



Linking Professional Community and Real School Improvement

A Workshop for the Ontario
Principals' Council

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Administration

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February 1, 2008

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



Today...

- 1. Professional Community** ... how it is created and sustained
- 2. Shared Leadership and Organizational Learning...** the key to “moving” schools
- 3. Leadership Practices**
...getting started
- 4. Take-Away Plan**

Grounding

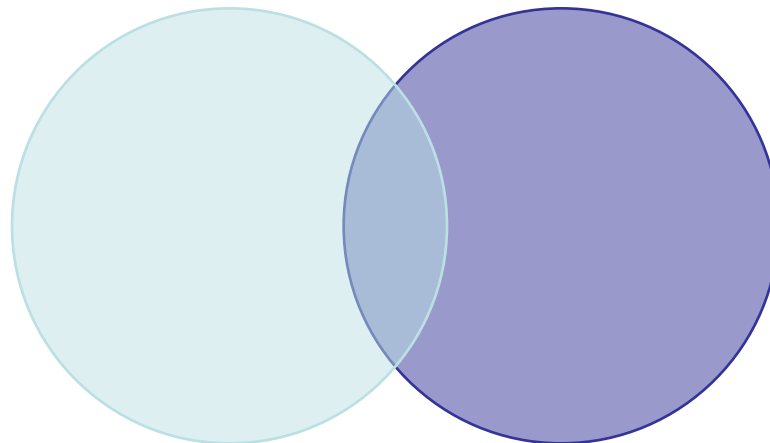
Round robin at your table

- Your name and what you do– if you don't know each other already!
- What you have learned about creating professional community and improvement cultures
 - ...something that has already worked
 - ...something that hasn't
- One thing you would like to learn more about today



The Core of Resilient Cultures and Leadership

•Organizational
Learning

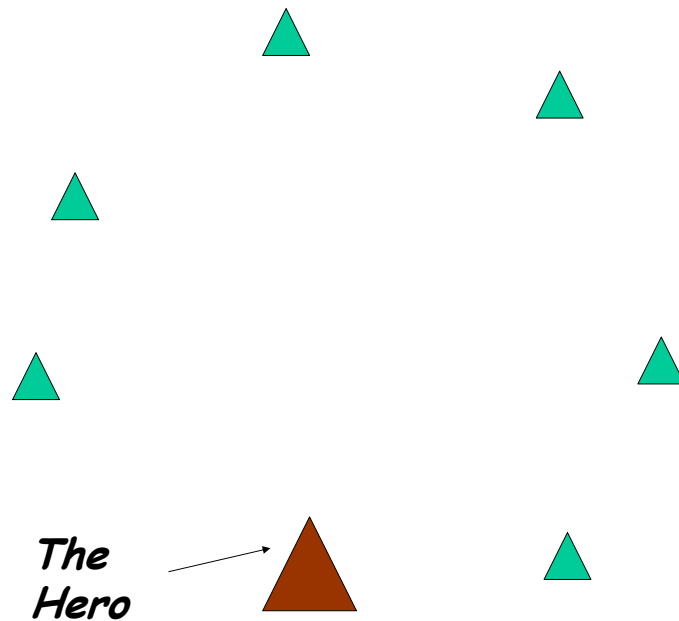


•Professional
Community

.....Hollywood's Assumption

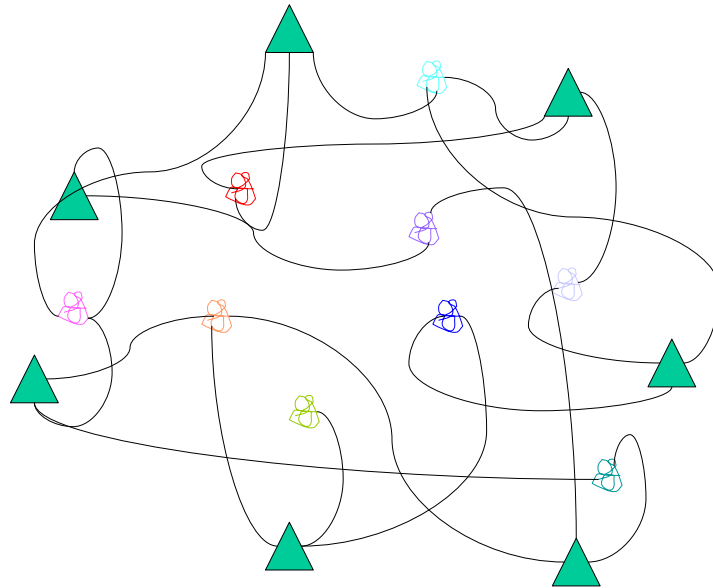
- WHAT DO THESE MOVIES HAVE IN COMMON? WHAT IMAGE OF LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE DO THEY PORTRAY?
 - To Sir With Love
 - Mr. Chips
 - Stand and Deliver
 - Dead Poet's Society
 - Mr. Holland's Opus
 - The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

Here's Hollywood's Image of Schools....



From Madeleine Church, 2002

The Alternative Picture....



From Madeline Church, 2002

Why Not Rely On Heroes?

- School Improvement is a “wicked problem”?
- School improvement has been well studied over the past decades--but
- We’re still learning about
 - How leaders can affect the “core technology” of the classroom...
 - How to capitalize on human resources in and outside the school...



Professional Community

- Three Critical Questions:

- What is it? Why do we care?
- How can it be created?
- How can it be sustained

Potential Benefits of School-Based Professional Community

*Empowerment
Personal Dignity
Collective Responsibility for Student Learning*



Characteristics of School-Based Professional Community

*Shared Values
Reflective Dialogue
Deprivatization of Practice
Focus on Student Learning
Collaboration*



Structural Conditions that Support School-Based Professional Community

*Time to Meet and Talk
Physical Proximity
Interdependent Teaching Roles
Communication Structures
Teacher Empowerment & School Autonomy*

Social and Human Resources that Support School-Based Professional Community

*Openness to Improvement
Trust and Respect
Access to Expertise
Supportive Leadership
Socialization*

