Pushing Our Horizons: Tackling the Big, Hairy Challenges of the Next 20 Years

@GrantLichtman
@VAISTweets

Agenda

- The framing questions:
  - Why change?
  - What is it?
  - What is inevitable in the next 20 years?
  - How to change?
- Two rounds of tackling big questions.
- Deep dive
- Focus on “how”

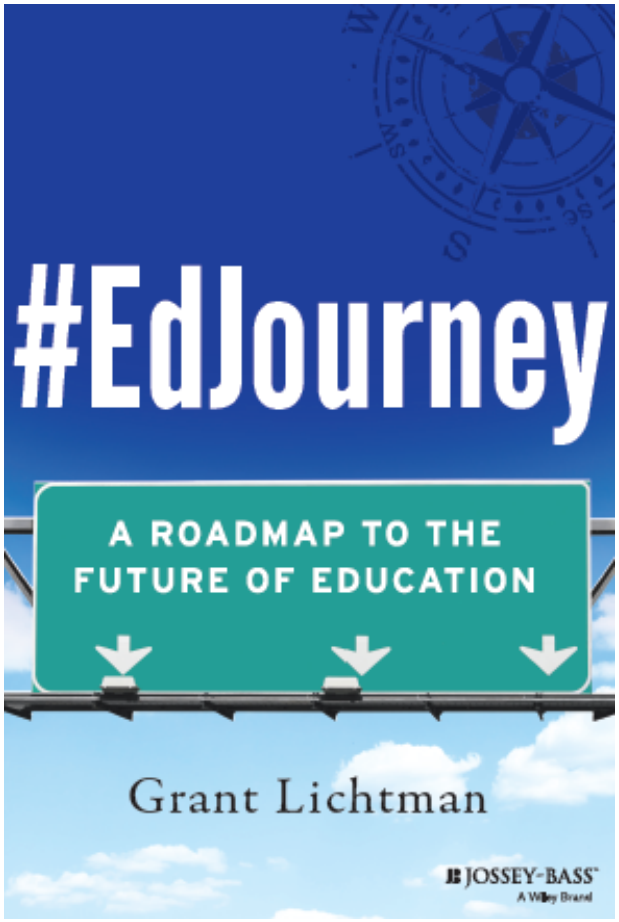
Goals

- Push our current time and thinking horizons
- Wrestle with big questions we need to ask
- Moving from the “why” and “what” of school change to the “how”.
- Capturing our collective thinking within four framing elements: Mission, Learning Experience, People, and Operations

What does innovation mean for education?

What is working?

How are we overcoming obstacles to change?



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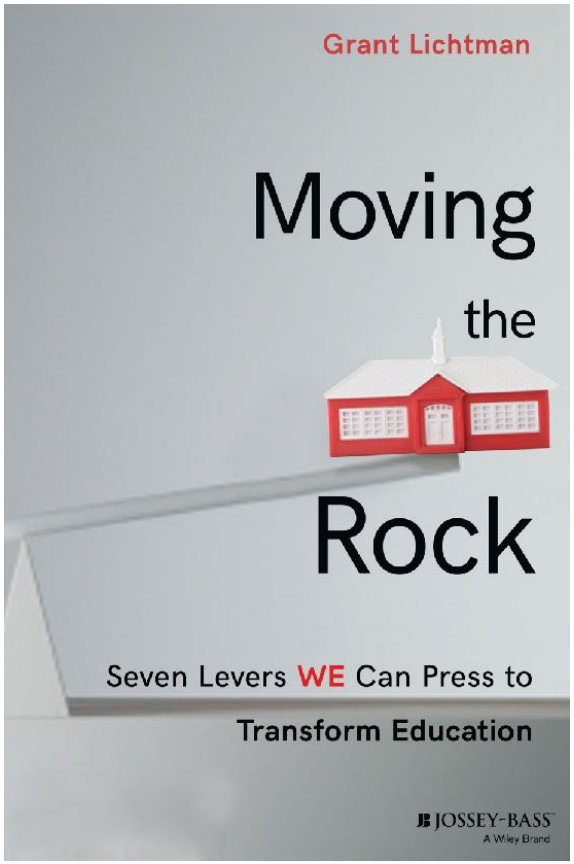
Big levers for transformation…

- Creating demand
- Community learning
- Open educational resources
- Measuring what we value
- Teacher training
- Leadership skills



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a moment of peak learning…

the why, what, how, and future of education…

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the call

the “why”

its not just about jobs

MUTATION:
Global shift in relationship between providers and consumers

education market pre-2000

• Public neighborhood schools	• Free
• Parochial schools	• $X
• Independent day schools	• $2X

education market today

- Neighborhood
- Social-Structed
- Charter
- Magnet
- Choice
- Home
- Online
- After school
- Hybrid
- Parochial
- Other faith-based
- Hacked
- Independent day
- Boarding

“Free”

