

Navigating the Principalship: Powerful Strategies for School Success



Corwin Press Webinar Based on

The Principal's Companion

April 24, 2014

Pam Robbins

probbins@shentel.net

Harvey B. Alvy

halvy@ewu.edu

1

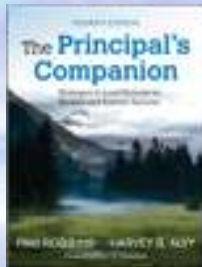
Principal as Lifelong Learner

“There is no setting in which the concept of the lifelong learner is more important than a school.”

(The Principal's Companion, 2014, p. 3)

2

Key Questions Addressed by *The Principal's Companion:*



What is effective school leadership?

How can I become a more effective leader to impact student learning and teacher growth?

How can I help others become more effective leaders?

3

**“Real leadership is what you
leave behind.”**

Allen Haymon

4

Agenda

Welcome, Introductions, Key Questions, Agenda

Strategic Leadership & *The Principal's Companion*

Powerful Tools to Support Strategic Leadership

- Leader as Learner
- Vision and Mission
- Culture
- Expanding Roles of the Principal
- Leadership and Management
- The Moral Imperative: Social Justice
- Teacher Supervision and Evaluation
- Curriculum and the Future: Vital Questions

Reflections and Personal Next Steps

5

What is Strategic Leadership?

Strategic leadership is a results-oriented strategy defined by student and teacher success. It is visionary and context driven, balancing **long-term ideals with short-term practicality**. The strategic leader takes actions that are driven by the organizational vision of success.



(Inspired by Mark Neeley's essay,
"Lincoln and the Constitution")

6

Powerful Tools to Support Strategic Leadership



7

A Key to Success: Leader as Learner

The leader as learner—a habit of mind. The leader-as-learner mind-set is essential to a principal's success. The leader who is willing to learn has an excellent chance to succeed. Thus, when principals ask questions and solicit ideas, they are not revealing a weakness or ignorance but a strength, the desire to learn.

(Adapted from *The Principal's Companion*, Robbins and Alvy, 2014)

8

Reflecting on Vision and Mission

“Despite the difficulty of coming to consensus on how to measure successful leadership, there is almost universal agreement that ‘success in carrying out the mission and vision of an endeavor—a cause—should be a primary gauge of leadership success.’” (Alvy and Robbins, 2010, p. 7)

(The Principal's Companion, p. 111)

9

Reflecting on Vision

- **Personal Leadership Vision**
 - Encapsulates a leader's core values and beliefs
 - Generates an awareness that informs thoughts, feelings, words, and leadership actions
 - Clarifies a leader's expectations of self and others to foster staff and student learning
- **Shared Vision**
 - Generates ownership and commitment
 - A purpose witnessed in the daily activities of the school

