Shifting Culture and Practice for Accurate, Ethical, and Equitable Grading

Diocese of Erie
2024

www.rickwormeli.com
rick@rickwormeli.
onmicrosoft.com
@rickwormeli2

For Further Conversation

- Why do you want to reform assessment/grading practices in the Diocese?
- When it comes to reporting student learning, why do you think it's okay to impose on teachers' autonomy, i.e. shape their thinking and practices even when they don't want to do so initially?
- What will you accept as evidence grading practices are accurate, ethical, and equitable?
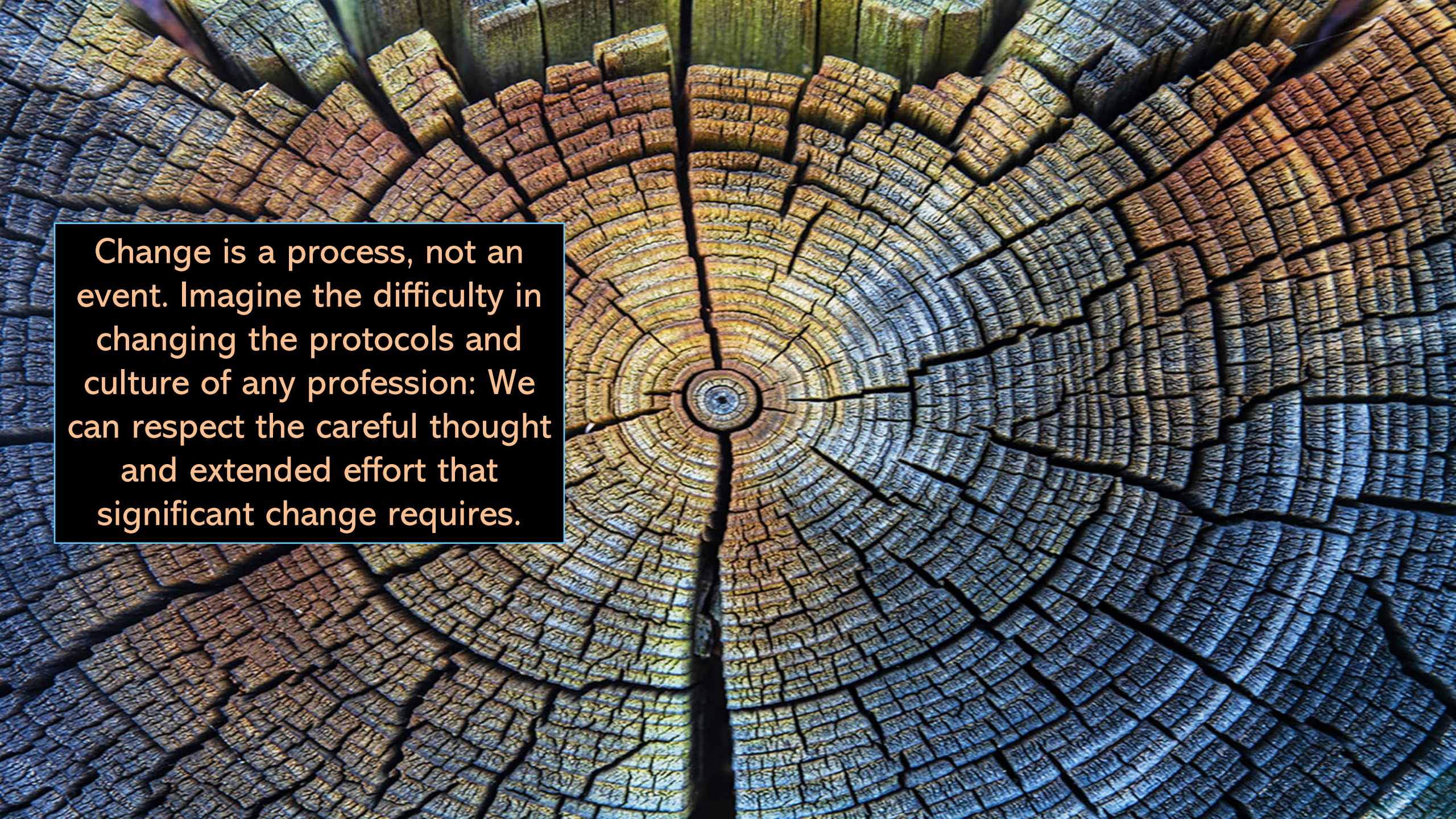
**Get Candid and Commit to your Purpose**

Reminders

Change is a process, not an event. Imagine the difficulty in changing the protocols and culture of any profession: We can respect the careful thought and extended effort that significant change requires.

You don't have to have all the answers, nor do you need specific experience with the path(s) ahead. Chances are good that we'll be in unfamiliar territory for years to come.

You.
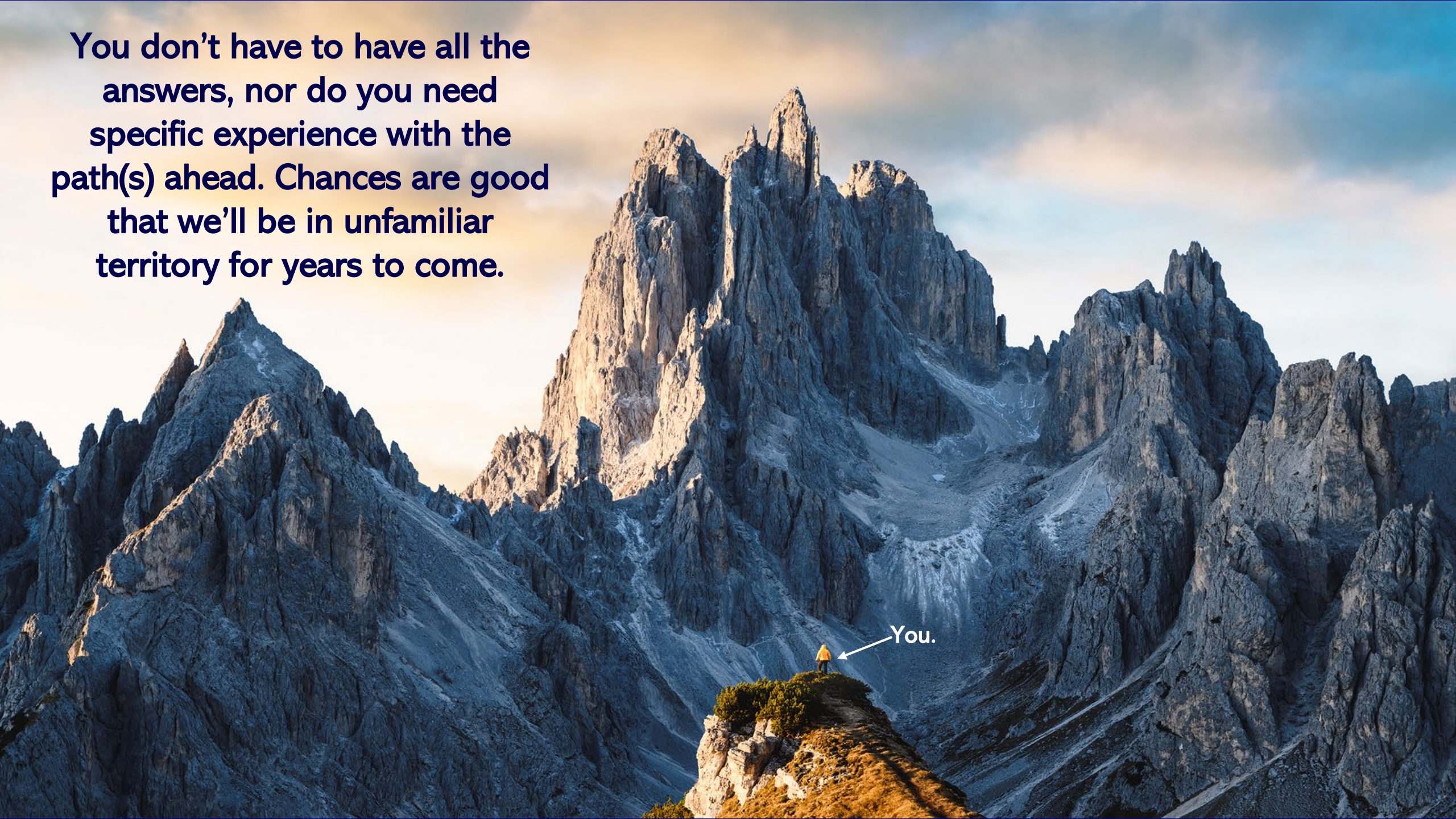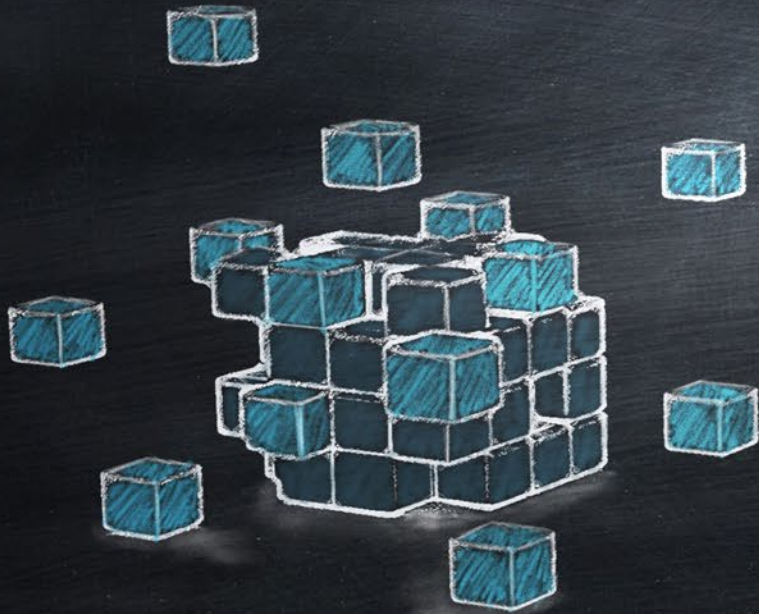
Bad news: There is no one, highly effective template for grading reform that works in every school or district.

Good news: We have principles and actions that tend to have great and positive effect on grading reform.

Teachers often to do not get a lot of tools or insights into accurate, ethical, and equitable grading in schools of teacher preparation. Until that's changed, it's up to in-service training to provide it.

Our assessment and grading practices reveal our true teaching colors. They imbue almost every facet of our instruction with students. They are a big part of our identity as educators.

We are often irrational. When it comes to grading reform, logic and rational arguments can take us only so far. We will have to work with the emotional side of reform, appealing to the lived experience and interpretation of that experience within teachers and the larger community.

"People don't resist change. They resist being changed!"
  - Toll, p. 22, quoting Peter Senge

Become informed. Effective cultural shift in schools happens best when superintendents, principals, assistant principals, team leaders, and department chairs are knowledgeable in the practices they are asking teachers to implement.

Education is a moral, ethical profession. Absent a moral imperative nothing in education changes (Doug Reeves). Aligning with our professional ethics summons courage of conviction – and the stamina needed to see our way forward.

Sometimes we are challenged by parents, pundits, and policy-makers telling us how to grade, but it's not based on modern thinking or effective practice. To what degree, then, do we allow others with no training in assessment and grading to tell us what to do?

Ethics in the Legal Profession: Lawyers, paralegals and other employees of the legal profession are bound to a general code of ethics. A few of these governing ethics include:

- Confidentiality - Lawyers must maintain their clients' confidence at all times.

- Competence - Legal professionals must represent their clients with a high level of competence.

- Professional Courtesy - Lawyers must treat their colleagues with fairness and courtesy.

- https://examples.yourdictionary.com/code-of-ethics-examples.html

Ethics in the Medical Profession: The American Medical Association imposes a code of ethics on physicians. It addresses everything from interpersonal relationships with other staff members to information on patient care. For instance:

- Trust - Doctors must instill a sense of trust between themselves and their patients.

- Do No Harm - Doctors cannot engage in any activity that would cause harm to their patients.

- Privacy - Doctors cannot share the details of their patients' medical treatments or histories without permission.

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that is responsible for studying the principles that govern the conduct of an individual. Ethical principles depend on the situation in which a person encounters and varies from one individual to another. Samples include:

- Acceptance
- Charity
- Respect
- Compassion
- Responsibility

- Empathy
- Equality
- Integrity
- Justice
- Transparency

- https://www.lifepersona.com/20-examples-of-ethics-and-morals-in-daily-life

- Are we concerned about grades becoming so transactional?
- Has the definition of fairness been corrupted?
- Is there unrecognized bias in assessment and grading?
- Do grades reflect compliance with tasks or evidence of learning?
- How do we report lateness and teach responsibility?
- Are we conflating the report of one thing with the report of something else?
- Are assessment formats getting in the way of accurate expressions of proficiency?
- What is the role of agency and student self-monitoring of academic progress?
- What leads to real learning and success for every one of our students?

- If you were the classroom teacher, how would you respond to these concerns? What would your grading practices be?
- To what degree will you allow teachers to believe and act differently than you would, especially if they are using a practice you find ineffective or unethical?

Mindset:
Conceptual Metaphors

Quite often, we've advanced in education by transcending the metaphor that guides our current thinking. No one teaching today thinks of a child as a blank slate anymore (John Locke, *Tabula rasa*).

How are our current metaphors for our craft limiting us, and to which metaphors do we turn in order to be effective?

From Professor Alane Starko in her book, *Creativity in the Classroom*:

- Gutenberg developed the idea of movable type by looking at the way coins were stamped.
- Eli Whitney said he developed the idea for the cotton gin while watching a cat trying to catch a chicken through a fence.

Pasteur began to understand the mechanisms of infection by seeing similarities between infected wounds and fermenting grapes

Einstein used moving trains to gain insight into relationships in time and space.

Okay, Einstein was probably
looking at something more
like this, but you get the idea.

Conceptual Metaphors

Concept: *Ideas are food.*

- All this paper has in it are raw facts, half-baked ideas, and warmed-over theories.
- There are too many facts here for me to digest.
- I just can't swallow that claim.
- Let me stew over that for a while.
- That's food for thought.
- She devoured the book.
- Let's let that idea simmer on the back burner for a while.

Conceptual Metaphors
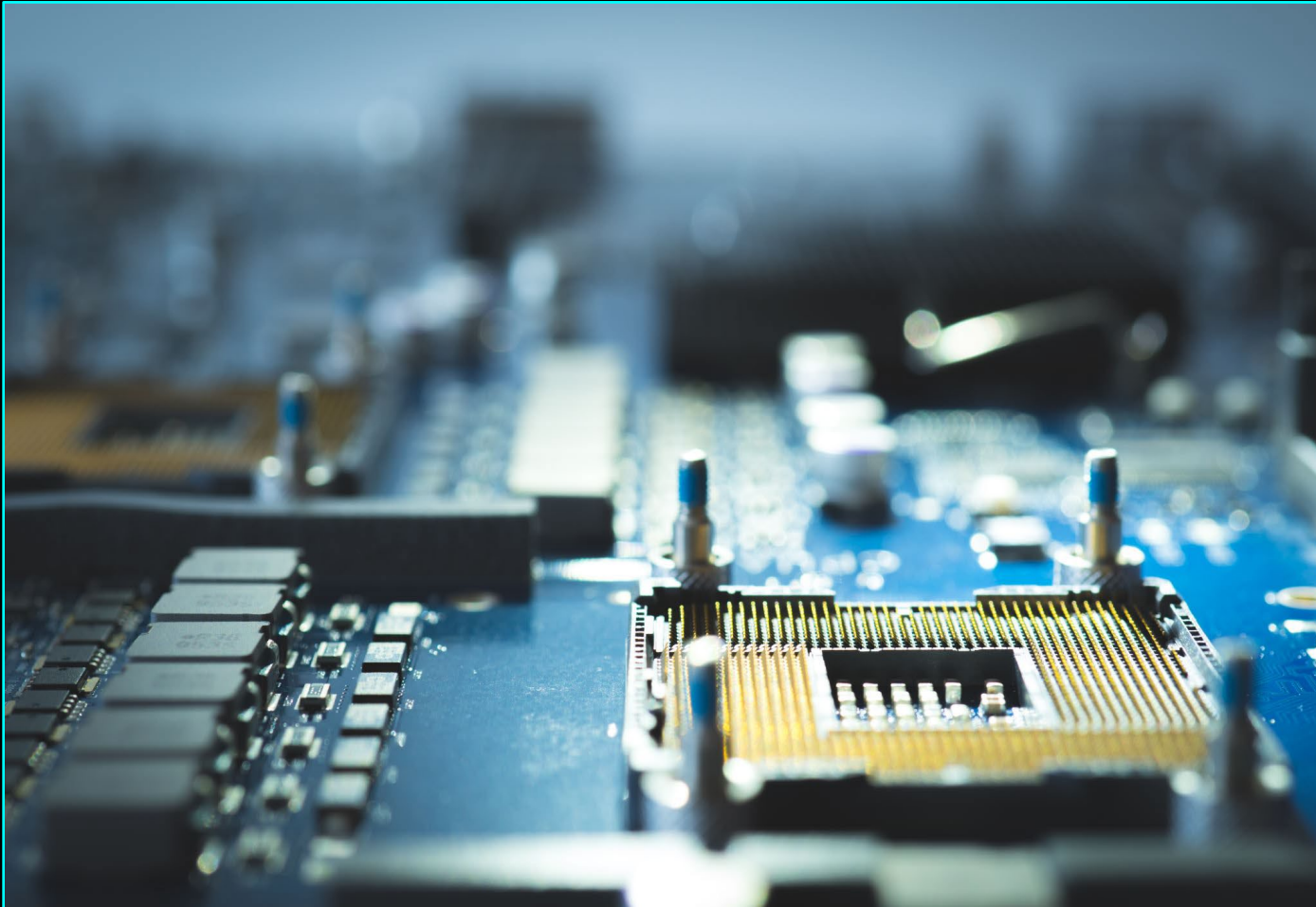
Concept: The mind is a computer

- He is hard-wired for action.
- The interface between the two ideas is…
- I'm going to fry a microchip thinking about that.
- It's a basic leadership sub-routine…
- I can't quite retrieve that memory.
- I haven't yet processed what he said.
- Did you store away what I told you?
- I filed that one under, "Rainy Day Worries."

"…[*B*]y editing the code, to reprogram how cells operate and thereby switch off the cancerous ones. In an interesting example of mixed scientific metaphor, we now hear much talk of using CRISPR—the molecular 'scissors'—to 'edit' genes."

- https://iai.tv/articles/all-science-is-based-in-metaphor-auid-1809

- How did Nelson Mandela change the operative metaphors of South Africa?

- What was the conceptual metaphor that assisted the Nazi Party's rise to power prior to World War II?

- What was the conceptual metaphor used by Henry Ford to develop his revolutionary ideas about assembly-line manufacturing, mass production of affordable automobiles, and paying workers high wages?

- What are the competing conceptual metaphors for dark matter, anti-matter, and what happened during the birth of the universe?

What are the underlying conceptual metaphors?

This reveals that there is a coevolution of our technologies with the metaphors and models that help us make sense of the world. Our technologies, metaphors, and the desiderata for what we consider a good explanation or description are constantly changing, feeding off one another in a kind of mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship…This is why the philosopher of science Ernan McMullin said that, "Science aims at ever more fruitful metaphor and at ever more detailed structure."
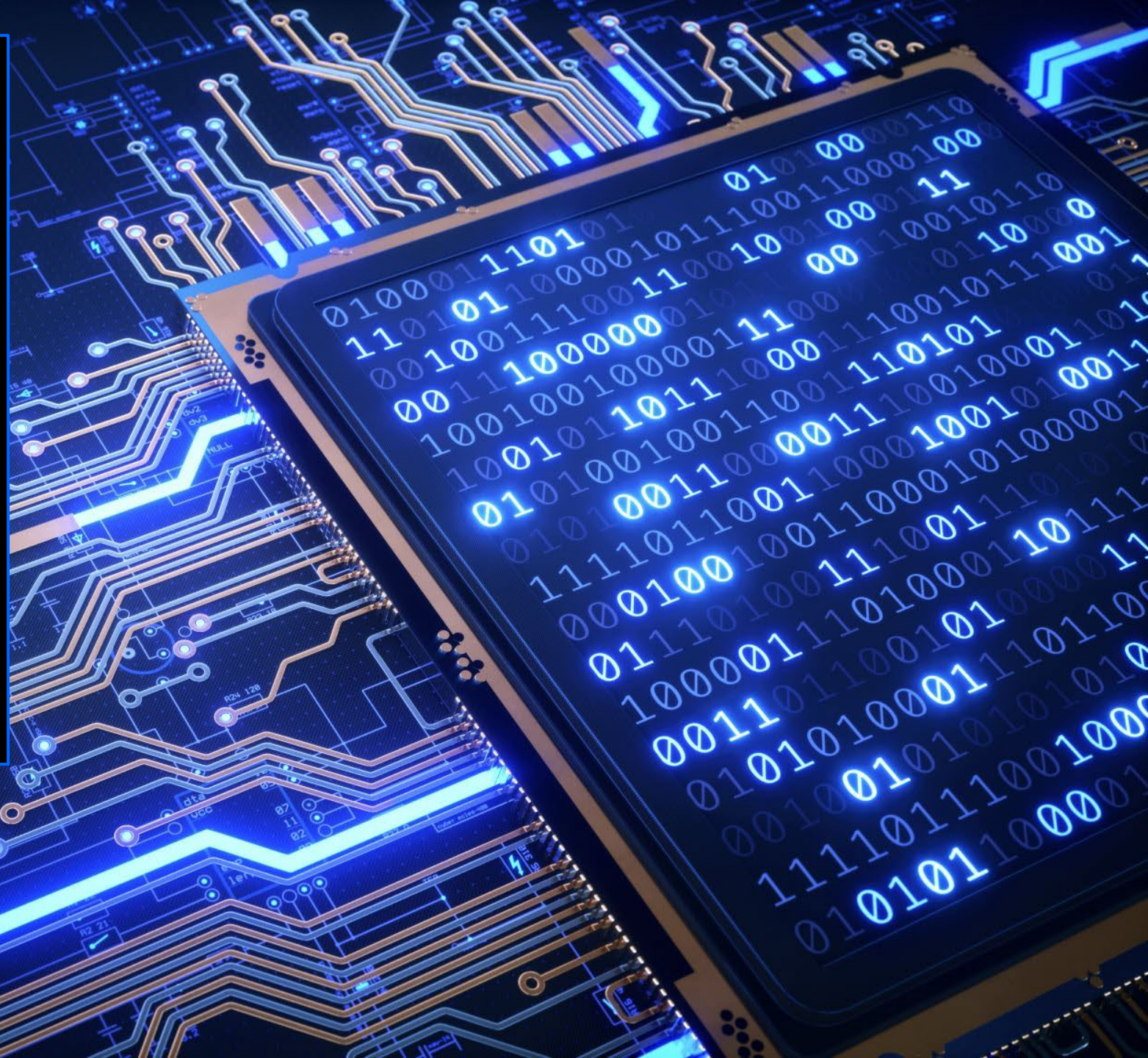
- https://iai.tv/articles/all-science-is-based-in-metaphor-auid-1809

