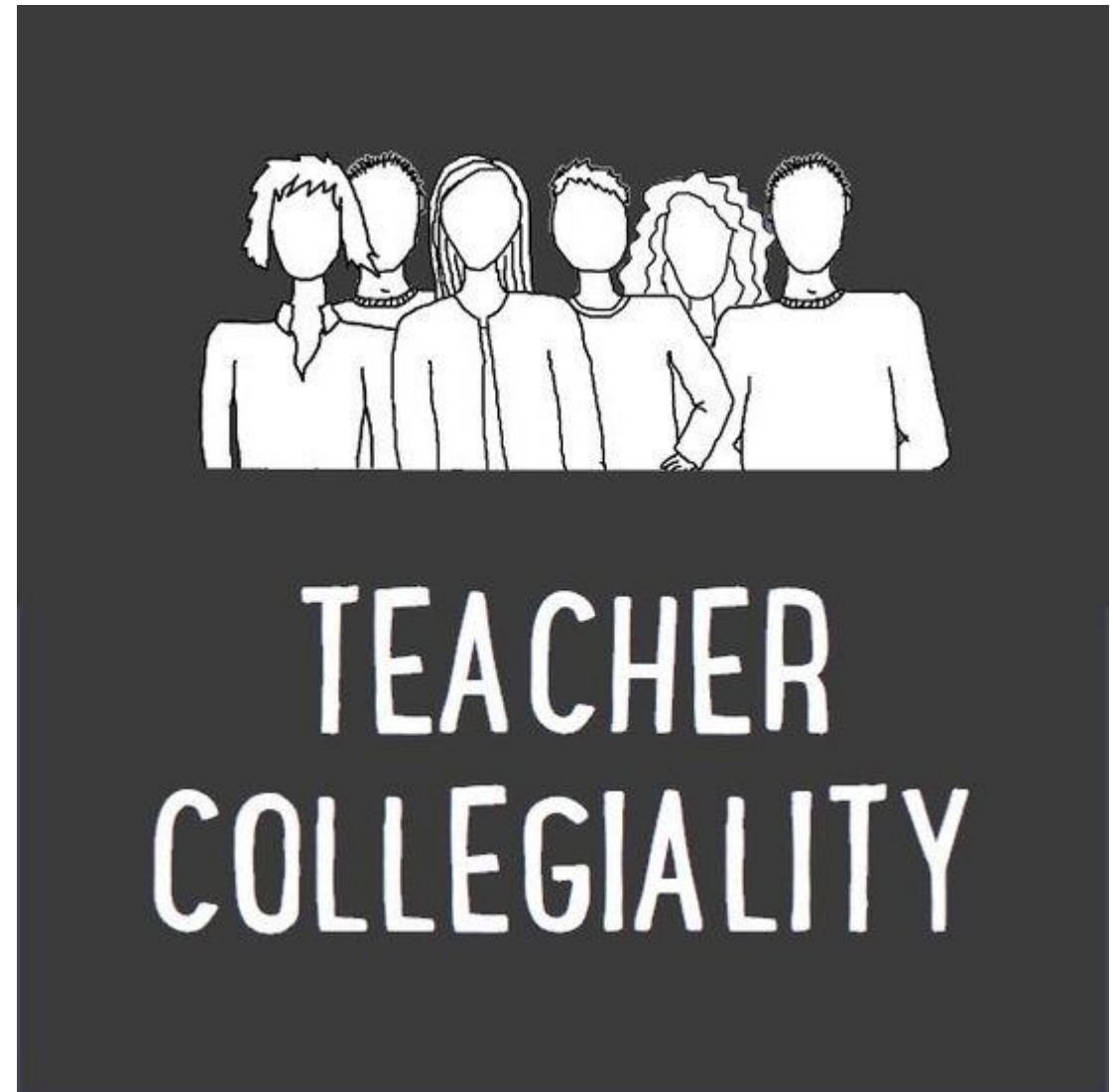
What is collegiality?

- Talk about practice.

