



# Data to improve learning: Collaboration + co-construction = collective efficacy

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Too often, education systems adopt competing priorities which lead to fragmented and unaligned system measurements and an overload of unrelated “data.” Choosing instead a baseline of unchanging data sources that is aligned to the system’s singular vision provides direction and accountability for both system and school improvement work. Starting from the sharpened focus provided by their vision, leaders and teachers need to combine their measures of *data analyses* with measures of *knowledge of who each learner is*. In their definition of data, successful systems combine assessment collection, i.e., projects, presentations, research papers and other forms of student work - with collected anecdotal and non-statistical evidence that demonstrates in-depth knowledge of every student as a person-a learner. Triangulating more than one or two data sources allows us to see the faces behind those data sources. Looking at each learner or FACE ensures systems have consistent and long-term approaches to looking at the individuals “behind” the statistical data, so that teachers can confidently say they know each FACE and are striving to teach each.

A corollary to improving student growth and achievement using data, at all levels, is that systems must adopt an evidence-proven framework against which to continuously self-appraise, to self-assess their own professional capacity/growth and from which to

develop evidence-directed next steps in learning. The 14 Parameter Framework for System and School Improvement (see Table 1) was developed and refined by year-after-year use in York Region (Canada). The research was initially collected through surveys, teacher and leader interviews, and focus groups involving over 500 respondents and first published in *Realization* by Sharratt and Fullan in 2009 and reintroduced in 2022 as the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. The 14 Parameters have not changed over that time; only the language has sharpened and is more precise as we both have learned from the practitioners with whom we do the FACES (Sharratt & Fullan, 2022) and CLARITY (Sharratt, 2019) work. The 14 Parameter Framework is robust and evidence-proven. It has also been used by education systems across Australia and globally as the source of data analysis to determine system and school needs and next steps in improvement. The 14 Parameters enables systems and schools to gather their own performance “data” against areas that effectively determine a high probability of success in student growth and achievement. Since the 14 Parameters track well against national and state improvement standards across jurisdictions, using the 14 Parameter Framework as a data analysis tool becomes a powerful lens for determining next steps. The 14 Ps are a powerful whole-system or whole-school approach to improvement.

**Table 1: The 14 Parameters of Systems and School Improvement**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Shared beliefs and understandings</i>. Parameter 1 is the only hieratical parameter for a reason; it is the hardest to do and begs the question, do we really believe all students can learn? It is based on the following:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. All students can achieve high standards given the right time and the right support.</li> <li>b. All teachers can teach to high standards given the right assistance.</li> <li>c. High expectations and early and ongoing intervention are essential.</li> <li>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 &amp; Crévola, 1999).</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. <i>Embedded Knowledgeable Others</i>. An expert teacher is on every staff.</li> <li>3. <i>Quality assessment informs instruction</i>. Impactful teaching and learning is built on an understanding of each student learner</li> <li>4. <i>Principal as lead learner</i>. The Principal leads and learns as a “learning leader” constantly.</li> <li>5. <i>Early and ongoing intervention</i>. Every teacher knows how to teach every child.</li> <li>6. <i>Case management approach</i>. A two-pronged approach: Data walls and case management meets are used to put FACES on the data.</li> <li>7. <i>Focused professional learning at staff meetings</i>. Every staff meeting is focused on learning, and compliance issues are relegated to memos.</li> <li>8. <i>In-school meetings - collaborative assessment of student work</i>. Every meeting must start with data. The Collaborative Assessment of Student Work is a strong tool to use.</li> <li>9. <i>Centralised rooms of multi-modal resources</i>. All resources for teaching and learning are accessible to all staff in a centralised location: a just-right, just-in-time repository.</li> <li>10. <i>Allocation of system and school budgets for learning</i>. Budgets must consider learning first and support human and material resources needed.</li> <li>11. <i>Collaborative inquiry - a whole-system/school approach</i>. Using data, every staff member, through reflection on data, develops a strong, ongoing collaborative inquiry question focused on increasing all students’ growth and achievement.</li> <li>12. <i>Parental and community involvement</i>. Parents and broader community are partners beside educators in the CLARITY journey.</li> <li>13. <i>Cross-curricular literacy connections</i>. Teaching the comprehension and critical thinking skills woven into every subject area is our commitment to graduating critically literate citizens.</li> <li>14. <i>Shared responsibility and accountability</i>. We all own all the FACES of learners in our schools and systems</li> </ol>
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Taken from *CLARITY: What Matters MOST in Learning, Teaching, and Leading* (p. 11), by L. Sharratt, 2019, Corwin.

