The Transformative Leader's Roadmap to Facilitating School Excellence and Progress Up the Growth Pathway
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Book Outline
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https://web.calstatela.edu/faculty/jshindl/cm/TransformativeLeaderBook.htm
(or Google "transformative leaders roadmap")

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Roadmap and the School Improvement Pathway

This book is your guide to becoming a transformative leader and supporting your school's process of growth. Within every school building lies the potential to be a high performing vision-driven school – transformative school. What is commonly missing is a roadmap for actualizing that potential. In this book, we offer a clear, research-based roadmap for how to understand the process of school change, and a practical methodology for moving your school up to higher levels on the roadmap. The benefits of that growth include improved performance, but also assume higher levels of function and climate quality, as well as a school that embodies a greater sense of ease, sanity and satisfaction.

Why Do We Need a Roadmap?
First, to initiate improvement, we to have a conceptual and operational understanding of where we are currently. Without that knowledge we lack the able to appreciate and define our current situation clearly. Second, we need a roadmap to know where we are going. Where are we heading, and what do we mean when we refer to concepts like "better" or "improved" or "higher performing?" If we cannot define what we are about, or where we are going in tangible terms that can be shared and understood by everyone, it will limit our ability to cultivate the qualities of *vision* and *trust* – which are essential factors to our growth.

The school effectiveness roadmap laid out in the first portion of this book will help illuminate the inner workings of schools and school change. Most readers will find that being able to explore the anatomy of their school will be empowering in and of itself. The following chapters will explain the practical steps required to move from where one is, to the next level. For some readers that may imply a starting point at a lower location on the roadmap and the need to build a foundation of function and plant the seeds for future growth. For other readers they may find the roadmap helpful in supporting their process of going from "good" to "great" and breaking through to the next level. No matter where your starting point, the roadmap will be a useful aid in clarifying how to ascend to the next stage of growth along your journey.

A Brief History of Our Work at ASSC and the Origins of the Effectiveness Roadmap
Over the course of the past 20 years my colleagues and I have explored what makes schools effective. We began our journey by asking a basic question – "what is the most essential phenomenon within a school?" What we concluded was that the X factor was the school's climate – that basic quality that defines each school and the totality of that which happens within it. We began our efforts as the Alliance for the Study of School Climate (ASSC) with the goal of understanding schools and helping educators. We then created the School Climate Assessment Instrument (SCAI) and began to assess climate at schools using this very broad and inclusive eight- dimension survey. Our goal was to provide a mirror for schools so that they could better understand how they were performing in the area of school climate. We were successful and content with this as our function, but soon we found that the SCAI also predicted student achievement (and other outcomes) almost perfectly – i.e., a 0.7 correlation (explained in more detail in chapter 2). While at the time most school leaders were still viewing social-emotional climate and academic achievement as separate, even competing consideration, what our research was saying was that they both had the same root – that basic X factor. Near the same time, we had developed a classroom teacher style matrix, that we used in our teacher and administrator credential classes and in our school consulting to help make sense of the different intentions and practices within classrooms. What we realized was that the matrix provided an ideal topography for how the climate and achievement data could be mapped and understood. When we combined the two, the essence of the school effectiveness roadmap was born. Over

the past decade or so we have made revisions and validated it with data and experience. And we have been able to see how powerful it can be as a means of prediction as well as explanation. We have presented it all over the country, to various groups of educators and the reaction has been the same – "yes, that's it!" In addition, we have been engaged with hundreds of schools in their improvement processes, and have sought out transformative leaders, and studied what they did. What we have found is that the process for moving up varies somewhat from one situation to another, but the basic principles for affecting positive change will be similar. Those common principles can be explained and operationalized into the practical action that best activate a school's potential. For some the roadmap model may require a paradigm shift to appreciate, while for others it will connect with their vision and values immediately. But in either case, what we hear is that one's appreciation of the roadmap as valid and useful grows with emersion and use over time.

The Big Picture – The Pathway

What is occurring in most schools can be depicted on a narrow pathway of phenomenon. And every point on this pathway implies a whole series of predictable characteristics.

Figure 1.1 depicts the broadest characterization of the school effectiveness roadmap. The more productive, effective and desirable locations on the roadmap are defined by higher levels of personal and collective function and empowerment. The vertical axis represents a continuum of function and intention. Moving up on this axis will imply creating more capacity, coherence, intention and efficiency. The horizontal axis reflects a contrast between empowerment, connection and trust versus control, competition and fear. Movement up typically implies a great deal of intention, effort and the building of effective structures. Moving over to the highest levels on the roadmap most often implies a shift in the mindset guiding the school's vision. We call that "making the left-hand turn." And without it, the function and performance levels of a school will be limited.