Agassiz Case : Using the PC Framework

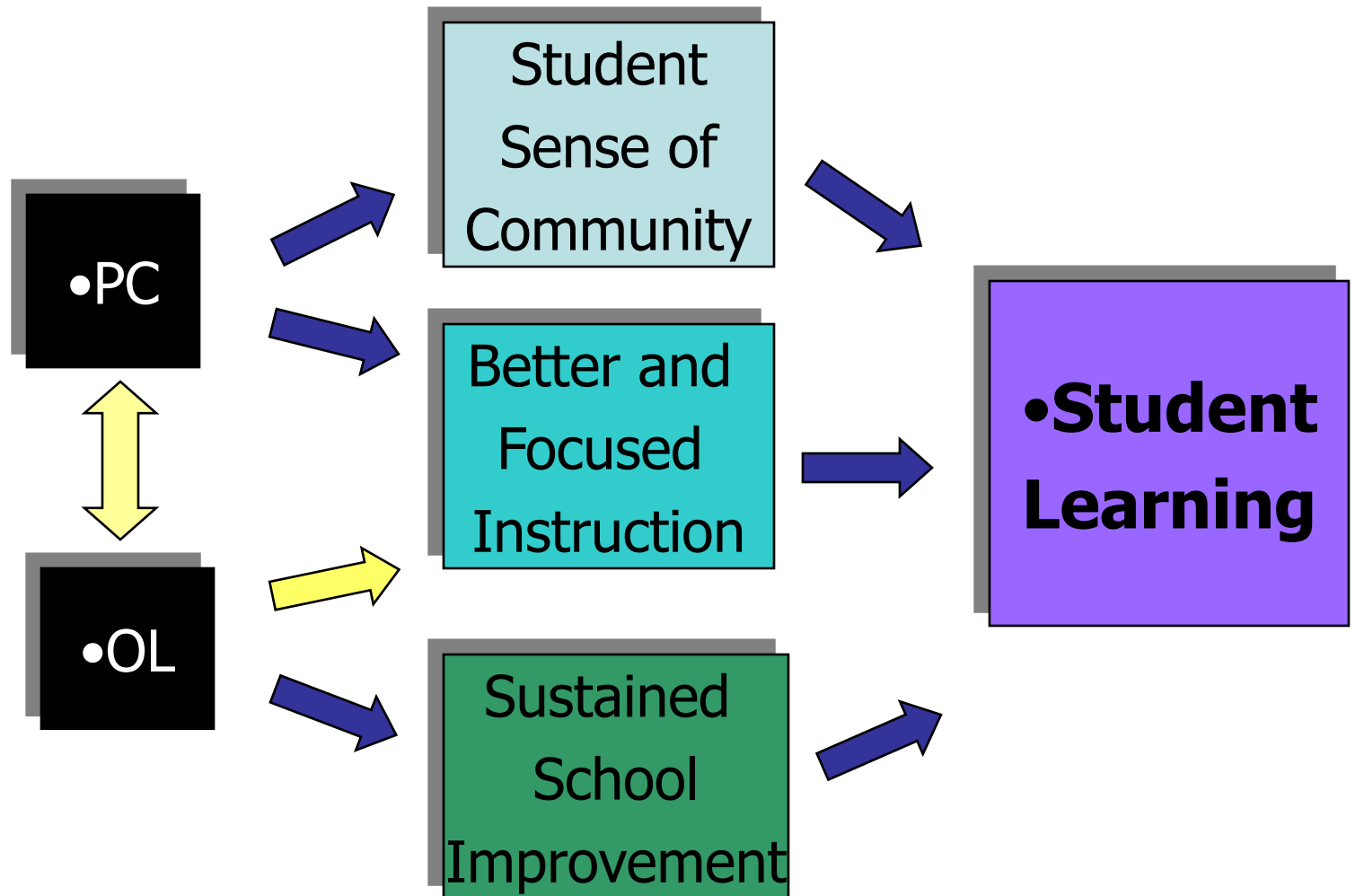
- Read Individually
- Table conversation to identify key components
- Share-back to whole group
- Whole group conversation

Leadership for Learning: Professional Community As Part of a Solution

- *Schools with higher levels of PC have stronger instruction,*
- *Teachers who experience professional community have stronger classroom practice.*
- *Schools with higher levels of PC also “learn” and adapt more readily.*

(Louis & Marks, 1998; Marks, Louis & Printy, 2000)

Why Do We Care?



What is Needed To Create and Sustain PC....

- Principals need to create the conditions in which it can occur...
- Teachers have the primary responsibility for sustaining professional culture....
- Working together, principals and teachers sustain organizational learning.



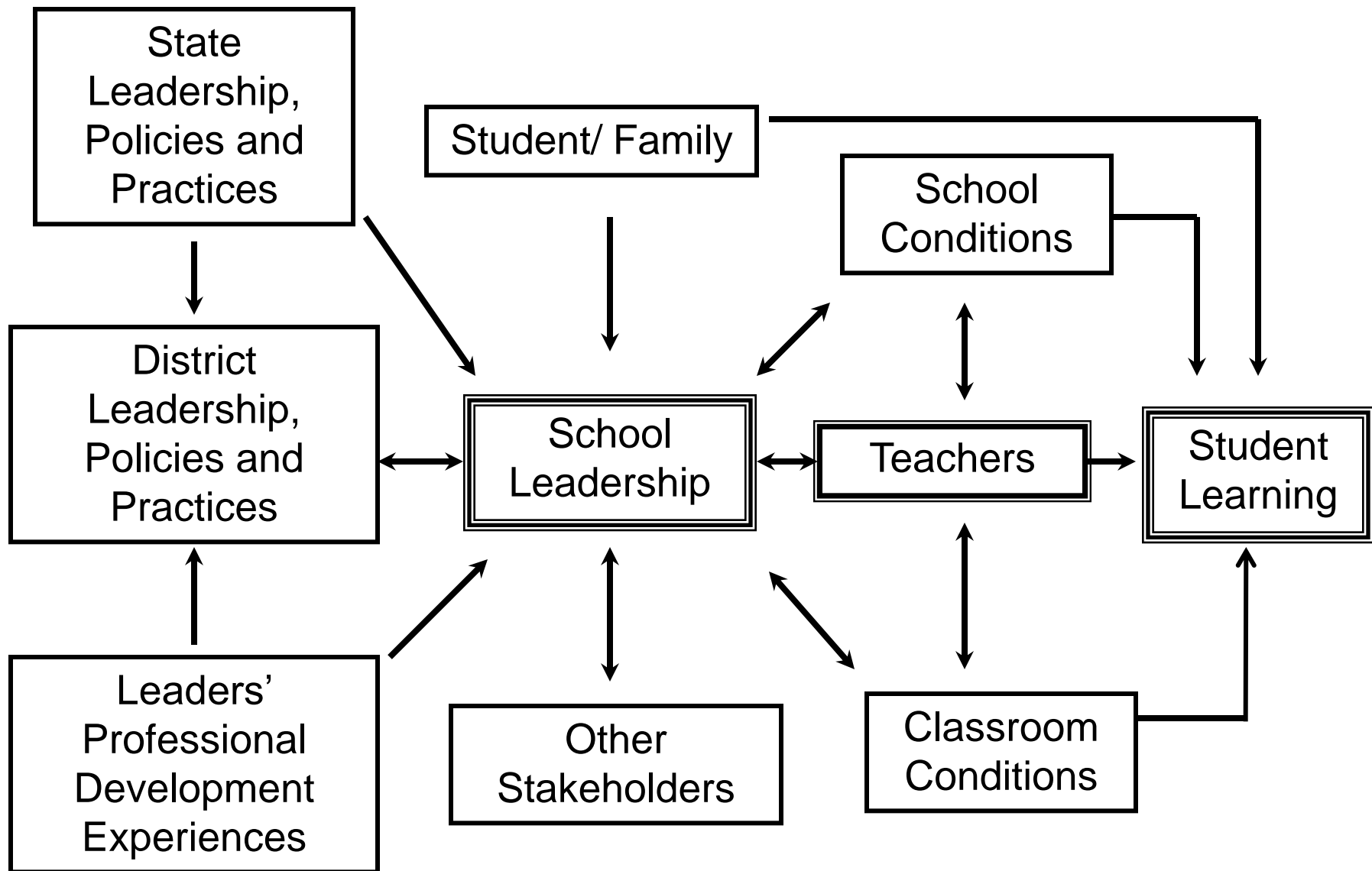
Principal “Leadership for Learning...”

What do we know?

The Limits of Top-Down Leadership: Basic Premises....

