

# Leading in Tough Times

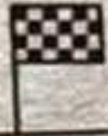
▸ Ray McNulty, President – [rmcnulty@spnetwork.org](mailto:rmcnulty@spnetwork.org)

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National Dropout Prevention Center - [dropoutprevention.org](http://dropoutprevention.org)



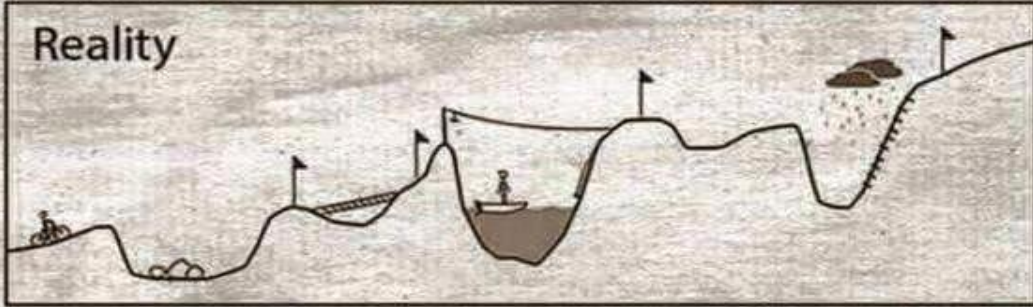
Your plan



Your plan



Reality



# Agenda

1. Welcome to the World Today!
2. Leading in a VUCA-H World
3. Strategies
4. Closing Point

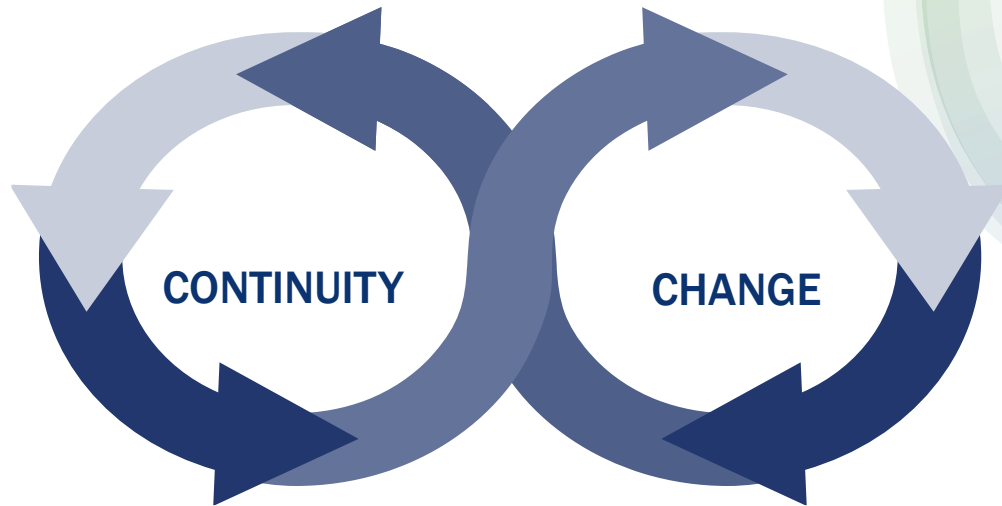
# Agenda

1. Welcome to the World Today!

Would you agree with me, that the pace of change is amazingly fast?

Well, the pace of change today will be the slowest it will be for the rest of your life!

# POLARITY CHALLENGE



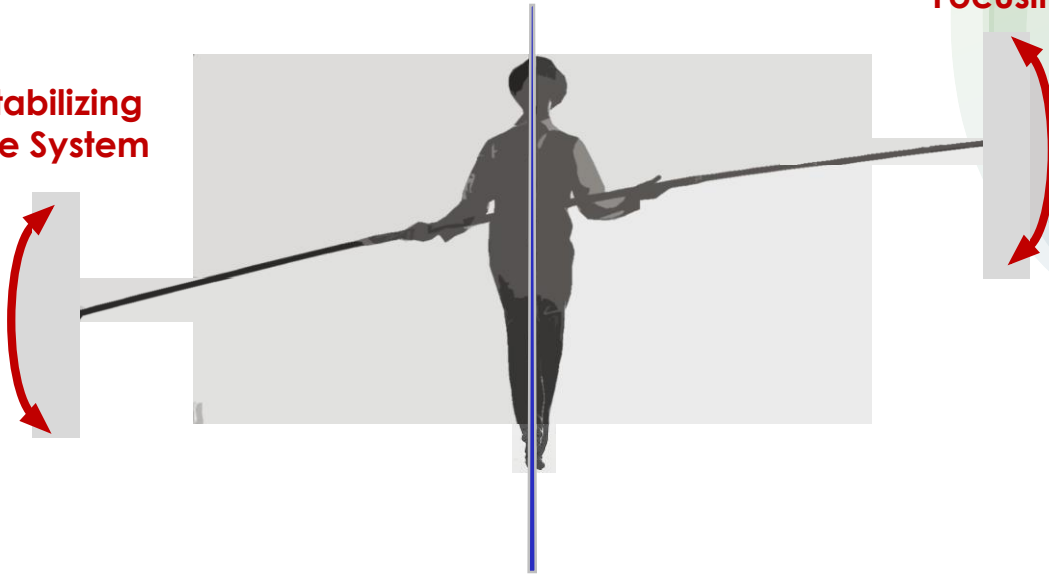




## Sustaining Equilibrium

Stabilizing the System

Future-Focusing





We can't build the future by perfecting the past!

