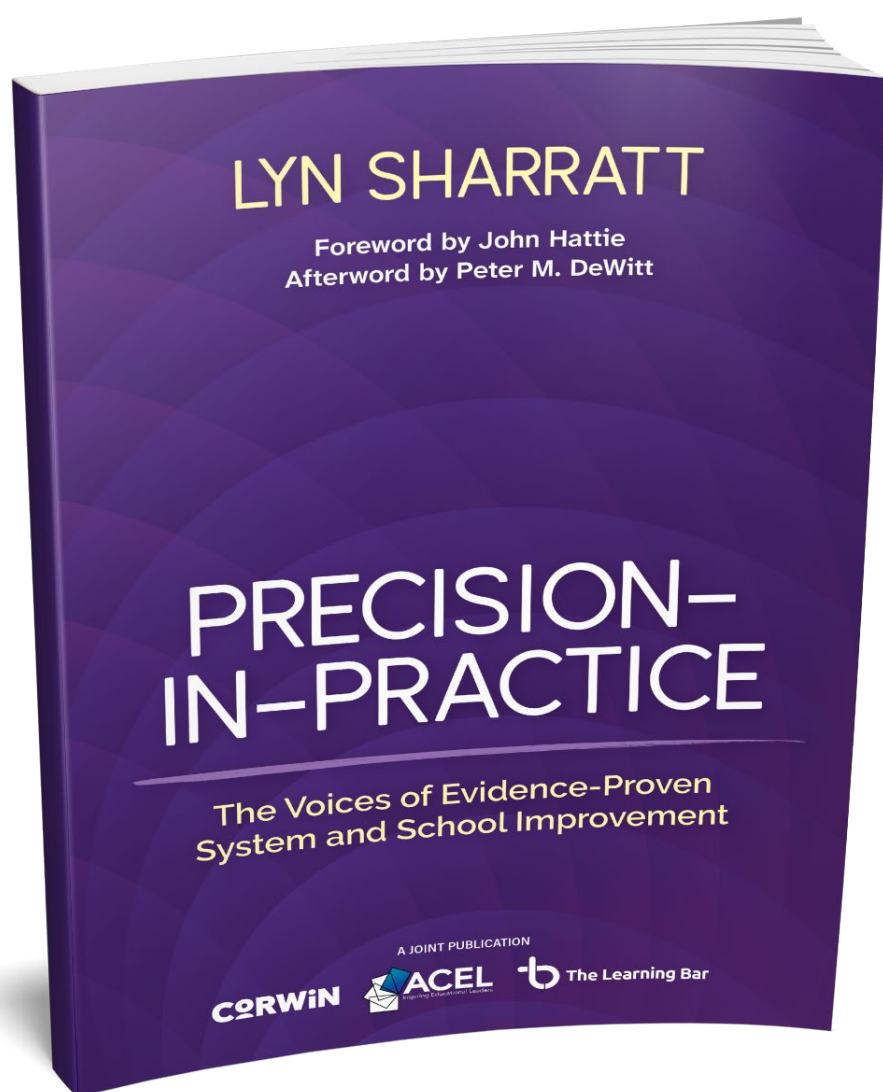


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Foreword

Clarity, Precision, Listening, and Impact

by Dr. John Hattie

John Hattie is the author of a series of books on Visible Learning, examining what works best in student learning and achievement, and specializes in measurement and statistics. He recently co-authored a book with Lyn Sharratt: Learning to Listen and Listening to Learn (Corwin, 2025). When not recalibrating the profession, he can be found on Ipperwash Beach with his mates, whiskey sour in hand, calmly watching waves roll in while the rest of the world argues about $d = 0.4$.



Sitting in a deck chair at Ipperwash, facing Lake Huron, sipping wine, and listening to Lyn and Jim talk about their careers and adventures—what a pleasure; what learning. They travel together, ensure they have a lot of fun between work, and have made a difference to the learning lives of so many educators and their students. Lyn, Jim, and I are University of Toronto graduates, have known each other for decades, and Lyn and I have published a book together. This book is Lyn's magnum opus, bringing together evidence of her impact worldwide.

Across her previous seven books, Lyn Sharratt has advanced a consistent and powerful message: Sustainable improvement occurs when leaders create clear, trusting conditions in which educators collaboratively use evidence—through disciplined listening and inquiry—to evaluate their impact and adapt practice in service of student learning. The core ideas have remained remarkably stable: reform only matters if it is realized in classrooms; data only drives improvement when it is humanized and used for learning; innovation is a disciplined extension of excellence, not a substitute for it; collaboration improves learning only when it is intentionally led; CLARITY is the primary driver of impact; data literacy has matured from reading numbers to interpreting learning systems; and listening is a two-way learning process that shapes motivation, trust, and agency.

These ideas come together in a clear theory of action. When leaders and teachers create conditions of clarity, trust, and disciplined collaboration; when evidence functions as feedback for learning rather than judgment for accountability; and when listening, inquiry, and professional judgment are treated as core capabilities rather than soft add-ons educators develop adaptive expertise and collective efficacy. Teaching practice improves, innovation becomes purposeful, and learners experience deeper and more equitable learning. This logic rests on five interdependent propositions that anchor this book: impact depends on realization, not intention; CLARITY enables autonomy and improvement; evidence must function as feedback; collaboration requires intentional leadership; and listening is the mechanism that converts evidence into learning.