- Improvement in student learning is primarily a problem of the smallest unit: the school and classroom.
- “Policy and directives framed outside the school ultimately stand or fall by what is actually done, day to day, by teachers, administrators and students.” (Louis and Miles, 1990, p. 289)

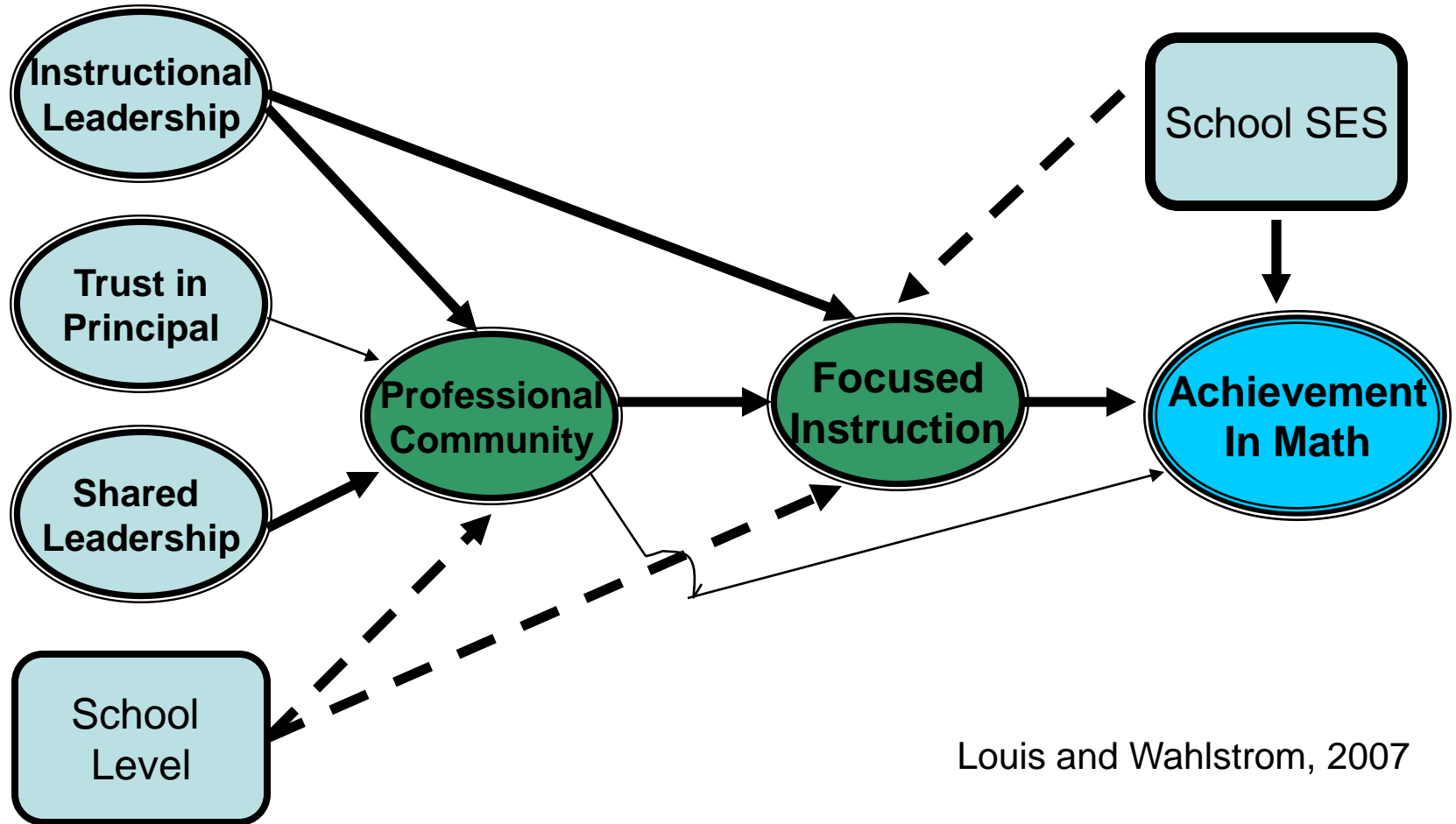
Leadership Influences on Student Learning



Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004.

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/NR/rdonlyres/E3BCCFA5-A88B-45D3-8E27-B973732283C9/0/ReviewofResearchLearningFromLeadership.pdf>

How Do Leaders Affect Learning?



Louis and Wahlstrom, 2007

What We are Learning....

- Formal Leaders (principals) have a strong impact on what happens in classrooms when....
 1. They **behave** as instructional leaders
 2. When they **share leadership** activities and influence with teachers
 3. When they engender, through consistent behavior, a sense of **trust**
- ***Principals affect classroom practice largely because when they are successful in these three areas, teachers are more likely to be involved in professional communities***

But....

- “Perhaps the major obstacle on the road to effective instructional leadership for principals is that it remains a construct which eludes exact definition.” (Ginsberg, 1988, p. 77)
- We can say the same for shared or distributed leadership....



Instructional Leadership – Two Perspectives

- **Instructional *Expertise*:**

1. Leaders have content knowledge
2. Leaders know how to coach
3. Leaders provide direct classroom support

(Stein & Nelson, 2003)

- **Instructional *Support***

1. Leaders understand new models/programs
2. Leaders foster discussion
3. Leaders promote professional norms

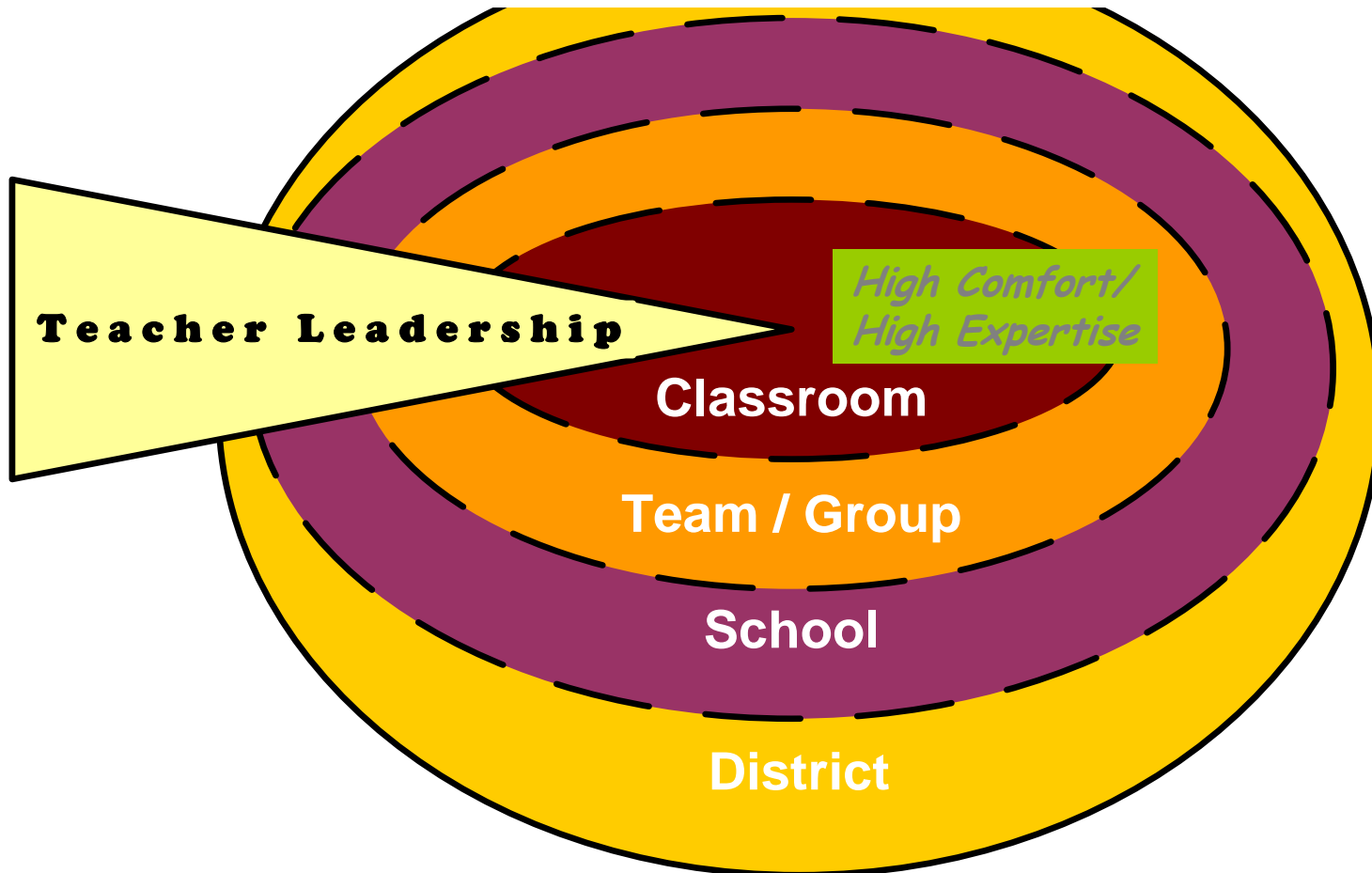
(Leithwood and Duke, 1998)