Using the Roadmap and the Book – The Journey is the Destination
Throughout the book as well as your process of school improvement it will be useful to keep in mind that both the nature of the more desirable locations on the roadmap and what it takes to progress there will be inter-related. When your school ultimately demonstrates the values and practices defined by higher levels of vision, trust and empowerment you will find yourself experiencing all the benefits and outcomes that correspond to those higher locations along the pathway. Concurrently, what it will require for that movement to have occurred will be those same qualities. We teach and lead who we are. And who we are will manifest ultimately as our performance level. So, in a very real sense the nature of the journey is the experience of the destination and vice versa.

While the school effectiveness roadmap is somewhat complex – it will take us the first five chapters to fully build – when entirely represented it provides a rather complete macro theoretical foundation as well as an applied tool-box for unpacking the countless micro practical implications required for leading your school in the process of meeting its full potential.

Moving Up the Pathway
As we will discuss throughout the book, within the overall roadmap, there is a typical theoretical *pathway* of phenomenon onto which most schools can be found. We do occasionally find schools operating off that common pathway, but for reasons that will be explored in more detail, most schools exist and/or move in the predictable pattern. And yes, it is true that each school along with its teachers and leaders exists within a physical and socio-cultural context that presents limits and challenges, however the capacity for substantive growth up the pathway exist within every school.

When we look at schools in general we find that there are countless ways to stay about the same and/or perform at an acceptable level, yet only a very narrow path to actualizing meaningful growth and improvement (that includes few if any short-cuts, or quick fixes). This is true for individuals, teams, companies, and schools. The process will be similar for all organisms. When we look at any collective entity closely, we see that groups at different points along the pathway are not only doing very different things, but they are trying to do very different things. One's location on the roadmap will be defined by three inter-related variable 1) what we value, think and feel, which we will call references, 2) what we do – our practices and actions, and what occurs as a result of what we do, which we will call our outcomes.

We have collected data from hundreds of schools over the past few years and interviewed dozens of highly effective school leaders. What we have discovered is that where the school is located geographically tells us much less about it than where it is located on the effectiveness roadmap. The reason is that the location of the values, practices and outcomes at any school will tend to be at the same location on the school effectiveness roadmap. Therefore, given the knowledge of either the common references/values, the common practices or the common outcomes, the roadmap will be able to accurately predict the qualities or rating or the other two factors. Certain climates produce certain achievement levels, and certain practices produce certain kinds of climates. And most telling of all will be the references/values that inform the practice. So, moving up the pathway to higher levels on the roadmap implies consideration for each of these three factors, and addressing each of them within the growth process.

> *"The means are implied in the ends"* **Gandhi**

Reflection 1.A.: Recall the last effort that you were able to observe closely that was referred to as a program implementation. What happened to the program goals in the long-term? What forces limited the program's effectiveness? Did staff buy in? Why or why not?
NOTE: This is the first of many reflections that will be included in the chapters to encourage reflection on specific topics corresponding the text.

The starting point on our journey to becoming more effective is to recognize that *everything is connected*. "Everything" at the school includes all the actions, methods, practices as well as all the thoughts, intentions, emotions, climate and culture. Denial of this fact is responsible for a vast amount of wasted time, money and effort, and why most school improvement efforts fail

(Kotter, 1995, Fullan, 1993)). Often we hear leaders lament that "we need to do something at this school to . . . " This seemingly proactive and well-intentioned sentiment is commendable. But it is useful to recognize that we *are* doing something at the school all day every day. While, sometimes it is useful to add a strategy or program into the mix to promote a positive outcome, no strategy can fix a fundamentally problematic context by itself. And more often than not what we tend to find is that adding a series of add-ons into a school or classroom results in rather mediocre results overall. If the values/references within the context do not support the new practice it *will* be rejected or dissipate eventually. And if we survey teachers and leaders in high and low climate and/or performance schools, we find that they both work very hard all day, the difference is whether our effort feels like it is moving us forward and making a difference or just coping and treading water.

1.2 Axioms for School Improvement

1. Everything is connected, everything is consequential
2. We cannot solve problems at the same level of consciousness with which they were created. Form follows consciousness.
3. Where we place attention will grow.
4. We lead who are and we teach who we are.
5. The only person that we can control is ourselves.
6. If we (individually or collectively) do not believe it in our hearts, we do not truly believe it.
7. Actions predict Outcomes
8. Values predict Actions, so Values predict outcomes
9. Overall school performance will be a direct reflection of the typical practices being used on any given day at the school.
10. School improvement is possible only when both vision and trust exist.
11. Addressing symptoms (outcomes) will keep us stuck in our roadmap location. But solving real problems (values and actions) will encourage our growth upward.

