Leading for Lasting Impact: Visionary Strategies to Plan, Scale, and Sustain Change in Education

Dr. Scott Morrison

Objective

Participants will connect the dots between their....
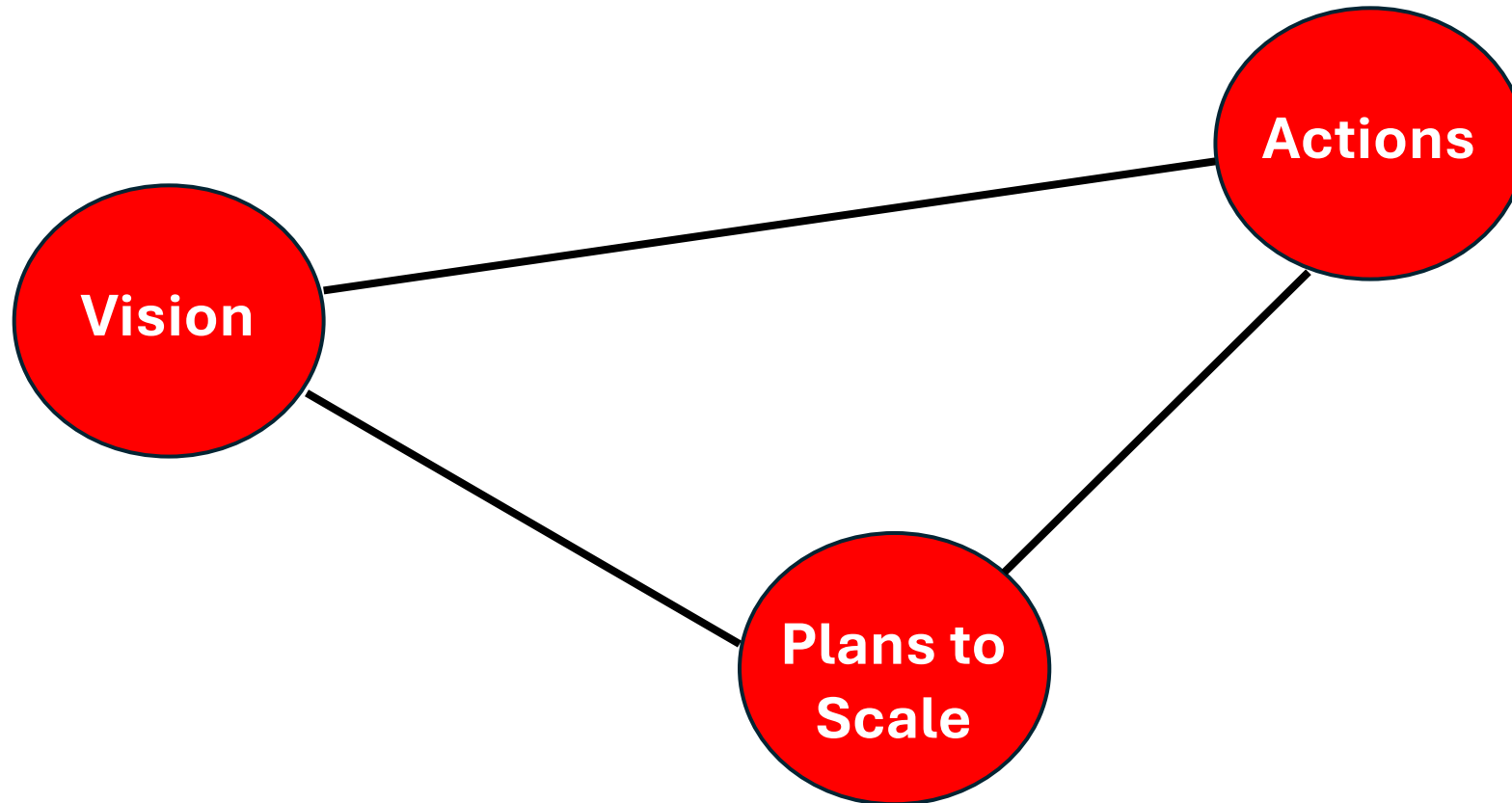
Vision

A clear and inspiring statement that outlines the desired outcomes for a division.

Sample Vision Statements

Calgary Board of Education

To ensure each student learns to their full potential and develops the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to thrive in a complex and interconnected world.

Edmonton Catholic Schools

To provide a Catholic education that inspires students to learn and prepares them to live fully and to serve God in one another.