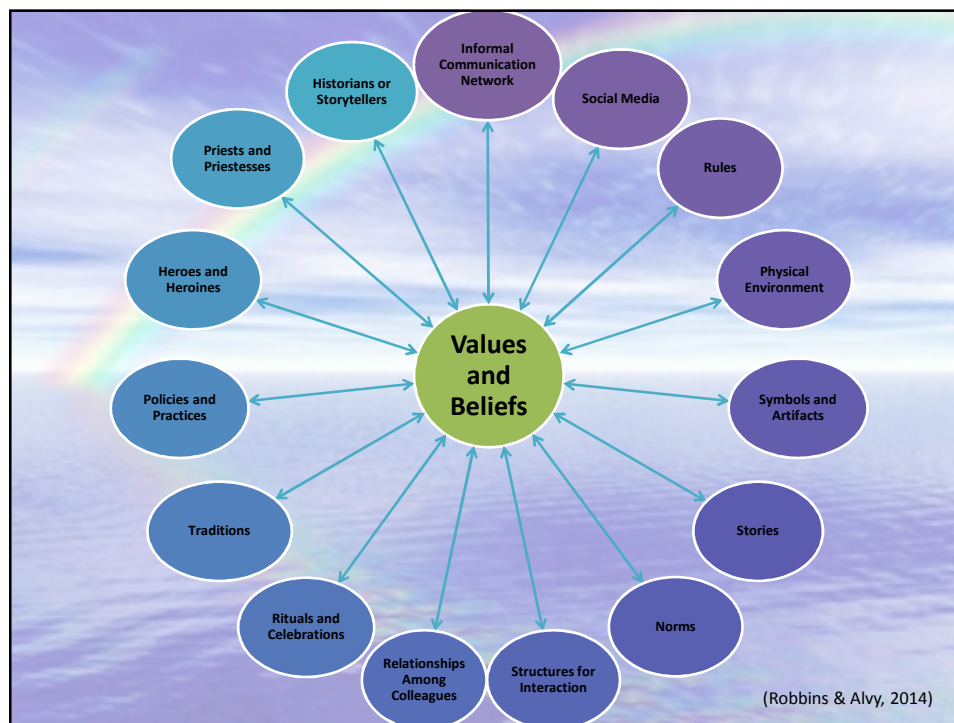
10

Pondering Vision

- Will my leadership vision transcend time?
- How will the vision and mission make the life and future of every child more promising?
- Who are significant players—formal and informal leaders—who might leverage the impact of a shared school vision?
- What leadership qualities or attributes do I possess that will galvanize staff energies in working to create a shared vision and mission and bring it to life?

(Robbins & Alvy, *The Principal's Companion* 4th edition, 2014, p. 112)

11



The Expanding Role of the Principal



13

From Your Perspective...

What are the types of roles that school leaders are asked to play?



14

Today principals are expected to:

- advocate for all students, advantaged and disadvantaged
- facilitate the use of data-based decision making
- support small nested and school-wide PLCs
- lead the effort to implement the CCSS and instructional frameworks
- recognize that workplace factors influence whether a teacher remains committed to a particular school
- seize the advantages of communicating through advanced social networking and personal interaction
- recognize that instructional leadership depends on management skills and managing resources

15

Leadership and management go hand-in-hand: To facilitate learning...the instructional leader makes sure the lights are working!



16

The Moral Imperative: Social Justice

“**Alone**, the principal often wonders, ‘Am I doing the right thing? Have I demonstrated a commitment to the success of each teacher and student? Have I taken a moral stand to represent the voiceless?’”

(The Principal's Companion, 2014, p. xiii)

17

Successful school leaders possess a strong sense of responsibility and **moral commitment** to a shared **mission and vision** aligned with deeply held **core values** that focus on

- Equity
- Social Justice issues related to: racism, elitism, poverty, various gaps, graduation rates, abuse, bullying, and giving voice to the voiceless
- Democracy and Equality—“all are created equal”
- Creating those conditions under which profound levels of human learning can flourish

18



**“What you pay attention to and
spend time on communicates
what you value.”**

Dr. Kent D. Peterson

19



Successfully Navigating the Teacher Evaluation Frameworks

- **Embrace the Template**
- **Clarity is Helpful**
- **Collaboration and Process Build Trust—and it Takes Time**
- **The Goal is Continuous Growth**
- **Going Beyond the Frameworks**
- **But...Stick to the Essentials**
- **Mastering the Framework is Not the Destination**

20

Seeing the Big Picture with Instructional Frameworks

Mastering the Framework Is Not the Destination—It Is Teacher and Student Success.

We create narratives. A school principal concentrating on understanding and applying an instructional framework can easily get lost in details and forget to look up and see the big picture—embracing and celebrating what teachers do to ensure student success....**We should never confuse a person's worth with a piece of paper.** The much bigger prize is what teachers do to ensure student success.

(Adapted from *The Principal's Companion*, Robbins & Alvy, 2014 p. 139)

