



Ongoing (Non-Linear) Considerations for Leaders

IMPLEMENTATION LEVERS

Aligned to "The 6 Literacy Levers" by B. Gustafson

MODEL THE WAY

Systemic change is complex. People look to leaders to show the way and go the way. When we lead with curiosity and take an active posture towards literacy leadership, we model the mindset, core beliefs, and behaviors we need to see throughout the organization in order to bring about systemic change.

The Compass

Model the way! Reflect upon your leadership "why" and how it connects to your district's literacy goals.

An Authentic Invitation

Model the way! Show up as a learner and look for opportunities to better understand the current literacy work and culture of your district. Invite others to join you in researching literacy leadership and evidence-based practices.

The Walking Stick

Model the way! Practice using questions to take a more active posture towards literacy leadership and learning.

Sample Questions:

1. What do we want others to see, hear, and feel after implementation?
2. What practices, initiatives, language, and/or resources might need to be officially de-implemented?

The Utility Knife

Model the way! Look for opportunities to share your reading life within your current leadership practices.

The Catapult

Model the way! Connect with a colleague and embark on this implementation journey together. Iron sharpens iron!

The Collage

Model the way! Start documenting your work, learning, and connections in a way that's meaningful to you. Save these notes, photos, data, etc. for future reference and sharing. Do not shy away from documenting challenges and failures you experience along the way.

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ESTABLISH THE VISION

Many leaders are familiar with the phrase, "Vision fades" or "Vision bleeds." Without a clear and connected vision that manifests in nearly every facet of the organization, your vision could fade too. Working with a team to co-create a vision that intersects with work and core beliefs people are already engaged with is critical.

The Compass

Establish the vision! Co-create a compelling "why" and literacy "true north" that includes all students learning how to read and wanting to read.

An Authentic Invitation

Establish the vision! Invite others to help define the current reality and inventory your resources. This process should include conversations about district/school strengths, culture, political considerations, curriculum, structures & frameworks in place, staff, budget, potential barriers, and more.

The Walking Stick

Establish the vision! Develop questions to help frame what implementation will look like ideally.

Sample Questions:

1. How does this [decision, practice, conversation] connect back to our literacy "true north?"
2. What is one next step we could take to help us move closer to our vision and the ideals we aspire to.

The Utility Knife

Establish the vision! Research and reflect on why authentic conversations about books (and booktalks) are an important part of your literacy goals. Develop a short (1-sentence) rationale you could share as an introduction when you're sharing booktalks before district and cabinet meetings, or in district communications.

The Catapult

Establish the vision! Relationships and connectedness matter. Talk about the degree to which your "why" and literacy "true north" supports the needs of the whole reader (e.g., skill and mastery as well as the importance of belonging, motivation, and community).

The Collage

Establish the vision! Work with your leadership team(s) and identify how stakeholders connect to your organization's literacy "true north." Then, align systemic resources to support the work and vision.

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CELEBRATE SUCCESS

When we celebrate small wins that are connected to our "why" we create leadership traction. Noticing individual stories of perseverance, mindset growth, as well as larger-scale change matters. Celebrating your people in a manner that is meaningful to them requires relationships, trust, and ongoing attention.

The Compass

Celebrate success! Identify meaningful ways to recognize individual and collective efforts. It's important celebrations are authentic, meaningful to those being recognized, and connected to your literacy "true north."

An Authentic Invitation

Celebrate success! As you progress through different stages of implementation, invite your team to highlight their journey by sharing. A powerful reflection prompt is: "I used to think ____, but now I ____."

The Walking Stick

Celebrate success! Work with your team to identify questions to help recognize growth, perseverance, and impact in an authentic manner.

Sample Questions:

1. What are the small and process-oriented steps we want to be intentional about celebrating?
2. How do people appreciate being recognized? This varies from person to person and across schools.

The Utility Knife

Celebrate success! When creating culture, success breeds success. If a book you've read helped you...or if a booktalk you've shared with another reader made an impact...don't shy away from sharing these stories.

The Catapult

Celebrate success! Invest in a community that notices small steps and positive progress (while also being honest about growth opportunities). Talk with your team about how this can be done in a meaningful and authentic manner (e.g., modeling, sharing at district meetings, 1:1 feedback, Board recognition).

The Collage

Celebrate success! To increase leadership traction and transform culture, you do not want one person to be the sole gatekeeper of celebration. Collaborate with the people you work closest with and develop an ongoing plan to recognize individual and organizational successes at every level.

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DEVELOP A SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Coherence and alignment do not happen on their own. They require leadership and intention. By developing a common language and implementing feedback loops, leaders help create a shared understanding. This work also requires continuous research and learning as well as bringing misconceptions to light.

The Compass

Develop a shared understanding! Use the compass you co-created with your team to actively inform the work, decisions, and learning. Look for opportunities to take work that's currently being done even deeper.

An Authentic Invitation

Develop a shared understanding! Invite others to share what each aspect of the implementation means to them. Use these conversations as opportunities to identify misconceptions and enrich your understanding.

