

What Your Colleagues Are Saying . . .

“You feel exhausted hearing all the roles of a leader: aspirers of high expectations and great ambitions, builders of collectives of learners and professional development, social influencers among leaders and teachers, leaders of teaching and learning, those who apply principles of improvement, amplifiers of effective instruction, architects of productive and inviting climates, beacons of trust, supporters of clarity about purpose and instruction, chief engagement officers of teacher and student learners, evaluators of impact, accountability officers, leaders of improvement, implementation scientists, and great managers. The alternative is a school of independent contractors where great teaching and leadership are by chance. *How Leadership Works* makes a convincing case about how to bring all these roles to fruition and how to have time left over to enjoy the success of all in the school (as well as your own successes).”

—**John Hattie**, Author, University of Melbourne

“To enhance your skills as a teacher of teachers, *How Leadership Works: A Playbook for Instructional Leaders* invites you to be an engaged learner. If you are looking for a nightstand book to passively peruse before sleep, this is not the book for you. If you are ready to roll up your sleeves and invest in some serious reflection about your own leadership practices around a powerful set of ideas, then dig in! This book is organized around a set of modules that include learning intentions and success criteria, vignettes, research-based practices, and space for reflection on what you will *keep*, *stop*, or *start* doing with what you have learned. It includes a variety of learning tools that will not only support you in your learning but will become a valuable set of tools for you to use as you support the thinking and learning of the teachers you lead. In the end, the thinking and learning of your students will blossom and grow.”

—**Megan Tschannen-Moran**, Professor of Educational Leadership,
William & Mary School of Education

“This publication is very timely. As I read the book, I was able to visualize how I would use it to provide professional development for my leadership team. The book called many of my actions into question, which has already reshaped my thinking as a leader. I would recommend this publication to school and district leaders.”

—**Audrey White-Garner**, Elementary Principal, Richland School District One

“This playbook helps leaders break down complicated scenarios into manageable next steps. The exercises felt relevant to help me work through a leadership challenge, and determine the next right step without taking an overwhelming amount of effort or time. This playbook would be beneficial for both novice and veteran leaders.”