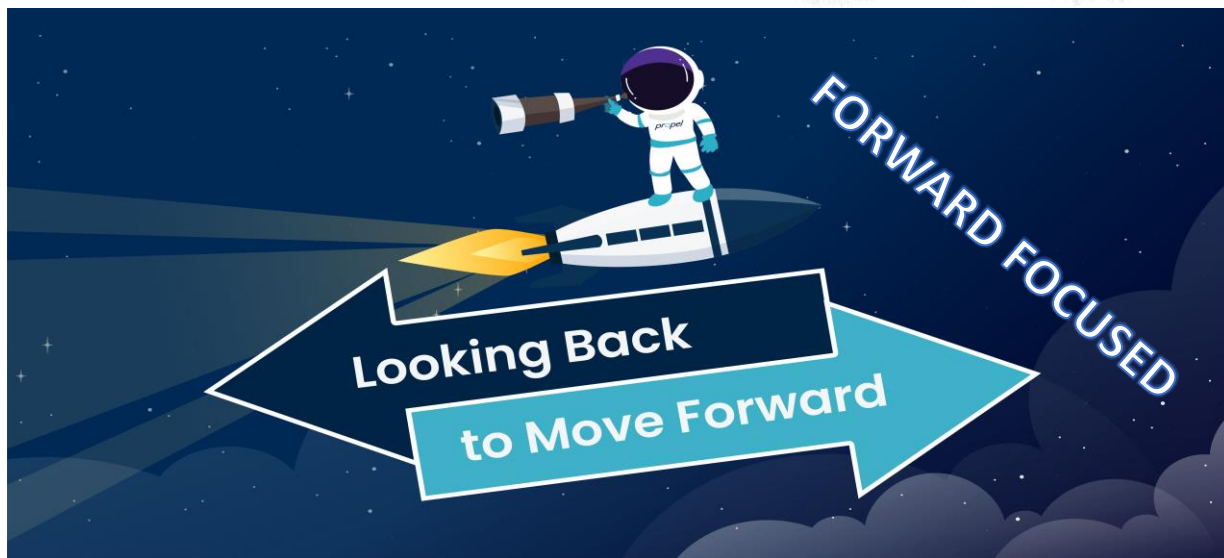
As “leaders” of learning, we all need to be...

***“FUTURE FOCUSED”***

# Do you have meetings and discussions about ....

- What is the future of early learning?
- What will the future look like for our children?
- What kind of changes are you curious about?
- Why is the future important?
- What is no longer a fit for our systems?
- What in our system should we keep and/or improve?

In our formal training we learned very little about being future focused leaders.



**The hardest part of change is not  
accepting the new....**

**It's in letting go of the old!**

**Our biggest  
challenge is..**

**The “Status Quo”**

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**So, in today's  
world, is there a  
choice for leaders?**



NATIONAL  
DROPOUT  
PREVENTION  
CENTER

**SPN** | Successful  
Practices  
Network





# The Jetsons - more accurate than expected

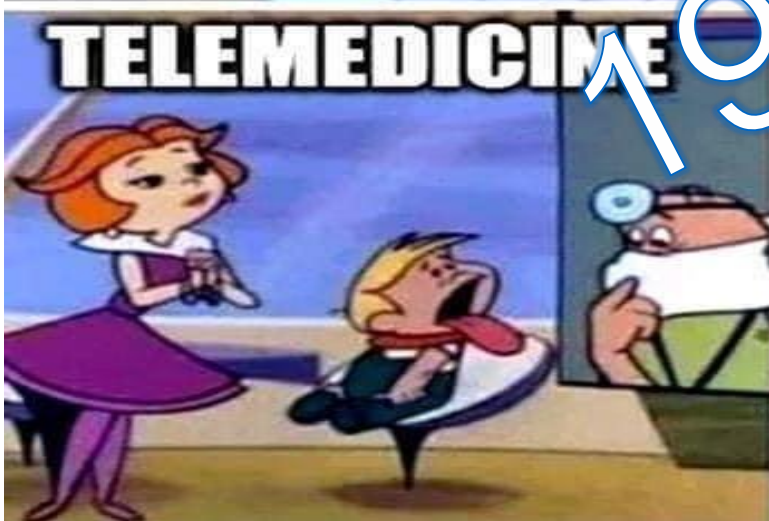
## HOME OFFICE



## ONLINE CLASSES



## TELEMEDICINE



## VIDEOCALL



1962

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**EITHER/OR**



NATIONAL  
DROPOUT  
PREVENTION  
CENTER

**SPN** | Successful  
Practices  
Network

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**BOTH/AND**



NATIONAL  
DROPOUT  
PREVENTION  
CENTER

**SPN** | Successful  
Practices  
Network

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**Unless you learn  
something new,  
you keep  
analyzing  
challenges the  
same way.**

Most  
statements  
about the  
future seem  
ridiculous...at  
first



Uber


N

amazon





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What are your  
thoughts about  
this?





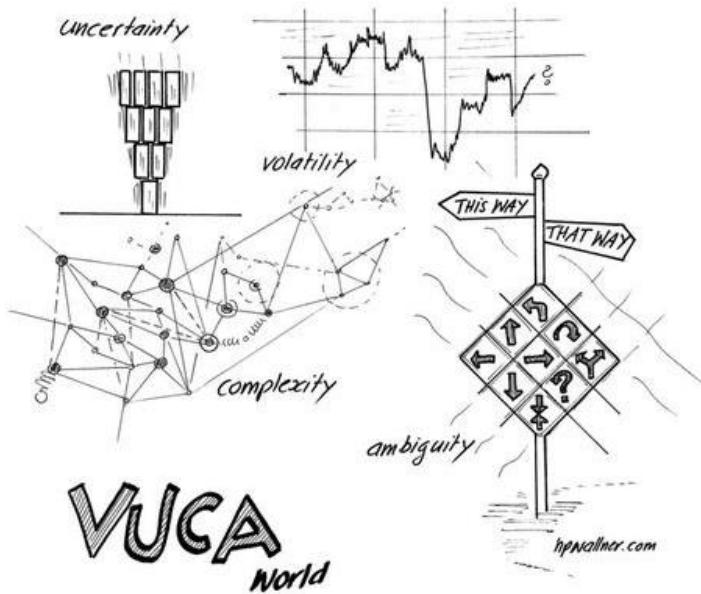
# Agenda

1. Welcome to the World Today!
2. Leading in a VUCA-H World



We Live in a  
**VUCA-H** World!