Lethbridge School Division

To inspire and support students to achieve their full potential and become responsible, contributing members of society.

Common Language

- Vision → Priorities → Initiatives

- Vision drives priorities

- Priorities are achieved with initiatives

Vision, Priorities, Initiatives

- Can you draw a straight line from your vision...

  ...to priorities?

  ...to initiatives?

- Do you do it at every opportunity?

- Is there more than one employee group advancing initiatives?
  - division office personnel
  - administration
  - classroom teachers
  - school-based specialists
  - educational assistants

CBE Vision: To ensure each student learns to their full potential and develops the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to thrive in a complex and interconnected world.

Vision: Excellence in learning

   Priority: Reading at grade level

      Initiative: Early Reading Intervention (K-2)

      Initiative: Enhanced Reading (3-9)

      Initiative: Before, During, After (K-12)

Vision - Excellence in Learning
Priority - Reading at Grade Level

Enhanced Reading (3-9)

Before During After (K-12)

Early Reading Intervention (K-2)

Touchstones

- Initiatives are touchstones that demonstrate you are focused on priorities and vision.

- Touchstones help you manage attention.

- Managing attention helps manage meaning.

Fewer Priorities, More Initiatives

There is an inverse relationship between the number of priorities and the likelihood of success.

Too many priorities, too few initiatives, and too little PD time devoted to initiatives.

Initiatives address complex priorities, which are often wicked problems.

Wicked Problems

"Wicked problems are problems that are so complex that you have to be highly intelligent and well informed just to be undecided about them" (Peter, 1982).

Beware the Single Solution

A host of small , diverse initiatives to address a priority may better than a single, one-dimensional approach.

Linear Accelerators use X-rays to treat tumours.

Staff Wellness...a Wicked Problem

13 Factors of Workplace Wellness

1. Organizational culture
2. Psychological support
3. Clear leadership and expectations
4. Civility and respect
5. Psychological demands
6. Growth and development
7. Recognition and reward
8. Involvement and influence
9. Workload management
10. Engagement
11. Balance
12. Psychological protection
13. Protection of physical safety

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services, 2025

The single solution will not address staff wellness.

3 initiatives addressing 3 factors per year?

Vision Test

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC
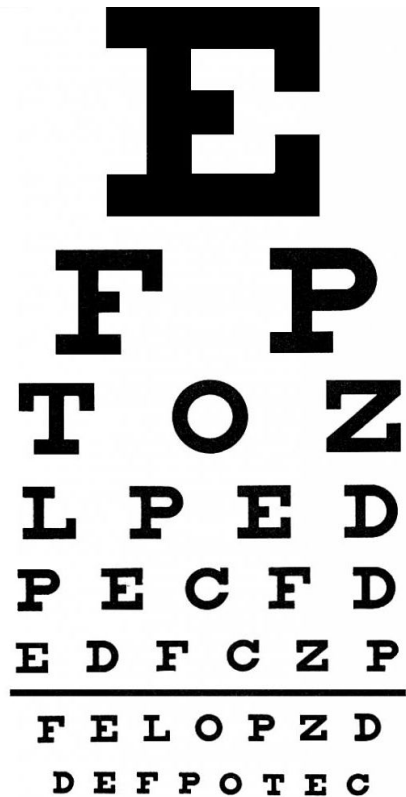
What is one of your top priorities that addresses an element of your vision?

Which initiatives demonstrate you're committed to your top priority? Do you have at least three?