Affordable to < 1%

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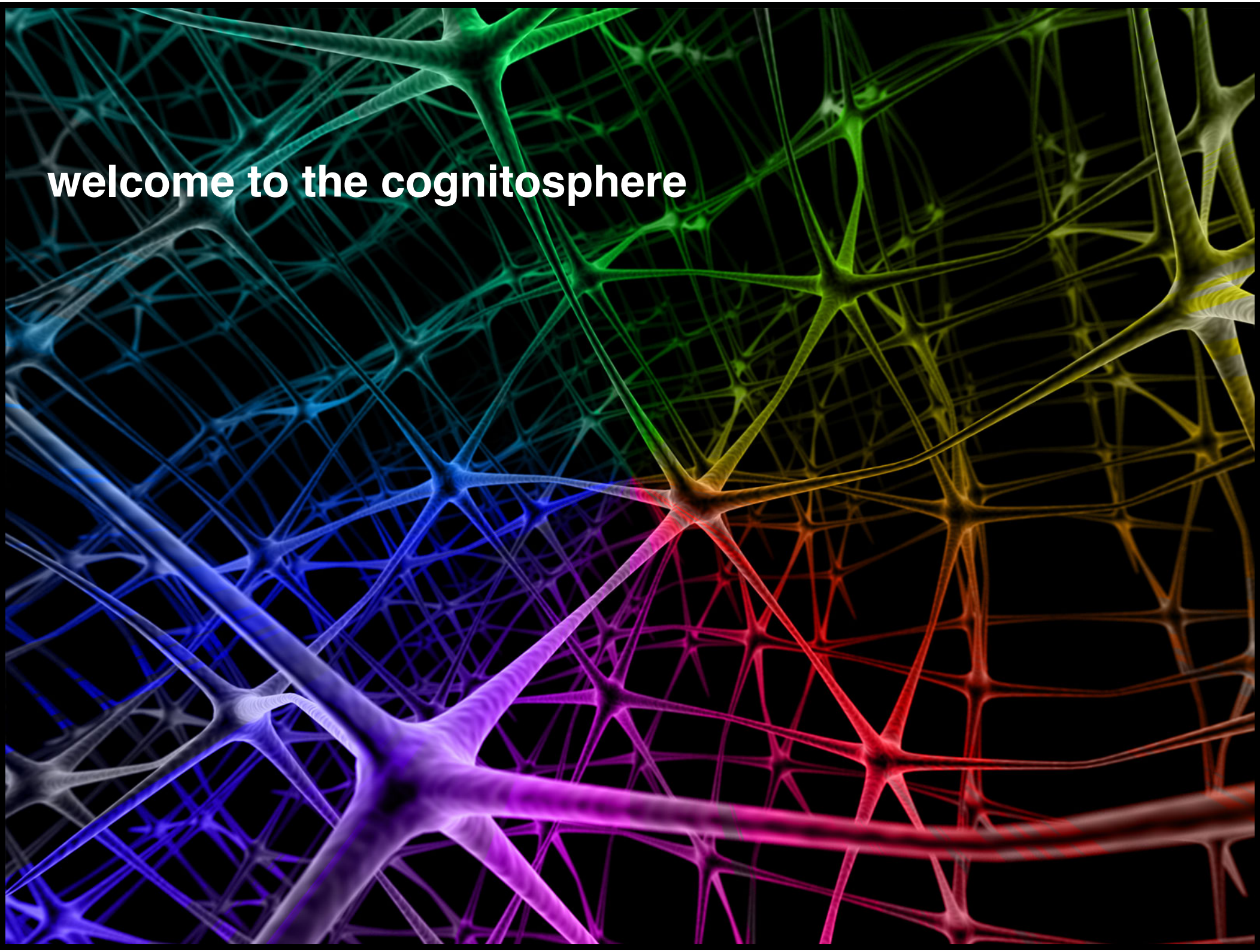
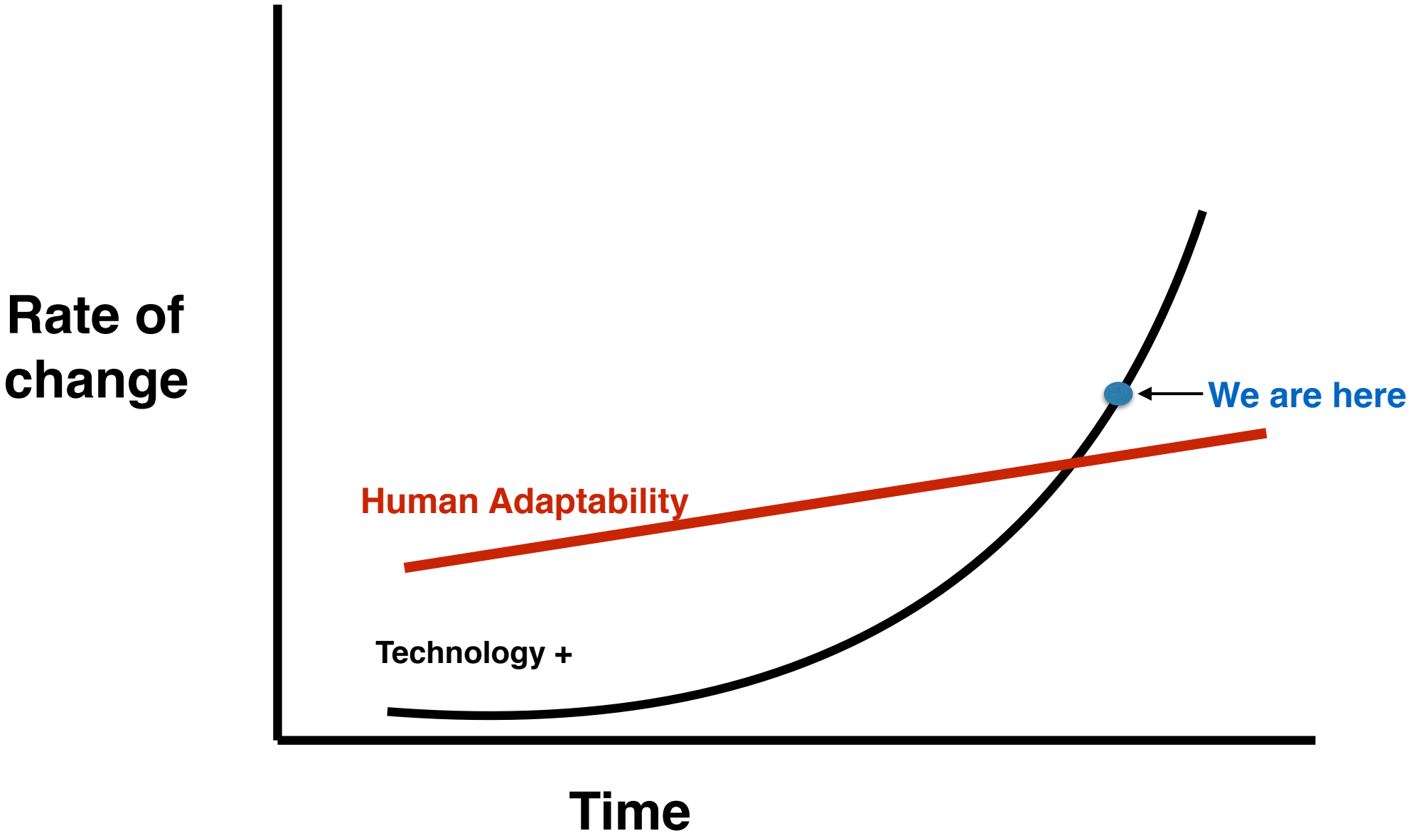
In 25 years, schools will all fall into one of three categories:

Insulated by some combination of market, legacy, demand, and finances

Highly differentiated by program or brand

Struggling/failing


welcome to the cognitosphere



Eric Teller, in Thomas Friedman,
Thank You for Being Late

So…why transform our schools?