Lyn's earlier books laid the foundations for improvement. This book activates the engine. It shifts the focus from structures to practice: from building data walls to acting on what they reveal; from doing the right work to also hearing the right things; from feedback as a delivery problem to feedback as a listening problem; from collaboration structures to relational precision; and from system reform to moral practice. It is the work of a lifetime—moving steadily from systems to coherence, from tools to judgment, and from policy to thinking in action.

The power of the book lies not only in abstraction but also in illustration. The arguments are grounded in rich examples from diverse systems, always tied to evidence and to the voices of educators and students. Across these cases runs a shared moral purpose: All students can achieve high standards, and all teachers can teach to them when supported by clarity, high expectations, and timely intervention. The work deliberately builds adaptive expertise, assessment capability, and disciplined collaborative inquiry as the engines of sustained improvement. Eight big ideas recur throughout: clarity drives improvement; precision in practice matters more than programs; putting faces on the data humanizes evidence; the parameters of practice must work in concert; assessment is instructional, immediate, and actionable; Professional Learning must be “just right, just in time”; leadership at all levels is non-negotiable; and equity is achieved through excellence and coherence.

The evidence base is substantial. Where cultures of respect, listening, and learning are deeply embedded, the effects on achievement are predictably strong. Across systems

and case studies, implementation of the CLARITY framework shows system-wide effects in the range of $d \approx 0.4\text{--}0.6$, with larger effects ($d \approx 0.8\text{--}1.0$) evident in mature, high-fidelity literacy reforms. Crucially, these gains are accompanied by improvements in instructional quality, assessment practice, and professional confidence.

What distinguishes Lyn's book is its attention to precision of implementation. Too many improvement efforts—and too many meta-analyses—fail to account for fidelity, quality, dosage, and acceptability. Here, those features are explicit. This is not another program to adopt or framework to admire from a distance. It is a careful documentation of what happens when educators commit to knowing why they do what they do, what high-quality teaching looks like, and how to act on evidence in real time. The message is one of coherence. Improvement does not come from isolated strategies, charismatic leaders, or one-off Professional Learning. It emerges when leadership, assessment, instruction, collaboration, and Professional Learning are aligned around a shared moral purpose and a common language of practice. The Parameters that underpin this work are not a checklist; they are a reminder that impact depends on how the elements interact.

At its heart, this is a book about trust: trust in evidence, trust in teachers as evaluators of their impact, and trust in students' capacity to grow when instruction responds intelligently to need. By putting FACES on the data, the work refuses to let averages obscure individuals and insists that equity is achieved through consistently excellent teaching for every learner.

Often times, we are jolted in our beliefs, and this book does some jolting. Improvement comes from fewer moves done relentlessly well; data does not drive improvement—conversations do; equity is an outcome of instructional precision, not a separate initiative; leadership impact grows when leaders learn publicly; fidelity matters more than flexibility early on; buy-in follows results; measurement of impact remains the weakest link; and sustainability depends on institutionalized practice rather than individuals. The paradox is that deep improvement feels painstaking at the practice level yet produces system-level gains faster than expected once coherence is achieved.

Lyn Sharratt's influence rests on earned credibility, clarity without simplification, relational rather than positional power, and a moral purpose made operational. Across decades, countries, and policy cycles, her message has not shifted. That steadiness signals seriousness. Evidence that holds up, practice that works, relationships that matter, and a moral compass that does not waver—this is the power behind the pages that follow.

