



From Children's Perspectives to System Change

Sweden, Catalonia, Latvia

Anna Fahlin & Patrik Sjöberg

Stockholm, Sweden

- Elementary School teacher (1996-2016)
- School leader, vice principal, principal (2016-)
- Since 2022, principal for an elementary school for in total 310 students.
- Supporting The network for Spiral of Inquiry in Sweden since 2022 (Voluntary)
- Middle/secondary School teacher (-2004)
- School leader, vice principal, principal (2003-)
- Since 2017, principal with the assignment to establish an elementary & middle school and a special needs school for in total 650 students.
- Supporting The network for Spiral of Inquiry in Sweden since 2022 (Voluntary)





Children's perspectives in learning

Experiences from our Swedish elementary school teams

The Swedish School context

A distinctive feature of the Swedish school system is its strong social mission. Education is not only about academic achievement, but about supporting students' overall development, well-being, and democratic values.

This is clearly reflected in the national curriculum, highlighting its equal importance in promoting learning, social skills, and inclusion beyond the classroom.

One example is that school-age educare has its own dedicated chapter.

The Swedish School context

Swedish schools must not only reflect society — they must actively reduce inequality. They complement what students bring with them and compensate for what they lack, creating real conditions for success for *all* learners.

The Swedish school system is built on the principle of equity – not just equal access, but equal opportunity to succeed.

Two core ideas:

The Complementary Mission

Schools *add* what cannot be guaranteed at home.

The Compensatory Mission

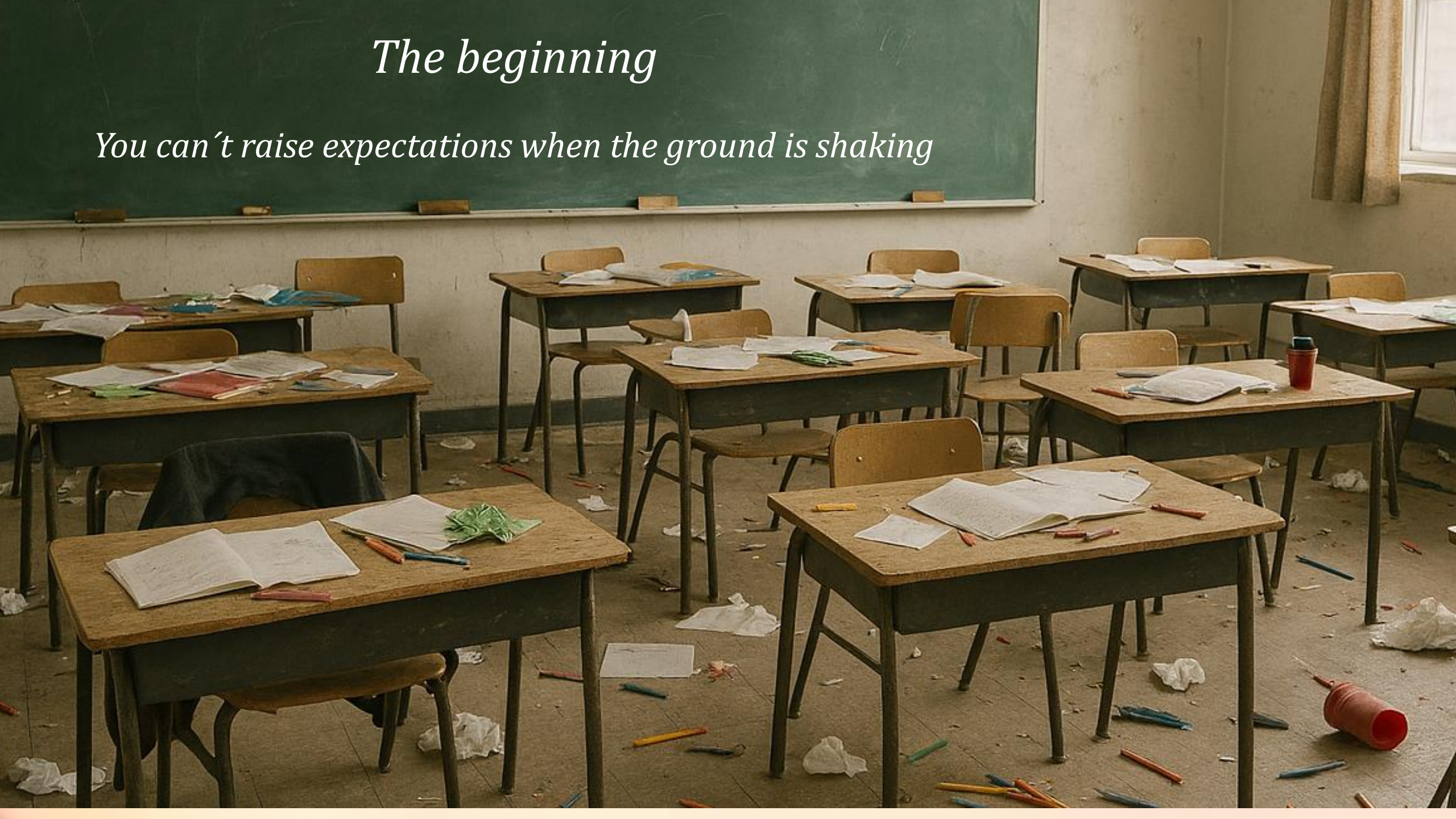
Schools *counteract* the effects of socio-economic differences.



*This child knows he
belongs here.*

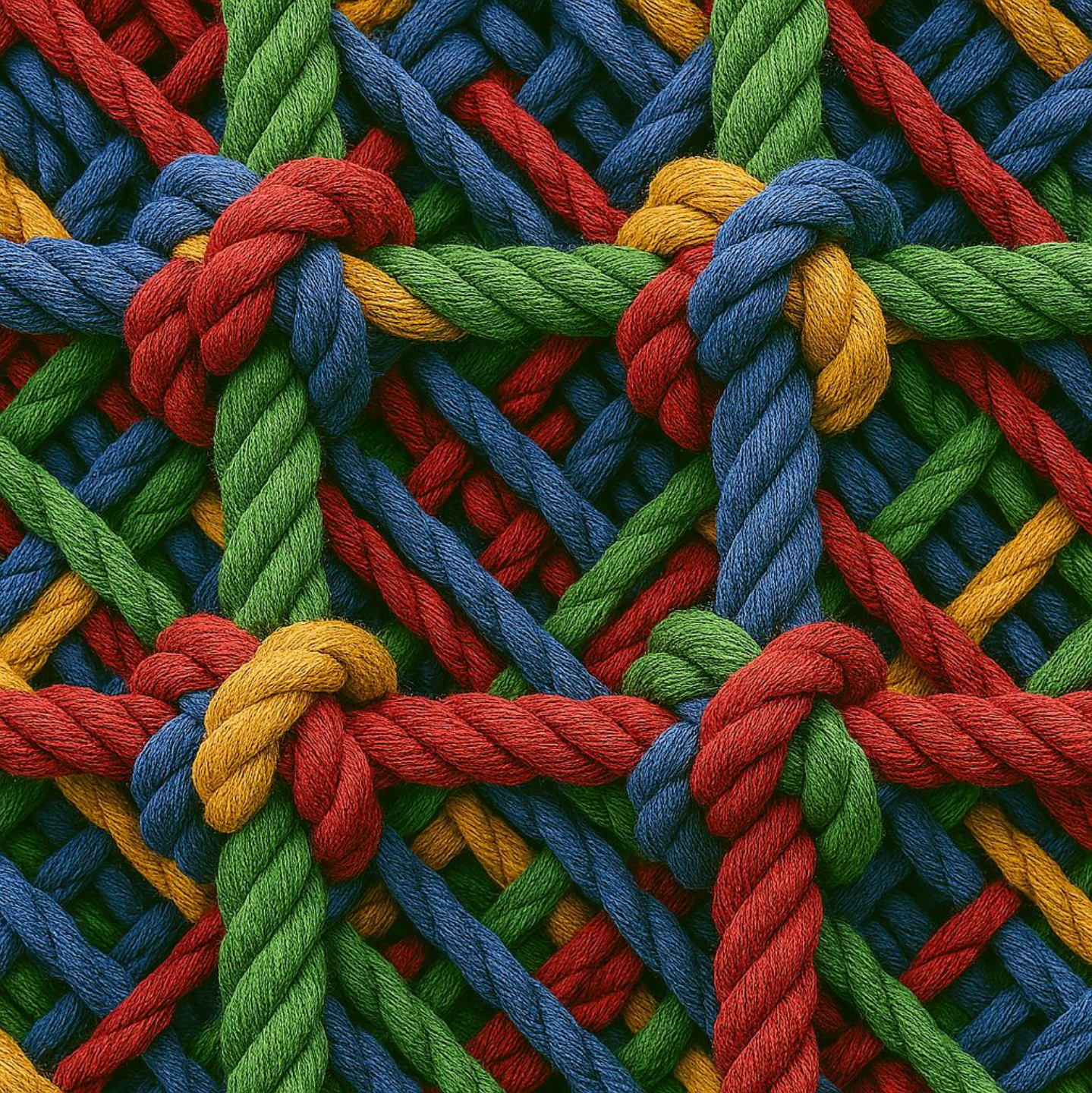
The beginning

You can't raise expectations when the ground is shaking





Strong roots before high expectations



“The door stays open”