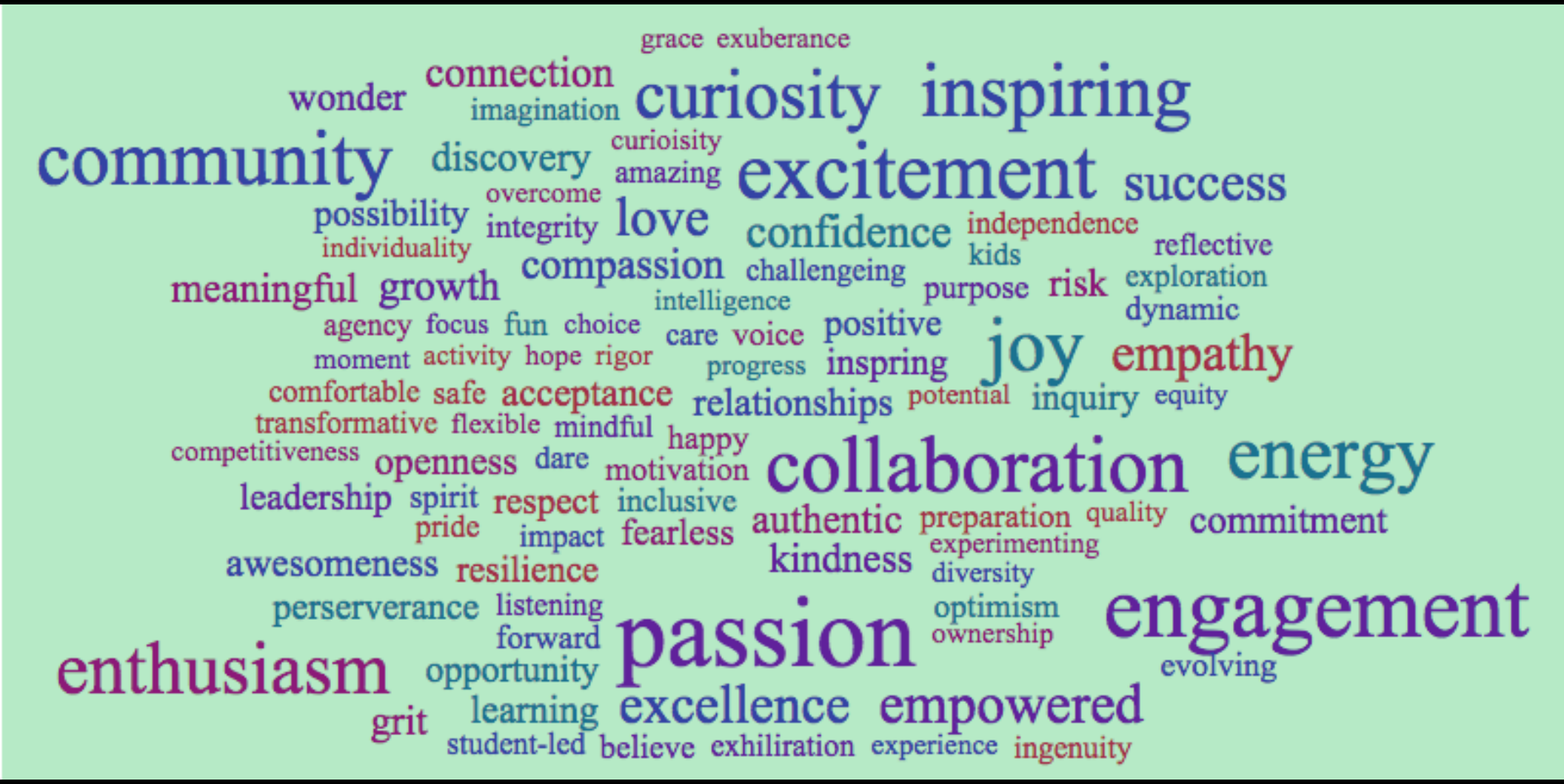
We must

We want to

We know better

We can

the “what” today



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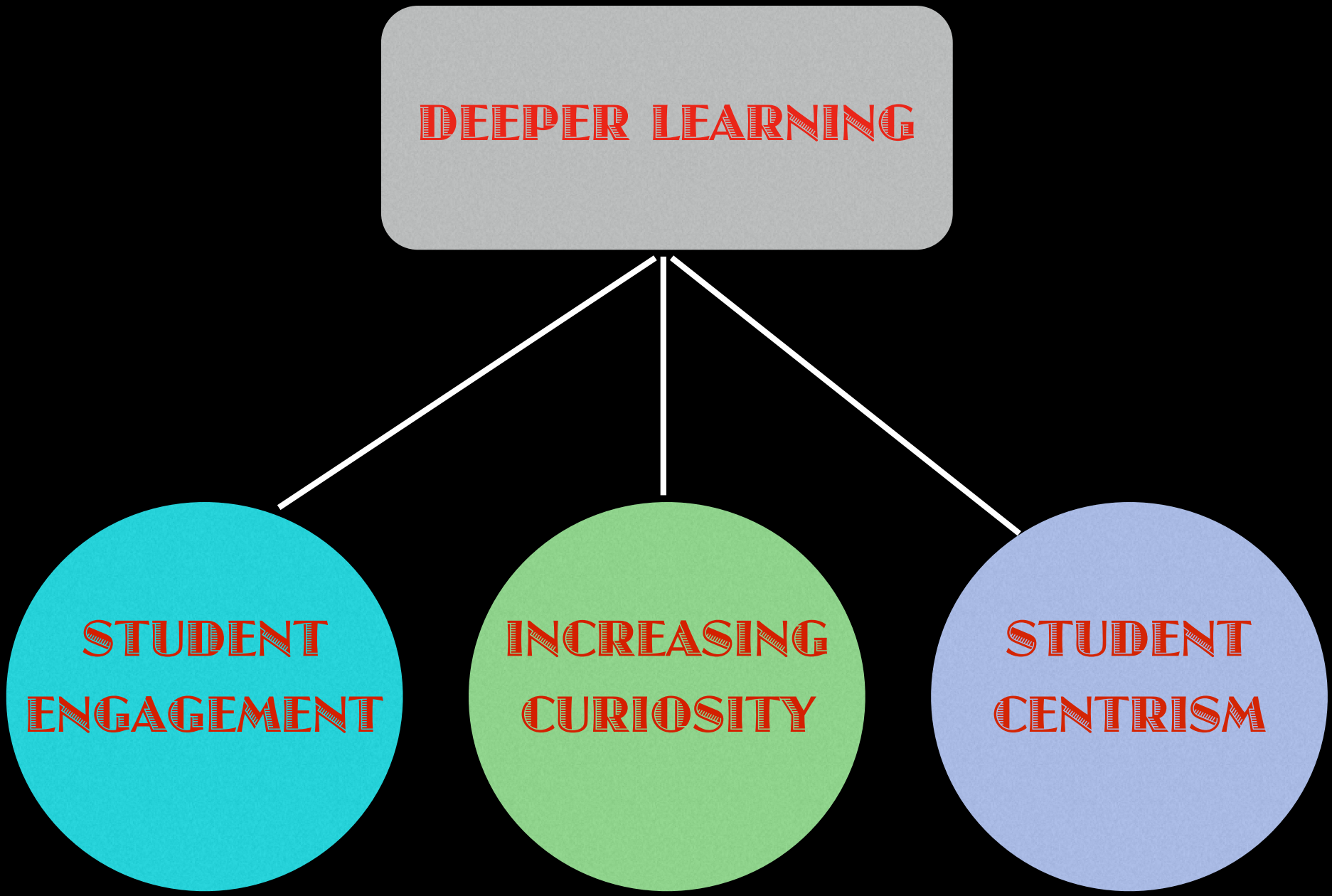
what we teach

how we learn



"Deeper Learning Cheat Sheet"
www.grantlichtman.com/Resources

“The Box”

- Time
- Physical space
- Subject
- Campus boundaries
