



Session Presenter



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WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

sais.org/wli



Navigating Polarity with Purpose

In this dynamic session, participants will explore how to **effectively navigate competing demands** and seemingly contradictory leadership challenges. Through **practical exercises and group discussion**, women leaders will learn frameworks for managing tensions between tradition and innovation, flexibility and structure, and individual needs versus institutional priorities. Participants will **develop strategies** to make purposeful decisions while **honoring** multiple perspectives and stakeholder needs in their school communities.

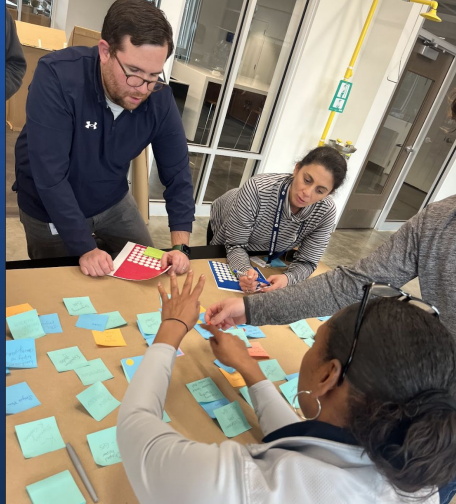


SPARK: **What is a conversation?**

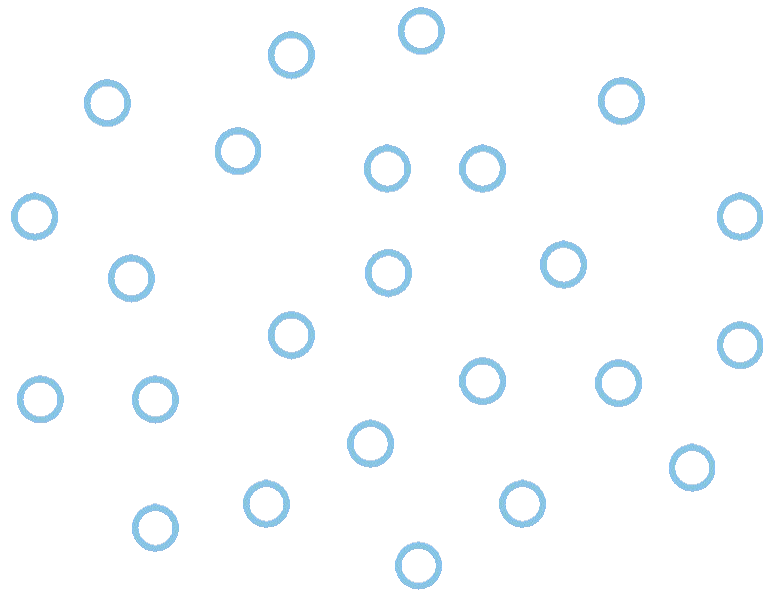


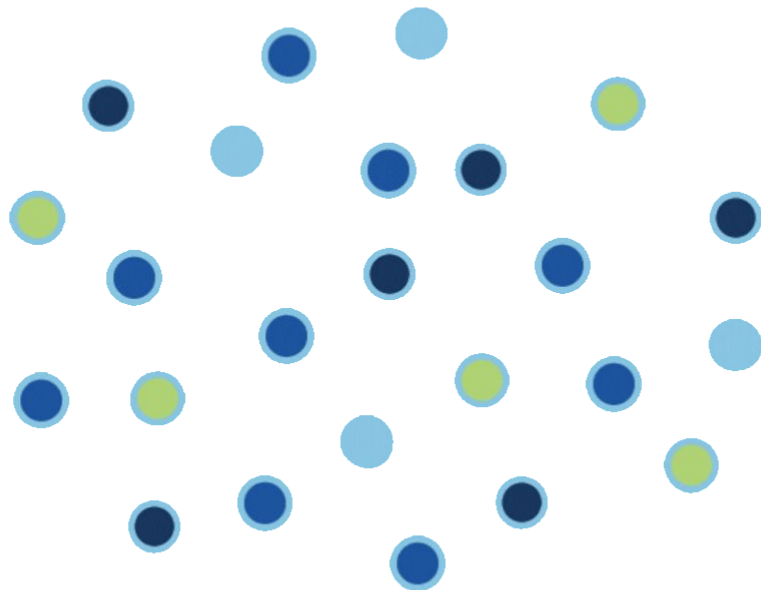
kids GO FIRST

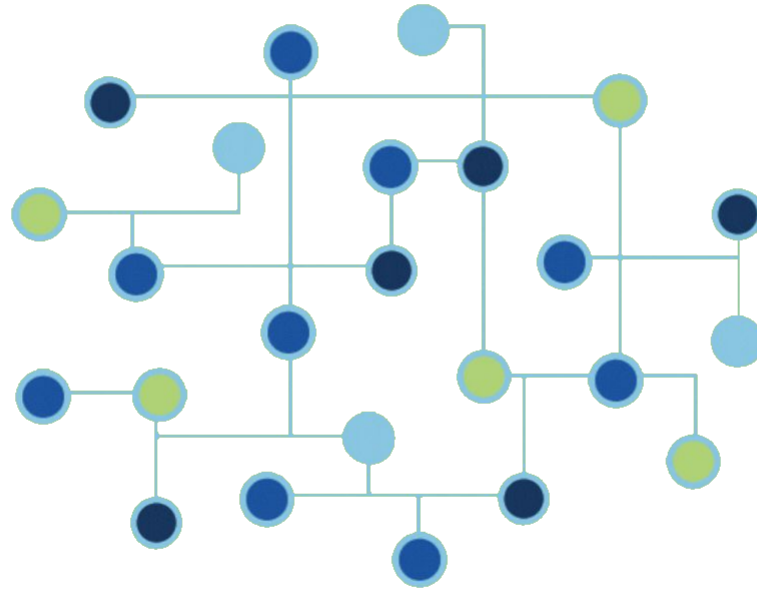


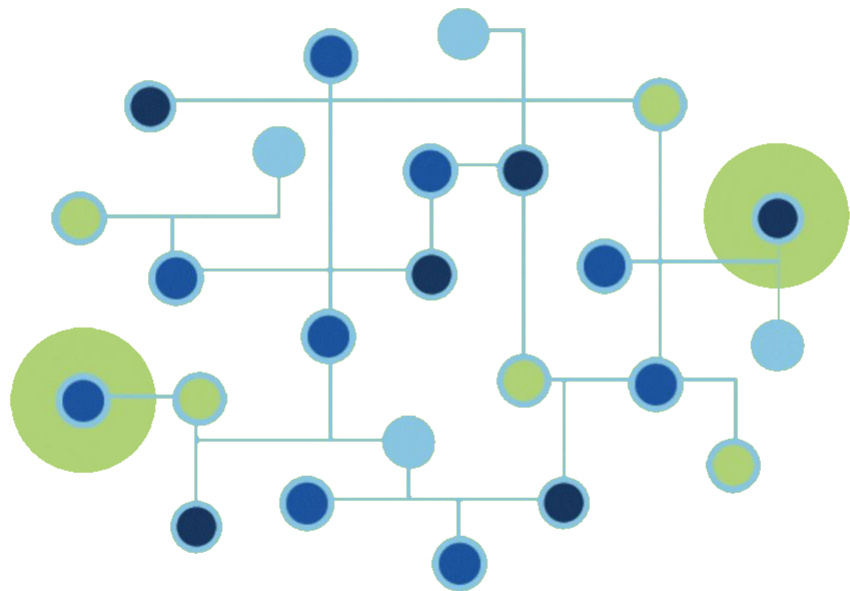












I D1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION	II D2: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT	III D3: INSTRUCTION	IV D4: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES	V INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING	VI COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING	OUR COMMITMENT INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACTION
1 APPLYING KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT & PEDAGOGY D1A	7 CULTIVATING RESPECTFUL AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENTS D2A	12 COMMUNICATING ABOUT PURPOSE & CONTENT D3A	17 ENGAGING IN REFLECTIVE PRACTICE D4A	23 IBL FRAMEWORKS Facilitate Learning Through Inquiry IBL1	28 USING A MASTERY APPROACH TO LEARNING CBE1	5a SELF AWARENESS (Reflective IDEA/SEL) IDEA1