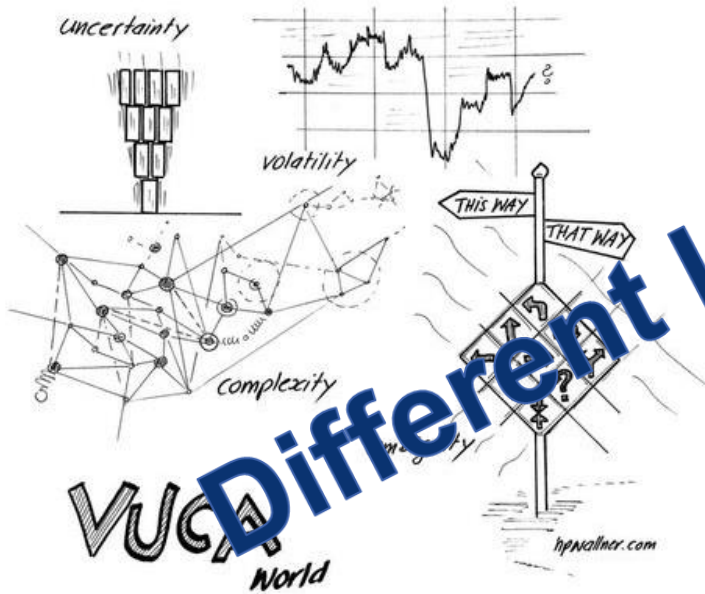
# It's a VUCA-H world



- Volatility
  - Increasing rate of change; fluctuation
- Uncertainty
  - Growing instability and unpredictability
- Complexity
  - The environment is dynamic, with many interdependent relationships
- Ambiguity
  - Difficult to understand events and their meaning; high risk of misinterpretation

## HYPER-CONNECTED

# It's a VUCA-H world



**Different Leadership**

- Volatility
  - Increasing rate of change; fluctuation
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**HYPER-CONNECTED**

Success



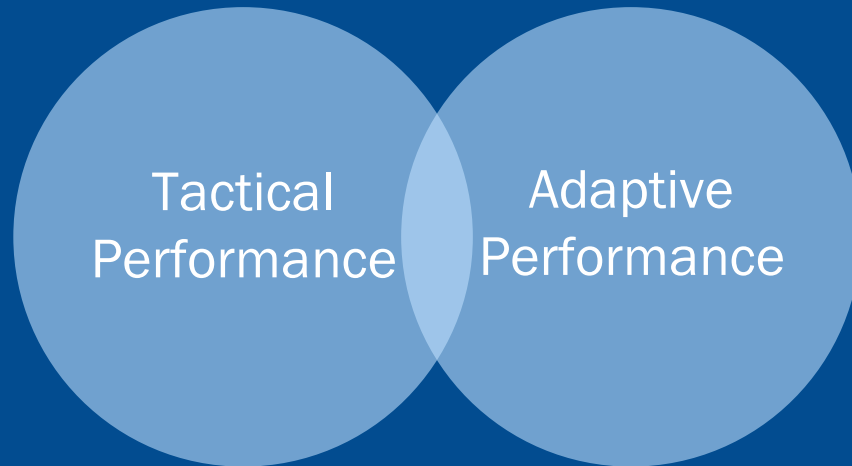
what people think  
it looks like

Success



what it really  
looks like

There are two types of performances  
we must be concerned with in a  
VUCA world.



**Operating Excellence  
Tactical Performance**

**Innovation  
Adaptive Performance**

Do what we  
“Already” do even  
better?

80

**Best Practice**

How to invent a  
different future  
for the learner?

20

**Next Practice**

**Operating Excellence  
Tactical Performance**

**Innovation  
Adaptive Performance**

Do what we  
“Already” do even  
better?

25

**Best Practice**

How to invent a  
different future  
for the learner?

75

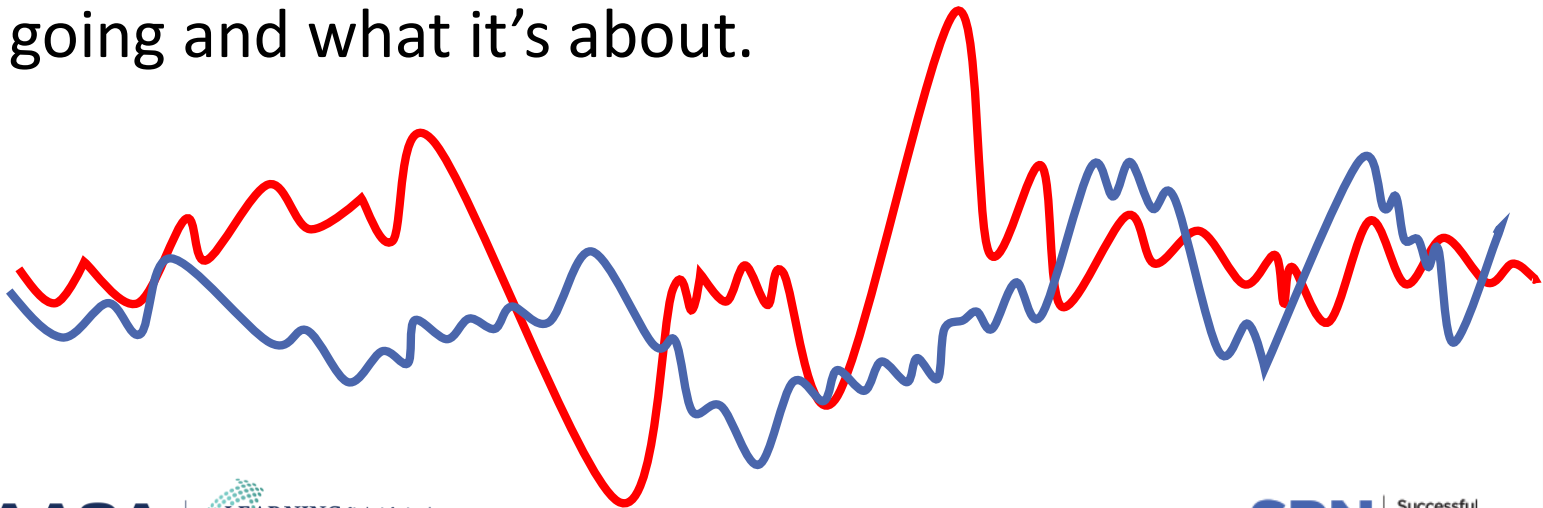
**Next Practice**



# VUCA 2.0

# VOLATILITY managed by VISION

Leaders are clear about where the organization is going and what it's about.



