



McREL
INTERNATIONAL

**Balancing Leadership for
Student Success**

Bryan Goodwin, President & CEO



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curiosity for better learning

What do you hope to gain from conferences like this?



Analysis & insights

- Learning from research & best practice
- Opportunities to reflect on how research applies to my work
- I want to walk away with more knowledge


A



Big picture inspiration

- Hearing big ideas that help me to make sense of my work
- Having my paradigm challenged
- I want to walk away inspired & with new purpose


B



Collegial learning

- Opportunities to process ideas with my colleagues
- Hearing what others are doing to solve my problems
- I want to walk away with “gems” from colleagues

C



Do's & don'ts

- Getting practical guidance I can use tomorrow
- Opportunities to create concrete action plans
- I want to leave here ready to take next steps

D

With a partner and discuss which of these is *most* like you.
And discuss which of these is *least* like you.

Which learning outcome matters most to you?

Research & best practices **A**

Big picture inspiration **B**

Collegial learning **C**

Practical advice **D**

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at pollev.com/app

We all have different thinking preferences

- Logical
- Quantitative
- Objective
- “Just the facts, please.”

Analytical

- Big picture
- Experimental
 - Intuitive
- “What’s the big idea?”

Imaginative

- Process
- Detail
- Pragmatism
- “Let’s get started.”

Sequential

- Feeling & intuition
 - Social cohesion
 - Group norms
- “Are we all okay here?”

Interpersonal

These preference can influence leadership style

- Objectivity & data
- Learning-oriented
- “How do we know?”

Analyzers

- Big ideas & change
- Innovation-oriented
- “Is there a better way?”

Visionaries

- Structure & routines
- Results-oriented
- “Let’s get it done.”

Directors

- Nurture & support
 - People-oriented
- “Are we all okay?”

Connectors

**Which leadership
style is best?**



Visionary leadership



Taps into sense of purpose.

Provides picture of a better future.

Challenges the status quo.

Helps others believe change is possible.

Why it matters

We need to see what we'll *gain*, not just give up.

Internal rewards motivate more than external ones.

No one cares what you do, they care *why* you do it.



Why it's not enough

People also need clarity and focus.

Which inspires more action?



You are what you eat!
So, eat healthy!



Buy 2% instead of whole milk
the next time you go to the store!



Be a good person!
Join our food drive!



Bring one can of food
to the student union this Friday!

A high-angle photograph of a runner on a track. The runner is a man in a purple singlet and black shorts, running towards the bottom right. The track is a light-colored concrete or asphalt surface. The background is dominated by large, dark, angular shadows cast by a modern building's overhangs, creating a complex geometric pattern. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

Focused repetition is key to mastery

**Adults need to practice a new skill
at least 20 times to master it.**

The perils of only providing visionary leadership

Great vision,
poor execution

Well, it looked way cooler in my head.

Directive leadership

Sets clear, non-negotiable goals.

Monitors progress toward goals.

Establishes routines, structures & efficiencies.

Turns up the heat as needed.

Would you be able to see the difference between high- & low-performing schools?



The “Forrest Gump” principal of school performance

Classrooms in
low-performing
schools
are like a box of
chocolates ...

*... you never know what
you're going to get.*

Why it matters



Improvement requires overcoming chronic inconsistency.

Improvement begins with establishing routines.

Clarity is the key to change.

Turning vision into action

We need to ask students high-level questions.

We need to ask students more connecting, explaining, evaluative and analytical questions.

We need to define what use of these questions looks like with non-evaluative rubrics.

Over the next six weeks, teachers will pre-plan high-level questions to ask with each lesson and we'll observe high-level questions being asked in classrooms.



Consistent high quality is
the key to excellence
(and chronic inconsistency is the key mediocrity)



Why it's not enough

Pressure alone doesn't
increase performance

Do we perform any better under stress?

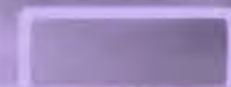
Kicking to win.

92% success rate



Kicking not to lose.