—**Jennifer Douglas**, Principal, Voris CLC, Akron Public Schools

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How LEADERSHIP WORKS

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HOW LEADERSHIP WORKS

a playbook
for Instructional Leaders

CORWIN

Fisher & Frey

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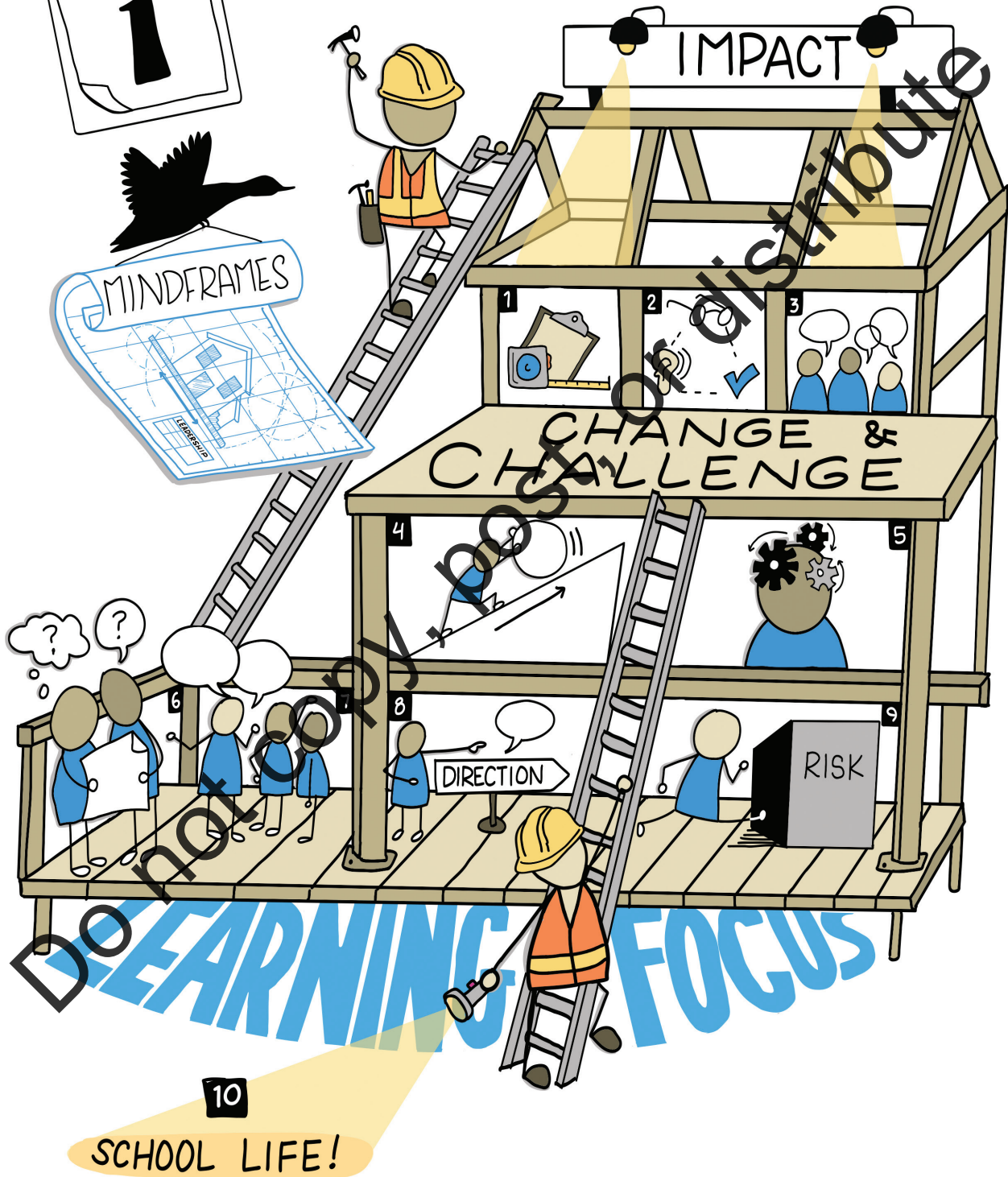
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MODULE
1

MINDFRAMES FOR LEADERS



MINDFRAMES FOR LEADERS

LEARNING INTENTIONS

- I am learning about 10 leadership mindframes.
- I am learning to leverage the leadership mindframes to strengthen my skills and evaluate my impact.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can explain the intent of the impact, change and challenge, and learning focus of the mindframes.
- I can analyze leadership practices for each mindframe and develop my own practices.
- I can assess my current mindframes and identify strengths and gaps.
- I can create a plan to intentionally develop the mindframes I need to lead instruction.

All schools deserve great leaders, not by chance, but by design. Schools with great leaders are better places for learning, and this is where students actually learn more. Furthermore, schools with great leaders have less turnover than schools with less effective leaders (well, some schools have higher turnover because the leader provides opportunities and supports others to become leaders). Teachers are happier at work and report higher job satisfaction where effective leaders lead. Finally, schools with great leaders are places that the community is proud of, and families are pleased that their children attend such schools.

Great school leadership cannot be left to chance. There are specific actions that leaders can take, as well as dispositions that we can adopt, to ensure that the schools we are responsible for are great places for learning, for both students and educators. Before focusing on the skills and strategies that are useful for great leaders, we will share several mindframes, or dispositions and habits, that are useful.

Hattie and Smith (2020) define the mindframes as a set of necessary dispositions or habits of mind that drive the performance of leaders. In other words, leaders' beliefs and values, their mindframes, determine their practices and ways of engaging with

students, teachers, and parents. These useful ways of thinking and acting are captured in a total of 10 mindframes. They help site-based and central-office leaders focus their thinking and engage in self-reflection to strengthen their leadership practices and improve the learning lives of students and teachers.