The Walking Stick

Develop a shared understanding! Work together to identify the shared questions you and your team will carry at different phases of implementation. Different departments may benefit from carrying different questions.

Sample Questions:

1. What is the Science of Reading (SoR)? What is it not?
2. How does our literacy "true north" connect to SoR at every level of the organization?
3. Is this [decision/practice] moving us closer to all students learning how to read and wanting to read?
4. What practices do we need to start, stop, and double-down on to ensure all readers are successful?

The Utility Knife

Develop a shared understanding! Make booktalks a part of the culture everyone experiences. Be certain your people also understand the danger of practices that shut down conversations about books/reading.

The Catapult

Develop a shared understanding! Identify how your organization will support continuous and job-embedded learning. Create connections between research, evidence-based practices, and a common language.

The Collage

Develop a shared understanding! Curate a collection of experiences (e.g., stories, photos, reflections, data) that show what an ideal implementation might look, sound, and feel like.

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SUPPORT AND DEVELOP YOUR PEOPLE

The capacity of your system is largely determined by how well you support and develop your people. Providing ongoing professional learning that includes coaching, workshops, conversations, and collaborative learning opportunities will help you and your team push practice forward.

The Compass

Support and develop your people! If your literacy compass doesn't include a commitment to ongoing learning and supporting your people...update it! The heart of implementation is the people who are working hard to learn and unlearn in order to champion all readers.

An Authentic Invitation

Support and develop your people! Identify current organizational strengths and structures for professional learning. Look for new opportunities to support and develop your people through conversation, podcasts, resource sharing, evolving PLC norms, etc.

The Walking Stick

Support and develop your people! Beware – sometimes questions frame things as mutually exclusive. However, multiple things may be true at the same time. Questions should create space for deeper learning.

Sample Questions:

1. What do we mean when we say we want all students to learn how to read and want to read?
2. What does the body of research say about this topic and what nuances might we be missing?

The Utility Knife

Support and develop your people! As your team takes their work with booktalks further, look for ways to converse directly with students about books. Support students in being leaders in this work.

The Catapult

Support and develop your people! Think about the specialized teams and departments throughout your system. Plan personalized support and professional learning for these smaller communities of learners.

The Collage

Support and develop your people! Over a period of time, you and your team will read countless articles. Create meaningful learning experiences connecting everyone to the most relevant research.

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MONITOR AND EVALUATE PROGRESS

Monitoring and evaluating progress is more effective when staff at every level of the organization own the goals. Develop school-based growth plans aligned with your organization's vision and strategic directions. Empower leadership teams to create goals connected to school-based growth plans.

The Compass

Monitor and evaluate progress! Establish goals connected to your literacy "true north." Use multiple levels of data (e.g., observation, student outcomes, process-oriented evidence, and feedback) to monitor progress.

An Authentic Invitation

Monitor and evaluate progress! Invite others to conduct Literacy "Walk & Talks" using the protocol provided in "The 6 Literacy Levers" (pages 168-170).

The Walking Stick

Monitor and evaluate progress! If everything is important...then nothing is. Determine what aspect(s) of implementation you need to focus on and co-create questions that focus on what matters most.

Sample Questions:

1. Do teachers and support staff have access to high-quality materials?
2. How might we support teachers and support staff in using high-quality materials with intention?
3. Are our materials getting positive results? How do we know?

The Utility Knife

Monitor and evaluate progress! Take time to notice how often you start meetings with a booktalk or how fluently your team converses about books they're reading during conversations.

The Catapult

Monitor and evaluate progress! Lean into your data to see who is benefiting from practices and who is not. Show up curious and work together to update your implementation plan so it's responsive.

The Collage

Monitor and evaluate progress! Develop school-based growth plans and goals aligned with your vision for literacy. Empower leadership teams to meet and discuss needs related to these goals on a regular basis.

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CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

Communication can remind us of the vision and ideals we aspire to. Continuous communication can shape the narrative people reference when choosing their next steps. It can build trust, empathy, and cohesion.

The Compass

Communicate! Share your organization's literacy "true north" in some way, shape, or form anytime you're communicating information pertaining to implementation.

An Authentic Invitation

Communicate! Invite questions, additional perspective, and stakeholders at every level (including students) to be part of communications. This includes community forums, newsletters, and harnessing the power of video.

The Walking Stick

Communicate! Sharing what matters most and why it matters needs to happen throughout implementation. The questions we ask ourselves on a regular basis will ultimately shape the culture we're creating.

Sample Questions:

1. How might we communicate this [research or change] in an understandable and actionable manner?
2. What are we doing to listen and learn from other stakeholders around this topic/decision?

The Utility Knife

Communicate! Identify existing communication tools that can be used to highlight the books students, staff, and the community are reading. Seek innovative ways to embed booktalks into regular communications.

The Catapult

Communicate! Language can influence how we think and behave. Create a plan to intentionally introduce and reinforce the common language and culture you and your team will create together. "The 6 Literacy Levers" has definitions for many concepts and key words to help you get started.

The Collage

Communicate! Be generous and inclusive with your communication. Be sure all stakeholders are connected to communication in a meaningful manner.