

The Power of Partnerships  
Moving to maturity  
Achieving the extraordinary

Monday September 3<sup>rd</sup>

CEP



# Our conversation today

- Envisioning new partnership based education systems and what this means for us at local level
- Exploring the features of mature partnerships
- Assessing our level of maturity and our impact to date
- Exploring a range of strategies to deepen our partnerships and enable sustainability and impact
- Exploring how we 'turn the curve' on what really matters to us as a partnership

# Who are we and what do we bring

Why am I here?

What do I want to learn?

What can I offer to the group?

# An enquiry based approach to our work today

- Learning with, from and behalf of each other
- Exchange of practice
- Shared problem solving
- Use of evidence
- Curiosity
- Open to learning

# A Powerful Question...

- Is thought-provoking and invites reflection and finding deeper meaning
- Expands possibilities or focuses attention
- Brings underlying assumptions to light
- Stimulates curiosity and creativity
- Can help a group move forward

Less Powerful Questions

More Powerful Questions



Yes/no

Which

Who

When

Where

What

How

Why

What If

*Like inquisitive scientists, the best corporate leaders we've researched remain students of their work, relentlessly asking questions – why, why, why? – and have an incurable compulsion to vacuum the brains of people they meet.*

*Jim Collins*

*Good to Great*



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# Our current system

Increased complexity

Increased accountability

Increased autonomy

Increased commitment to equity and social justice

Increased focus on leader and teacher agency and professional development

Increased need for great teachers and leaders



# Stuck in a system .....

What's going wrong?

Imposed and external accountability – failure to motivate / competition between schools

Individualistic and ad hoc policies – lack of understanding of 'place and context', little coherence

Limited use of technology – superficial solutions, limited innovation, knowledge stuck in pockets

Fullan; 'The wrong drivers in education reform'

*Partnerships are a means to an end  
They are only worth engaging in if they  
strengthen the collective efficacy of all within  
the community to make a difference to the well  
being and learning and outcomes of all students  
within an area*

Fullan and Munby  
Inside out and upside down

# Meaning .....

This requires 'new work' on a scale hitherto not seen.

- identifying and sharing specific instructional practices that enhance, enrich and impact learning for all in the partnership
- protocols for sharing data that provide the basis for conversations about improvement demonstrate evidence of impact on outcomes
- consensus that teachers, school leaders and schools collaborate with others on what, when and how to teach
- Partnerships seek expertise and share it, wherever it can be found inside or outside the schools involved in the partnership

# So let's imagine .....

A system that had a strong school and community led middle tier

A system where the 'pull' of the collective is far greater than the 'pull' of the individual institution

# Lets Imagine ....

Lay the ' Lets imagine' cards face down on the table

Pick them up one at a time

What thoughts and insight does each card stimulate?

It's already happening .....

So what really keeps us stuck on 'one school' mentality?

# But are partnerships always the answer ..... ??

‘ Be careful that networks and partnerships do not become the next ‘ silver bullet. This is highly focused and precise work’

John Hattie EDT, CEP, Fullan Global Dialogue 2016

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# Focused and precise work

## The DNA of self improving and learning communities



# Strengthen relationships

Appreciative enquiry

Asset based approach

Community conversations

Every opportunity to find learning spaces and places

Reduce isolation – at all levels and everywhere

Sharing our practice

# Focus on learning

The opportunity to work alongside outstanding teachers and leaders within own school and in other schools

Building a co coaching culture within and between schools

Agreeing an annual professional learning focus for the cluster

Progressive 'staff meetings' in each others schools over the course of the year

Knowing where your best bits 'best bits' are and maximising their influence within and between schools

Forward planning to allow for peer review / joint action research / joint professional learning

Personal learning goals – shared and explicit

An enriched and extended curriculum for all children and young people

An explicit promise to staff, students, families and communities as a result of their engagement in the 'partnership'

## Sharing our practice

# Be determined - impact and accountability

Peer review as a vehicle to improve practice and shift culture to one of shared accountability for outcomes

One / two priorities and no more – made visible and reported on

Our collective promise to our children ‘Guarantees’  
Shared responsibility for outcomes