Lead Article

Using the power of the 14 Parameters, in this paper I consider two evidence-proven ways, embedded in Parameter #6, to use data to improve students' learning growth and achievement. These are (1) *Collaboration*; and (2) *Co-Construction* both of which result in *Collective Efficacy*. Following this, I draw on the evidence in a case study from Wales to demonstrate how collaboration and co-construction result in collective efficacy. Table 2 includes a set of questions (referred to as "deliberate pauses") for the reader to reflect on as they read this article.

Table 2: Deliberate Pauses

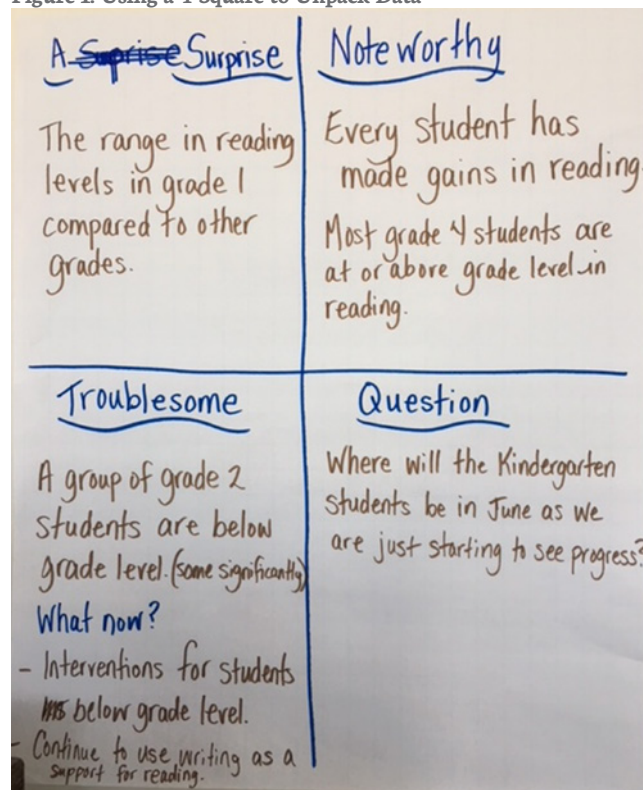
Deliberate Pauses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your plan for improvement - how do all staff commit?</li> <li>• What resources do you have available to implement this focused work?</li> <li>• Do you have respected instructional coaches (Knowledgeable Others [KOs]) in every school either primary and secondary?</li> <li>• Do your instructional coaches offer added value to the professional learning of principals, leadership teams, <b>and</b> teachers?</li> <li>• Who is in my class? (Note: Everyone has "a class" to teach and learn from, i.e., state leaders, school leaders, teachers, elected officials, and community members).</li> <li>• Whose learning is my responsibility?</li> <li>• How do we ensure that the use of data considers emotional connectedness and cognitive insights?</li> <li>• Are we using all the potential data points we have available, i.e., standards-based assessments, new sources, alternative forms of measurement?</li> <li>• Are system, school, and student growth and achievement data driving the inquiry process?</li> <li>• Do you co-construct, maintain and enforce respectful operating norms for all discussions?</li> <li>• Are multiple data sources driving the collaborative inquiry and instruction in classrooms? How do you know?</li> <li>• Are collaborative assessment of student work, instructional coaching time, case management meetings, early intervention processes, and collaborative inquiry (arising from data) "standard operating procedures" in your school? How do you know? What evidence tells you that they are having an impact?</li> <li>• Are Professional Learning (PL) sessions for staff informed by data that differentiates learning options? Is the PL you are leading improving student learning? How do you know on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis?</li> <li>• Who owns the responsibility for all your students' growth and achievement?</li> <li>• What is your strategic leadership style in calm and crisis?</li> <li>• How do you support parents and the community to share ownership for students' learning?</li> <li>• What supports are in place to encourage <b>all</b> staff members to own <b>all</b> students' growth and achievement data and make connections to each FACE?</li> <li>• If you were not able to continue to lead at your level tomorrow, would the ownership of <b>all</b> students' and teachers' success continue?</li> </ul>

