More than just results: Leadership actions for effective use of assessment information

NZAI National Assessment Conference 2025 Ormiston Junior College, Auckland 15 April

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Karakia and Mihi

More than just results:
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Overview

- The concern

- How the topic was researched

- What were the findings

- Recommendations for action

- Suggestion for practice

The concern

- Responsibility for data use

- Challenge was bigger than expected
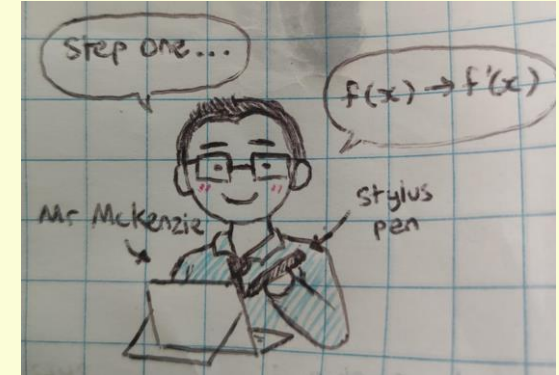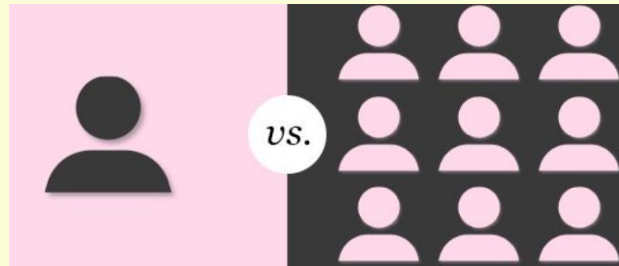
The concern

The Education Review Office, which is the government department tasked with monitoring schools in New Zealand found in their 2014 report that only ¼ of schools used their NCEA data well, more than 1/3 were allocating significant resources but had yet to see any benefit.

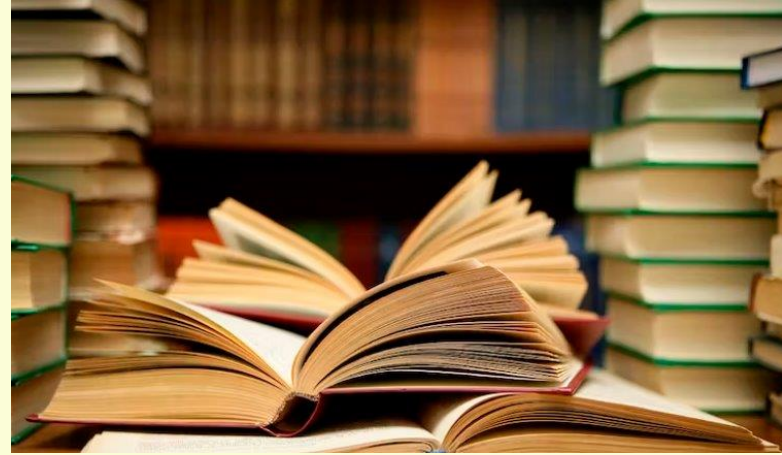The issue still persists Dyson (2021).

Nature of assessment

Formative vs Summative

Use of summative data in a formative approach

Exploring the Literature

Not just education

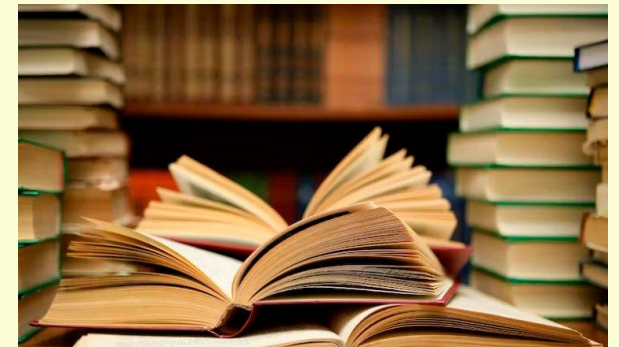Data Driven Decision making/ Evidence based practice

Exploring the Literature

Popular in education reform all over the world, this is not unique to New Zealand.

Data driven decision making has become the latest mantra for many

An emerging field, Lack of evidence of data use tied to learning.