*The group became the
foundation*





Because that small moment...

entering a room where you know you are
welcome

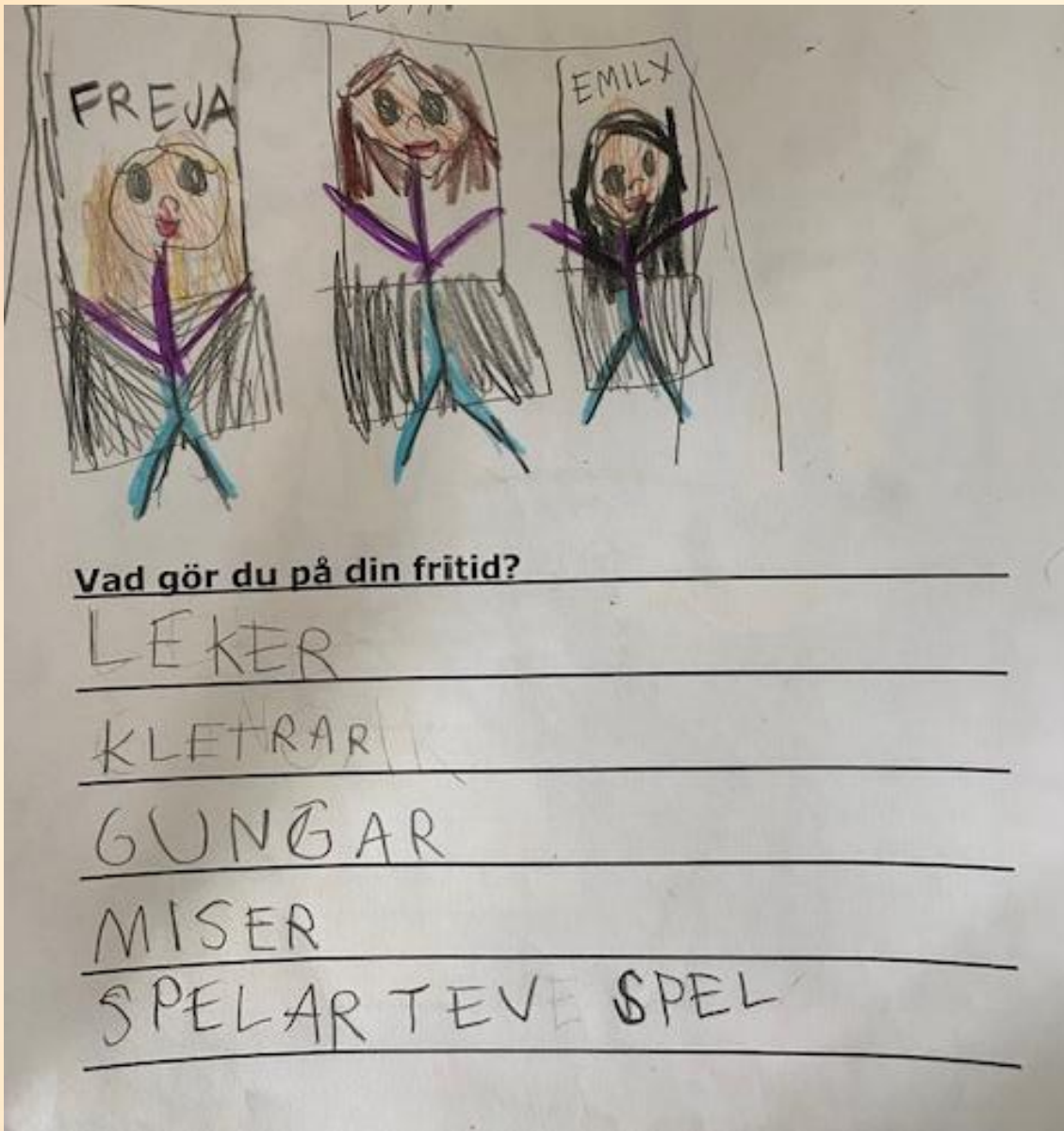


changes everything.

School Age Educare (fritidshem)

- A **part of the Swedish compulsory school** 6-12 years.
- School-age educare is an **integrated** part of the Swedish education system that supports children's **learning and social development** before and after the school day through curriculum-based activities, play, and care.
- School-age educare is not only about free play and recreation, but above all **about intentional, planned teaching and learning** linked to the content and goals of the national curriculum.
- The aim is for learning in school and in school-age educare to be **interconnected**, and educators in school-age educare also work together with school teachers during the school day. The two settings also share facilities





How can we learn more about what is going on for our learners, so that we can fulfil our complementary and compensatory missions?