A LEADER'S CHALLENGE

Tim is the principal of an elementary school where students come from homes in communities struggling to provide the basics of modern life, such as internet access, healthy food sources, and quality recreational facilities. As the coronavirus pandemic changed the schooling format, Tim thought about the love, support, and services students might miss. He was also gravely concerned about the well-being of his teachers, as they were isolated from their colleagues, families, friends, and everyday activities. Although he was consumed by the many state mandates, ever-changing district plans, and his own ability to lead through the crisis, Tim was able to take some time to consider how his thinking was impacting his actions and the degree to which they would further impact his staff and students. Tim thought to himself, "What messages do I want our staff and families to hear and see from me that will help move us together through this crisis?" He determined the most important messages to communicate, including

- ➔ Children and their families need support, love, and grace.
- ➔ The most important thing is health, safety, and well-being.
- ➔ We will learn what we need to know about distance learning by supporting each other and making mistakes.
- ➔ We will roll with the punches, be flexible, and keep our students at the forefront of our decisions.

He then collaborated with his leadership team and developed an action plan that would clearly communicate a commitment to these ideas. He instituted a weekly virtual coffee time with the principal for staff to connect, get the latest updates, share worries and concerns, and have some fun. Furthermore, he established a weekly family news brief and posted it online. He then searched for and provided quality professional learning to help all educators, including himself, learn about the tools, platforms, and best practices for distance learning. Importantly, he responded to the many changes in plans that rolled in from the district office. He remained calm and presented the changes to staff with a can-do spirit and confidence that they would get through it together. He took care of students and their families by providing food pick-ups, lessons in technology, and phone calls to check in with empathy and grace. Tim and staff also visited students' homes, leaving goodie bags filled with school supplies, books, and snacks, as well as important information about support services and learning programs.

Over time, as the format of school continues to change, Tim continues to assess his mindframes and strives to serve as a model during confusing and uncertain times. This is Tim's leadership challenge.

PAUSE AND PONDER

Which of Tim’s leadership behaviors indicate that he is an effective leader?

 **A Work in Progress**

SELF-ASSESS YOUR INTENTIONALITY

How intentional are you? For each of the following statements, indicate the extent to which it is part of your practice:

	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
I consider my mindframes before embarking on a change project with my staff.			
I am mindful of how my actions and behavior impact how the staff are thinking and acting.			
I determine the impact I wish to have with staff and students before I act.			
I intentionally model the behaviors and actions I hope to see in staff.			
I seek evidence to inform my thinking and leading.			
I am more proactive than reactive when making decisions.			
I am driven by a set of leadership mindframes that impact my leadership actions.			

Which rating (rarely, sometimes, or always) did you select most often?

What can you infer from your ratings regarding how well you are currently leading instructional initiatives?

Based on your ratings and inferences, what are some potential starting points for you to lead instructional improvement?

TEN LEADERSHIP MINDFRAMES

“The way we think about the impact of what we do is more important than what we do” (Hattie & Zierer, 2018).

According to Hattie and Zierer (2018), “The way we think about the impact of what we do is more important than what we do.” They offer 10 mindframes that encourage teachers and leaders to be more intentional about the ways we think about our impact on learners and learning. These mindframes drive how we do our work in very specific ways. For leaders, the mindframes inform how we lead professional learning, give feedback, coach improvement, and hire and support quality teachers. The mindframes “focus on self-regulation—or the ability to control and direct one’s behavior, emotions, and thoughts” (Fisher et al., 2021a, p. 92).

The 10 mindframes for leaders listed below, introduced by Hattie and Smith (2020), were divided into the following three main categories:

- ➔ Impact mindframes
- ➔ Change and challenge mindframes
- ➔ Learning focus mindframes

We have retained these categories and made slight adaptations to keep the focus on instructional leadership. The mindframes and three categories are listed below.