- Age of student
- Student:teacher ratio

WE HAVE TO BUILD A NEW OPERATING SYSTEM

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stop and take a breath, Grant

A few questions or comments?

the future

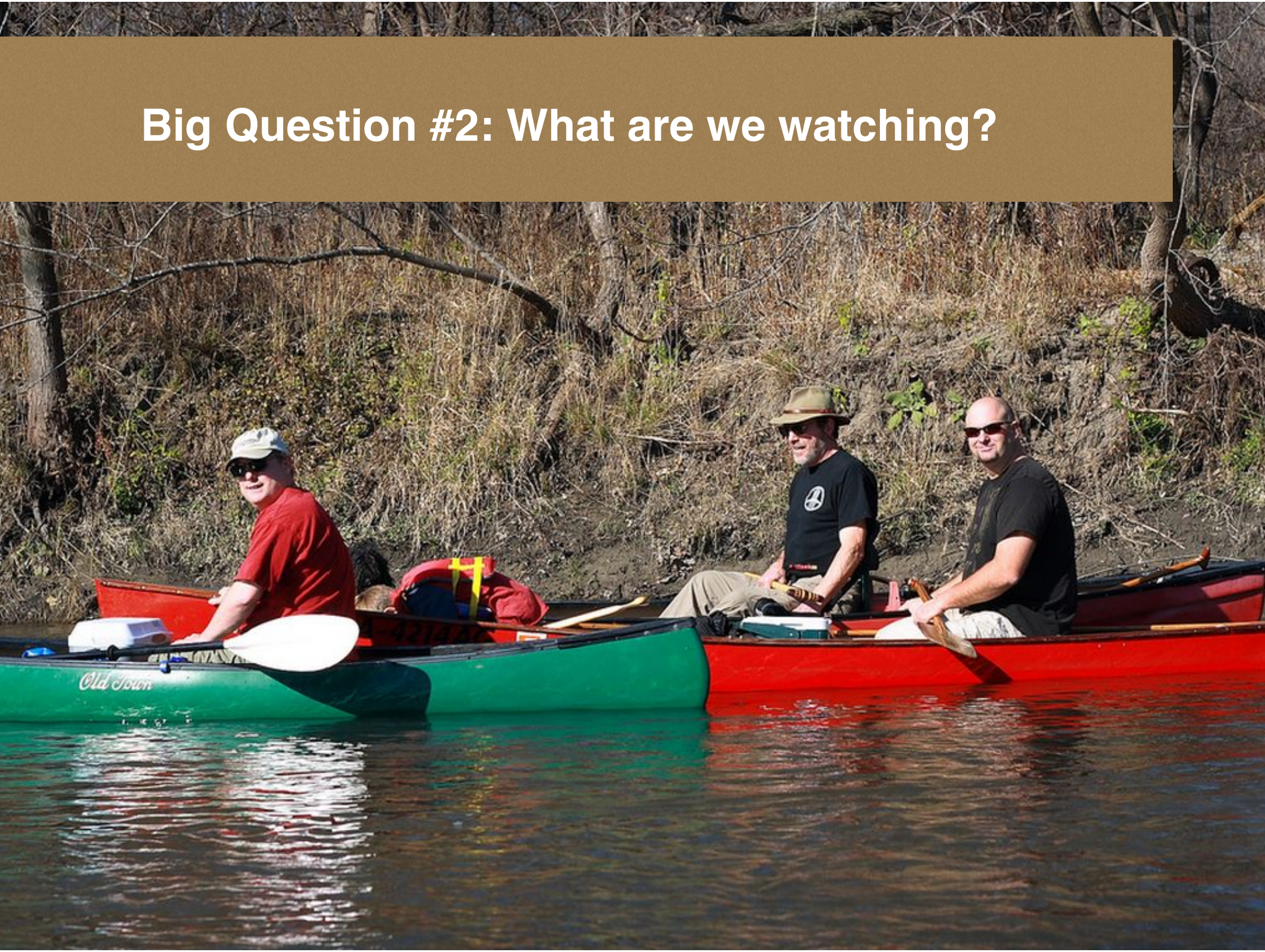
some big, inevitable changes

the “how”

three big questions

Big Question #1: What is our “extra chunky”?