2 KNOWING & VALUING STUDENTS D1B	8 FOSTERING A CULTURE FOR LEARNING D2B	13 USING QUESTIONING & DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES D3B	18 DOCUMENTING STUDENT PROGRESS D3B	24 VTR Utilize Visible Thinking Routines IBL2	29 CUSTOMIZE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE CBE2	5b SELF MANAGEMENT IDEA2
3 SETTING INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES D1C	9 MAINTAINING PURPOSEFUL ENVIRONMENTS D2C	14 ENGAGING STUDENT LEARNING (Promote Learner Agency & Ownership) D3C	19 ENGAGING FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES D3C	25 MVXPERTS Engage External Experts & Experiences IBL3	30 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ANYTIME/ANYWHERE, INTERDISCIPLINARY, REAL-WORLD LEARNING & CONNECTION CBE3	5c SOCIAL AWARENESS IDEA3
4 USING RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY D1D	10 SUPPORTING POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR D2D	15 USING ASSESSMENT (AND DATA) FOR LEARNING D3D	20 CONTRIBUTING TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY & CULTURE D3D	26 PBL Facilitate Project-Based & Project Approach Learning Experience IBL4	31 USE COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK CBE4	5d RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING (Can Make Mission-Aligned Decisions in Real Time & Demonstrates Integrity) IDEA4
5 PLANNING COHERENT INSTRUCTION D1E	11 ORGANIZING SPACES FOR LEARNING D2E	16 RESPONDING FLEXIBLY TO STUDENT NEEDS D3E	21 GROWING & DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALLY D3E	27 DT Engage Design Thinking IBL5	32 USE TECHNOLOGY IN SERVICE OF LEARNING CBE5	5e RELATIONSHIP SKILLS (Includes Essential Partners Dialogic Model & Facilitation) IDEA5
6 DESIGNING & ANALYZING ASSESSMENTS D1F			22 ACTING IN SERVICE OF STUDENTS D4F			5f CULTURALLY PROFICIENT & EQUITY LITERATE (Continues to Build Knowledge, Empathy, & Capacity in IDEA) IDEA6





Aspiring Leaders:

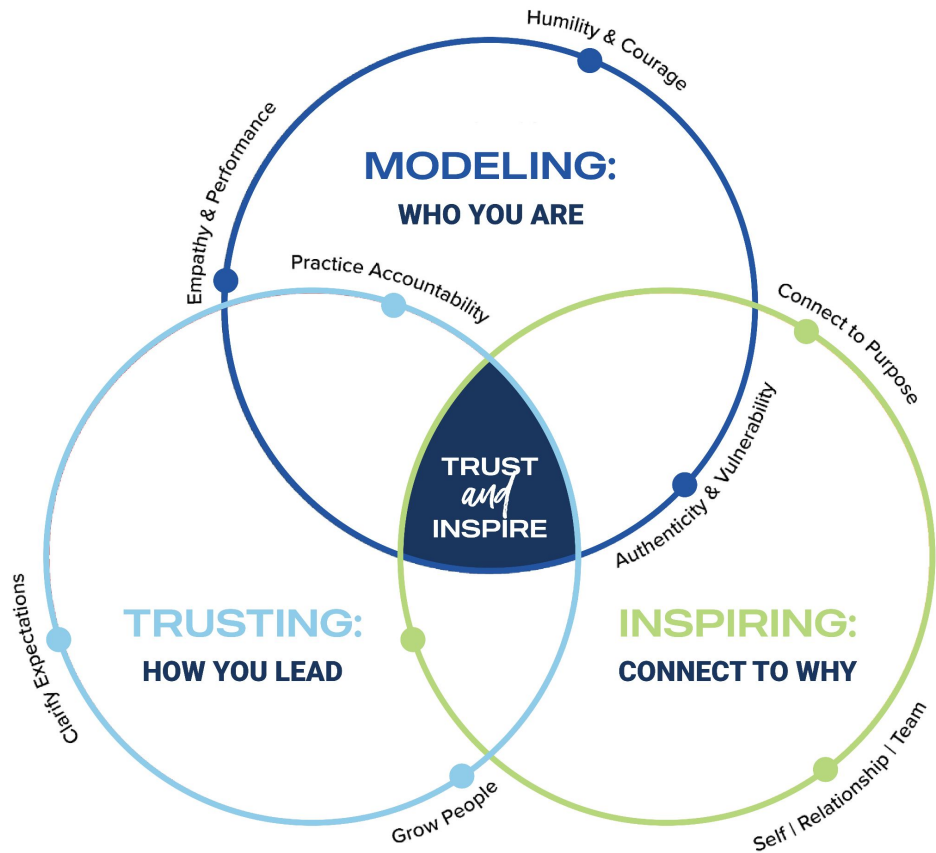
Building Leadership Skills, a competency framework for career growth