Addressing the Complexity Conundrum

1. Connect priorities & initiatives to vision
2. Reduce the priorities
3. Increase the initiatives
4. Advance initiatives with more...
   - embedded time for implementation
   - accountability for implementation
   - embedded time for reflection
   - sharing evidence of success
   - celebration of success
5. Schedule professional learning time, and spread implementation over the course of your four-year plan
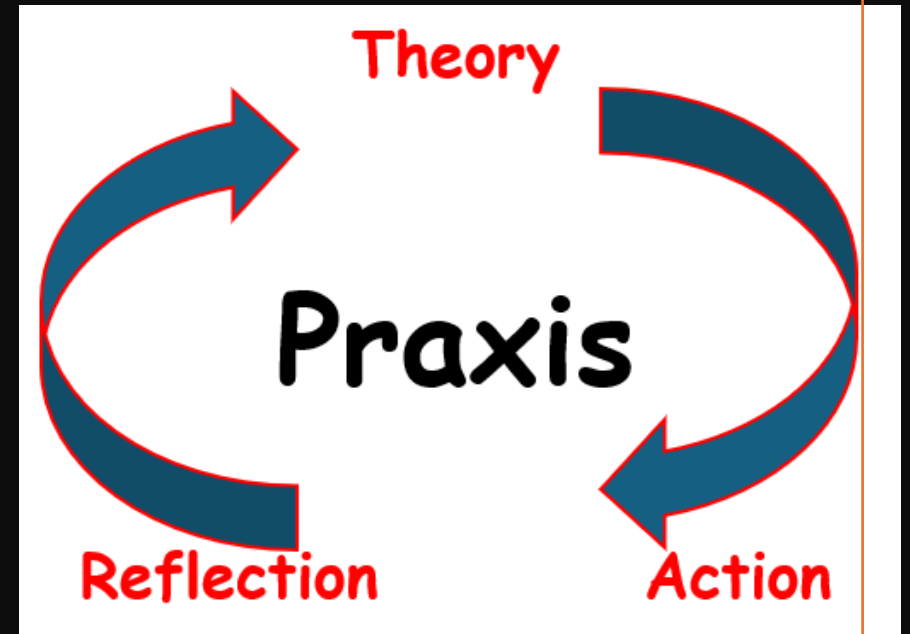6. Communicate the implementation plan
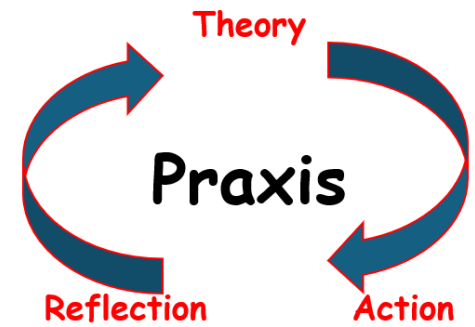
Get Practical

Analogy – Is inclusion an Illusion?

Is your four-year plan an illusion?

Praxis

Ensure those implementing an initiative have time to engage in a cycle of praxis.

Praxis

- Theory – What's the philosophy behind the initiative? How long do admin or teachers need to learn the theory? Should the sessions to learn the theory be spaced apart.

- Action – What actions do admin or teachers need to engage in after learning the theory? What accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure action is taking place.

- Reflection – How often are admin and teachers given time to gather together to enhance their understanding of theory and engage in reflection on practice?

How Much Learning Time do Admin Have?

- Assumption: Train-the-trainer at admin meetings
- 10 meetings, 5 one-hour blocks per meeting
- 50 one-hour blocks per year

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
9am	**Administrivia**									
10am										
11am										
1pm										
2pm										
3pm										

One Initiative…at a Minimum

- One-hour of train-the-trainer with admin
- Time for action over the course of the year
- Three one-hour sessions for reflection on action/implementation
  - Note – Reflection sessions always review and expand theory while reflecting on action

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
9am	**Administrivia**									
10am	Initiative1 Theory	*A c t i o n* →	Initiative1 Reflection	*A c t i o n* →		Initiative1 Reflection	*A c t i o n* →		Initiative1 Reflection	
11am										
1pm										
2pm										
3pm										

Mapping 6 "Whole of Division" Initiatives

- 6 initiatives with time for theory, action, and reflection
- 24 of 50 admin meeting segments.
- But we need to scale...how much learning time do teachers have?

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
9am	Administrivia									
10am	Initiative1 Theory		Initiative1 Reflection			Initiative1 Reflection				Initiative1 Reflection
11am	Initiative 2 Theory		Initiative 2 Reflection			Initiative 2 Reflection				Initiative 2 Reflection
1pm	Initiative 3 Theory		Initiative 3 Reflection			Initiative 3 Reflection				Initiative 3 Reflection
2pm	Initiative 4 Theory		Initiative 4 Reflection			Initiative 4 Reflection				Initiative 4 Reflection
3pm	Initiative 5 Theory	Initiative 6 Theory	Initiative 5 Reflection	Initiative 6 Reflection		Initiative 5 Reflection	Initiative 6 Reflection		Initiative 6 Reflection	Initiative 5 Reflection

How Much Learning Time do Teachers Have?

- 8 professional development days
- 6 one-hour blocks per day
- 48 one-hour blocks per year
- Scale from administrative meetings providing time for theory, action, reflection

	PD 1	PD 2	PD 3	PD 4	PD 5	PD 6	PD 7	PD 8
9am								
10am								
11am								
1pm								
2pm								
3pm								

How Much Learning Time do Teachers Have?