- Observe each other engaged in the practice of teaching and administration

- Engage in curriculum planning, researching and evaluating of curriculum

- Share Craft knowledge

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The benefits of collegiality

- Decisions are better.
- Implementation of decisions are better.
- Higher level of morale and trust among teachers.
- Adult learning is energized and sustainable.
- Student motivation increased.

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What can be done to encourage collegiality in schools?

- State expectations.

- Models collegiality.

- Reward collegiality.

- Protect teachers who engage in collegiality behaviour.

iv. Empowering teachers

- Provide teachers with responsibilities and resources.

- Opportunities to make decisions.

- Intensive use of data.

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Factors that Lead to School Improvement from Within

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Communities of Learning

- Schools prefer their own common sense.

- All participants engage in learning and teaching.

- Learning is endemic and mutually visible.

- The assumptions of a community of learners.

- Principals are ' lead learners'.

- Teacher growth related closely to student growth.

- Professional development

- Principals learn together with teachers.

- Establishing relationship with outside community
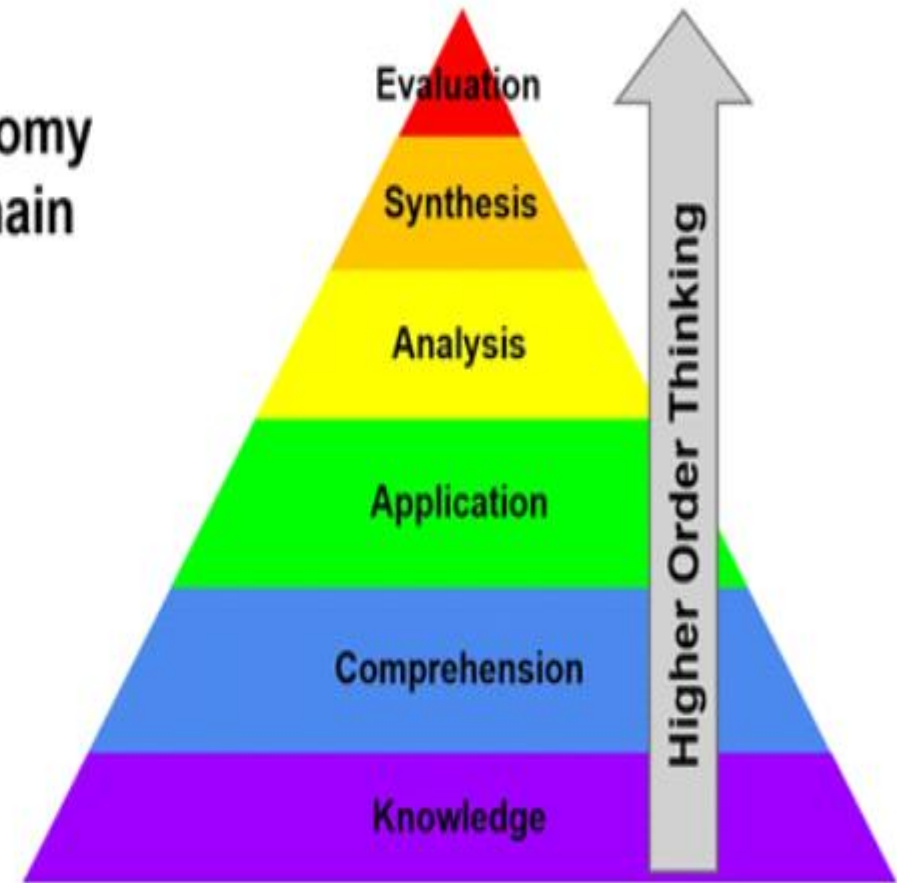
COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING EXAMPLES

Study.com

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Factors the Lead to School Improvement

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Bloom's Taxonomy
Cognitive Domain

Fostering Higher Order Thinking Skills

- A tool for life-long learning
    - The ability to think
    - To make informed judgements
    - To critically evaluate information.
    - To think creatively.
- A thinking culture in the school.