1. Collaboration + co-construction = collective efficacy

Educators everywhere need to develop a sense of collective urgency and efficacy to make a significant difference in the way they respond to changing needs. The work required to transform education demands that teachers and system leaders be focused on an expanded array of achievement data that includes students' skill in innovation, collaboration, curiosity, entrepreneurship and creative problem-solving (Sharratt & Harild, 2015). To accomplish this deepening of achievement outcomes, educators are themselves encouraged to work more collaboratively in order to better employ collaborative learning approaches. For example, one of our research participants in *Leading Collaborative Learning* (Sharratt & Planche, 2016, p. 3) stated: "We need to build the awareness of all teachers and leaders about the importance of collaboration and their capacity to be collaborative. It must become second nature to all members of a school community - students, teachers and leaders."

My observations as a practitioner (I continue to teach doctoral students at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Canada), consultant, and researcher are that when leaders engage all staff members, K-12, in collaboratively scrutinising one set of data, using a 4-square process (Figure 1) to reflect on *What's Noteworthy?*, *What's Unique?*, *What's a Question?*, and *What's a Concern?*, they not only get staff buy-in to further engage in "investigative collaboration" but also deepen, through rich dialogue, their understanding of all FACES portrayed. Moreover, all staff members get collaborative inquiry (CI) question(s) to continue their pursuit and ongoing investigative processes of getting better at what they do.

Figure 1: Using a 4-Square to Unpack Data



From *CLARITY: What Matters MOST in Learning, Teaching and Leading* (p. 233), by L. Sharratt, 2019, Corwin.

Figure 2: Using the Venn Diagram as Visual Portrayal of Data

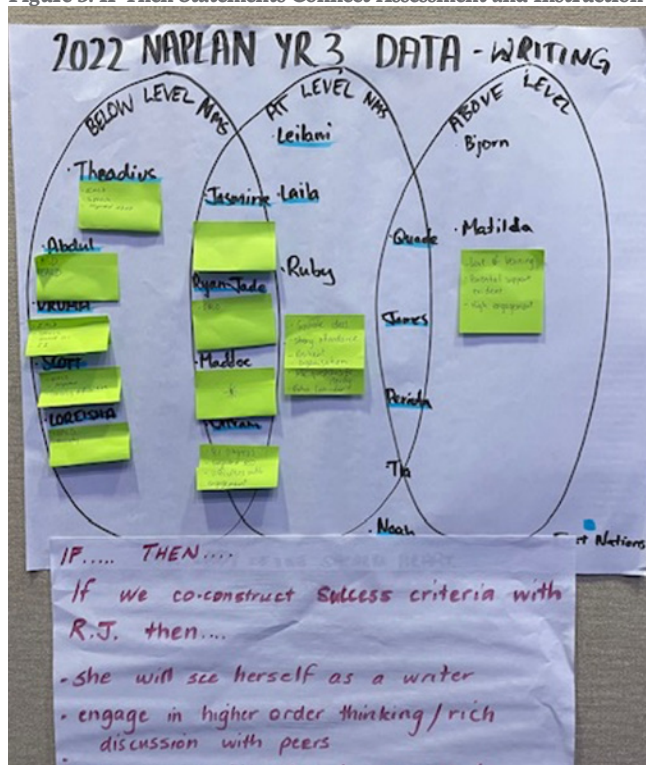


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For many, words such as those in the 4-Square are powerful descriptors; however, for others, the use of a venn diagram featured in Figure 2 visually representing a Year Level set of data, may provide the background status information needed to prompt rich discussions among leaders and teachers about the “why” and “next steps.”