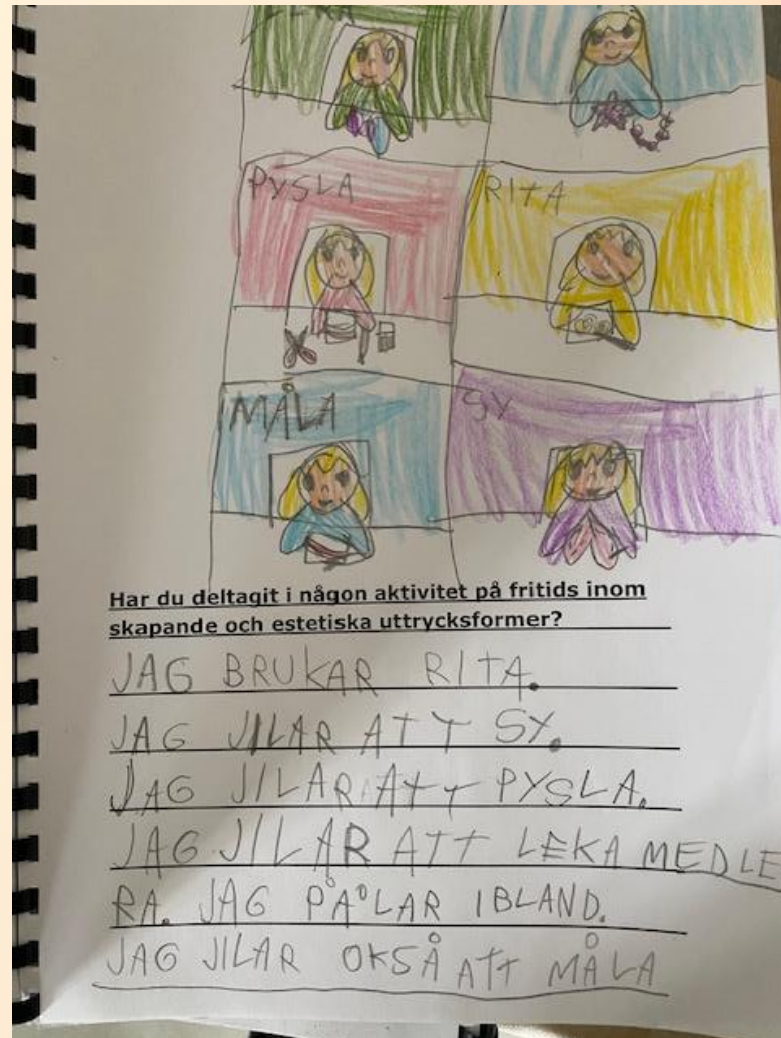
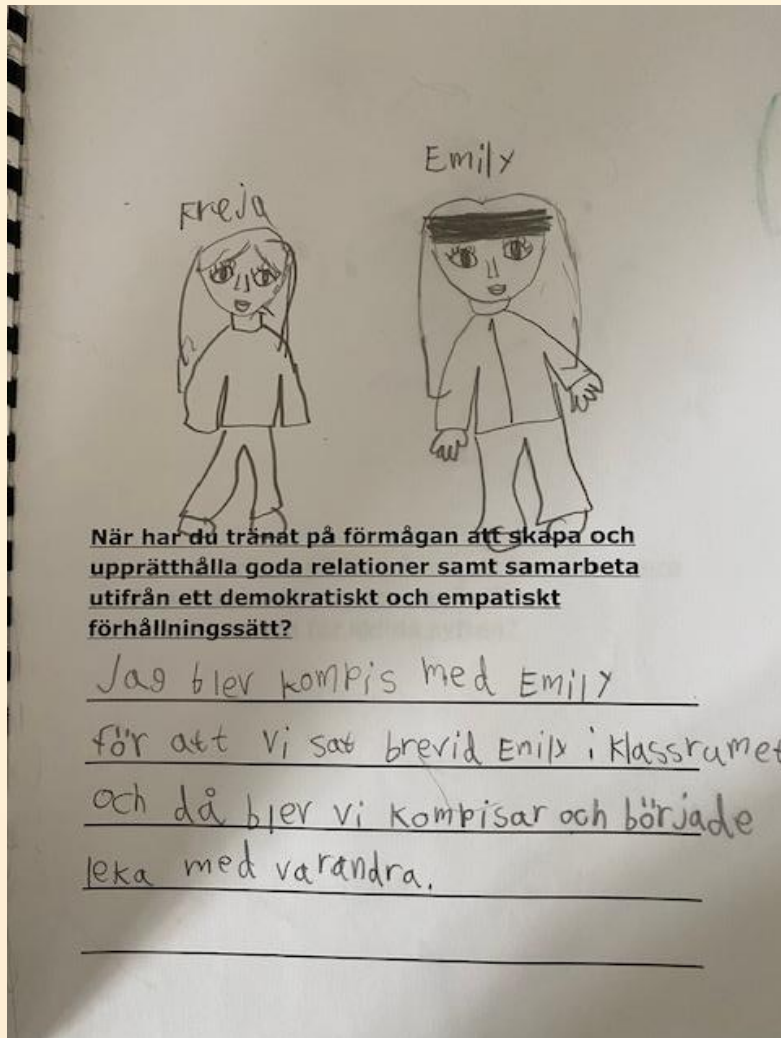
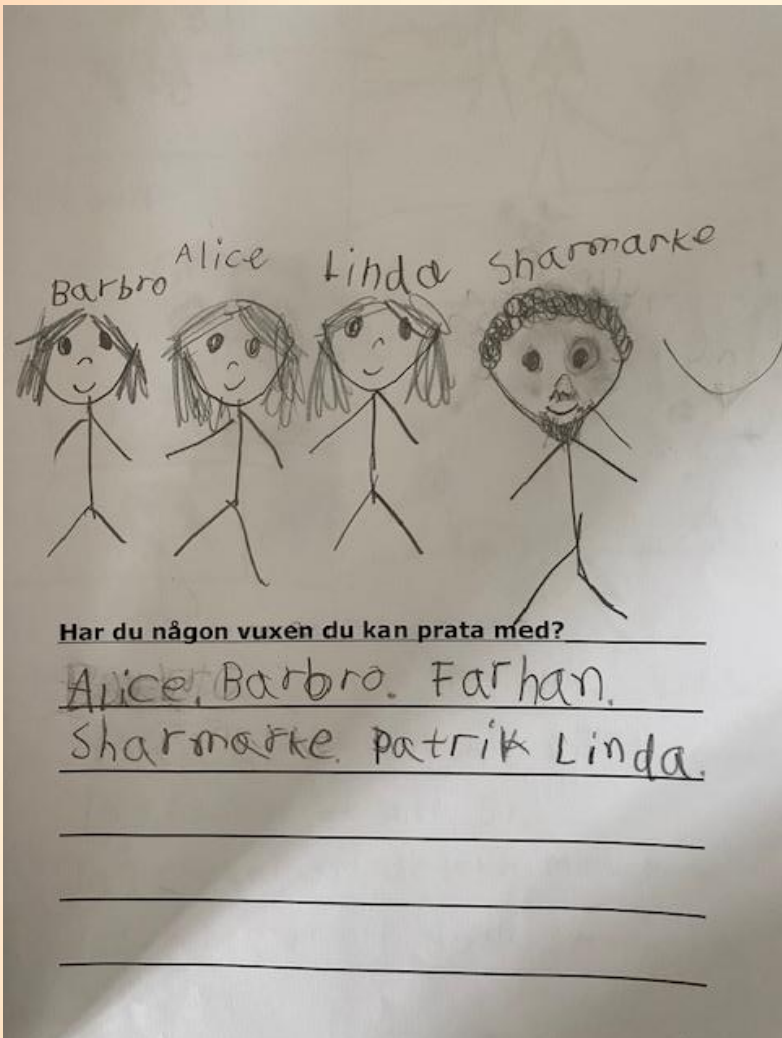


The staff group carried out the activity first within their own group. The outcomes from the students' drawings and following interviews were then used as a basis for the staff's continued work.

Key outcomes of the process

1. Students genuinely appreciate having the opportunity to talk to adults and **share what is going on in their lives.**
2. This is a working method that we can use more frequently to gain **children's perspectives** in relation to the content and goals of the curriculum.

"Fritidsboken" – "The book for School Age Educare"



"The potential beading activities"





What does it mean to adopt an (adult, professional) **child perspective** in teaching or in the organization of the school?

What does it mean to take the **child's perspective** in teaching or in the organization of the school and is that different from adopting an (adult) child perspective?

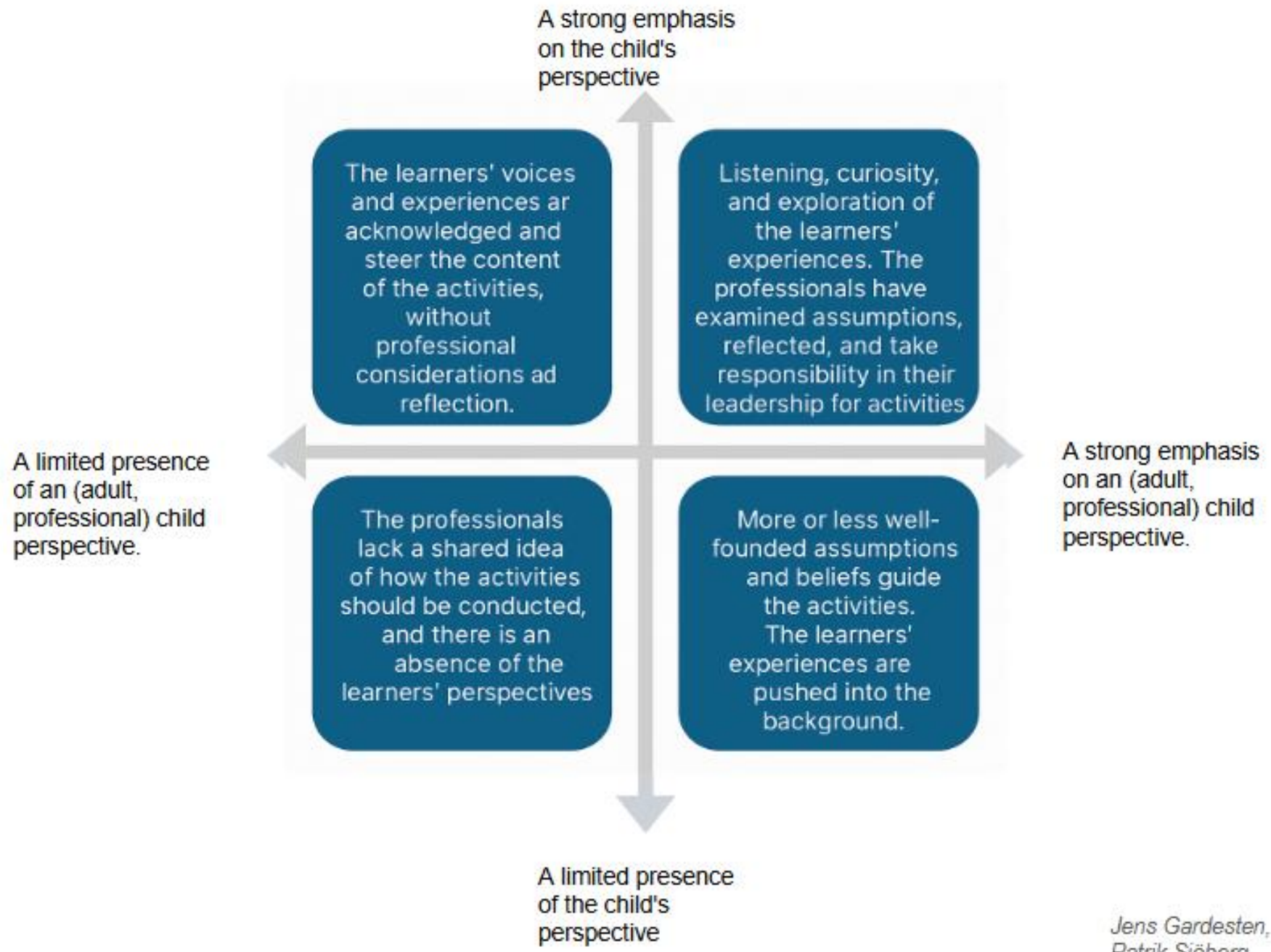
A strong emphasis
on the child's
perspective