Kristy Lundstrom | klundstrom@mountvernonschool.org



The 3 Stewardships of a Trust & Inspire Leader

2022 Trust & Inspire by Stephen M. R. Covery



MV Leadership Competency Research																				
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T20		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
Source		Academy to Innovate HR	Amazon Leadership Principles	Society for HR Managers	California Department of HR	Northwestern Leadership Dev	Harvard Business Review	Institute for Management Development	McKinsey	Deloitte	Christensen Institute - Microcredentials	Franklin Core Leadership Skills	Building 21 Leader Competencies	Deloitte Leadership Framework	Totals	MV Leadership Competency Research List				
2	sharing a compelling vision/big-picture/inspiration/storytelling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10	✓				
3	(learning) agility/increasing capacity/growth mind being a good coach/talent dev.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	✓				
4	decision-making/backbone/problem solving	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	✓				
5	inclusiveness/valuing diversity/justice/different perspectives/ unconscious bias	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	✓				
6	ownership/long-term thinking/strategic thinking/	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	✓				
7	Interpersonal Skills/building & maintaining relationship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	✓				
8	scale/create/innovate/take risks/competitive edge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	✓				
9	creates a safe environment/ability to take risks/be supportive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	✓				
10	deliver results/execute	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	✓				
11	industry expertise/business skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	✓				
12	Conflict Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	✓				
13	emotional intelligence/self-awareness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	✓				
14	change management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	✓				
15	communicating effectively/clearly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	✓				
16	collaboration/team building	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	✓				
17	managing yourself/developing leadership style	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	✓				
18																				



MV Leadership Development Framework

INVEST IN OTHERS



BUILD

- Building Relationships of Trust
- Practicing Contextual Discernment
- Practicing Entrepreneurship & Intrapreneurship
- Leveraging Systems Thinking to Ensure Quality & Integrity



NURTURE/DEVELOP

- Using Storytelling to Inspire and Support Others
- Designing moments and empowering teams to enhance culture
- Effective Coaching & Talent Development



EXECUTE/ESTABLISH

- Establishing an Ethic of Excellence
- Using Data to Drive Decision-Making
- Providing Clarity & Navigating Ambiguity



ITERATE

- Facilitating reflective practice
- Scaling capacity
- Eliminating/Essentializing



MANAGE

- Aligning Resources & Processes with Org Priorities
- Managing Polarity & Conflict
- Providing High-Quality Feedback

INVEST IN ORG

BELIEF IN SELF/CONFIDENCE
ESTABLISH PROFESSIONAL/
PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

VALUE
SERVICE/DIVERSITY

PRACTICE DISCIPLINE
DEVELOP HABITS

CARE FOR SELF/DEVELOP
SUPPORT SYSTEM/CREATE
MOMENTS OF MARGIN

MODEL A GROWTH
MINDSET/ LEARN/BE AGILE/
REFLECT

INVEST IN SELF



I D1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION		II D2: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT		III D3: INSTRUCTION		IV D4: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES		V INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING		VI COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING		OUR COMMITMENT INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACTION		LEADERSHIP									
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D1A		D2A		D3A		D4A				CBE1		IDEA1		LA1 Build Invest in Others		LA2 Build Invest in Others		LA3 Build Invest in Others		LA4 Build Invest in Others			
2	KNOWING & VALUING STUDENTS	8	FOSTERING A CULTURE FOR LEARNING	13	USING QUESTIONING & DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES	18	DOCUMENTING STUDENT PROGRESS	24	VTR Utilize Visible Thinking Routines IBL2	29	CUSTOMIZE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE	5b	SELF MANAGEMENT	43	USING STORYTELLING TO INSPIRE & SUPPORT OTHERS	44	DESIGNING MOMENTS & EMPOWERING TEAMS TO ENHANCE CULTURE	45	EFFECTIVE COACHING & TALENT DEVELOPMENT	46	ESTABLISHING AN ETHIC OF EXCELLENCE		
D1B		D2B		D3B		D3B				CBE2		IDEA2		LA5 Nurture/Develop Invest in Others		LA6 Nurture/Develop Invest in Others		LA7 Nurture/Develop Invest in Others		LA8 Execute/Establish Invest in Others			
3	SETTING INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES	9	MAINTAINING PURPOSEFUL ENVIRONMENTS	14	ENGAGING STUDENT LEARNING (Promote Learner Agency & Ownership)	19	ENGAGING FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES	25	MXPERTS Engage External Experts & Expeditions IBL3	30	PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ANYTIME/ANYWHERE, INTERDISCIPLINARY, REAL-WORLD LEARNING & CONNECTION	5c	SOCIAL AWARENESS	47	USING DATA TO DRIVE DECISION-MAKING	48	PROVIDING CLARITY & NAVIGATING AMBIGUITY	49	FACILITATING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE	50	SCALING CAPACITY		
D1C		D2C		D3C		D3C				CBE3		IDEA3		LA9 Execute/Establish Invest in Others		LA10 Execute/Establish Invest in Others		LA11 Iterate Invest in Org		LA12 Iterate Invest in Org			
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D1D		D2D		D3D		D3D				CBE4		IDEA4		LA13 Iterate Invest in Org		LA14 Manage Invest in Org		LA15 Manage Invest in Org		LA16 Manage Invest in Org			
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D1F						D4F						IDEA6											





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**MANAGING POLARITY
& CONFLICT**

LA15
Manage
Invest in Org

MOUNT VERNON



CONFLICT

Definition

A disagreement or struggle between opposing forces, interests, or ideas, often with the goal of resolving the issue.

Nature

Can be short-term or long-term, involving personal, interpersonal, or group dynamics.

Focus

Identifying the problem and finding a solution or compromise.

Outcome

Can be positive (functional conflict leading to better outcomes) or negative (dysfunctional conflict hindering progress).

Examples

A disagreement between team members on a project approach, a dispute between neighbors over property lines, or an argument between family members.

POLARITY

A situation where two or more seemingly opposing ideas, values, or approaches are interdependent and necessary for a system's effectiveness, requiring ongoing management rather than a simple resolution.

An ongoing, unsolvable dilemma that contains seemingly opposing ideas.

Balancing the positive and negative aspects of each "pole" to achieve optimal outcomes.