Duncker's
Radiation Problem

Graphics from:
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wiki/File:Duncker%E2%80%99s
_Radiation_Problem.svg
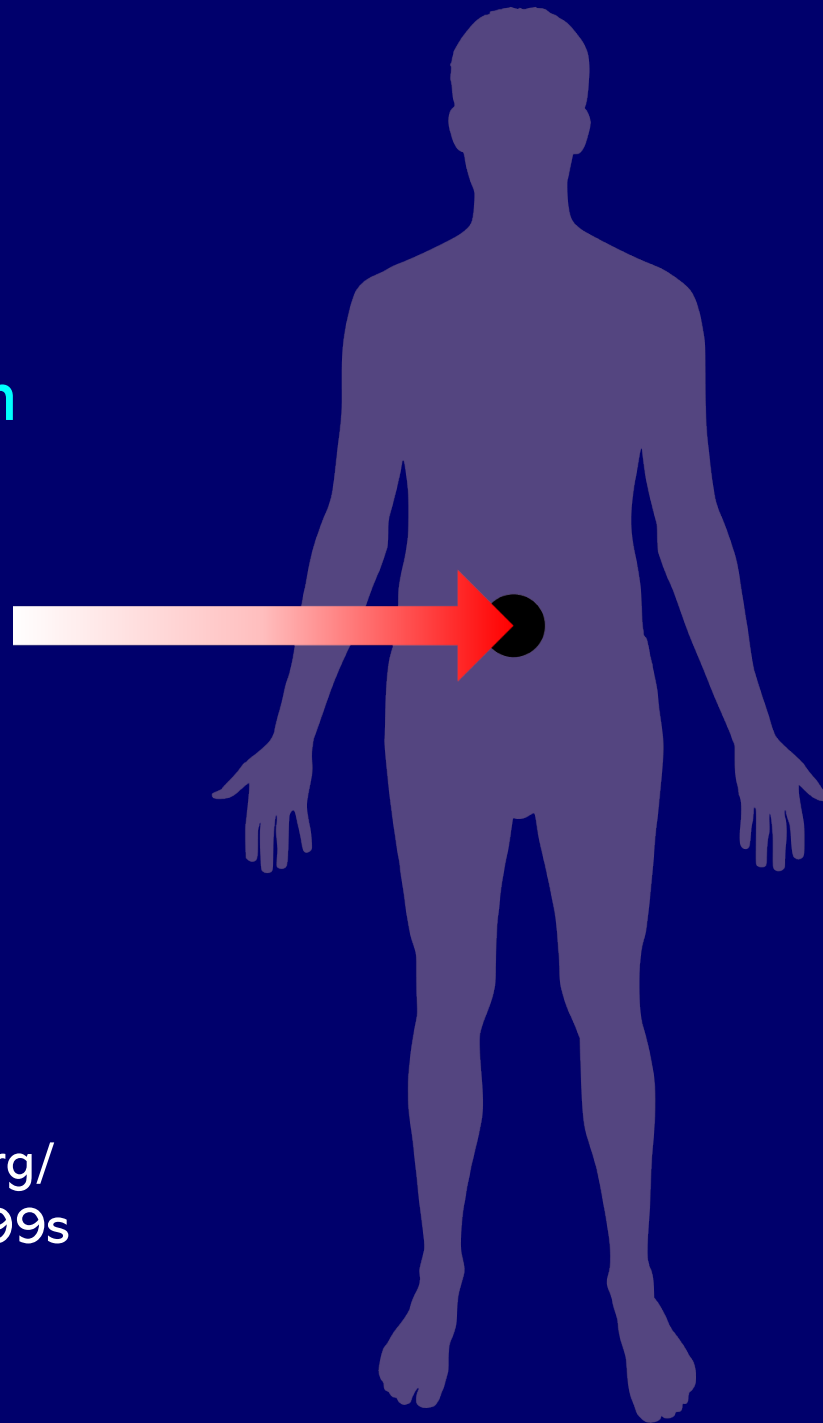
Duncker's Radiation Problem – Convergence Castle Attack Analogy Provides Solution
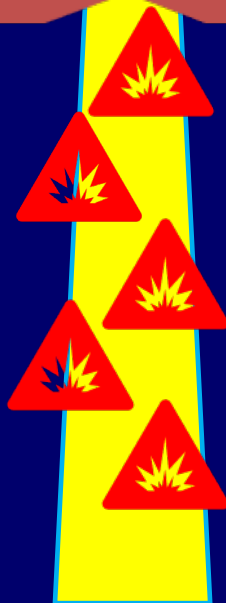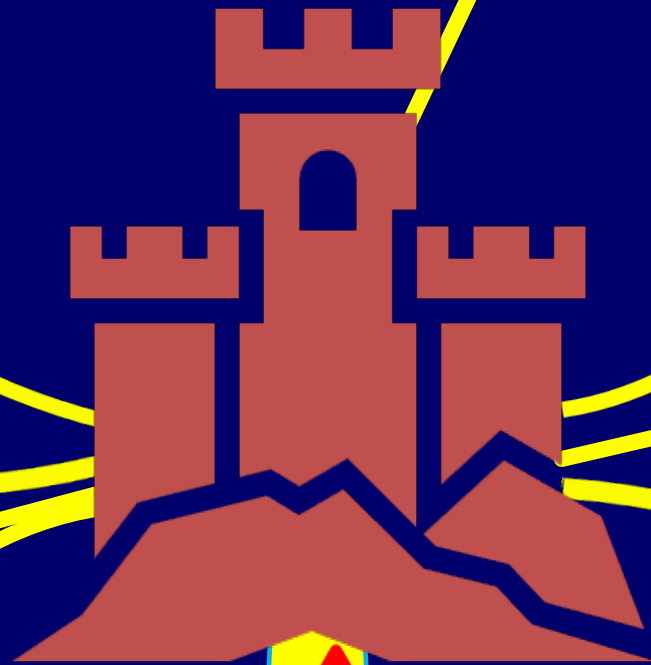
Duncker's
Radiation Problem

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_Radiation_Problem.svg
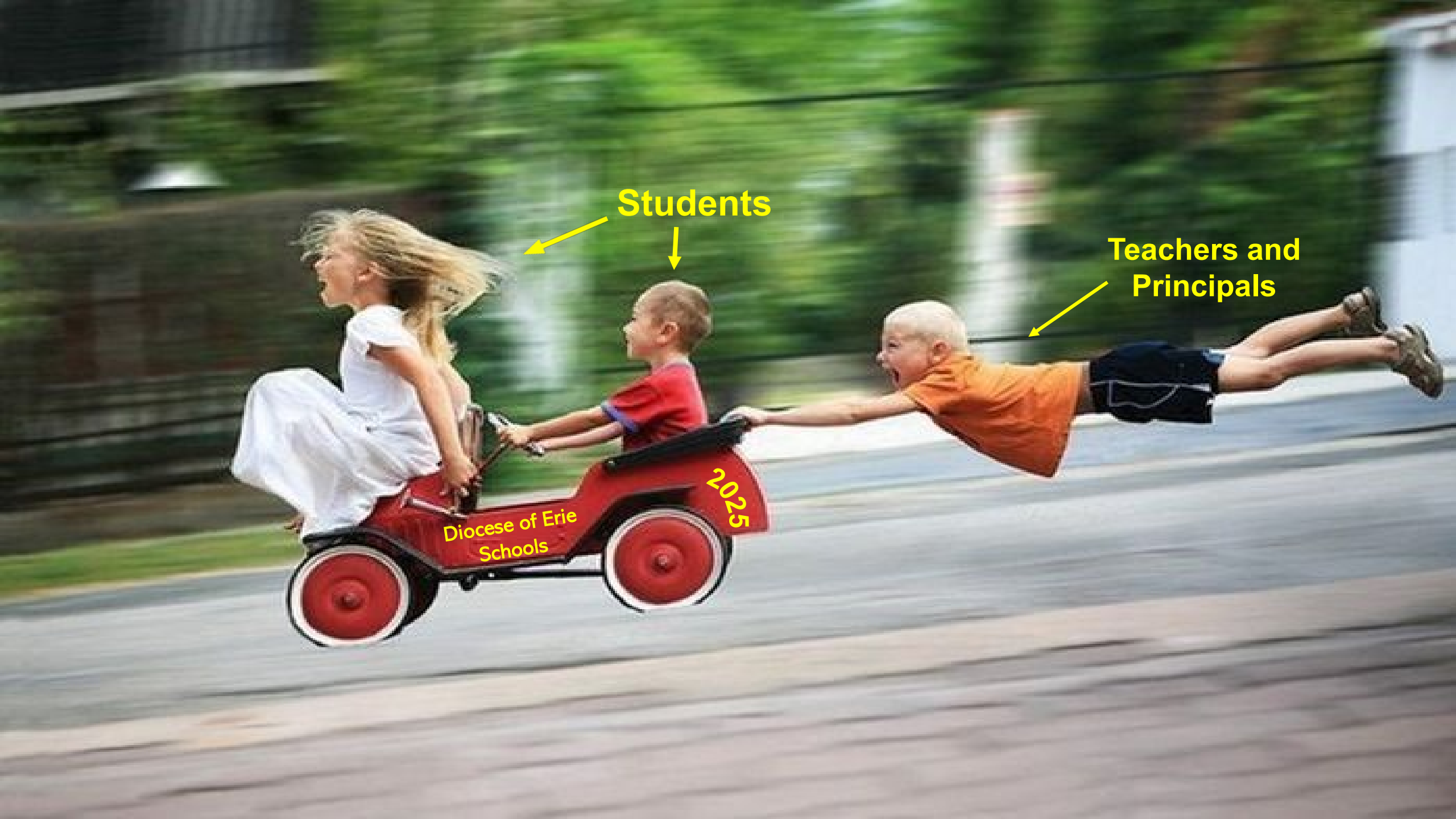
Great Resources on Metaphors

- *From Molecule to Metaphor: A Neural Theory of Language* by Jerome Feldman

- *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* by Zoltan Kovecses

- *Poetic Logic: The Role of Metaphor in Thought, Language, and Culture* by Marcel Danesi

- *Metaphors & Analogies: Power Tools for Teaching any Subject* by Rick Wormeli

- *I Is an Other: The Secret Life of Metaphor and How It Shapes the Way We See the World* by James Geary

Great Resources on Metaphors

- *Metaphors We Live By* by George Lakoff
- *The Political Mind: Why You Can't Understand 21st-Century American Politics with an 18th-Century Brain* by George Lakoff
- *A Bee in a Cathedral: And 99 Other Scientific Analogies* by Joel Levy
- *On Metaphor (A Critical Inquiry Book)* edited by Sheldon Sacks

Mindset:
Letting Go
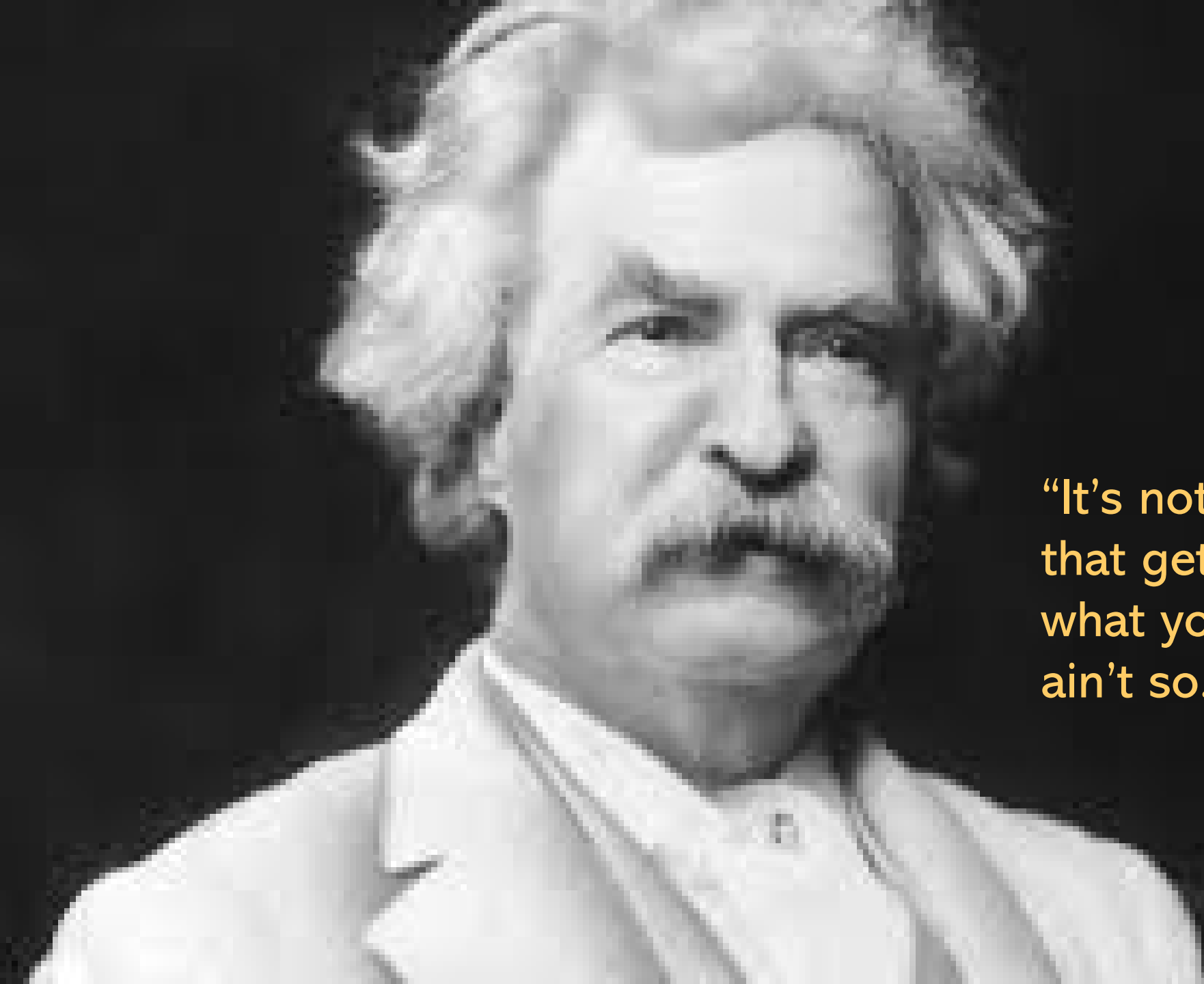
"It's not what you don't know that gets you into trouble, it's what you know for sure that ain't so."

- Mark Twain
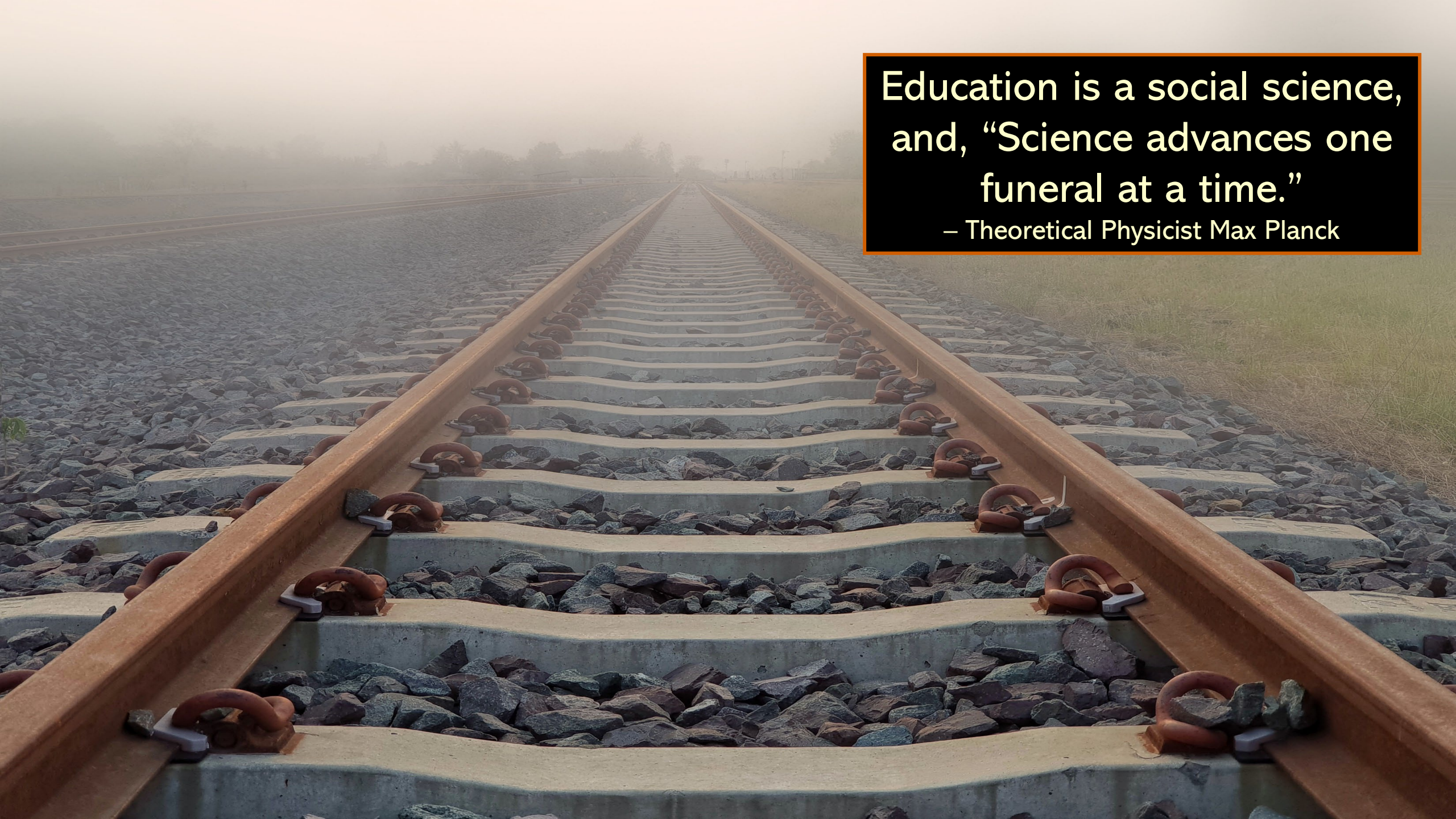
Education is a social science, and, "Science advances one funeral at a time."
– Theoretical Physicist Max Planck

Partial List of Things I've Let Go as an Educator Over the Years

- "I'm just a teacher."
- Oral dictation spelling tests
- Needing to grade everything
- 0's on the 100-point scale
- Re-do's for only partial credit
- Teaching only to the extent of my own knowledge, not letting students surpass me
- Working harder than my students when it comes to their discipline
- Being teacher-centered in the classroom
- We have to wait until everyone agrees before we move forward

Partial List of Things I've Let Go as an Educator Over the Years

- Using technology just to use technology, especially when something without tech would work better
- Feeling like a complete failure when I make one mistake during the day
- Taking students' comments about me personally
- Letting my schoolwork overwhelm my family and personal life
- Thinking that only I, the teacher or administrator, can give useful feedback.
- Of course, others see the logic of my reasoning and find it just as compelling as I do.

No, we don't have to replicate college grading practices in our high school classrooms as the best way to prepare students for college. Quite often, universities & colleges don't have the economy of scale to offer sound instruction to young adults in large freshmen courses.

Developmentally responsive instruction is more than sufficient to prepare students for the next level. The most preparatory and engaging elements here are: Real subject competence and personal maturity.
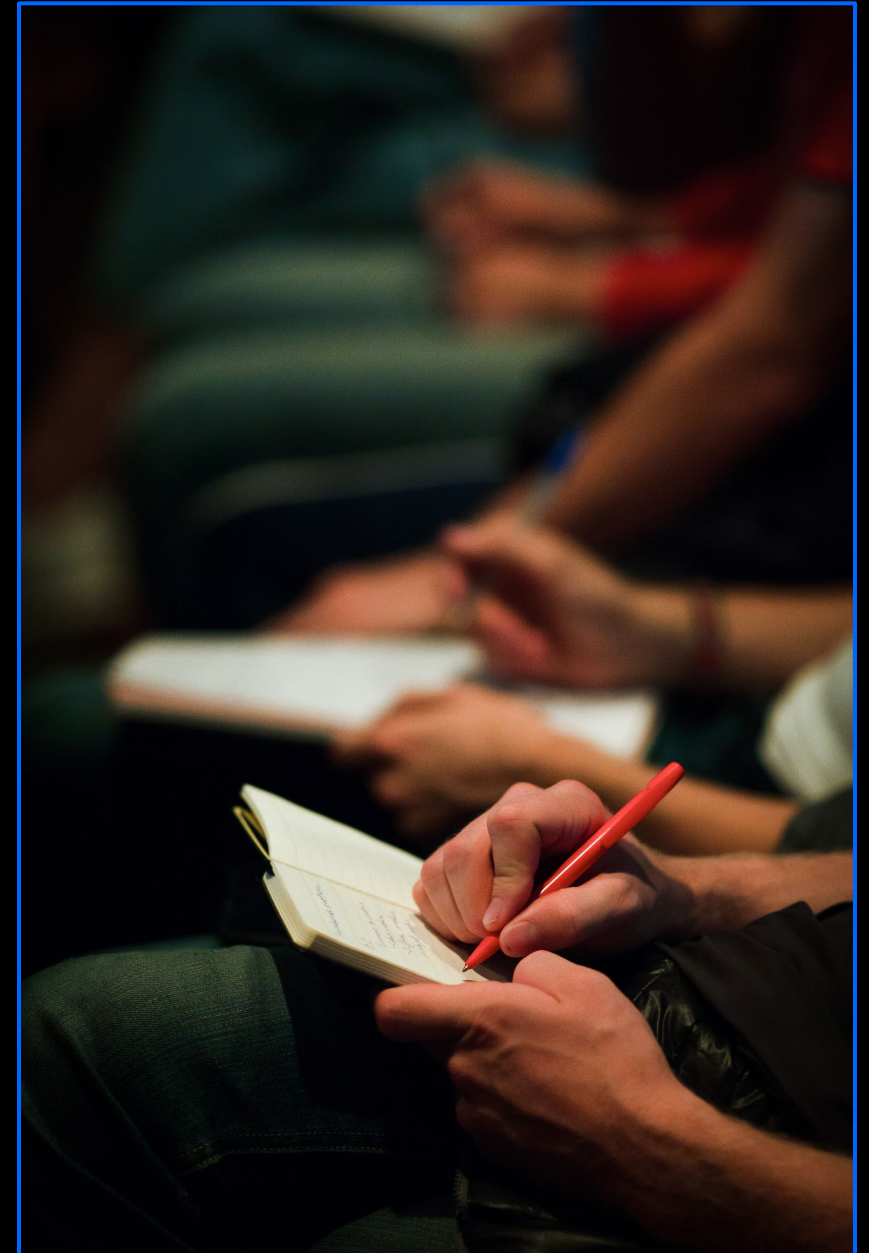
There is no discernible difference in mastery between an 89 and a 90. It's within the statistical margin of error, yet whole futures are built or destroyed because we thought we see a difference and sort students this way.

Grades are not transactions!
Grades are accurate communication, *not* compensation, reward, affirmation, validation, or what a child deserves.
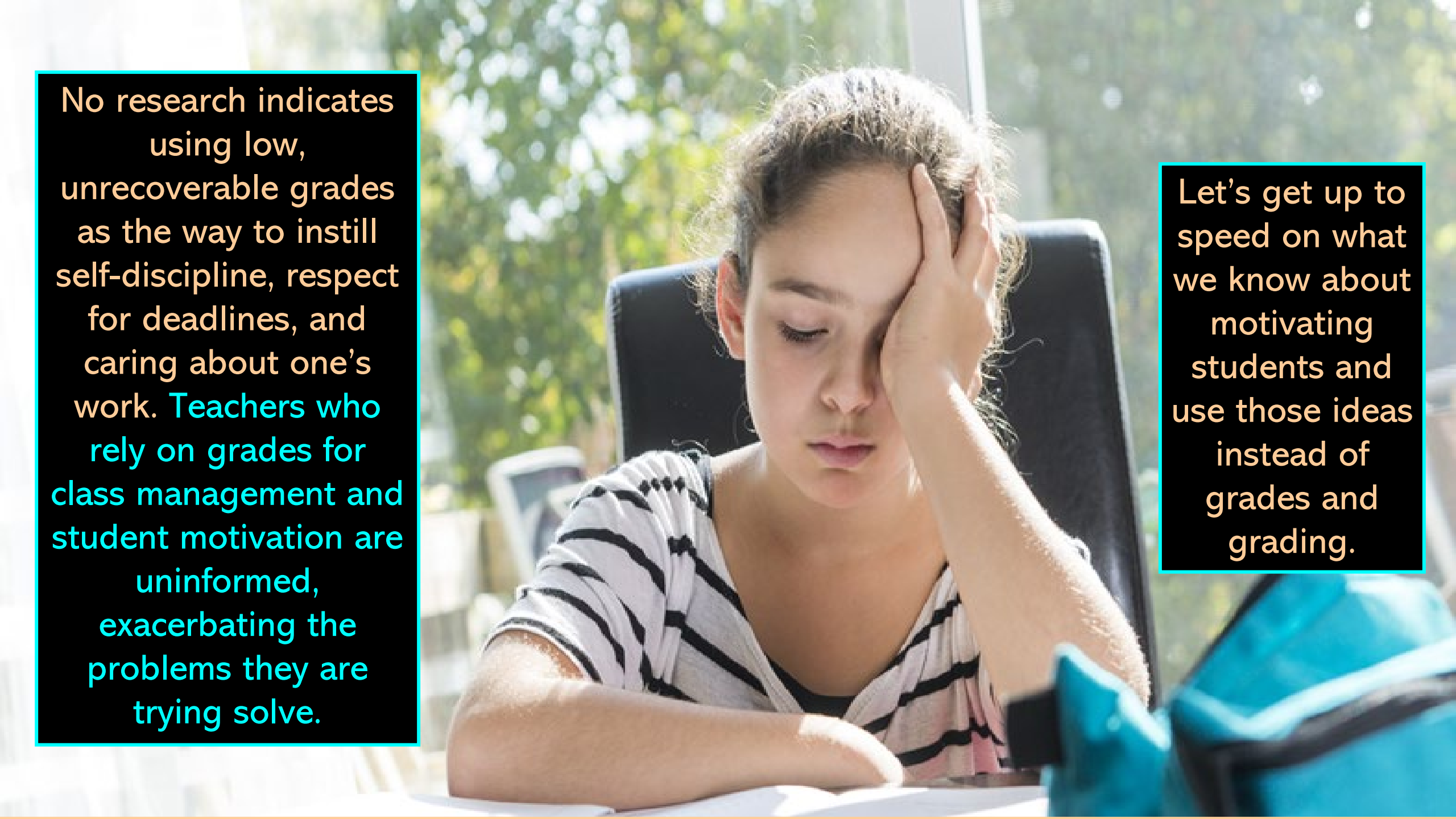
Requiring high school students to demonstrate post-certification, adult-maturity performance in subjects they are just now learning after going through the process and product only once and probably fields in which they will never be employed -- is wildly at odds with what we know about how adolescents – or adults! - learn.