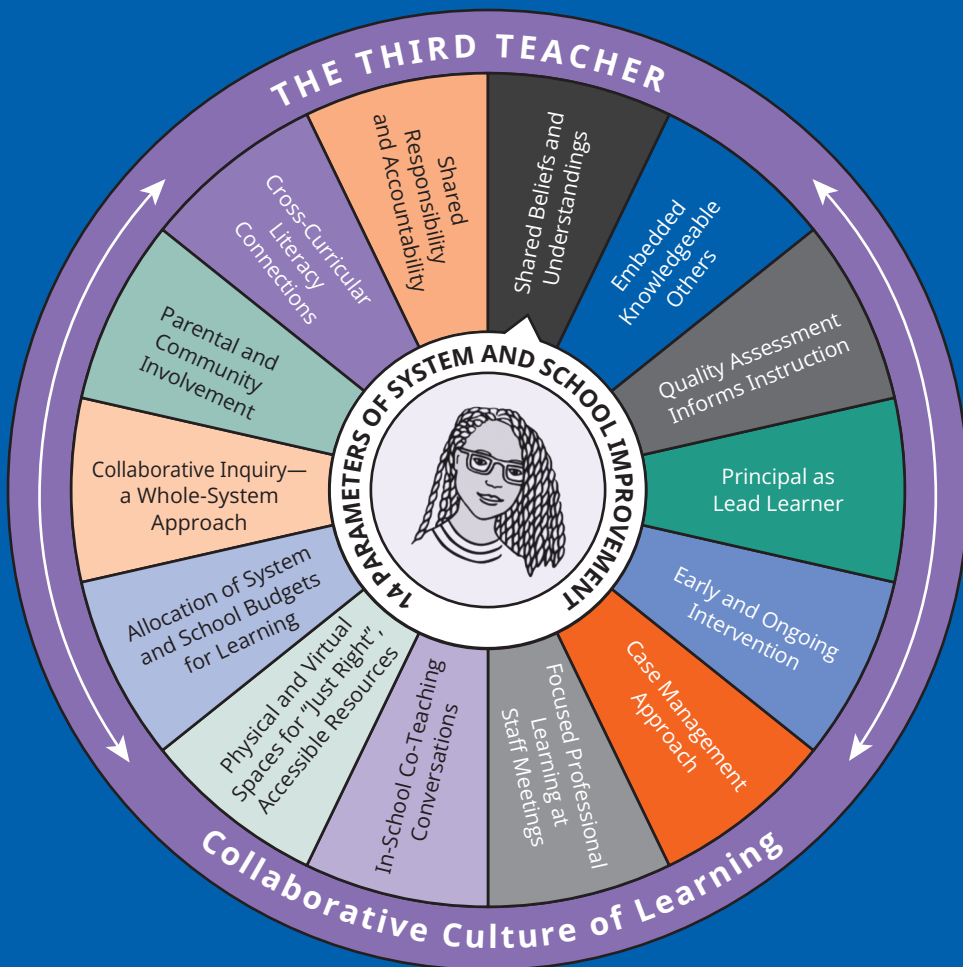


Figure A: The 14 Parameters Wheel

Introduction

James Coutts is an educator, businessman, Managing Director of CLARITY Learning Suite Global, and the proudest supporter of the author.

Every strong Learning Organization (LO) has a vision of why its members do what they do. It serves as the bedrock of its core beliefs, a statement that is continually referenced. Dr. Lyn Sharratt has relentlessly researched the basic building blocks for improving education systems and schools. The 14 Parameters of System and School Improvement are the essential statements educators need to follow.

Parameter 1, the core belief for educators, is based on the rationale for having “good schools.” Parents send their children to schools where teachers are to provide the learning they need to become literate, critically thinking citizens. Everyone in the system *must* believe that all students can learn and that all teachers can teach—given the right support and resources. Great, high-performing systems and schools work hard to sustain that one belief, *and* they also support learning and teaching by adhering faithfully to the actions within the other Parameters. Understanding the 14 Parameters is foundational to understanding every case study, narrative, and quote in this text; the successes attained and maintained by the case study writers depended on their adherence to them.

Here, we introduce you to the 14 Parameters of System and School Improvement that are referenced throughout this book. They are presented here in a list (Figure B), which Lyn Sharratt’s colleague Michael Fullan said never to do (Sharratt & Fullan, 2022). He said they are not a checklist. We agreed they are actions that, when inextricably woven together and underpinned by leadership actions and the practical CLARITY tools, increase *all* students’ growth and achievement and improve all teachers’ capacity to teach each FACE. I’ve unpacked Dr. Sharratt’s 14 Parameters here as a reference for readers of *Precision-in-Practice*. They also appear again on every section opener in a circular format (Figure A), which is designed to show that they are ongoing and connected, not a list to “get done.” The 14 Parameters are our “forever work.”

Parameter 1: Shared beliefs and understandings. This Parameter is number one for a reason: It is the most important and hardest to do. We must believe all students can learn; all teachers can teach; we have early and ongoing interventions in place; high expectations are a must; and we can clearly articulate why we do what we do every day. It is a challenge to move forward with improvement if we are not all in agreement with the four statements in Parameter 1. That is why we need to begin with this Parameter, return to it often, and have the data to support what it looks like.

Parameter 2: Embedded Knowledgeable Others. We call those teachers and leaders with proven expertise to teach all students Knowledgeable Others (KOs). They are

Figure B • The 14 Parameters of System and School Improvement

1. Shared beliefs and understandings
 - a. All students can achieve high standards given the right time and the right support.
 - b. All teachers can teach to high standards given time and the right assistance.
 - c. High expectations and early and ongoing intervention are essential.
 - d. All leaders, teachers, and students can articulate what they do and why they lead, teach, and learn the way they do. (Adapted from Hill & Crévola, 1999)
2. Embedded Knowledgeable Others
3. Quality assessment informs instruction
4. Principal as lead learner
5. Early and ongoing intervention
6. Case management approach
7. Focused Professional Learning at staff meetings
8. In-school co-teaching conversations—e.g., Case Management Meetings (CMMs) and Collaborative Assessment of Student Work (CASW)
9. Physical and virtual spaces for “just right”, accessible resources
10. Allocation of system and school budgets for learning
11. Collaborative Inquiry—a whole-system approach
12. Parental and community involvement
13. Cross-curricular literacy connections
14. Shared responsibility and accountability
 - a. We all own all the FACES!

Source: Sharratt and Fullan (2022).

value-added in all K–12 schools when they spend part of their time during the school day working alongside colleagues, sharing their experience, skill, and insights with grace and humility. We all need to be KOs and have KOs to support our collective efficacy.

Parameter 3: Quality assessment informs instruction. The Assessment Waterfall Chart (AWC; Figure C) serves as our guide to explicit assessment, informing instruction in every classroom. The AWC becomes a self-reflection tool when used to shine a light on our practice. The key five constructs are deconstructed Learning Intentions (LI), co-constructed Success Criteria (SC), Descriptive Feedback against the SC, Peer- and Self-Assessment against the SC, and ultimately individual Goal-Setting against the SC. It may sound straightforward; however, it is very sophisticated, intentional teaching

when assessment informs instruction—the heart of improving practice—especially when meaning is co-constructed, that is, developed by students and teachers together.

Parameter 4: Principal as lead learner. In Dr. Sharratt’s original data collection with Michael Fullan (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009), they heard teachers say, “We don’t learn unless the principal is present and involved.” Sharratt has said, “We have been tempted to say that this Parameter is about **all** leaders in systems and schools; however, we also wanted to be true to the original intent of our research, so we left it the same: Principals must show up, leave their titles at the door, and learn alongside.” The principal must model being a learner and leader simultaneously. They must support others to become leaders at every opportunity. Leaders are judged by how many leaders they leave behind.

