

Learner Agency

- a driver for equity and inclusion



with
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Key workshop premise

You cannot
achieve equity
without building
learner agency.

Workshop intent



Time to think further about what learner agency for equity & inclusion means to you, where you are currently and possible next steps.

Workshop narrative

1. Building on – what does learner agency mean to us now?
2. Why it matters.
3. What's needed to develop it?
4. How leaders support teachers?
5. Where are we now in this work?

*Equity and Excellence in school education;
policies, practices and pedagogy for good
schools in Australia.*

**If excellence is not possible
without equity...**



**Is equity possible without
learner agency?**



Workshop narrative

1

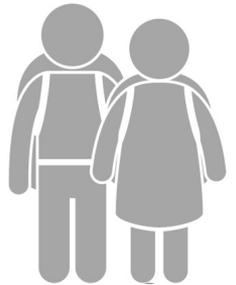
**What does
learner agency
mean to us?**

'Agency' - to our leaders means.....

Talking point: Consider 2 learners from your school
- one who epitomises 'high agency' and
- another at the other end of the spectrum

***Write the key characteristics of each learner on your table mat.**

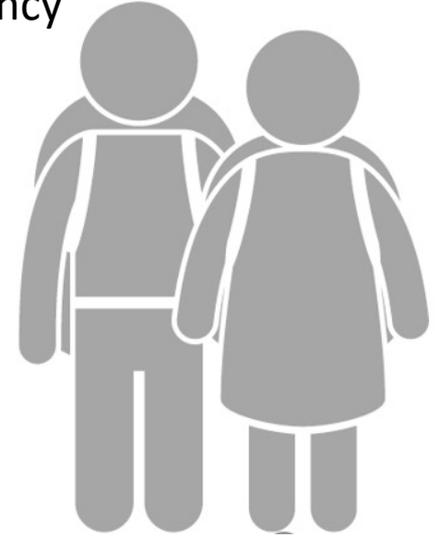
Use this contrast to help you progress your thinking about the key features of learner agency.



Features of learner agency – Essence of learner agency

Absence of agency

1. Discuss & settle on 3 defining characteristics that capture the essence of learner agency.
2. And 3 defining characteristics that demonstrate lack of agency.



Once you have agreed upon 3 characteristics for each question, scan the QR code on your phone and enter your table's responses into the Padlet.



So what do
we mean
by
"learner agency"?

Student agency is defined as the capacity to set a goal, reflect and act responsibly to effect change.

It is about acting rather than being acted upon; shaping rather than being shaped; and making responsible decisions and choices rather than accepting those determined by others.

OECD Future of Education & Skills 2030

Agency is not action for the sake of it. Nor is it simply offering students more choice from a pre-set menu, nor an occasional voice to give feedback on their teachers.

Charles Leadbeater: Learning on Purpose

Learners who have agency are purposive, reflective, invested and action-oriented. Agency means:

- Developing goals (personal & social)
- Initiating action towards those goals
- Reflecting on & regulating progress towards those goals
- Belief in self-efficacy

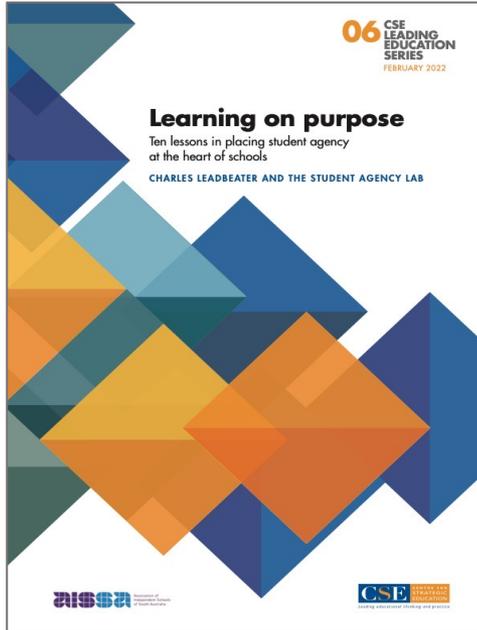
Hannon & Peterson; Thrive

'Agency' – thought leaders & academics

Student agency relates to the development of an **identity** and a **sense of belonging**. When students develop agency they rely on **motivation, hope, self-efficacy** and a **growth mindset** (the understanding that abilities and intelligence can be developed) to navigate towards well-being. This enables them to act with a sense of **purpose**, which guides them to flourish and thrive in society.