& Consider: Recovering from failure in full teaches more than being labeled for failure ever could teach.

No research indicates using low, unrecoverable grades as the way to instill self-discipline, respect for deadlines, and caring about one's work. Teachers who rely on grades for class management and student motivation are uninformed, exacerbating the problems they are trying solve.

Let's get up to speed on what we know about motivating students and use those ideas instead of grades and grading.

For motivation, tenacity, taking responsibility, and more, get training in:

Tiles in the Mosaic

- Responsive Teaching
- Child and Adolescent Motivation
- Relationships, Belonging,
- and the Social-Emotional Side
- Constructive Response to Anxiety, Panic, and Depression
- Agency (Voice and Choice)
- Learning Tools
- Executive Function Skills
- Descriptive Feedback, Student Self-Monitoring
- Re-Learning-Re-Assessing
- Engaging Cognitive Science Strategies (How the brain learns)
- Meaning-Making
- Engaging Presentations/Lectures

We're hired to teach the way *students* best learn, not the way *we* (or *their classmates)* best learn.

What we present doesn't matter so much as what students carry forward after the experience.

"When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce.

- Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist Monk

We like orderly schematics and linear progression. It makes us feel like we are productive, and students' learning seems quantifiable.
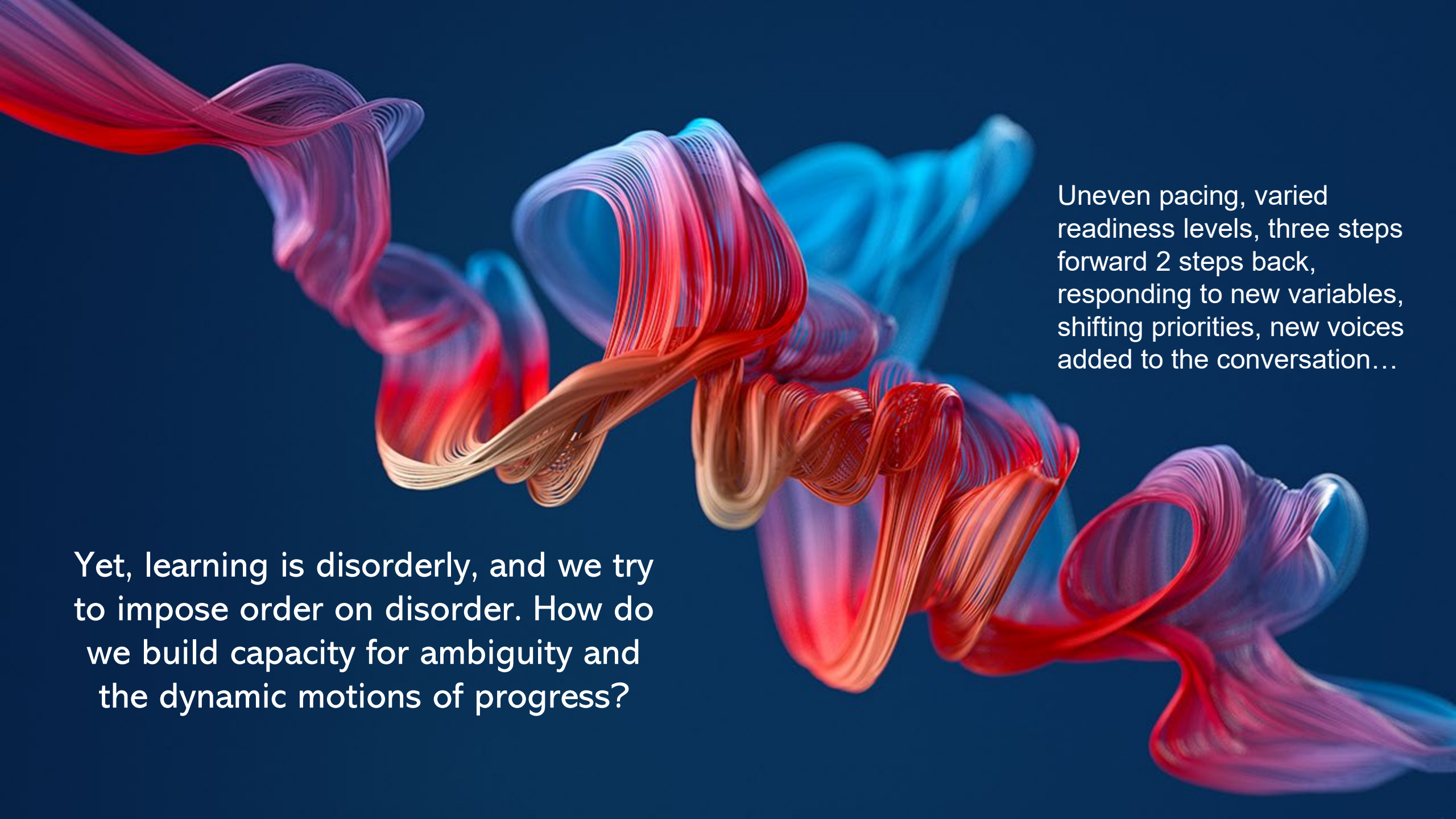
Uneven pacing, varied readiness levels, three steps forward 2 steps back, responding to new variables, shifting priorities, new voices added to the conversation…

Yet, learning is disorderly, and we try to impose order on disorder. How do we build capacity for ambiguity and the dynamic motions of progress?
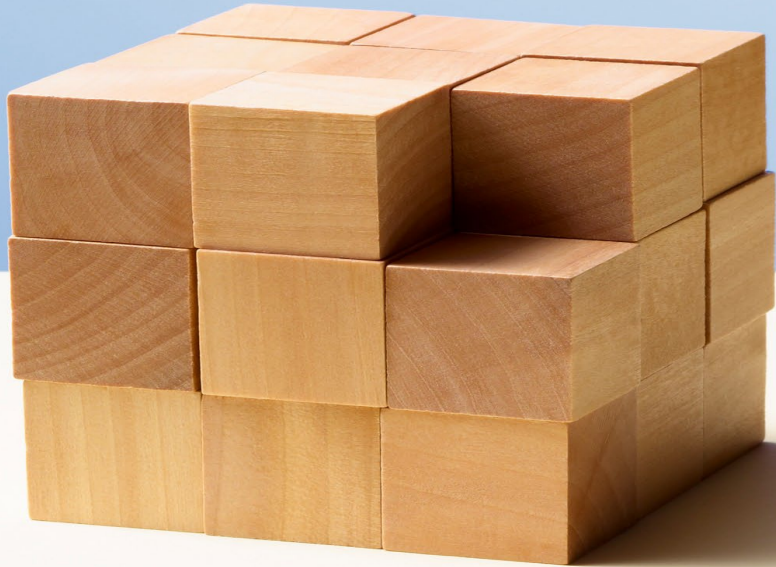
Time is not immutable. It's a variable.

Popcorn kernels pop at different rates,
but when each one pops, it's accorded
full status as a piece of popcorn, not
something less than popcorn because
it popped later than its fellow kernels.

We are not beholden to an arbitrary,
uniform timeline.

Most classes are set up to meet the needs of the student who gets it first or easiest, not for the ones who learn differently.

We teach <u>all</u> students, not just those who fit easily into current classifications, protocols, and our narrative of humanity.

All students are general education students. There are some that have been identified as needing special education supports, but all students are general education students.

"I can't teach (or grade) like that for those three students because it wouldn't be fair to the others."

Fairness

We provide what students need to maximize their learning and achievement, even when it differs from what we do for their classmates. It does *not* mean equal, similar, or same treatment.

In order for someone to accept feedback or take a risk with a new idea, he/she/they must admit first that what they were doing was less effective than their ego thought it was.

"The humiliation of becoming a raw novice at a new trade after having been a master craftsman at an old one, and…the deep crisis caused by the need to suppress ancient prejudices, to pust aside the comfort of the familiar to relinquish the security of what one knows well." (Kaufman, 1971, p. 13)" - Evans, p. 48

"Denying others the opportunity to [resist, push back, stress, work through challenges, clarify their thinking, struggle with new perspectives], criticizing them for not responding to explanations about change, dismissing their resistance or hesitation as ignorance or prejudice expresses arrogance and contempt for the meaning of other people's lives (Marris, p. 155)."   - Evans, p. 63

We can act our way into belief and believe our way into action.

"[P]eople will accept and retain new and unfamiliar practices when they perceive that those practices increase their competence and effectiveness. And they will likely abandon new practices in the absences of any evidence of their positive effects.

Alternative Model for Change, Guskey, 2002, p. 282 as quoted in *Get Set, Go!, 2020,* p. 69
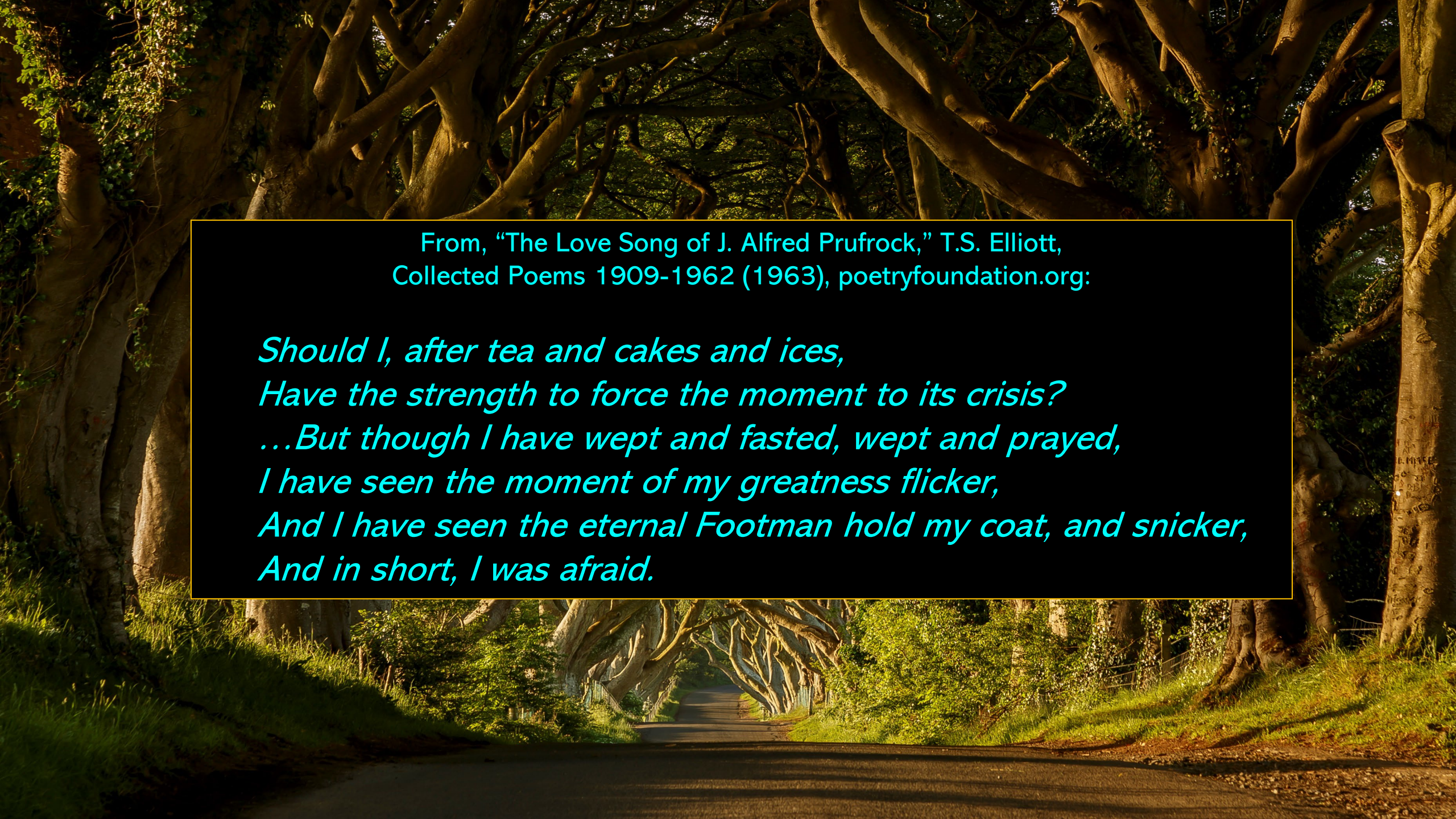
Acknowledge & respond to imposter syndrome.

- Collaboration makes us vulnerable to one another. Some of us are afraid to share our thinking for fear of judgement.
- Some teachers & leaders are afraid they don't have the skills & experience to accomplish stated goals.
- Some of us are barely ahead of our students when teaching something for the first time. We are not completely familiar with our subjects.
- Saying, "I don't know how to do this" feels like admitting incompetence.
- Some teachers & leaders are alternatively certified and may not feel as professionally prepared as others.

From, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," T.S. Elliott,
Collected Poems 1909-1962 (1963), poetryfoundation.org:

Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
…But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

Do the stuff that scares you.

First Elements

When it comes to grading reform, where does it usually break down?
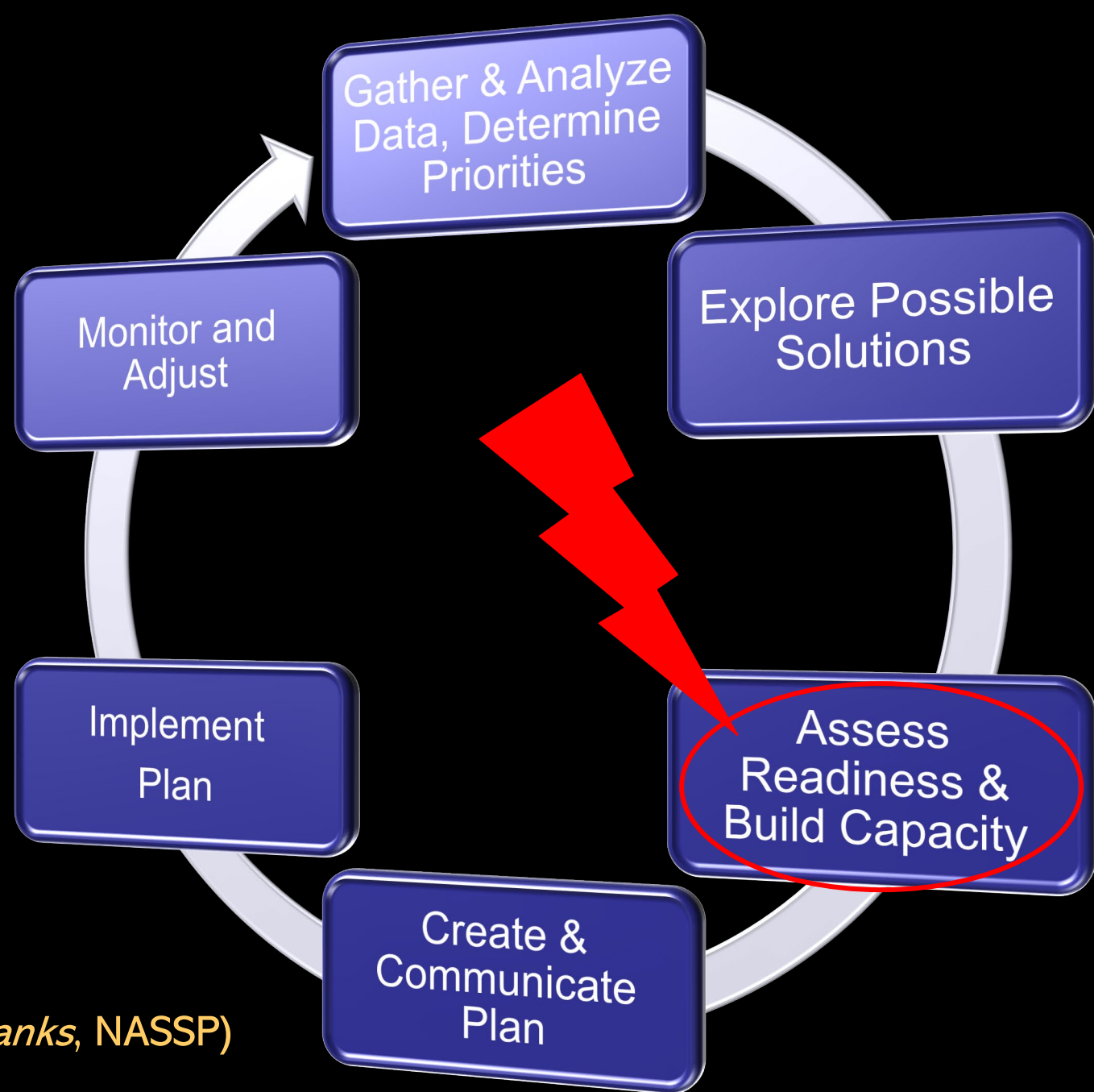
(From Breaking Ranks, NASSP)

Gather & Analyze Data, Determine Priorities

Explore Possible Solutions

Assess Readiness & Build Capacity

Create & Communicate Plan

Implement Plan

Monitor and Adjust

Incorporate the Basics of Personal Well-Being…

Incorporate the Basics of Personal Well-Being…

…including a purposeful focus on teacher mental and emotional health
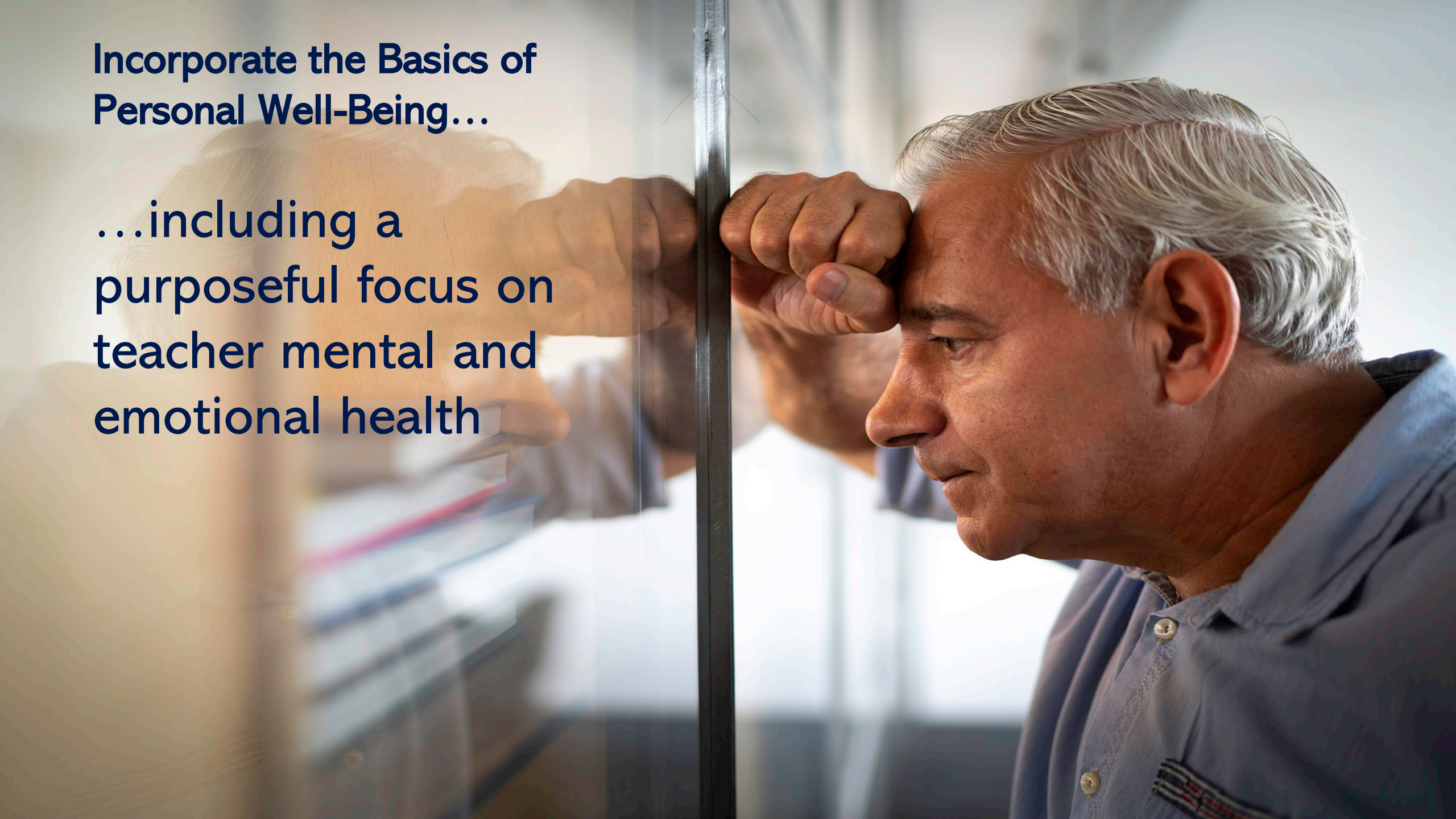
When discussing things that may be challenging,

Begin by revisiting what you hold in common

Keep a running list of elements that we want to be sure to include in PL experiences moving forward.

Consider using a GANTT chart…

"11 Gantt Chart Examples For Project Management
BY BRONWYN KIENAPPLE, MAY 10, 2023"

https://venngage.com/blog/gantt-chart-example/
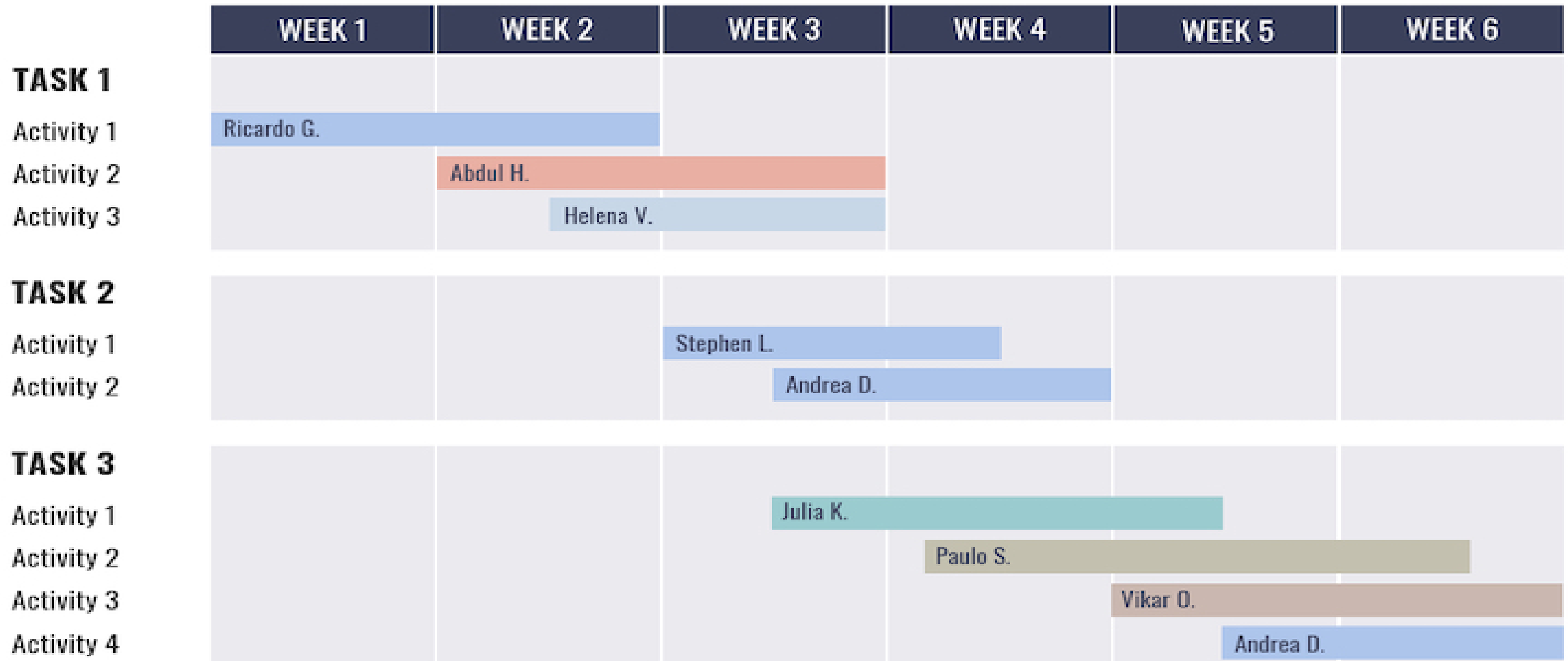
Europa project

VanArsdel, Ltd. Project lead

Project start: Thu, 7/27/2023

Display week   1

SIMPLE GANTT CHART by Vertex42.com
https://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/simple-gantt-chart.html

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	PROGRESS	START	END
Initiation				
Define goals	Gokce Aslan	50%	7/27/23	7/30/23
Conduct studies	Hayden Cook	60%	7/30/23	8/1/23
Establish comms	Jens Martensson	50%	8/1/23	8/5/23
Develop charter	Nuria Acevedo	25%	8/5/23	8/10/23
Set up team	Olivia Wilson		7/31/23	8/2/23
Planning and design				
Create schedule	Gokce Aslan	50%	8/1/23	8/5/23
Identify deliverables	Hayden Cook	50%	8/3/23	8/8/23
Develop budget	Jens Martensson		8/8/23	8/11/23
Define scope	Nuria Acevedo		8/8/23	8/10/23
Identify risks	Olivia Wilson		8/8/23	8/11/23
Execution				
Execute tasks	Gokce Aslan	50%	8/11/23	8/16/23
Monitor progress	Hayden Cook	60%	8/17/23	8/21/23
Manage resources	Jens Martensson	50%	8/22/23	8/27/23
Provide updates	Nuria Acevedo	25%	8/28/23	9/1/23

Project Planner

Select a period to highlight at right. A legend describing the charting follows.