62% success rate



Too much pressure to just do something
can lead to leaping without looking
(a.k.a. “solutionitis”)



Avoiding solutionitis: An example

Why is the Lincoln Monument deteriorating?

It's being cleaned with harsh chemicals

Why is it being cleaned so frequently?

Because of the large amounts of bird droppings

Why are there so many bird droppings?

Because birds feed on spiders around the monument

Where are there so many spiders?

Because they're drawn to insects swarming around lights shining on the monument

Bingo! Change how and when the monument is illuminated

Source: Gross, J. A. (2014). *5 whys folklore: The truth behind a monumental mystery.*
<http://thekaizone.com/2014/08/15-whys-folklore-the-truth-behind-a-monumental-mystery/>

A school example: the 4th grade slump

Average reading achievement drops in 4th grade.

Why?

Because our early grade reading programs focuses mainly on reading skills, not exposing kids to interesting texts.

Why?

We were told young students aren't ready for that.

Why? Is that true?

Because students struggle to shift from learning to read to reading to learn.

Why?

Many kids don't like to read so they don't do much independent reading., Thus, there's a big "Matthew effect."

Why?

Well, not exactly.

They can demonstrate fluency on simple but are overwhelmed with lengthier more complex nonfiction.


Why?

Because students lack reading comprehension skills and have weak vocabularies.

Why?


So maybe we need to focus on ensuring our K-2 students can decode *while also* exposing them to interesting texts to read.

The perils of only providing directive leadership
Consistency, but drudgery



How many years
till I can retire?

Connected leadership



Nurtures & supports staff well-being & engagement.
Creates a positive, supportive culture.
Celebrates success and builds collective efficacy.

Teachers are more apt to change when others change with them

Components	Knowledge	Skill	Transfer
Study of theory	10%	5%	0%
Demonstration	30%	20%	0%
Practice	60%	60%	5%
Peer coaching	95%	95%	95%

Joyce, B., and Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Why it's not enough

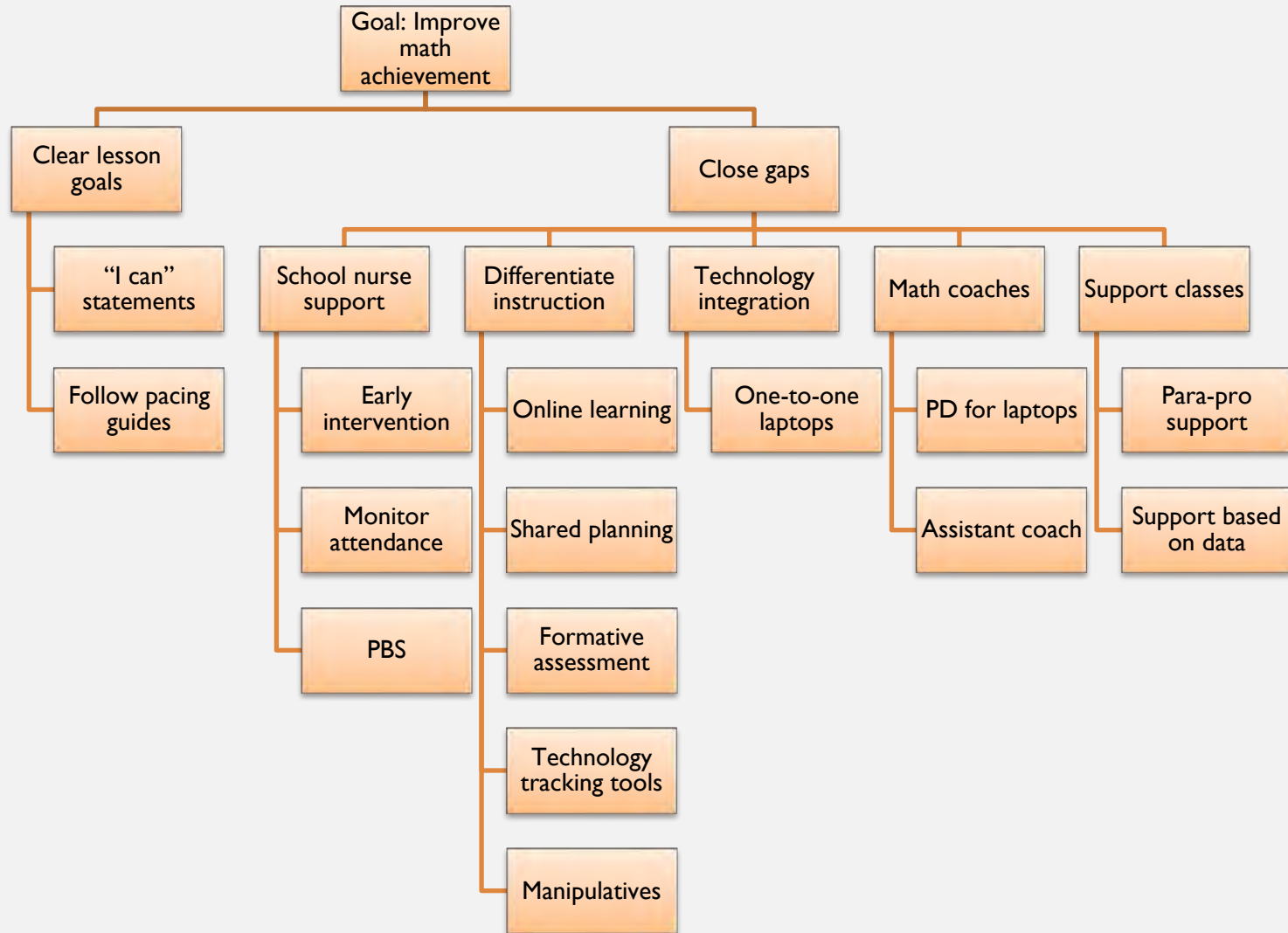
Too much cohesion can lead to complacency.
Group thinking can lead to “camels”.