A limited presence
of an (adult,
professional) child
perspective.

A strong emphasis
on an (adult,
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perspective.

A limited presence
of the child's
perspective

Jens Gardesten



Jens Gardesten,
Patrik Sjöberg



*Use every opportunity to capture the child's perspective.
Use it to challenge your own assumptions and to take your professional
responsibility to lead.*

Professional conversations

A Foundation for Teacher Professional Development

Begonya Folch Martínez
Institut Angeleta Ferrer, Barcelona, Catalonia





Learning requires talk with others

“Learning requires talk with others. From the effort based perspective, however, not all talk sustains learning. (...) It demands contributions that are accurate and relevant to the issue under discussion.” Kaser i Halbert, Leadership Mindsets, 2009, p.90





APRENDRE A L'ESCOLA QUE APRÈN

ALA



1a sessió de la interxarxa Grup de treball Espiral d'indagació
Amb 70 docents de 34 centres de #XarxesperalCanvi que aprendran de i amb les altres amb el compromís de portar a terme una espiral d'indagació per a la millora de l'aprenentatge en el seu centre aquest curs.

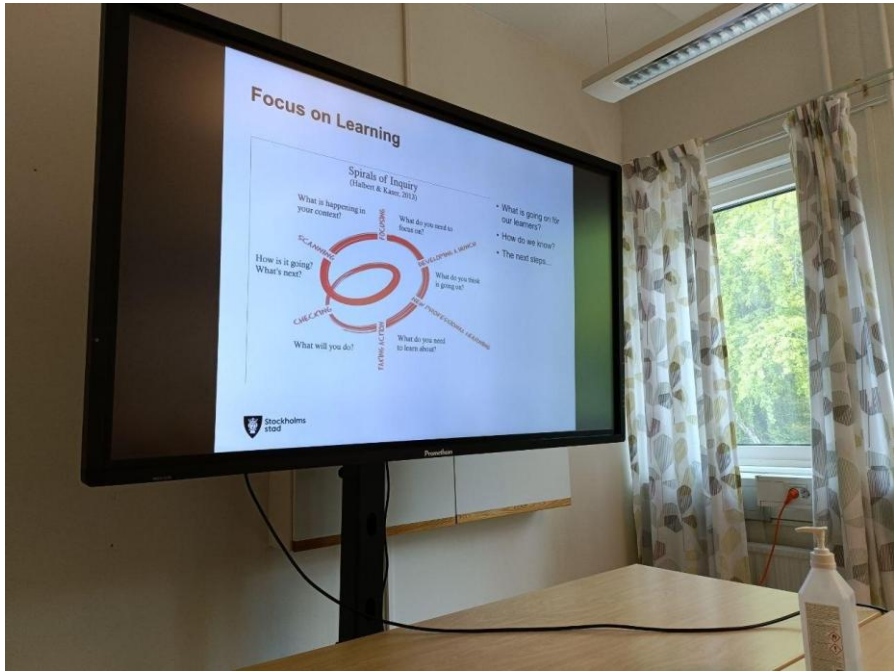
Translate Tweet

e **Consorti d'Ed**
@consorciedu
Consorti d'Edu
Gestió dels cer
ciutat de Barce
Catalunya i Aju
#Consortiedub

edu
cació
Educació
@educaciocat
Departament d'E
de Catalunya
participació
gen.cat/normesp

BCN
EDUCACIÓ
BCN Educadora
@BCNeducadora
Ciutat educadora
amb educació per
ample de la vida.

















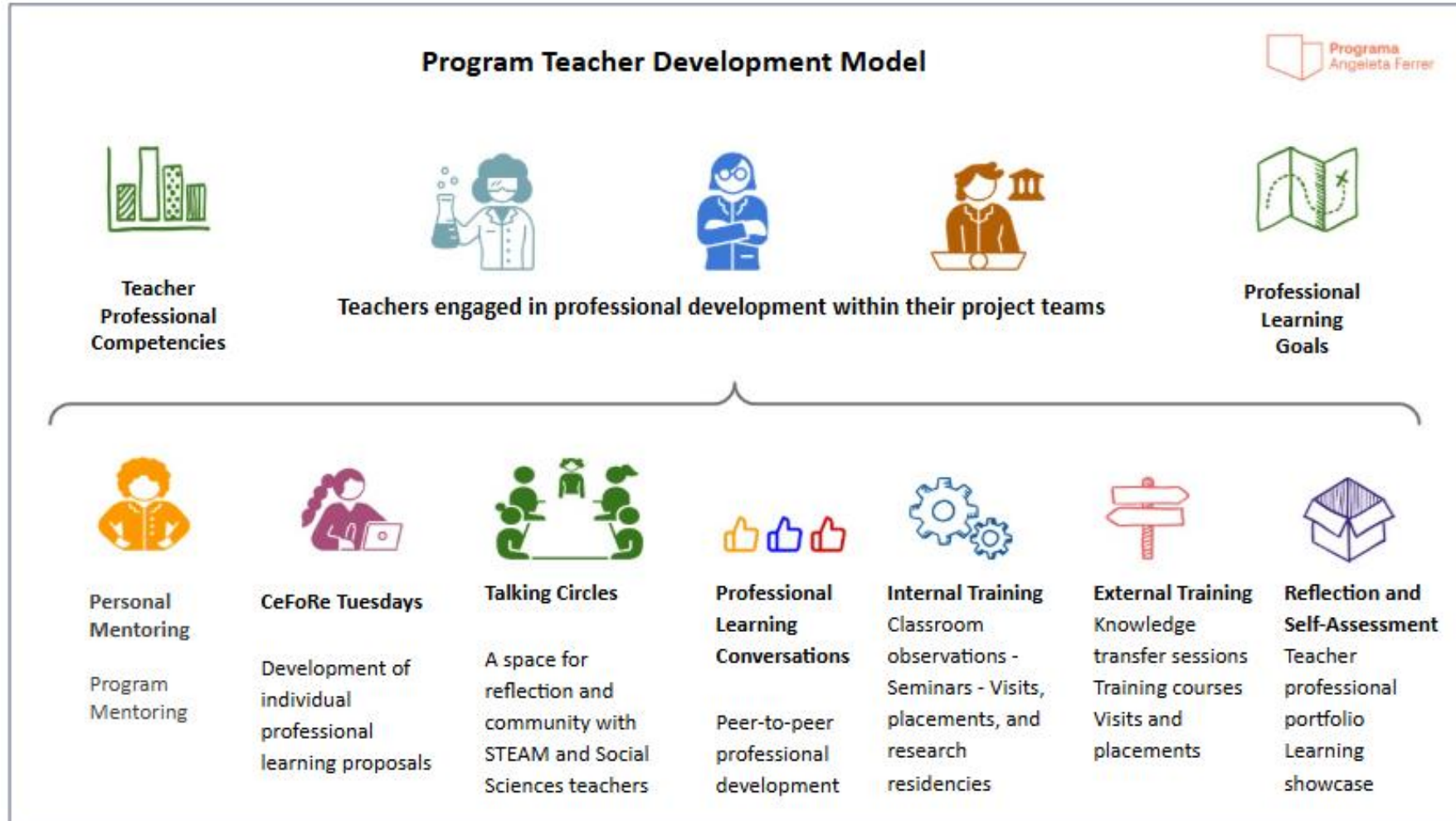


Barcelona, September 2022



Institut
Angeleta Ferrer

Context



Again, it's about time, the use of time: when the school designs "time for professional development", in the leader's mindset it's about "what do each teacher want to learn?" It is not "what we should learn **together** in order **to improve our students' learning?**"