OECD 2030 Student Agency definition

'Agency' – thought leaders & academics



Charles Leadbeater and the Student Agency Lab
<https://www.learningcreates.org.au/findings/leading-education-series>

**10 lessons learned
- a short reading
4 minutes**

Introduction

The school leaving exam should have just one question, which should read:

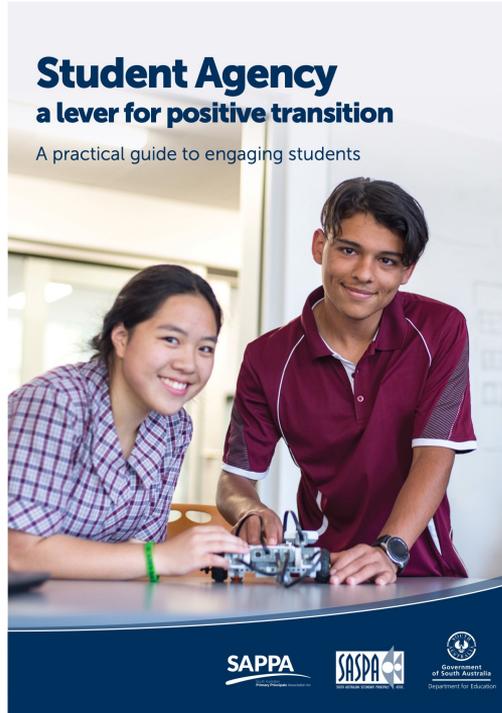
Show how you can work with others to combine and use your knowledge to create change that will generate better outcomes for people and the planet, while doing what you consider to be the right thing.

That's it.

In a world that is increasingly volatile, unstable, uncertain and unequal, education needs to help students exert some control and purpose over their lives. To do that they need to develop a sense of agency so that they can: understand what matters

to them and the communities they are a part of; sense opportunity and act on it; take risks; make commitments; and learn in action how to recover from setbacks, to adjust their plans when things do not work out as they had hoped.....

Learner Agency – in South Australia 2021



Student voice

Creating avenues to listen to students' opinions, feelings and ideas



Student agency

Students have the ability and the will to take action to positively influence their own lives and the world around them

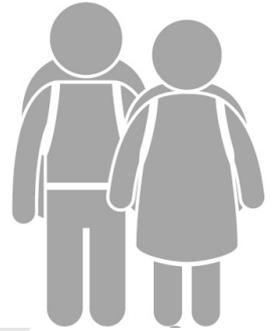
'Agency' - to our learners means.....



reflection

1

Connections and
contrasts between
the academics,
learners and
educators?



Workshop narrative



2

**Why it
matters**



Professor Dylan Wiliam

Unpacking formative assessment

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is now	How to get the learner there
Teacher	1 Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions	2 Eliciting evidence of learning	3 Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer		4 Activating students as learning resources for one another	
Student		5 Activating students as owners of their own learning	

Adapted from Dylan William 'Five key strategies for formative assessment', in Leahy et al (2009)

It's a hierarchy - Professor Dylan Wiliam

UK Education Endowment Foundation 2019

Gold standard educational research

Teaching and Learning Toolkit

An accessible summary of the international evidence on teaching 5-16 year-olds

Filter Toolkit

Filter results by keywords



Cost



Evidence



Months Impact

Toolkit Strand ^

Cost v

Evidence Strength ^

Impact (months)

Feedback

High impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence.



+8

Metacognition and self-regulation

High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.



+7

Teaching and Learning Toolkit

An accessible summary of education evidence

Watch the Toolkit explainer

Read our guide to using the Toolkit

today

Implementation cost



Evidence strength



Impact (months)



Search by keyword

Toolkit Strands

Cost

Evidence

Impact

Metacognition and self-regulation

Very high impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence

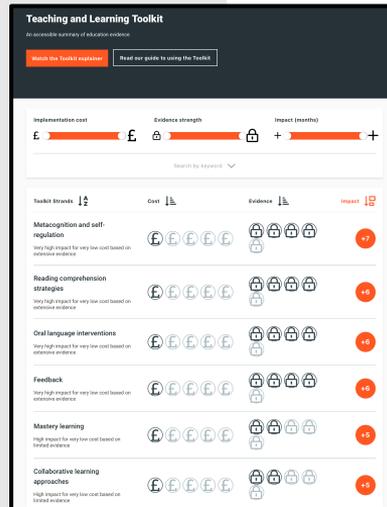


+7

Reading comprehension strategies



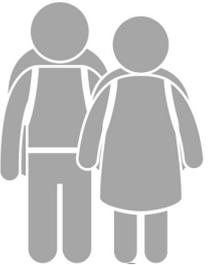
+6



reflection

2

The evidence
base is strong
– any
yes, but...?