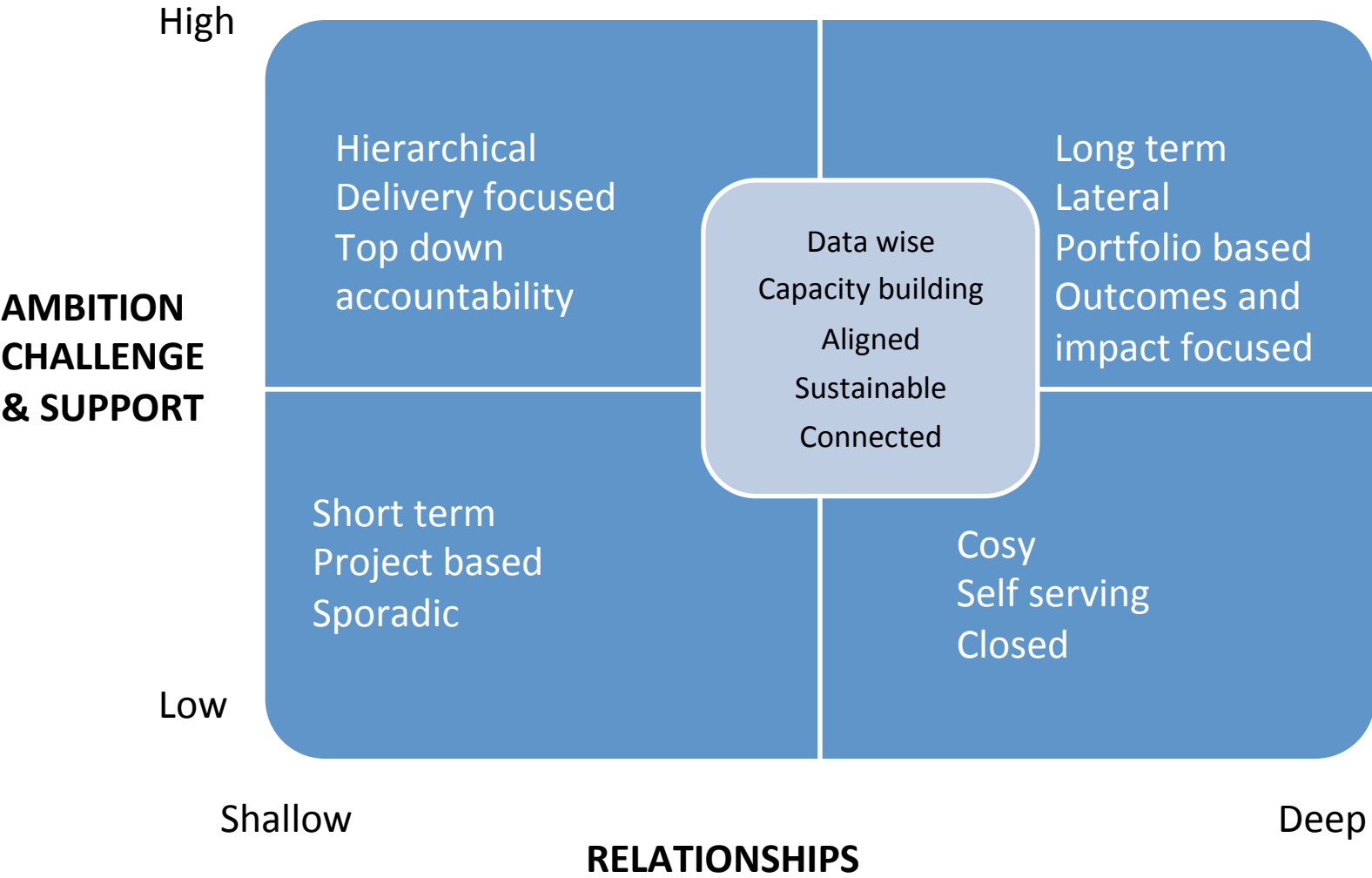
Use of data and evidence

Sharing our practice

So how what does this mean for the continuous journey to maturity, effectiveness and impact?