“A camel is a horse designed by committee.”

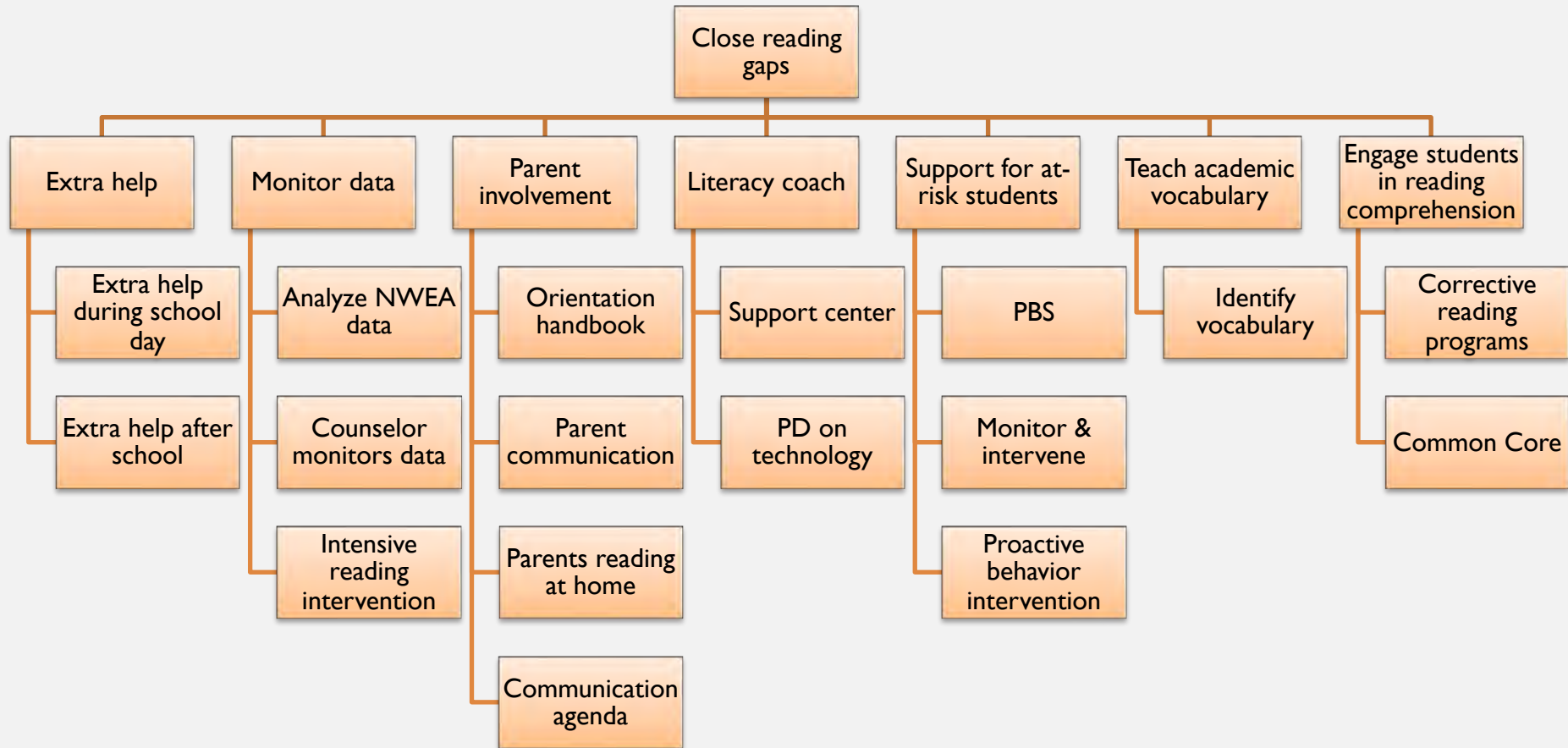
~ Sir Alec Issigonis, British car designer