Parameter 5: Early and ongoing intervention. Not everyone can teach every child everything. Evidence-proven formal interventions are important supports; less formal interventions are also important. Readers may have often heard, “I can’t get through to James in geometry; any ideas?” or “This child will never learn to read.” or “Can someone give him some extra help?” Early and ongoing interventions are critical and can be formally unpacked and assessed during Case Management Meetings (Parameter 6).

Parameter 6: Case management approach (CMA). CMA is two-pronged: Data Walls and Case Management Meetings. (1) Data Walls in private, non-public places accomplish “putting FACES on the data” and provide a physical forum where leaders and teachers can discuss the instructional starting points for each FACE. Tangible Data Walls lead to (2) Case Management Meetings (CMMs). Not all students will come to CMMs, only those about whom the staff are wondering or have questions. CMM templates can be found in Appendix B on the companion website (<https://www.lynsharratt.com/precision-in-practice>) and ensure meetings are only 15 minutes (short, sharp, and shiny).

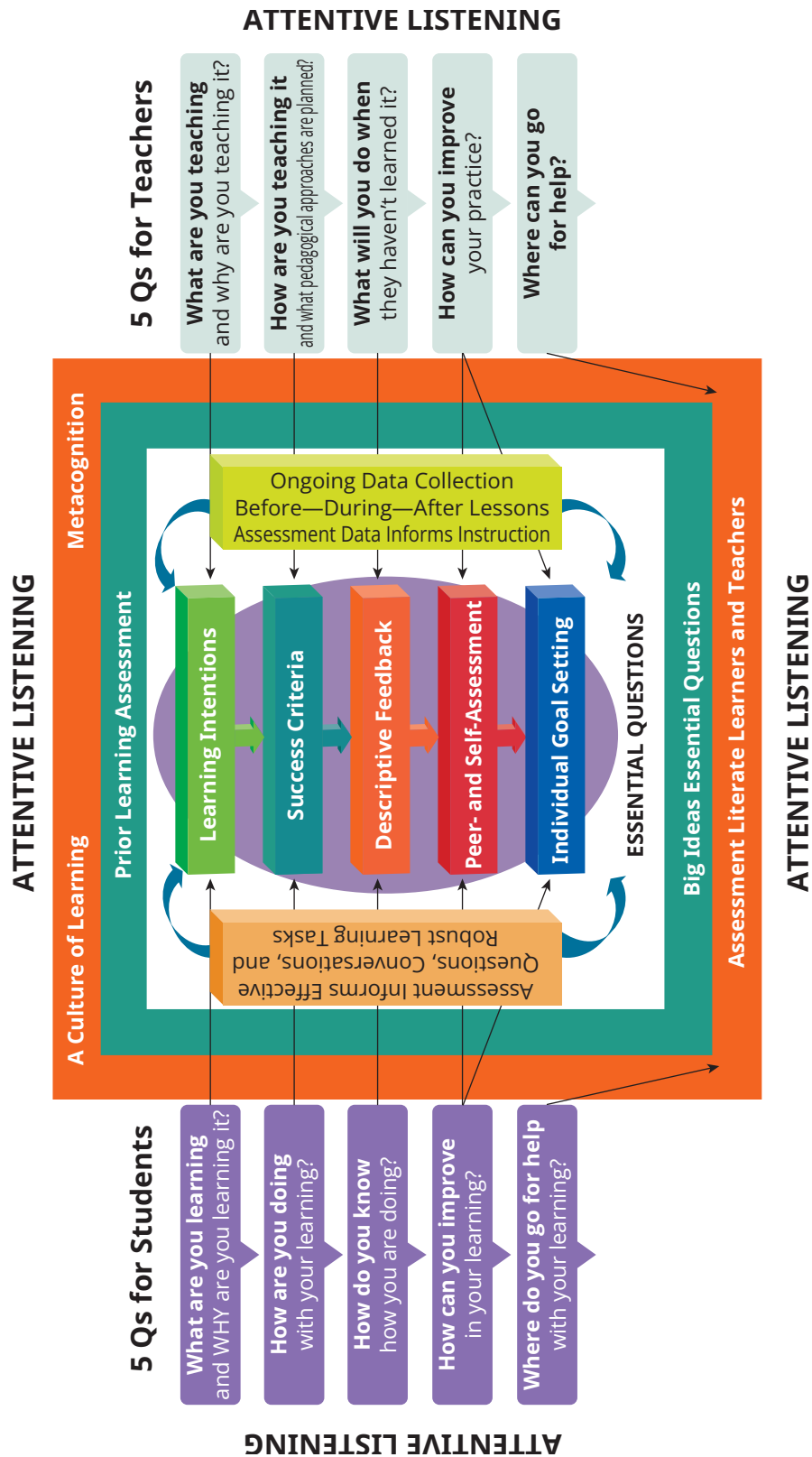
Parameters 7, 8, 9, and 10 are all operational supports for quality teaching that need to be addressed by financial staff, librarians, literacy leaders, and particularly principals and vice-principals. These four Parameters are the pillars underlying Parameter 1.

Parameter 7: Focused Professional Learning at staff meetings. Every meeting is focused on learning and has a foundational routine that is a collaboratively planned structure: Minds ON! Co-Constructed Operating Norms (how we will treat each other), Learning Intentions, Success Criteria, and beginning with data. These Professional Learning (PL) routines model what we expect to see in classrooms. All operational issues are addressed via email and daily/weekly bulletins.

