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BECOMING A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

GLOBAL FORUM FEBRUARY 2016 CONVERSATION

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The Centre for Innovation, Research, Creativity and Leadership in Education Pty Ltd



Context: About CIRCLE



CIRCLE – The Centre for Innovation, Research, Creativity and Leadership in Education

Working with over 1,750 schools internationally

Achieving better outcomes for more learners by building cultures of excellence in leadership and learning in communities of inquiry

An educational agency that equips, empowers and enables schools and school leaders through consultancy and educational services

Strategic alliances with tertiary bodies (including University of Tasmania) and professional associations including partnership with the IBSC since 2011

Creating educational software solutions for improving school performance including Touchstones Performance Development software

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INTRODUCTION

TODAY'S CONVERSATION

- 1 A great school for girls – what's really happening today?
- 2 The culture of a great school for girls – how do you find out?
- 3 Leading a great school for girls – how do you know?

1. A great school for girls – what's really happening today?



A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

CASE STUDY: LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP CULTURE IN A SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

School 1:

- **Assumptions:** Our enrolment profile is declining slowly due to demographic pressures and changing urban development. We need to address this through a range of marketing and logistical strategies.
- **Intervention:** Cultural Audit with a focus on external demography and internal leadership and learning culture.
- **Conclusion:** Our school's leadership and learning culture has stagnated and we need to address both the quality of our leadership, and also the rationale and relevance of our pedagogy, curriculum and staff professional learning in a 21C context (**Achievement and Reputation**)

A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

THE LEARNING CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Four learning dispositions of a 21st Century school for girls:

- **Developing Girls:** Girls' physical, emotional and cognitive development from early childhood to young adulthood.
- **Supporting Girls:** Wellness, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, performance and motivation.
- **Developing Staff:** Helping staff to engage in reflection on their teaching, and lay the foundations for their own journey to mastery practice in teaching girls.
- **Developing Leaders:** Developing leadership and global citizenship capabilities for students and staff.

FROM CIRCLE'S EXPERIENCE ... OUR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Complex educational environments place difficult, challenging and contradictory demands on leaders.

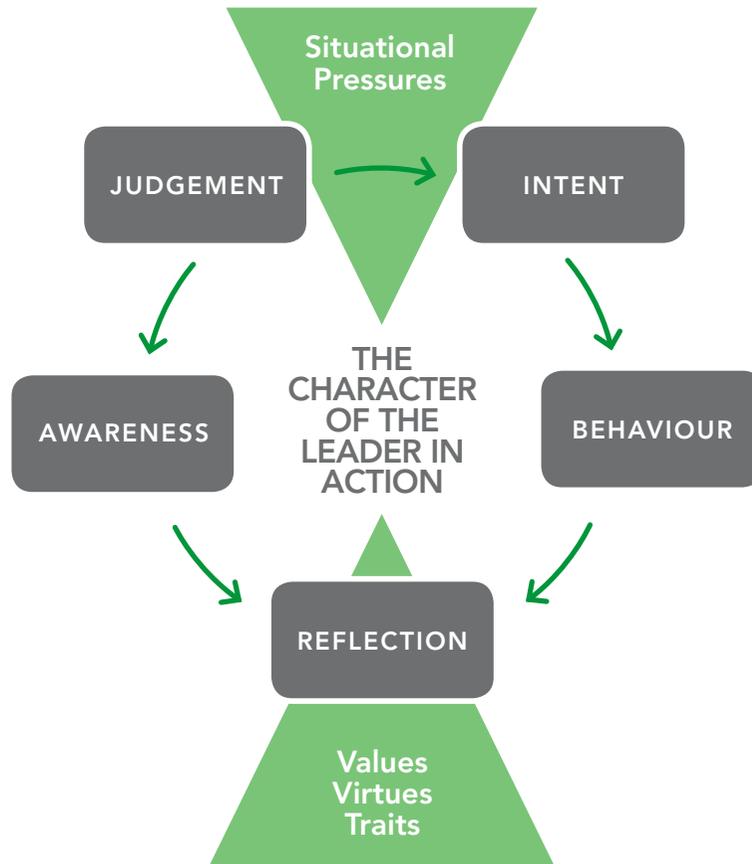
Long-term educational leadership success lies in clear purpose and direction, strong values and organisational belief which enhance team flexibility and responsiveness.