This venn diagram represented as a data wall prompts dialogue. Data was co-constructed using a venn diagram structure to unpack the specific next steps in planning for these students. The data wall leads to Case Management Meetings (CMM) following on from dialogue at the data wall, “If-Then” statements, shown in Figure 3, record the ensuing discussion of what instructional approaches will be tried in order to reach and teach each FACE. Recording the completed CMM template on the data wall using a QR Code to house the information gives all staff - at a glance - how the improvement for this student started and ended at the data wall, with a very important QR Code.

Figure 3: If-Then Statements Connect Assessment and Instruction



Source: Lyn Sharratt, April 2022, Queensland, Australia.

Putting FACES on the data through the development of data walls that lead to case management meetings requires the establishment of agreed-upon norms and protocols. Operating norms (how we will treat each other) and protocols (detailed steps in the data scrutiny process) ensure the collaboration space will be safe and purposeful for all participants leading to *co-construction of meaning* of the data, and co-construction of responses to the data for example, in a case management meeting.

**2. Collaboration + co-construction = collective efficacy**

Co-construction of the meaning of specific data - numeric or anecdotal - where leaders and teachers work together to understand how to improve on students’ learning is a powerful capacity-builder. Taking the data - for example, assessments and student work examples - to be discussed collaboratively from the perspective of the teacher who has self-nominated their “case” to a group of leaders and teachers takes courage on the part of the teacher. Co-constructing potential scenarios or teaching strategies with/for that teacher within a case management meeting takes a willingness to share and bring everyone on the “team” to better understand the issues presented and the responses offered to the teacher. This approach to improving teaching practice by knowing every student’s FACE and how to teach each one, produces an easier willingness for teachers and leaders to work collaboratively to problem-solve and co-construct the next steps to enhance each student’s learning. The result over time is that teachers become more comfortable with “trying on” and adopting suggested high-impact instructional strategies that are necessary for that one student but may also be good for other students in the class.

The case management approach (Parameter #6, Sharratt & Fullan, 2009, 2012, 2022) is two-pronged: Data walls and case management meetings.

1. *Data walls* build shared beliefs and understandings as teachers and leaders together make sense of the data displayed. Data walls are housed in *private* locations, not in view of community members, parents, or students. The FACES featured on data walls demand response and attention; they are there for all leaders and teachers to see, discuss and own. Data walls are an urgent call to action and should be seen as “prevention” so all FACES are known and all teachers in schools have opportunities to offer input or questions on “why?” - then no one student should fall through the cracks. Data wall discussions - formal and informal - lead to case management meetings where instructional action is defined and refined *for and with* a student’s teacher for the benefit of the student, the teacher, and everyone who participates in the case management meeting.

## Lead Article

2. *Case management meetings* build individual teacher confidence and strengthen their trust in each other, each learning that they are not alone in finding the instructional pathways for all students. Case management meetings become seen as collaborative, co-constructed “*intervention*” forums. Through them, all teachers learn how to intervene to move all students forward. Through them, leaders also develop deeper instructional intelligence they can share with teachers in the future. And, through case management meetings, participating Knowledgeable Others (Parameter #2) become even more strategic in enhancing learning.

CMMs are **not** to be confused with multidisciplinary special education meetings, often with outside personnel attending, that focus on behavior, discipline, psychosocial assessments, family backgrounds, and the like. In addition, it is critically important that CMMs **not** be perceived as or ever become opportunities for punitively dressing-down teachers for “failing” to achieve. When focused on growth, case management meetings are a powerful approach to using data to build the collective responsibility of all school staff to own all students’ learning.