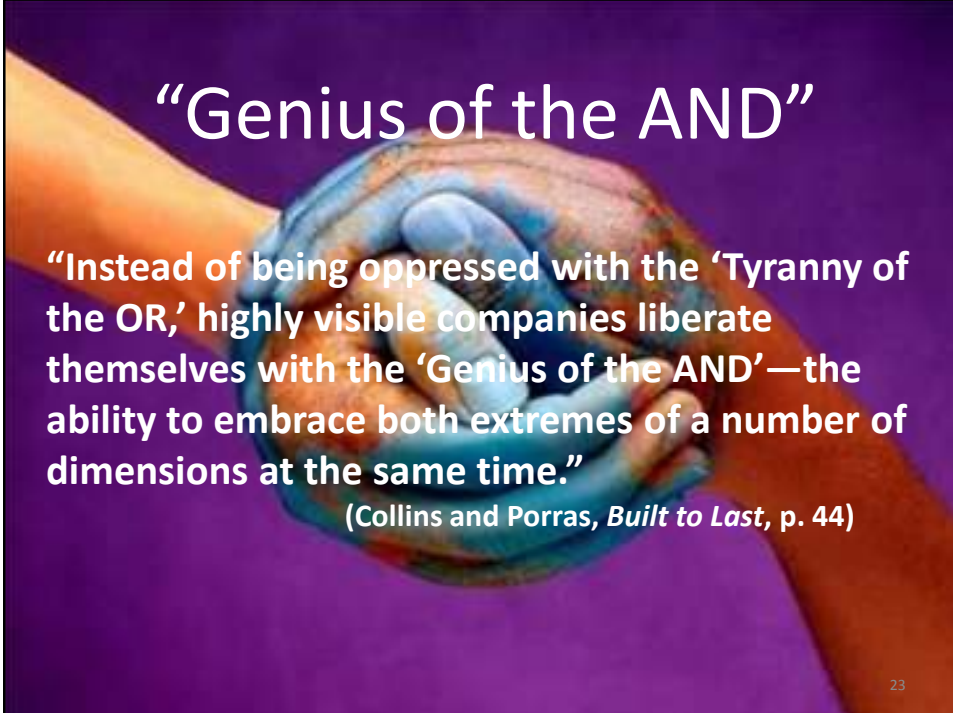
21

Can an instructional framework “measure” how teachers inspire students to pursue careers as artists, engineers, architects, business entrepreneurs, doctors, teachers, social workers, and inventors?

Can we “measure” how teachers inspire students to visit museums and art galleries throughout their lives?

Great teachers help their students pursue happiness and a life of purpose—a life devoted to social justice and improving our communities and the world. How can we “measure” this aspect of a teacher's life?

22

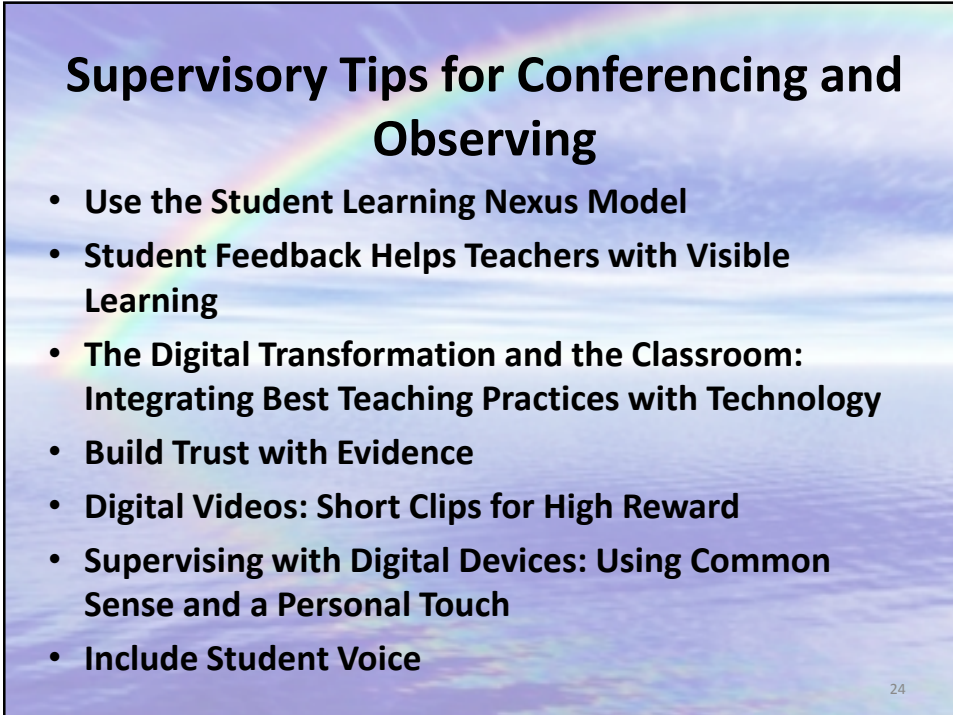


“Genius of the AND”

“Instead of being oppressed with the ‘Tyranny of the OR,’ highly visible companies liberate themselves with the ‘Genius of the AND’—the ability to embrace both extremes of a number of dimensions at the same time.”

