Making Schools Work Better

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Abstract:

This paper synthesizes four research projects the authors completed between 2006-2011. The first research study was a case study of leadership in five highly-effective elementary schools in Alberta. Second, we thoroughly reviewed literature in the area of *Student Engagement.* Our third research project included 50+ interviews compiling ten years of success stories from the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI). The final research project was longitudinal study asking high school students at risk of not completing high school why they had disengaged with learning and how they would change schools. This paper attempts to reflect upon our collective research. We have synthesized our work into seven key findings, twenty-one specific positive actions, and three actions that suggest principals should not do. Key findings include: (1) engaging students; (2) encouraging specific teacher actions; (3) building good relationships; (4) building spaces for learning; (5) focusing on *how* learning takes place, not on what is learned; (6) involving parents; and (7) practicing shared leadership. As authors, we hope these reflections help inform efficacious school leadership.

Everyone does the best they can at any moment in time.
No one ever sets out to make a mistake.
However, once we know better, we are obligated to do better.
~Anonymous

Schools are foundational North American institutions, and often act as both 'canaries in the mine' for the health of the nation and as litmus tests for a nation's core beliefs about how children are valued. We should all have a vested interest in schools; specifically, we should desire to understand what happens when schools work well and how to improve them if they don't. The following paper synthesizes five years of research we've conducted in the area of school improvement and our reflections about what our findings reveal about how good schools work and should work.

To begin our reflections, we offer old wisdom from Chinese Taoist philosopher, Lao Tzu (600 BC – 531 BC) that mirrors our research findings. "A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, the people will say: We did it ourselves." Our research suggests that effective schools are led by wise principals who build and support teacher leadership. When offered opportunities, teachers build good learning environments and school cultures themselves. Teachers can also be instrumental in identifying key problems and, when empowered and supported by principals, make significant inroads to improve the lives of children.

We also offer 21st Century wisdom from Hip Hop album *Like Water for Chocolate* (2000). In the Grammy-nominated second single "The Light," Common's lyrics note: "It don't take a whole day to recognize sunshine." We found sunshine and bright ideas throughout schools: they were easy to recognize. Unfortunately, the 'business of school' has become exactly that – a business, where imported sunshine sadly seems brighter. Hoping to cash in on teachers' passion and commitment to professional learning, the rise of a professional development industry that promises 'products to solve problems' has sidetracked our abilities to recognize our own sunshine – it isn't marketed, packaged, and sold in bulk. For a society sold just about everything and a North American ethos that equates spending with 'good citizenship,' it is little wonder that many teachers no longer trust themselves to solve their own problems. Our findings suggest that teachers have less professional need for outsiders than we think.

We hope to make two points by citing this Hip Hop classic: first, when a treasure sits clearly in front of you, pick it up – sunshine is sunshine. Second, our research found that good schools were "positive" places – they had largely exorcised negativity. Teachers worked hard; were willing to work hard; and, were even energized by hard work. What brings teachers to their knees is negativity – whether introduced from the outside (where all manner of negative influences weigh upon teachers) or from wide-ranging internal criticism that caused teachers to dwell on failures, self-critiques, and difficulties. Obviously, in any human community, things can and do go wrong, and it can be hard to

avoid the negative whirlpool. Regardless of source, it is crucial to address negativity head on – to name it, understand its source, and refocus that energy towards improvement.

Simply stated, our research found that, when schools worked well, the activities of those schools were organized around the needs of children. A common mantra of teachers and principals in these schools was "It's all about the kids." Our research suggests that good schools are motivated by clear goals: (1) children learning and (2) teachers as learning leaders.

The Research Base

This paper is based upon a synthesis of four research projects we completed from 2006-2011. First, the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) sponsored case studies of five of the best elementary schools – by reputation – in Alberta. As lead researcher, Jim spent weeks asking teachers, principals, and support staff two questions: (A) What makes this school such a good place for teaching and learning? and (B) What does the administration do to help? He gathered data, analyzed, theorized, and shared the findings. Our second research was a thorough literature review on *Student Engagement.* In our third research project, we conducted more than fifty interviews with teachers and a co-authored *Little Bits of Goodness* (2009) - a compilation of ten years of success stories from the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI).