A state of dynamic equilibrium where both sides are acknowledged and managed rather than one side winning over the other.

Balancing efficiency and quality, freedom and responsibility, or innovation and stability.



CONFLICT OR POLARITY?

Scenario 1:

Theatre production rehearsals are scheduled the same time as Soccer practice and three students are “needed”/“required” to be at both. Parents are frustrated because students are stressed about not letting their coaches down.

Scenario 2:

Staff are at odds because the scheduling solution “favors” arts over athletics. Coaches say we don’t have enough time to be competitive. Theatre director responds with “art takes time.” No one is happy.

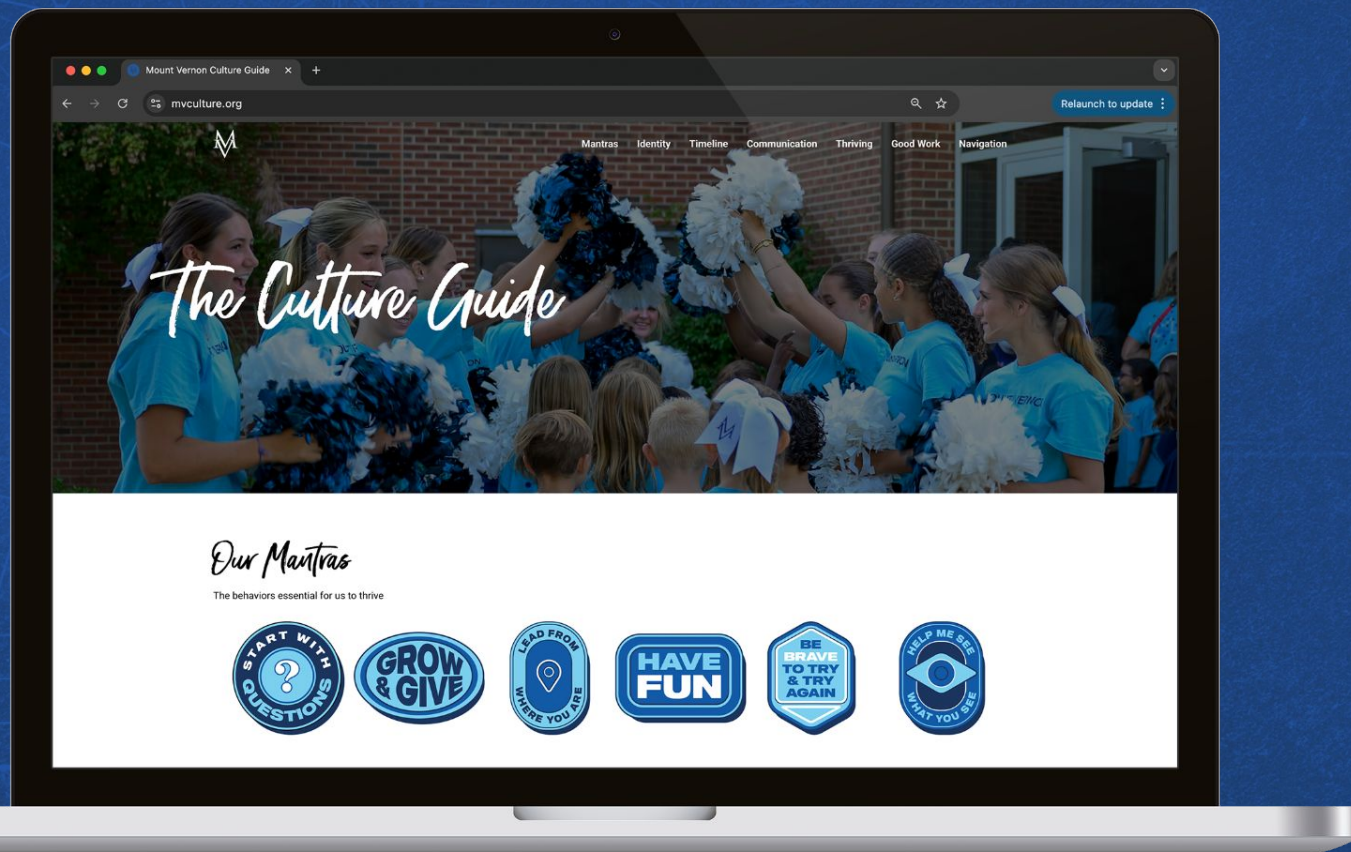
BONUS: Parents hear of this disagreement and are now weighing in on what they think is the most important.



STRATEGY #1:

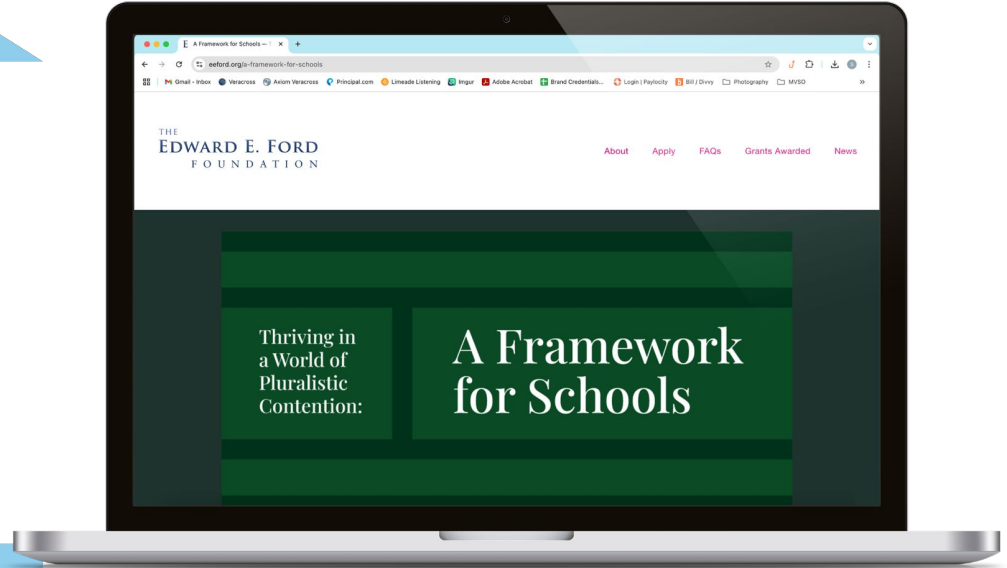
DEFINE THE NON-NEGOTIABLES (ORGANIZATION)