Period Highlight: 1   ▨ Plan Duration   ▨ Actual Start   ■ % Complete

ACTIVITY	PLAN START	PLAN DURATION	ACTUAL START	ACTUAL DURATION	PERCENT COMPLETE	PERIODS
Activity 01	1	5	1	4	25%	
Activity 02	1	6	1	6	100%	
Activity 03	2	4	2	5	35%	
Activity 04	4	8	4	6	10%	
Activity 05	4	2	4	8	85%	
Activity 06	4	3	4	6	85%	
Activity 07	5	4	5	3	50%	
Activity 08	5	2	5	5	60%	
Activity 09	5	2	5	6	75%	
Activity 10	6	5	6	7	100%	
Activity 11	6	1	5	8	60%	
Activity 12	9	3	9	3	0%	
Activity 13	9	6	9	7	50%	
Activity 14	9	3	9	1	0%	
Activity 15	9	4	8	5	1%	

Periods header: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

Why should we reform grading practices to make them accurate, ethical, and equitable?

- More useful to parents and stakeholders
- Protects students (from what?)
- Builds & maintains teaching integrity and consistency
- More reflective and preparatory for the post-high school world
- Makes descriptive feedback more effective & useful
- Helps students mature and develop executive function in ways traditional grading does not
- More effective instructional design: Students learn more as a result

Six Critical Conversations to Conduct as We Build Capacity for Accurate, Ethical, and Equitable Grading

Begin with common ground: Discuss and agree on why changes in [X] are needed. Write this out thoughtfully. This rationale will be used for many audiences, so make it clear and compelling. Cultivate commitment.

"Why is change necessary? Why is the current system not working? Why infringe on teachers' professional freedom and discretion when it comes to [X]? Why take on [X] when other issues seem more pertinent?"
                                    - p. 56, Guskey, Get Set, Go! (2020)

Brainstorm your goals regarding assessment and grading practices in the school or district

What in [X] practices do you want to achieve? Dream big, list them all…

3rd

Consider your evaluative criteria for success: What evidence will you expect to see if teachers are successfully implementing accurate, ethical, and equitable grading practices?

Anticipate hurdles and challenges: List "sticking points," pushbacks, "yeah, but's," and other issues (pedagogical, emotional, financial, logistical, political) that you may encounter during implementation.

Begin your Reasoned Responses: With your team, start your list of constructive responses to each of these issues, pushbacks, and concerns that you can articulate, or use to help guide teachers to their own, ethical solutions. Turn this into a ceaselessly updated FAQ for all interested parties.

5th

6th

On paper or digitally, map out the months ahead for at least three years, then create a tentative plan with cultural shift elements we've discussed here, and the specific person(s) responsible for each element recorded in each month.

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	1st round of Small group conversation on grading concerns – Martha					
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	2nd round of Small group conversation on grading concerns – Martha					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Three major "separations" or disaggregations to try in the first year:

Separate reports of proficiency with standards from reports of work habits, character, and learning methods

Separate formative feedback reporting from summative evaluation

Separate the report of learning from reports of doing

We can't innovate with what we don't have; we need wide repertoire and deep knowledge. Intellectual agility happens most often in the presence of robust content and experience. With such, we can perceive connections unrecognized by others and our earlier selves. And, no, it can't be left to content and skills obtained online as needed. In building the knowledge base, we ignite innovation.

Grading reform has much more meaning to teachers when they have a healthy backgrounds in six areas
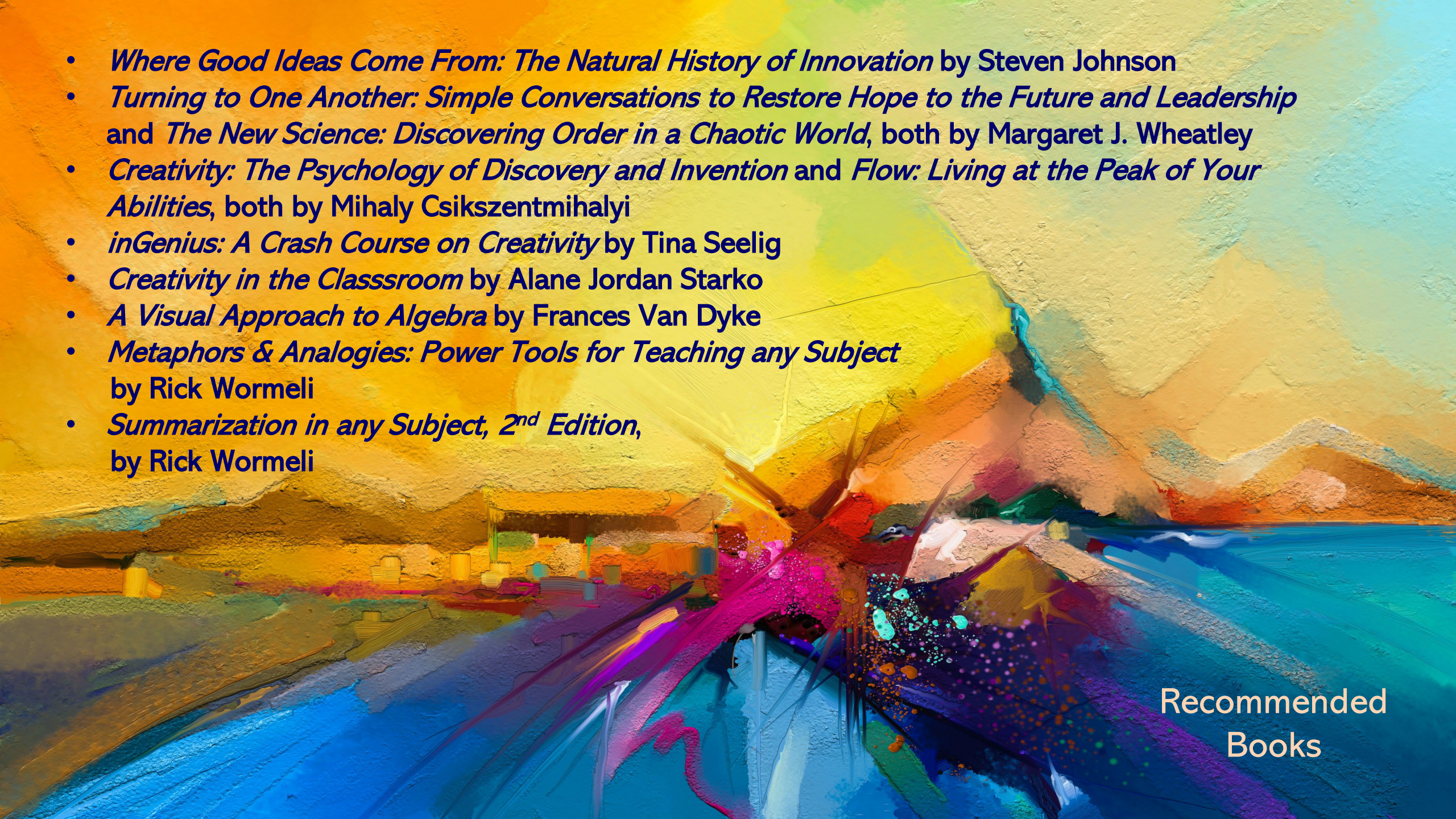
- Developmentally responsive teaching, including equity practices
- Cognitive Science (How the mind learns)
- Cultivating one's intellectual and creative self
- Cultivating tenacity, maturation, motivation, self-discipline in students'
- Assessment literacy, including an extensive assessment repertoire
- Professionalism
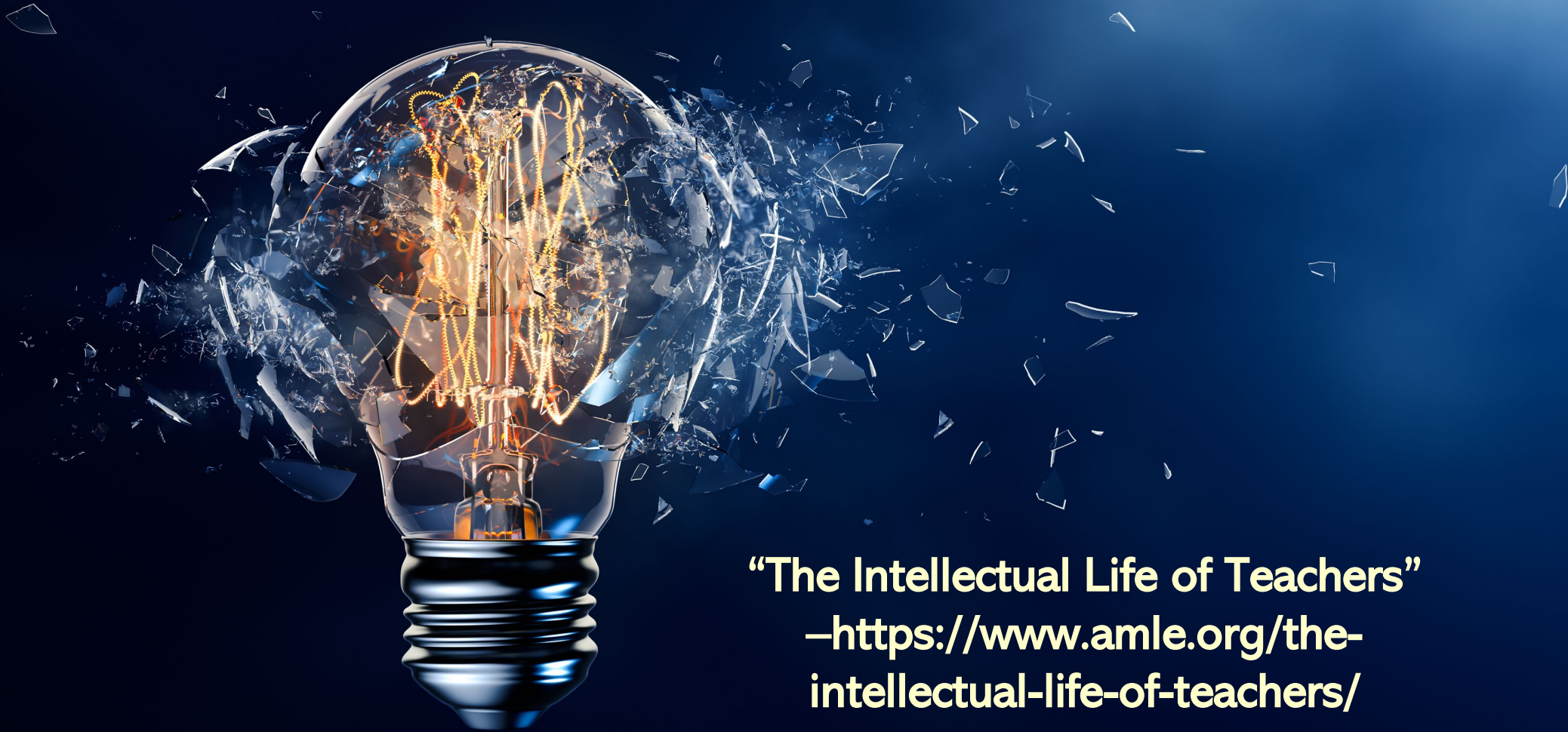
"The Intellectual Life of Teachers"
–https://www.amle.org/the-intellectual-life-of-teachers/

- *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation* by Steven Johnson
- *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future and Leadership* and *The New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, both by Margaret J. Wheatley
- *Creativity: The Psychology of Discovery and Invention* and *Flow: Living at the Peak of Your Abilities*, both by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
- *inGenius: A Crash Course on Creativity* by Tina Seelig
- *Creativity in the Classsroom* by Alane Jordan Starko
- *A Visual Approach to Algebra* by Frances Van Dyke
- *Metaphors & Analogies: Power Tools for Teaching any Subject* by Rick Wormeli
- *Summarization in any Subject, 2nd Edition,* by Rick Wormeli

Recommended
Books

Mentoring

Ed Camp

Action research

Faculty Portfolios

Professional Reading

Professional Learning Communities

Reflective Learning Logs

Listservs, on-line communities

Instructional Roundtables

Videotaping and Analysis

Workshops and Conferences

Web casts and Video-conferencing

National Board Certification

We are in charge of our own Professional Development.

- www.teachingchannel.org

- www.schooltube.com

- www.teachertube.com

- www.khanacademy.org

- www.youtube.com

- https://www.rbteach.com/videos/

- Authors/Publishers often have videos

- https://www.youtube.com/c/Thomgibson/videos

- https://www.youtube.com/c/Cultofpedagogy/videos

We are in charge of our own Professional Development.

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- ➤ Subject organization
- ➤ Blogs
- ➤ Magazines/journals
- ➤ Updates
- ➤ Smartbrief *(Sample)*

- Stem Education
- Middle Level Teaching
- Special Education
- ASCD
- Global News
- Ed Tech
- Geography
- English and Literacy
- Social Studies
- Math
- Scientific Research
- Education Leadership
- Education Policy

SmartBrief

'Helpful for seeking specific research:
"What Works Clearinghouse,"
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
ERIC (Education Resources Information Center),
www.eric.ed.gov,
JSTOR (Journal Storage),
www.jstor.org

Additional Area for Training that Helps Educators Embrace Accurate, Ethical, Equitable Grading Reform

Student-Led Conferences

VIDEOS INCLUDED ▶

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LEAH RUGEN   LIBBY WOODFIN

Leaders of their Own Learning

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STUDENT-ENGAGED ASSESSMENT

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NEW TOOLS AND TIPS FOR TACKLING THE COMMON
CHALLENGES OF STUDENT-ENGAGED ASSESSMENT

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Matt Renwick

DIGITAL PORTFOLIOS
in the Classroom

Showcasing and Assessing Student Work

Student-Led Conferencing
Using
Showcase Portfolios

Barbara P. Benson • Susan P. Barnett

KATIE WHITE

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Data Notebooks, Portfolios, & Other Tools to Advance Learning

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IMPLEMENTING STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES

JANE M. BAILEY
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EXPERTS IN ASSESSMENT™

SERIES EDITORS
THOMAS R. GUSKEY AND ROBERT J. MARZANO

6

TOOLS
for Collaborative
Mathematics Coaching

Nicora Placa
Foreword by Elham Kazemi

BRIAN KISSEL
Foreword by
Aimee Buckner

WHEN
WRITERS
DRIVE
THE
WORKSHOP

Honoring Young Voices
and Bold Choices

Conferring in the Math Classroom

A Practical Guidebook to Using 5-Minute Conferences to Grow Confident Mathematicians
K-5

Gina Picha

Foreword by Brian Bushart

What's Right About Wrong Answers

Why do you think so?

parallelograms are slanted

Learning from Math Mistakes, Grades 4–5

Nancy C. Anderson
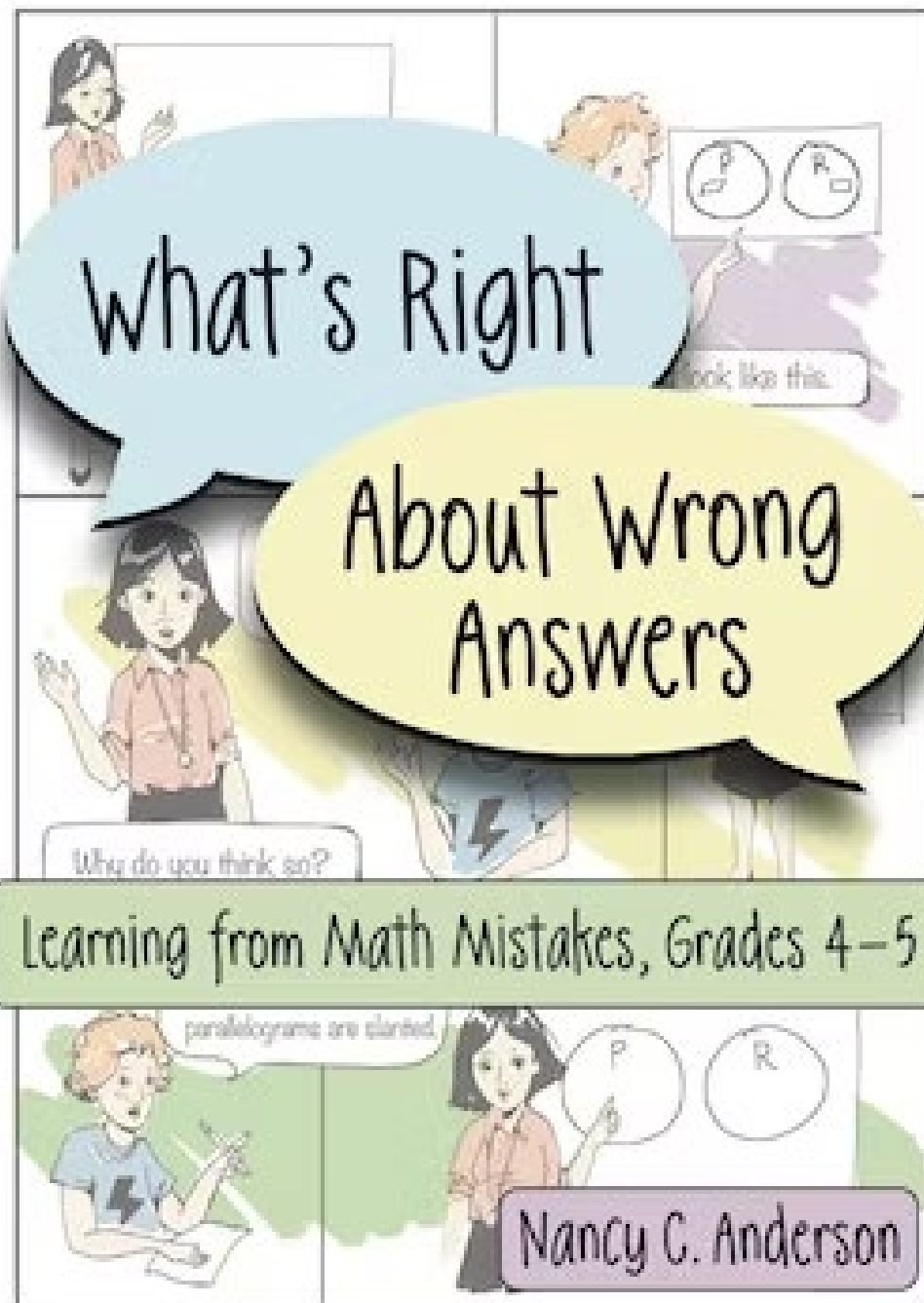
Recommended Articles on the Best Digital Apps Used to Create Portfolios

- https://www.educatorstechnology.com/2012/06/free-apps-to-create-digital-portfolios.html
- https://www.techlearning.com/resources/top-10-sites-for-creating-a-digital-portfolio
- https://www.edutopia.org/article/tools-creating-digital-student-portfolios/
- https://www.edtechreview.in/trends-insights/insights/top-resources-for-students-to-create-a-digital-portfolio/

Recommended Websites on Practices and Getting Started with Student-Led Conferencing

- https://www.edutopia.org/blog/student-led-conferences-resources-ashley-cronin
- https://www.wps.k12.va.us/Page/10975 Winchester Public Schools, VA
- //efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://images.template.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/13204219/student-council-agenda-template.pdf (Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School Minds in Motion)
- //efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://mlei.pbworks.com/f/SLCPP.pdf (From Patti Kinney, training principals presentation)
- (Podcast) https://www.bamradionetwork.com/track/student-led-parent-teacher-conferences/

Increase Assessment
Repertoire Among Faculty

With the same content or skills, students can:

- Create, solve, or do the task

- Critique others demonstrating the skill or content, offering proof when things are correct and advice on how to improve performance when things are weak or incorrect

- Use the content and skills to respond to novel applications, incorporate different variables, or respond in a non-formulaic way

- Describe concepts and skills in terms of other domains (Use metaphors and analogies)

- Analyze and respond to potential misconceptions others might have regarding the topic

- Express clear mastery of the topic via a different medium

Consider the Possibilities…

Innovative Assessment Prompts for Use in Multiple Subject Classes:

- Build physical model with one moving piece that accurately expresses this abstract concept. Be prepared to defend it as an accurate representation as classmates critique its elements.
- One of these is impossible to answer, figure out which one and explain why.
- For each multiple-choice problem, explain why your answer is correct and the others are not.
- Identify four metaphors for this science, math, writing, engineering, art, music, health, government, legal, media, or philosophical concept and a favorite sport or hobby.
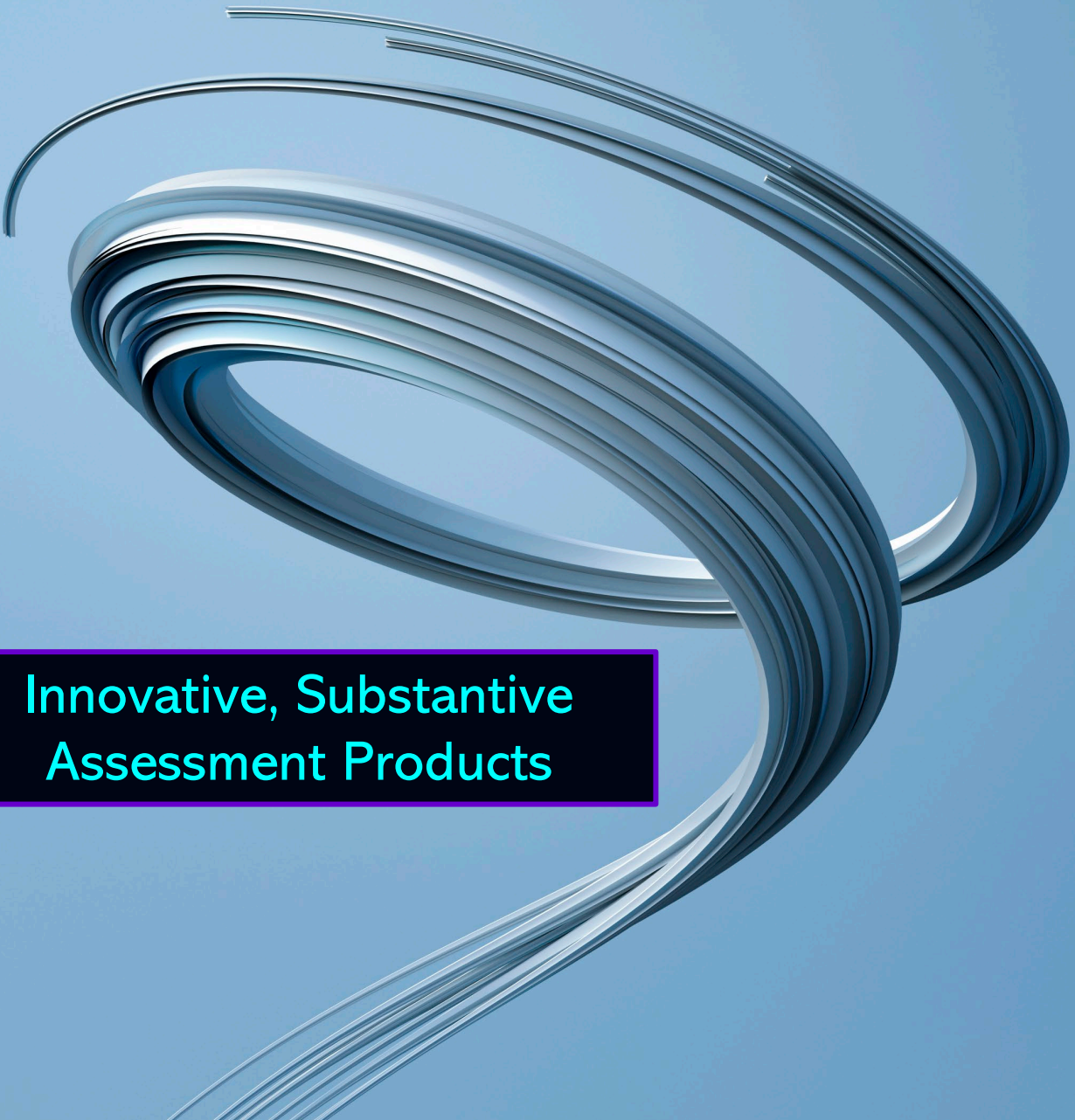
Innovative Assessment Prompts for Use in Multiple Subject Classes:

- Here's how five different classmates responded to this particular question – Who did it correctly, and how do you know? Who did it incorrectly, and what would they need to be re-taught?
- Given this question, here is its correct answer. Demonstrate two different ways to arrive at this answer.
- Have a debate between two of these components about who's function has more impact on the success of the whole. [Alternatively: 'Between two historical/literary/scientific figures about a modern debate topic.