HIGHER ORDER THINKING in the CLASSROOM

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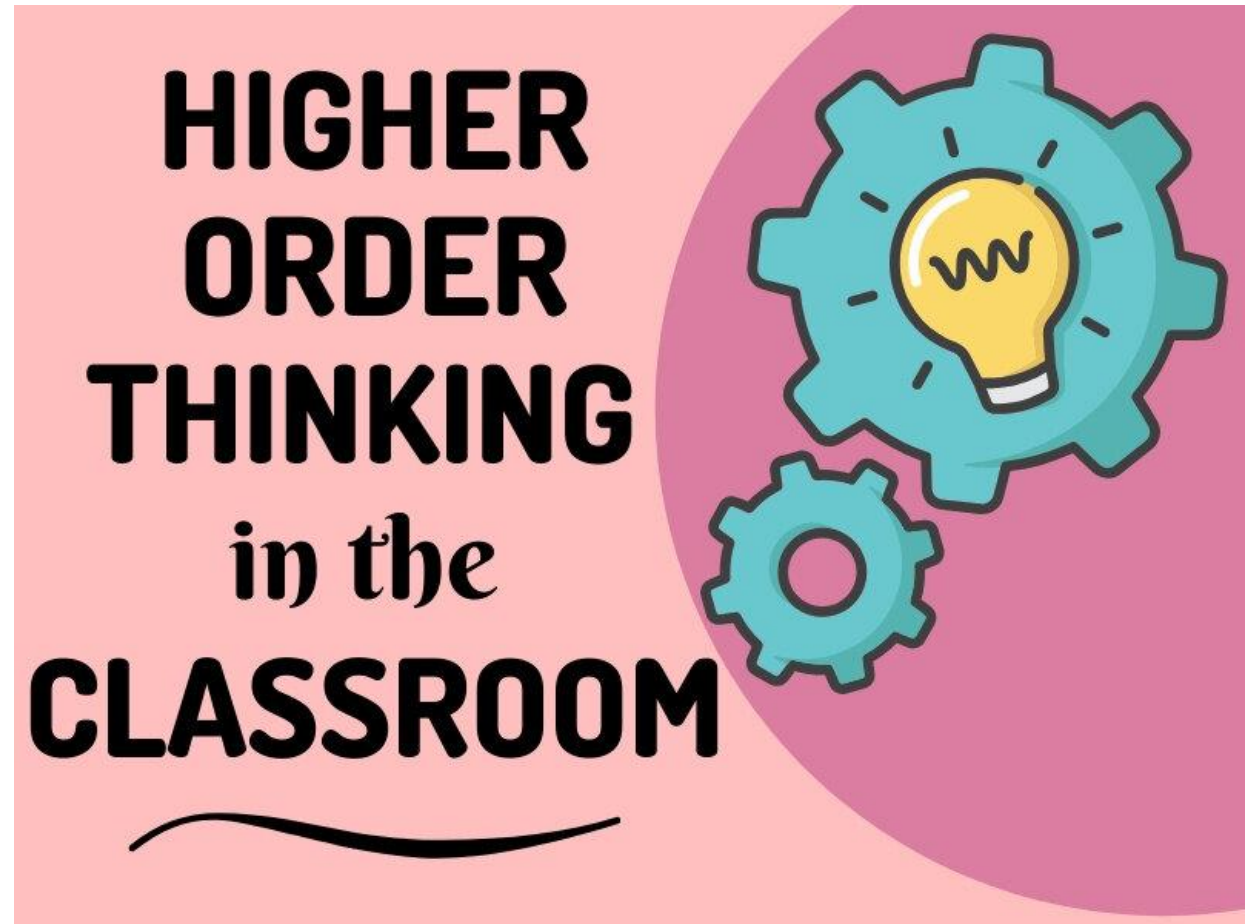