Parameter 8: In-school co-teaching conversations (e.g., CMMs and Collaborative Assessment of Student Work [CASW]). Time to collaborate is critical. CLARITY tools provide structures and templates for collaboration, such as the Collaborative Assessment of Student Work (Appendix H on the companion website, www.lynsharratt.com/precision-in-practice), CMM, and the co-teaching Cycle.

Parameter 9: Physical and virtual spaces for “just right,” accessible resources. Resources must be current and reflect the students who are in classes.

Figure C • Assessment Waterfall Chart

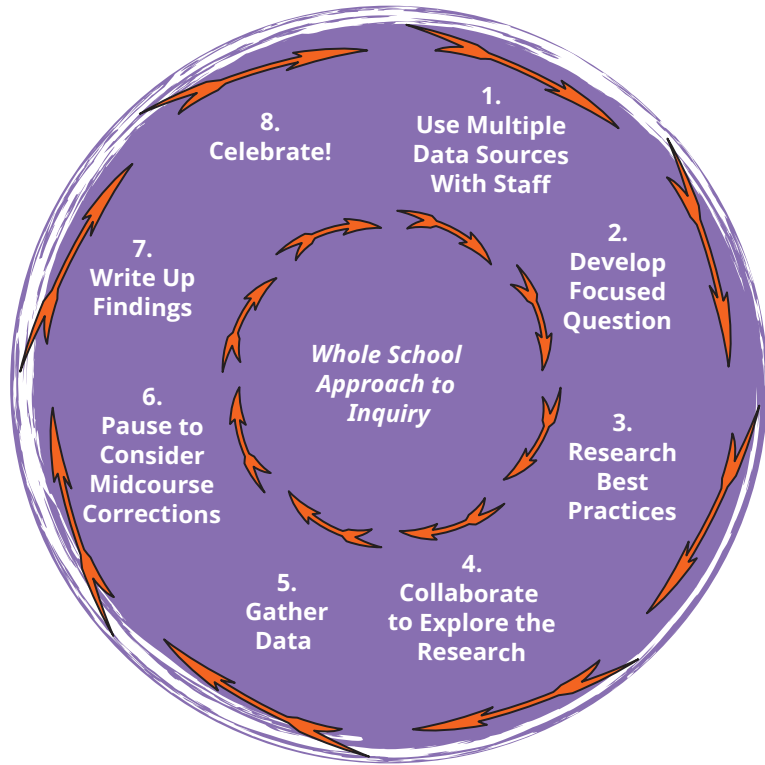


Source: Hattie, J. and Sharratt, L. (2025)

Parameter 10: Allocation of system and school budgets for learning. It is imperative that these budgets support the priority: learning. It is difficult for some administrators who like to sit on the budget and secretly dispense funds for favorite purposes. Other administrators like to hand out funds quickly without prioritizing which purchase will have the greatest impact on students’ growth and achievement.

Parameter 11: Collaborative Inquiry—a whole-system approach. Everything is inquiry! When we look at Data Walls as “wondering walls” we understand the importance of the questions that are provoked by the data. Capturing those questions asked at the Data Wall is critical in shaping the Collaborative Inquiry cycle (Figure D). What do we need to know more about? Having a structured Collaborative Inquiry cycle keeps the inquiry focused, even though it may be one step forward and two back!

Figure D • Detailed Collaborative Inquiry Iterative Process



Source: Sharratt, L. and Fullan, M. (2012, 2022).

Parameter 12: Parental and community involvement. Parents are students’ first teachers. They need to be involved in their children’s learning, and when they are, they make a difference to students’ achievement (Sharratt, 1996). Ongoing communication is necessary, and meeting parents where they are, not expecting them to always be able to get to the school, is key.

Parameter 13: Cross-curricular literacy connections. This Parameter specifically addresses the notion “I teach Physics [or Math, or English]” that reveals an undercurrent

of “I don’t teach students” or “I taught it; they just didn’t get it.” Large blocks of uninterrupted time in all content areas help teachers to access assessment practices that inform K–12 instruction (see AWC). Literacy comprehension is critical across all subject areas, K–12, and should be part of every course in elementary and secondary schools. Making cross-curricular literacy connections in every subject area and/or unit of study can make *all* students’ understanding explicit.

Parameter 14: Shared responsibility and accountability. Sharratt’s research with Dr. Fullan also reported that successful systems and schools didn’t talk about *my* classroom or *my* students (Sharratt & Fullan, 2022) but about *our* students. System and school leaders discussed in this book say, “We own all the FACES of the learners (adult and student) in our care. We care as much about the school down the road as we do our own.” That is **Response-ability** that leads to systems thinking. Anything that a school is asked to do should also be modeled by system leaders, for example, a System Data Wall, System Case Management Meetings, System multi-modal teaching resources, and System community advisory councils. The Principal as Lead Learner is a good example for leaders to follow at the System level. Leaders and teachers at all levels use

Learning Walks and Talks to judge the effectiveness of their leading by asking the 5 Questions:

5 Questions Teachers Can Ask Students

- ✓ What are you learning and why?
- ✓ How are you doing?
- ✓ How do you know?
- ✓ How can you improve?
- ✓ Where do you go for help?

5 Questions Teachers Can Ask Themselves

- ✓ What am I teaching?
- ✓ Why am I teaching it?
- ✓ How will I teach it?
- ✓ How will I know when students have learned it or not?
- ✓ What is next if this works? If it doesn’t work?
Where do I go for help?