- Would your answer to the previous question change if you were given this new variable…? Why or why not?
- Add your own voice in the assessment: If we left your name off the project, would we know it was you that created it? Express your individual voice in at least three elements.
- Create podcast debates between historical figures or inanimate elements of our topic of study
- Create a series of postcards or Instagram reflections from specific characters in their novels.

Innovative, Substantive Assessment Products
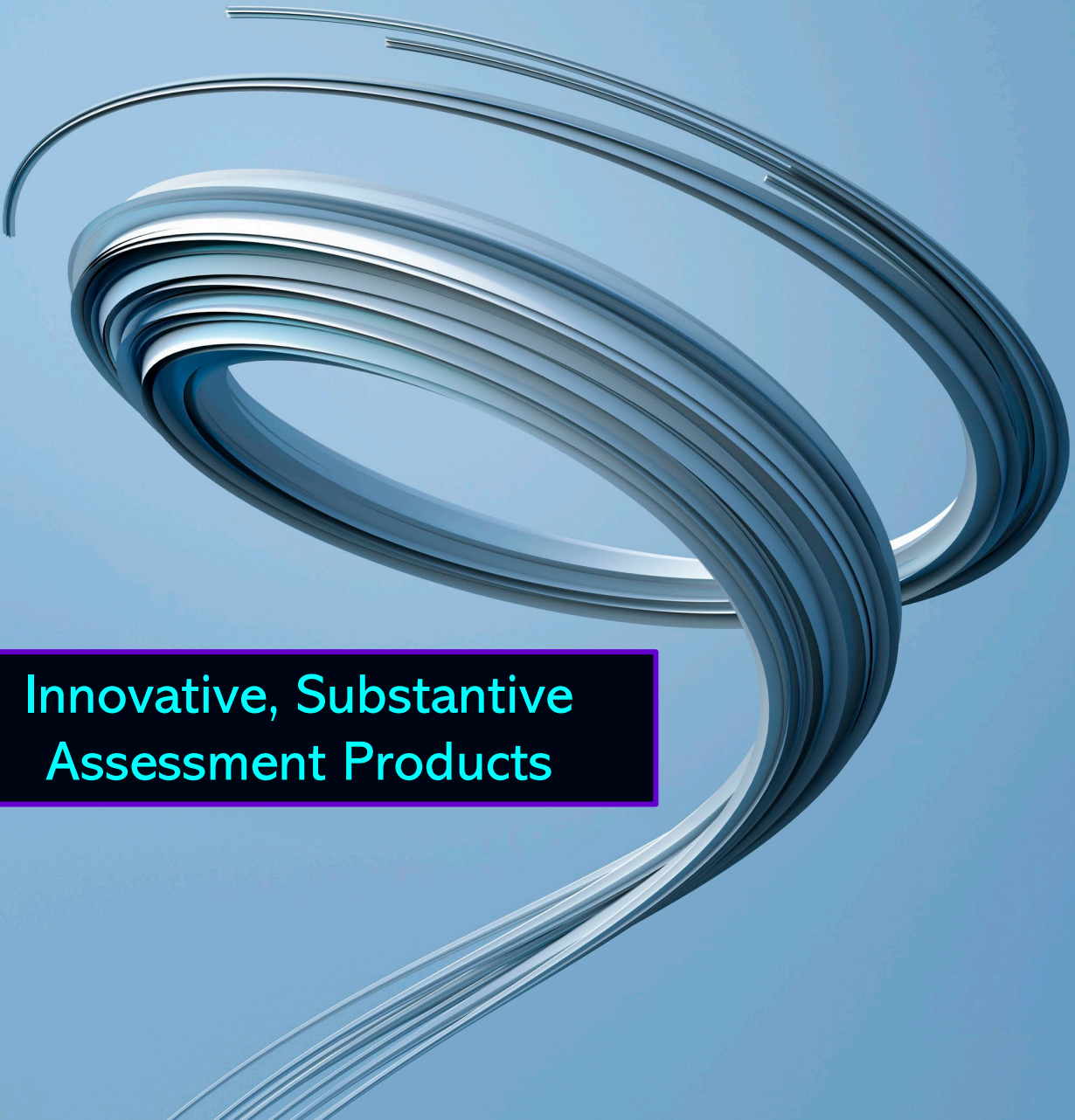
- A soap opera about valence among chemical elements

- A "Wanted: Dead or Alive" poster about Preposition Pete ("He was last seen in the OverHill'n'Dale Saloon, at the table, in the dark, under close scrutiny of other scalawags…")

- Compose a ballad about the cautious Massasoit tribe coming to dinner with Governor Bradford and his colony in 1621.

- Interpret the Internet for Amazonian inhabitants that have never lived with electricity, let alone a computer.

Innovative, Substantive Assessment Products

- Argue for and against [X] as a healthy way to build a country – Provide at least two arguments for each position.

- Classify the Greek gods and goddesses according to three different criteria.

- Predict the limiting factors for this habitat twenty-five years from now.

- Retell a fairytale or myth of your choosing with one of the *[math, science, historical, art, logic, economic, philosophical, engineering]* concepts we've been studying as its central theme.

Innovative, Substantive Assessment Products
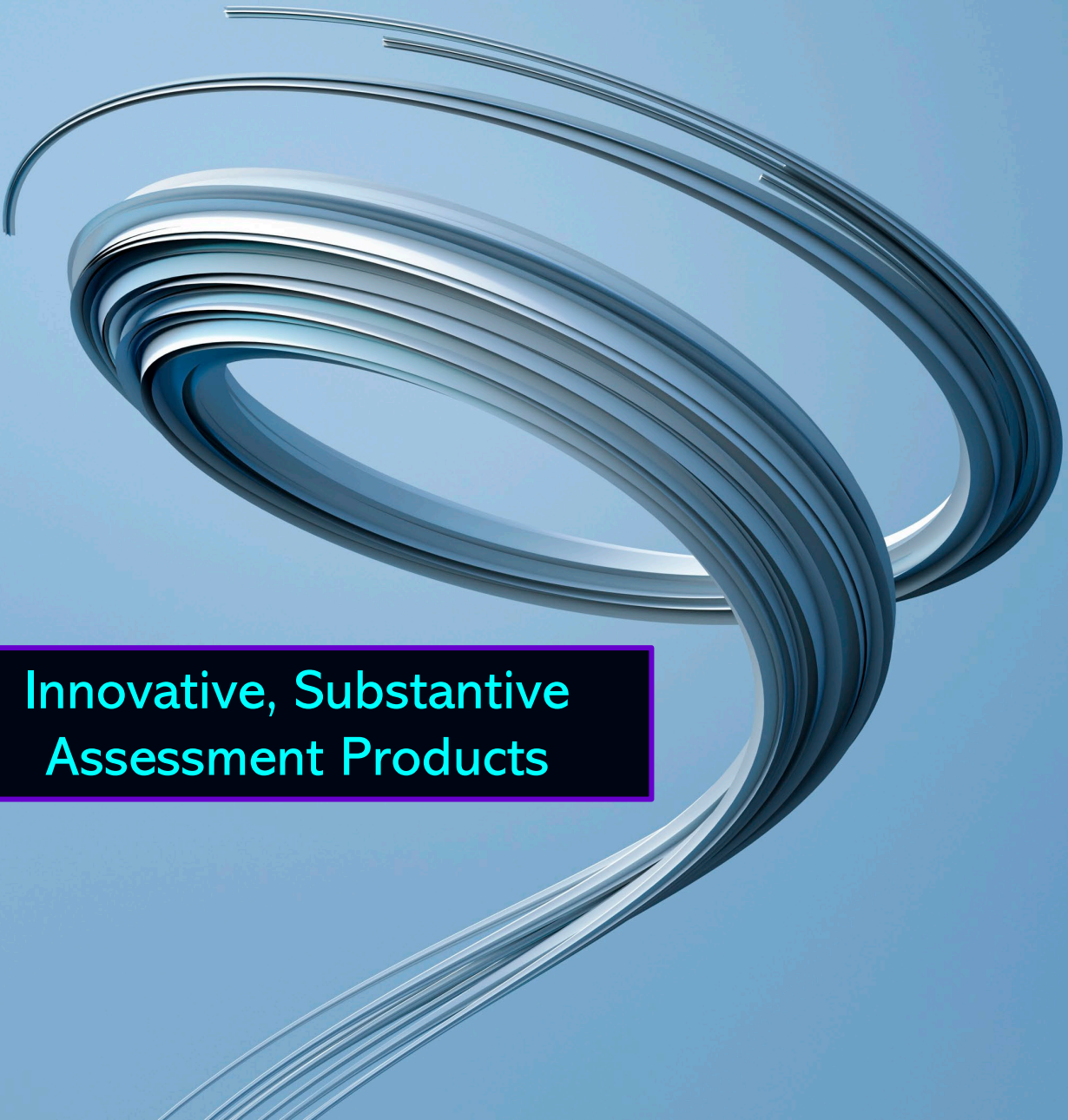
- A comic strip about the mantissa (the decimal-fraction part of a logarithm)

- A mysterious yet accurate archeological map concerning the quadratic formula

- A field guide to the asymptotes of a hyperbola *(the diagonals of the rectangle formed by the lines x= a, x= —a, y= b and y= -b in the hyperbola: x squared over a squared – y squared over b squared)*

- A coloring book about Amendments 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10 to the Constitution

Innovative, Substantive Assessment Products

- A hip-hop or rap song that expresses the order of Presidential succession

- A grocery list for Taiga biomes

- A mural that accurately expresses the "checks and balances" nature of our Federal government's three branches: judicial, legislative, and executive

- A sculpture or mobile that teaches observers about latitude and longitude

- A pop-up book on liquid and dry measures

Choose Between Two Metaphors:

- After reading the text, which item is more indicative of the true nature of our government's diplomacy: a doorknob or doormat, and why do you believe as you do?

- The beads of sand in a beach, or the dead seaweed washed up on that same beach: Which one is the best expression of the Law of Conservation of Energy in physics, and how so?

- The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is most similar to which type of dance: modern ballet or the Tango, and why?

Innovative, Substantive Assessment Products
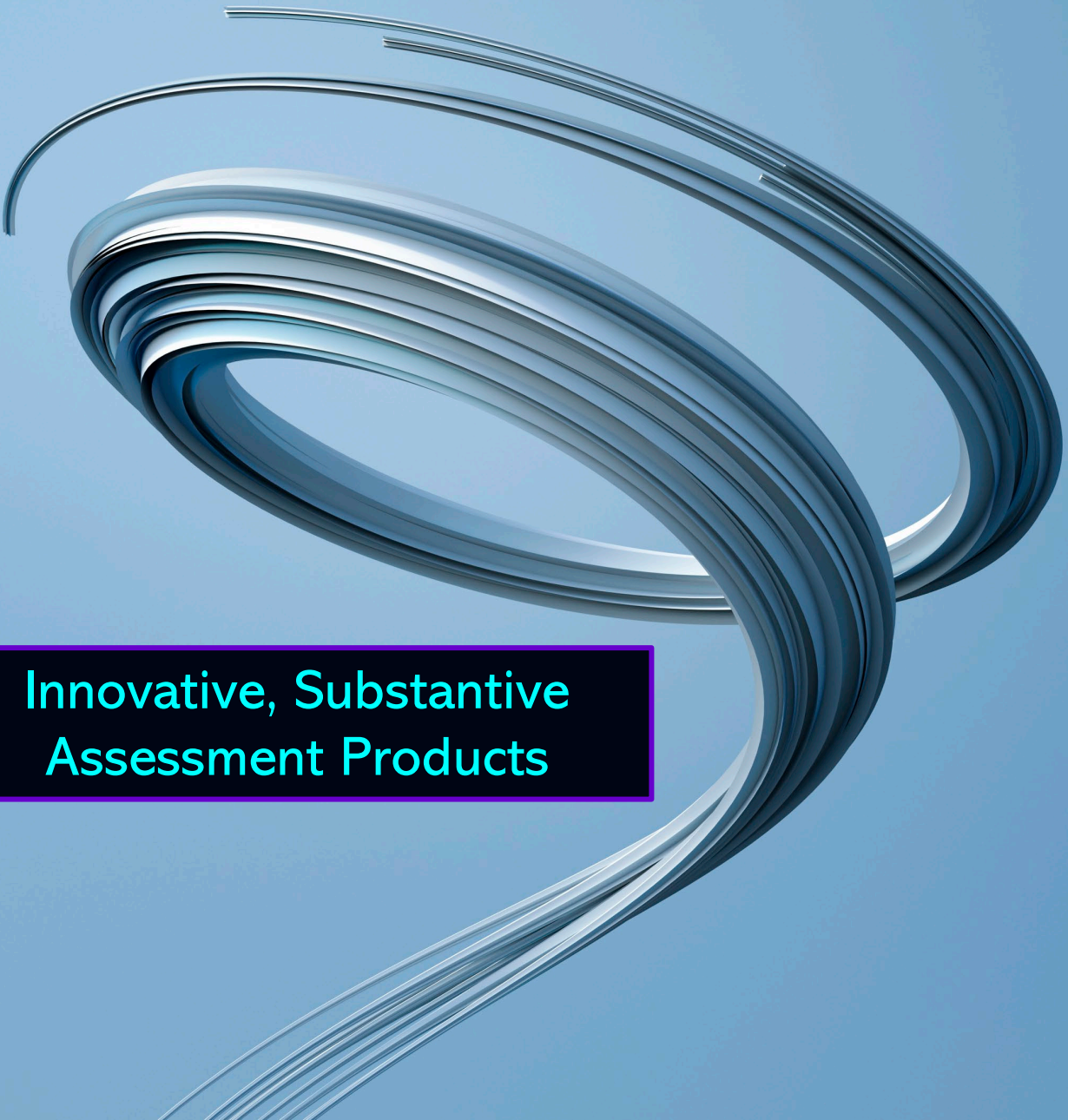
Innovative, Substantive Assessment Products

Interdisciplinary Language Studies (2005, Amy Benjamin) - "Use the terminology of one subject to describe what they are learning in another…use literary terms, such as irony, to discuss what [students] learned in biology, social studies, and math:

- English/Biology: Like a word that is out of rhyme, mutations interfere with genetic rhythm and expectations

- English/Social Studies: In both the Russian and French revolutions, bread was the metaphor for widespread frustration at the excesses of the ruling classes who refuse to respond to the needs of the masses." (p.129)

From Rick Wormeli and Dedra Stafford:

- How could types of rock (sedimentary, metamorphic, igneous) describe elements of effective speeches? What in mathematics is conjugated, as we do with verbs in Spanish or French class?

- Describe new coding software in terms from physical education class that describe one's health, proper exercise, or dietary cautions.

- How could art terms (tone, composition, postmodern, stippling, shading, contour, fresco, cubism, impressionism, perspective, palette, tint) be used to describe a government or one of its policies?

Innovative, Substantive Assessment Products

Innovative, Substantive Assessment Products

- Given this question, here is its correct answer. Demonstrate two different ways to arrive at this answer.

- Have a debate between two of these components about who's function has more impact on the success of the whole. [Alternatively: 'Between two historical/literary/scientific figures about a modern debate topic.
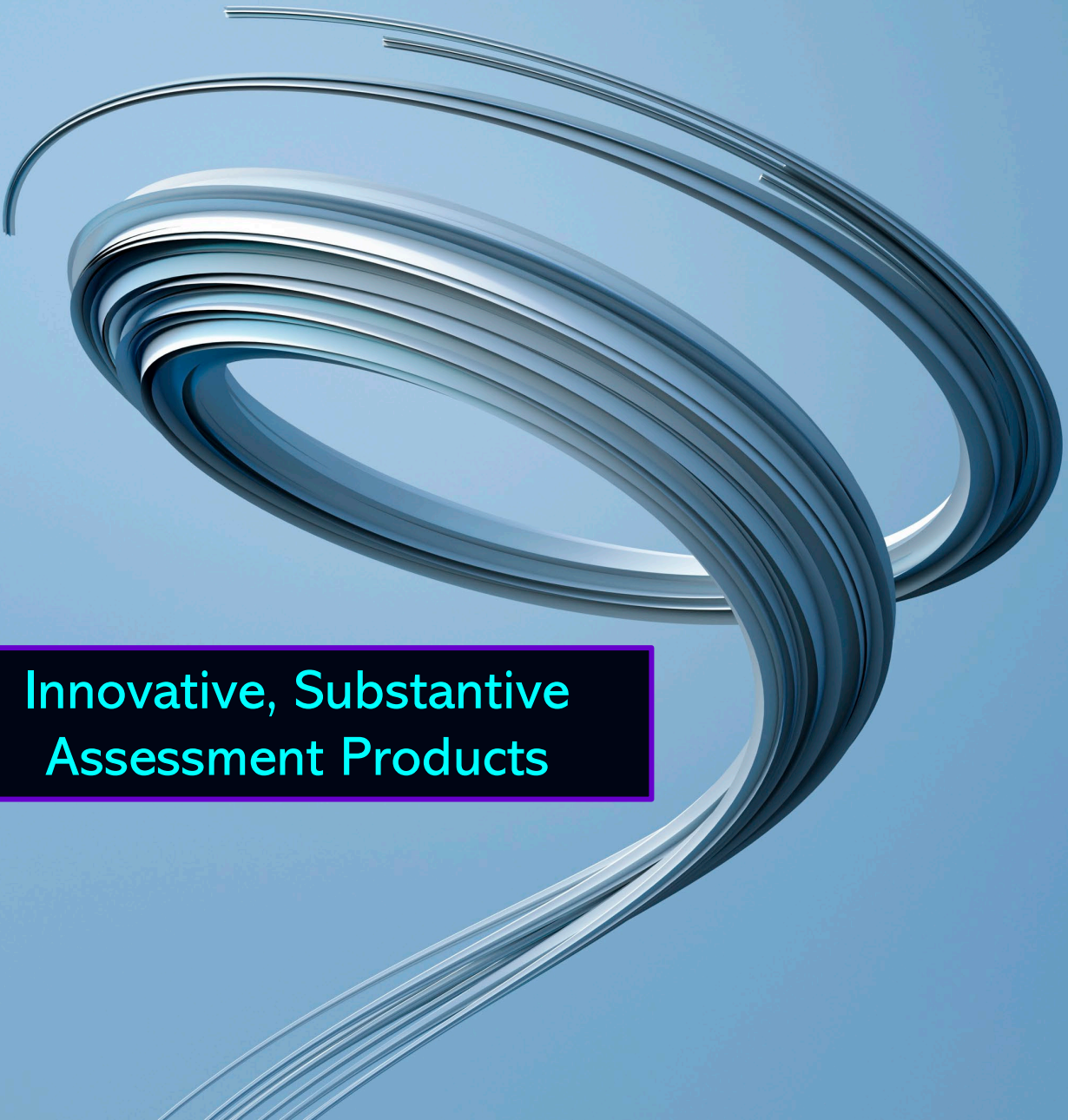
- Would your answer to the previous question change if you were given this new variable…? Why or why not?

- Create podcast debates between historical figures or inanimate elements of our topic of study

Six Word Memoirs

Sample:

"For sale: baby shoes, never worn." - Ernest Hemingway

Other Samples:

Need more friends or more hobbies.

Old age approaches. Better start now.

My entourage asleep in his crib.

Some shoes will take you anywhere.

Life packed neatly away in boxes.

My greatest ideas involve duct tape.

Two eyes open, but still nearsighted.

Hobby became job. Seeking new hobby.