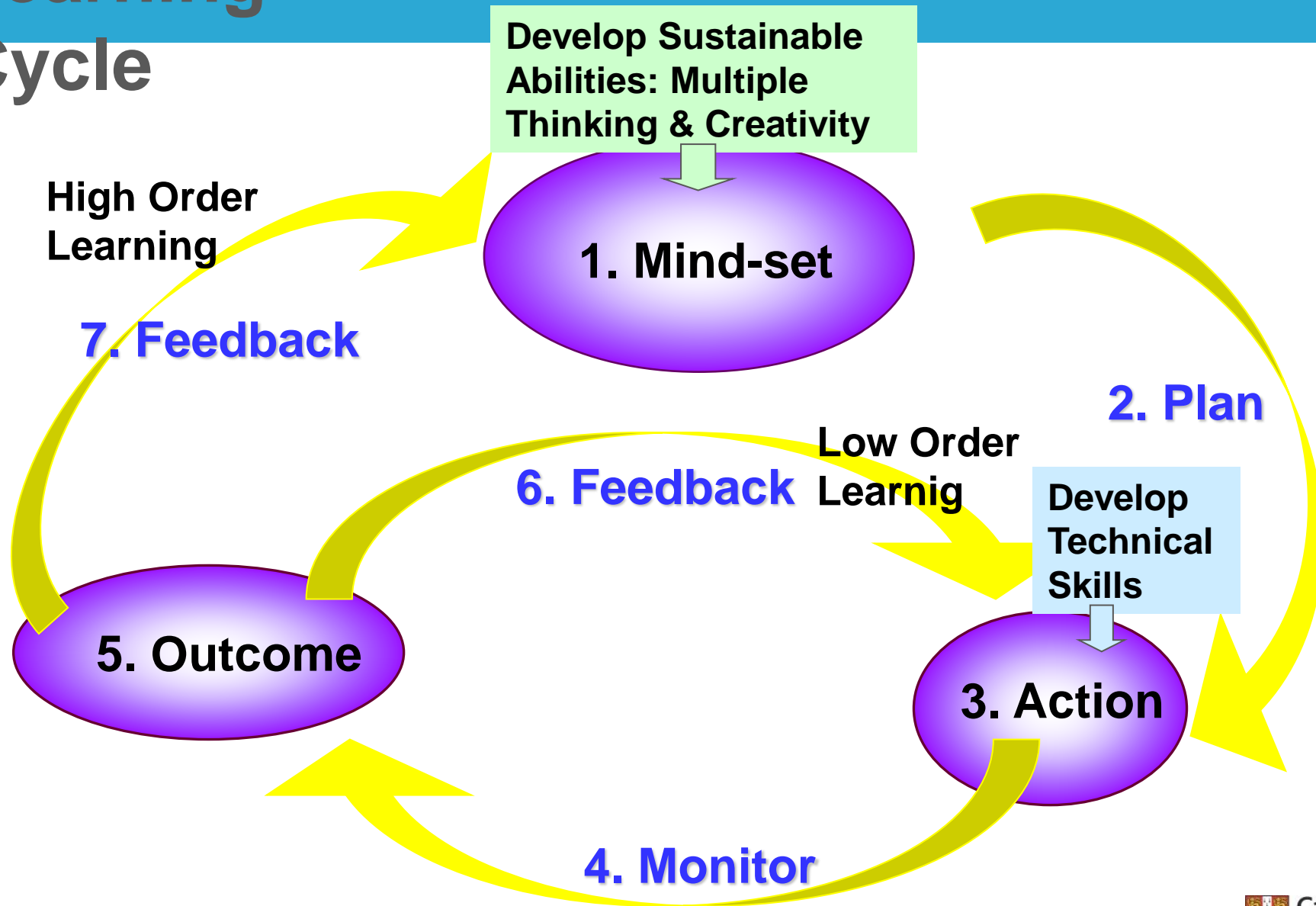# Creating a Positive School Environment from Within