The Leader's Dilemma....

- **Provide both types of instructional leadership yourself**
- BUT: Have little time for other leadership and management work, such as...
- Working with the district
- Working with parents
- Working on creating an orderly environment...
- Etc.
- **Share instructional leadership with teachers and others**
- BUT: This requires changing the school's culture....

Contexts for Shared Leadership?

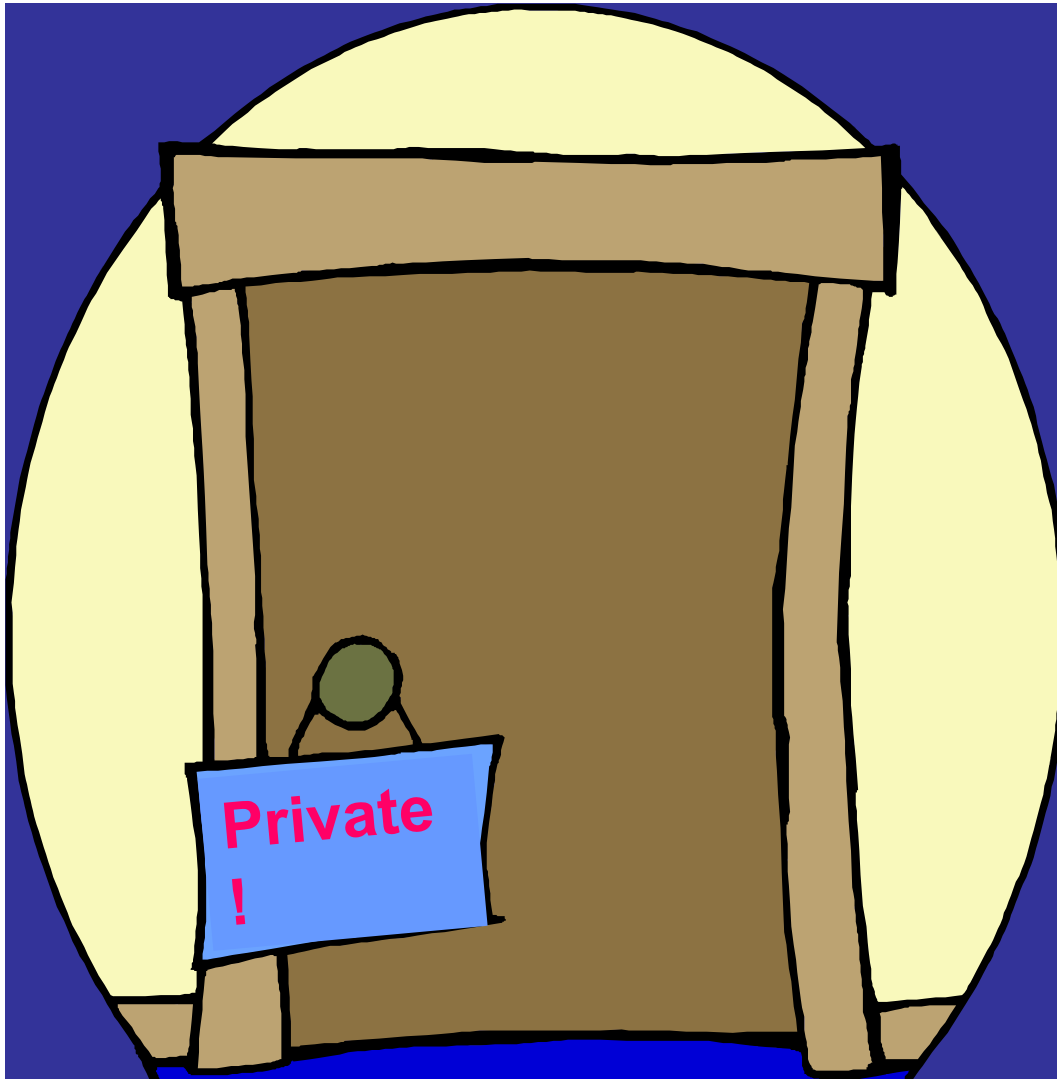
Leading from the middle is a powerful point of influence....



REVERTING TO DEFAULT CULTURES....

- If principals (and other leaders) are not consistent in reinforcing alternative norms, ***default cultural assumptions*** will resurface....
- THIS IS WHERE TRUST BECOMES IMPORTANT....