# Best Leadership Advice

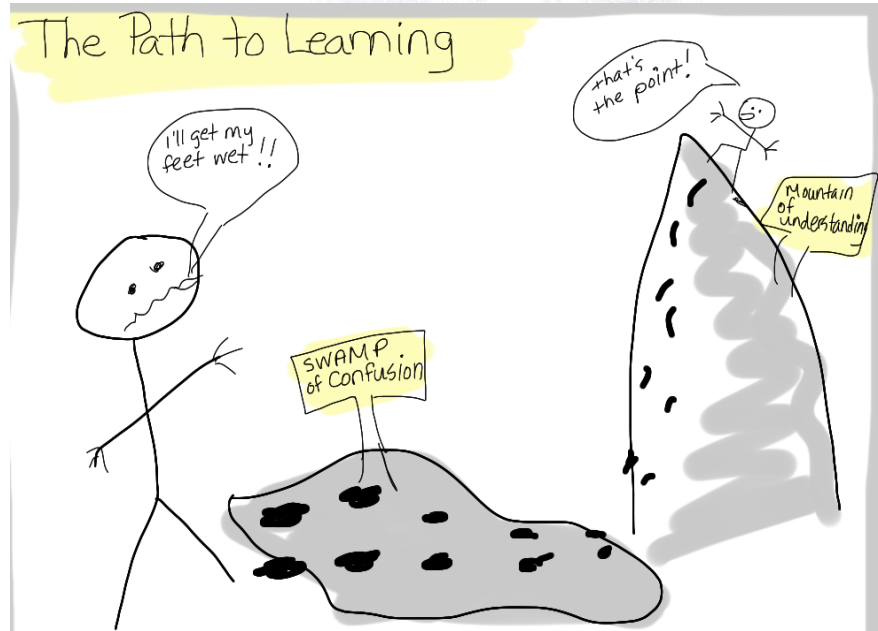
Be very clear about where you are going, but very flexible about how you get there. Avoid certainty but seek clarity.

# UNCERTAINTY

managed by

# UNDERSTANDING

With vision you know your organization's strengths and capabilities, and design strategies to maximize strengths.



# COMPLEXITY managed by COURAGE



Leaders need courage more than ever to take bold action now. With vision and understanding in hand you reduce risk and understand bold moves are necessary.

# AMBIGUITY managed by AGILITY

Leaders need to be flexible and move fast. They need what is called “Learning Agility.” Does your organization have an innovation policy, take risks, collaborate, reflect and listen to all the differing opinions?

## Five Factors of Learning Agility



SOURCE: KORN FERRY VIAEDGE™ SELF-ASSESSMENT

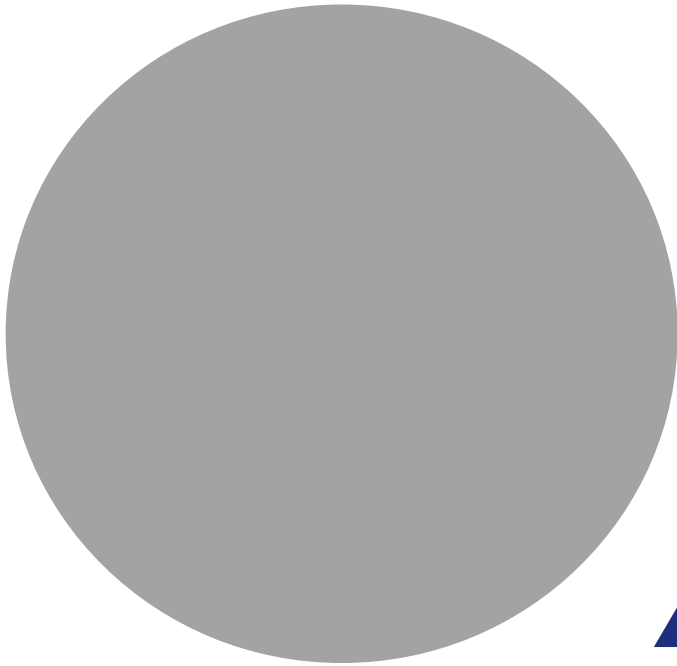
Action by **leaders** matters more now than ever before. Just because the future is uncertain it doesn't mean you can't influence it.