(Collins and Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 44)

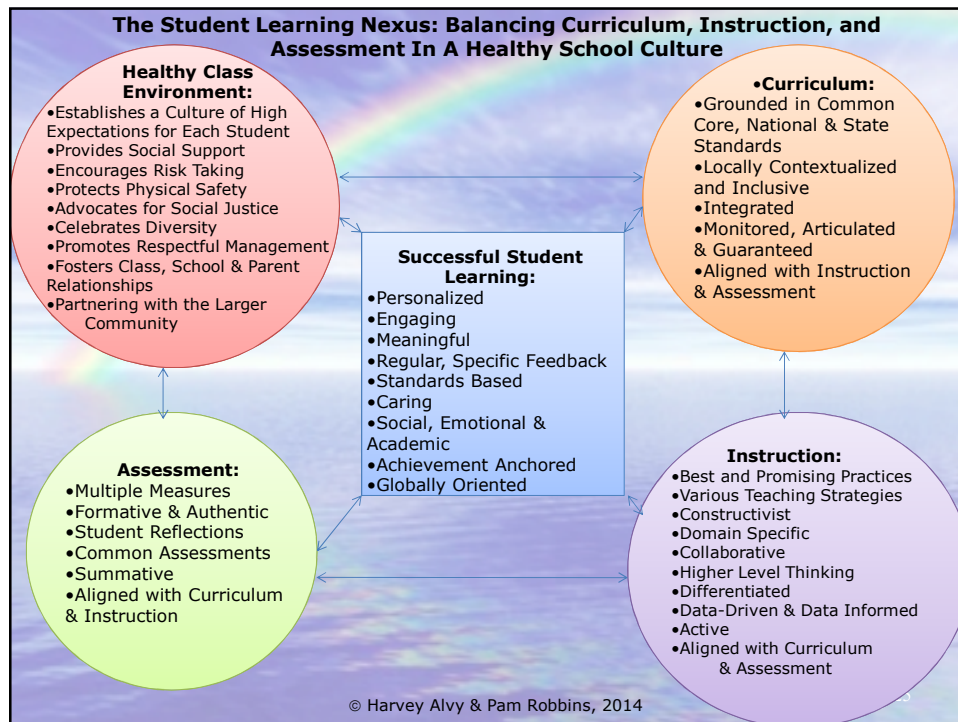
23



Supervisory Tips for Conferencing and Observing

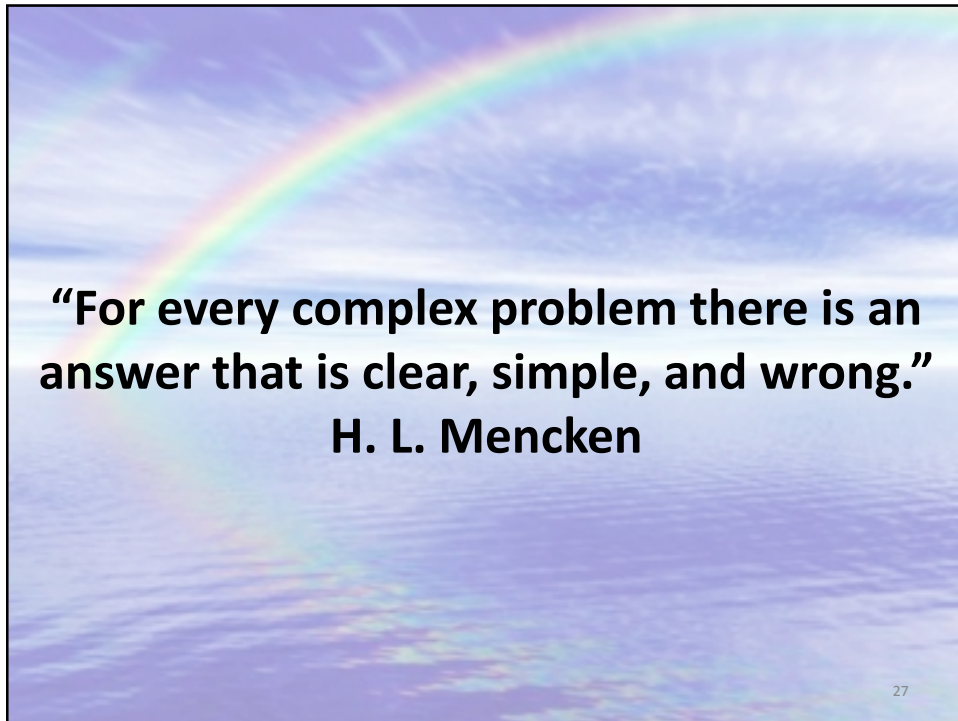
- Use the Student Learning Nexus Model
- Student Feedback Helps Teachers with Visible Learning
- The Digital Transformation and the Classroom: Integrating Best Teaching Practices with Technology
- Build Trust with Evidence
- Digital Videos: Short Clips for High Reward
- Supervising with Digital Devices: Using Common Sense and a Personal Touch
- Include Student Voice