- What is HOTS?

▶ Bloom's Taxonomy

i. Knowledge

ii. Comprehension

iii. Application

iv. Analysis

v. Synthesis

vi. Evaluation

Lower order thinking skills
Not HOTS

Higher order thinking skills
HOTS

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Learning Cycle

Develop Sustainable Abilities: Multiple Thinking & Creativity

1. Mind-set

High Order Learning

7. Feedback

2. Plan

Low Order Learnig

6. Feedback

Develop Technical Skills

5. Outcome

3. Action

4. Monitor

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Collaborative Leadership (Distributed Leadership)

- What is collaborative leadership?
  - Intentional and skillful management of relationships
  - Align people's actions to accomplish a goal or solve a problem
  - Facilitate the involvement of two or more people in a group.
  - Possess knowledge, skills and dispositions to optimize assets, seeking new solutions, sustaining focus, promoting trust and monitoring goals and progress.

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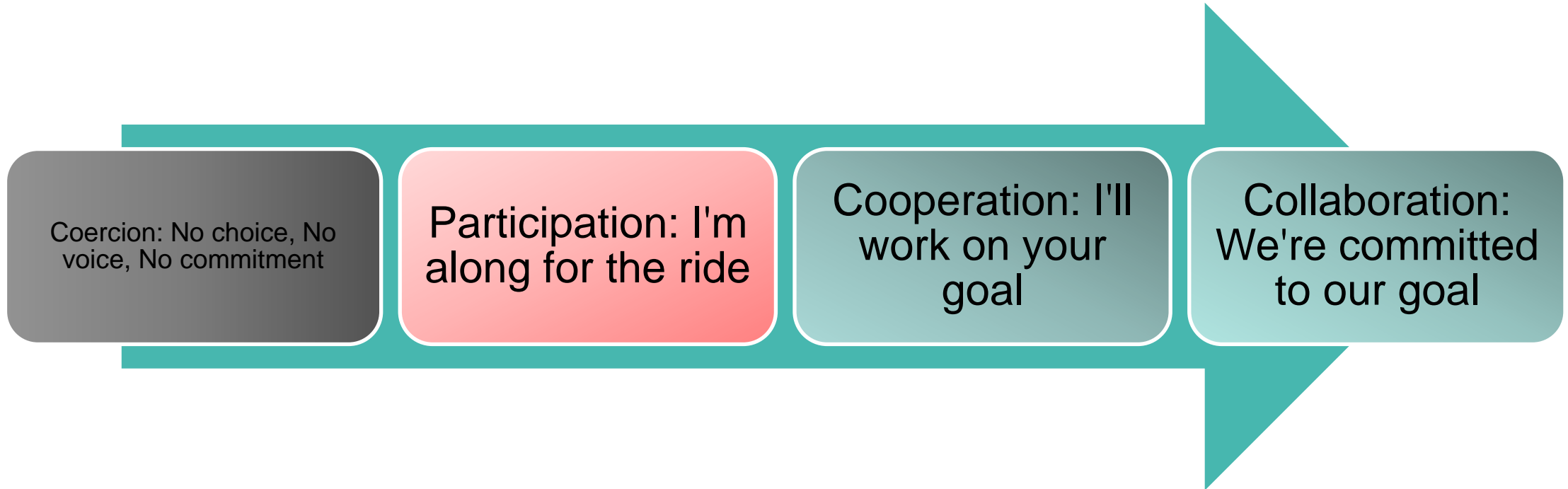
Collaborative Leadership (Distributed Leadership)

- Why collaborative leadership?
  i. Principal tasks too complex
  ii. Balances individual and collective needs
  iii. Manage relationships
  iv. Catalyst for improvement
  v. Decision making from one to many