Leaders in education must be adaptable and possess many skills to meet challenges, including:

- Finding new and better ways of doing things
- Accepting greater levels of responsibility
- Understanding the implicit need for decision-making by making judgments, managing risk and allowing freedom of action by team members



THE LEADER OF CHARACTER



A CHARACTER-BASED MODEL OF DECISION MAKING BY SCHOOL LEADERS

Modified from Crossman, M (et al), "In search of virtue: The role of virtues, values and character strength in ethical decision-making." in *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113 (2013) p. 568



A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING THE LEADERSHIP CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

- **Articulate and infect:** We know good leadership instinctively – we feel it in ourselves. If we write it down and tell people about it, it makes it easier to infect others with it. Conceptual models help create a contextualised and shared vocabulary and visual map.
- **Train and do:** Learners respond to being led well. They learn best through an informed leadership experience where they are both taught theory (“doing leadership”) and also can learn by putting it into practice (“being a leader”).
- **A whole-school program:** Take the time to build a whole-school program. Be bold, be ambitious and be prepared – your students and staff will learn much from this approach also!
- **Character and capability:** Learners learn to fulfill their essential leadership roles through their experiences of leading and being led. Leadership education builds character education and capability.

Your questions

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2. The culture of a great school for girls – how do you find out?



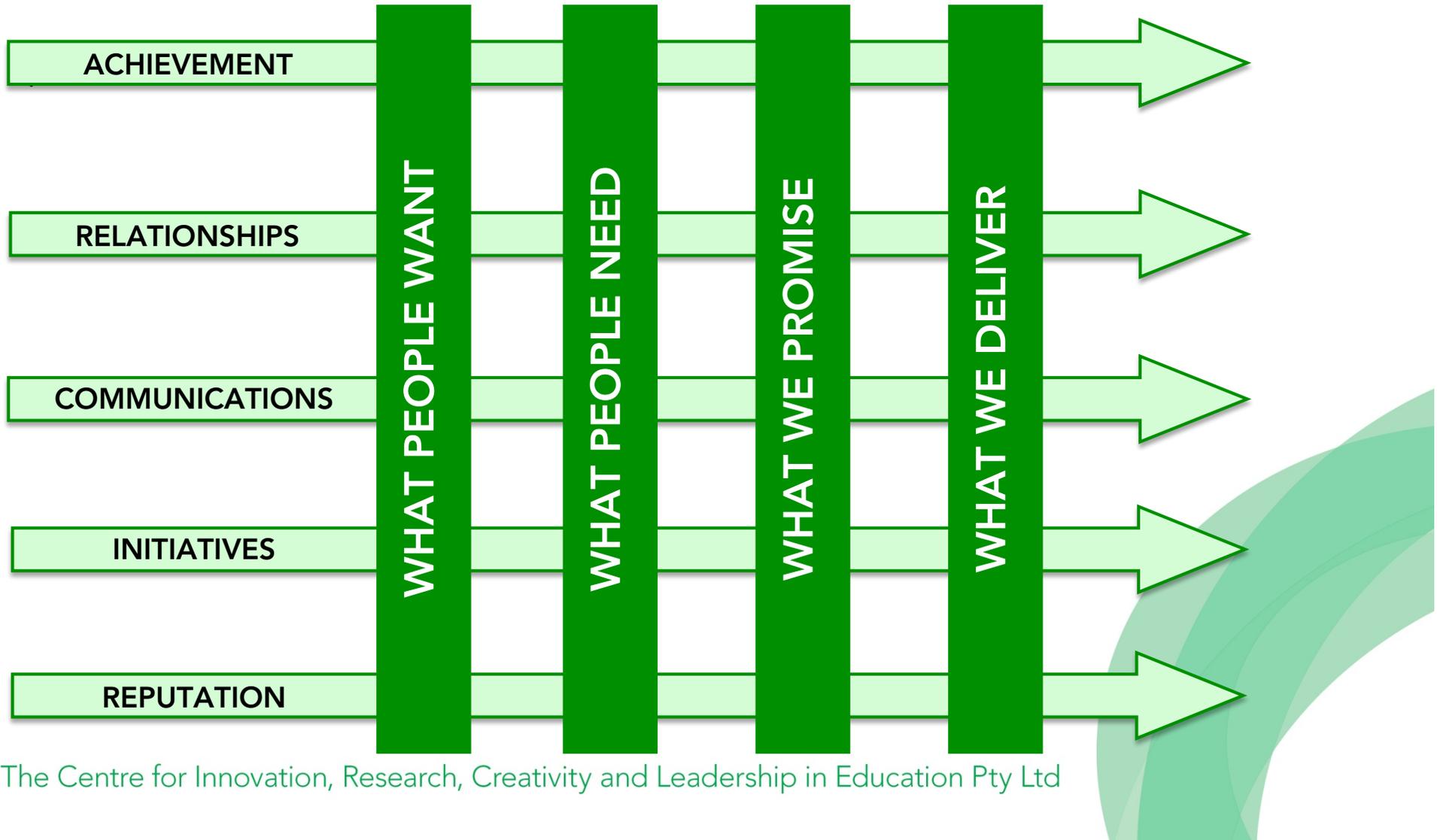
CASE STUDY: DISTINCTIVE CULTURE IN A SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