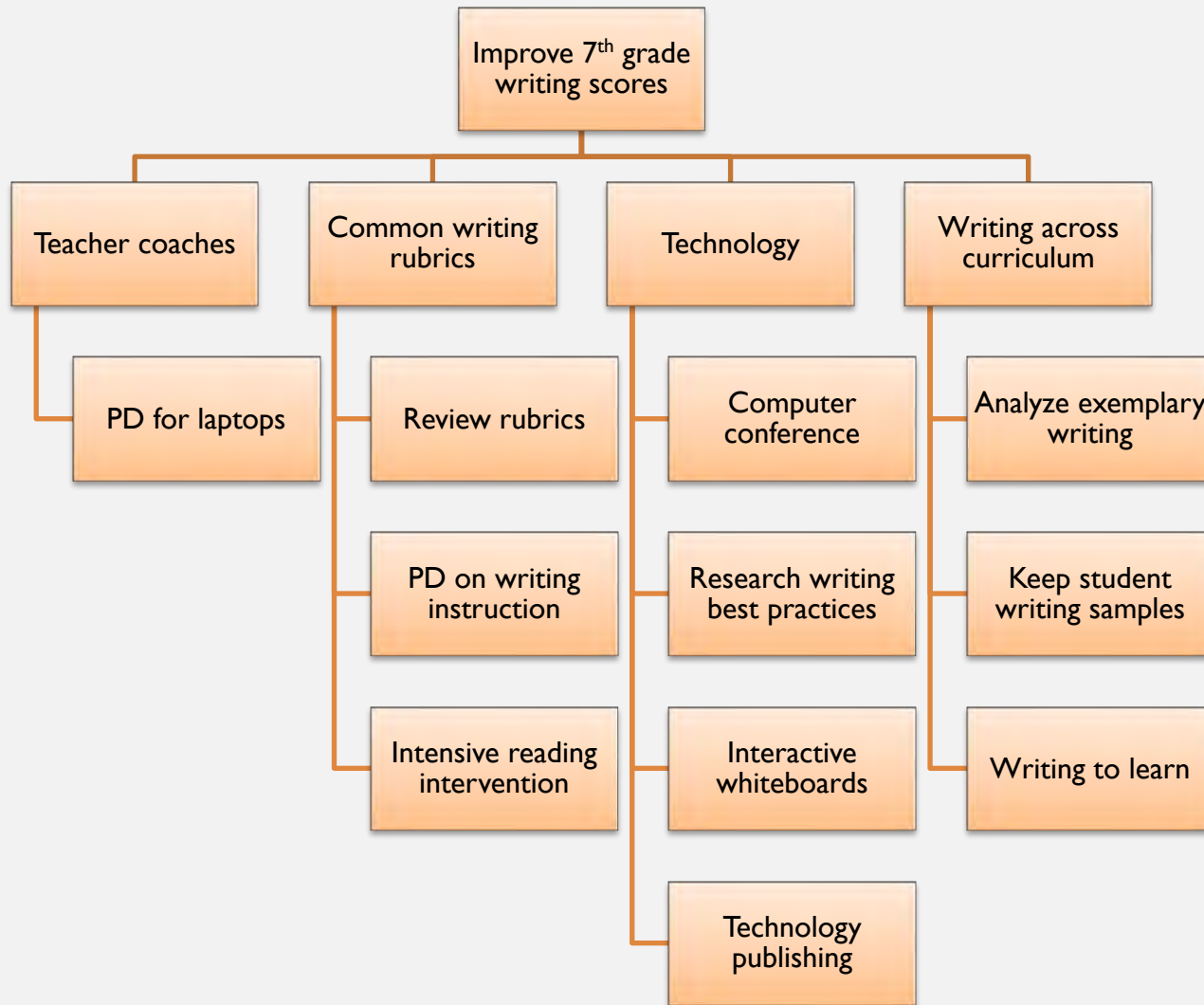
A typical school improvement plan



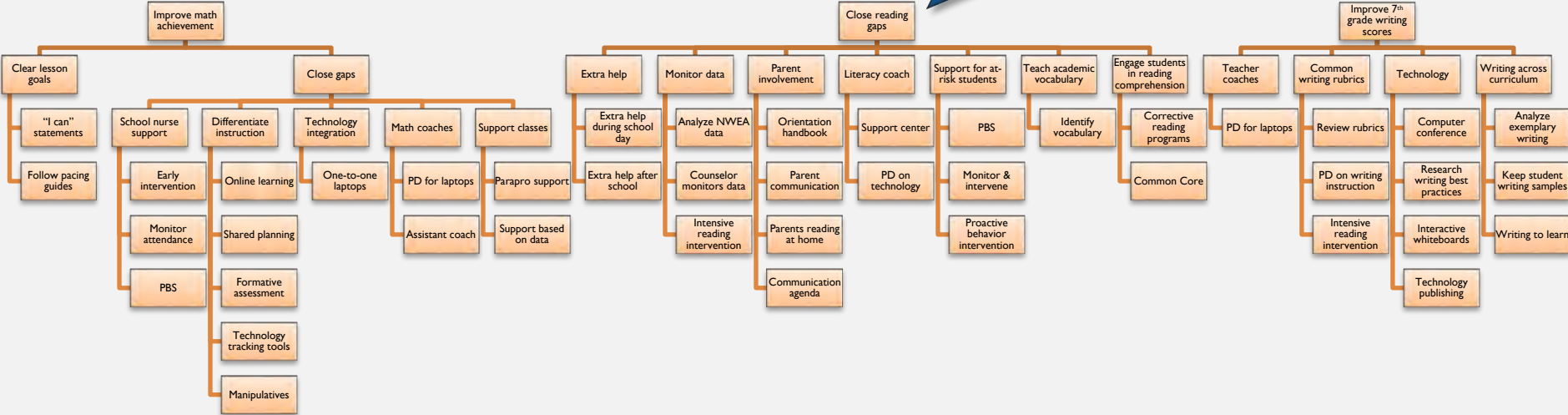
But wait ... there's more.



We're not done yet!



Okay, folks, if we just focus on these 18 strategies and 41 activities, we'll be fine.



The perils of only providing connector leadership

**Happily busy,
but drifting
toward
disaster**

Did anyone see this coming?
Great teamwork, everyone.