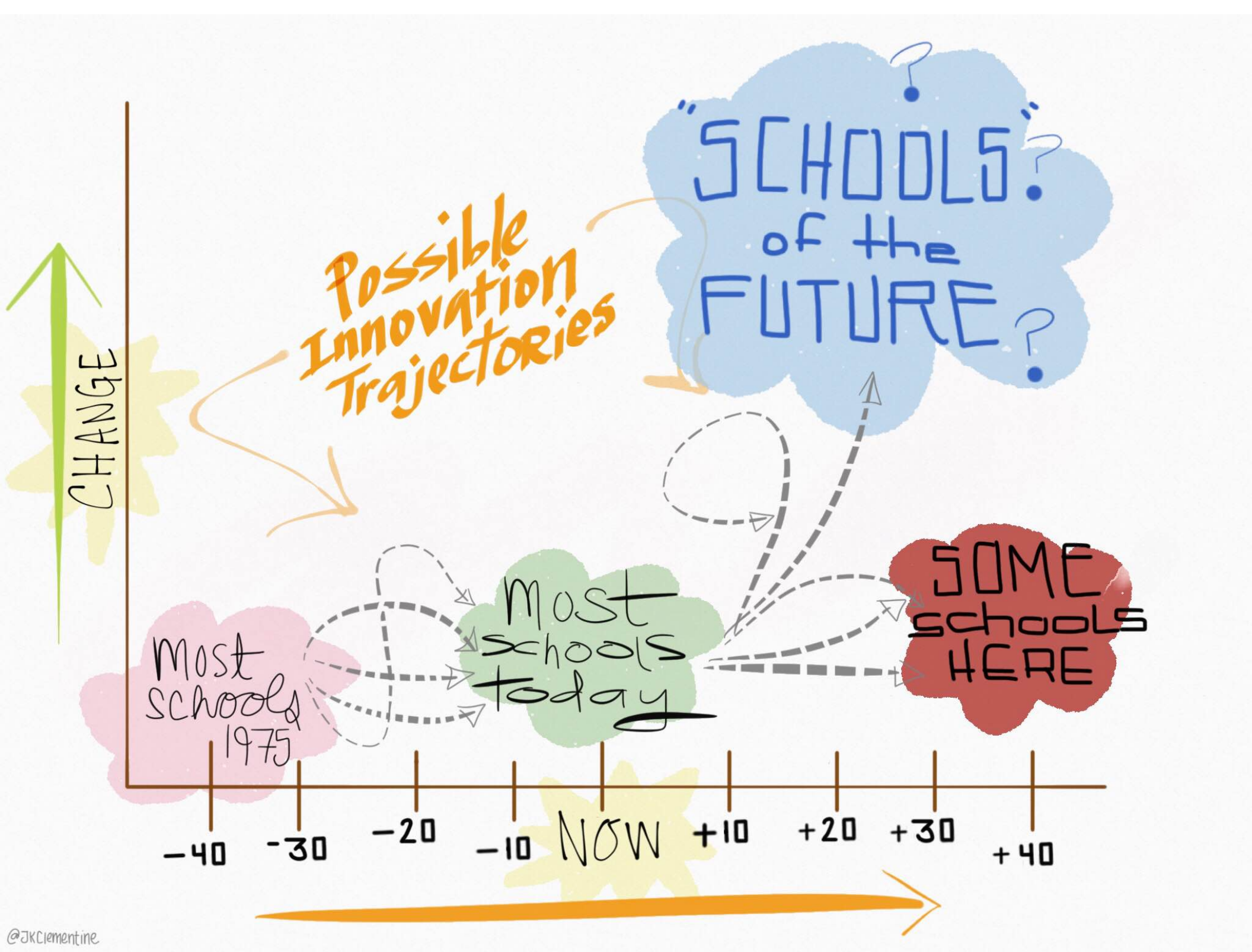
Big Question #2: What are we watching?



Big Question #3: How will we manage our horizons?

What is it in our organizations and structures that make it challenging to pursue a longer-term vision for our future; what can we do to refocus our sense of time and magnitude of our goals?

trajectory


"SCHOOLS" of the FUTURE?
Possible Innovation Trajectories
CHANGE
Most schools 1975
Most schools today
SOME schools HERE
-40
-30
-20
-10
NOW
+10
+20
+30
+40
@JKClementine

Are we ready to push out to the"Third Horizon"?

Using the Brains in the Room

Big Themes

- About 20 mins to generate essential questions and ideas
- Use post it notes and allocate to:

- Share out some reflections

Round One

What is it in our organizations and structures as independent schools that make it challenging to pursue a longer-term vision for our future (*comfort with the familiar, the inertia of success, head turnover, board term limits, annual contracts, cyclical nature of the school year, etc.*)

What can we do to overcome these challenges?

Round Two

What are the changes and forces external to schools (*what will happen*) that will change us and what are the changes internal to schools that are within our control (*what do we want to have happen*)?

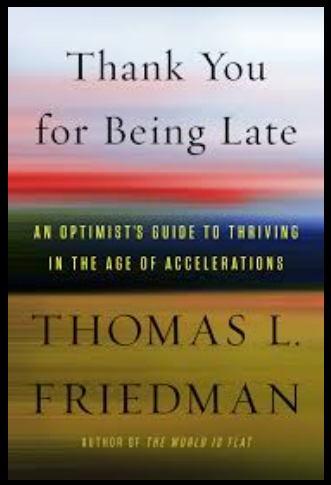
Round Three

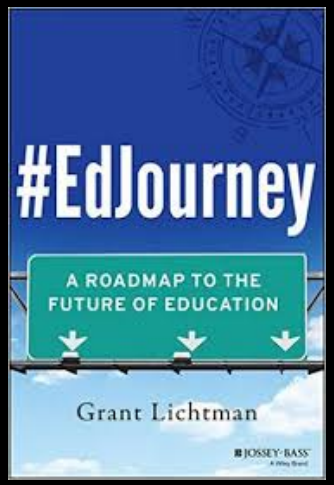
What does it mean to shift schools from being “teaching organizations” to schools as “learning organizations”?

