

# Using the Spiral of Inquiry

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Jumbo Day  
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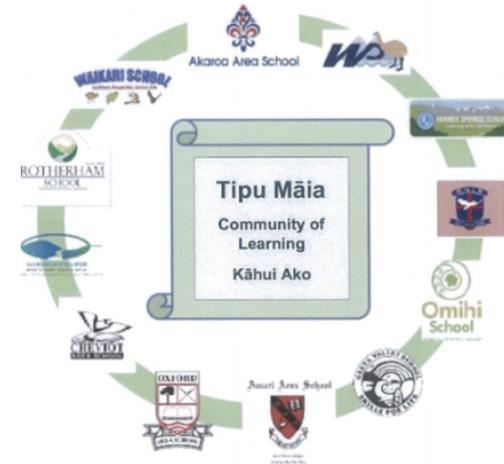


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**EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK**

# Tipu Maia-

Succeeding through  
collaboration & inquiry



## Mission:

Brave, capable, confident learners working together to enable high quality schools with excellent teaching to create the best future for each and every learner .

# • **Key Ideas: Inquiry**

- Start with genuine curiosity
- Ask the learner what's happening for them
- Resist starting by taking action (solutionitis)
- Recognise our bias, assumptions and blindspots
- Collaborate

# Jumbo Day

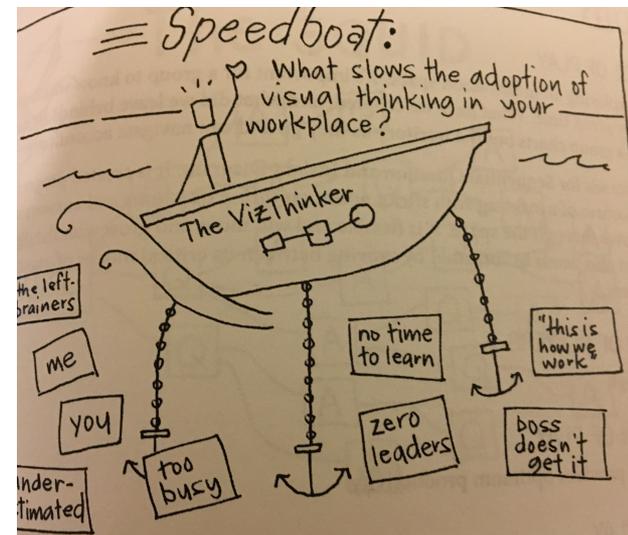


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- Why ‘Spirals’ are not just something else on our to do list.
- In this session we will collaboratively workshop getting an inquiry spiral underway
- How could inquiry become a way to transform our learning as teachers?

# Getting started: What's our problem?

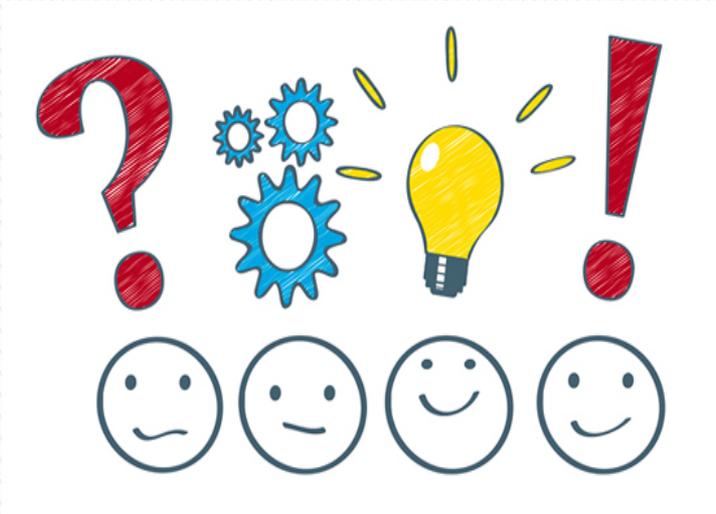
- Activities:
- Five whys-5 post its each
- Boat Activity  
What's standing in the way of ....



Improving

OR

Proving



Oriented toward surfacing problems of practice and view these as opportunities for generative conversation about instruction, student thinking, and interpretations of content goals

For teachers with a proving stance, data lead to results, not questions.

# Inquiry mind-set



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## or stance:

- Stance is a much greater influence on collaborative teacher inquiry than time on task.
- Teacher group's stance toward student-learning data can determine the nature of their collaborative work
- Need more time **exploring potential data sources and reflecting on implications of their data analysis**; less collecting and analyzing data

Slavit et al., 2013

# The Teachers' Point of View

From

- Professional development is something I do to improve my teaching
- I receive knowledge and skills from experts to help me improve my teaching
- I assess students to find out about their ability and what they know