School 2:

- **Assumptions:** Our school culture is well known in our area and we have almost completed our strategic transition to a more contemporary culture that blends 21C thinking with a well-established tradition of special character and programs.
- **Intervention:** Cultural Audit with a focus on special character and its implementation.
- **Conclusion:** Our school's character and culture have been passed on by word of mouth. Tensions exist within the staff body (especially alumnae staff) as to how best to conserve and curate tradition and renewal. A strong focus on articulation of culture and ongoing reflection and evaluation will support strategic implementation and develop staff more effectively. **(Communication and Relationships)**

THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT



THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

A PROCESS OF 5 Ds

- **Discover:** What do we know about our performance and culture?
- **Diagnose:** What key patterns and trends can we observe from the data?
- **Decide:** What should we do?
- **Direct:** What strategies can we use to do this well?
- **Deploy:** How are we going to get there?



THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

THE CULTURAL AUDIT

- **Discovery:** quantitative and qualitative surveys of the community linked to a framework for education
- **Culture Capture:** focus groups honing in on the character, aspirations and working of culture
- **Framing + Focusing:** focus groups and workshops that develop suggestions for cultural trajectories

THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

DISCOVERY – FIVE SIMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS ABOUT PERFORMANCE

- Achievement: *Do we achieve good results?*
- Relationships in our community: *Do we have good relationships?*
- Communication: *Do we communicate well?*
- School initiatives: *Do we plan for, conduct and evaluate initiatives well*
- The school's reputation: *Do we have a good reputation?*

THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

DISCOVERY – FIVE MORE SIMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS ABOUT PERFORMANCE

- **Outcomes:** Do we achieve what we set out to achieve with our performance?
- **Processes:** Do we use the best teaching and learning, research and development, information recording and tracking, evaluation and decision-making, and resourcing and other business processes in our operations?
- **Ethos:** Do we enhance our school's ethos and values?
- **Community Engagement:** Do we engage with and satisfy our community's expectations?
- **Strategic Intent:** Are we aligned with and contributing to our strategic intent?

THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

CULTURE CAPTURE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- What characterises us?
- What do we want to become?
- What's the best way to get there?
- What works for us?
- What doesn't work for us?
- How will we know when we get there



THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

FRAMING + FOCUSING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

For each key concept identified so far in a Cultural Audit:

- How do we connect to this concept?
- How might we nurture this concept?
- What challenges do we face in connecting to this concept?
- What might we do differently in relation to this concept?

THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

FRAMING + FOCUSING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

For reviewing and reflecting on a program or initiative as part of a Cultural Audit:

- What were we trying to do?
- What have we done?
- How well have we done it?
- What have we learned?
- What's next?
- How are we going to do this?

THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

FRAMING + FOCUSING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

For thinking about teacher leadership as part of a Cultural Audit:

- **Leadership:** what do you do?
- **Outcomes:** what do you want students to do?
- **Resources:** what do you need to do it?
- **Assessment and Reporting:** how do you assess and report on your activity?

THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

FRAMING + FOCUSING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

For thinking about instructional leadership as part of a Cultural Audit:

- **Ask:** how do you ask people to do what they do?
- **Support:** how do you support people to do it?
- **Know:** how do you know what people are doing?

THE CULTURE OF A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

IMPLEMENTING A CULTURAL AUDIT

When we are conducting a Cultural Audit, we:

- **Honour the process:** Ask the same questions every time and build them in to the processes
- **Keep it simple:** Complicated dashboards work for a handful of us; just about anyone in your school can understand a simple matrix that is used again and again
- **Use a framework to build alignment:** Linking everything to a common framework that provides the alignment we need

Your questions

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3. Leading a great school for girls – how do you know?



CASE STUDY: TRANSMITTING CULTURE IN A SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

School 3:

- **Assumptions:** Our school has a unique approach to educating girls and relies heavily on how it encourages and nurtures staff to grow in their capabilities and leadership. We have embedded this culture deeply among the staff over decades of practice.
- **Intervention:** Cultural Audit with a focus on key programs and strategic intent.
- **Conclusion:** Our school's methodologies are implemented inconsistently by staff who have a solid understanding of the intended culture with a variable capacity to implement this culture to an excellent standard and data systems that rely on conversation. The school will design and implement a tertiary accredited professional learning program to support staff learning, supported by increased use of deliberate, targeted and intentional data collection and analysis. **(Initiatives)**

THE SCHOOL LEADER'S EXPERTISE IN DATA

Leaders must be **experts in the evaluation of data**; the data that has been assembled across research worldwide indicates that activators are more successful than facilitators.

John Hattie, *Visible Learning*, 2009

Systems 1 Thinking (fast, intuitive, often unconscious, relying on past association of ideas) complements Systems 2 Thinking (slow, conscious, reasoning, full of effort and ultimately often lazy) – Systems 1 Thinking is the hero.

Daniel Kahnemann, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, 2012

11% of decisions made by marketing professionals are based on data; 16% of decisions are made based on too much data.

Harvard Business Review, September 2012

FROM CIRCLE'S EXPERIENCE ... EVIDENCE-BASED LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

1. **Mission alignment:** Understand your purpose and concentrate your activity on this goal; don't spread your resources too widely.
2. **Open inquiry:** Ask good questions; don't expect a particular outcome.
3. **Dynamic explication and experimentation:** Define your processes, test and iterate; don't lock things down too soon.
4. **Wise measurement:** Use grand school averages and value-added models; avoid benchmarks where possible.
5. **Contextualised interpretation:** Analyse data by finding patterns that tell the real story; don't let data speak for itself.
6. **Balanced judgment:** Temper data with intuition.
7. **Collaborative improvement:** Use the findings to help engage all members of the community to construct better outcomes for more learners.



THE SCHOOL LEADER'S LEARNING JOURNEY

A process of **becoming better instructional leaders** through the right processes for development of our capacity, that is, initial training, induction and continuing professional development, including mentoring and cluster professional development support structures.

– Philip SA Cummins,
*Autonomous schools in Australia:
Not 'if' but 'how', CSE, February 2012*



Can you describe three ways that you collect and use data in your decision-making?

Can you identify three more ways that you could be doing it?



Your questions

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BECOMING A GREAT SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

TODAY'S CONVERSATION

Becoming a great school for girls

One thing:

- You know more about
- You feel more confident about
- You might use at your school tomorrow
- You might think about carefully for a long time before using at your school



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