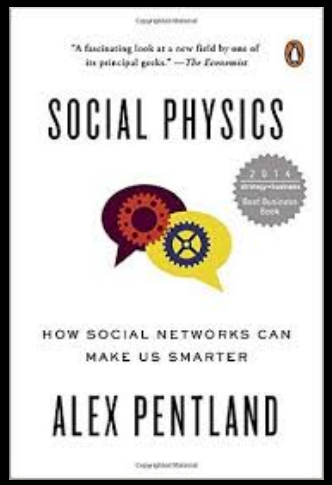
Which traditions are important to preserve and which traditions hamper this shift to a long-term growth mindset?

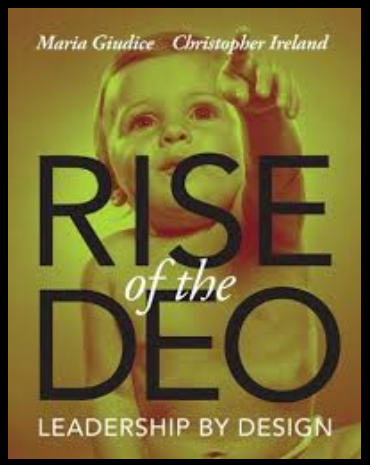
How will your school make this shift?

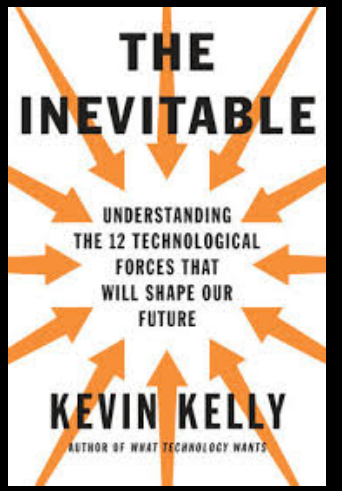
Essential Reading

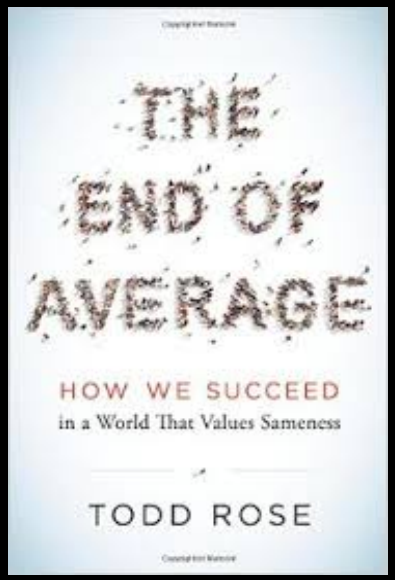


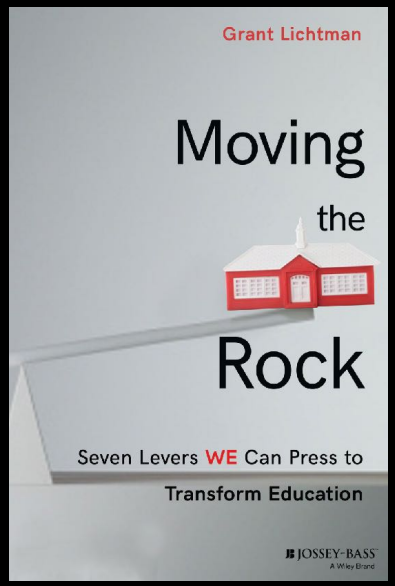


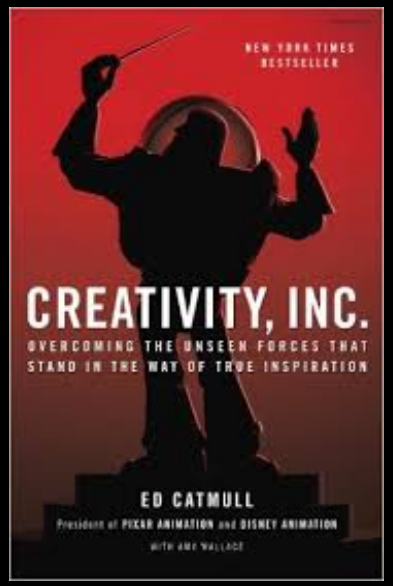


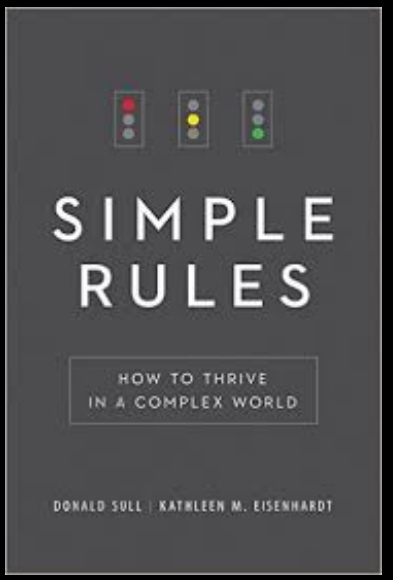












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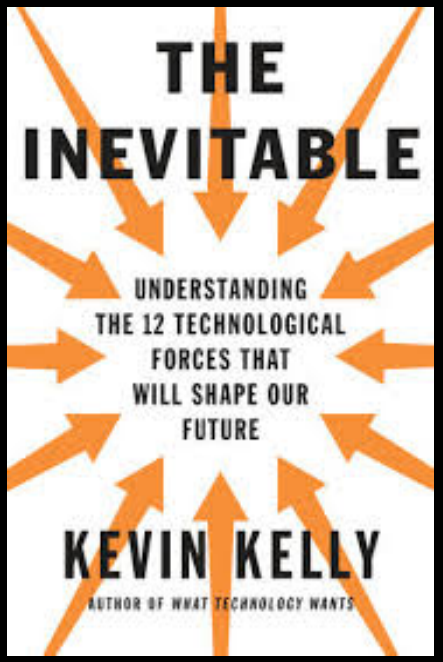
Eight “generatives” that are better than free:

- Immediacy
- Personalization
- Interpretation
- Authenticity
- Accessibility
- Embodiment
- Patronage
- Discoverability



My Five Big, Hairy Challenges

Big learning challenges: civil discourse, expertise, fact and opinion, science, global stewardship.