When we examine what creates true improvement, higher levels of function and high-quality outcomes, success is dependent on a series of complex but rather explainable factors such as vision, trust, function, climate, and quality. These concepts can appear abstract and elusive, but in this book, we will operationalize them, and explore how to promote them as practical realities. An especially critical quality indispensable to any effort toward meaningful growth will be that of vision. Too often we attach the vision in an organization to a person. Having leaders who possess visionary qualities will be useful indeed, but the quality of vision can be created within any group. Sustainable vision is an attitude, a set of practices and collectively moving with confidence in a clear direction. Vision is part of the culture of great schools, and something any school can cultivate.

While the definition of school improvement today is dominated by the goal of raising student achievement scores, and how we get there is often defined by a "whatever it takes." mentality, the fact is that how we get there *is* the key to obtaining and sustaining higher levels of achievement. As a result of the external pressures to improve, and the prevalence of heavy-handed external program "implementations," we may associate improvement and change with something unnatural and forced. But the growth process, when approached with a sensitivity to how individuals and groups function, can be rather satisfying and rewarding. And the fact is that creating a healthy, functional and vision-driven school is more likely to improve student achievement scores (as well as real student achievement by any definition) than trying to attack student achievement scores directly, with "programs." The highest locations on the roadmap produce both high student achievement as well as high student achievement scores, but they are also defined by a healthy climate, an emotionally sane and satisfying environment, meaningful learning and critical life lesson learning. There is no compartmentalization or compromise necessary. Every move up the pathway is innately more natural and enjoyable to those within the school. Figure 1.3 outlines some of the markers of successfully movement up the pathway.

Figure 1.3: Frequency of certain phenomenon within schools successfully moving up the pathway

More	Less
Vision within the collective that clarifies our work	Need for telling, selling, bribing and coercing people to get them to perform well.
Integrity of the efforts from leaders, teachers, staff and students in a direction that leads to growth.	Disconnected action from leaders, teachers, staff and students that tends to add up the same old same old.
Internal discovery of high-quality practice as a result of asking the right questions and looking in the right places	Need for administration to externally implement things onto others that are resisted, ignored and/or replaced later.
A clear sense of the long-term and how today fits in.	The feeling that coping and getting along in the short term is all that one can handle in a typical day.
A solid context (school and classroom climate and function levels) that allows for qualities such as creativity, trust and innovation to emerge naturally.	School and classroom environments that perpetually requires so much management and maintenance that creativity and innovation are viewed as luxuries or fantasies.
A pervasive feeling of movement, growth and winning. Something is being built.	A familiar feeling related to the need to solve the same set of problems day in and day out. We are on a treadmill.

Story of School A: moving from a low to a higher location on pathway

School A began their process of growth lacking a guiding vision, experiencing a somewhat negative climate including a poor self-perception, and using a mix of practices that were incoherent at best and ineffective in many cases. After doing a complete school assessment, they recognized the essence of their "real problems" and set out to move from their lower level performance on the effectiveness roadmap to the next level.

The focus was on creating more intention, coherence and capacity. They created a school leadership team to process data, develop plans, and coordinate their PD. They changed their schedule to include a professional development period once a week so teachers could process ideas and plan collaboratively. And they used the idea of a psychology of success and growth mindset to guide their thinking in evaluating and selecting practices.

After two years, school A has seen a significant change in how students and staff perceive the school, and outcome measures such as achievement as steadily improving. Their move up the pathway has been grounded in creating a more functional school and has had the effect of creating optimism among the teachers and staff.

Progression of the Book Content

After building the school effectiveness roadmap in chapters 2-5, in chapter six we examine how to cultivate trust among the leadership, teachers/staff and students within the school and the necessity to emphasize process values over outcome values. While trust is often associated with a feeling, operationally, trust in an organization will also require a clear sense that the ship is heading toward a direction that makes sense, and policies are in place that allow adults and students to feel a sense of confidence in the plan. In chapter seven we explore how we can cultivate a guiding school vision and offer ideas for supporting this quality within the school. As you become more familiar with the roadmap, you will likely find that it functions well to as means of guiding your vision toward your desired growth destination. In chapter eight, we explore how to support and encourage great practices and how to act as an expert instructional leader. While vision is the most essential catalyst, the best indicator of success for any school will be the quality of the instructional practices and the capacity of the school to function as a professional learning community. In chapter nine, we examine strategic planning and how to use data and assessment effectively. We offer a vision-based process for strategic planning and how to use data to recognize and solve real problems rather than symptoms. What our research has shown is that when schools use a reactive logic {response solution <- problem outcome} they tend to stay stuck in the middle of the pathway, but when they use a vision-based logic {vision -> practice -> assessment of efficacy} they are able to elevate their game to the higher levels of the roadmap. In chapter ten we take each of the eight dimensions of climate and examine their interdependence as well as their independent contributions to the overall climate of the school. For each dimension we offer guiding questions to support your school's investigation and processes of reflection. Often the most