5 Questions Leaders Can Ask Themselves

- ✓ What am I leading?
- ✓ Why am I leading it?
- ✓ How will I lead it?
- ✓ How will I know when teachers have learned it?
- ✓ What is next if this works? If it doesn't work?

These questions tell leaders everything about the depth of understanding of a unit of study or how the PL sessions are translating into practice in the classroom. Learning Walks and Talks are the tool to determine the depth of implementation of the bookends—Parameter 1 and Parameter 14—in the belief that every teacher can teach, and no child is ever unsupported but is growing and achieving as we own all the FACES in our care.

Although you can read about and self-assess against the Parameters individually, the impact of the 14 Parameters is like the strands in a finely woven tapestry. Parameters 1 and 14 are the tapestry's border. Together, Parameters 1, 6, and 14 are the “non-negotiables” that are foundational to the work and need to be revisited often. At the end of each term, staff involvement shifts from understanding the Parameters to using them as a self-assessment or gap analysis tool (Appendix I on the companion website, www.lynsharratt.com/precision-in-practice) to ensure learners are moving forward in each of the 14 Parameters. If they are embedded with fidelity, all students *will* grow and achieve (Sharratt, 2019a), as the case studies in this book demonstrate.

—J.D. Coutts

Teacher Takeaway Podcast (January 31, 2026): Evidence-Proven Improvement With Dr. Lyn Sharratt

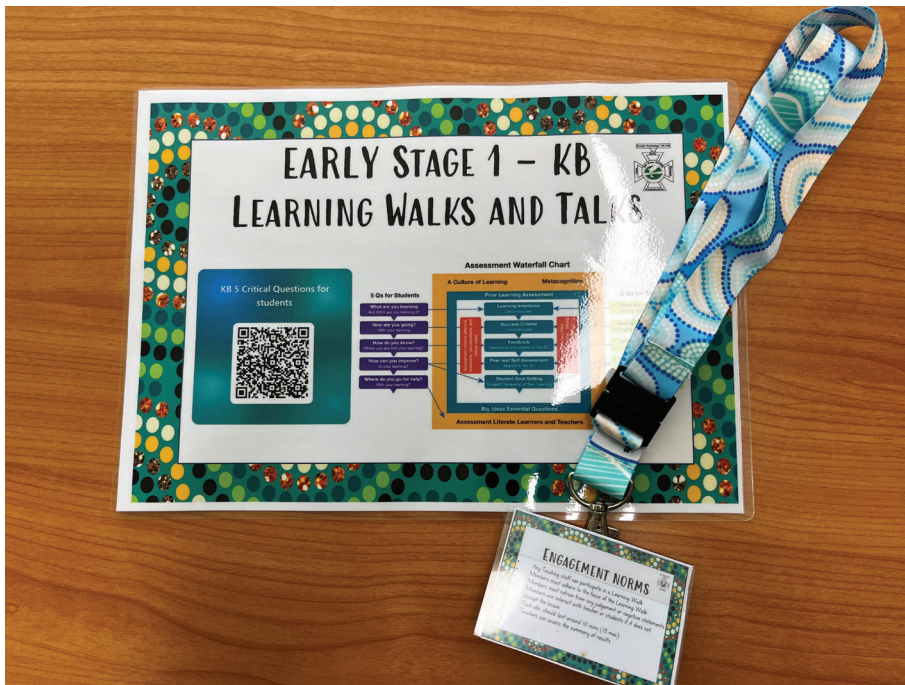


A conversation between Dr. Lyn Sharratt and Aaron Johnston, Deputy Principal at Telarah Public School, NSW, Australia, discussing Dr. Sharratt's book *Precision-in-Practice*.

<https://qrs.ly/1ehbz8e>

Learning Walks and Talks Unpacked

Every system, network, school, and classroom leader needs a tool to answer the question, “How do I know that every student in my care is growing and achieving?” Jessica Sheather provides us with an impactful reply in the following narrative.

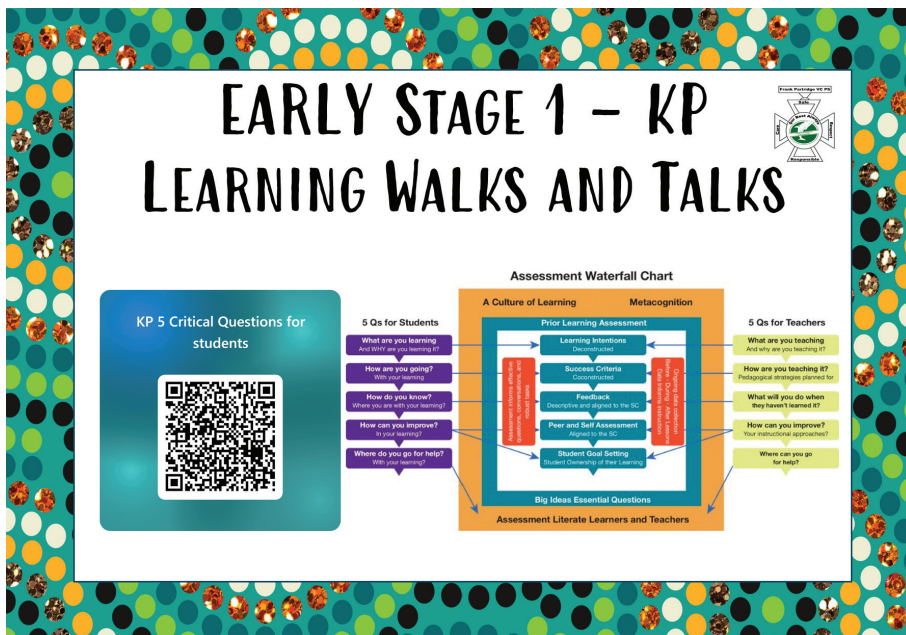


The Learning Walk and Talk (LWT) (Figure E) is a powerful formative tool used by educators to engage collaboratively in observing and discussing teaching and learning practices in real time. Traditionally, it involves moving through classrooms or learning environments to focus on specific aspects of pedagogy, student engagement, and/or curriculum delivery. **It is non-evaluative.**