Evolution is not kind.

Adapting to a world of AI and VR.

Re-aligning assessment with intrinsic motivation.

Finding differentiated value at the margins of our experience

Deep Dive

Select a theme:

- Mission
- People
- Learning Experience
- Operations and Facilities

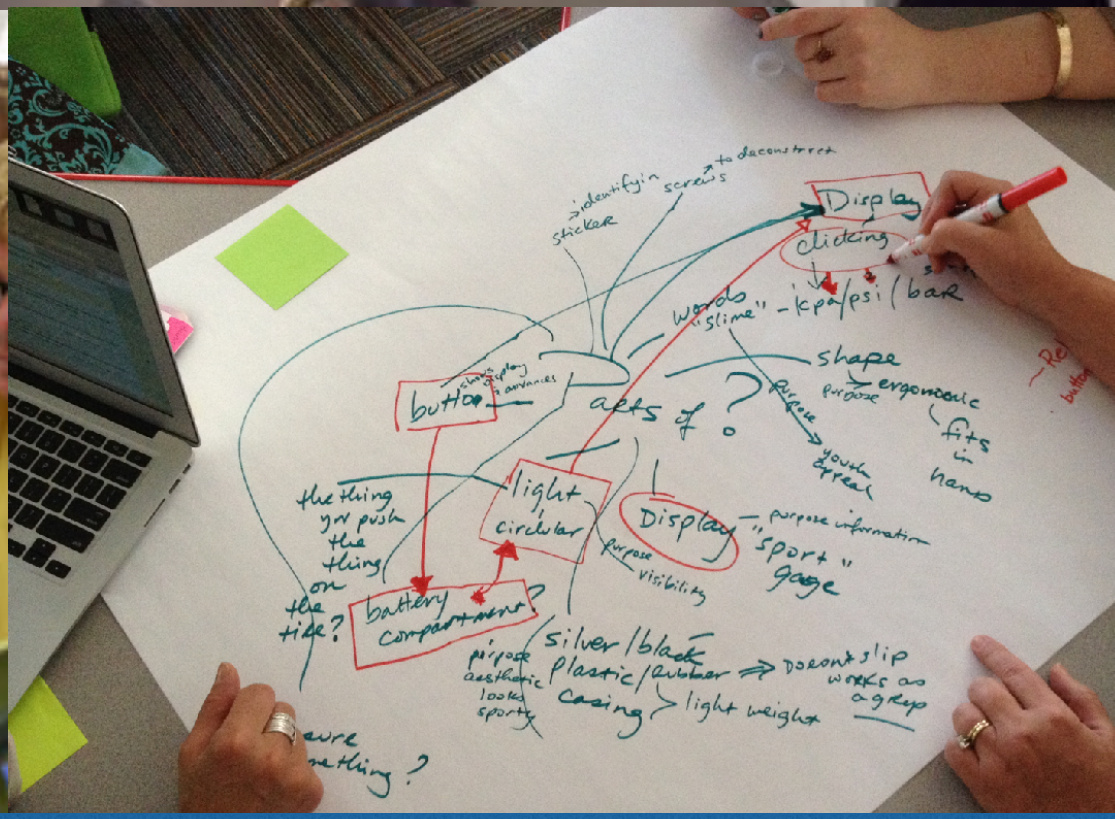
Use the ideas generated during Rounds 1-3

What are some bold ideas that stand out that might be worth further ideation as we look out 20+ years?

How to Lead These Discussions at Your School

SHIFT BIG THINKING

FROM	TO
INWARD	OUTWARD
BACKWARD	FORWARD
EPISODIC	ONGOING
MEDIUM TERM	LONG RANGE
TACTICAL	STRATEGIC



expansive…transparent…inclusive…systemic…ongoing…messy

steps

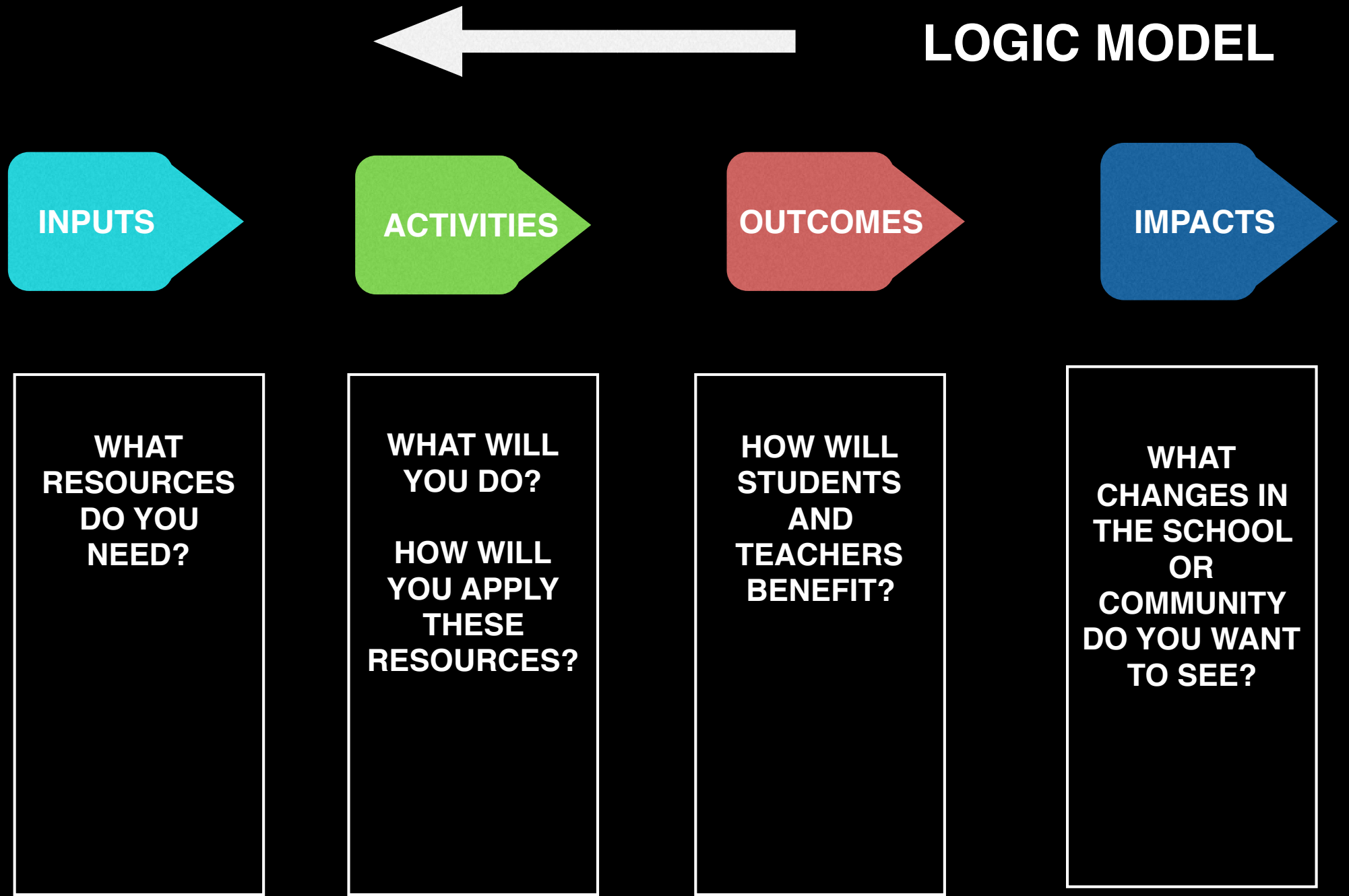
- **Create a sense of urgency around a big opportunity**
- **Unwrap and articulate a North Star**
- **Attract a growing volunteer army**
- **Accelerate movement by removing barriers**
- **Design and test**
- **Visibly celebrate significant early wins**
- **Institutionalize changes in culture**