> ## *Story of School B: moving from a middle to a high location on pathway*
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> *School B is a successful independent school with an excellent reputation. However, as they examined their SCAI survey results they realized that students felt little voice, power, belonging and pride in the school than they would have liked or expected. As they explored more deeply, they realized that while rigor was expected, the same value was not placed on creating empowerment, connection and other social and emotional values.*
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> *As a result, the leadership team set out a few goals. 1) make the school a more empowering place for students and adults, beginning with making the 1-Style classroom the norm. 2) Ask students what they thought would make the school better and make a better commitment in the future to valuing student voice. 3) Create a "what we do and what we don't do list" to help guide the evaluation and selection of practice. 4) Create the structures in the schedule to provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate, observe on another, and really understand ideas such as the 1-Style classroom, project-based learning, and inquiry.*
>
> *The most immediate result was that the students felt the intended empowerment and that they were listened to and responded with great appreciation that translated into increased motivation, better behavior, and innovative ideas for new clubs and school initiatives. The teachers are moving forward as more of a team, and many teachers are breaking out of their teacher-centered comfort zones. And both leadership and the teachers can see a clear trajectory toward becoming the exceptional school of which they are capable.*

effective strategy for change is to change the internal guiding questions we are using to inform our strategic as well as daily actions.

Because of the critical place of classroom management in the school improvement process, an entire chapter (11) is devoted to how to move up the pathway in this area. Basic factors related to a sound social contract, sanity promoting policies, and clear, logical, and empowering practices make up a solid foundation at any school. As schools seek to move up in this area, the task will be to promote more student self-direction, community bonds, and social and emotional growth within the individuals and the collective – in other words the 1-Style classroom Shindler, 2009). Given that all schools are currently at different locations on the roadmap, the needs of leaders and schools will vary. Each school will ultimately need to enter the improvement process at different places therefore the next two chapters are devoted to schools starting at two distinct location on the roadmap. Chapter twelve outlines the process of moving a school from a lower performing location to higher levels of function, a more positive climate and level of self-efficacy. The nature of this effort will be defined by developing a sound school vision, building the capacity for sustained growth, engaging in a process of self-evaluation with the goal of clarifying the requisite intentions moving forward, ensuring coherence, and encouraging sanity and efficiency so as to respect the needs of everyone in the school. Chapter thirteen explains how to go from "good" to "great" - how a school that is currently performing well by most standards can move up the pathway and actualize more of its potential. While this trajectory requires a potential paradigm shift toward more empowerment and activation of the human capital, it implies a great many adjustments in practice from a move teacher-centered, and top down structure, to a more student-centered, and democratic structure. And for many schools, this transition will require as much letting go of attitudes, practices and policies that define the lower/middle levels as adding more transformational attitudes, practices and policies.

The Leader's Journey
In the final chapter the focus is you the leader and your personal journey of vision setting and growth that will inevitably mirror the broader school effort. Regardless of the location of your school, department, team, or institution geographically or on the improvement roadmap, you will need to cultivate your personal intention related to your role as a leader. This chapter will support your process of self-reflection and growth. You may want to read this chapter first. No matter your current mindset or the state of your school, as you engage the process of reading this book and endeavoring to facilitate the improvement at your school, you are encouraged to consider adopting the following three basic personal values. They are:

1. Willingness to become an expert in the nature of the roadmap and the mechanics of the change process. Much of it will resonate with your experience, and your instinctual sense of how things work, but there will also be some areas where your assumptions will be challenged, and it may imply the need to change your thinking or your practices. Included in that willingness will be the need for patience with yourself, others and the process. If you are looking for quick fixed or clever strategies that you can use as short cuts to promoting meaningful and systemic change you will not find many here. The effort here is to support your growth as a real leader not someone who is posing as one.
2. Commitment to a department, a school, or a district, team, institution, etc. This will imply time and a real concern for the well-being of those who you are entrusted to work with and lead. It will require an attitude of service and an emergence of your sense of your purpose as a leader.
3. Openness to cultivating a vision. Your success will be dependent on your ability to see within the institution the highest good and nurturing a shared vision among the collective. You will need to develop the personal skills, knowledge and dispositions to inspire others to see a more functional, empowered, and satisfying place that can emerge out of the

current state of affairs. Appreciate the reality of where folks are but hold the vision of their potential as an even more accurate reality.

Within each school is the potential for excellence. As leaders we need harness the power of "yet." We may not be where we could be yet, but we can tap into the vision of what can be that brings hope and energy to our work and everyone at the school. Change is a team effort. But if we look around, we see abundant evidence that improvement will not happen without great leadership and a quality roadmap. In the next chapter we will begin the process of building the school effectiveness roadmap that will be your guide to taking your school where you desire.

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