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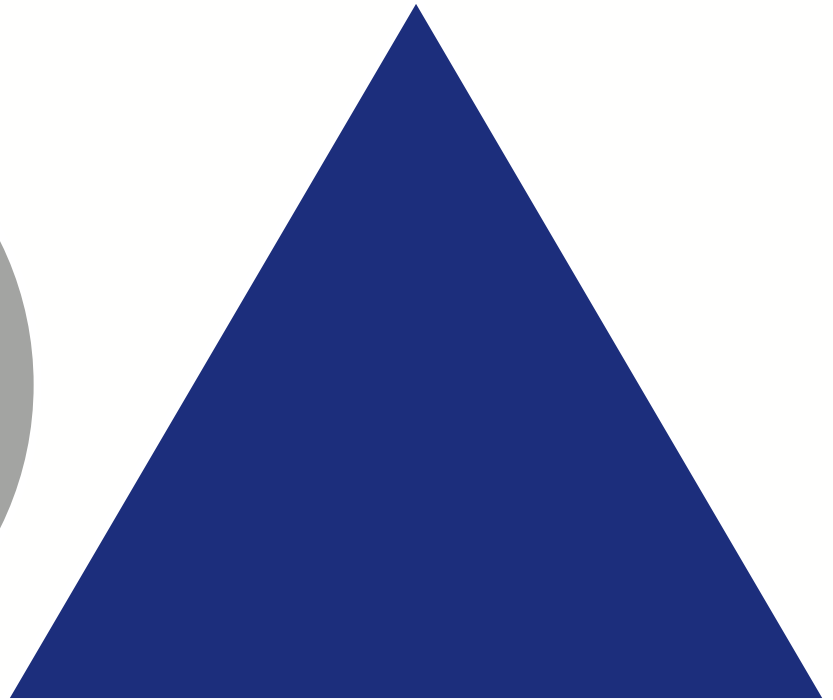