To make this process more efficient, interactive, and sustainable, we can integrate a **digital framework** using **QR codes** and **Microsoft Forms** aligned with the 5 Questions approach. This method enables easy data collection, real-time reflection, and ongoing feedback to us as leaders, to embed best practice more thoroughly. It works as follows:

1. QR Codes as Access Points

Place QR codes strategically in learning environments or provide them digitally to educators. Scanning the QR code directs participants to a Microsoft Form designed around the 5 Questions about the observed practice.



2. The 5 Questions

These 5 Questions focus on essential elements of teaching and learning:

- ✓ What are you learning and why?
- ✓ How are you doing with your learning?
- ✓ How do you know how you are doing?
- ✓ How can you improve in your learning?
- ✓ Where do you go for help with your learning?

3. Engagement Protocols

- ✓ Any teaching staff can participate in LWTs with a leader.
- ✓ Walkers must adhere to the focus of the LWT, starting at the Data Wall.
- ✓ Walkers must refrain from any judgments or negative statements.
- ✓ Walkers do not talk to the teacher but can ask a student the 5 Questions if it does not interrupt the lesson.
- ✓ Each classroom LWT is 5–7 minutes, beginning by observing the Third Teacher.
- ✓ Observations are discussed outside the classroom away from the purview of the teacher.
- ✓ Notes are recorded on a shared document without students' or teachers' names and year levels. This is about collecting data on trends and patterns over time in the school and looking for Knowledgeable Others who would be willing to share their practice with colleagues.

4. Digital Recording and Time Stamping

- ✓ Microsoft Forms automatically records responses along with the date and time.
- ✓ Responses are saved centrally, ensuring data are organized and accessible for analysis.

5. Embedding Practice Through Feedback

- ✓ Patterns and insights from LWTs can inform professional development sessions, coaching, and collective reflection activities.
- ✓ This supports a culture of continuous improvement and sustains impact beyond individual observations. This process is *not* “teacher performance appraisal.”

6. Sustainable and Scalable

- ✓ Digital tools allow easy replication across multiple classrooms and timeframes.
- ✓ Reduces paperwork and manual data entry
- ✓ Enables school leaders and teams to track progress and trends over weeks or terms

7. Benefits

- ✓ **Impact:** LWTs support leaders to find impactful practices in schools across systems. This allows doors to open and teaching to be made public—and to be celebrated!
- ✓ **Efficiency:** Timely access to classrooms, to student voices, and to reflection tools via QR codes.
- ✓ **Data-Driven:** Supports evidence-based decision-making.
- ✓ **Engagement:** Encourages active participation in reflective dialogue about assessment that informs instruction.
- ✓ **Sustainability:** Creates a consistent feedback loop to embed best practices.
- ✓ **Visibility:** Leaders and educators can monitor patterns of learning and growth over time.

Integrating LWTs with a digital framework (e.g., using QR codes to collect data linked to Microsoft Forms) offers a streamlined way to ask the 5 Questions, record responses with timestamps, and provide meaningful constructive feedback. This positive approach not only enhances observational practice but also strengthens the embedding of effective teaching strategies in a sustainable and scalable manner. Always end with celebrations of leaders', teachers', and students' growth and achievement. Celebrate small wins!

—**Jessica Sheather**, Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Instruction,
Frank Partridge VC Public School, Nambucca, NSW, Australia

Figure E • Learning Walks and Talks

LEARNING WALKS AND TALKS



Research Monograph #1: Learning Walks and Talks

This Monograph Series unpacks the leadership tools that make a difference to increasing all students' growth and achievement. They are intended to be short, sharp, and shiny pieces from the research in the CLARITY text.

Dr. Lyn Sharratt (2019). CLARITY: What Matters MOST in Learning, Teaching and Leading. Corwin Publishers



Available for download at <https://www.lynsharratt.com/precision-in-practice>

Implementation and Sustainability

This must be a topic on every educational leader's mind. How do we scale and sustain successful implementation from pockets of success? We first must know that successful systems, networks, and schools move quickly to **turn their strategic plans into action**. They create a concrete roadmap (Figure F), pressure-test their implementation plans, and ensure the budget (Parameter 10) is oriented around the priority: every student succeeding.