Workshop narrative



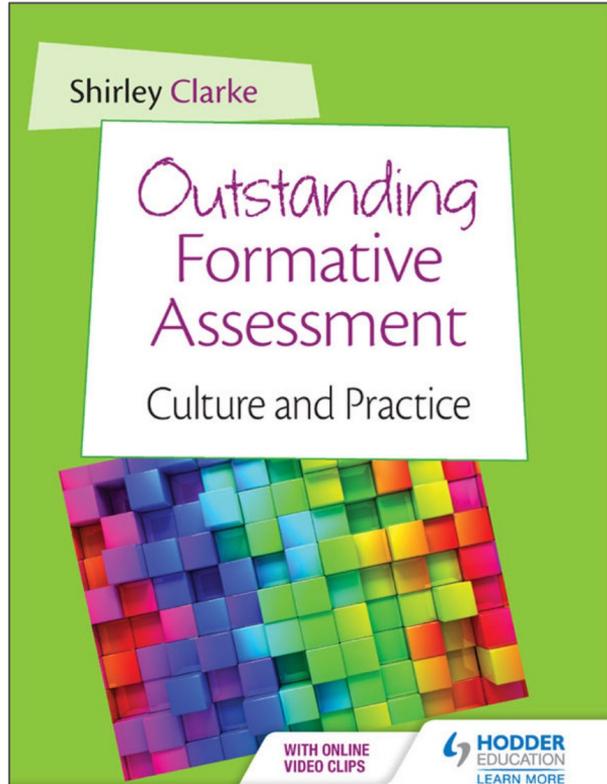
3

**What's needed
to develop
learner agency
for greater equity
& inclusion?**

“If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to one principle, I would say this: 'The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach... accordingly.'”

Ausubel, David (1968). Educational Psychology – A Cognitive View.

Is this possible without student involvement?

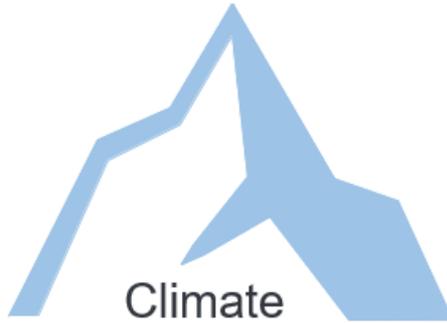


“ It would be possible to have lessons where all the elements of formative assessment featured but were more or less cancelled out by the absence of a **true learning culture.**”

Culture and Climate

Climate is

- ❖ “What” and “How” the organisation does each day
- ❖ A sense, feeling or atmosphere people feel every day
- ❖ An organisation’s behaviours: what people feel, hear, see, say and do

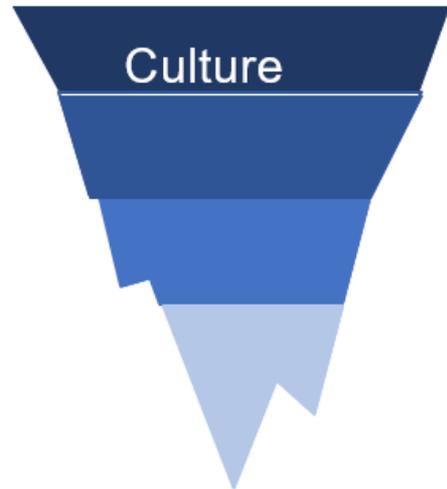


- ❖ **FUN**
positive, happy, enjoyable, enthusiastic
- ❖ **PRODUCTIVE**
challenged, vibrant, excellence, energetic
- ❖ **COLLABORATIVE**
communicating, teamwork, trusting, encouraging
- ❖ **SUPPORTIVE**
safe, customer centered, shared responsibility

What do we mean by culture?

Culture is

- ❖ It is knowing “why” the organisation does what they do
- ❖ The set of values, beliefs and aspirations the organisation shares
- ❖ Purpose, Mission, Values



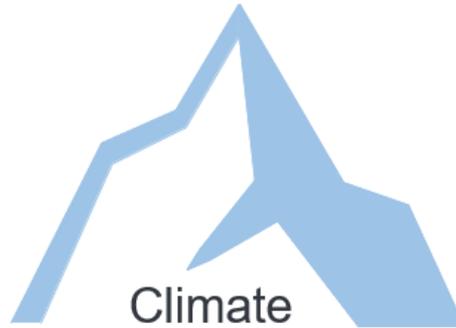
- ❖ **VISIBLE ARTÉFACTS**
Physical environment, dress codes, furniture, habits, symbols, jargon, art, stories able to be seen and shared
- ❖ **ESPOUSED VALUES**
Integrity, Honesty, Fairness, Trustworthiness, Accountability, Learning, Customer Experience.
- ❖ **BASIC ASSUMPTIONS**
Unobservable, the correct way to think, talk, perceive, feel and act, in certain situations

Learning

Climate

What is the ideal climate at your school with regard to

- ❖ Student Agency
- ❖ Equity & Inclusion
- ❖ What do learners feel, hear, see, say and do in the classroom?