PRESENTACIÓ D'EVIDÈNCIA D'APRENTATGE

NOM I COGNOMS	
NOM DE L'EVIDÈNCIA D'APRENTATGE	
TIPUS DE DOCUMENT	
FRANJA	
DOCENT	
EQUIP (si s'escau)	
DATA EN QUÈ ES RECULL L'EVIDÈNCIA	

<p>"Quina demostració/evidència d'aprenentatge presentes?"</p> <p>"Per què és important per a tu aquest aprenentatge?"</p>	<p>[El sentit d'aquesta pregunta és comprovar si ets conscient del propòsit de l'activitat d'aprenentatge que tu mateix/a has triat com a més significatiu per a tu; no només si ets conscient del propòsit, sinó si t'has compromès amb aquest propòsit, si saps veure la importància d'aprendre això, si té valor per a tu. Parlem de les funcions afectives o de compromís.]</p>
<p>"I com t'ha anat aquest aprenentatge?"</p> <p>"Quines dificultats has superat i quines creus que encara hauràs de superar?"</p>	<p>[Aquesta pregunta fa referència a si coneixes i et representes els criteris d'èxit de la tasca o aprenentatge. Són les funcions cognitives o de representació.]</p> <p>Per exemple podries escriure:</p> <p>"Ja sé fer el % , però encara em costa calcular mentalment les parts d'un tot, %, %, %, etc. Fer càlculs aproximats de les proporcions i operar amb fraccions és un aprenentatge que considero que encara no assolit."</p> <p>És a dir, és una pregunta molt específica sobre els criteris d'èxit d'aquest aprenentatge.]</p>
<p>"I a partir d'això que has après, quin seria per a tu el proper pas a fer en aquest aprenentatge?"</p>	<p>[l aquesta pregunta fa referència a la presa de decisions, les funcions executives. No hi ha avaluació sense presa de decisions. Com t'autodirigeixes davant una dificultat? Què et dius a tu mateix/a per continuar aprenent i millorant?]</p>

Presenting evidence of learning through a reflection task:

1. What have you learned and why is it important to you?
2. How is it going with your learning?
3. What are your next steps?

Institut Angeleta Ferrer, Barcelona

SEL + UDL	Understand	Know	Do
Me	S elf Esteem Love who you are	S elf Knowledge Identify your thoughts	S elf Management Autonomy Decision Making
Others	B elonging Empathy	P erspective Point of view	P artnership Relationships
World	C ommitment Responsibility	A wareness Respect Knowledge	C ulture Contribution

SEL + UDL	Sentir	Pensar	Actuar
Jo	A utoestima Estima qui ets	A utoconeixement Identifica els teus pensaments	A utogestió Autonomia Presca de decisions / Hàbits
Els altres	P ertinença Empatia	P erspectiva Punt de vista	P artnership Relacions
El món	C ompromís Responsabilitat	C onsciència Respecte Coneixement	C ultura Contribució





“The Four Big”
Spiral of Inquiry
Kaser & Halbert

1. Pots anomenar dos adults de l'escola que creuen que te'n sortiràs, que tindràs èxit?

I com t'ho demostren?

2. Què estàs aprenent i per què és important?

4. I quin és el proper pas en aquests aprenentatges?

3. I com et va aquest aprenentatge?

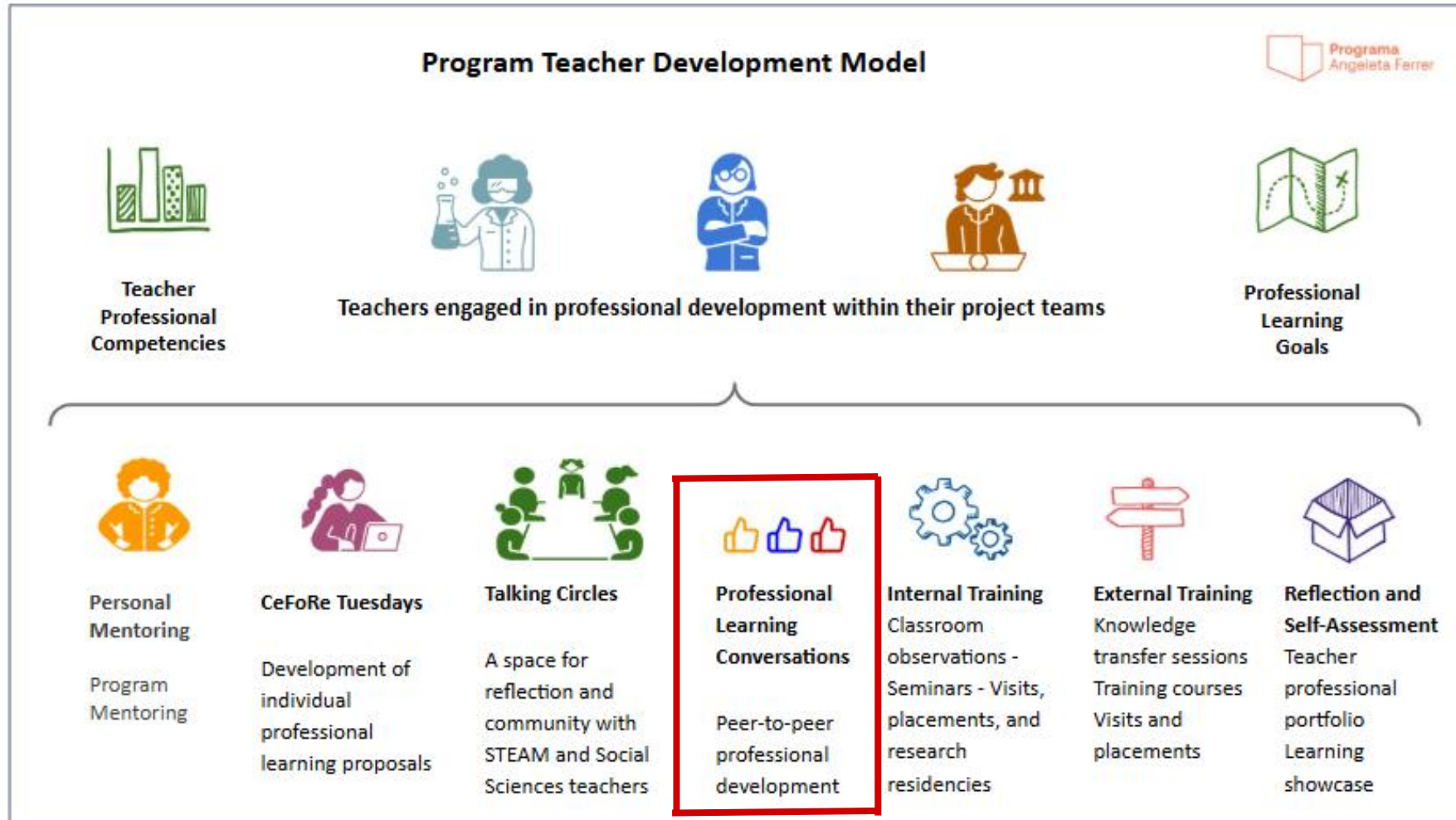


“The 4 Big in a booklet”

The Spiral of Inquiry, Linda Kaser & Judy Halbert



Context







Learning requires talk with others

Our shared and written goal at the beginning of the professional conversations:

“To increase awareness and responsibility to change actions for better learning.”