Finally, Kelly conducted a longitudinal study with 4th and 5th year high school students – many classified at risk of not completing high school for reasons including language barriers, poverty, life-style issues, health and learning challenges, and homelessness. Beginning five years ago, Kelly began to ask young people arriving at the school why they had disengaged with learning and how they would change schools. Conducting a series of focus groups and data collection surveys, Kelly found three significant themes: (1) students want to know *how* what they were learning in their classes was relevant to their lives, (2) students need to feel that their schools and teachers care about them, and (3) students are concerned for their futures and want to know their lives have purpose.

As applied researchers, our synthesis focused on answering three questions: (1) What? {What did we find?}; (2) So What? {What do these findings mean?}; and, (3) Now What? {What should we do after we make sense of the findings?} This paper attempts to answer those questions – especially the final question. Seven key findings emerged: (1) engaging students; (2) encouraging specific teacher actions; (3) building good relationships; (4) building spaces for learning; (5) focusing on *how* learning takes place, not on what is learned; (6) involving parents; and (7) practicing shared leadership. Each finding suggests specific actions.

What does the research say about effective schools?

Key Area #1: Engage Students

When synthesizing our research, student engagement emerged as the most fruitful area of

potential action. A number of insights emerged. First, when schools worked well, students talked more than we are used to having them talk in "traditional schools." Although *traditional* is a contested concept, we trust the reader has some understanding what we mean. Second, student learning stemmed from student engagement, and our findings suggest that we should re-vision how we believe students involve themselves in learning; moreover, students need to see connections between their needs and the tasks they are asked to complete in schools and for their futures. This finding about student engagement suggested a number of specific actions. We author these specific actions from the perspective of our completed research, our reflections about this research, and how we might best share what we have learned with others as insights for directing their work. We see ourselves as part of a large group of committed educators who hope to improve schools and promote student learning.

The specific actions include:

· Specific Action #1: Make formative assessment the dominant assessment system in classrooms and schools. Summative assessments, those weighty exams written quietly at the end of a learning unit, can kill genuine learning. Formative assessments, or *assessments for learning*, provide teachers information they can use immediately to re-focus their teaching. Rather than waiting for end of the unit exams to see if students learned the curriculum, teachers and students are empowered to embrace a growth-oriented definition of learning. Schools that worked well had not completely ignored summative assessment, but they had certainly moved more towards formative assessments. Teachers in these schools had moved from the head of the class to the side of the class – holding regular and natural conversations with students about what they were learning. These conversations both kept students on-track and allowed teachers opportunities to direct and encourage. Classrooms became happier places and also places where children shared their learning with their parents – without parents asking.

· Specific Action #2: Invite students to talk more about what they have learned. Our research suggests student should: (1) talk more about the content of their learning, (2) talk about what their learning means to them, and (3) talk more about the processes of their learning – how they learn. Help students make connections between the classroom and the rest of their world. These areas of *talk* are keys to meta-cognition, allowing and encouraging students to see themselves as learners who can shape what they learn toward personal relevance. No longer was it good enough to take direction from teachers as authorities: in *new pedagogies*, teacher authority is built not through the power of management but through the power of relationship. Asking students to speak to their learning places them in positions of agency and responsibility. School is no longer 'done' to students; instead, students co-construct their learning – including classrooms where students gained a consciousness about social justice. Our research suggests that classrooms should "feed curiosity" without micro-managing learning. That said, we understand the difficulty: good teachers worry their students won't learn unless we micro-manage. So we are tempted to *standardize* learning - dis-engaging students from their own

skills, interests, and aptitudes - and wonder why they "run away from school."

· Specific Action #3: See student engagement as a measure of *engaged and effective teaching*. In schools that worked well, we saw a correlation between engaged teachers and engaged students. Engagement from either teacher or student impacted both. Engaged teachers established classroom culture; worked with students to establish the language of success; showed students how to see learning as ongoing – rather than a completion of single tasks – where understanding and success resulted from long-term effort, commitment, and practice. Engaged teachers transformed schools and inspired reluctant learners. Engaged teachers help students find their voices, talents, and passions – and put these to work. Engaged students showed themselves more than willing to work and accept teacher direction. When schools worked well, classrooms were happier, more encouraging places. One obvious impact was a reduction in *behavior issues*. In the good schools we researched, teachers and students talked to each other about their interests and what they were learning. Teachers used professional insights to guide these conversations without student resistance.