1. Cultures of Isolation



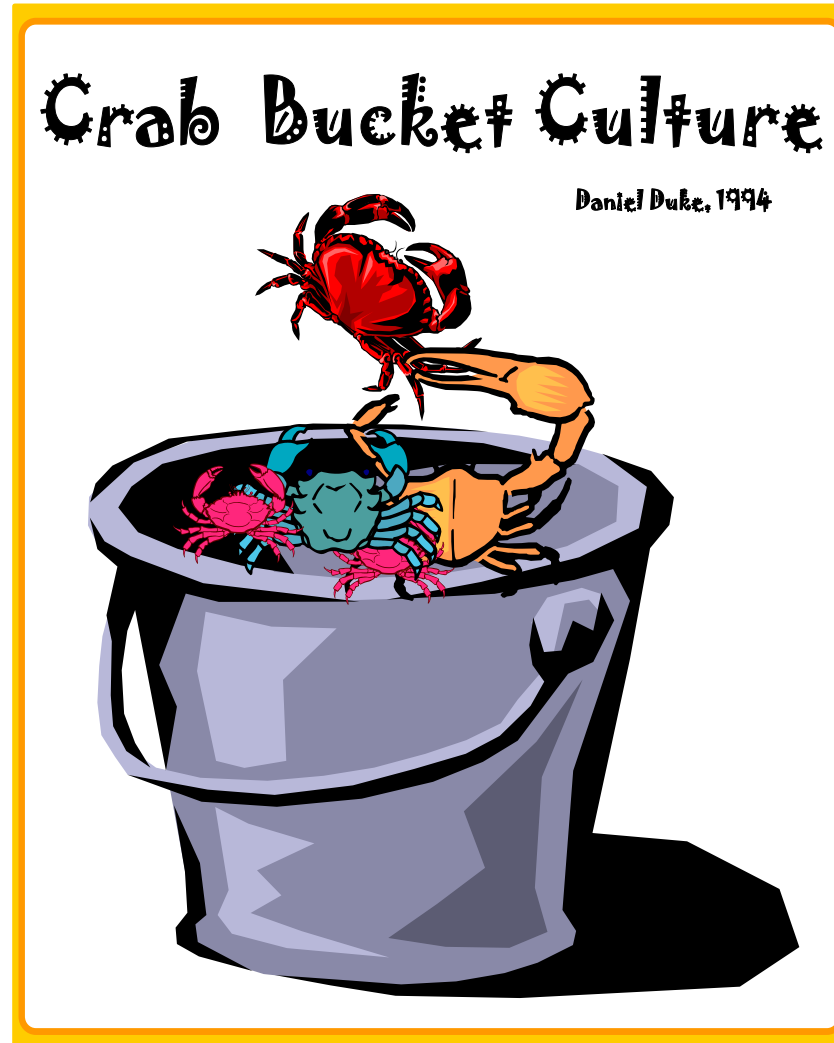
**PRIVATE
PRACTICE**

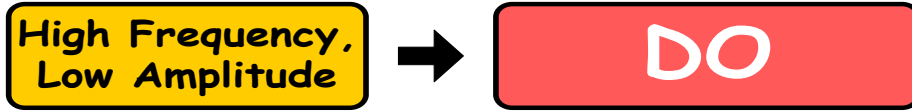
**Keep
OUT!**



NO
TRESPASSING

2. Stepping up (or in) as *stepping out of line*

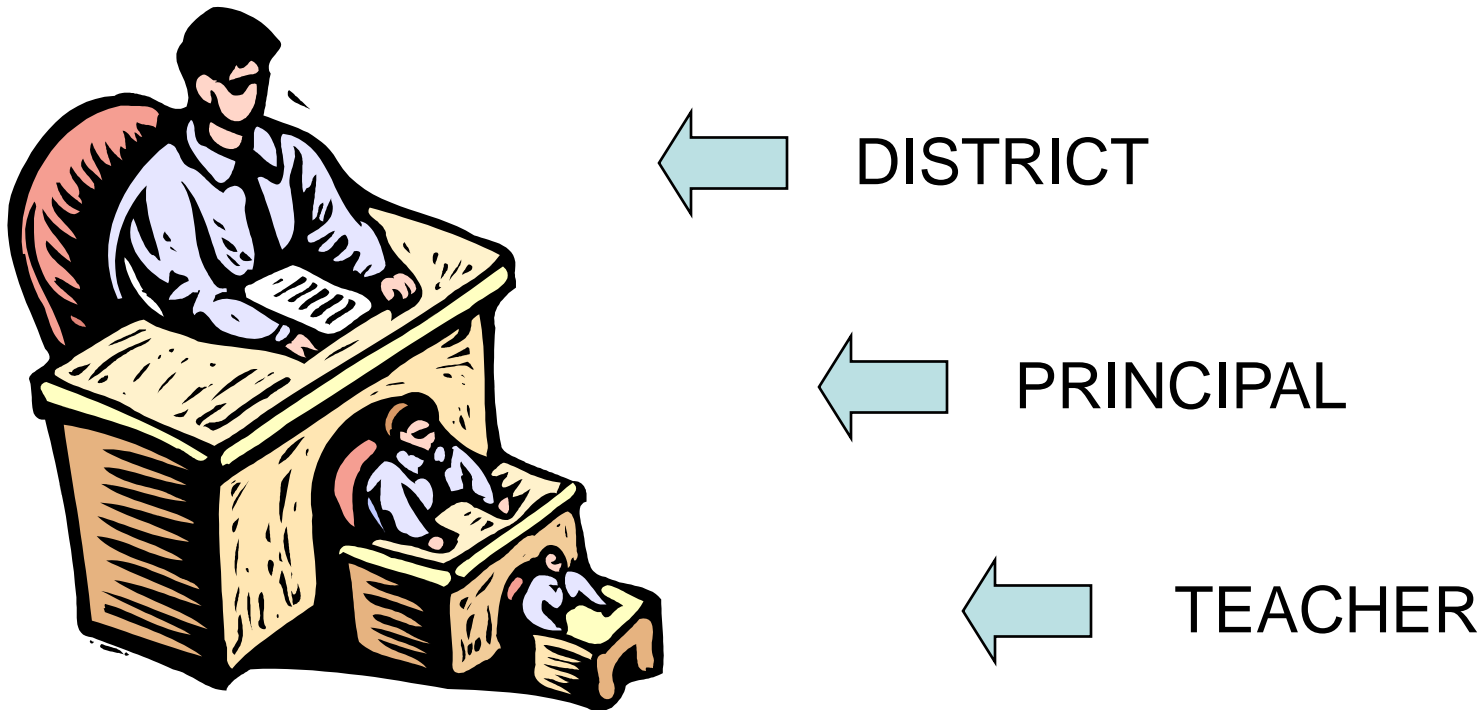




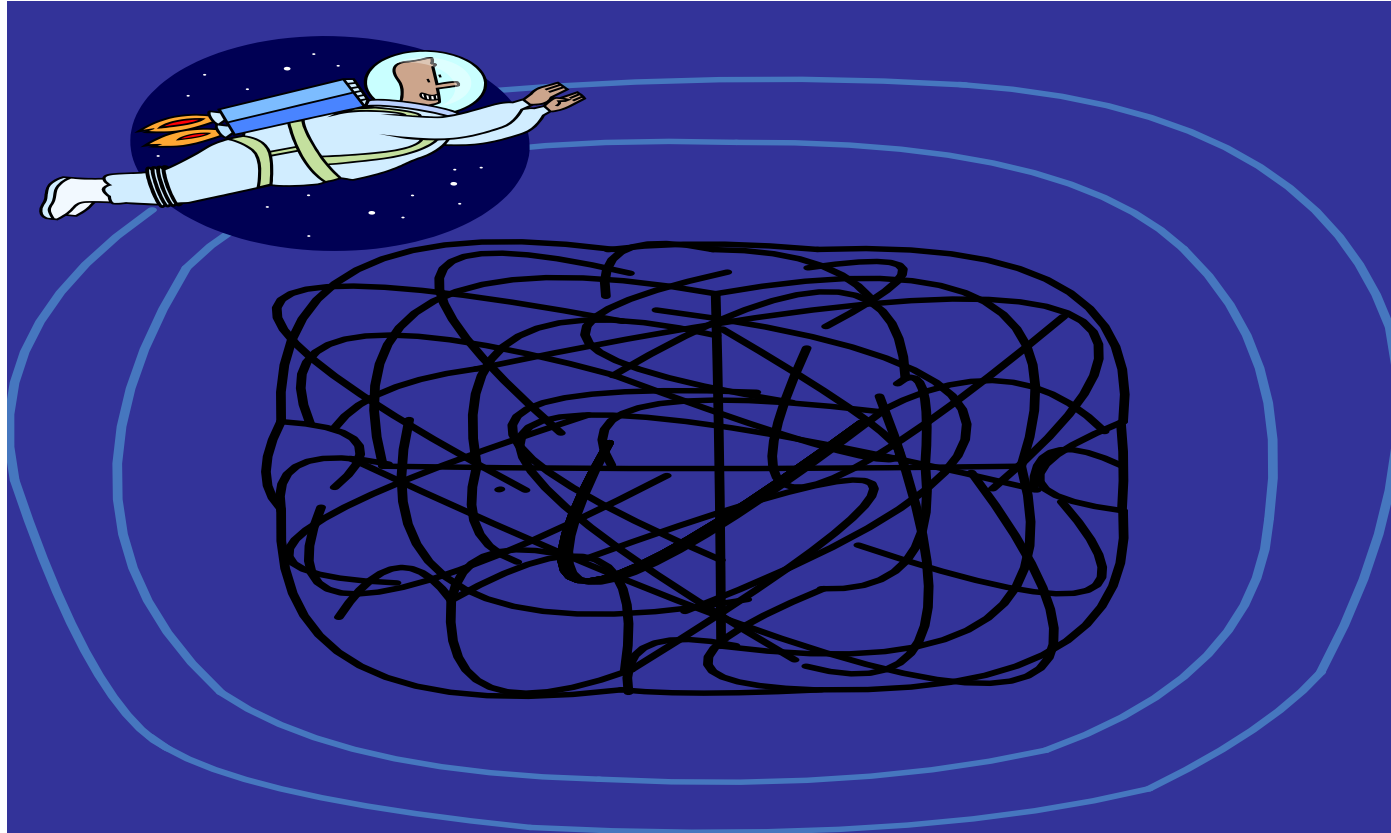
3. “Doing” Cultures

....Including a value that the only “real work” is teaching a class of students

4. Hierarchical Assumptions with “Zoned” Responsibilities



5. Schools as Giant Hairballs



Reflection (Individually) and Discuss

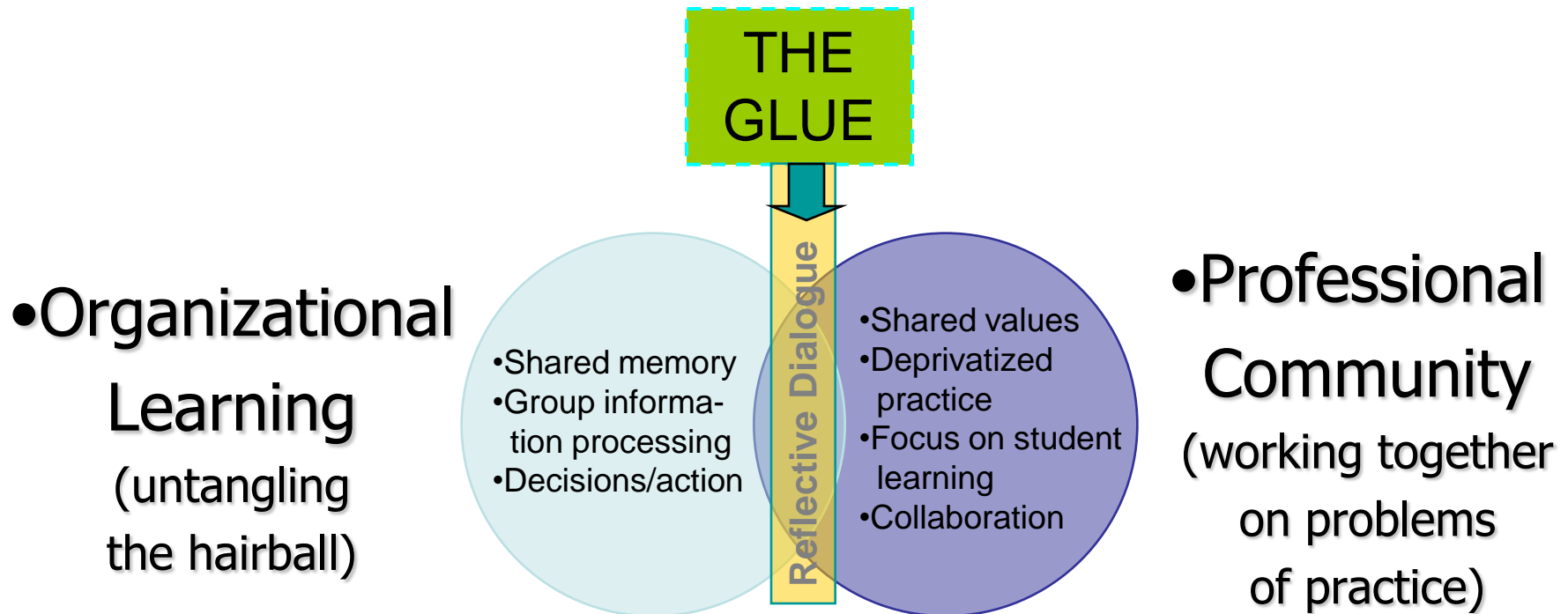
- As you think about creating professional community and learning cultures...
- And, as you think about creating shared leadership.....
 - ◆ What aspects of the “traditional teacher culture” still challenge you or your school?
- Skim the “hairball” handout –
 - ◆ What “hairballs” get in your school’s way?



How to Continue Your Work

- 1. Addressing conditions**
- 2. Focusing conversations**
- 3. Balancing “risks” and
“assessment”**
- 4. Building/reinforcing relationships
and networks...**

PC & OL: Independent but Related



1. Managing Boundaries... Talking About Uncertainty...

- **Another stimulus!** (policy, program, leader, etc.)
 - How do we experience it? (emotions)
 - How would we interpret it given our sense of “who we are”? (identity)
 - Have we seen anything like this before? How did we react, and with what consequences (memory)
 - What should we do? (processing with intellect)

2. Addressing “Default Cultures”

Facilitating Factors

- **Structures that support learning and leading as embedded aspects of teacher roles, such those found in professional development schools**
- **Site-based, participatory decision-making structures and processes**
- **Access to teachers, time and space**
- **Initial and ongoing professional learning for teachers to lead**

Constraining Factors

- **Lack of clarity about process and locus of decision making and channels of authority**
- **Isolation of teachers caused by traditional schedules and structures**
- **Inadequate resources or technical support for development materials**
- **Inadequate time for collaboration, learning, leading**
- **Lack of incentives or rewards for engaging in leadership activities**

Confronting the “Doing” Culture

REFRAMING
YOUR WORK

FROM
Tasks to get done



TO
Opportunities for
learning

3. The “WHAT” of Shared Leadership: CO NVERSATION

What are priority student learning goals in your school? grade level? subject area?



What is the learning and development work that needs to be done to progress toward these goals?