The missing line: **a call for expert knowledge**

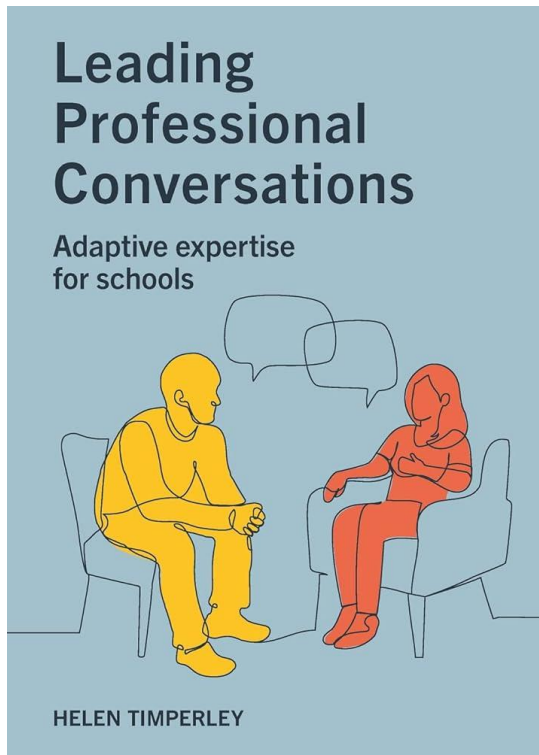
Learning requires talk with others

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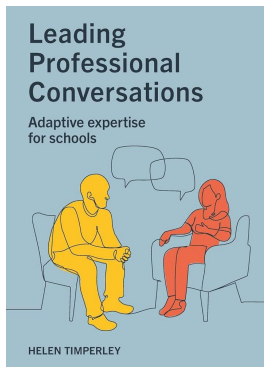
“To increase awareness and responsibility to change actions for better learning.”

The missing line: a call for expert knowledge

A call for expert knowledge

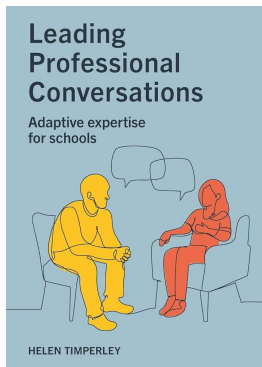


A call for expert knowledge

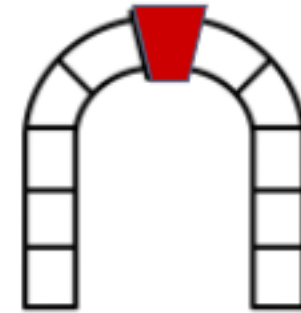


- ❑ The need for **trust**
- ❑ Transparent, authentic dialogue that allows people to express what truly **concerns** them
- ❑ What concerns us often makes us feel **vulnerable**
- ❑ Conversations with **no hidden agendas** are the only way to build mutual trust

A call for expert knowledge



Conversations need a **purpose**, something we're willing to commit to, to improve and grow.

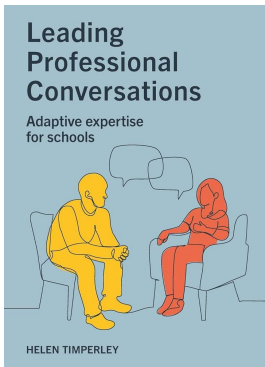




Lorna Earl and Helen Timperley suggest that professional learning conversations should not be about telling someone what to do. Instead, they are about committing to explore more knowledge together—**gaining different perspectives so we can make better decisions.**

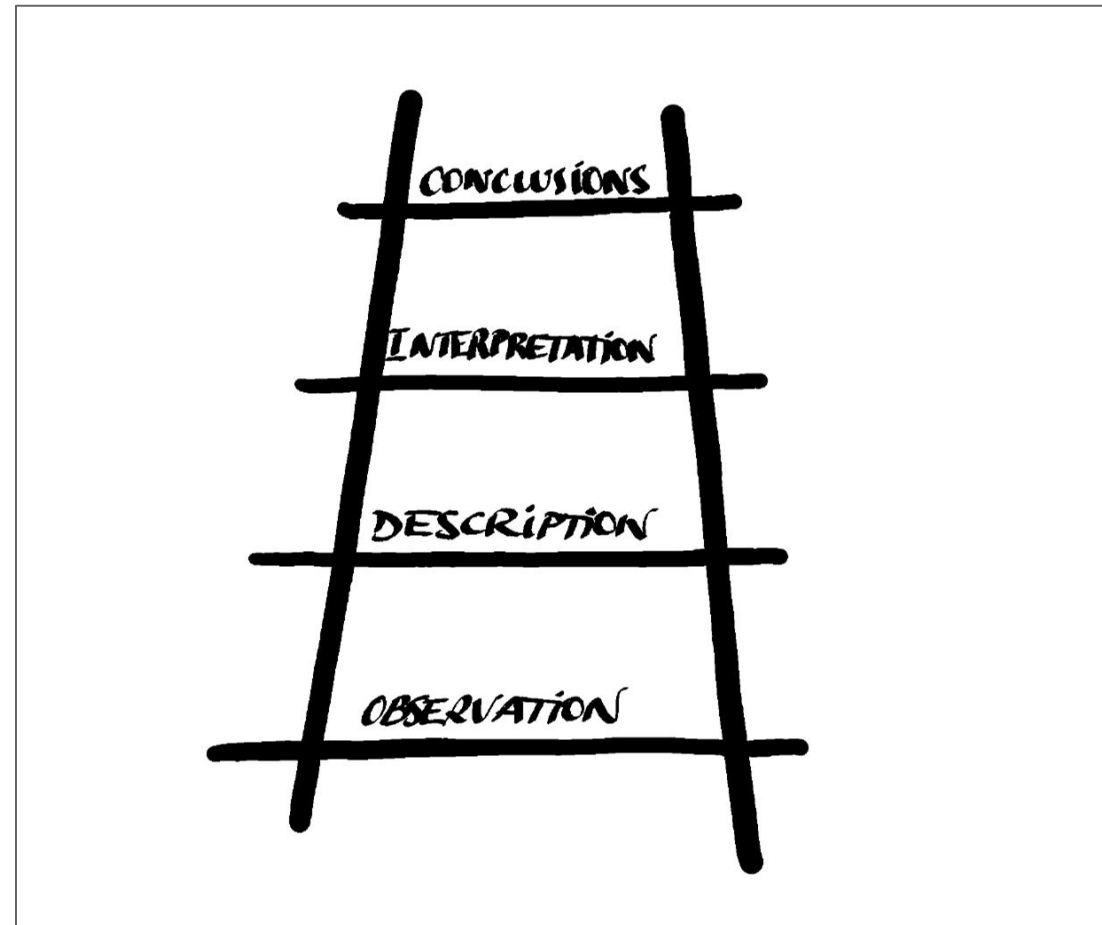


EVALUATIVE THINKING FOR SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION.
Education Working Paper No.122, By Lorna Earl and Helen Timperley



How do you get people to not only learn deeply, but to change their practice as a result?

The Ladder of Inference - Chris Argyris, 1970



That's just how humans are. As Helen Timperley writes:

“We all make judgments. That’s the nature of our thinking processes. But it’s about being much more systematic about how we make those judgements. It’s about inquiring!”

This means we must make a conscious effort **to explore *all possible interpretations*, to expand our perspective, move beyond our biases, and develop more flexible and complex thinking about our students and their work.**

This book could be the scaffold to improve. Choose your own criteria, what's important to you, and develop some alternative ways to do things, with your colleagues.

We need to keep learning, we need to listen.

If each of us contributes a small piece, we can make education more human, more meaningful, and more connected to the real world.

“What’s important to you?”

“What **evidence** would you like to bring?”

“Slow Down”: stop giving your description, stop and check,

“Do you agree? Have you got **a different interpretation?**”

Symmetry Principle

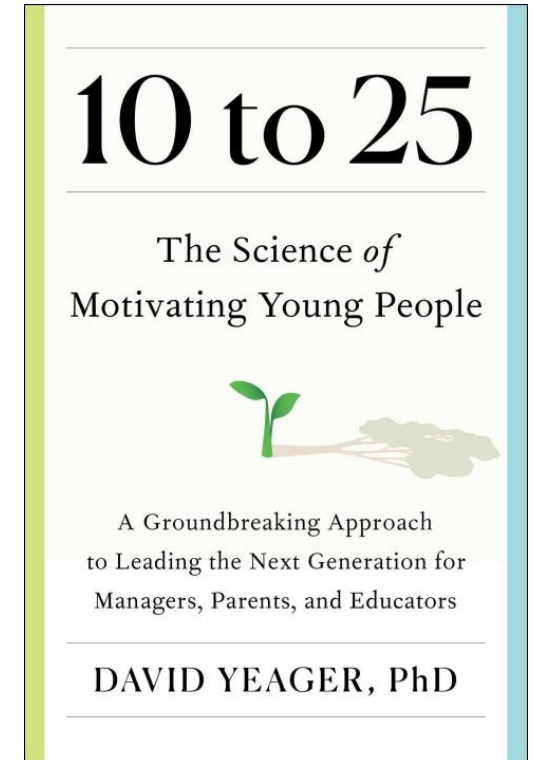
Similarities between professional and student planning

1. “Engage the learners understandings of how the world works”
2. “Learning is highly social”
3. “Build deep knowledge; build adaptive expertise”
4. “Developing metacognition: **see patterns in your behaviour and make changes**”
5. “See individual differences”
6. “Assessment is learning”
7. “Deep learning is transferable learning” (Pellegrino & Hilton)

Keep the inquiry fresh! Start a snowball effect!