Feel like



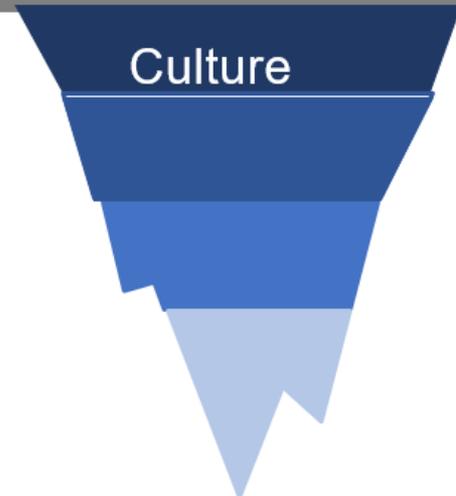
Look like

Sound like

What do we want our learning culture to look like??

Culture

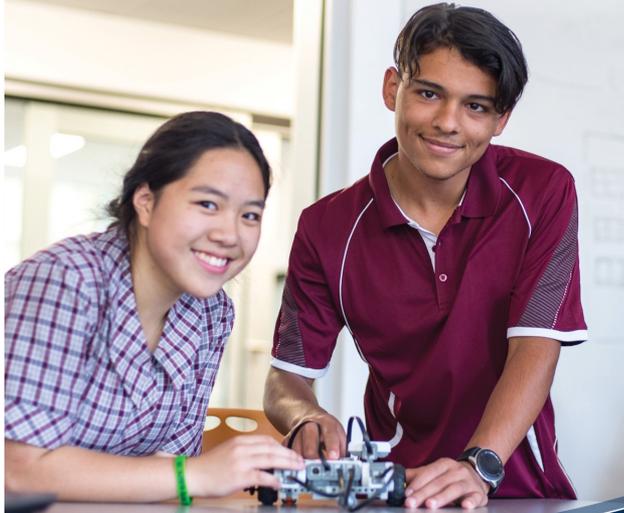
- ❖ What is solid in your school with regard to learning culture?
- ❖ What's working well?
What do people value?
What can they rely on?
- ❖ What can our learners rely on



Student Agency

a lever for positive transition

A practical guide to engaging students



SAPPA
Primary/Prepade (South Australia)

SASPA
Secondary Schools (South Australia)

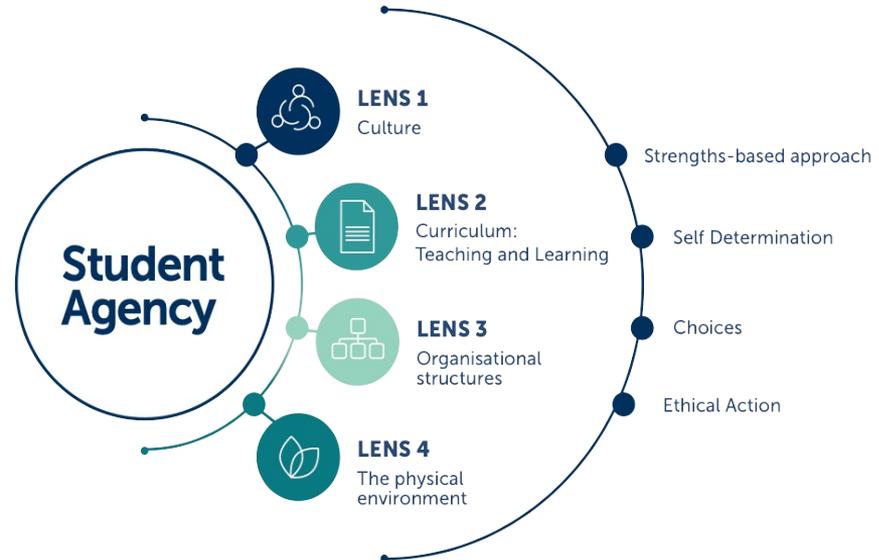
Government
of South Australia
Department for Education

What can we learn? The challenge of using student agency as a lever

The information gathered for this paper through interviews and sharing of practice is presented here through four 'lenses', or levers. Using the principles of student agency, these can be explored to develop quality transition and learning programs for students.

The four lenses are:

1. Culture
2. Curriculum: Teaching and Learning
3. Organisational structures
4. The physical environment



Guiding questions

Activating students as learning
resources for one another

Activating students as owners
of their own learning

reflection

3

Gone are the days of

- compliance as the norm
- a quiet classroom...
- questioning as disruption...
- choice only from fixed menu

Food for thought...what are our challenges related to developing student agency?