· Specific Action #4: Teach the language of *learning* – not "achievement." For more than two decades, student engagement has been linked to high school completion. But there are significant problems with this simplistic connection. First, one can *complete* high school without learning much. Second, the connection is exceedingly conservative: high school completion shapes students to fit high schools but does little to revision schools to meet the needs of 21st century learners. The result of focusing upon achievement is cookie-cutter education, where schools attempt to mold students into a one-size-fits-all pattern. The high rate of first-year, post-secondary dropouts suggests that many high school graduates know little about how to learn and are unprepared to be independent thinkers. Our research found that "engagement for learning" and "engagement for achievement" differ. But, our research found that it is almost always true that, when young people are *learning successfully*, they are more fully engaged – achieving the numeric definition of 'academic success' required for entry into post-secondary institutions and possessing the learning capacities, self-awareness, and self-governance required to thrive. Most teachers know what good teaching and learning are. We also know what philosophies should ground our work and how to best match pedagogy to philosophy. However, the openness that such a philosophy entails can be difficult in the face of scrutiny from above and near – and, we are tempted to blink. Insights gained from the schools we researched suggest that teachers who hold true to their beliefs that students will learn – even if holding that view is uncomfortably tough and people resist – will encourage student flourishing. We must resist the false assurance of summative, cookie-cutter final evaluation.

Key Area #2: Teachers, work together.

The power and value of teachers working together was obvious in our research. The actions of teacher collaboration assumed a variety of forms; however, at the foundation of

these positive actions was accepting and building on the professionalization of teachers. In schools that worked well, teachers showed themselves to be capable of insight, leadership, and trust.

· Specific Action #5: Move from professional development to job-embedded and context-specific *professional learning*. Obviously, educational terms can be defined differently and professional development and professional learning might – to some people – mean the same thing. However, to be clear, the professional learning we are speaking about is local and teacher-led. It is not instituted on the shoulders of outside, knowledgeable *experts*. Professional learning occurs in many ways, but it is always borne by teachers within their own schools. Our research suggests that teacher professional learning should be expected, encouraged, and supported. It also suggests that teachers should embrace leadership opportunities. Countless conversations with teachers revealed a reoccurring theme: external PD events are costly, superficial, and seldom alter or impact teacher practice. A number of teachers praised the idea of 'share fairs' – in-house, teacher-led, timely, and supported mini-lessons around specific professional learning goals: instructional technologies, literacy activities, assessment practices, instructional strategies, and data analysis are just a few of the many peer-to-peer learning collaborations that shift knowledge from a few designated leaders to leadership by the majority of teaching staff.

· Specific Action #6: As long-time teachers, we have watched the actions of our teaching colleagues grow and change. One positive change has been the social and collegial aspects of teaching. Teaching was once a lonely activity – the humans one worked with were mostly one's students. Today's teachers talk to each other more. The skill set required for successful employment in the work world – collaboration, teamwork, networking, and critical problem solving – is just as necessary in teaching. Formerly criticized as isolating, lonely, and competitive, high schools are eschewing the culture of scores and percentages for a culture of mutual interests and goals – ensuring all students are learning and receiving the best instructional learning opportunities. The impact of this shift is positive for many reasons. In the good schools we researched, when teachers worked together on real educational issues, their leadership grew and positive changes happened. This suggests the possibility and value of Action Research – teachers working together to solve their own problems. Our research also found that, when teachers worked together, they were happier, more effective, and better able to promote positive attitudes and increased student engagement.

Key Area #3: Build good relationships.

Although this might seem overstated, our research found that relationships are the key to *every* positive action within a school. Relationships are everywhere – between teachers and students; between students and students; between teachers and teachers; between teachers and principals; and between teachers and principals and parents – and all other combinations. When relationships were smooth, schools were smooth. Simply put, we all tend to accept incredible challenges and tasks if asked by someone with whom we share

good relations. Yet, when asked to an easy job by someone we dislike, we find any number of reasons to decline. Considering our research in the area of instructional leadership, which includes reading many leadership books and articles, we felt literature in the area of school leadership was too much about identity and too little about relationships. Our research in student engagement did nothing to dissuade us from this declaration.