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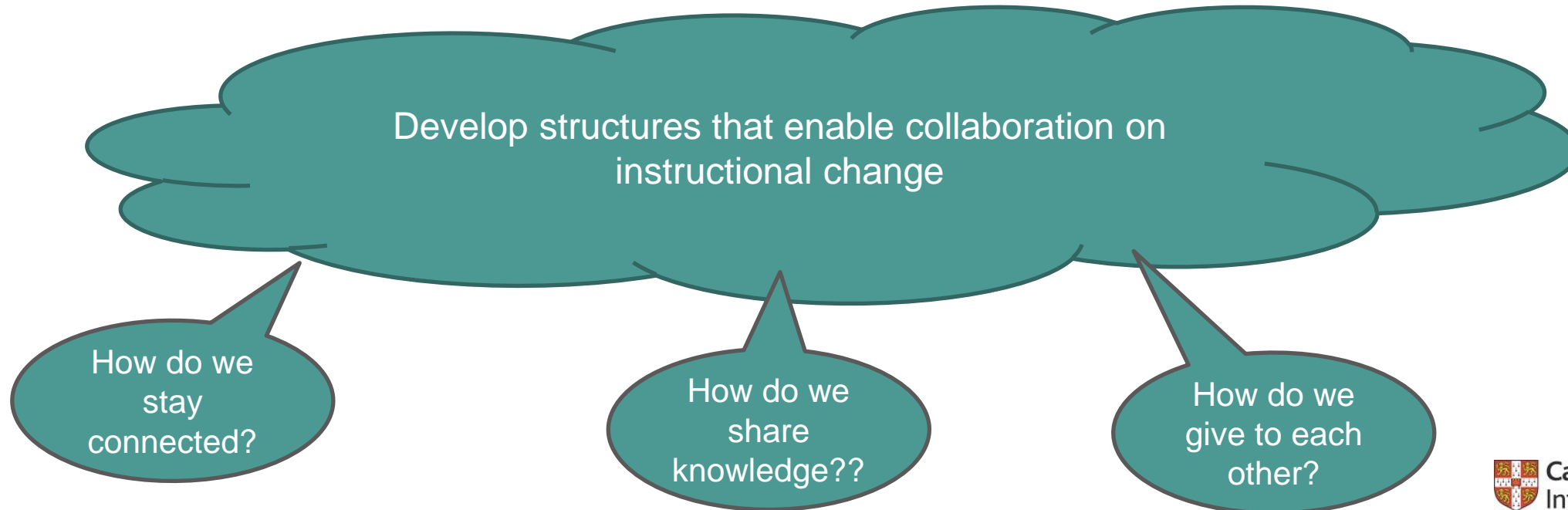
iv. Collaborative Leadership (Distributed Leadership)

- What is collaborative leadership?

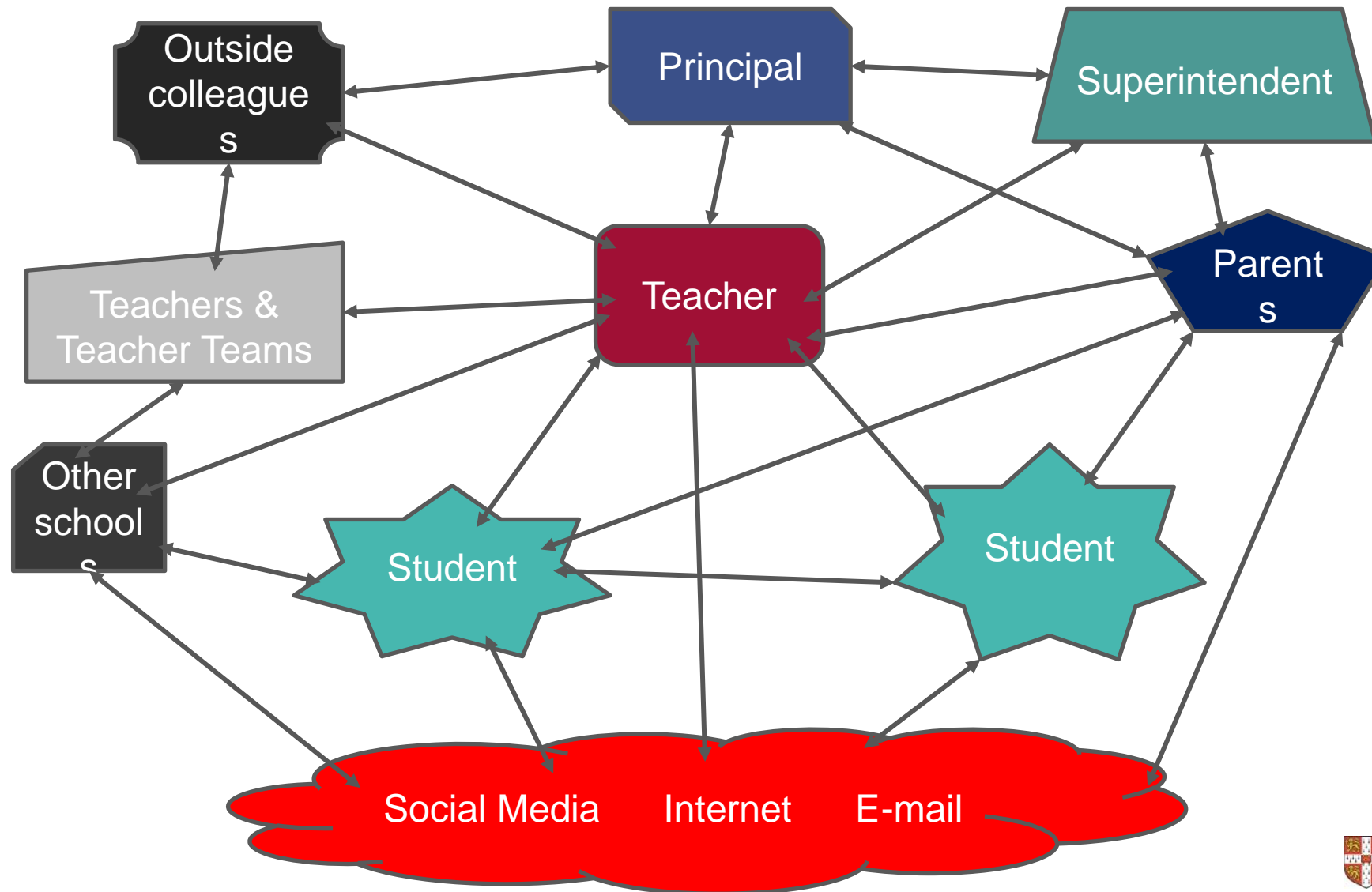| Coercion: No choice, No voice, No commitment | Participation: I'm along for the ride | Cooperation: I'll work on your goal | Collaboration: We're committed to our goal |