MINDFRAMES FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Impact Mindframes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am an evaluator of my impact on teacher and student learning. 2. I see evidence and data as informing my impact and next steps. 3. I collaborate with peers, teachers, students, and families about my conceptions of progress and my impact.
Change and Challenge Mindframes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. I am a change agent, and I believe my role is to improve the learning lives of teachers and students. 5. I embrace challenge, and I support teachers and students in doing the same, not just doing our best.
Learning Focus Mindframes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. I foster a culture of feedback where teachers, students, and leaders seek, give, receive, and act on feedback. 7. I engage as much in dialogue as in monologue. 8. I explicitly inform teachers and students what successful impact looks like from the outset. 9. I build relationships and trust to make it safe to make mistakes and learn from others. 10. I focus on learning and contribute to a shared language of learning.

Source: Hattie & Smith (2020).

We provide a narrative description of each of the 10 mindframes and a brief list of leadership practices that are examples of the mindframe in action. The mindframes and associated leadership practices can serve as guideposts for leaders to engage effectively in the three main areas of instructional leadership that follow in Parts I–III of this playbook. These parts focus on leading teaching, leading learning, and leading change.

Hattie tells us that Mindframe 1, “I am an evaluator of my impact,” is the most important of all, as it serves as an umbrella for the remaining nine mindframes.

Impact Mindframes

Mindframe 1: I am an evaluator of my impact on teacher and student learning.

This mindframe is the essence of effective leadership. It means that leaders must be as deliberate about measuring the impact of leadership decisions and practices as they are in planning actions and practices. It is one thing to thoughtfully plan and implement ideas, and quite another to focus on the impact of the decisions and actions on the people affected by them. Evaluators of impact actively look for, measure, and respond to the impact their decisions have on learning, culture, efficacy, and equity.

MINDFRAME 1: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Survey staff for successes and challenges with a new instructional practice.
- Walk the halls and check in with staff by doing “one-legged interviews” (i.e., short informal conversations that focus on how a change or practice is going. The name comes from the advice that the length of the interview corresponds to the amount of time you can stand on one leg).
- Monitor student benchmark data to capture trend lines tied to instructional practices.
- Routinely survey all stakeholders informally and formally on progress of new practices or changes recently implemented. Act on the feedback to improve support for deep implementation.

Mindframe 2: I see evidence and data as informing my impact and next steps.

Mindframe 2 requires leaders to engage in a courageous pursuit of evidence of impact and an open-minded reflection to drive next steps. Too often most of our energy and effort is exerted at the front end of a change initiative, rather than throughout the initiative. Unfortunately, after the initiative rolls out, we cannot assume that everyone affected understands what to do. This is what leads to so many failed initiatives. If you really want to know your impact, look deeply and listen for it, and prepare to make adjustments to your practices along the way.

MINDFRAME 2: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Conduct learning walks to collect evidence on the deep implementation of new instructional practices and plan professional learning sessions to close teachers’ gaps in understanding.
- Visit grade level or department meetings and professional learning community sessions to determine from teachers what support has helped them and what support has not been helpful. Adjust leadership practices accordingly to better support staff.
- Host regular talks with students about what is and is not working in their classrooms, and what changes they believe would improve their learning. Work with staff to authentically review and act on this feedback.

Mindframe 3: I collaborate with peers, teachers, students, and families about my conceptions of progress and my impact.

Building a shared understanding and commitment to a change vision is essential for progress and impact. Rarely, if ever, is a leader’s desired impact achieved quickly. Therefore, collaboration regarding what incremental success might look like and how to measure impact over time is necessary. Leaders possessing this mindframe plan their communications with stakeholder groups and develop clarity of thought about what progress looks like. Then, leaders communicate in a way that provides stakeholders with clarity on the *why*, *what*, and *how* of the work ahead.