· Specific Action #7: Nurture relationships. Often we forget what small villages schools actually are. They are places to which humans carry their lives and become social networks for teachers and students. Sadly, thousands of students enter neighborhood schools where only a handful of people know their names. They pass through hallways surrounded by people yet feeling invisible. Covering content to prepare for achievement exams appropriate space where relationships might flourish. Careful attention to relationships seemed a key aspect in the schools we researched. In these schools, teachers and administrators *put people first* – as a non-negotiable. The pay-off was seen in how the young people in schools treated each other. Simply acknowledging the existence of relationships is a healthy beginning, accomplished by creating cultures of caring. In the schools we researched, student engagement linked directly to positive and caring relationships. All young people benefit from good relationships with caring adults. Teachers also benefitted from good relationships. Teaching brings optimal occasions for engaging in caring behaviors, and our research suggests that both teachers and students should keep asking each other – indirectly – how caring might be manifested in actions.

Key Area #4: Build total learning spaces

Building a school is more than physically constructing a building. “Spaces for learning” are both cultural and physical, and our research found that social relationships are keys to how schools function. Like any culture, schools build rituals, shared language, and values. School beliefs color every aspect of the milieu. Considering how these cultures work and could work helps us build better schools. The good schools we researched also expanded learning environments past the classroom – wisely engaging technology for learning. Such technologies, when used wisely, expand learning opportunities for students and teachers.

· Specific Action #8: Don’t forget that school life is cultural life, and work to construct “learning cultures.” Good schools build spaces that promote learning. Good governance, open communication, trust, and attentiveness to issues compel people to actively participate. A learning culture shares rights and responsibilities; builds a language of success; creates learning rituals and celebrations; and provides safety, support, and agency. These spaces of culture and geography should be constructed consciously.

· Specific Action #9: Use technology wisely. How schools embrace the Internet and other computer technologies is a measure of both philosophy and possibility. It matters where computers are in the school and how often children use them. But, it takes an

examined working philosophy to engage possibilities to expand classrooms. Do our schools look down or out? Are their vistas small or big? Our ability to overcome physical geographies seems almost endless – if we think to do it wisely. In the case of technology, possibilities are more real because students have already embraced them socially, if not educationally. The good schools we researched used technology to aid and track student learning and to help students and teachers engage the world. In our research, when schools worked well, technology was a curriculum tool, not a curriculum topic.

Key Area #5: Focus on the *how* of learning, not on the what.

Our young people must learn how to learn. Gaining the ability to adapt to contexts and situations is a necessary mark of intelligence. Of all the key areas we have named here, perhaps revising how we shape pedagogy is the most radical and will be resisted most vigorously. As noted in Key Area #1, a refocus on learning instead of achievement is a difficult *shape shift* to make. We are so wired into *standardized learning* that it will take a willfully, sustained act to resist 'cookie-cutter' pedagogy. But, our research suggests that we need to engage, embrace, and empower learning. Our very good desires to measure how our students have learned tempts us to blink and give up too quickly, particularly when those around us place tremendous value on achievement tests results. But our research found that trusting the *process of learning* holds stronger possibilities for long-lasting student engagement and learning.

· Specific Action #10: When building curriculum, focus on process and pedagogy not on content. Our research suggests that, what we have come to call "conversational pedagogies," encourage student engagement and learning. These conversational pedagogies include assessment for learning, differentiated instruction, and inquiry-based/problem-based learning – among others. What makes these pedagogies trustworthy learning opportunities is their high correlation to student engagement. As noted above, the difficulty many teachers have with them – we included – is that we must trust students to learn what they will learn. No clearly defined measures of learning can be realistically applied – especially when it comes to content.

· Specific Action #11: Deconstruct the 'buzz' and talk about "how to do" things. In our research, differences between listing and doing were most obvious in the area of 21st Century learning. Many educators have listed attributes of 21st Century learning and requirements for 21st century employees; however, few have turned these lists into actual classroom activities. We can make lists until the cows come home, but the difference between listing and incarnating specific pedagogies into practice is big. Our research suggests that the answer lies in teachers talking with each other to plan curriculum. As we have noted, when teachers talk with each other about the how's and why's of teaching, good things happen. Some practical questions teachers might ask and answer include: *How should 21st century teachers educate their students? What beliefs and attitudes should 21st century teachers hold? What processes and activities should teachers privilege in classrooms so that 21st century learners develop the skills and capacities they require for their 21st century futures?* There

are good reasons to believe that moving from listing to learning is an area where teacher collaboration will be beneficial.