Summarization Techniques also make great assessment tools!
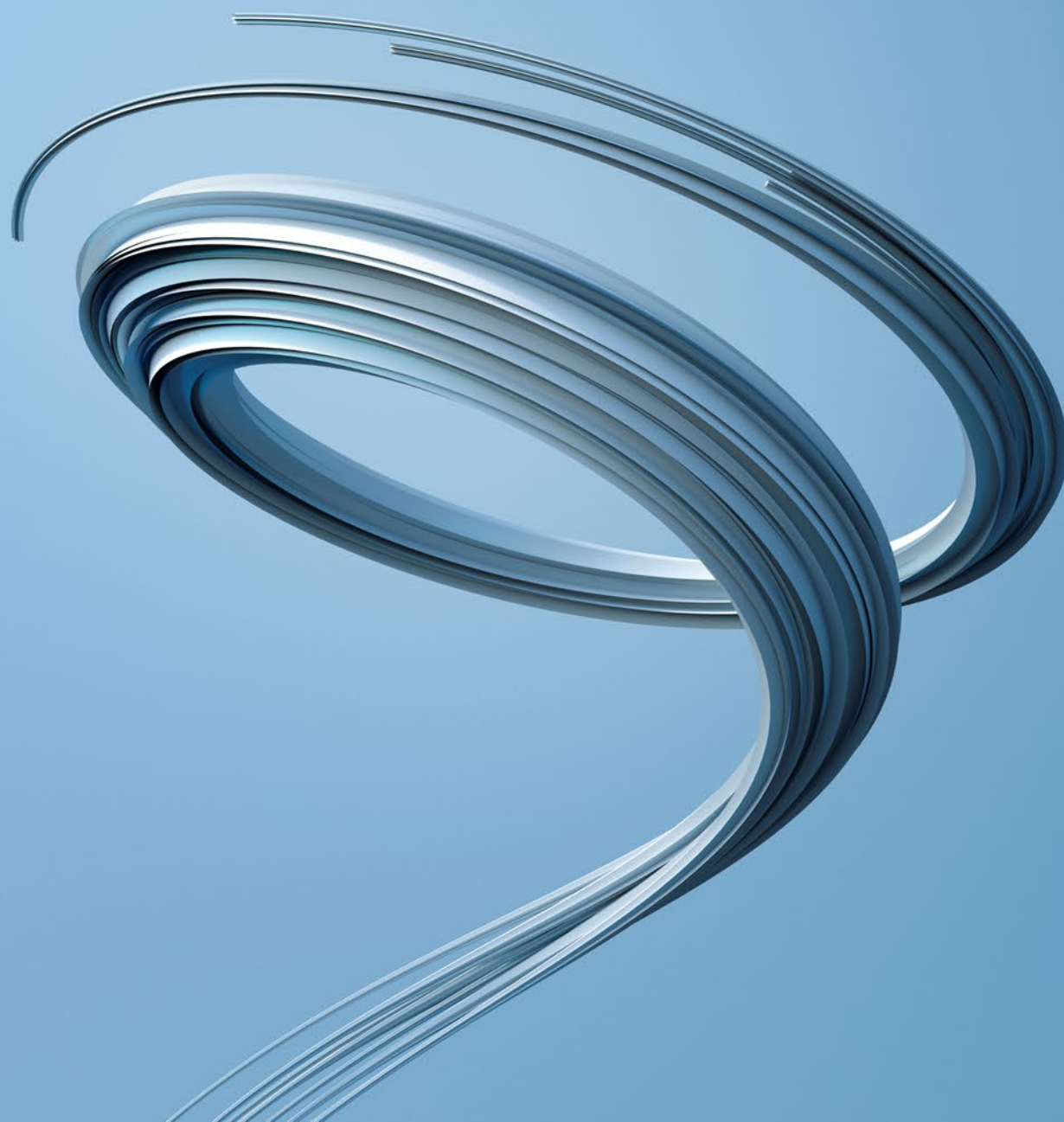
3 – Identify three characteristics of Renaissance art that differed from art of the Middle Ages

2 – List two important scientific debates that occurred during the Renaissance

1 – Provide one good reason why "rebirth" is an appropriate term to describe the Renaissance

3 - 2 - 1

3 – List three applications for slope, y-intercept knowledge in the professional world

2 – Identify two skills students must have in order to determine slope and y-intercept from a set of points on a plane

1 – If (x1, y1) are the coordinates of a point W in a plane, and (x2, y2) are the coordinates of a different point Y, then the slope of line WY is what?
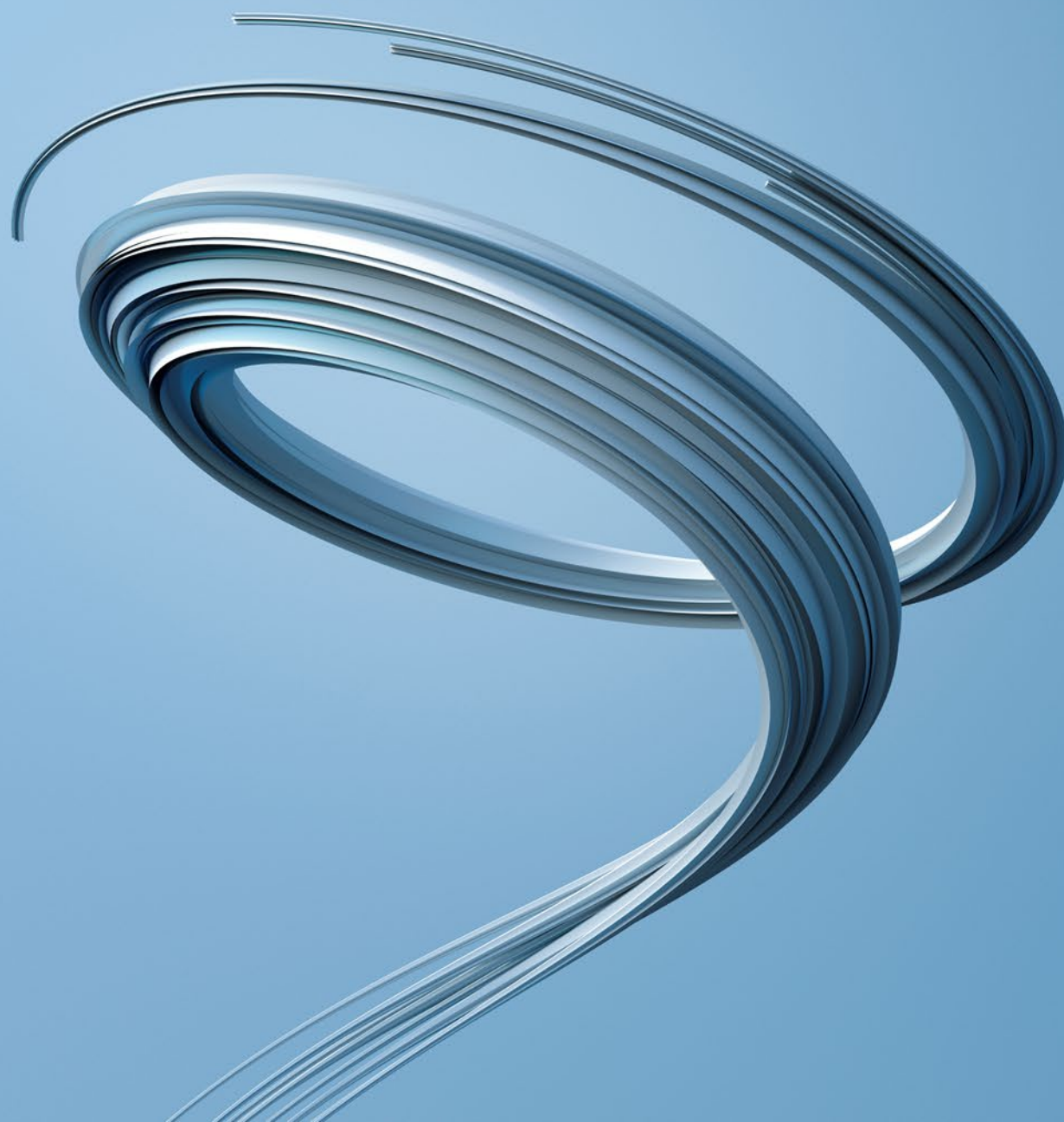
3 – Identify at least three differences between acids and bases

2 – List two uses of acids and two uses of bases

1 – State one reason why knowledge of acids and bases is important to citizens in our community

Backwards Summaries

- "Make the web from which this paragraph came."

- "Here's the completed math solution. What would happen if I had never considered the absolute value of x?"

- "Here's the final French translation of this sentence. What if I had not checked the tense of each verb?"

- "Here's a well done concerto. What happens if I remove the oboe's eight measures on page 4?"

- "Here's a well-done lab procedure. What happens if I don't use distilled water?"

Summarization Pyramid

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
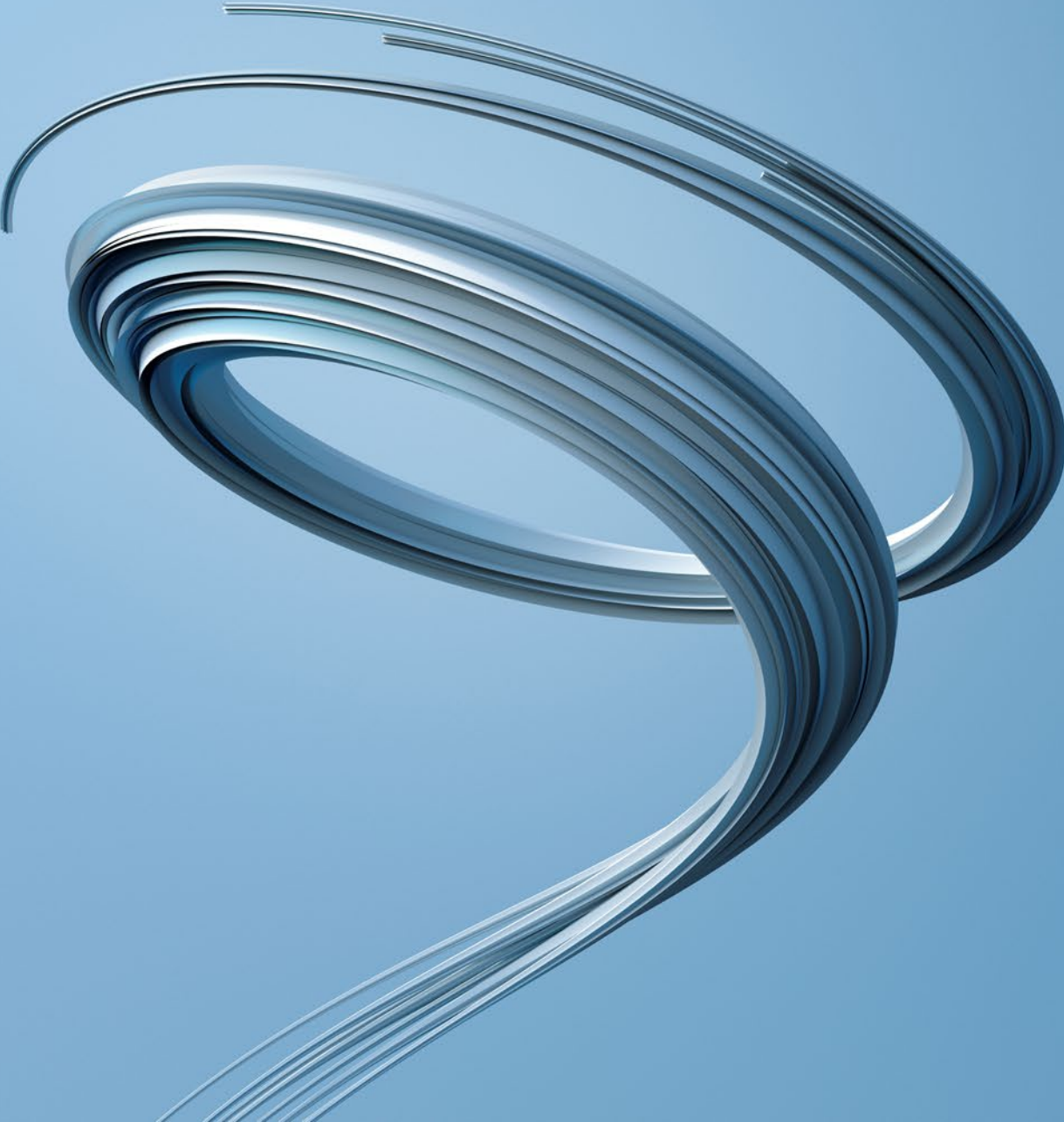
Great prompts for each line: Synonym, analogy, question, three attributes, alternative title, causes, effects, reasons, arguments, ingredients, opinion, larger category, formula/sequence, insight, tools, misinterpretation, sample, people, future of the topic

Concept Ladder

Concept:

Causes of:

Effects of:

Language associated with:

Words that mean the same as:

Historical examples:

Contemporary examples:

Evidence of:

Literature connections made:

Exclusion Brainstorming

The student identifies the word/concept that does not belong with the others, then either orally or in writing explains his reasoning:

- Mixtures – plural, separable, dissolves, no formula
- Compounds – chemically combined, new properties, has formula, no composition
- Solutions – heterogeneous mixture, dissolved particles, saturated and unsaturated, heat increases
- Suspensions – clear, no dissolving, settles upon standing, larger than molecules

Change your verbs!

Analyze…

Revise…

Decide between…

Why did…

Defend…

Devise…

Identify…

Classify…

Define…

Compose…

Build…

Construct…

Rank…

Argue against…

Argue for…

Contrast…

Develop…

Plan…

Critique…

Rank…

Organize…

Organize…

Interview…

Interpret…

Expand…

Predict…

Develop…

Categorize…

Suppose…

Invent…

Imagine…

Recommend…

Connect…

"Word Link"

- Each student gets a word.
- In partners, students share the link(s) between their individual words.
- Partner team joins another partner team, forming a "word cluster."
- All four students identify the links among their words and share those links with the class.

-- Yopp, Ruth Helen. "Word Links: A Strategy for Developing Word Knowledge," Voices in the Middle, Vol. 15, Number 1, September 2007, National Council Teachers of English

Categorizing Games

Any game in which students categorize items according to identified criteria. No one category can have less than three items that share that common characteristic.

Classify numbers, historical figures, literary devices, elements, uses of a particular object, plants, animals, insects, shells, rocks, and so on. Examples:

- Categorize the Greek gods and goddesses three different ways (domains/powers, relationships, chronological appearance, frailties…)

- "Word Sorts"

- Sort these student essays (products) into "Proficient," "Good, but in need of improvement," and "Struggling."

One-Word Summaries

- "The new government regulations for the meat-packing industry in the 1920's could be seen as an <u>opportunity</u>…,"

- "Picasso's work is actually an <u>argument</u> for….,"

- "NASA's battle with Rockwell industries over the warnings about frozen temperatures and the O-rings on the space shuttle were <u>trench warfare</u>…."

Basic Idea: Argue <u>for</u> or <u>against</u> the word as a good description for the topic.

4-Square Synectics

- Brainstorm four objects from a particular category (examples: kitchen appliances, household items, the circus, forests, shopping malls).

- In small groups, brainstorm what part of today's learning is similar in some way to the objects listed.

- Create four analogies, one for each object.

Example: *How is the human digestive system like each household item: sink, old carpet, microwave, broom*

Example: *How is the Pythagorean Theorem like each musical instrument: piano, drum set, electric guitar, trumpet?*

"Awards"
(p. 68, *Checking for Understanding*, ASCD, 2010)

- Students recommend someone or something for an award that they or the teacher have created based on their understanding of the topic:

  "Busiest Part of Speech" Award

  "Most Likely Mistake We Make while Graphing Data" Award

  "Most Important Literary Device in this Novel" Award

Taboo Cards

Turn an index card vertically and write a vocabulary word or concept at the top. Place a thick line underneath that word. In the remaining space under the line, write four or five words/concepts your students would normally associate with the vocabulary word.

Photosynthesis

Light
Green
Water
Sun
Chlorophyll
Plant
Produce
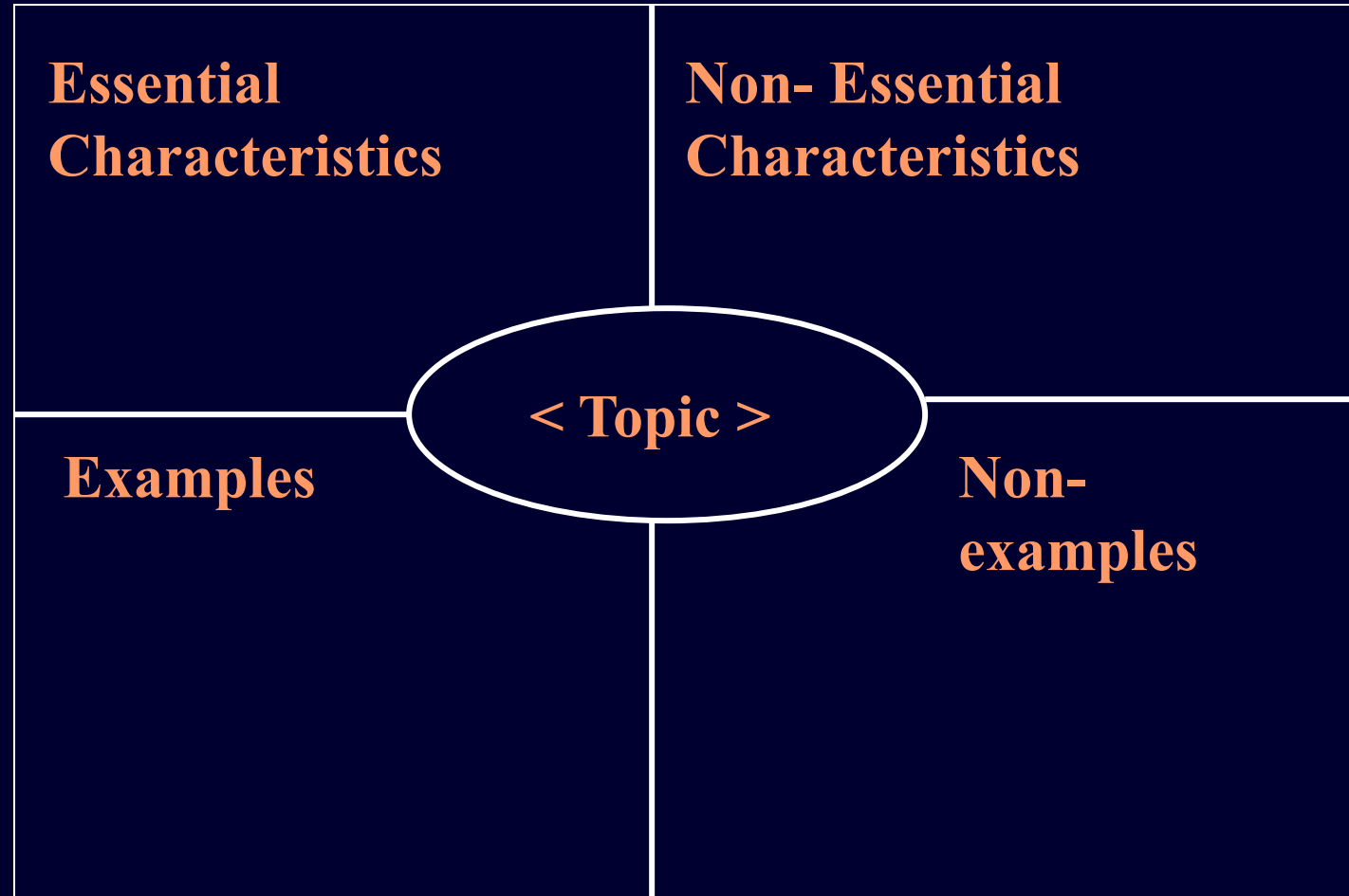
Principled First, Actionable/Doable Second

Identifying our operating tenets (principles) provides the stamina to see us through the logistics that initially elude us. Without principles, it's easy to lose steam and succumb to indifference or helplessness. Let's be principled and persevere.

Tenet: Whoever does the editing, does the learning.

Principled Responses:

- I will stop correcting students' work so often. Instead, I will put a dot at the end of the line or in the general area of the issue in a math problem, lab write-up, computer code, etc and ask students to identify and fix the mistakes. If necessary, I will provide a one-word clue as to the nature of the error.
- I will include students' critique and editing of others' work as a portion of the evidence of their own mastery in that content area.
- I will increase students' practice with editing/critiquing the work of others.
- I will do more self-talks and think-alouds of successful editing of content and skills, and I will ask students to demonstrate the same in front of their classmates.

Tenet: We teach for subject mastery, not short-term memory.

Principled Responses:

- I will avoid tests prompting for only basic recall of information, and I will include prompts requiring flexible applications and proven versatility with content and skills.
- In formative and summative assessments, I will ask students to apply, adapt, and reimagine what they are learning to ensure that their understanding is both broad and deep.
- I will incorporate novel applications of content into both lessons and assessments so students will become flexible when using new information and accounting for working world variables.
- I will put previous curriculum on subsequent assessments, even months later, to make sure they carry learning forward.

Tenet: We teach in ways *students* learn best, not the way *we* learn best.

Principled Responses:

- I need to continually update my knowledge and skills to ensure that I can provide appropriate responses to students' learning needs.
- Sometimes I will provide learning experiences for students that are outside my comfort zone.
- I will ask students how they learn best and use that information to help me plan lessons and assessments.
- I will not wait for my college to provide professional development for me. If I perceive a need, I will take steps to get the necessary training myself.
- I will analyze and reflect on the effectiveness of at least two lessons each month.

Tenet: Homework should enable students to practice what they have already learned in class and should not present new content for the first time.

Principled Responses:

- I will not assign homework to students who do not understand the content.
- I will give some students homework and others different or no homework, depending on their proficiency.
- I will use exit slips and formative assessment during class so I can determine proper after-school practice for each student.
- I will not give homework because parents and administrators expect me to do so, nor assign homework because it's a particular day of the week.
- I will only assign homework if it furthers students' proficiency in the field we're studying.

Tenet: Students learn at different rates.

Principled Responses:

- Some students will need more or less support and/or time in order to meet learning objectives and deadlines, but once they achieve mastery, I will record full credit for the demonstrated proficiencies.
- I will encourage students to re-do assignments and tests for full credit.
- I will not be restricted by a school district's calendar if I can teach students the course content solidly, though it be on a different timeline, including providing extensions into the summer months.
- I will incorporate formative assessment often to make sure teaching matches learning needs.

Tenet: Classrooms should cultivate, not stifle, creativity.

Principled Responses:

- I will embrace students who think differently and provide frequent descriptive feedback about their efforts to extend and adapt learning.
- I will encourage students to incorporate their own unique voice and experience in projects.
- Using specific subject content, I will show students how to look for fallacies in arguments, compare different viewpoints, and push for divergent thinking.
- I will provide students with multiple examples from many fields of individuals who parted from normal procedures and improved the human condition as a result.
- I will cultivate my own creativity as a teacher and thinker and model it for students.
- I will make it safe and inviting to think outside the box in our course learning.

Tenet: Fair isn't always equal.

Principled Responses:

- I will use varied instructional techniques as needed for students to achieve full competencies.
- I will not use a one-size-fits-all approach in my lessons.
- Grades will report only what students know and can do after learning's cycle, not the routes they used to get there.
- I will question teaching, assessment, and grading practices that are not developmentally appropriate for students.
- I will not promote fair as being equal; it means to be developmentally appropriate for the student at strategic moments in their learning.

Tenet: Intrinsic motivation for learning is more valuable than extrinsic motivation based on rewards and punishments.

Principled Responses:

- I will not use rewards and punishments to try to motivate students. Instead, I will provide descriptive feedback and strive to make the work meaningful.
- I will not use grades and grading policies to substitute for effective classroom management.
- I will study and use research about motivational strategies that are developmentally appropriate for the students I teach.
- I will help students build perseverance, executive function, and self-efficacy in their own learning and to be less dependent on external validation.

Tenet: Grades are communication, not compensation.

Principled Responses:

- I will not barter with students about grades, such as when declaring, "If you do this, I will give you an A."
- I will not use grades to reward, affirm, or validate any student.
- I will not tell students they "earned" a grade, which perpetuates the grades as currency rhetoric.
- I will make every effort to make sure grades are perceived as accurate reports of evidence, nothing more.
- I will not sort or classify students based on grades alone.

Principles/Tenets Involved:

- Teachers must be ethical. They cannot knowingly falsify a score or grade.
- To be useful, grades must be accurate reports of evidence of students' performance against standards.
- Regular report cards report against regular, publicly declared standards/outcomes. They cannot report about irregular standards or anything not publicly declared.
- Any test format that does not create an accurate report of students' degree of evidence of standards must be changed so that it does or replaced by one that does.

Example: How do I grade English Language Learners?

Principles/Tenets Involved: (continued)

- English Language Learners have a right to be assessed accurately.
- Lack of language proficiency does not mean lack of content proficiency.
- Effective teachers are mindful of cultural and experiential bias in assessments and try to minimize their impact.

Example: How do I grade English Language Learners?

Suggested first steps in
becoming a principled leader…

- Identify at least five ways to help teachers or yourself summon the professional courage/fortitude to do what's right, not what's easy. What changes in your collegial interactions can you make in order for facilitate this conviction among colleagues?
- What education belief or principle do you judge so important, it's worth the pushback or outright scorn from others if or when you implement it? State the principle, why it's so important, and your responses to those who would push back on it.
- List at least five elements (or ways of thinking) in your school's educational approach that should be "let go" in the service of more effective and ethical elements. Now identify two individuals with whom you will share these elements and elicit their input on first steps of doing so.

- Identify a teaching situation that concerns you or challenges your colleagues. Describe it thoroughly. Now identify the principles of learning and professionalism at play in the situation. Finally, record the opening lines you will use to open the topic with those involved in the situation as you help them resolve the issue.
- Make a list of a dozen ways teachers can check to see if a new practice they're implementing is improving learning over what was achieved with their former approach (or lack thereof). Share the list with two colleagues and invite them to revise it as they find helpful.

- Identify at least three of your unrecognized biases, leanings, preferences, or slanted "–ism's" (racism, classism, sexism, ageism, conservatism, liberalism, etc), and get honest: How does it filter how you see teaching, learning, students, colleagues, new ideas, or the role of education? Does it diminish anyone or anything, and does it elevate anyone or anything? Does it shape what you consider to be "normal," and thereby, exclude what others find normal? How could you open what you perceive as normal here? As you feel comfortable, identify a respected colleague with whom to share your thinking.

- In whatever medium you prefer, prove you are a principled educator whose actions align with his/her/their beliefs. If you discover you are not as principled as you believed, identify at least three steps you can take to become more principled.
- Choose three of the principles presented here or three principles you thought of while watching this presentation. For each one, identify five expressions of the principle in real classroom or professional practices, if actions aligned with these beliefs ('had integrity).

- Identify at least two principles with which you feel particularly challenged (You are not convinced they are true). Note that all that are presented here are generally accepted as reasonable and true in our profession. Now list multiple steps you can take to dive deeply into each of these troublesome principles and identify a respected colleague with whom you can discuss these principles and your investigative options.
- Add two new principles to which you adhere to each of the three categories of principles above: professionalism, learning, and assessment/grading.
- In whatever medium best suits you, explain how being principled improves teacher/leader effectiveness and student learning?

- Take several quiet moments and record your response: *For whom (student or colleague) do you stand, and why? [Be detailed here]*
- As a leader and/or classroom practitioner, what steps have you taken to create moral imperative in yourself and to assist others in the same endeavor? If you haven't, identify at least five ways you can do this.
- Write a letter of no more than two pages for potential new hires that describes your faculty's guiding principles and professional expectations (In short, 'your culture). These should be friendly descriptions of your operating tenets, mindful, too, that those who do not ascribe to the same tenets would be frustrated working in your school, so you're trying to be very clear here.

- For leaders: Identify at least four practices you want teachers to be using with their students that you can do with them professionally so they can feel the positives from being on the receiving end of those practices. Then actually do those practices with a sub-group of teachers for a period of two weeks, noting teacher response and amount of use of the same ideas with their students.
- Make a case for teachers to be up to speed on cognitive science (how the mind learns). Include specific examples in instructional design where such expertise could be expressed clearly, as well as five actions teachers can take to remain attentive to this element in their teaching.
- Make an argument for education as a moral enterprise. Share your argument with a respected colleague and invite its critique.