### 3. Collaboration + co-construction = collective efficacy

The collective questioning of visible data on data walls leading to hypothetical comments (have you thought of...), to more formal case management meetings lead to sharing successful strategies among all teachers in a school. The collective success achieved - when all own the data of all students’ growth and their achievement at a system, network, or a school level, creates *collective efficacy*. When all teachers and leaders know how to teach so that all students can and have learned, they share professional pride in knowing that they have, through their collaboration and co-construction processes, assisted others to teach with impact. Such is the case at Llanidloes High School.

#### Case study: Llanidloes High School

Llanidloes High School is situated in a rural mid-Wales and has over 500 pupils. The school’s case study, *Enhancing Teaching and Learning at Llanidloes High School*, written by Head Teacher, Daniel Owen, is a strong example of how the use of data empowered their teachers and leaders to experience success, one student at a-time.

*“We began our CLARITY journey with Lyn Sharratt from the strong foundation of Parameter #1. There was and is a strong, caring ethos and commitment to the principle that all students can succeed given the right support and teaching. Staff were eager to improve their expertise and were open to requesting and receiving support if they were experiencing difficulties with individual students.*

*When designing our co-constructed data wall, we used value-added data - measuring pupils’ current performance against expected performance using baseline data - to identify trends and establish a target group. Our aggregated subject data masked underperformance of our boys. Our disaggregated data was a complete surprise to staff.*

- 8 of 12 underperforming pupils in Year 11 English Language Course were boys (bottom 10%).
- 12 of 20 underperforming pupils in Year 11 Maths were boys (bottom 10%).
- 12 of 19 underperforming pupils in Year 11 Science (Biology) were boys (bottom 10%).

*Consequently, staff feedback, pupil reports, standardised test scores and wider intelligence on individual pupils were used to finalise our target group of boys from different year groups, including the Year 11 cohort.*

*“There are many lessons to be learned when we bring together data sources that are complex through processes that are simple.”*

*All staff agreed to address underperformance using the following four Parameters (Sharratt, 2019):*

- #1. Shared beliefs and understandings among all staff*
- #5. Early and on-going intervention*
- #6. A case management approach to monitoring student progress*
- #14. Shared responsibility and accountability*

*Regular case management meetings (CMMs) made use of the data wall in the staff room, a private area, to identify pupils in need of support. Student work samples were the focus of the case management meeting time, using the CMM template (Sharratt, 2019, QR Code for Web Resource #6) and the Follow-up Meeting template (Sharratt, 2019, QR Code for Web Resource #7). Staff worked closely together to identify each pupil’s needs and to tailor support through planning for differentiated instruction as a result of the CMMs. This process was supported by:*

- *sharing with the whole staff, through ‘rich’ conversations and a sharepoint site, what worked with each individual student.*
- *reviewing assessment data from across the curriculum.*
- *implementing immediate triaging strategies.*
- *agreeing to developing longer term plans.*

*Senior leaders were careful to establish a culture conducive to courageous, intentional acknowledgement that there were problems that needed to be addressed with individual pupils, making use of the operating norms and protocols to support the co-construction of data walls and the collaboration at CMMs (Sharratt, 2019).*

*All staff actively promoted:*

- *A culture of shared responsibility and accountability for every learner within the school, ensuring all staff knew where each learner was compared to where they needed to be throughout the school year. This objective was met by establishing a data wall (putting FACES on the data); initiating regular case management meetings; co-creating tailored support plans for the targeted group of boys; and ensuring implementation of research-driven teaching and learning approaches in all classrooms.*
- *Alignment between system, school and classroom priorities through coherent evidence-based planning at all levels.*
- *Strong support for and development of staff to improve assessment and instruction through Clarity practices (Sharratt, 2019)*

*The agreed upon parameters and follow-on approaches were incorporated into the School Development Plan and implemented at the earliest opportunity. Staff developed a shared understanding that all students, including challenging boys from farming families, can achieve high standards given the right time and proper support.*

*All teachers were clear concerning our belief (P. #1) that each and every member of the team can learn to teach literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills to a high standard, given sufficient time and support.*

Figure 4: Evidence of Collective Efficacy



Photographs reproduced with permission by Daniel Owen, Head Teacher, Llanidloes High School, Wales.