Key Area #6: Involve Parents.

When schools worked well, every group or person with a vested interest in the school was included in the school's communication. And, who would be more interested in school activities than parents? Parents care deeply about children – particularly, their own children. Engaging parents in schools includes sharing the school's philosophies and actions. Sometimes, because parents understand schools in a particular way, they might resist change. We have found this especially true in grading. Parents, having been "schooled in" a traditional grading system and because they want to know how their child is doing in reference to other children, resist changes they should support – for example, moving to criterion-based reporting from more traditional "How is Johnny doing compared to Janie?" reporting. Successful schools saw such resistance as an opportunity to engage parents in meaningful conversations about how schools were changing for the better – emphasizing learning processes over memorization of facts, for example.

- Specific Action #12: Involve parents. The quality of contact and relationship between schools and parents helps determine successful student engagement – regardless of student age. When students naturally and joyfully engage their parents in school activities – what they have done in school – parents in the schools we researched became more interested, engaged, and accepting of a school's philosophy.

Key Area #7: Practice shared leadership

In the schools we researched, good leadership underpinned the school's success and student learning. Our research highlighted the unique and key role of principals. To say that a school principal made *all* the difference is not much of an understatement. The next section outlines a number of specific actions for principals, but first we share two specific actions about leadership in general.

- Specific Action #13: Focus on instructional leadership. Our research highlighted the bridge between student learning and teacher focus. That is, teachers in good schools were "all about the kids." Teachers in these schools also possessed a *leadership ethic* – which differed from a *leadership title*. Teachers who saw themselves as classroom and school leaders were critical thinkers and problem-solvers. They viewed challenges as natural, possibilities for their own growth, and ways to improve learning. They saw themselves as agents, empowered to address and improve their practice: they were engaged in *leading learning*. When schools worked well, leadership was about learning – not management. Obviously, schools must be managed; but learning is their key function. Believing oneself capable of leading one's practice – regardless of years of service or experience – is prevalent in schools that esteemed and practiced instructional leadership.

- Specific Action #14: Build leadership teams. Schools are busy places, dominated by innovations in technology, changes to curriculum, new research findings about instructional practices, and diverse student populations. To ask any person to become expert in all areas at all times is unrealistic. Instead, the good schools we researched invested time in creating leadership teams – positioning staff members in specific focus areas such as technology, assessment, math and reading literacy, and community relationships. Members of specific teams worked to become site-based experts – taking responsibility and accountability for how their school addressed its energies and resources in these areas and communicating with the rest of the staff. Omni-competence was absent. Instead, leadership was teamwork and good schools shared the leadership load.

Specific Actions for Principals

Our research found that the principal was the key to effective learning. Because principals can create inspiring learning spaces, we have included a number of specific actions that emerged from our research on effective schools. First, principals should not be afraid to lead. Teachers in our research were ready to follow a principal's vision, plan, and ideas – if that principal helped them teach children.

- Specific Action #15: Be in classrooms. Principals support teachers by spending time in classrooms. Being in classrooms illustrates commitment to student learning and allows principals to speak to effective instructional excellence with authenticity. Principals who spent time in classrooms were able to engage in critical conversations in and around student learning initiatives, challenges, and successes. Teachers appreciated and trusted principals who taught – especially when teachers knew principals didn't have to. Because teachers trust other teachers, principals should not forget what it means to be a teacher. When principals offer feedback, it should be specific. Teachers noted their desire for specific feedback, one saying "It is not flattery when the feedback is specific."

- Specific Action #16: Be responsive. Teachers face a myriad of obstacles to teaching – from a missing chair to funding to support inclusive classrooms. Effective principals removed barriers so teachers could do their jobs. The principals we saw took care of teacher needs and issues immediately. If there was a problem, principals attended. When teachers needed resources, they were found. Moreover, teachers were included in decisions around budget priorities. Principals who are not open about where and how the money is allocated miss incredible opportunities for innovative and creative problem-solving. Teachers know how to stretch dollars and, if there are fewer to go around, they will work out among themselves how to balance restraints. Communicate budget realities so staff members can imagine different ways to get things done. Effective principals provided support, interventions, and resources so that barriers that stopped teachers from teaching were removed. In good schools, things got done immediately!