INTEGRITY BLUEPRINT



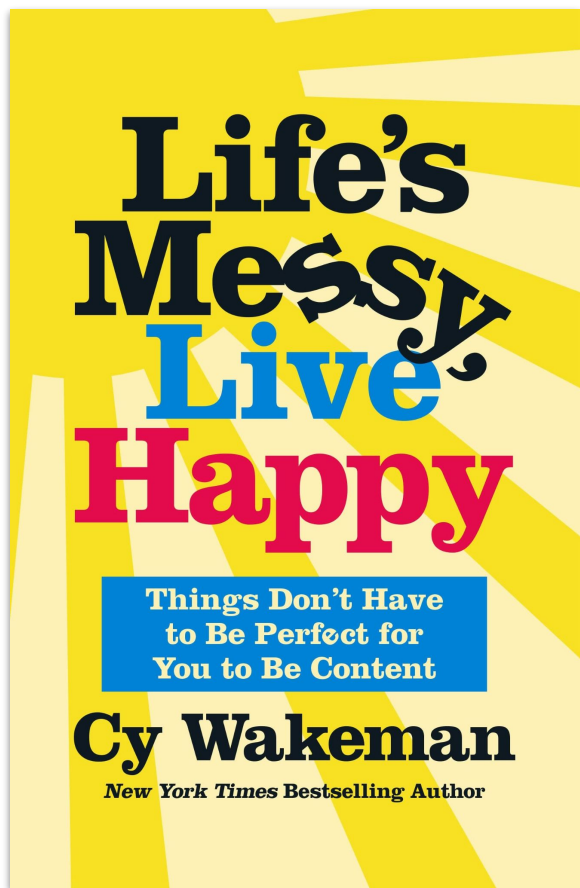
Word, Phrase, Sentence

- Visual Thinking Routines



STRATEGY #2:
**PUT YOUR MASK
ON FIRST
(SELF-LEADERSHIP)**



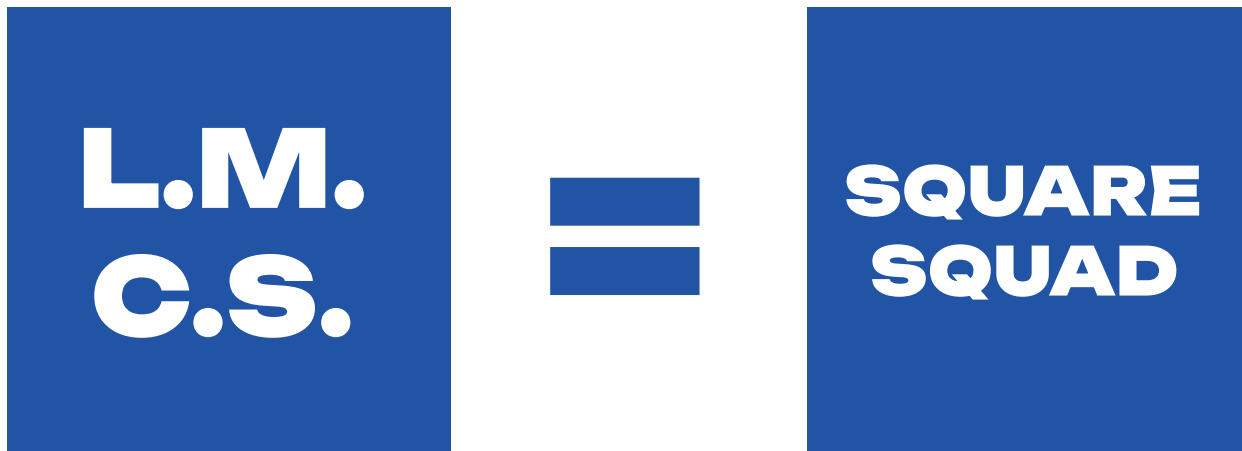


3 Questions to Find Clarity

From Cy Wakeman's New Book — *Life's Messy, Live Happy*

- What do I know for sure?
- How can I help?
- What would great look like in this situation?





Square Squad = people whose opinions matter most to you

Your square squad is a 1 inch x 1 inch square in which you list the initials of people, whose opinions ***really*** matter to you. They are the people that you know you can reach out to when you really need to share something vulnerable.

Create your “Square Squad” square.

Inspired by Brene Brown



Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats offers a powerful framework for enhancing decision-making and creating creative collaboration.

White Hat

Data, facts information
known or needed



Red Hat

Feelings, hunches, instinct
and intuition



Black Hat

Difficulties, potential
problems, why something
may not work



Yellow Hat

Values and benefits, why
something may work



Blue Hat

Manage process, next
steps, action plans



Green Hat

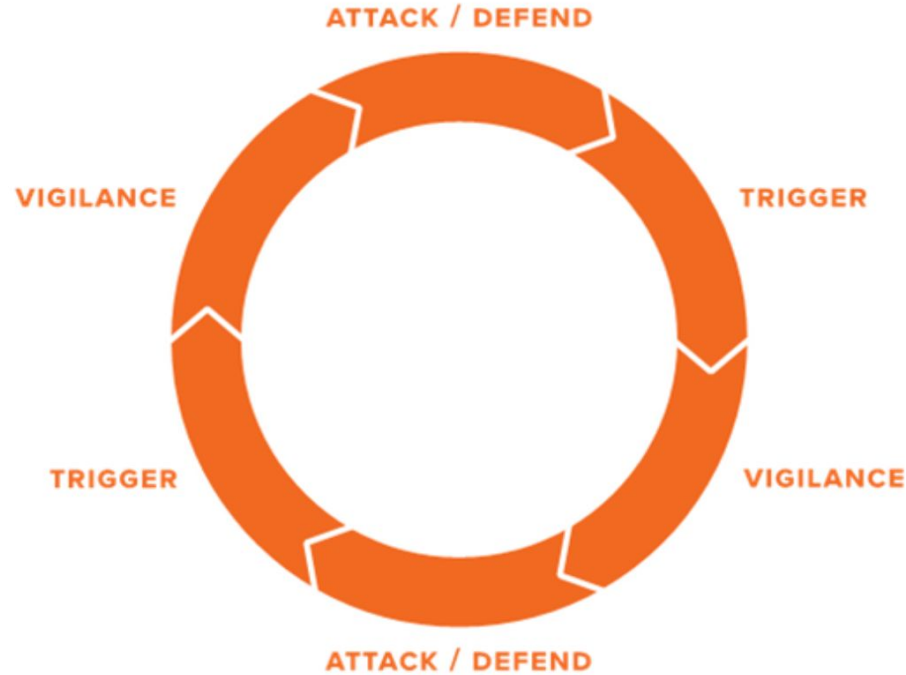
Creativity, solutions,
alternatives, new ideas