Modified from Kotter, HBR 2012

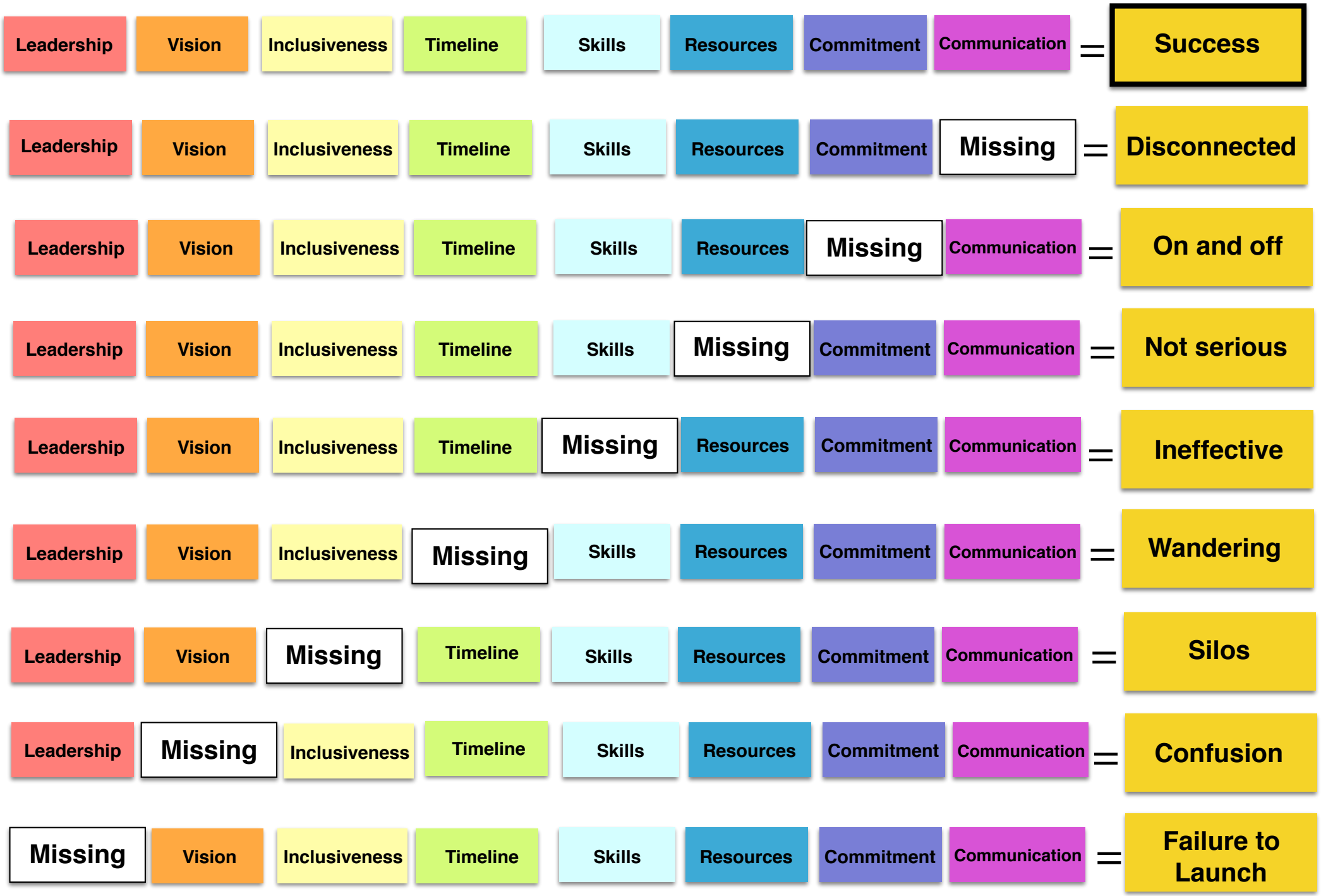
Getting Started

- Community discussion: What is great learning?
- What if?
- Ask the big questions
- Frequency, inclusion, listening

LOGIC MODEL


INPUTS
ACTIVITIES
OUTCOMES
IMPACTS
WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU NEED?
WHAT WILL YOU DO?
HOW WILL YOU APPLY THESE RESOURCES?
HOW WILL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS BENEFIT?
WHAT CHANGES IN THE SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY DO YOU WANT TO SEE?
YOUR PLANNED WORK
YOUR INTENDED RESULTS

Stairway of Successful Innovation



Grant Lichtman, 2014; (*expanded from M. Lippett, 1987 and T. Knoster, 1991*)