- Why are these sections harder to embed in our culture?

What might we need to supercharge to achieve the learning culture we are seeking?



Workshop narrative

4

**How can we as
leaders support
teachers in this?**

Mission impossible?: Why equity and inclusion matters

Professor Tanya Fitzgerald
September 2021

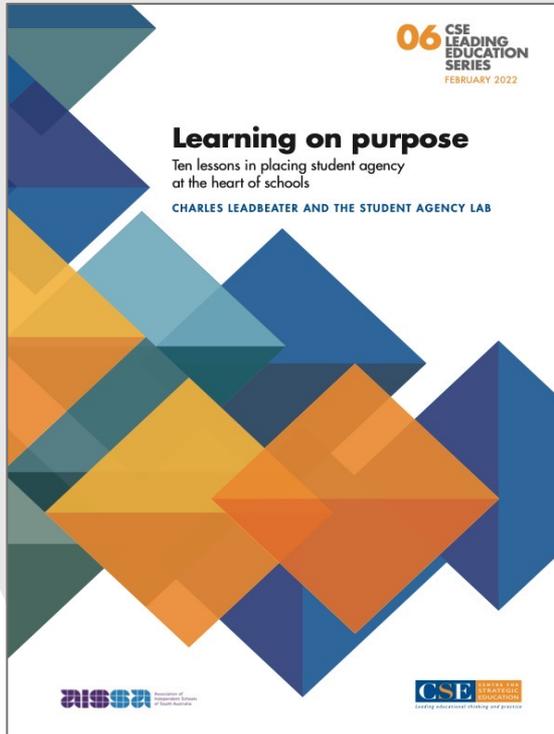


THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**

**DISRUPTING
PATTERNS**

CHARLES LEADBEATER AND THE STUDENT AGENCY LAB

The Learning Future Podcast Series



**Independent
schools context**

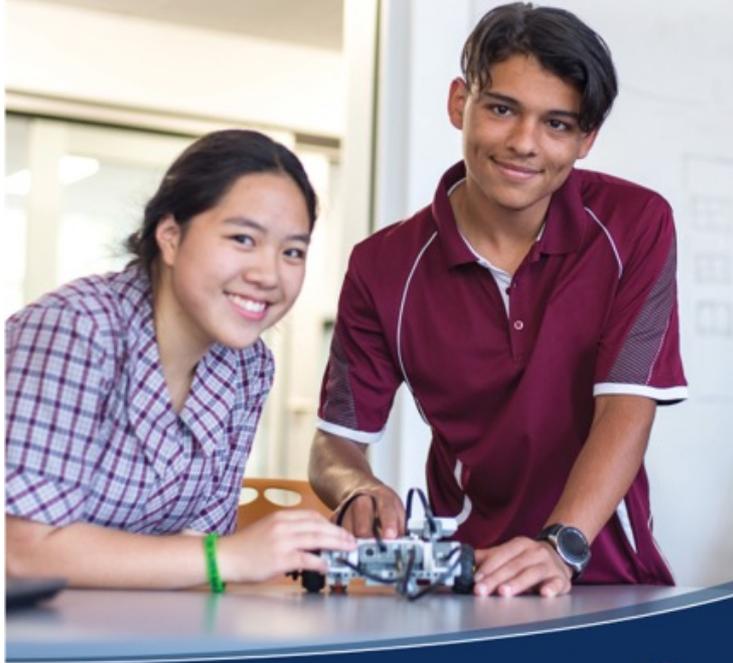
Ten lessons

- Lesson One:** Learning on purpose
- Lesson Two:** Dynamic capability
- Lesson Three:** Philosophy, product, practice
- Lesson Four:** Students bring it to life
- Lesson Five:** Teachers as agent
- Lesson Six:** Creating new patterns
- Lesson Seven:** Recognising agency
- Lesson Eight:** Strategies for change
- Lesson Nine:** The power of narrative
- Lesson Ten:** Whole-school leadership

Student Agency

a lever for positive transition

A practical guide to engaging students



SAPPA
Schools Advancing Positive Progress and Agency

SASPA
Schools Advancing Student Agency and Progress



many useful
practical examples

STUDENT VOICE AUDIT AND ACTION CARDS

Activating student voice to accelerate learning improvement

'... the 'secret ingredient' that could become the most powerful force of all.'

Michael Fullan, Indelible Leadership



pilot



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and Child Development

Student Voice Audit and Action Cards | Overview

STUDENTS AS EVALUATORS

Students:

- get feedback and use it to move their learning forward
- give feedback to their peers and teachers
- observe learning and teaching, and their feedback is used
- understand the importance of feedback and seek it in all of their learning.