- Specific Action #17: To mirror Specific Action #6, principals should support moves from professional development to professional learning. As noted, professional learning is local, teacher led, and addresses school-based issues. It fundamentally sees teachers as professionals and extends teacher leadership and efficacy. Principals should expect, encourage, and support professional learning by sharing and creating opportunities for teachers to lead. One obstacle many teachers faced was a lack of trust. Principals who believed teachers would do a good job and gave them space to do it were successful. Our findings suggest that principals should assume the best from teachers. They should let teachers know what's expected, then step aside and let teachers practice their craft. Principals should give teachers freedom to take innovative risks. Obviously schools are institutions governed by rules; but principals who built hard shell structures with soft, gooey insides successfully promoted student learning.

- Specific Action #18: Principals should be strong leaders – but from the background. Principals should not hesitate to establish expectations or set high academic goals. Effective principals unflinchingly expected that everyone in school was doing their best for kids. Although leadership literature seems to trumpet horizontal leadership, we believe horizontal leadership cannot work unless the principal is strong enough to allow and support it. In the hands of a weak principal, horizontal leadership can be chaotic and factious. Our research revealed successful principals as iconic leaders who had earned trust and respect and had, ironically, become big enough to step to the background.

- Specific Action #19: Principals should value people and establish a culture of belonging. Teachers often spoke about being the "right" person for their school and were happy to belong to a highly-functioning community. Principals communicated to teachers that they were the "right staff" – such teachers felt respected. Students felt accepted as well. Students knew the non-negotiables and knew they would be supported and encouraged to meet expectations as valued learners in the school community.

- Specific Action #20: Principals should work to build a culture of enthusiastic celebration of successes. In the good schools we researched, principals – actually everyone in the school – focused on the positive. Often, in busy schools, conversations are about challenges; but, tracking the small and great things that occurred during the day was important. Principals and teachers *looked* for ways to help students achieve and celebrate that achievement.

- Specific Action #21: Principals should build vision and goals. These include sharing and living a mission statement built around common language, common values, and common activities. Schools become families filled with joys and heartaches. The wall between personal and professional is permeable. Personal issues walk to school. Principals should help the entire school work together and support each other. This includes sharing stories and resources. In the good schools we researched, people loved coming to work! They defined themselves as "family."

Specific Non-Actions for Principals

We were fortunate in our encounters in highly effective schools; we saw evidence of the specific actions we have noted here and the incredible impact these conscious choices had in classrooms and schools. Our research also helped us enumerate a number of specific activities principals should NOT DO. These include:

- Don't Do #1: Principals should not micro-manage. Instead, patience and trust were virtues. Teachers desire to be trusted to do their work. They also desire that their principal remove barriers that stop them from working. Teachers willingly take direction; but, micro-management is a sure sign they are not trusted and puts teachers on guard, constantly looking over their shoulders. As one teacher put it: "If they [principals] care, I feel safe. If I feel safe, then I have the freedom to do what I know is best for kids."

- Don't Do #2: Principals should not be negative. Hard work does not kill teachers – negativity does! One teacher told us: "I am completely over my head, and I cannot wait to come to school tomorrow." Another noted how the administrative team had encouraged good work: "They hold us to high standards and we WANT to rise to them. They won't let you stagnate or bog down." In schools that worked well, teachers were ready to work hard – but were wounded by negativity.

- Don't Do #3: Principals should not be wishy-washy! Instead, they should be authentic, genuine, and confident leaders. Teachers did not mind their principals being forthright. Indeed, they hoped principals would say what needed to be said. Teachers wanted collegial, yet decisive leadership. They believed their principals should "Make it so!"

Final Thoughts

Our research reinforces how dedicated teachers are, and how ready they are to sacrifice time and energy so students might learn. Students responded with excitement about opportunities for positive educational experiences. We came to believe that the best work principals can do is to create spaces where teachers can teach. We found that teachers focused on teaching. They were not interested in politics or mind games or anything else but teaching children. They wanted space to do what they believed would help students learn.

Reference

Parsons, J. & Harding, K. (2009) *Little Bits of Goodness*. Edmonton: School Improvement Press.