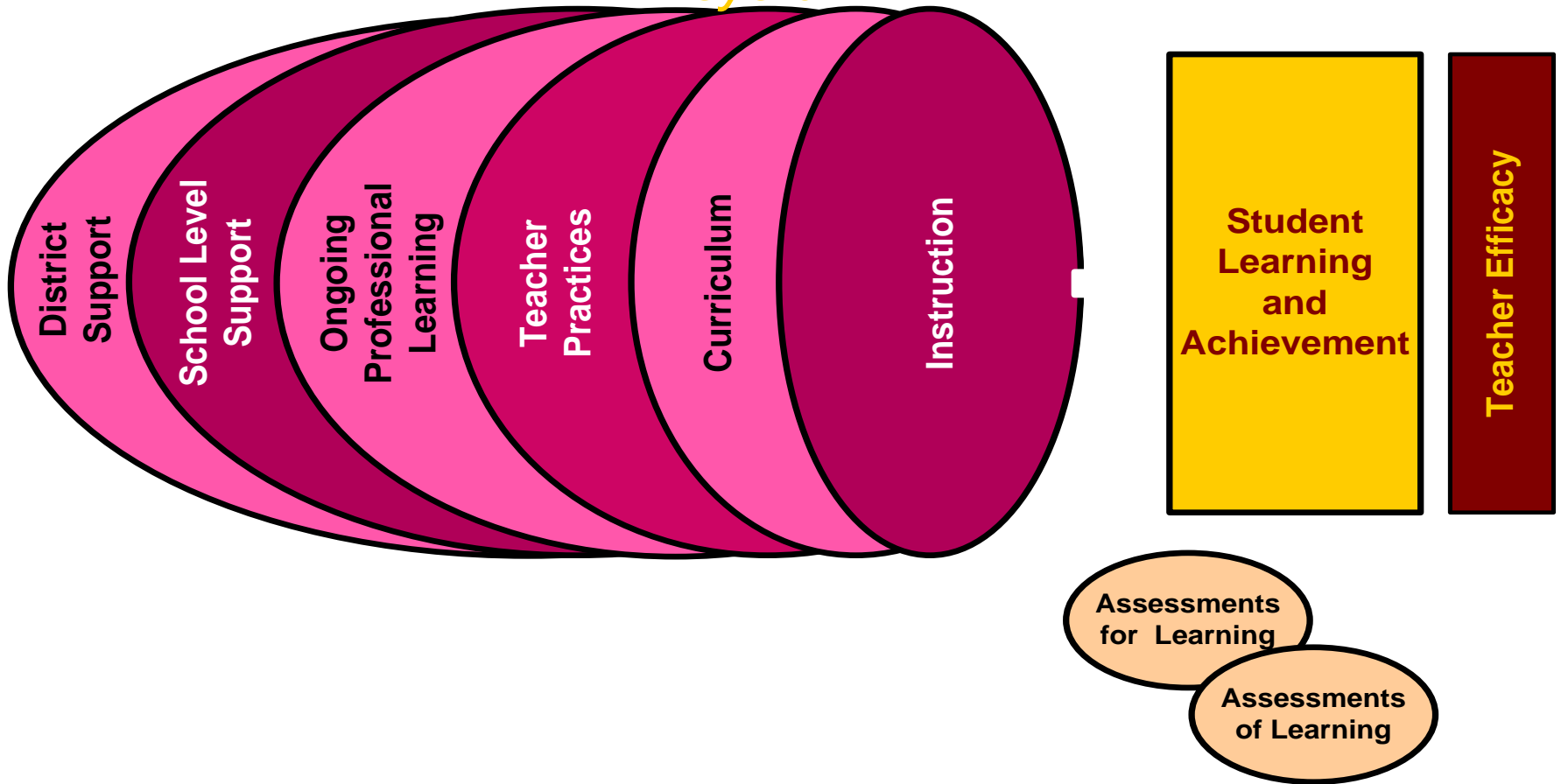
How will teachers be involved in the learning required to make progress?



In what ways might teacher leaders advance this learning work?

Mapping the Layers of Learning Leadership

...a picture that shows why leaders are needed throughout the system



4. Staff Development and Change

Guskey 1985 *EdL*; 1986 *Educational Researcher*

What Order of Change ?

Conventional
Wisdom

Empirical
Findings

1. Beliefs

1. Practices

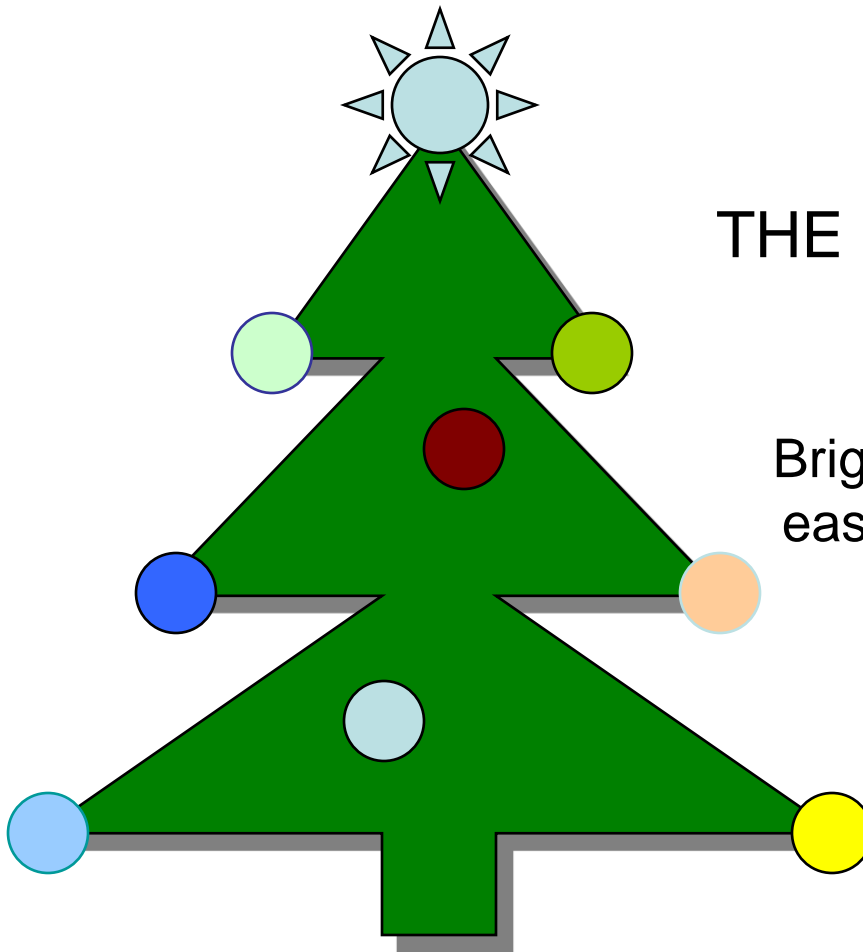
2. Practices

2. Student Learning

3. Student Learning

3. Beliefs

5. A Caution: Creativity Can Also Result In....



THE CHRISTMAS TREE
SCHOOL...