STUDENTS AS LEARNING DESIGNERS

Students:

- talk with others about what they need to learn and why
- share what they already know, can do and understand
- discuss how everyone can challenge themselves in new learning
- negotiate and design learning that stretches their thinking.

STUDENTS AS DECISION-MAKERS

Students:

- discuss decisions made by adults in their preschool/school
- share their ideas and opinions for decisions to be made
- work with adults in making decisions for teaching and learning
- provide evidence to show how they achieve stronger outcomes when students and adults make decisions together.

STUDENTS AS TEACHERS

Students:

- see their teacher being a learner
- help someone with their learning and notice the difference it makes
- plan learning activities and teach others
- teach others because they know it helps their own learning.

STUDENTS AS RESEARCHERS

Students:

- reflect on what works or what doesn't for their learning
- hypothesise with others on what might improve learning
- collect information and data to find out more and test their hypothesis
- interpret data and present their findings for future action.

STUDENTS AS ADVOCATES FOR 21C LEARNING

Students:

- practise being a confident, resilient and powerful learner wherever they are
- speak up to represent their own and others' views
- thoughtfully challenge others' views around learning
- find ways to influence powerful learning across the community.

<https://acleadersresource.sa.edu.au/resources/teaching-for-effective-learning-resources/tfel-card-collections/>

Disrupting 'below the line'

LIMITING

ASSUMPTION AND BELIEF

Some kids just aren't able to (or don't want to) problem solve.

OBSERVABLE ACTION

After trying a problem solving task with students and observing that some/many students, 'don't know what to do when they haven't been shown', the teacher feels concerned about pursuing problem solving activities with that class. Problem solving activities are given as extension tasks for more able students (and those who can already problem solve).

SA DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION | LEADING LEARNING DESIGN

ENABLING

ASSUMPTION AND BELIEF

All students can and should problem solve. My job is to:

- create an environment in which they feel safe to have a go
- develop problem solving dispositions in my students
- develop students' problem solving strategies.

OBSERVABLE ACTION

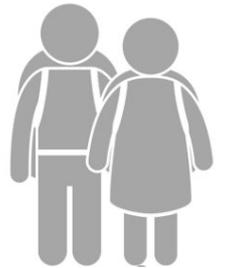
Problem solving strategies and scaffolds are provided and taught to all students. Problems are differentiated so all students are challenged appropriately and the learning environment supports students to 'have a go'.
(First thinking, second thinking, next thinking... final thinking.)

reflection

4

Leading this work involves building the staff learning culture **and** 'disrupting compliant teaching patterns'.

What might be your small step forward in this?