There is a lot on data use tied to accountability of teacher performance

Data Literacy

Organizational vs individual

Exploring the Literature

Leadership

School leaders are becoming overwhelmed with this glut of information such that they are having to come up with **policies and procedures** not just for analysis and interpretation but for **data management** as well

(Abshire, 2014).

Exploring the Literature
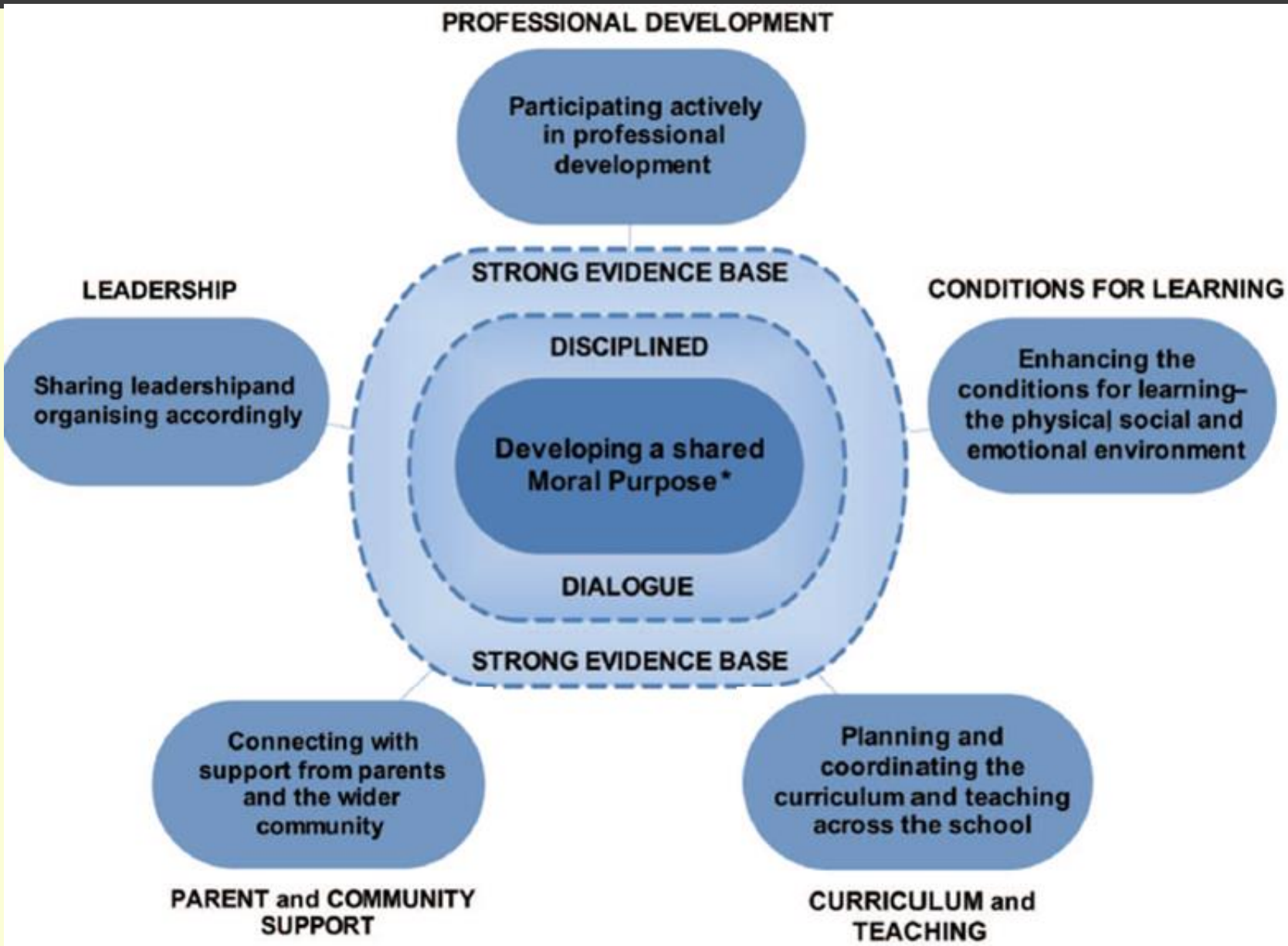
Leadership

Leaders need **strong data literacy** to ensure any interpretations they make aren't flawed.

Leaders should act as **initial catalysts** then apply **distributed leadership**.