STRATEGY #3:
DIALOGUE

INQUIRY
innovation
& IMPACT





Cycle of Defensive Response

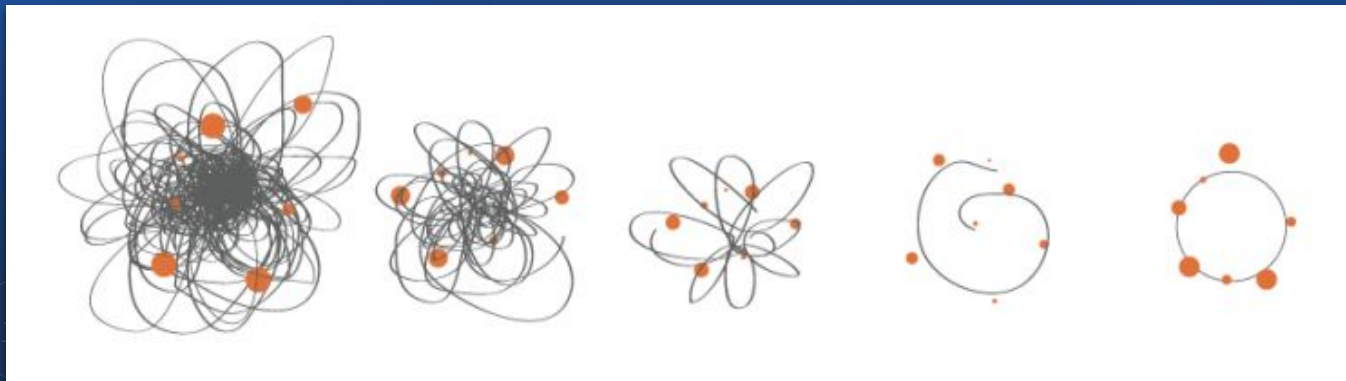


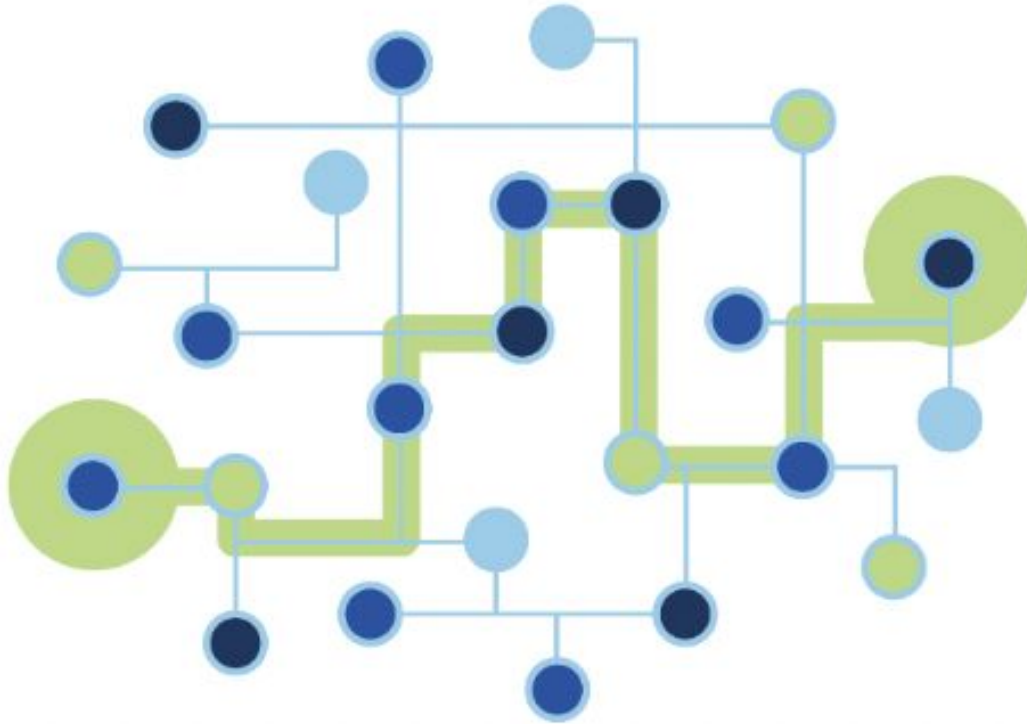
Constructive Cycle

Dialogue — Putting It All Together

What We Call Dialogue

The primary goal of dialogue: to pursue mutual understanding and improved communication that enhances curiosity, respect, and trust. This includes better understanding oneself as well as others. We use dialogue to make ideas more personal, connected to values, and more complex.





Roles

- Facilitator
- Timer
- Speaker
- Listener

We may equip listeners with SAVE or Questions to support mirror understanding.



Full Spectrum Listening

Listening happens at many levels because many different things are expressed when a person speaks. This exercise is a way of tuning into one of the many “wavelengths” of the listening spectrum.

In groups of two: **S-A-V-E** (**S**taories, **A**ctions, **V**alues, **E**motions; rotate roles)

- Each person will have 2 minutes to share a headline that summarizes the story.
- While your partner shares you will listen from the role listed below (**actions**, **emotions**, and **values**).
- At the end of the story, each person will tell the speaker what they heard from their role.

ACTIONS

When listening for actions: Be a reporter. Listen for the Who? What? When? Where? How?

VALUES

When listening for values: What were the values beneath what was shared? What does the speaker care about? What is important to them?

EMOTIONS

When listening for emotions: Notice what emotions are mentioned in the story. How would you describe the storyteller's emotions both in the story and as they are telling it?

Closing

In thinking about what you and others have shared, is there something you think would be important to consider in decisions about extracurricular activities and use of time at your school?

- We will have 2 mins to think/write
- Each person will be invited to contribute with 1 min.



Round 1

- Your Name
- Pick your favorite extracurricular activity story. Share what made that experience special and something you learned.

Facilitator will set a timer for two minutes. Everyone gets to think about their story.

Speaker will share their story for 2 minutes. Listener will repeat back the actions, values, and emotions they heard in 1 minute. No discussion.

Repeat in switched roles.

The team will then have 2 minutes to identify similarities and differences.