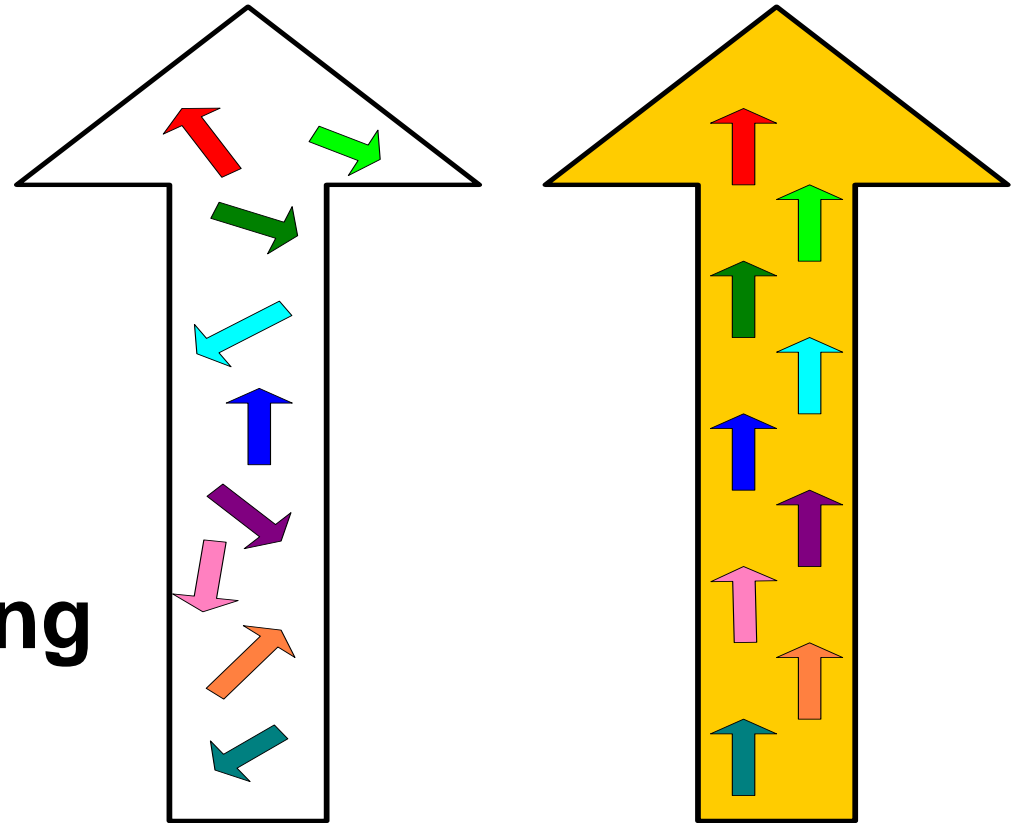
Bright and shiny baubles—
easily broken or replaced

6. Professional Learning Organizational Learning?

Learning
to align energy

**Aligning energy
and resources for
teaching and learning**

Source of arrow diagram:
Peter Senge (1990). *The Fifth
Discipline*, page 235.



7. About RELATIONSHIPS

from Margaret Wheatley
Leadership and the New Science

In organizations, real power and energy are generated through relationships.

The patterns of relationships and the capacities to form them are more important than task, functions, roles and positions.

TRUST

... from an interpersonal perspective

A study of professional community in 248 elementary schools in Chicago found that

“by far, the strongest facilitator of professional community is social trust among faculty members. When teachers trust and respect each other, a powerful social resource is available for supporting the collaboration, reflective dialogue, and deprivatization characteristics of professional community”

(Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999, p. 767).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) explain that *relational trust* develops through day-to-day interactions with people who share some common experience.



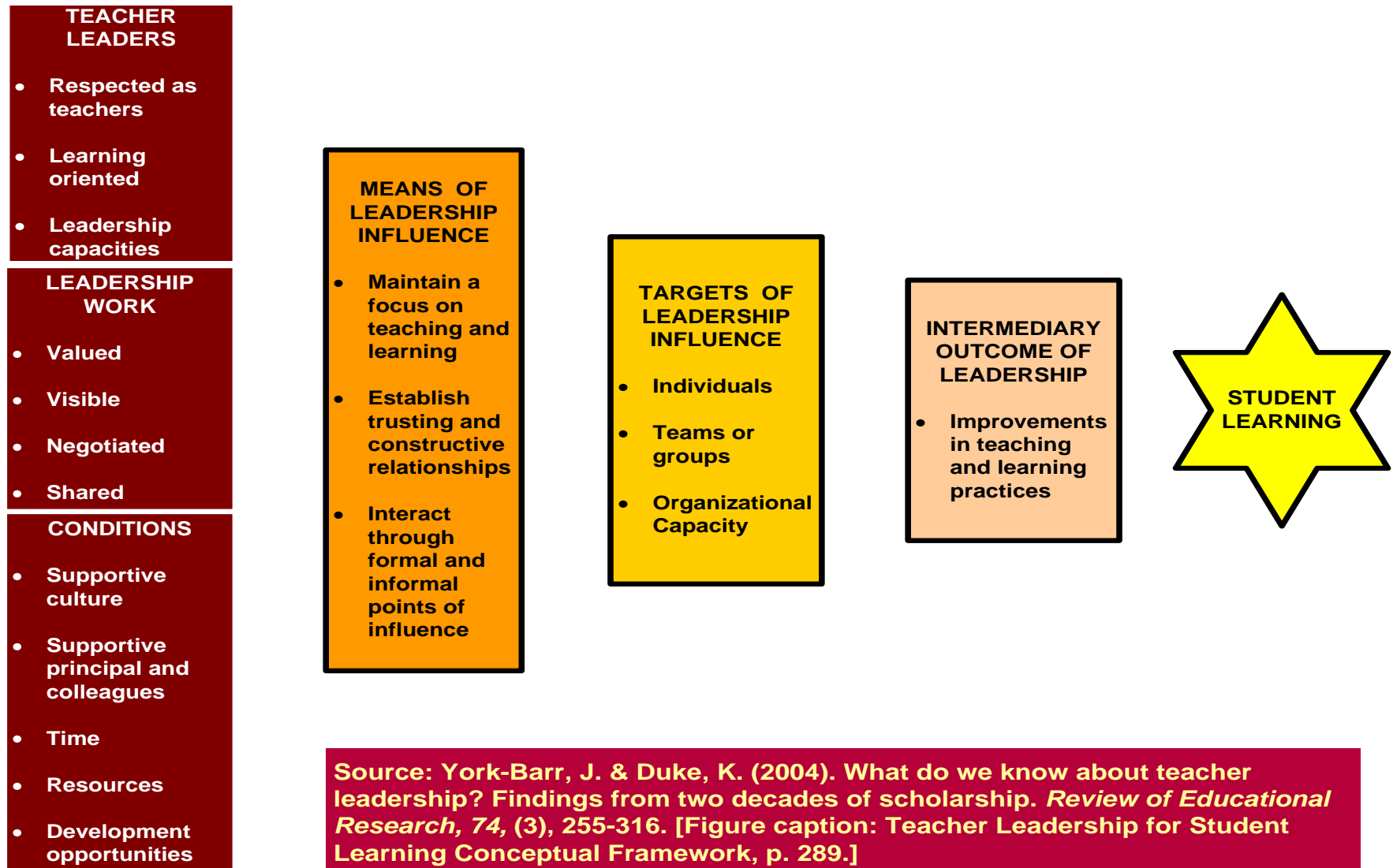
You Need Ideas to Take Away... Nourishing PC/OL and Shared Leadership

- Generate 3 *specific* actions that YOU could take to begin to address default cultures, hairballs or other impediments to PC/OL
 - Work in pairs....(with someone who knows your school....)
 - Explain your choices and get feedback
 - Partners should be critical and probing
 - Plan for assessing the impact of your actions

In Sum...Three Principles for Instructional Leadership....

- Marzano (2005) lists three responsibilities fit into the general category of instructional leadership:
 - ***knowledge*** of curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
 - ***involvement*** in curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
 - and ***monitoring/evaluating progress***
- In other words, principals need **SOME** knowledge, and **MUCH** involvement and supportive/pressuring behavior

In Sum...Principles for Maximizing Shared Leadership for Student Learning





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