- (1) Your struggles are normal (validate emotions)
- (2) Things could change, but not right away
- (3) You can take steps to start improving the situation
- (4) Your efforts could snowball into something better

Chapter





Latvia – geography and context

1.8 million people
36 years, since regained freedom from the Soviet Union

220 000 students
25 000 teachers
600 schools

42 local authorities (school districts)

New K-12 curriculum “Skola2030” –
emphasis on deeper learning, cross-curricular competencies





Purpose of the MIIT* Latvian Network

- to create deeper learning experiences for all students;
- to help schools become learning communities where all students can thrive and fulfill their potential;
- to foster dialogue between system stakeholders in order to effect sustained, transformative change in the Latvian schools.



* MIIT – *Mācīšanās iedziļinoties izglītības tīklojums* (Deeper Learning Education Network)

MIIT Network Design

- **School district teams** (21 participants from each school district):
 - a school district leadership team
 - teams from 3-4 schools
- **Three districts** in the MIIT First Cohort – Ogre, Limbaži, Talsi, serving a total of about 20 000 students
- A non-profit organization Children's Environmental School acting as a **network hub, learning designer and facilitator**



MIIT Activities

- Two three-day convenings a year
- Online meetings/workshops in role-alike groups (principals, teachers, professional support staff)
- Consultations and visits from the network leadership team





MIT participants

District and school teams engage in **collaborative inquiry**, using the *Spiral of Inquiry* to guide the process

Explore and deepen their understanding of **deeper learning** and how it can create more **equitable** learning opportunities for all

Learn about and reflect on **leadership tools** for creating sustaining change in organizations

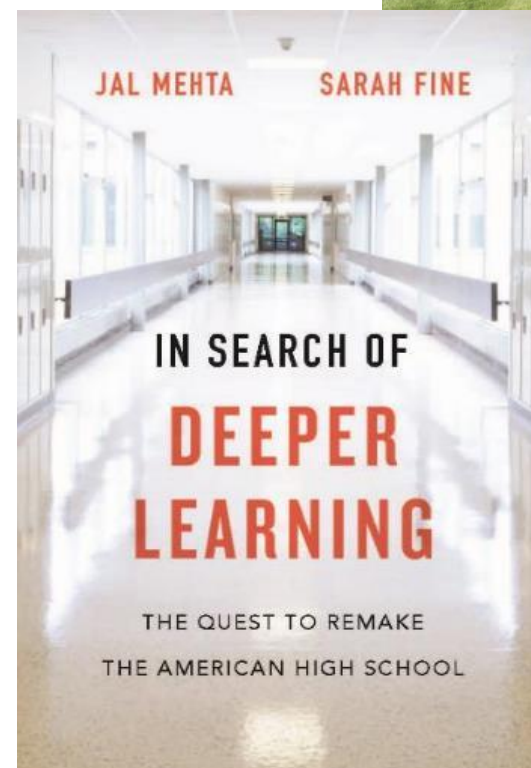
Experience learning symmetry Symmetry – adults engage in similar learning experiences we would like to create for students





The Deeper Learning Institute (DLI) is a system-wide effort to transform schools into more human and humane places for the people who work and learn within them.

DLI supports school districts and educator leaders on their journey to transform from industrial-era systems to modern learning organizations.



Deeper Learning Districts –
a project of the
Harvard Graduate
School of Education
since 2018

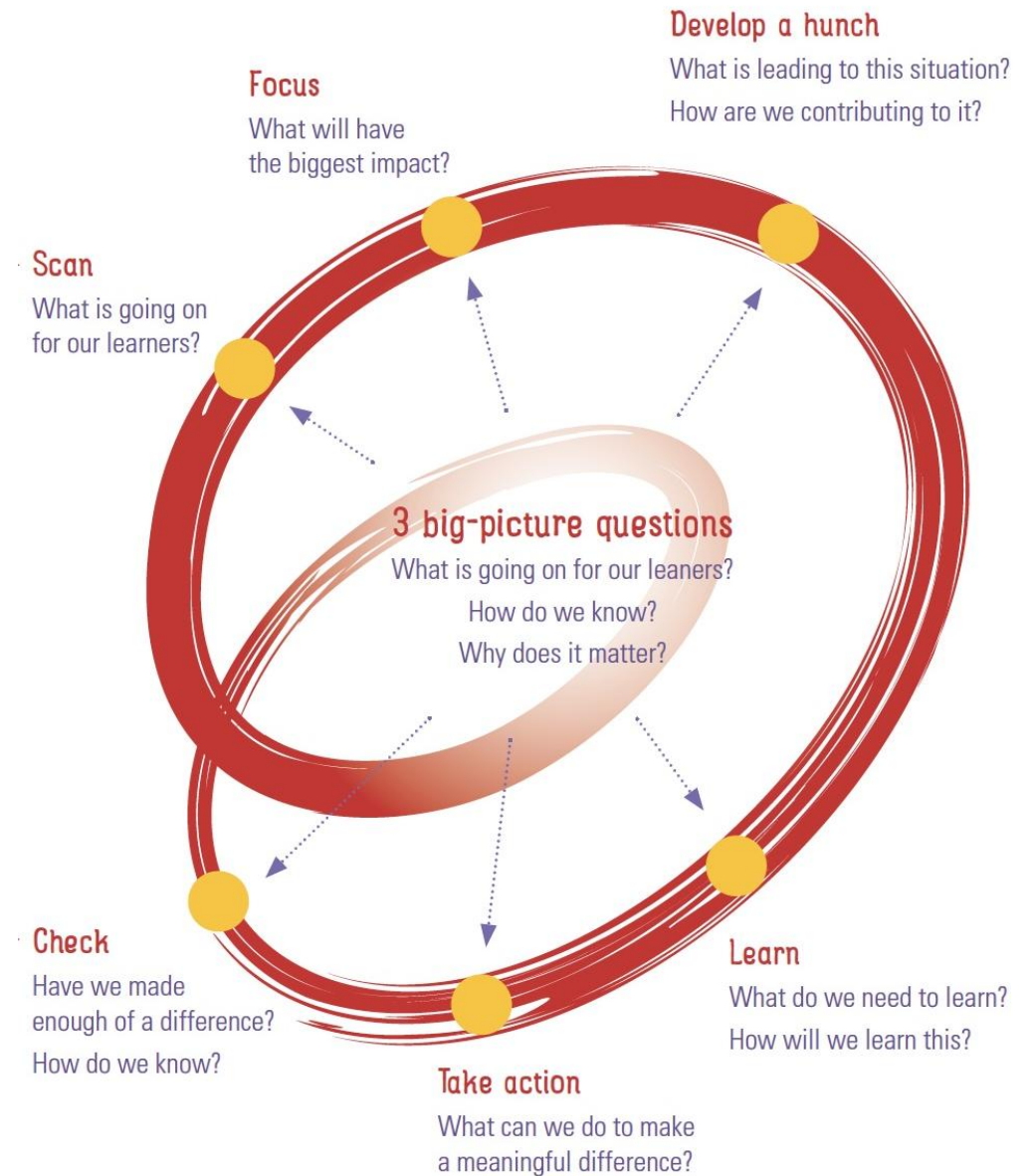
<https://deeperlearning.gse.harvard.edu/>