Go - Around #1

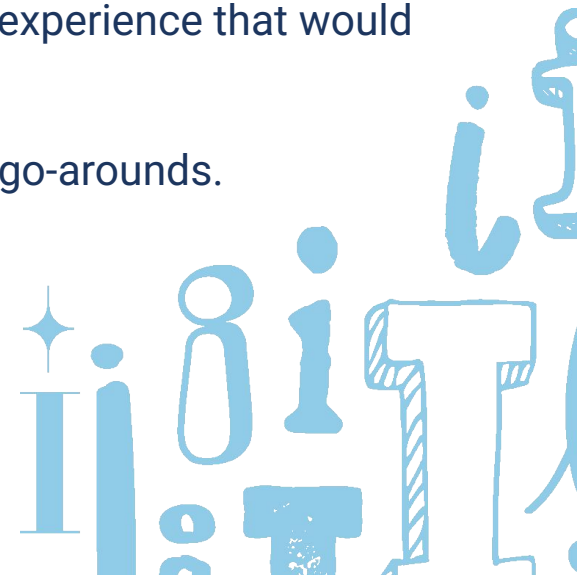
Question: As you think about your exposure to leaders and concepts of leadership, speak about a leader you admire enough to advocate for a monument in their honor.

- Who is this person and what do you admire about them?
- What values do you share with them?
- Share a person in your life that taught you those values, or an experience that would help others understand how you came to hold those values.

We will think/write for 2 minutes. Then, the facilitator will begin the go-arounds.

Each person will have 1 minute to share their thoughts.

If you are listening, you are only listening. No interruptions.



Go - Around #2

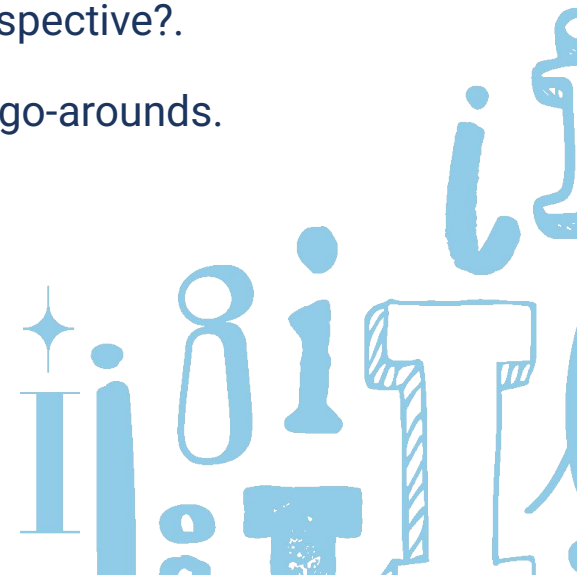
Question: Think of a leader you feel conflicted about, someone that you would be torn about honoring with a monument.

- What do you admire about this person?
- What gives you pause or leaves you feeling conflicted?
- What people or experiences in your life are informing your perspective?

We will think/write for 2 minutes. Then, the facilitator will begin the go-arounds.

Each person will have 1 minute to share their thoughts.

If you are listening, you are only listening. No interruptions.



Questions

In this section we have a chance to ask each other our questions about what we shared. We'll follow go-around format. Wait to hear all of your partner's questions before responding.

- Each person will have 1 min to share their questions for their partner's consideration.
- After 1 min the responder will have 2 mins to respond to the questions as they would like. You may respond whichever question(s) you'd like. It is your response.



Closing

In thinking about what you and others have shared, is there something you think would be important to consider in decisions about whether a monument is made or not?

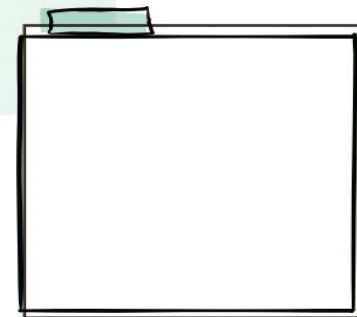
- We will have 2 mins to think/write
- Each person will be invited to contribute with 1 min.



WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Name: _____

Date: _____



WHAT DID YOU LEARN?



STRATEGY #4:
MAP IT OUT

INQUIRY
innovation
& IMPACT

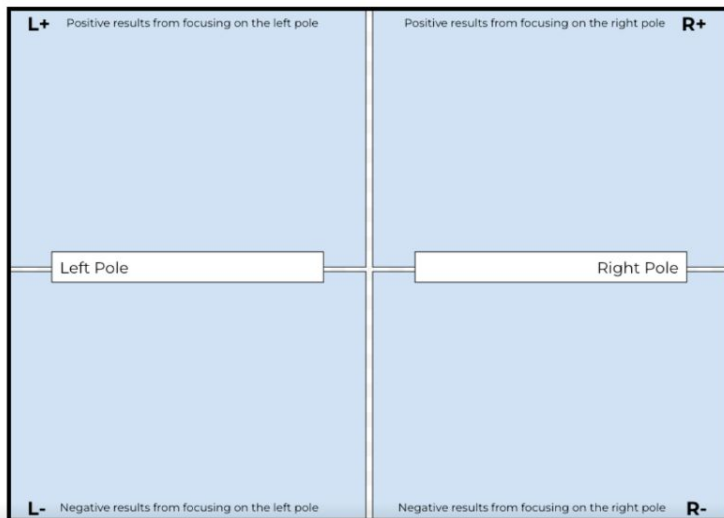




Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems

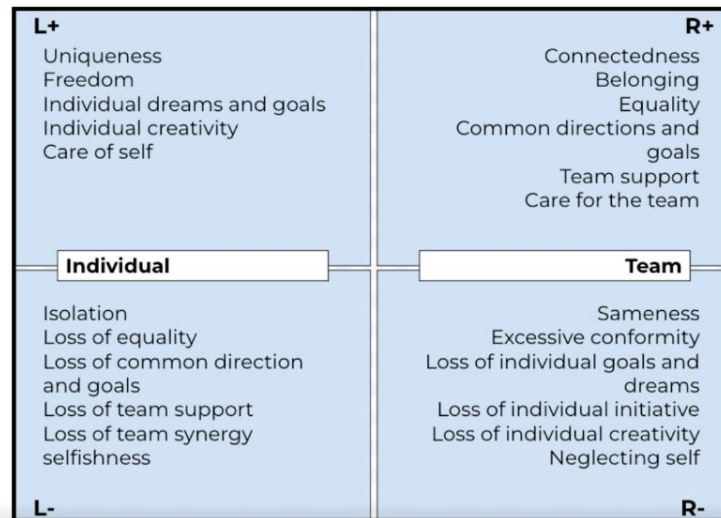
A polarity map is a visual tool used to analyze situations where two seemingly opposing forces, or polarities, are at play to help understand the up and down side of each force, and how they can be balanced for the best outcome.