Analytical leadership

Relies on data to focus on what matters most.

Relies on data to make objective decisions.

Resists jumping to solutions.

Supports continuous learning & improvement.



Why it matters

Schools often jump to solutions.

Many school improvement plans lack focus.

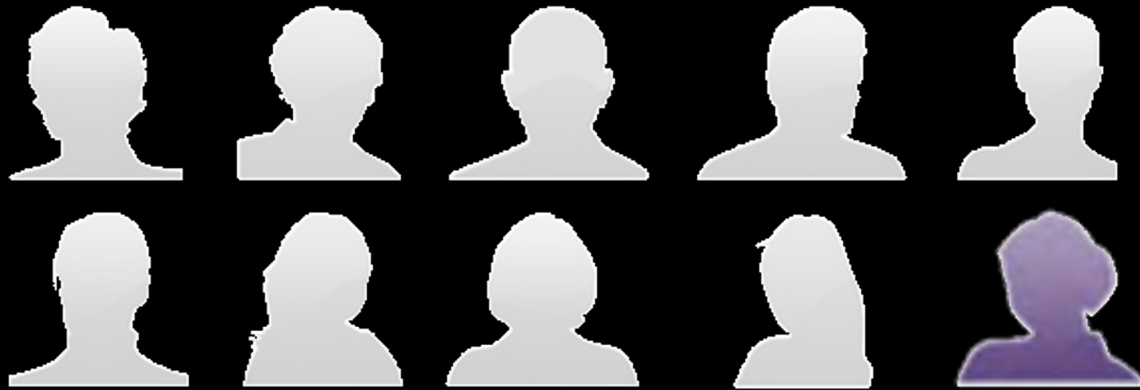
Schools often have too many “ornaments on the tree”.

Schools tend to focus more on implementing than learning.

If you were told you must change your lifestyle
or die within a few months or years,
would you do it?



How many people out of 10
change their lifestyle when confronted
with these brutal facts?



Why it's not enough

Facts alone don't change behavior.

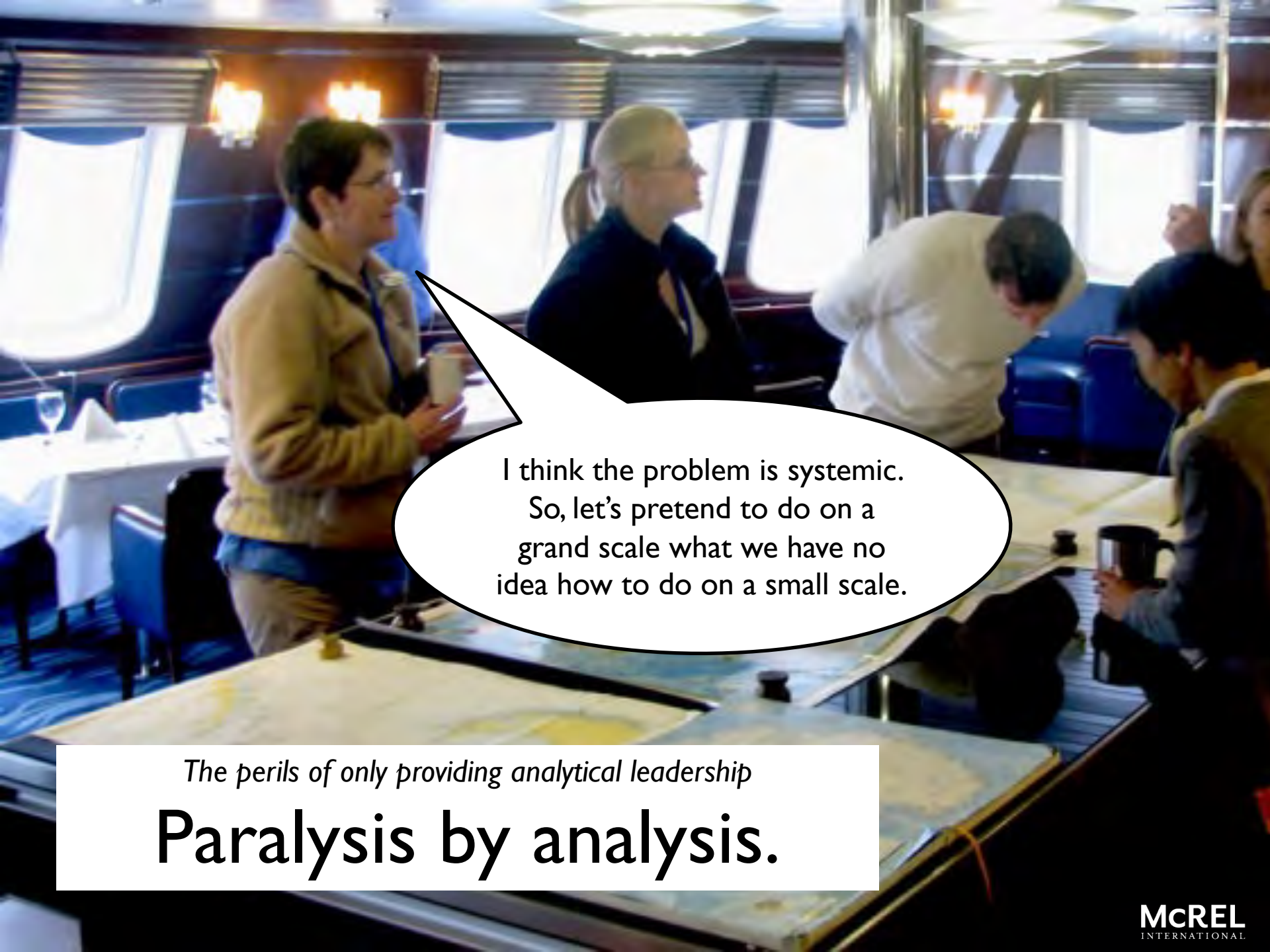
Our biggest challenges are adaptive with no
playbook to follow.