Figure F is logical and sequential. Implementation may not be that easy, as it is often two steps forward and one back. However, successful implementation depends on leaders who can

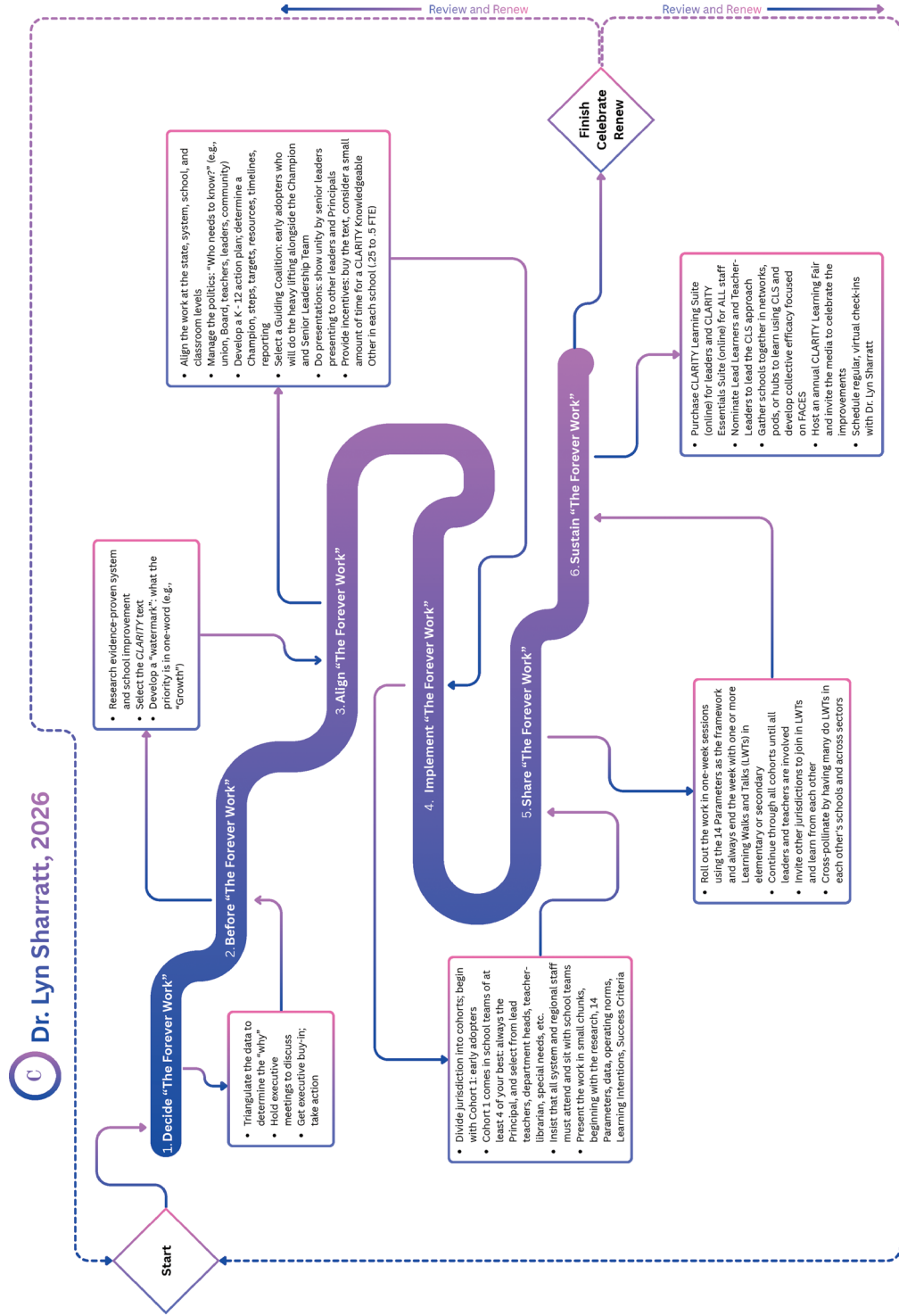
- ✓ Keep distracters away;
- ✓ Gather early adopters into a “Guiding Coalition” to move the work forward together (Parameter 14);
- ✓ Consider alignment of the priority from states to systems to networks to schools to classrooms;
- ✓ Articulate that the unit of change is the classroom: assessment drives instruction (Parameters 3 and 13)!
- ✓ Create a legion of changemakers: Knowledgeable Others in every school who have time, during the school day, to work alongside colleagues, sharing their teaching expertise (Parameter 2); and
- ✓ Put FACES on their data and **use the data** to build a shared culture of continuous improvement (the non-negotiables: Parameters 1, 6, and 14).

Failure Is NOT an Option

Education is notorious for “trying something” without an evidence-proven evaluation, implementation roadmap (e.g., Figure F), or adequate funding. Quick fixes don't work. There are no sprints. Staying the course is a must if the work is well-researched from the outset.

Leadership is key (Parameter 4). Leaders in systems learn alongside school Principals and their teams: they show up, stay, engage, guide, and empower the Professional Learning toward the shared vision (Parameter 1) of all students learning. Leaders who make a difference to successful implementation and sustainability leave their titles and egos at the door and learn alongside others (Parameter 14).

Figure F • The Precision-in-Practice Implementation Roadmap



Authentic engagement is hard to do well, but successful school systems treat it as non-negotiable. They develop and enhance policies to integrate the work that resonates and is embedded in all classrooms.

In practice, this includes (1) collecting perception data from all stakeholder groups to measure the rate of change, and (2) ensuring that everyone is Walking and Talking in classrooms, looking for evidence of **all** students' growth and achievement. These create compelling change stories, like the ones in this text, that influence Precision-in-Practice at the system, network, school, and classroom levels.

Author's Note: I think graphic organizers are visually very helpful—like the roadmap in Figure F. Another helpful thinking organizer is found in Appendix E on the companion website: The 6 E's of Explicit Instruction by Principal Elizabeth Beasley and her staff who have graphically illustrated Precision-in-Practice (<https://www.lynsharratt.com/precision-in-practice>).

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