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iv. Collaborative Leadership (Distributed Leadership)

- What are the benefits of collaborative leadership?
  - Understand teachers' role
  - Commit to successful team.
  - Practice active followership.
  - You don't have to be in-charge.

Develop structures that enable collaboration on instructional change

How do we stay connected?

How do we share knowledge??

How do we give to each other?

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COLLABORATION IN ALL DIRECTIONS

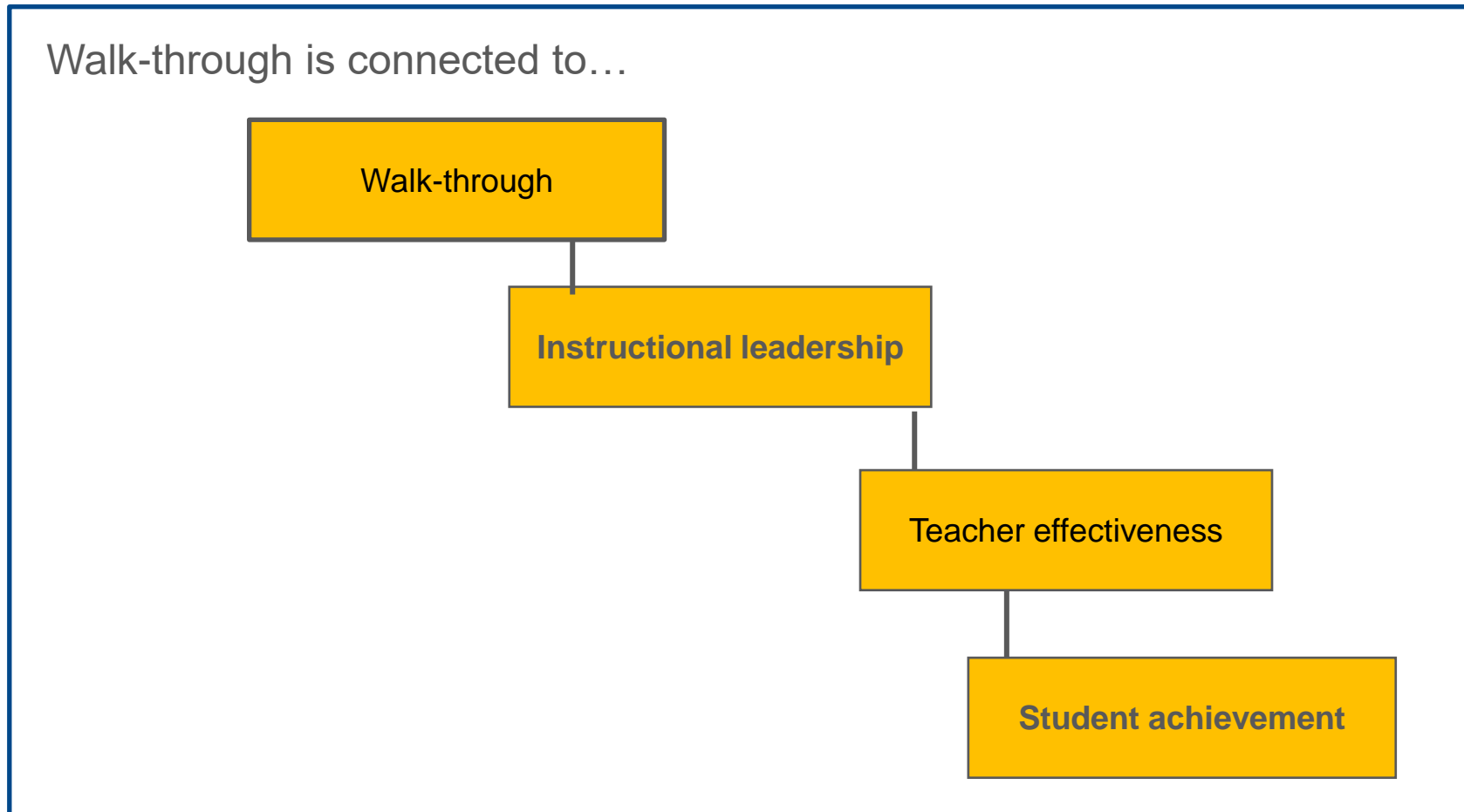# Creating a Positive School Environment from Within