Thus, an experimental mindset is needed.

Bringing an experimental mindset to school improvement

If we do X...	Y should occur
Launch more lessons with curiosity hooks.	Students will be more engaged and interested in learning.
Reframe learning objectives as student learning goals that students buy into.	Students will be able to explain what they're learning and why and be more committed to learning.
Engage students in responding to high-level questions with wait time and small-group discussion opportunities.	More students will participate in classroom discussions, make their thinking visible, and be more engaged in learning.

Reminder: Be clear how you define X.

A group of people are gathered around a table in a meeting room. A woman in a tan jacket is standing and talking to a woman in a dark jacket. A man in a white shirt is leaning over the table, looking at a large map or document. Other people are visible in the background, some sitting at tables. A speech bubble is overlaid on the scene, containing text.

I think the problem is systemic.
So, let's pretend to do on a
grand scale what we have no
idea how to do on a small scale.

The perils of only providing analytical leadership

Paralysis by analysis.

Which style is best?



Which style is best? All four

- Use & analyze data
- Identify the root causes of problems
- Create a culture of honest inquiry & continuous learning

Diagnose the situation & focus on what matters most

- Paint picture of better future
- Create sense of purpose
- Convey optimism & hope

Inspire & catalyze change

Provide clarity and direction

- Set & monitor goals
- Establish structures & routines
- Create press for achievement

Build a positive, cohesive team

- Create shared responsibility
- Encourage people to learn together
- Build collective efficacy

How to balance leadership

How can we be sure to solve the right problems and share the rationale for our decisions?

Purpose

How will we inspire people & articulate the vision?

Picture

How will we *show* people exactly what is expected of them?

Plan

In what ways do we need to challenge group norms yet attend to well-being?

Part

Final words of advice

- Know thyself.
Some of these behaviors will come more naturally to you than others, so you may need to *lean into* them.
- Don't go it alone.
Some of these behaviors will come more naturally to you than others, so you may need to lean on others to carry them out.



No one has it all together,
but together we have it all.

Thank you!



Scan for free resources & to stay in touch!

Contact me



bgoodwin@mcrel.org



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