- Identify one of your "touchstones" in education: someone with whom you've worked, an author/presenter, a district leader, a family member. This should be someone you reference when making difficult decisions: *"What would [X] say about this?"* Then describe why they are such a professional touchstone for you. Once done, identify the merits of doing this reflection and whether or not it would be valuable to your faculty.
- Identify 3 to 4 colleagues willing to try the new building or department initiative, and brainstorm at least eight different ways to support their efforts as well as two ways to share their results.

- Pull four or five videos of teachers teaching from Youtube, Schooltube, Teachertube, Teacherchannel, Khan Academy, the "Teach Like a Champion" recordings, or from a similar resource. Then, in small groups of faculty or the department and in light of the building's emphasis for this year, critique the teaching, assessment, and any other related factor as you all watch: Ask teachers to note what worked and what didn't, what represented the building's focus, and how they might improve the lesson for the next time it's taught. Analyzing and discussing others' teaching, especially those not on the faculty, is a safe way to reflect on our own choices.

Identify individuals in your life who serve as professional "touchstones" for you.

Paulo Freire

John Goodlad

Regie Routman

Parker Palmer

Roland Barth

Pedro Noguera

Margaret Wheatley

Kylene Beers

Marcia Tate
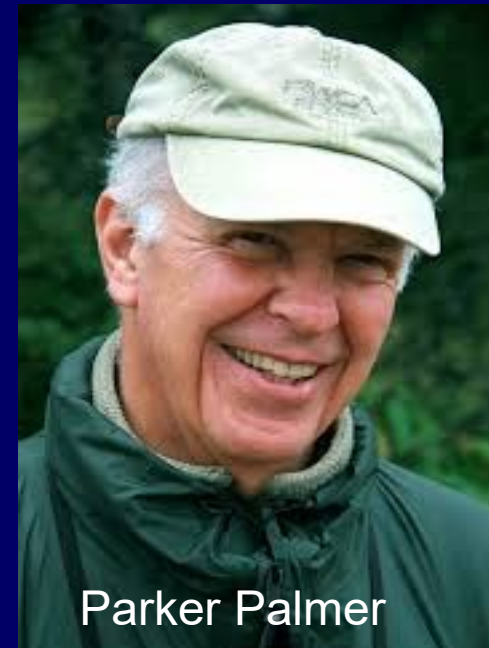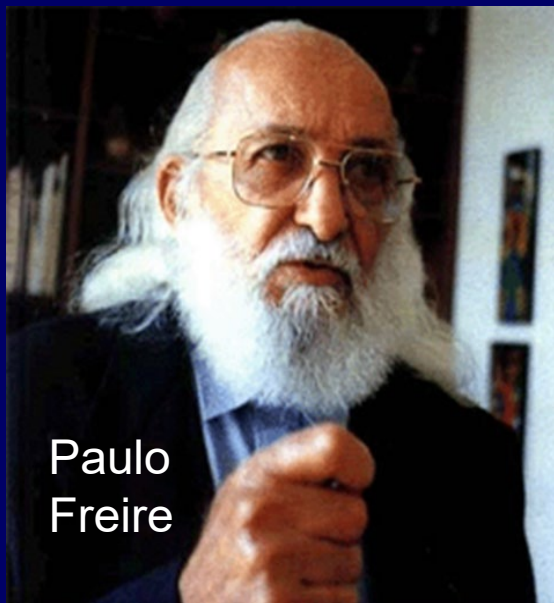
Specific Actions
that Work

Sometimes, in order to understand something, we have to experience it ourselves. Perspective and clarity recalibrate with direct experience.

- Ask each other whether or not grades should be accurate reports of student learning. Discuss about why this is so important to both the student and the teacher. Then, set up a T-chart: "Elements that Increase the Accuracy of Grades, and, "Elements that Decrease the Accuracy of Grades." Now, look at every grading policy or practice you have and place each one into one of the two categories. Reflect on what you notices in the listings.

- Using your or your department's grading policy letter (syllabus) and using it, create a pretend new contract for your evaluation that reflects the exact same policies. Consider whether or not the policies are equally applicable to us, professional educators.

- Provide a clear list of the standards and acceptable evidence of their proficiency, then to demonstrate in your assessments and grading focuses on those elements. Do a one-to-one comparison. For example, we might ask, "Where in the standards for this course, does it say, "Maintains an organized notebook?"

- With one another, practice using the "pitchback," bigger picture method: "When you declare this in your syllabus, it comes across as saying _____. Is that the message you intend to convey?" For example, recording an automatic, unrecoverable zero for any work submitted one day late gives the message that the assignment doesn't matter and it's okay to remain incompetent. Is that what we want to communicate to students?

- Design the perfect gradebook that reflects as many of the acceptable principles of ethical grading as possible: What information would be included? What format or structure would be the most user-friendly? What do we currently use in our gradebooks that does not align with ethical grading principles that we'd need to remove? How might we graphically represent the reporting? What supplementary elements would be helpful? If time allows, do the same with a suggested new report card for the district to use. This is wish-list, big time brainstorming and thinking that helps us aspire – and in doing so, make principles real.

- Invite parents and students to reflect on how the information you are sending home about students' learning is helping or not helping them at home.
- Video yourself working with students – What worked? What didn't? What was in alignment with ethical assessment/feedback/grading principles and what wasn't? What might we change for next time?
- Obtain a few samples of grading policy letters (syllabi) from other schools and analyze them together in terms of which ones align with equitable, ethical grading practices, and which ones do not align.

Effective leaders in grading reform see themselves as coaches and facilitators of others' journeys.

Great questions come from an authentically curious and collaborative place. They are not manipulations or declarations in disguise, such as, "Don't you think you should…," and, "Wouldn't it be better if you…".
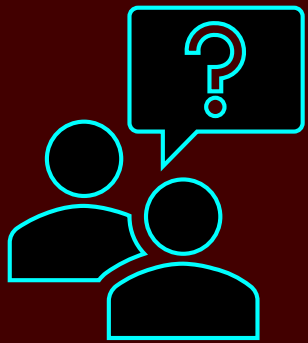
"[Great questions]…don't carry an implicit criticism like, "Why aren't you giving students more feedback? As coaching expert Julie Starr (2016) says, "Great Questions avoid making somebody wrong." (p. 96). P. 39, Knight

Paraphrase Often

- I hear you saying…

- What I hearing you saying is…

- Let me make sure I have this correct…

- In sum, then, you are worried that…

- Do I have that right?

- Did I hear that correctly?

- It sounds like you're saying that…

Questions to Help Teachers Reflect

- How do you feel it went?
- If you were teaching the way you wanted to teach, what would students see, hear, and feel?
- "When you think about the learning you want your students to do and the teaching you want to do, what gets in the way?" (Toll, p. 27)
- "When you think about bringing [Standard] to life in your classroom, what might get in the way?" *["Coach: I'm making a note of that. What else gets in the way?" Then as things are mentioned, keep recording the notes, and re-mentioning them in the list – "In addition to X getting in the way, you also think Y and Z are adding to the challenge…"* – Based on idea by Toll, p. 28]

- How's [X] going? You were concerned/happy with it last time.
- What was your goal there?
- What do you mean by….?
- Tell me more about…
- How will students be different as a result?
- What would a respected colleague do this situation?
- What have you done in the past, and what was the result?
- Why did you choose….?
- Is this increasing or decreasing students' self-efficacy?
- How does this move students from dependence on the teacher to independence from the teacher?

- Which of these suggestions seems the most workable? 'Gets your teacher engine running?
- "Let's assume the lesson bombs. Where is the likely cause of that?"
- "Can you walk me through that thinking for a moment, and when finished, show me how similar that is to other professions?"
- "Tell me how you learned your craft as a teacher…."
- "What's your goal here ultimately, and how does this policy/action advance that goal?"
- "You've identified three things that concern you about grading. Which one would you like to address first?"

- Are their other ways to teach/assess students identified with that challenge?
- I noticed you…., and as a result, students….. Was that your goal?
- How does that further their goal?
- How does that further your goal?
- Describe a time when this was successful for you.
- Tell me what excites you about this unit.
- Tell me what excites you about your teaching these past few weeks.
- Let's consider the situation from his/her point of view….
- What are your objectives, and how are they a part of a larger set of goals?

- When you do this again next year, what will you change?
- What does that tell you?
- Is there anything to that?
- Who is your intended audience for that statement, and will it be clearly understood by them?
- If time wasn't an issue, how would you teach this differently?
- How are students progressing towards the goal?
- Is that congruent with your teaching philosophy/beliefs?

- How will you begin?
- What will you need for that?
- Can you give an example of….?
- Imagine yourself at that point in the lesson (or grading those projects) – What will be going through your mind?
- Can you describe that further?
- Let's rehearse that moment in the lesson/assessment together.
- At this point in the lesson, were you making students more reliant or less reliant upon you for their learning?
- Let's watch another teacher teach/assess a similar lesson via this video clip – What do you notice?

- Let's consider the situation from his/her point of view….
- How will you know your lesson/assessment was successful?
- What would you like me to look for as I watch the lesson/assessment happening?
- What did you see students doing (or hear them saying) that made you feel that way?
- What do you recall about your own behavior during the lesson?
- How did what you planned compare with what you did?
- Are the students engaged or just on task, and how do you know?

- What are the goals for student learning stated in student-friendly language?
- What are some anticipated misconceptions? How will they be addressed?
- How will we make student learning visible?
- How will we record what we notice about student learning; during the lesson and after?
- Is there any part of this lesson you can turn over to students?
- At this point in the lesson, are students *accessing* content or *processing* content? Let's look at evidence of each.
- Does this make it passive or active for students?
- How could we streamline this process so you have more time to…?

Questions to Help solve problems

- Could you tell me how you…?
- And what else?
- And what was your response?
- How could you have re-phrased the question/statement so there was a different outcome?
- How could we re-phrase that to better communicate your intent?
- What did you do/decide that added to -- or resolved -- the issue?
- How will students be different as a result?
- What have you tried so far?
- Was this effective – How do you know?
- Did this increase the difficulty of the challenge or the complexity?

- "If this problem were solved what would it look like?" (Toll, p. 32), or alternatively, "What would I notice is different if I visited the classroom or chatted with you about your students' learning?" (Toll, p. 33)
- What would a respected colleague do in this situation?
- Let's brainstorm some possibilities together.
- What have you tried?
- How would you like this to be different?
- Would it be okay if we "partnered on this" (Toll) and did some individual information gathering and share back with other next week?

- Have you talked to….? They may have some advice on this.
- Where did the learning break down?
- Is there a metaphor or analogy we could create or help students create that would help them understand this more clearly?
- I hear you saying….. Is that what you intended to say?
- What else are you considering?
- Why did you not choose to….?
- Why did you choose to….?
- Of the three concerns/challenges listed, on which one would you like to focus first?

Questions Focused on assessment and Grading

- How will the students self-assess/self-monitor?
- How does that demonstrate ethical assessment/grading principles?
- Is that a report of compliance or competence?
- What does the grade/symbol/percent mean?
- What instruction/assessment principle is at work here?
- How did you express your assessment philosophy here?
- Will students and their parents get a clear picture of the student's progress?
- What are you trying to assess?
- What evaluative criteria are you using?
- Did students create the criteria by which they will be judged or did you?
- How does that help students understand what is expected of them?

- Are you reporting what students did or what they learned?
- Is consistency teacher to teacher valuable?
- As a result of this analysis of evidence, where are the students' strengths and needs?
- How will feedback be provided to students?
- Will that get you the accurate data you need? Why or why not?
- How does that practice make an assessment/grade more accurate?
- Is there any other way students could express the evidence you're seeking?
- Is the assessment format getting in the way of an accurate report?

As we are presented with concerns & challenges in teacher or parent statements, consider the following behind-the-scenes perspectives…

A. Let's get an accurate picture of the situation:

- Are there any misconceptions/misunderstandings that are being assumed as truth that need to be addressed?
- Is this venting about one thing but masking or revealing a larger issue?
- What is NOT being said?
- Are there multiple issues/challenges embedded in the statements that need to be identified and separated from one another?

B. What are the principles of [X] involved in this issue?

C. Our goal is not to provide the solution, but to facilitate/coach teachers' development of such. Let's begin with questions, not declarations.

D. Ninety-nine percent of teachers are doing the best they can with the information and resources they have. They may not be aware of the possibilities.

E. Identify what you believe or hold in common about the topic and move from there.

F. We can act our way into belief and believe our way into action.   Teachers must experience the psychological rewards of new practice in order to embrace it fully.

G. Sometimes just being a "pitch back," paraphrasing what teachers have declared and how it comes across, double-checking if that was their intent and consistent with their understanding of effective grading is all we need to do for clarity.

H. This teacher seems to be deflecting quite a bit when I ask this question. Is she feeling out of her depth regarding the new skill, strategy, or program?

I. If there is resistance, ask yourself, "What am I doing that is creating this resistance?" (p. 44, Knight, *Instructional Coaching: The Definitive Guide*)

J. Comparison through analogies or if the practice were applied to teacher evaluations may help.

K. Try to keep the focus on principles of [X], not the recipes and mechanisms/recipes of [X], if we want to shift perspective. Purpose and clarity provide the stamina needed for successful application.

Remember the #1 Rule of Improvisational Comedy: "Yes, and…"

Agree
(accept whatever it is),
and
take the journey with the other person by continuing the dialogue, perspective, or story

Create a Culture of Expectancy

- "This is our way of doing things around here."
- Letter to potential new faculty outlining beliefs
- Immersion -- If it's in sight, it's in mind, so put it in sight.
- Publicize at faculty meetings, newsletters, letter to parents, news organizations, Website
- Promote in public spaces used by teachers
- Attach proof of these practices to professional goals and annual evaluation

Include Parents

Super Helpful for Parent School Communication about Grading

➢ Create (and Update Regularly) a Parent FAQ Document
➢ Purchase additional copies of books for parents to borrow when doing a book study
➢ Invite parents to half the professional development trainings
➢ Conduct a parent survey of how the new assessment and grading practices help at home
➢ Ask parents from varied professions to share how they are evaluated in those professions
➢ Invite parents to be members of the gradebook and report card re-design process

- Is this reporting method helpful to us as parents? How is it informing our home conversations?
- How can I provide feedback, or help my child get feedback, on this work?
- What are the evaluative criteria for proficiency (success) in this skill or competency?
- How is my child progressing towards those learning goals? If he isn't progressing, what can we do differently to get him there?

…involved parents
ask helpful questions.

- To which skill or competency does this test prompt refer?
- How does this assessment allow my child to express what she knows and can do accurately?
- Can I trust the grade to be an accurate representation of my child's learning regarding those standards?
- Is my student developing agency and self-efficacy, taking responsibility for his/her/their learning?
- Will this approach prepare them for the post-high school world?

When it comes to assessment and grading,

…involved parents ask helpful questions.
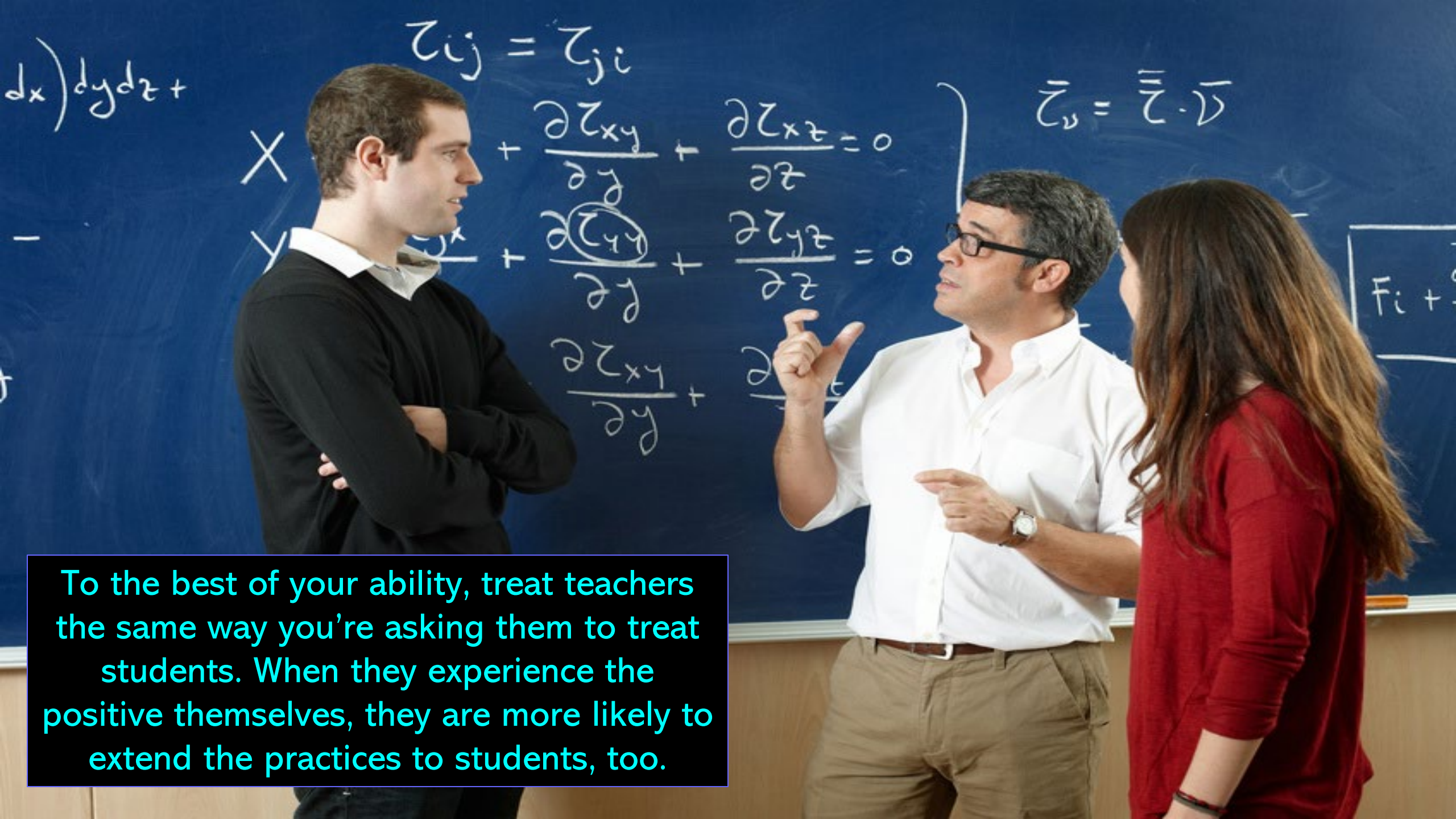
To the best of your ability, treat teachers the same way you're asking them to treat students. When they experience the positive themselves, they are more likely to extend the practices to students, too.
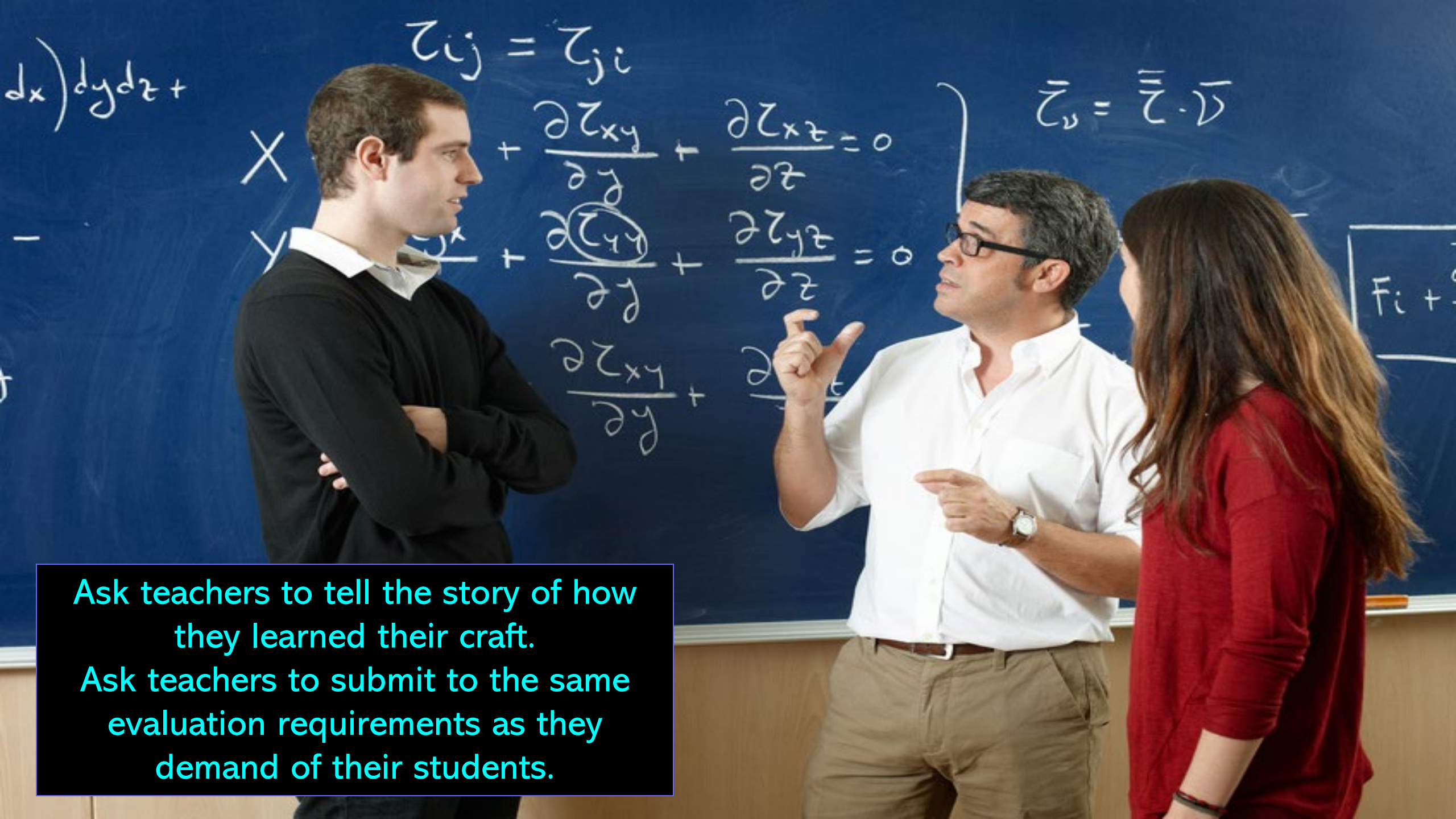
Ask teachers to tell the story of how they learned their craft.
Ask teachers to submit to the same evaluation requirements as they demand of their students.

Put time, energy, people, and money into coaching and mentoring teachers:

- Becoming a Lab School for a local University
- Beginning teacher induction programs
- Critical Friends Network
- Teacher Action Research Teams
- PLC's
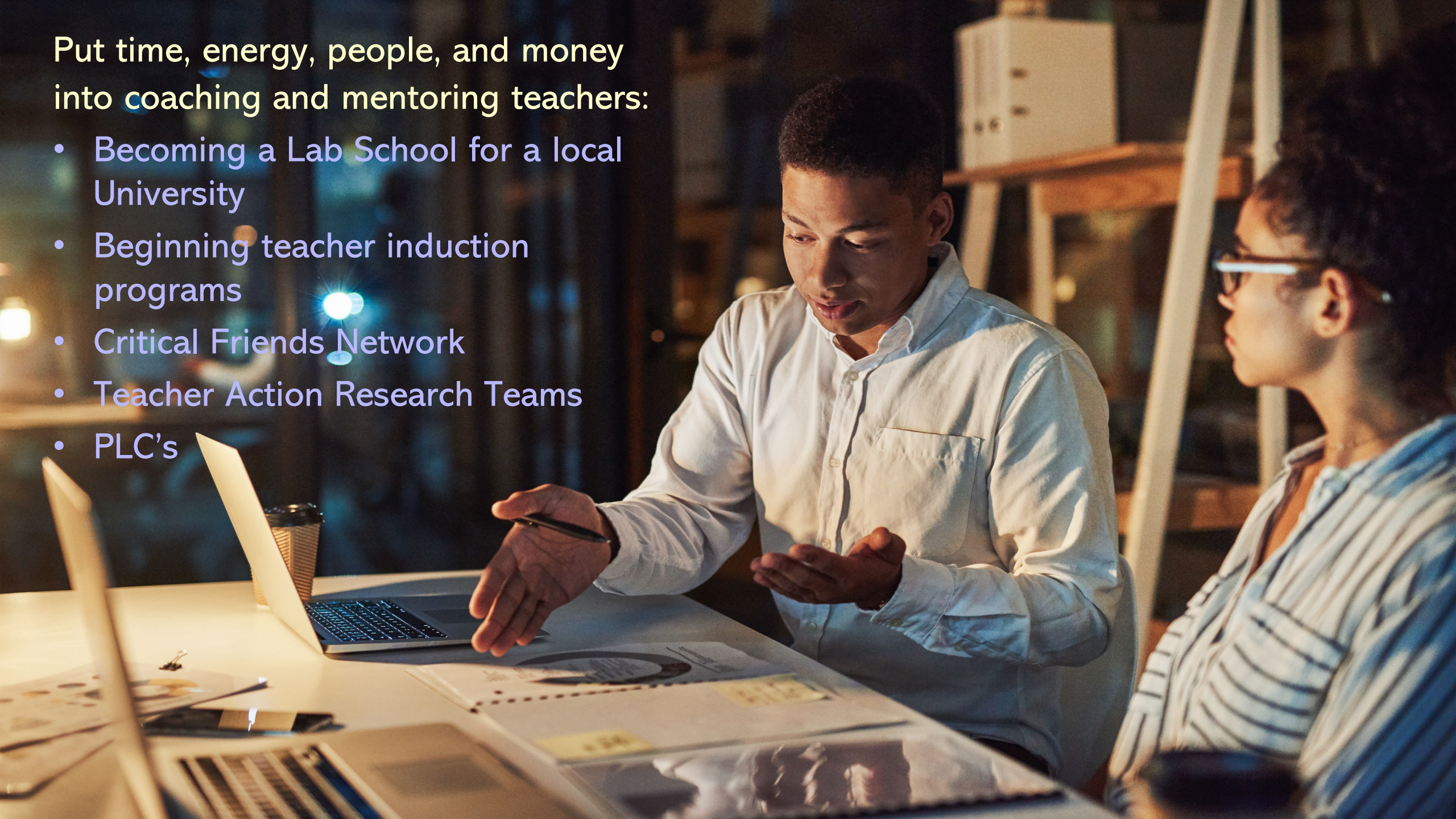
Run the numbers for those that need to see them.