# Best Practices and Next Practices



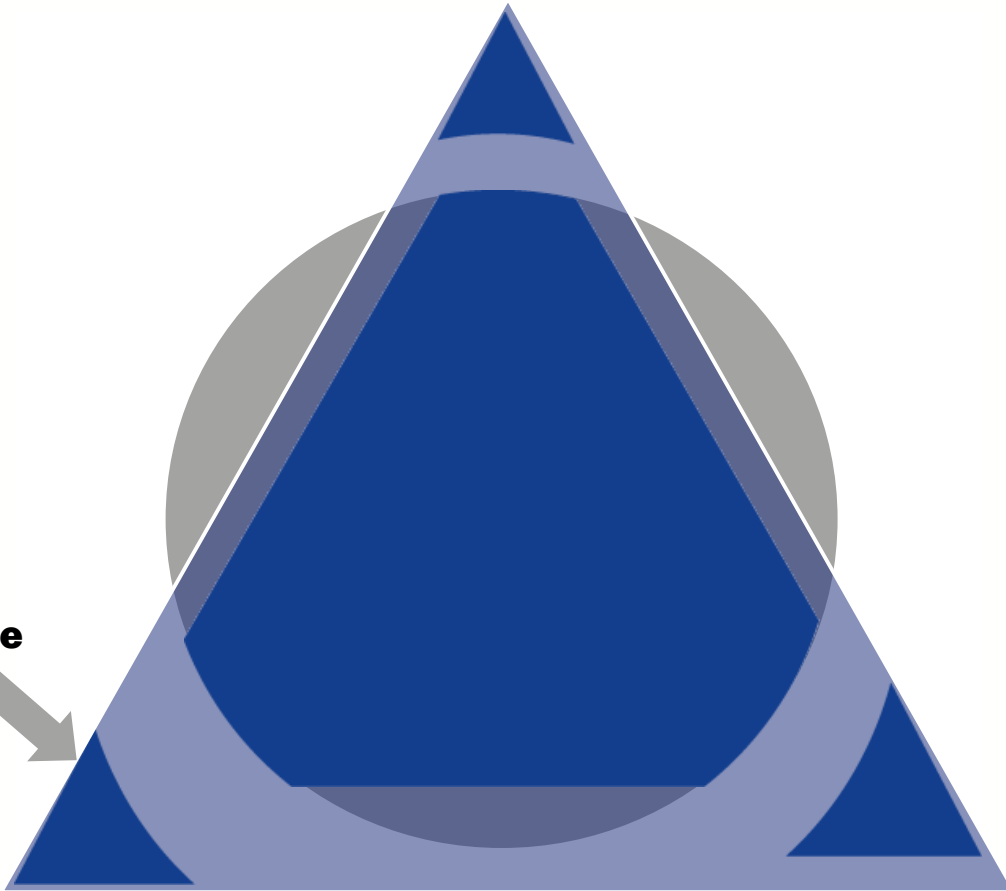


**System**

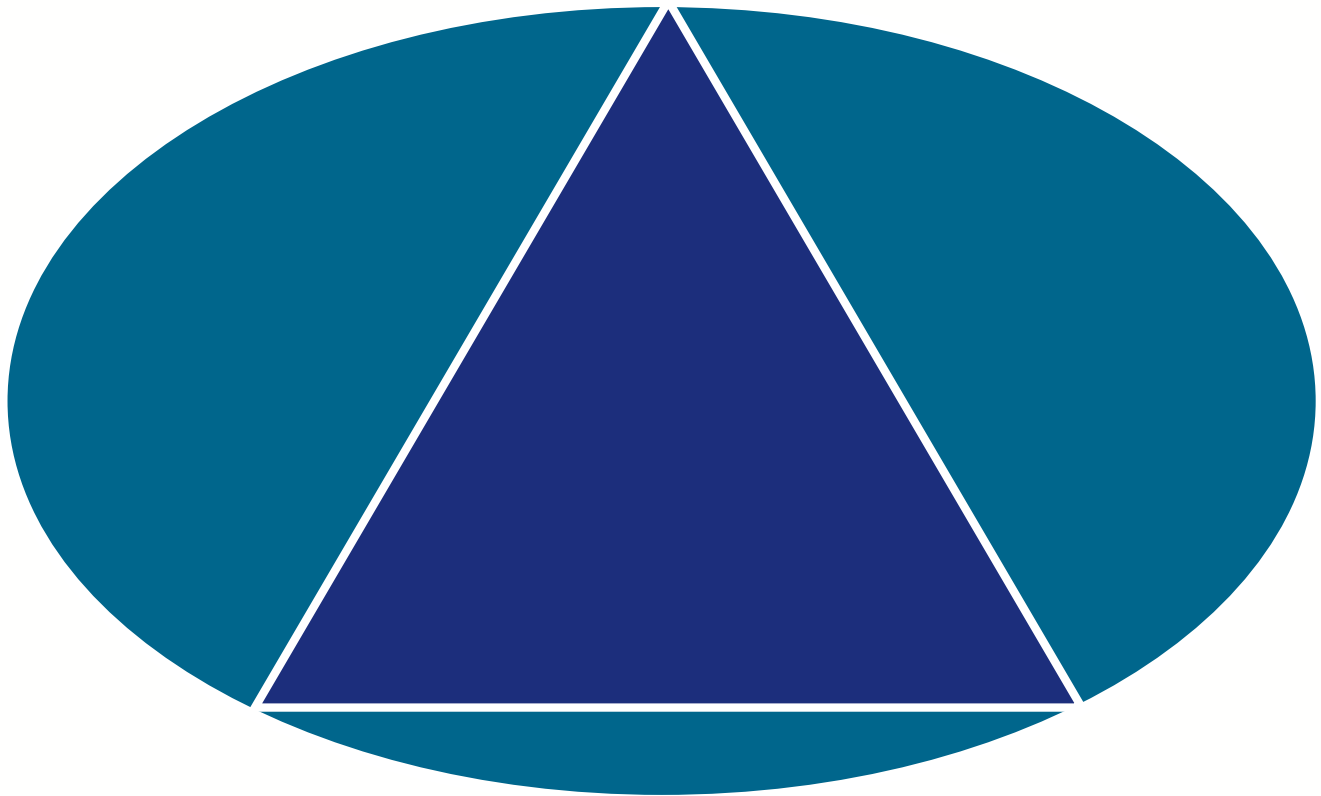


**Innovation**

**Next Practice**



# Sustaining Innovation



# Disruptive Innovation

# Agenda

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# Leadership Factors

1. Always have a clear vision against which judgments can be made, with agility to respond to rapidly changing situations.

# Leadership Factors

2. Build a culture of change. Learning organizations must always be ready to reflect and question the status quo.

# Leadership Factors

3. Be curious and seize the chance to innovate. Uncertain times bring opportunities for bold moves.

# Leadership Factors

4. Encourage networks rather than hierarchies. Collaboration yields more than competition.



# Leadership Factors

5. Get used to being uncomfortable. Resist the temptation to cling to outdated systems and ideas.

# Leadership Factors

6. Hierarchies often cripple decision-making. Success depends on distributed leadership.

We all work hard in education to efficiently deliver the next thing that should be done to help our children.

The skill set for doing this is called...

# Delivery Skills

- Analyzing
- Planning
- Detailed  
Implementation
- Disciplined Execution

# **The transformative person incorporates skills from a far different dimension.**

- Why accept the status quo?
- Look for new and better ways!

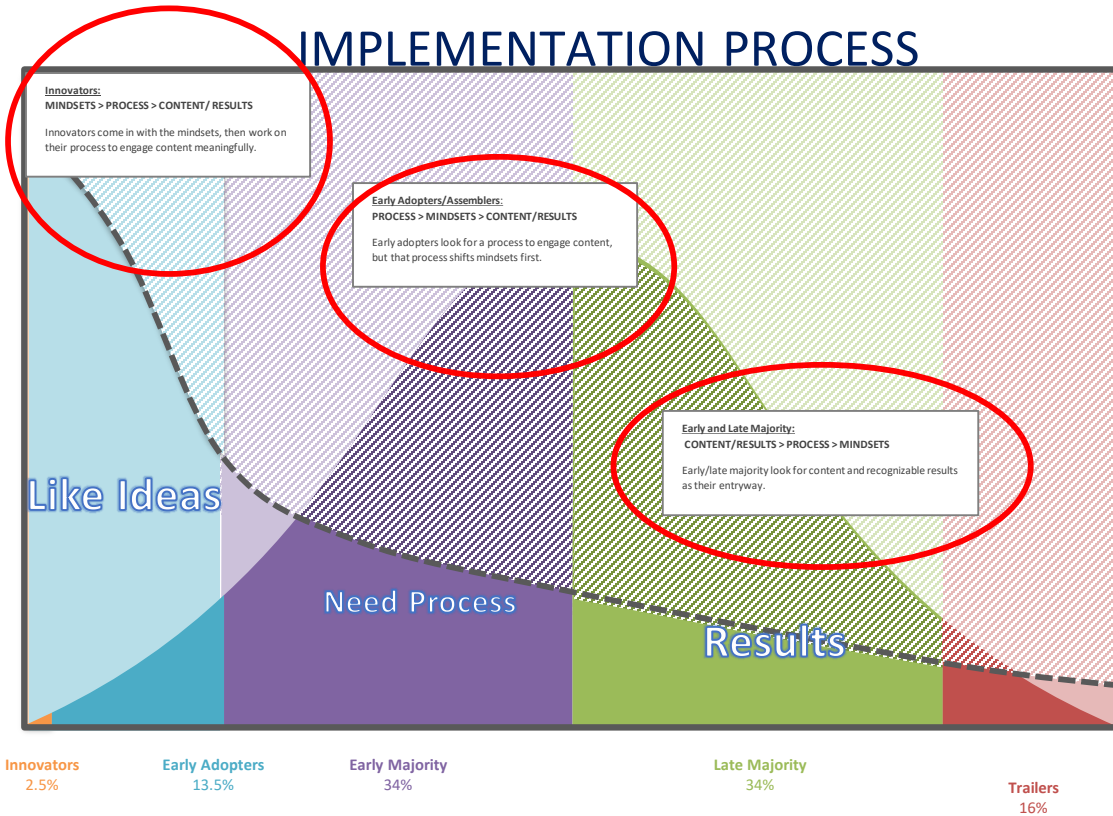
## Delivery Skills:

- ❖ Analyzing
- ❖ Planning
- ❖ Detailed Oriented  
Implementing
- ❖ Disciplined Executing

## Discovery Skills:

- ❖ Questioning
- ❖ Observing
- ❖ Networking
- ❖ Experimenting
- ❖ Associational Thinking

# IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

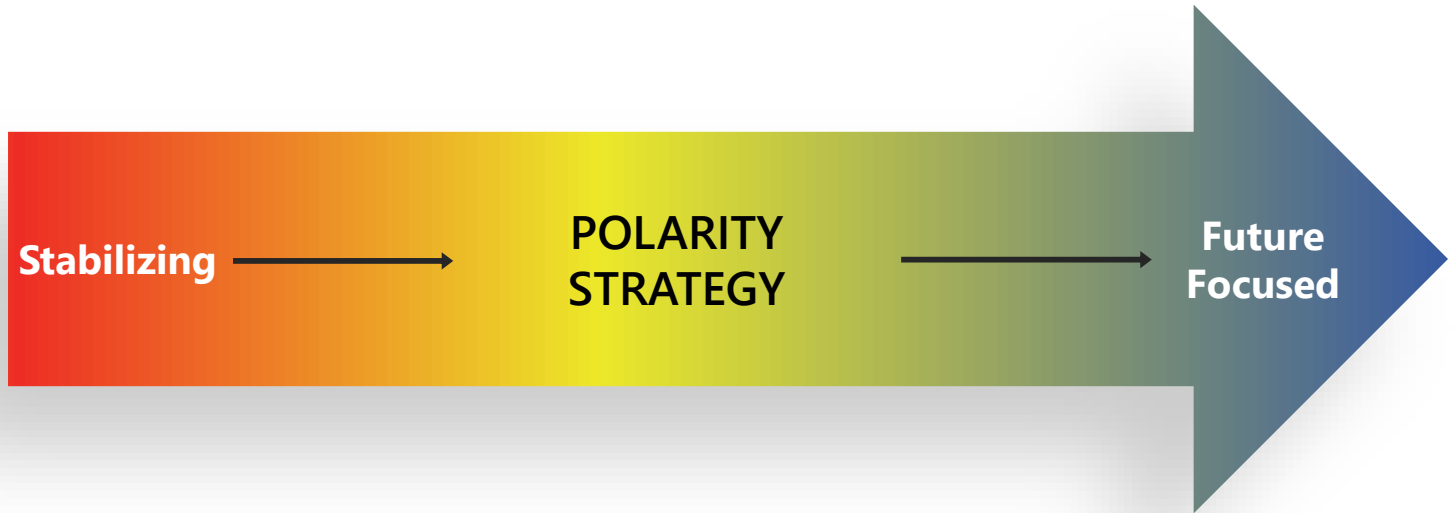


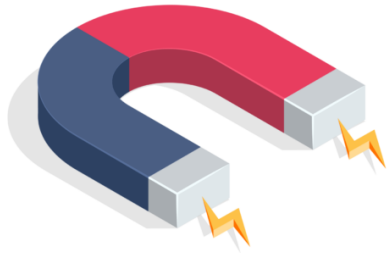


**Some people like new ideas and  
some people like tradition.**



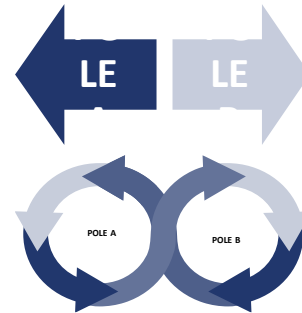
# The Future Focused Success Continuum™





## Polarities = energy systems in which we live and work

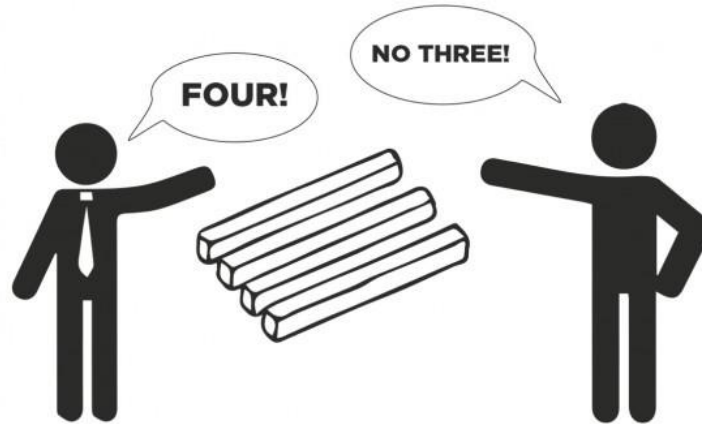
- Two interdependent “right answers”
- Requires that we shift from
- A problem solving – “either/or” –perspective
- To a “yes, and approach



# Seeing Polarities

All polarities contain two points of view, both of which are absolutely true.

AND they are a part of a pair of truths that need each other over time.

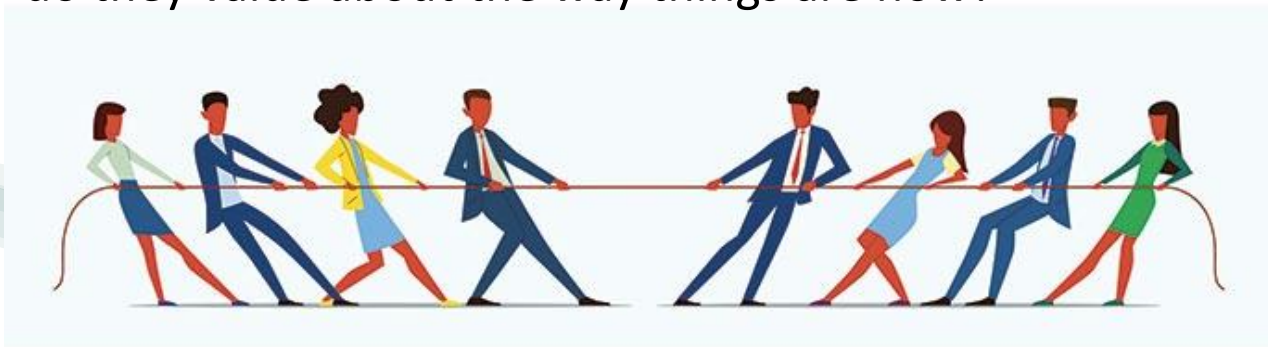


## A few common Polarities Educators Live In

- student responsibility for learning and teacher responsibility for learning
- academic achievement and whole child development