MINDFRAME 3: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Meet with the school leadership team before, during, and after the change work gets underway to share your conceptions of progress and seek input from the team to refine and edit your conceptions based on their thoughts.
- Hold coffee chats or small focus group talks with families to discuss the work, the desired impact of the work, and the feedback you will seek to keep the work on track.
- Review student benchmark data with teachers and determine next steps for success. Share your conceptions of what progress looks like and the support you are prepared to provide to make steady progress to achieve the desired impact.

A Work in Progress

IMPACT MINDFRAMES

Previously, we shared 10 examples of leadership practices linked to the impact mindframes. In the chart that follows, on the left, add your current practices that align to the impact mindframes. On the right, record practices you are thinking about undertaking to strengthen your leadership for impact.

Mindframes 1–3: Current Practices That Align	Practices I Am Considering
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Change and Challenge Mindframes

Mindframe 4: I am a change agent, and I believe my role is to improve the learning lives of teachers and students.

Change agents are design thinkers, envelope pushers, risk-takers, and creative problem solvers. Leaders who routinely ask themselves how they can make things better are most likely driven by this mindframe. The learning lives of teachers and students encompass how they learn in groups, how they learn from mistakes, how they use feedback, how they work as a team, how they practice new skills, and how they see themselves as learners. A leader has a significant influence on these aspects of school life. Change agents realize this and serve their schools as leaders who constantly review and refine their leadership to enhance the learning lives of staff and students.

Change agents are design thinkers, envelope pushers, risk-takers, and creative problem solvers.

MINDFRAME 4: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Collect and use feedback from staff following professional learning experiences to improve the impact on building the staff capacity.
- Provide and model collaboration protocols for professional learning community plus (PLC+) meetings to keep teachers focused and productive during their team time.
- Monitor student learning outcomes and collaborate with teachers on what is working and what is not to plan refinements to the instructional program.
- Explicitly talk about what it means to be a learner and model the dispositions of a learner for staff and students.

Mindframe 5: I embrace challenge, and I support teachers and students in doing the same, not just doing our best.

An essential quality of leaders is a willingness to embrace and thrive on challenge. Leaders who embrace challenge recognize that meeting a challenge might be uncomfortable. It could be frustrating and maybe even exhausting, but the struggle is worth it if it results in better learning for teachers and/or students. As Doug says, “We are in an anti-struggle era” when it comes to classroom challenges. Leaders often protect students from productive struggle, frontload too much, or rescue students when they see signs of struggle, which robs them of the thrill of learning something that is both difficult and complex. Adults, teachers, and leaders improve outcomes when they embrace productive struggle. This may involve persevering in learning more effective teaching strategies, finding solutions to assist struggling learners, or working toward shared agreements with PLC+ members. Adults who embrace challenge and bounce back after disappointments are much more likely to experience success and satisfaction as educators.

From the leaders to the teachers and to the students, struggle should be normalized and viewed as an essential part of learning. Learning is supposed to be hard work, both for adults and students.

MINDFRAME 5: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Normalize challenge and productive struggle among adults and students.
- Share appropriate personal examples of embracing a challenge and persisting through struggle.
- Share examples of embracing challenge in classrooms.
- Make embracing challenge a valued learner disposition for all learners.

Working on the Work

TEXT RENDERING PROTOCOL

Re-read the descriptions of Mindframes 4 and 5. Choose a most significant sentence, phrase, and word for each mindframe and record them in the chart on the next page or highlight them in your book. Examine your choices, make inferences, and use the reflection question following the chart to consider your selections.

Mindframe 4: Change Agent	Mindframe 5: Embrace Challenge
Significant sentence	Significant sentence
Significant phrase	Significant phrase
Significant word	Significant word

What do your choices tell you about your current mindframes as related to being a change agent and embracing challenge?

Learning Focus Mindframes

Mindframe 6: I foster a culture of feedback where teachers, students, and leaders seek, give, receive, and act on feedback.