- Mapping 3 "whole of division" initiatives for teachers

	PD 1	PD 2	PD 3	PD 4	PD 5	PD 6	PD 7	PD 8
9am	**Initiative1 Theory**		**Initiative1 Reflection**		**Initiative1 Reflection**		**Initiative1 Reflection**	
10am	**Initiative 2 Theory**		**Initiative 2 Reflection**		**Initiative 2 Reflection**		**Initiative 2 Reflection**	
11am	**Initiative 3 Theory**		**Initiative 3 Reflection**		**Initiative 3 Reflection**		**Initiative 3 Reflection**	
1pm								
2pm								
3pm								

- Why only three "whole of division" initiatives?

... we reserve time for "whole of school" priorities

- Mapping 3 "whole of division" initiatives for teachers
- Mapping 3 "whole of school" initiatives for teachers
- 24 of 48 one-hour blocks used

	PD 1	PD 2	PD 3	PD 4	PD 5	PD 6	PD 7	PD 8
9am	Initiative1 Theory		Initiative1 Reflection		Initiative1 Reflection		Initiative1 Reflection	
10am	Initiative 2 Theory		Initiative 2 Reflection		Initiative 2 Reflection		Initiative 2 Reflection	
11am	Initiative 3 Theory		Initiative 3 Reflection		Initiative 3 Reflection		Initiative 3 Reflection	
1pm	School Initiative 1 Theory		School Initiative 1 Reflection		School Initiative 1 Reflection		School Initiative 1 Reflection	
2pm	School Initiative 2 Theory		School Initiative 2 Reflection		School Initiative 2 Reflection		School Initiative 2 Reflection	
3pm	School Initiative 3 Theory		School Initiative 3 Reflection		School Initiative 3 Reflection		School Initiative 3 Reflection	

...and we might want more time for theory

- Mapping 3 "whole of division" initiatives for teachers
- Mapping 3 "whole of school" initiatives for teachers
- 30/48 sessions

	PD 1	PD 2	PD 3	PD 4	PD 5	PD 6	PD 7	PD 8
9am	Initiative1 Theory	Initiative1 Theory	Initiative1 Reflection		Initiative1 Reflection		Initiative1 Reflection	
10am	Initiative 2 Theory	Initiative 2 Theory	Initiative 2 Reflection		Initiative 2 Reflection		Initiative 2 Reflection	
11am	Initiative 3 Theory	Initiative 3 Theory	Initiative 3 Reflection		Initiative 3 Reflection		Initiative 3 Reflection	
1pm	School Initiative 1 Theory	School Initiative 1 Theory	School Initiative 1 Reflection		School Initiative 1 Reflection		School Initiative 1 Reflection	
2pm	School Initiative 2 Theory	School Initiative 2 Theory	School Initiative 2 Reflection		School Initiative 2 Reflection		School Initiative 2 Reflection	
3pm	School Initiative 3 Theory	School Initiative 3 Theory	School Initiative 3 Reflection		School Initiative 3 Reflection		School Initiative 3 Reflection	

...we still have room for more initiatives

- 18 one-hour sessions remaining
- But we **reserve time** for emergent issues and addressing implementation concerns
- What about addressing our other priorities? We need time for more initiatives!

	PD 1	PD 2	PD 3	PD 4	PD 5	PD 6	PD 7	PD 8
9am	Initiative1 Theory	Initiative1 Theory		Reflection T1		Reflection T1		Reflection T1
10am	Initiative 2 Theory	Initiative 2 Theory		Reflection T2		Reflection T2		Reflection T2
11am	Initiative 3 Theory	Initiative 3 Theory		Reflection T3		Reflection T3		Reflection T3
1pm	School Initiative 1 Theory	School Initiative 1 Theory		Reflection LI1		Reflection LI1		Reflection LI1
2pm	School Initiative 2 Theory	School Initiative 2 Theory		Reflection LI2		Reflection LI2		Reflection LI2
3pm	School Initiative 3 Theory	School Initiative 3 Theory		Reflection LI3		Reflection LI3		Reflection LI3

The Beauty of *Ad Experimentum*

- AKA: Pilot Projects

- Fewer admin, teachers, & students involved

- Addresses initiative overload and initiative fatigue

- Less risky
  - Ask for volunteers...they're not grumpy
  - Volunteers are problem solvers, not problem finders
  - If we fail, we fail small-scale
  - When we decide to scale division-wide...
    - Worked out kinks
    - Teachers teach teachers
    - Gamaliel Effect

- Empty blocks = time for every pilot group to engage in praxis cycle (PD 3, 5, 7)

- Four-Year Plan: Success of pilot projects and overall priority load determines when we scale division-wide.