### ***Outcomes realised!***

At Llanidloes High School, as in many other secondary and primary schools across Wales, there is a growing commitment to using evidenced-based research to shape how we teach and to be able to articulate why we teach the way we do (Parameter #1). Sharratt's CLARITY research increasingly informed and influenced our classroom practices (Parameters #3 and #13).

Case management meetings that have taken place have proven popular with staff who are happy to openly share struggles and solutions (Parameter #6). This use of data through student work samples has helped forge a supportive learning culture, strong professional dialogue, and a commitment to persevere until the underperformance data of these boys is finally addressed, regardless of how many failed attempts are needed before meeting with success (Parameters #1, #6, and #14). The impact of this 'precision-in-practice' CLARITY approach is better exemplified through the following CMM success story.

### ***An example of impact***

One young man in Year 11 from an agricultural background was causing staff considerable concern. His friendship group outside of school was adversely affecting his attitude, engagement and attendance.

A case management meeting was held using hard data to establish baseline performance. Through professional dialogue at ongoing CMMs, staff identified potential levers and teaching strategies to re-engage this pupil. One such lever was this pupil's fascination with horses. It was agreed that staff would trial a tailored timetable that incorporated an Equine Studies (horse care) course with him as the only student enrolled.

Equine Studies lessons were scheduled to occur every day in the hope of maximising his attendance. One member of staff was found with the expertise needed to successfully oversee delivery and assessment of the course. Lessons were based in the quiet environment of the school's learning centre. From the outset, the pupil was excited and engaged. Attendance improved almost immediately.

Over time, the pupil was equipped to work independently under the direct supervision of other staff members, including members of the senior leadership team. During these sessions, the pupil continued to make strong progress. He became sufficiently confident to share his learning with evidence and showed increasing enthusiasm with the wider

staff team and with his peers. His change in attitude, demeanour and attendance was noticeable to all staff within six weeks of the tailored timetable. The young man's smile returned, his confidence grew, and he eventually achieved two graduation-equivalent qualifications in Equine Studies at an A level.

The school helped the pupil find a work experience placement in a well-known, local stable. This developed into a full-time work placement and a career in horse racing.

### ***Student voice demonstrates empowerment***

Recently, this pupil provided the following reflective feedback which really summarised the impact of using data to not only put FACES on the data but also to build the collective efficacy of staff:

*'I found school really hard growing up. It just wasn't for me. I couldn't settle and just wanted to be outside around horses where I belonged. But other pupils didn't see where I was coming from and treated me differently which I felt was unfair.'*

*'The Equine Studies (horse care) course I completed in school helped me a lot. It helped me get to the end of school successfully as it took my mind off what everyone else was thinking about me. It was something I was passionate about. The course will one day have helped me reach my dream of getting my own yard once I have finished racing.'*

*'I left school and, with the help of the school, went straight into horse racing and haven't looked back. I race every Sunday and have two rides this weekend so am hoping for a double win.'*

*'Racing is a different type of world as all the jockeys are like one big family. Everyone gets along, often have similar backgrounds to me. We are there to help each other.'*

*'In the future, I am hoping to become a champion jockey and have set my new goal on winning the Grand National, Gold Cup and a string of winners in the JP McManus colours.'*

*The case management meeting process allowed staff to collaborate and co-construct this student's needs that resulted in a very successful strategy to renew the student's enthusiasm for learning and for taking risks to follow his passion.'*

### “Student work sample scrutiny” is data

During conversations at the data wall” and subsequent CMMs, student work samples led staff to identify the needs of each student presented and delve into the FACE behind the work sample, as shown in the case study. Student work is THE critical source of data. Work sample scrutiny must be collaborative, collegial and developmental, focused on a student’s progress and aimed at improving approaches to assessment that informs the very next minute of instruction.