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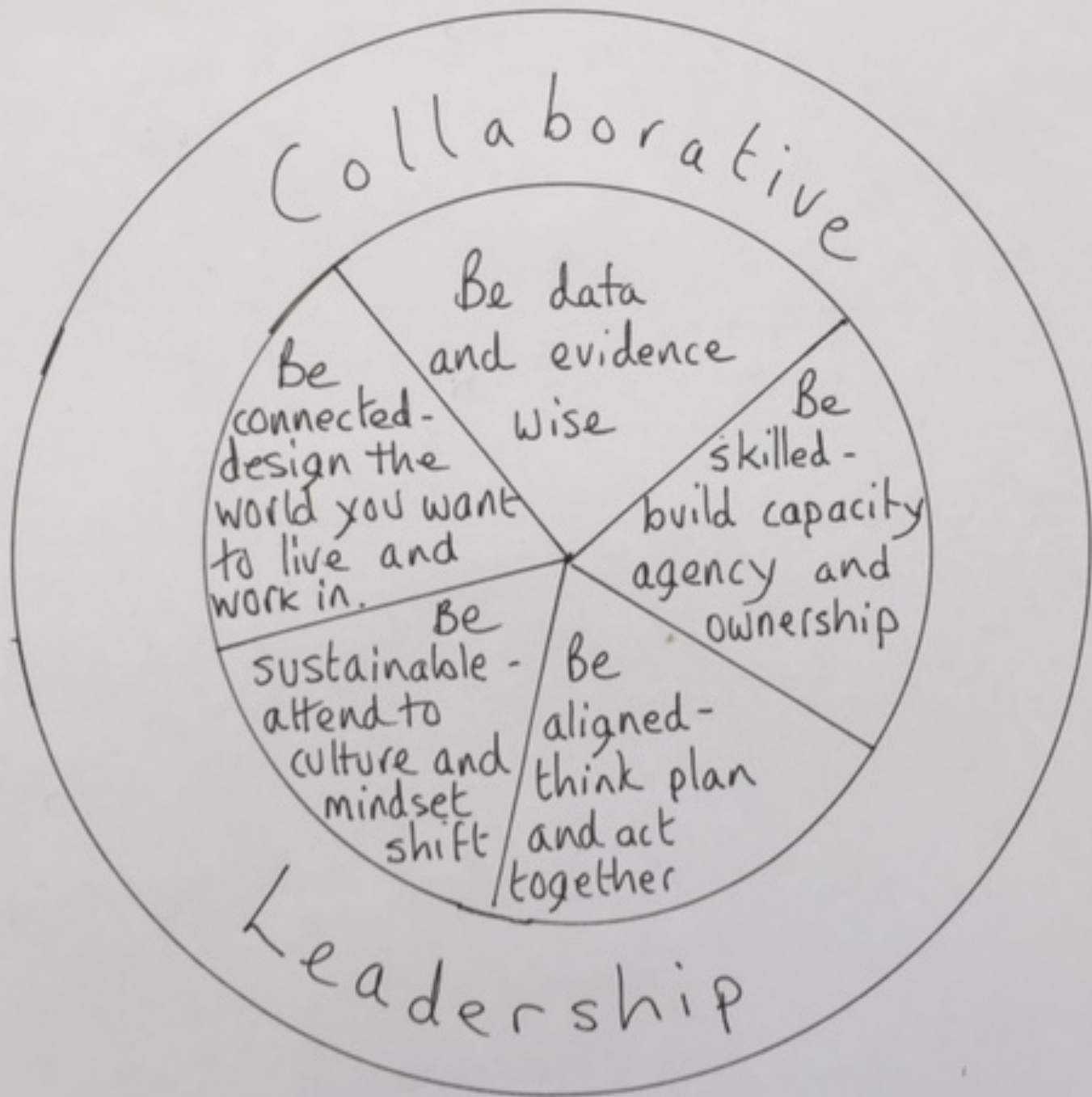
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# Work in progress from England

Toward maturity

5 insights



# Be data and evidence wise

Build the skills of enquiry

Use all forms of intelligence including data to feed the enquiry

Stay in exploration mode longer than feels comfortable – avoid jumping to quick fix. Get underneath the intelligence to mine for deep understanding

Agree which data matters to you as a partnership – obsess about it

Give both big and small data equal validity

Source: Education Development Trust

# Be skilled and be responsible – build capacity, agency and ownership

Build communities of expertise and learning strengthening connections between all members of the partnership

Invest in collective conversations about what needs to improve, why and how

Engage the children and young people – who is the partnership for?

Strengthen the experience of agency ( opportunity, skill and will ) at all levels

Heads coffee club or deep engagement?

Source: Education Development Trust



# Be aligned – think, plan and act together

Be 100% clear on purpose – why do we exist?;  
Commit to a common set of priorities ( 2 / 3 ) agreed by all, priorities focused on areas of improvement that no school could ever hope to achieve alone - make these the basis of peer review, targeted and equity based support and professional learning;  
Track and share impact and learning

Source: Education Development Trust

# Be sustainable – attend to culture and mindset shift

Be clear on ‘ what we hold in common’ and make sure it has the biggest impact on the greatest number of children

Invest in strategies that build relationships and therefore trust

Use approaches that allow you to stay ‘open to learning’ and be attentive to complacency or self protection

Attend to and acknowledge the competition – collaboration dynamic in a way that strengthens the partnership

Source: Education Development Trust

# Be connected – design the world you want to live and work in

Address personal and organisational isolation, for everyone everywhere

Resist greater system fragmentation

Strengthen local area based approaches

Grow the next generation of leaders and teachers who think and act collaboratively first

Source: Education Development Trust

# Group exploration of the 5 insights

Go to a table hosting an ‘insight discussion’ that you want to be part of

Stay there for the whole session or move around – do whatever will be of most value to you and your partnership



# We will turn the curve

What's the one tough issue, shared by every school, that can only be addressed by the partnership making it their focus

Use data – what curve needs turning ( less of / more of)

Agree up to 3 ' essentials' in how you will address this taking into account the features of mature partnerships and the 5 insights

# And finally – back to our ‘let’s imagine conversations’ To shift the system .....

## **Act like an organisation**

Plan – implement – review

Prioritise – focus

Hold to account

Build capability and grow leaders

## **Think like a movement**

Attend to process – the why and the how before the ‘what’

Vision and purpose – build and sustain engagement

Agency – ownership – voice

Celebrate, affirm, dream

# Taking stock Today

A discovery

A disturbance

A delight

and so what .....

Your commitment

who you can help

who you need help from

‘Change happens when good people getting together to do something bigger than themselves that they all care about’

Margaret Wheatley