The way humans improve at anything—whether it is golf, cooking, writing, or leading—comes from quality feedback followed by deliberate practice. Therefore, if schools are to benefit from this powerful influence, leaders must commit to creating a *culture* of feedback. When there is such a culture, leaders and teachers explicitly teach learners what feedback is, why it is important, how to give feedback using success criteria, and how to respond to feedback once it is received. Leaders who embrace Mindframe 6 establish norms and routines to enable streams of feedback to flow freely to and from students, teachers, and leaders. This culture of feedback is built on a foundation of trust-, empathy-, and growth-producing relationships, which will be discussed in-depth in Mindframe 9.

MINDFRAME 6: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Seek feedback from staff on the implementation of new practices. Analyze and share the feedback with them and the actions you will take to respond to it.
- Engage students in all classes in peer feedback based on success criteria as an integral part of the instructional program.
- Support teachers in collecting feedback from their students to improve the effectiveness of teaching practices.

Mindframe 7: I engage as much in dialogue as in monologue.

Leaders with this mindframe understand that talking *with* people is more effective than talking *at* people. Dialogue enables us to learn new ideas, consider various perspectives, find different solutions to problems, and engage others in meaningful work. Dialogue involves active listening, questioning to understand, and responding thoughtfully and honoring the views of many. Dialogue is growth producing. Monologue, although necessary at times, is simply a means to direct people to certain tasks or provide them with information. Monologue is rarely growth producing for those involved.

MINDFRAME 7: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Model dialogue as a value by thoughtfully listening, questioning, and responding to all stakeholders.
- Honor ideas developed through dialogue by implementing them.
- Encourage and support teachers in doing the same with their students.
- Share/teach specific conversation stems and sentence starters for teachers to use to spur quality class dialogue (adults could use these, too!).

Mindframe 8: I explicitly inform teachers and students what successful impact looks like from the outset.

According to Buckingham (2016), “Clarity is the antidote to anxiety.” Teachers, as well as students, should be able to confidently respond to the following three questions related to their learning:

- ➔ What am I learning?
- ➔ Why am I learning this?
- ➔ How will I know that I learned it?

This clarity relies on teachers knowing at the start of the year what successful impact looks like in their classroom. For students, it means knowing what success looks like at the start of each unit and lesson: It is the leader’s responsibility to communicate and to act with clarity toward shared goals.

MINDFRAME 8: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Communicate, communicate, and communicate again the expectations and desired impact to ensure a shared understanding of goals and expected impact.
- Collaboratively develop a set of success criteria for expected outcomes and base feedback on the criteria.
- Seek feedback from teachers on support they will need to reach the expected outcomes. What do they need to learn? How can leaders support them? What resources would be helpful?
- Monitor results and the effectiveness of supports along the way.

Mindframe 9: I build relationships and trust to make it safe to make mistakes and learn from others.

Mindframe 9 is the critical foundation that allows learning to occur. When human beings feel a sense of belonging at work, when they experience relational trust from their leaders and colleagues, and when they are able to learn from mistakes and each other, deep learning and growth are likely to happen. When these elements are not part of the school culture, deep learning is unlikely.

MINDFRAME 9: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Administer a survey to determine current levels of trust in the school and work with the leadership team to build a plan to improve trust among and with all colleagues.
- Implement team-building exercises at meetings and gatherings.
- Establish peer learning walks and debrief sessions to build efficacy.
- Support staff when learning something new and give grace during the learning period.
- Collect teacher perspectives regularly and respond with genuine interest.

Mindframe 10: I focus on learning and contribute to a shared language of learning.

When leaders focus on learning, they lead their teams in understanding how learning happens, they value teaching students how to be learners, they advocate for certain learner dispositions that all learners in their school can activate when needed, and they reinforce the concept that productive struggle and challenge are essential for successful learning. In principle, they create a learning culture where the learning process and learner dispositions are commonplace in conversations, lessons, data discussions, parent meetings, and all other aspects of school life. Leaders driven by this mindframe prioritize learning-focused work with teachers and spend significant time doing it.