Lesson 1: Trust the Process

Scanning benefits from thorough prep work

Focus and **solutions** are not interchangeable

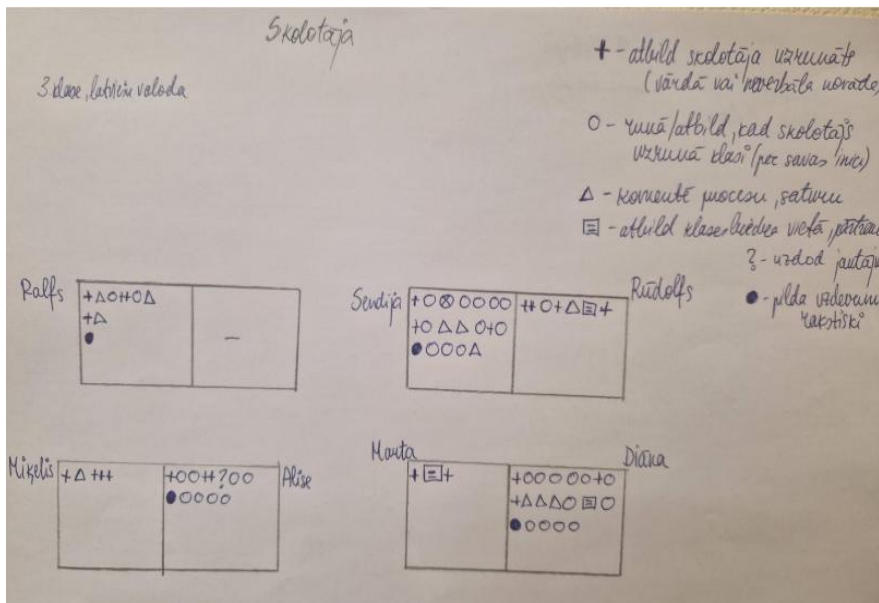
New learning is likely necessary for more accurate **hunches**





Lesson 2: Look for Tools to Scaffold Each Step

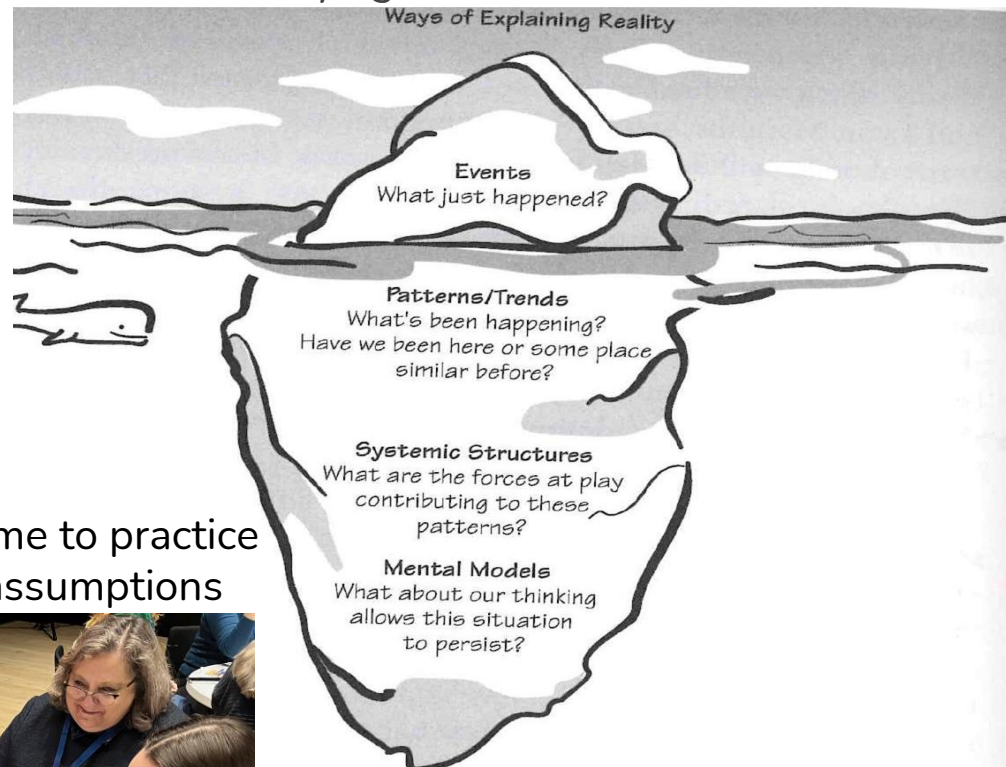
Example 1: Protocol for mapping student engagement in a lesson, for scanning phase



Example 2: Playing Team3 game to practice perspective taking; to surface assumptions



Example 3: Iceberg activity as a way to move closer to identifying hunches



Senge. P. Schools that Learn. The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook.. (1994)

Lesson 3: Engage All Levels

- **School district** honing their vision for student learning, examining their role and impact, identifying what support looks like
- **School leadership** pondering strategies for creating a shared vision and facilitating whole school involvement
- **Teachers** investigating their practice in the classroom and creating small-scale prototypes



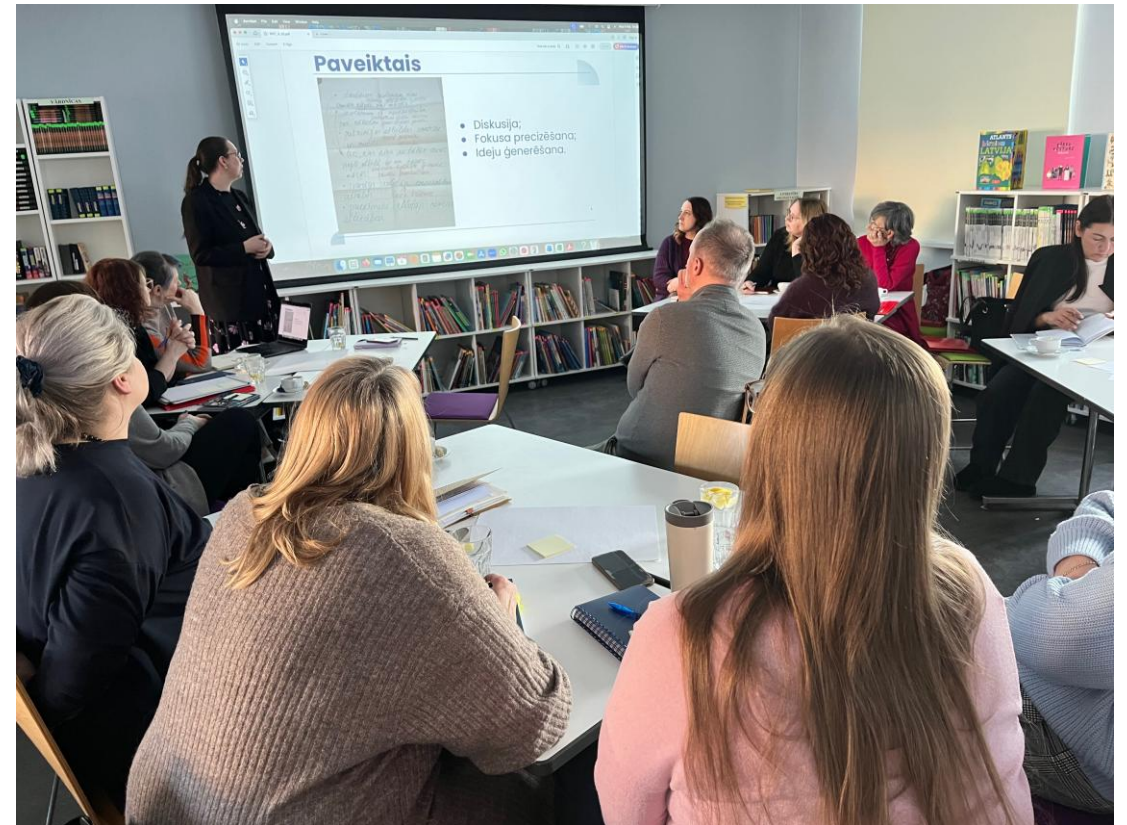
Lesson 4: Take Your Time

Vast differences in participant **readiness to reflect** openly and concretely on their practice

Long history of prior relationships, must work on building **trust**

«Thank you for **not rushing** us to quick solutions and performative action.»

Yet, how to **balance** «we still need to investigate further» with «let's test our first assumptions by taking some action»





Lesson 5: Learning Symmetry Is Key

Engage adults in meaningful learning, as we would like them to do for students





Thank you!

Anna Fahlin annafahlin@denutforskandespiralen.se

Patrik Sjöberg patriksjoberg@denutforskandespiralen.se

<https://www.denutforskandespiralen.se>

Begonya Folch b.folch@gmail.com

Zane Olina zane.olina@icloud.com