Don't Miss The Point!

- Your time is not like that of the example.

- Mapping the learning time available for admin/teachers is the key.

- Mapping…
  - focuses your energy and resources
  - demonstrates your time limitations
  - demonstrates the need to abandon priorities, delay implementing priorities, or to advance priorities ad experimentum.
  - must be done over four years, not one.

Prove You're Vision-Focused!

Vision

Priority

Initiative   *Initiative*   *Initiative*
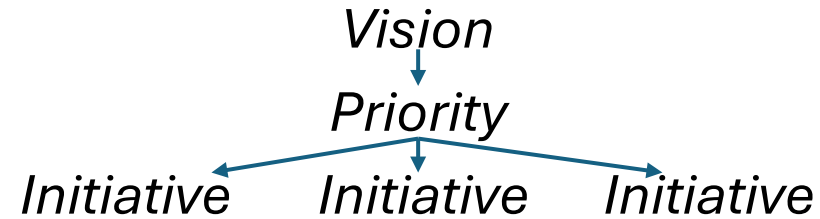
The key initiatives must be in place and be "seen" to be in place.

Theory

Praxis

Reflection   Action
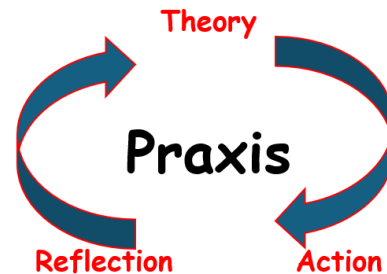
Evidence of Success

Celebration of Success

"The management of attention is the management of meaning." (Bennis, 2000).

Key Messages

Budget
Results
Enrollment

Issue: *What are the messages about*		
Context: *Who uses the key messages and when?*		
Key Message: *The main message stated in one sentence.*		
Supporting Detail: *The first supporting detail stated in one sentence.*	**Supporting Detail:** *The second supporting detail stated in one sentence.*	**Supporting Detail:** The third *supporting detail stated in one sentence.*

Vision Messages

Vision	**Issue:** Learning
	Context: Administrators and trustees can use these messages to show we're focused on our learning vision.
Priority	**Key Message:** Our division is focused on ensuring every student can read at or above grade level.

Initiatives		
Supporting Detail: Early Reading Intervention Programs for K-2	**Supporting Detail:** Enhanced Reading Program for 3-9	**Supporting Detail:** Before, During, and After Strategies in the regular classroom for K-12.

Three "Whole of Division" Initiatives Mapped
...not an illusion

	PD 1	PD 2	PD 3	PD 4	PD 5	PD 6	PD 7	PD 8
9am	**Early Reading Intervention**	**Early Reading Intervention**		**Early Reading Intervention**		**Early Reading Intervention**		**Early Reading Intervention**
10am	**Enhanced Reading**	**Enhanced Reading**		**Enhanced Reading**		**Enhanced Reading**		**Enhanced Reading**
11am	**Before, During, After**	**Before, During, After**		**Before, During, After**		**Before, During, After**		**Before, During, After**
1pm								
2pm								
3pm								

Evidence and Celebration of Success

Factors of Workplace Wellness

- Clear leadership expectations
- Growth and development
- Recognition and reward – celebrate success
- Psychological support – celebration/affirmation

STRUCTURED LISTENING

Focus Question:	Facilitator:
Share an insight on the ideas presented.	Who has the most years in CASS?

Reflect		What do I have to say about this issue? Silently develop a response and enter on _personalized slide_. (4-minutes)
Collect		What do others have to say about this issue? Share without interruption, comment, or discussion. (1-minute each)
Consolidate		Open discussion. Identify areas of convergence & develop one big idea to share. Enter the idea on the slide following your table slide. (10-minutes...or more if time permits).

STRUCTURED LISTENING ROLES

Facilitator – Ensure the process is followed and there are no interruptions or interjections during the collect stage.

Timekeeper – Selected by the facilitator. Display a smartphone stopwatch to ensure the time limits are adhered to:

- Reflect-4min
- Collect – 1min
- Consolidate – 10 min or more if time permits

- **Recorder** – Selected by the facilitator. Enter the big idea on the slide following your table slide.