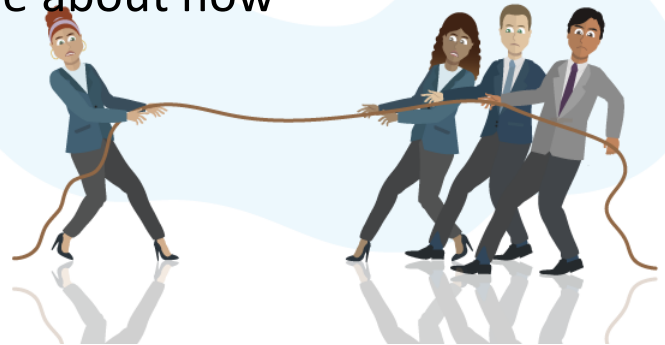
## Look behind resistance

What are people saying as they resist a new initiative, policy or program? What are they concerned about losing? What do they value about the way things are now?



## Look behind difficulties and dreams

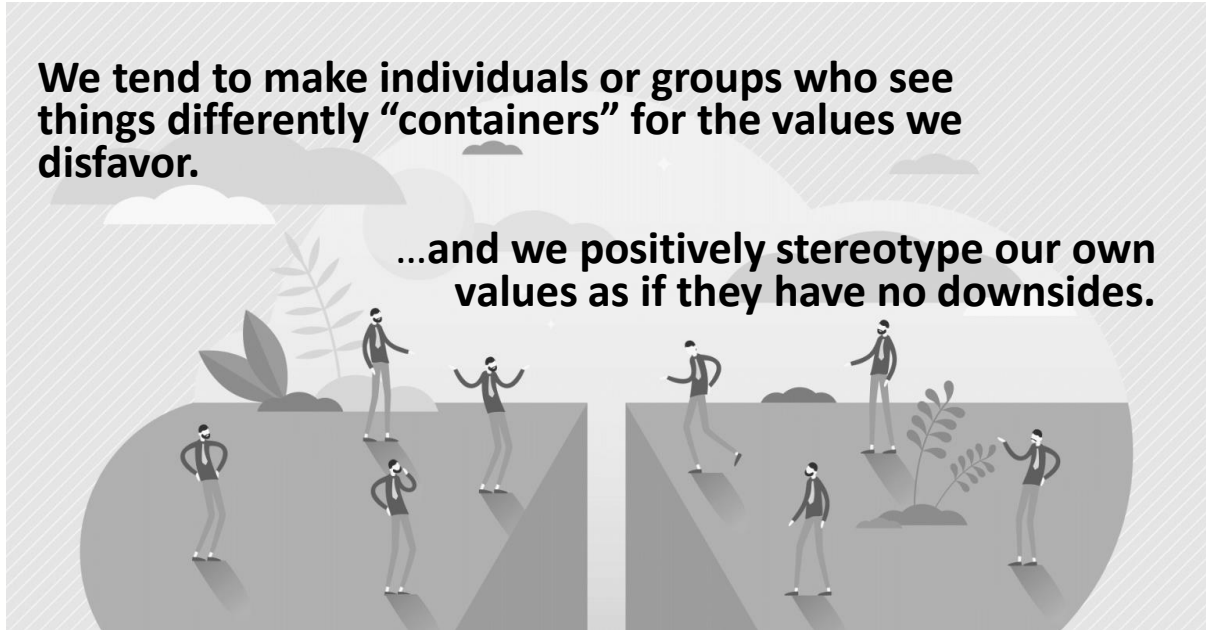
What is the difficult, chronic problem you are trying to solve? What are the most exciting possibilities? Why are some people strongly advocating, and others strongly resisting? What are the dreams that people have about how things could be?



# Polarity Stereotyping

We tend to make individuals or groups who see things differently “containers” for the values we disfavor.

...and we positively stereotype our own values as if they have no downsides.



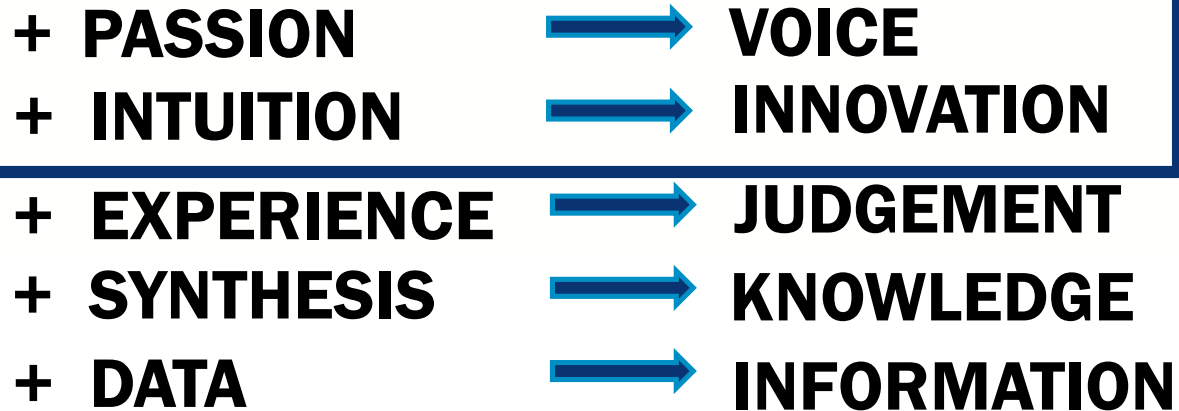
Continuity **AND** Change

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# **BOLD** LEADERSHIP



# Leading in Tough Times

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