ideas
steal

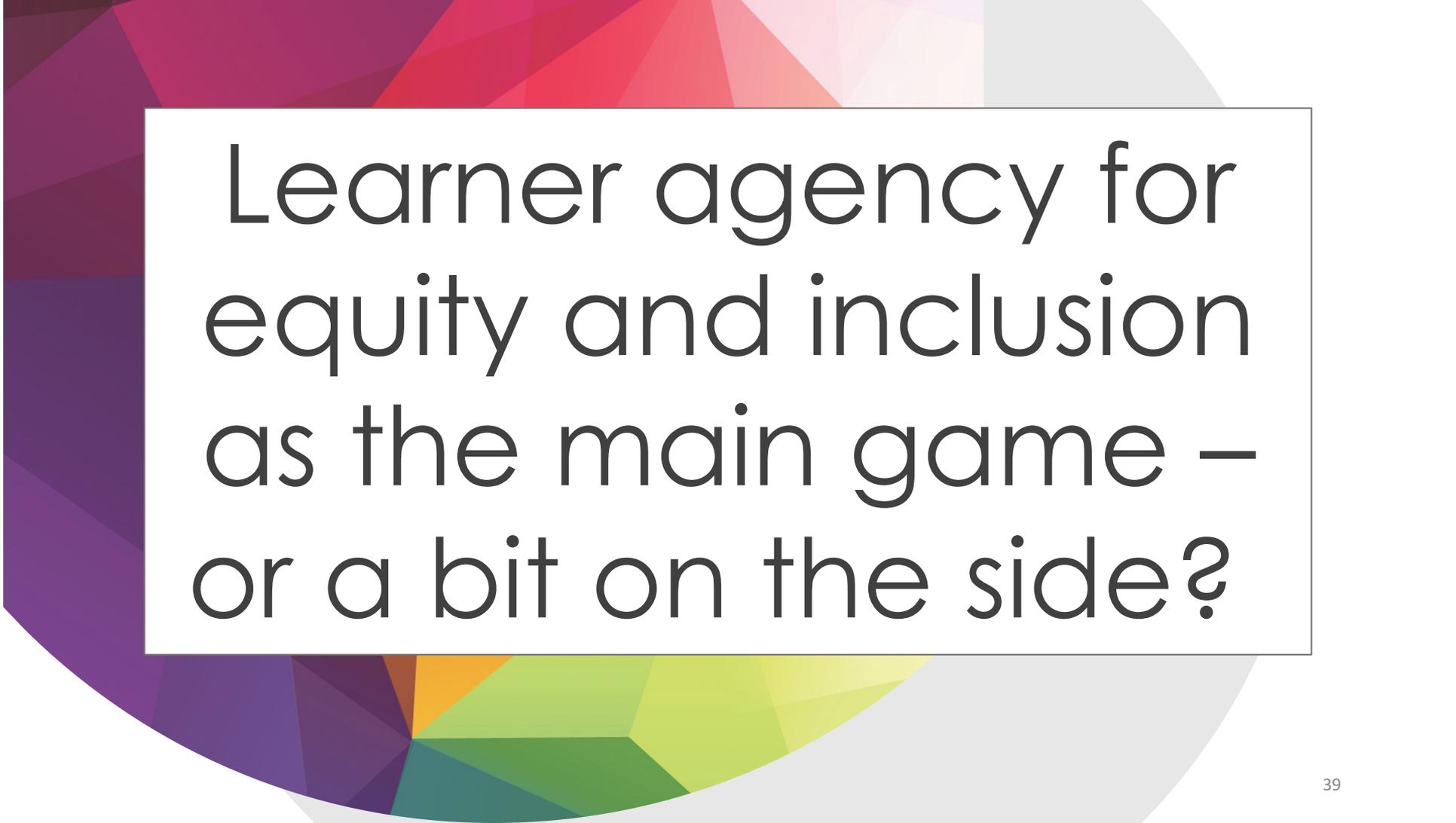


Workshop narrative



5

**Where are
we now in
this work?**



Learner agency for
equity and inclusion
as the main game –
or a bit on the side?

Numeracy and Literacy
RESULTSplus+

START WITH THEIR
OPINION

PROBE THEIR
OPINION

DIRECT THEIR
MATHEMATICAL
NOTICING

ACTIVATE AND
TRANSFER WHAT
THEY ALREADY
KNOW

CONSTRUCT NEW
UNDERSTANDING
(may require
explicit instruction)

REFLECT ON THE
LEARNING

SOURCE:
Would you rather?
wouldyourather.com



Which would **you** rather?

What makes **you** think that?
How sure do you feel?
Listen to each others thinking
Do you want to **change your mind**?

What information might help **you**?
What measurement could you make?
What information could your research about
soap/towels?

How might/will **you start**?
What could **you try**?
What/who will help you?

*This type of task can be referred to as a 'low floor, high ceiling' task.
The task can be used to engage with elements of the AC: Mathematics from approx. Year 4 to Year 9. Age and stage appropriate 'next learning' can be developed.**

Share different approaches
What did you **learn about**?
What did you **learn to do**?
How did you work together?
What 'failures' did you experience? How did you respond? How did that effect your learning?

SOURCE:
Dan Meyer's blog
blogmrmeier.com



What questions do **you** have?

What questions do **you** have?
...and **another question**
...and **another question**

What information might help **you**?
What do you already know about
clouds/ladders?
What information could you research?

How might/will **you start**?
What could **you try**?
What/who will help you?

*This type of task can be referred to as a 'low floor, high ceiling' task.
Age and stage appropriate 'next learning' can be developed.**

Share different approaches
What did you **learn about**?
What did you **learn to do**?
How did you work together?
What 'failures' did you experience? How did you respond? How did that effect your learning?

**SOURCE: Which one
doesn't belong?**
wodb.ca



Which one doesn't belong?
(In **your** opinion)

What makes **y**
Is there **anot**
Is there **a diffe**

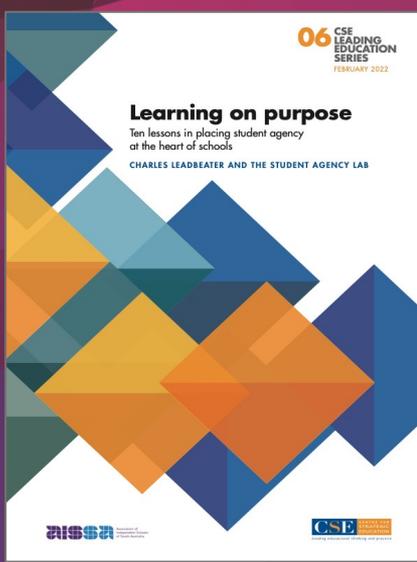
What **mathematical info**
abo
*This type of question is only
not automatically notice*

Eg. What could we say
dic
**Have a go. Try to make
and we'll impro**

*This type of task address
curriculum age rang
construct new unde
conversation, as studen
perspe*

*Activities like this can be used as quick mental
starters or extended into whole lessons.
We don't need to reflect on everything!*

Surely the
main game is
the teaching
and learning.



next steps

Where we started 'advice'
from leaders in the
Student Agency Lab project.