24



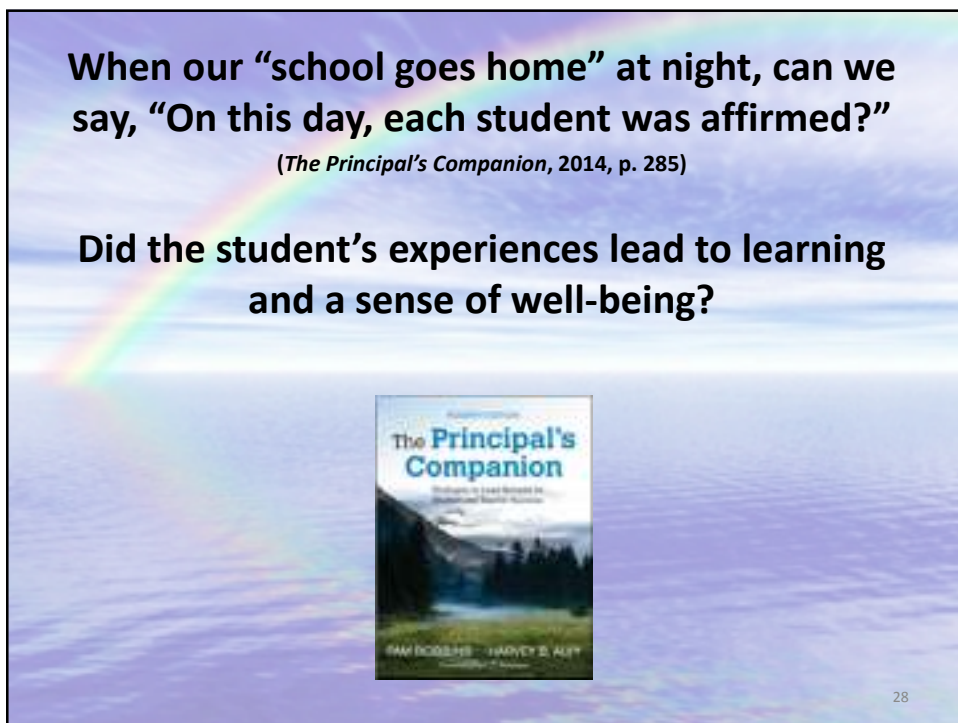
Curriculum and the Future: Vital Questions

1. Will we commit to writing curriculum (scope and sequence) aligned to the CCSS and will we provide the professional development that teachers need to implement the new standards?
2. Are we committed to ensuring that students without privilege have the same access to superior curriculum, teachers, and resources as privileged students?
3. What will be the status of subjects that are not part of the high stakes testing related to the CCSS?
4. Can we commit to both rich content and 21st century skills?
5. Do we have the courage to practice “less is more”?
6. Where is the digital transformation taking us?
7. Can we say “No” to the next big thing?
8. Will “teaching to the test” become the dominant factor as we move forward with the CCSS?
9. Will our concern with curriculum content diminish the importance of personalization and making connections with students?



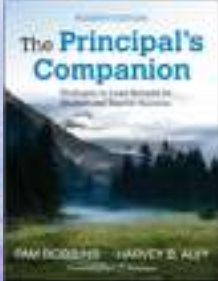
“For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong.”
H. L. Mencken

27



When our “school goes home” at night, can we say, “On this day, each student was affirmed?”
(The Principal's Companion, 2014, p. 285)

Did the student’s experiences lead to learning and a sense of well-being?



28