A **collective sense** of responsibility was deemed important.

Leaders need to set the **culture**

Exploring the Literature

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Participating actively in professional development

LEADERSHIP

Sharing leadershipand organising accordingly

STRONG EVIDENCE BASE

DISCIPLINED

CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

Enhancing the conditions for learning— the physical social and emotional environment

Developing a shared Moral Purpose*

DIALOGUE

STRONG EVIDENCE BASE

Connecting with support from parents and the wider community

Planning and coordinating the curriculum and teaching across the school

PARENT and COMMUNITY SUPPORT

CURRICULUM and TEACHING

Exploring the Literature

- **Emphasis** on effective use of assessment by the Ministry

- Greater **clarity** of meaning

- Curriculum has supplied a **framework** to structure teaching as inquiry
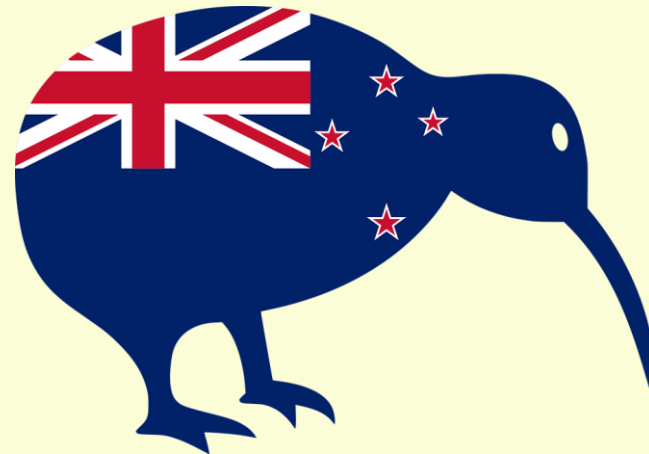
The study design

- National online survey

  - 70 responses

- Case study

  - 3 schools

  - Descriptive multi case study which utilised semi structured interviews

Findings: Leader's challenges

(1) Time - the greatest challenge.

(2) Lack of individual data literacy skills and statistical knowledge amongst all levels of educators.

Findings: Leader's challenges

(3)Tension between the use of NCEA assessment information for accountability purposes, as opposed to being used for professional reflection.

(4) The lack of available analysis tools.

Findings: Leader's actions

- Assessment literacy culture

- Resourcing analysis tools

- Resourcing Time

Important for leaders

- Focus on the purpose

- Separate accountability where possible

- interrelated layers of leadership

Recommendations

For the Ministry of Education to:

(1) Provide centralised NCEA data analysis tools to enable equity of access.

Many schools paying external companies

Need a systematic approach

Must be collaborative

Recommendations

For the Ministry of Education to:

(2)   Disseminate exemplars of the use of assessment

information at the school level

Recommendations

For school leaders to:

(1)   Clarify the nature and purpose of reports

(2)   Schedule dedicated time for reflection

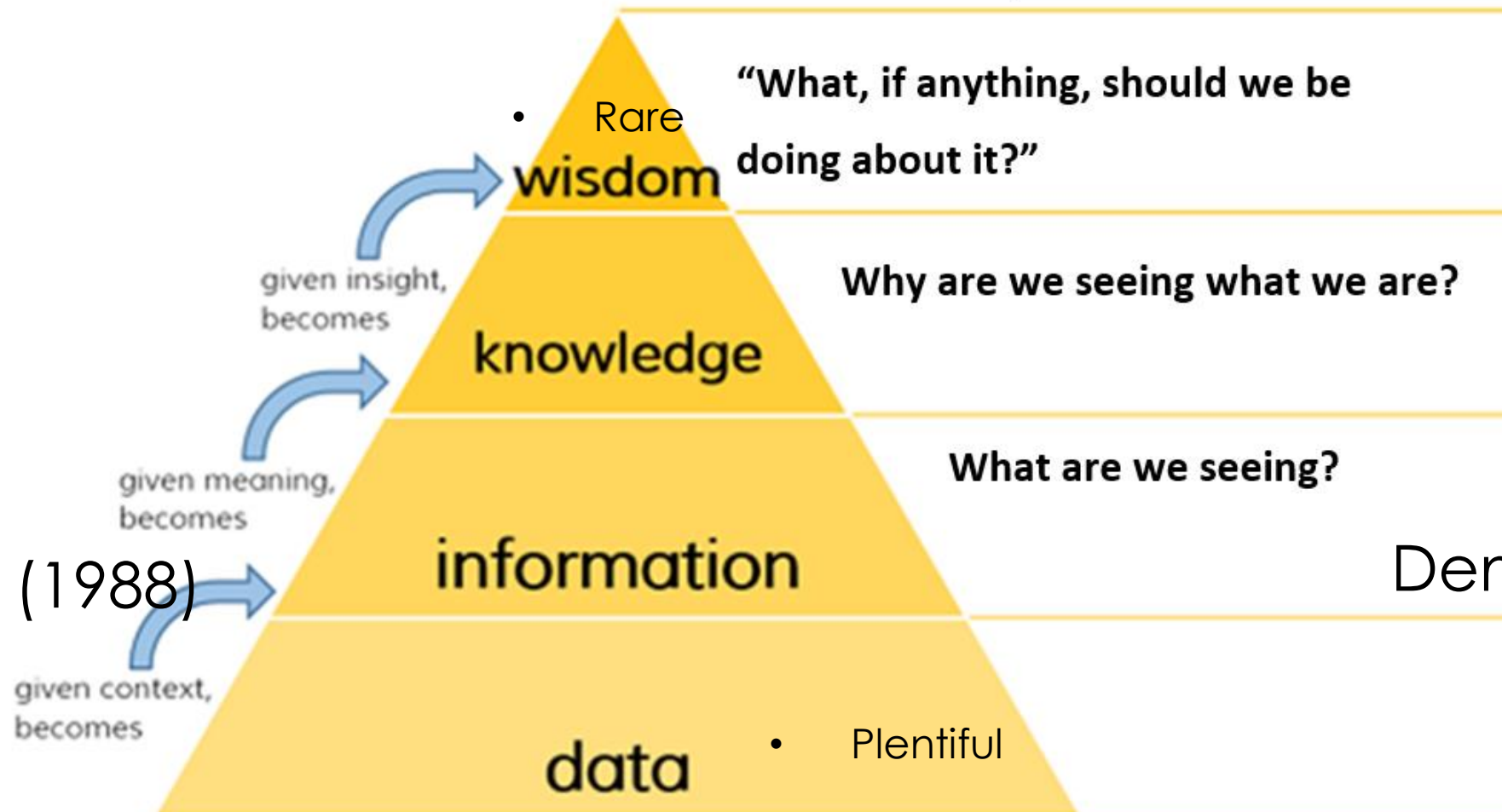(3)   Use conversation prompts to guide reflection.

Recommendations

For school leaders to:

(4) **Set the culture**

Conversation Prompts

Knowledge Pyramid

Dempster's Disciplined Dialogue

- Rare

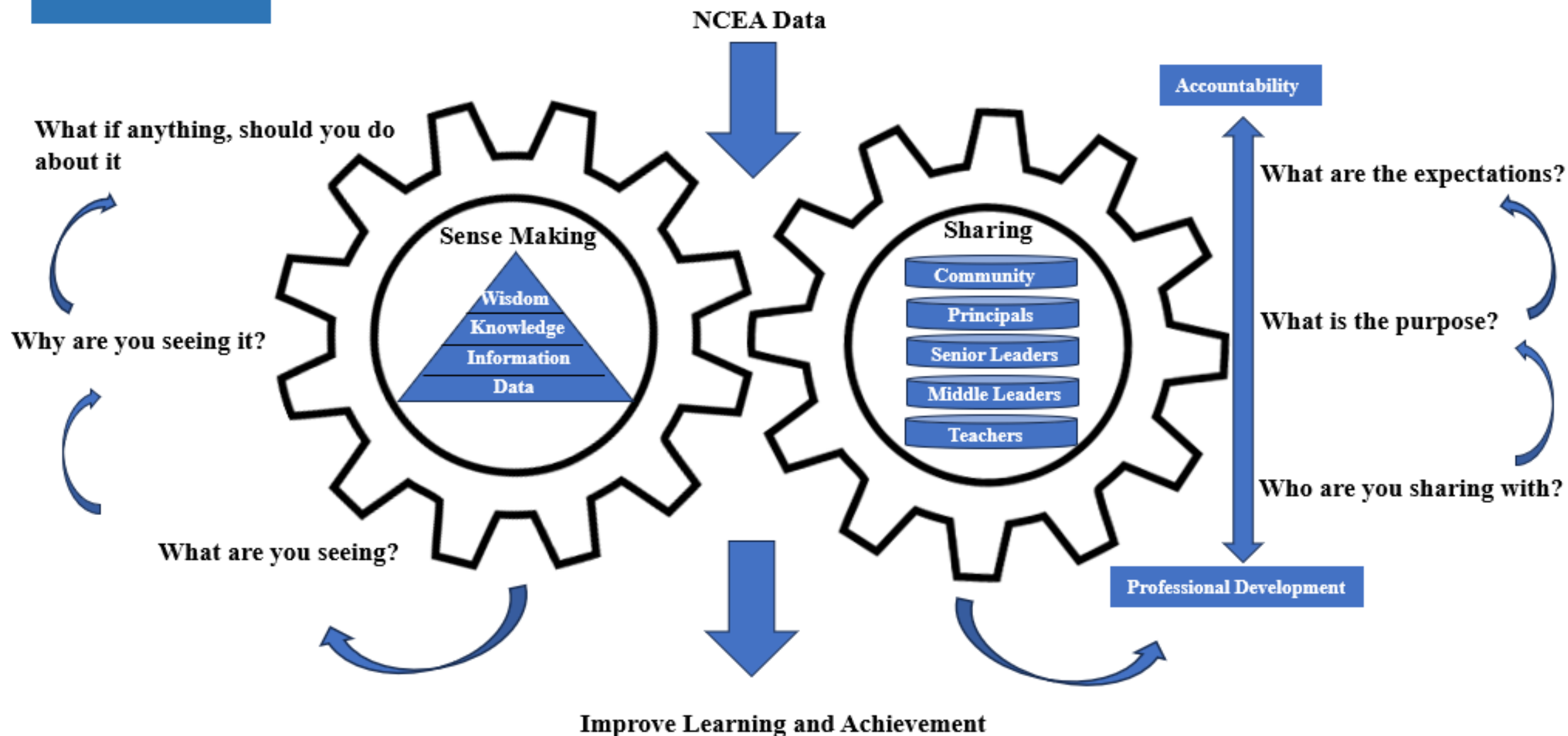wisdom — "What, if anything, should we be doing about it?"

given insight, becomes

knowledge — Why are we seeing what we are?

given meaning, becomes

information — What are we seeing?

given context, becomes

data

- Plentiful

Ackoff (1988)

Dempster (2011)

Learning Culture of Trust and Honesty

Open to Learning

NCEA Data

Sense Making

Wisdom
Knowledge
Information
Data

Sharing

Community
Principals
Senior Leaders
Middle Leaders
Teachers

Accountability

Professional Development

What if anything, should you do about it

Why are you seeing it?

What are you seeing?

What are the expectations?

What is the purpose?

Who are you sharing with?

Improve Learning and Achievement

Redesign the system

- **Annual Reporting**

- **Layers of Leadership**

- Board

- Senior Leadership

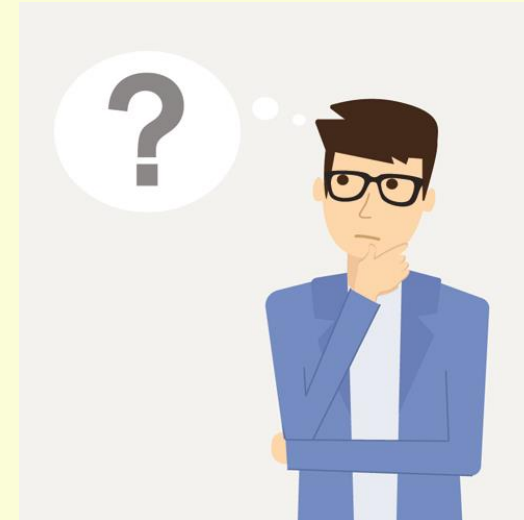- Middle Leadership

- Teachers

Redesign the system

- Reporting **Styles**

- Reporting **content**

- Putting into context - **Telling the story**

- **Actionable wisdom**

Possible Approach

- Two different report styles

Reporting up vs **Reflection**

Possible Approach

- Conversional guidance - Dempster's dialogue

Possible Approach

- **Dedicate** time

- Part of **professional Growth Cycle**