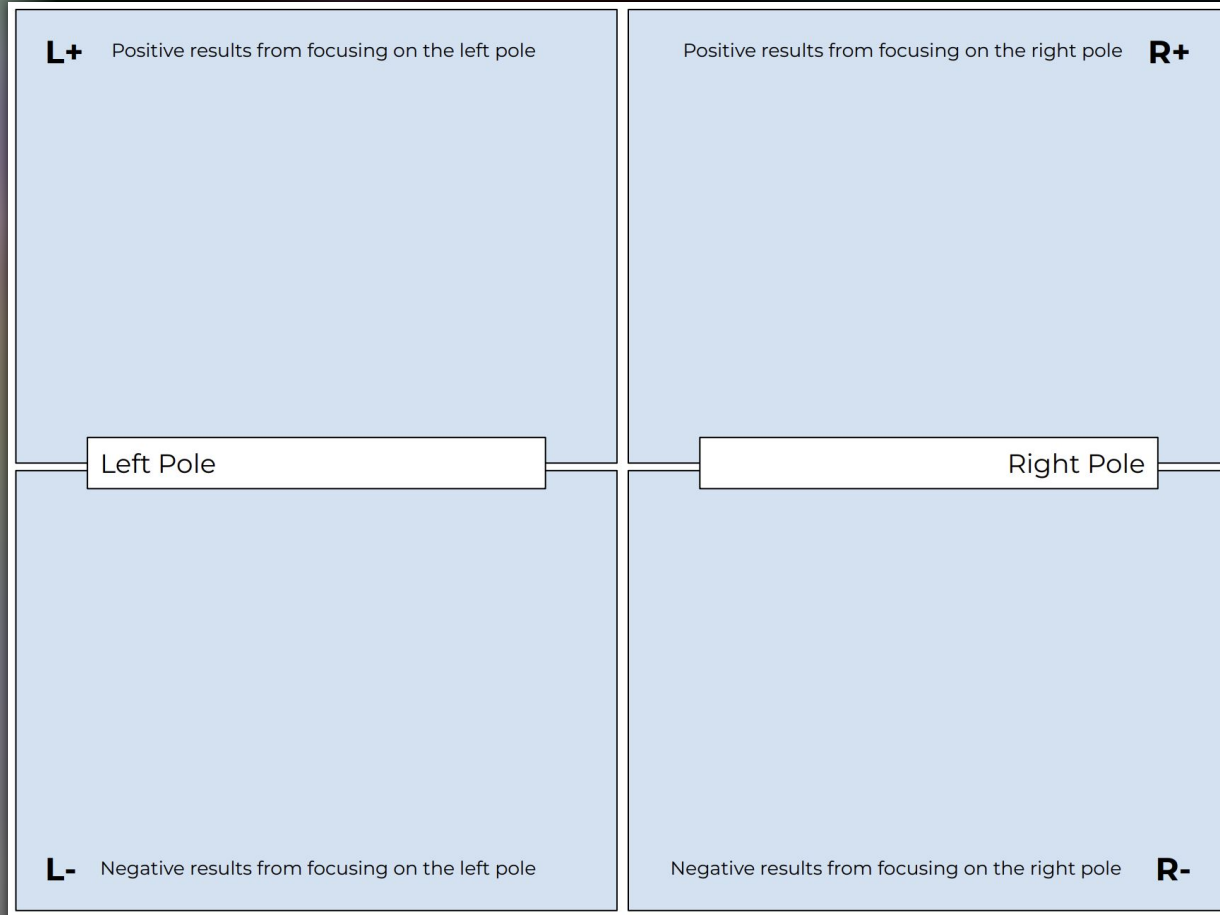
Tool



This completed example of a polarity map uses individual and team as the polarities to be managed. The top left quadrant shows the advantages to functioning as an individual in contrast to the top right listing the advantages of working as a team.

Tool





**Tradition and
Innovation**

OR

**Flexibility and
Structure**

Strategy #1

Define the Non-Negotiables — Build the Culture

Strategy #2

Put Your Mask on First — Self-Leadership

Strategy #3

Dialogue — Listen to Understand

Strategy #4

Map It Out — Develop Comprehensive Awareness



RESOURCES

- [A Framework for Schools, EE Ford](#)
- [Aspiring Leaders: Building Leadership Skills, a Competency Framework for Career Growth, MV Ventures](#)
- Dare to Lead, [Brene Brown](#)
- [Dialogic Model](#), Essential Partners
- [Integrity Blueprint](#), Mount Vernon School
- [Leading through Polarity Leadership & Governance](#) — August 2024
- [Life's Messy, Live Happy](#), Cy Wakeman
- [Little Learners with Big Ideas](#), MV Ventures
- [Mount Vernon's Culture Guide](#)
- [Six Thinking Hats](#), Edward DeBono
- [Visible Thinking Routines with Project Zero at Harvard Education](#)

Let's stay connected.

Scan the QR code to
sign up for our MVV
newsletter.



THE MOUNT VERNON ORGANIZATION

The Mount Vernon School anchors the Mount Vernon Organization as a destination of inquiry, innovation, and impact. Through MVSO and MV Ventures, our school is living its mission to design a better world by providing unique and differentiated value for all community members now, and into the future.



MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL PK3-12 Flagship Campus

Mount Vernon is an independent school serving over 1250 students from Preschool through Grade 12. Mount Vernon School is a community where curiosity is cultivated, multiple perspectives are valued, and prototypes are built and iterated until mastery is achieved. Learning is amplified through real-world problem-solving, creating limitless possibilities for meaningful impact.



MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL ONLINE 9-12 Global Campus

Serving grade 9 - 12 families and students who seek an alternative to a traditional in-person school setting, MVSO shares the same quality Upper School curriculum but in a virtual and asynchronous format.



MOUNT VERNON VENTURES Research, Development, and Educational Consultancy

Through Ventures, the School has access to the latest educational research and tools including quarterly R&D reports, creating a host of benefits for our students, faculty, staff, the community at large, and beyond.



We are a school of inquiry, innovation, and impact.
Grounded in Christian values, we prepare all students
to be college ready, globally competitive, and
engaged citizen leaders.