MINDFRAME 10: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- Create a video diary of students’ current conceptions of learning by asking students, “What makes a good learner?” Record their answers and analyze their responses with the staff. How many students responded with behavior- or compliance-based answers such as “listen to the teacher,” “don’t disrupt others,” or “do your work”? How many students responded with qualities of a learner such as “be persistent,” “ask questions,” “collaborate,” “embrace a challenge,” and so forth?
- Work with the staff to create a profile of an ideal learner for your school.
- Conduct research on how learners learn and teach that process to staff and students.
- Routinely talk with staff and parents about learning—how learning happens, what good learners do, and how to learn from mistakes.

 **A Work in Progress**

LEARNING FOCUS MINDFRAMES, MINDFRAMES 6–10

In this module, we shared 20 examples of leadership practices for the learning focus mindframes. In the chart that follows, on the left, list your current practices that align to the learning mindframes. On the opposite side, record practices you consider undertaking to strengthen your leadership for impact.

Mindframes 6–10: Current Practices That Align	Practices I Am Considering
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP MINDFRAMES, MINDFRAMES 1–10

Reflect on your responses in previous exercises and your notes on the learning focus mindframes leading to this point. For each of the mindframes that follow, mark whether your learning on this mindframe *affirmed* current thinking, *extended* your thinking by adding something new, or *challenged* your thinking by prompting you to consider changes to your current practices. This assessment will help you capture your experience with this content and then make decisions on what your next step might be in conquering a challenge you are facing now.

Mindframes for Instructional Leadership	Affirmed	Extended	Challenged
1. I am an evaluator of my impact on teacher and student learning.			
2. I see evidence and data as informing my impact and next steps.			
3. I collaborate with peers, teachers, students, and families about my conceptions of progress and my impact.			
4. I am a change agent, and I believe my role is to improve the learning lives of teachers and students.			
5. I embrace challenge, and I support teachers and students in doing the same, not just doing our best.			
6. I foster a culture of feedback where teachers, students, and leaders seek, give, receive, and act on feedback.			
7. I engage as much in dialogue as in monologue.			
8. I explicitly inform teachers and students what successful impact looks like from the outset.			
9. I build relationships and trust to make it safe to make mistakes and learn from others.			
10. I focus on learning and contribute to a shared language of learning.			

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Working on the Work

Think of an important challenge or change you are working on now. Record this challenge in the box and answer the questions that follow.

My leadership challenge is . . .

The mindframes I need for success on this challenge include:

To ensure success on my challenge or change, I need to intentionally develop mindframes:

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ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Consider the questions below and complete the chart to capture your thinking about how to lead effectively with the 10 mindframes.

Which of your current practices align most strongly with the mindframes?

➔ Place these practices in the KEEP section of the chart.

Which of your current practices are not in alignment with any of the 10 mindframes?

➔ Place these practices in the STOP section of the chart.

What practices are you considering adding to strengthen your leadership aligned to the mindframes?

➔ Place these practices in the START section of the chart.

ACTIONS	PRACTICES BASED ON MY LEARNING IN THIS MODULE:
KEEP	I will continue to . . .
STOP	I will stop . . .
START	I will start . . .

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CONCLUSION

In this module, you focused on the mindframes for effective leadership and were provided information and exercises to establish foundational knowledge that will enrich your reading of the remaining modules. To provide great instructional leadership for all schools, leaders must remain deliberate and unwavering in their quest to positively impact the learning lives of the students and the working lives of their teachers. The 10 mindframes serve as a guide and anchor for leaders to self-reflect and self-regulate toward more effective leadership.



Access resources, tools, and guides
for this module at the companion website:
resources.corwin.com/howleadershipworks

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