Rotate meeting places in order to fully dimensionalize colleagues—so they become more than stereotypes and caricatures. Help faculty and colleagues see the full person with whom they are working.

Start with a Few…

"Start with volunteers rather than conscripts."

– Dylan Wiliam, *Leadership for Teacher Learning,* 2016, p. 200

- Identify 3 or 4 staff already differentiating or willing to give it a shot…*and support their journey with everything you've got.*

- Ask them to present their journey to the faculty -- 'mistakes, successes, 'everything.

- Invite a parent or three to be a part of the conversations.

Regularly Affirm Small and Large Successes

- public recognition at faculty gatherings
- private notes of thanks & encouragement
- take over a teacher's class in order to give her an extra planning period

- refer a teacher looking for help to a successful teacher
- post teacher successes somewhere visible
- invite news organizations to interview teachers who've been successful
- ask successful teachers to take on leadership roles
- Invite teachers to publish their ideas, co-write with them, if needed.

Conduct Instructional Roundtables

- One-hour or less
- Someone (not limited to leaders) posts a topic for discussion and a location for the meeting two weeks in advance
- All are invited, but 'must have one idea to share (photocopied) as ticket to the roundtable

Conduct Book Study Groups

- Teachers and administrators
- Request study guides from publisher, if available
- One month in duration, if possible

Analyze each other's lessons and actual teaching. When analyzing others, we think about our own practices.

Let's Honor the adult learner.
(andragogy)

Adults need to feel their life and work experience/perspective are honored, 'that they have something to bring to the conversation, task, and learning. Motivation suffocates with a coach's (or principal's) dismissiveness or inattention to earned insights.

From, "Breaking the Code: What Motivates Adult Learners?" (2018)
https://www.shiftelearning.com/blog/what-motivates-adult-learners

"Job Relevance: They should be able to determine the need for the learning…Adult learners appreciate working towards clearly-defined goals (this is their main motivator…)…They hate the feeling of running around in circles and quickly become frustrated…. *[So,]*

- Begin every module by stating the learning objectives clearly.
- Explain in detail how to carry out an activity.
- Use analogies to relate new ideas to what learners already know.
- Provide concrete examples.
- End every module by reinforcing the learning.
- Make sure all relevant information is visible and easily accessible, and there are no obstacles that keep your learners from reaching their goal efficiently.

"**Progress:** They are interested in learning that aligns with their life goals According to Teresa Amabile of Harvard, the lure of progress is a powerful motivator in adults. …They are motivated to engage with your eLearning course if you reveal to them what they can achieve by the time they complete it. *[So,]*

- Incorporate videos of successful people or relevant experts related to the subject.
- Give students the opportunity to constantly self-assess their progress and understanding of a subject.
- Offer feedback to boost their efforts and encourage them in completing a task.
- Provide a concrete proof of completion such as a certificate.
- Build levels, grades, or other types of rewards and recognitions in your course to give the learner the gratification of knowing that he or she is making progress at the workplace.

"**Trust:** They are more influenced by messages that come from a trusted source or a figure of authority

Exploration: They want to learn by exploring, NOT clicking through a course…Adult learners are self-directed individuals who want to control the way they lead their lives. They want to be involved in and experience the learning first-hand….Charles Jennings said it clearly "Think experience, practice and sharing rather than content, content, content." *[So,]*

- Consider gamification. When you set goals, throw in challenges, and provide rewards, learners will be instantly hooked.
- Offer several opportunities for them to participate.
- Invite them to solve a problem or a mystery.
- Storytelling: When you weave your content within an engaging story, your audience will gobble it up. Stories feel more realistic than charts and statistics.
- Provide learners a level of individual control as they complete the course.
- Create activities and assessments that make the learner think. Adult learners love nothing more than to connect the dots, find patterns, and figure out the answers themselves.
- Make use of their previous experience. A simple "what if" exercise can effectively help you achieve this."

"Adult learners are results-oriented. They need to know that the material is relevant to their goals…Adult students are more self-directed. They want to be responsible for and in control of their educational path. Adult learners can benefit from options, such as the ability to choose between an essay-based test and a multiple-choice test.

"Although you might think age makes people more open-minded about learning, the reverse is typically true. Life experiences can make mature students less receptive to new ideas. They need to know the "why" behind the need to learn a new concept, then be able to relate it to established ideas…

"Adult students have busier lives. The majority work full time and spend significant time commuting between work, home and campus. Restrictive policies can make it impossible for adult learners to juggle all of their responsibilities. Breaking learning into smaller chunks that they can complete quickly can help.

"Children absorb new information faster than adults, but adults tend to have a deeper understanding of the information. The difference can be noticeable with material that requires memorization, such as mathematical formulas or foreign-language vocabulary lists. Adult learners can benefit from having "memory work" introduced early in the learning module to give them more time to commit the material to memory."

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results

Atomic Habits

An Easy & Proven Way
to Build Good Habits
& Break Bad Ones

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James Clear

"Brailsford's strategy "the aggregation of marginal gains", 1 percent improvements. If you can get 1% better each day for one year, you'll end up thirty-seven times better by the time you're done. You'll get what you repeat....True behavior change is identity change. The goal is not to read a book, but to become a reader...The most effective way to change your habits is to focus not on what you want to achieve, but who you wish to become."

-- https://mindwave.app/blog/atomic-habits-james-clear/

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"The purpose of setting goals is to win the game. The purpose of building systems is to continue playing the game. - P. 27

The Four Laws of Behavior Change are a simple set of rules we can use to build better habits. They are:

- make it obvious,
- make it attractive,
- make it easy,
- make it satisfying.

- https://mindwave.app/blog/atomic-habits-james-clear/

To break the habit

- Make it invisible
- Make it unattractive
- Make it difficult
- Make it unsatisfying

- p. 54

Working through scenarios, hypotheticals, and case studies when it's emotionally neutral helps adult students find relevancy and engage.
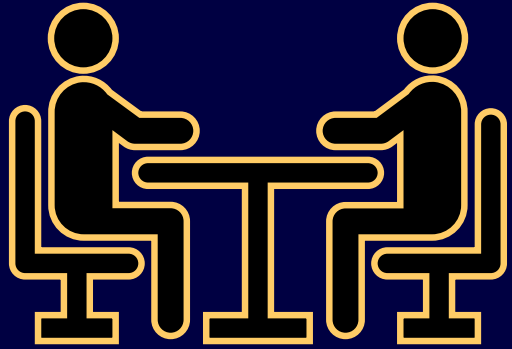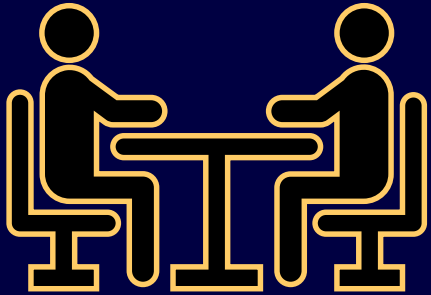
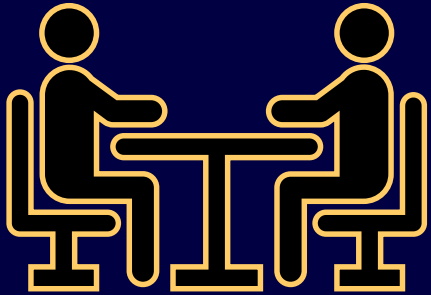Given the operational tenets of equity in grading, how might we respond to specific grading challenges?

- One student uses a graphic organizer or similar organizational tool on a summative assessment and gets an, "A," grade, but the rest of the class does not use an organizer and they also get an, "A." 'Any concern here?

- One student can't read on grade level so the test is read aloud with proper vocal inflection and respect for the punctuation, which results in a higher level of comprehension of the reading than he could achieve reading silently. As a result, he is able to answer comprehension questions accurately. 'Concerns?
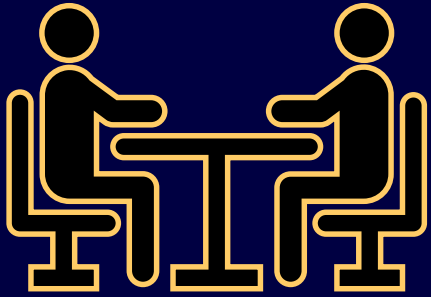
- One student is asked to write an essay for the summative assessment while another student is asked to produce a podcast on the topic. Another student is invited to create slide presentation on the topic. 'Any issues here?

- Three students are given more time to finish a report or project than the rest of the class. What do we do about this when it comes to their grades?
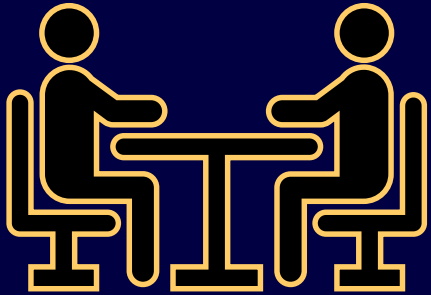
- While averaging on the 100-point scale, a teacher records a zero for a major test not done. While the student does well (A's and B's) on the five other tests in the marking period, the one score of "0" skews the average so low that the highest grade he can get in the class is a D or low C. 'Issue here?

- One teacher does not allow redo's and re-takes because she feels that students won't study for the first version of the test if they think they can just take the first one as a preview of what's on the test. 'Issue?
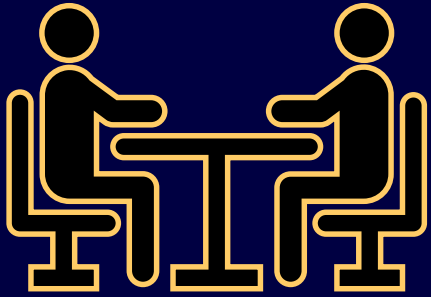
- A teacher declares that students must stay after school for a review session if they want to re-assess on something. 'Possible concern here?

- A colleague counts the following (see below) in the academic grade. 'Any concerns here?
  - Timely adherence to deadlines
  - Returns permission slips and other forms signed by parents
  - Maintains a neat and up to date notebook
  - Student keeps up on homework assignments
 - Student uses a color printer as directions indicate

- A colleague is asking higher-order thinking questions with girls more than with boys because the boys are less well prepared, and embarrassing them won't help, she thinks. 'Issue here?

- Out of mercy's sake, a teacher doesn't require several impoverished students to demonstrate complex, interwoven thinking as she requires of the rest of the class, as they are already dealing with so many challenges. 'Concern here?
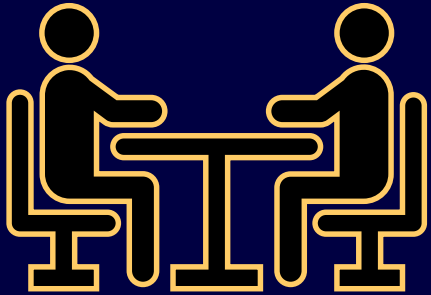
- "All final papers must be typed, not handwritten." 'Issue here?

- A student re-learns and re-assesses five times and finally achieves a grade of 3.5 (B+) on the final version. Do we type over the former grades for this assessment and use the most recent one, do we average all five grades, or do we keep the historical record of all the grades, and report them all?
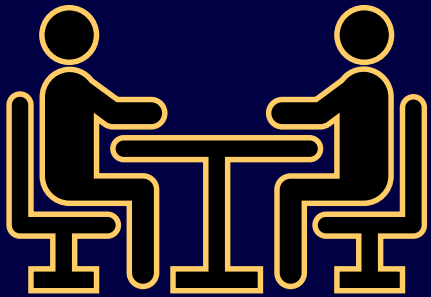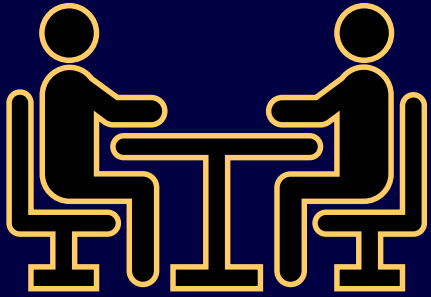
- The classroom teacher is in a school district that requires homework/classwork/character habits to count 35% of the course grade, yet she knows from her training in grading that this is knowingly falsifying the grade report regarding student learning. What should she do?

- A colleague declares that she needs to prepare students for the high school where they don't extend deadlines, separate work-habits from academic grades, or allow re-dos', so she's not going to do any of these here. 'Concern here?
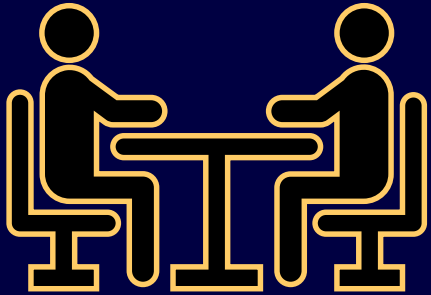
- For some reason, a student struggles with the current content and gets a, "D," on the test. Two months later, however, after some additional learning on his part, he demonstrates full proficiency on a follow-up test. What grade should be recorded for this new demonstration of mastery?

- Similarly, a student doesn't know the material in the first grading period, but DOES know it in the last grading period. How do we report learning on the transcript, then?
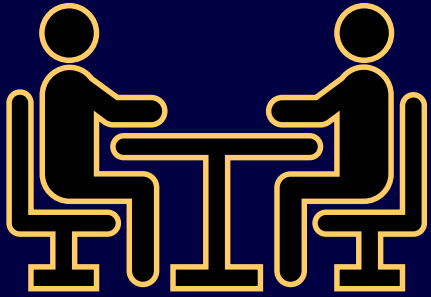
- Claiming a dedication to fairness and integrity, the teacher requires all students to take notes, do classwork/homework, and similar activities the exact same way. As a result, some students who don't learn in those ways did not learn as the material as effectively as others, and their low test grades show it. 'Issue? How might we respond to this colleague?

- A student has very little prior knowledge or lived experience with the instructional examples given, or the level of proficiency required to apply a concept, yet is required to do so on a high stakes test or project. 'Issue?
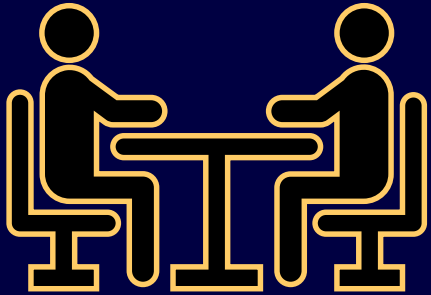
- A student is docked points on a test because he did not bring in the 300 index cards required by the teacher, or alternatively, he did not attend a live, on-line module the class was doing together on one assigned evening. 'Issue?

- A student demonstrates proficiency in the standard, but does it in a way that expresses a strong political or religious opinion at odds with the teacher's very strong political or religious beliefs. The teacher takes points off the grade report because of this. (Yes, this happens.)
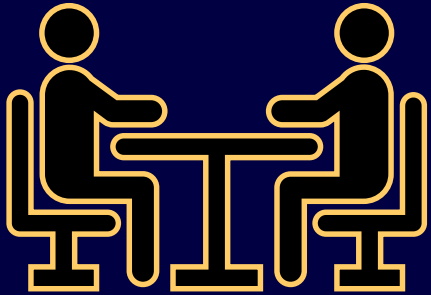
- The teacher is unaware of daily micro-aggressions against students of color, students from a particular part of the world, or of a particular sexual orientation or gender, and, as a result, instruction is increasingly hostile and oppressive experience for these students, negatively affecting their learning. What happens, then, when it comes to grading these students?

- A student knows the content being assessed very well when interviewed, but struggles to express that mastery with the given assessment format. What can a teacher do?
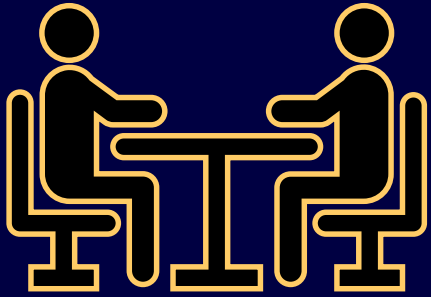
- "There's nothing I can do when he doesn't turn in the work and the parents are uncooperative. The F stays."

- "Look, I know he is an English Language Learner, but he needs to learn to speak and write in English; that's the only way he's going to get serious about learning it. Plus, I have to be fair to all the other students, so I can't give him a different version of the test – It has to be the same as everyone else."
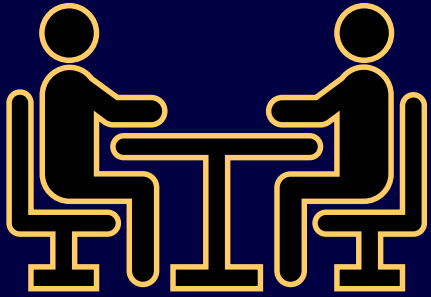
- A student has text anxiety, so his teacher schedules his exam for three, after-school sessions, each one for 20 minutes, over the course of three days. Instead of the short answer, multiple choice format the rest of the class is using, she conducts the test as an interview.

- Mrs. GoodTeacher counts her single-sitting, two-hour, final exam at the end of the year as 50% of the overall grade.
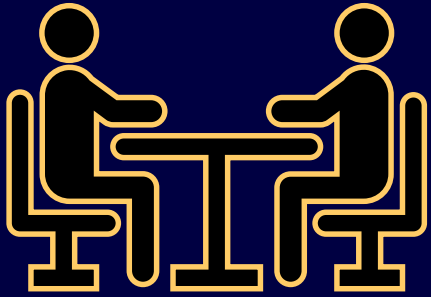
- For every high grade on a report card that was achieved by a student completing one or more redo's, the teacher records an asterisk next to the grade and explains that it was only achieved through the redo process. 'Issues here?

- The teacher is grading students against end of the year expectations instead of the material they were taught and on which they were assessed in this particular marking period. 'Concern?
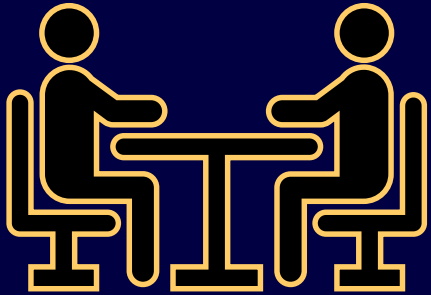
- "Students have to learn to take a standardized, non-creative test for the state. Allowing them to do alternative assessments like this does not prepare them for that world."

- "He needs sports eligibility, so I let him do that project about finding examples of mathematics in classical music instead of taking the unit test on the math topic."

- All students in Mr. Brown's class keep journals in math. The type of journal matches each student's strengths/interests. For example, one journal is for the students whose verbal skills are stronger than their math skills. Students keep a list of math terms learned in class and then use the terms in sentences. Another journal is for students have good visual-spatial skills. These students draw pictures to remind them of math vocabulary. 'Any issue here?

- Two students struggle with graphing the intersection of two inequalities, so the teacher asks them to graph only one inequality instead. 'Issue?

- The teacher declares that there is only one real way to assess something in this particular topic, so she declines the request from the partnering special ed teacher to use an alternative assessment method for an identified student who needs it.

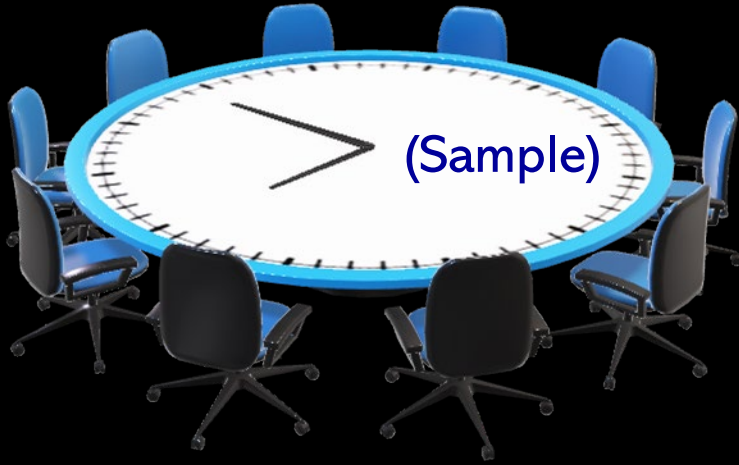- The teacher's assessment prompts do not match what she has declared as evidence of mastery for the standards.

Grading Philosophy Statement (GPS)

'A Powerful Experience…

- Public declaration of beliefs
- Invitation to critique and question those beliefs
- Revising teaching practices in light of that critique and questioning

GPS

(Sample)

Grading Philosophy Statement
(Your Personal navigation device)

Remember:

1) This is best done AFTER some foundational training/reading.
2) There is great value for you as a leader, facilitating the experience of others, to draft a GPS.
3) It's in ceaseless composition.
4) We do this to build capacity and dexterity for the challenging conversations ahead, to gain clarity for ourselves, and for insight into how to facilitate the journey of others, *not* as the first draft of district policy handed down from above.

GPS Format

1. 1-2 sentence statement of your philosophy.
   Ex: *"Homework will count 10% in this class."*

1. 3-8 sentences of rationale as to why this is your policy. Ex: *"Homework is meant to be practice as students learn a topic, not a declaration of summative mastery of that topic. Since grades are reserved only for summative declarations of mastery, homework should not be a major portion of the final grade for the grading period."*

Include in your statement your philosophy on the following:

Differentiated and fair grading
Rubrics
Modified or adjusted curriculum
Student self-assessment
Extra credit
What grades mean
Definitions of individual grades
Grading scales (100 vs 4.0)
Formative vs summative assessments
Averaging grades vs using median/mode
Grading classwork
Grading homework
The purpose of homework
How much curriculum should be on one test and tiering tests

The role of alternative assessments
Weighting grades
The percent influence of varied assessments
Dealing with late work
Setting up the gradebook according to categories, assessment formats or standards
Re-doing work or tests for full credit
The purpose of grades and grading

GPS

1. Write it individually, in alignment with your grading principles and fully aware of your intended audience.

2. Share in small groups, giving and receiving critique. Ask questions to get colleagues articulating philosophy. Play "contrarian," as needed.

3. Revise in light of new insights, and do so the rest of your career.

Keep a running list of elements that we want to be sure to include in PL experiences moving forward.
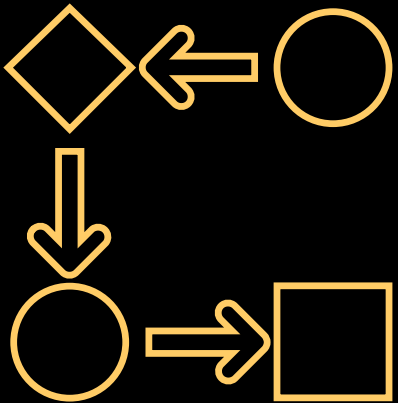
Now sequence those elements over two to three years mindful that some elements will run concurrently with others.

"Start where you are.
Use what you have.
Do what you can."

- Tennis champion, HIV/AIDS educator, and civil rights activist, Arthur Ashe