Work sample scrutiny during CMMs helped these secondary staff members to:

- evaluate student standards and progress;
- determine the extent to which pupils receive feedback that enables them to understand precisely how to improve;
- evaluate the impact of feedback on pupil progress;
- prioritise curriculum areas of focus;
- identify individual staff development priorities;
- share good practice;
- monitor implementation of the school assessment policy; and
- identify how practice could be productively adapted to address workload issues.

Staff at Llanidloes High School intend to embed case management practice by:

- increasing the frequency of CMMs at every year level;
- re-creating the data wall for an updated target group;
- communicating broadly the successful teaching strategies recorded at CMMs;
- reshaping “green card” lessons to focus on classes attended by the target group (both modelling successful practice and authentic relationships, and inviting supportive feedback where staff are struggling to engage students);
- using work scrutiny days (CMMs) to focus on analysing targeted pupils’ work across the curriculum to identify and share strong practice.

They also have reached consensus on their next focus, Parameter #7, by:

- creating a coherent, research-driven teaching and learning strategy. At a macro level, this will underpin their new curriculum planning. At a micro level, it will help them shape effective targeted intervention and support for their target group;

- sharing the professional learning within and beyond the school through regular professional learning briefings (teachers teaching teachers!) and a new curriculum professional learning website for Wales.

### Leadership lessons when using data to learn

Leadership to do this work is about causing positive movement in individuals, schools, and systems. Stated more dramatically, leadership stimulates large numbers of people to put in the energy to get better results even when, at the outset, they are not motivated to do so. *This is the magic of FACES* (Sharratt & Fullan, 2022).

Data to inform “learning for all” is complex and sophisticated; however, we have labelled “using the group (of early adopters) to move the (whole) group” “simplicity” (Sharratt & Fullan, 2022). There are many lessons to be learned when we bring together data sources that are complex through processes that are simple. For example, Marisa Matthys, Principal, Melbourne Archdiocese Diocese Catholic Schools, Eastern Region, reports that through Sharratt’s CLARITY work and use of the 14 Parameters to guide their network and school improvement work, they have learned:

- Empowered teams are critical to achieving success.
- Whatever the focus of the data, it must be a whole school approach.
- Uninterrupted consistent planning must be timetabled for each year level of teachers facilitated by “knowledgeable others” to support improved pedagogical knowledge.
- Work with key “knowledgeable others”/mentors on staff and in the system provides support and critical friendship.
- Be consistent, persistent, insistent about ensuring quality teaching in every classroom.
- Interrogate your data to establish a clear focus, an achievable goal and a documented, clearly communicated plan.
- No matter what educational distractions or voices for deviation there are, stay the course.
- Have one clear focus. All other areas of the curriculum will benefit from the robust work in the key improvement strategy.
- Utilise the 14 Parameters to constantly audit and evaluate the effectiveness of your plan and recalibrate when necessary.
- Clearly communicate the “WHY” through the alignment between the research, the School Improvement Plan and any introduced structures, strategies, and expectations.
- Celebrate all achievements!



These lessons sum up how we use data, practically, to impact students' learning outcomes and to build teachers' capacity to teach ALL learners.

Systems and schools can simplify their work and improve their outcomes by adopting a singular and sustained baseline or framework like the 14 Parameters upon which to build incremental steps to system and school improvement. By incorporating both cognitive and affective measures of student work and by "being" present through *collaboration + co-construction*, systems and schools can reach a sustainable point of *collective efficacy* as this case study has shown.

Behind every data dot and digit is a FACE waiting to be revealed. Data today is instruction tomorrow making this precision-in-practice our "forever work." Analogous to our notion of "Putting FACES on our Data," is a quote from Michelangelo, 1475-1564,

In every block of marble, I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and action. I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it. (in Sharratt, 2019, Introduction)

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