Factors that lead to school improvement

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Instructional Leadership

Walk-through is connected to…

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Instructional Leadership

The purpose of instructional leadership:
i.   Improve instructional outcome
ii.   To strengthen instructional leadership
- Be visible
- Be supportive
- Be engaged
- Be knowledgeable

iii. To support the coaching process
iv.   Protecting instructional time

If student learning is the most important function of schools, then instruction is where we focus our time and attention"

(Fielding & Rosier, 2007)

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Transformational Leadership

i. Providing individualized support/ consideration

" …targeted resources (including instructional resources) towards their vision and provided support to teachers in their efforts to improve… In these schools, the principal was viewed as someone who not only listened to the complaints of parents and teachers but also identified solutions to their problems…and teachers at these schools reported positive communication and feeling supported through the evaluation process because they were given feedback about how to improve curriculum and instruction".

(Finnigan & Stewart, 2009: 508-9)

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Transformational Leadership

ii. Intellectual Stimulation

- Behaviours include taking intellectual risks, re-examine assumptions, look at work from different perspectives, challenging the status quo
- School leaders at the centre of teaching and learning
- Leaders participated in their learning with their teachers

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Transformational Leadership

iii. Providing appropriate model
- Leading by example
- Transparent decision-making, confidence, optimism, hope, resiliency, and consistency between words and deeds.
- Modelling core values in one's own practices
- High visibility
- Role models with the appropriate behaviours and attitudes that require to build trusts and respect in followers.

SCHOOLS ARE COMMUNITIES OF LEARNERS

- Schools are communities of learners.
- The capacity of schools to change depends upon their ability to learn.
- Teachers are adult learners.
- Principals are "head learners".

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EMPOWER A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS AND THEY WILL BECOME LEADERS

One day, lying alone on the lawn on my back…I saw above me a flock of geese. The head goose, the leaders of the "V", suddenly swerved out, leaving a vacancy that promptly was filled by the bird behind. The leader then flew alongside, the formation growing wide, and took his place at the back of the line _ and they never missed a beat!

Barth (1990). *Improving schools from within.*

Creating a Positive School Environment from Within

YOU HAVE TO FIND THE WAY BY WALKING IT

"There is no ready answer to the "how" question. Singular recipes…oversimplify what it will take to bring about change in your own situation. Even when you know what research and published advice tell you, no one can prescribe exactly how to apply [it] to your particular school and all the unique problems, opportunities and peculiarities it contains".

(Fullan & Hargreaves, 1998).

Any questions?

THANK YOU

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