'Advice 'principles'

- Involve the learners from the beginning
- Model being OK with the uncertainty of 'no program'
- Anticipate teachers' discomfort with shifting power dynamics
- Design to maximise teachers' intrinsic motivation
- Just start – all in – small steps – teacher choice

Rethinking Educational Reform

A Loosely Coupled and Complex Systems Perspective

Chris Goldspink

ABSTRACT

This article critically examines two sets of ideas that have influenced educational reform in the recent past: managerialism and market approaches. It is argued that while each can be demonstrated to have led to useful change, neither provides a basis for future improvement in education. A recent example of change within the State School sector of South Australia is used to provide a grounding point for the development of a set of principles to guide future reform. These principles draw on a well-established set of ideas: that of educational systems as 'loosely coupled' and recent advances in the application of complex systems concepts to organizational management. These concepts, and the South Australian example, suggest the potential benefits from using self-organizational properties to improve institutional learning. Unlike the 'rationalist' management and market approaches, the alternative model emphasizes the need for a focus on people, relationships and learning rather than structures and centrally determined standards for conformance.

KEYWORDS *agency theory, complexity theory, educational reform, loosely coupled systems, managerialism, new public management, public choice, school improvement*

Introduction

A political reality in western democracies during the post-war period has been the need to do 'more with less' (Wilenski, 1986; Keating, 1988). In addition, the influence of neoclassical economic and neoliberal political thinking led to

A powerful lever for change

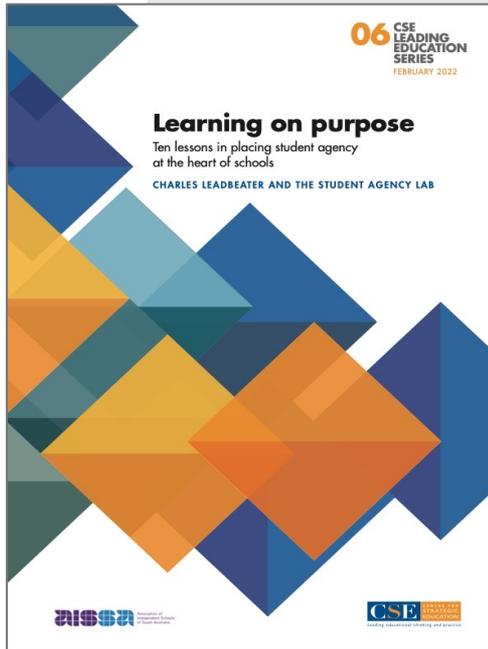
Teachers' intrinsic motivation in listening to their learners.

Best Paper of the Year 2007 - Educational Management Administration and Leadership

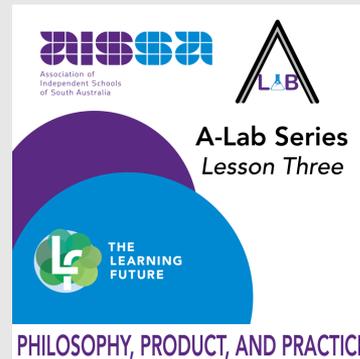
Ten lessons

Lesson Three:

Philosophy, product, practice



You can start anywhere
but ultimately these 3 aspects work together.



Charles Leadbeater

thelearningfuture.com/the-learning-future-podcast/a-lab-3

Leaders are
building skill
and will.



Education
Endowment
Foundation

METACOGNITION AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING

Summary of recommendations

1

Teachers should acquire the professional understanding and skills to develop their pupils' metacognitive knowledge



2

Explicitly teach pupils metacognitive strategies, including how to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning



3

Model your own thinking to help pupils develop their metacognitive and cognitive skills



4

Set an appropriate level of challenge to develop pupils' self-regulation and metacognition



5

Promote and develop metacognitive talk in the classroom



6

Explicitly teach pupils how to organise and effectively manage their learning independently



7

Schools should support teachers to develop knowledge of these approaches and expect them to be applied appropriately



3

Model your own thinking to help pupils develop their metacognitive and cognitive skills

school discussion and planning

reflection

5

Where is your thinking now – a key insight?

What would you want to learn more about in this area?