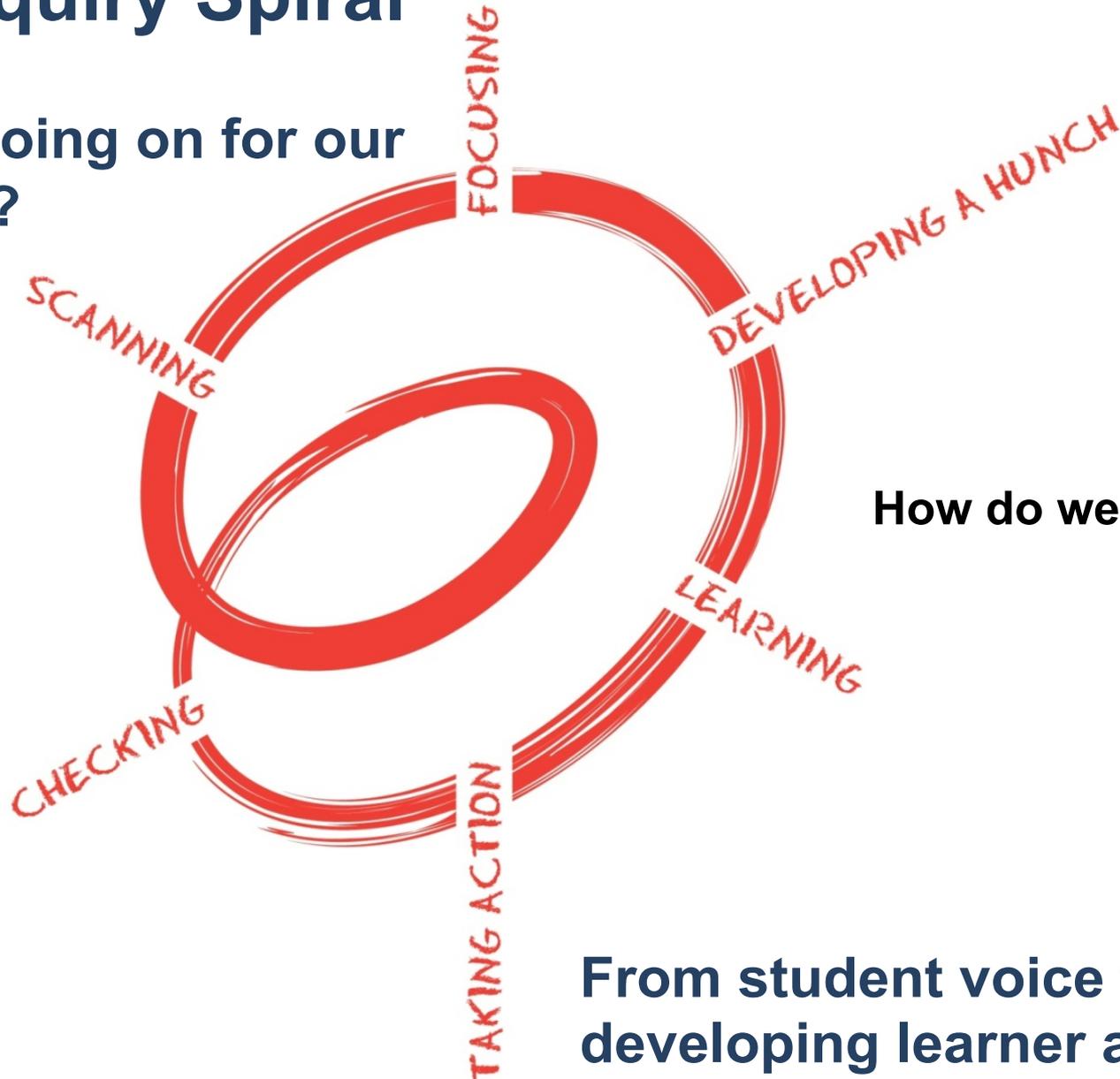
To

- ▶ Professional learning is about improving outcomes for targeted students
- ▶ I need to identify PL goals and actively problem-solve teaching- learning challenges to meet them
- ▶ I assess students to find out about the effectiveness of my teaching and what I and the students need to learn next



# The Inquiry Spiral

What's going on for our learners?



How do we know?

From student voice to developing learner agency

What's going  
on for our  
learners?

## SCANNING



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# What Scanning is and isn't

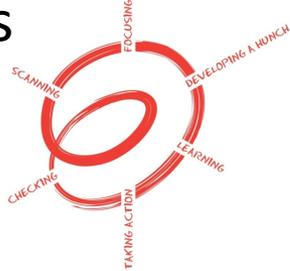
- Requires an inquiry mind-set
- Takes a wide perspective (Eg. student engagement)
- What is happening for **all** learners from **their** perspective
- Not about confirming what already know
- Not just focused on easily measured academics
- Not just what the professionals decide



What does our focus need to be?  
**FOCUSING**

# What **Focusing** is and isn't

- Uses information from the scan
- Requires collection of further information to clarify what is going on
- Includes strengths PLUS problems and challenges
- Not the time to introduce completely new areas
- Can't assume you know what to focus on
- Doesn't focus on one or the other



How are WE  
contributing to  
this situation?  
DEVELOPING  
A HUNCH



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# What Developing a Hunch is and isn't

- It's about the adults
- It Involves getting deeply held beliefs out on the table
- Focuses on how the participants are contributing to the situation
- Turns beliefs into a form that can be assessed as a worthwhile focus
- It's not about students
- Doesn't involve a general brain storm of all possibilities
- Doesn't focus on everyone else
- Doesn't mean just letting off steam about something over which have no control



What capabilities  
do we need?  
PROFESSIONAL  
LEARNING

# What Professional Learning is and isn't

- Connected to the inquiry and analysis process in the earlier phases
- Requires knowing why new ways of doing things are better
- Requires sustained time
- Not just based on a good idea or someone's preference
- It isn't just about learning new things
- Not just a series of brief encounters



What will we do differently?

TAKING ACTION



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# What Taking Action is and isn't

- Involves learning more deeply about new ideas
- Informed by knowing why new practices are more effective than others
- Judging effectiveness by the impact on learners
- Not just about implementing what was learned
- Not just trying things out without understanding why
- Not about getting the teaching practices right



Have we made  
enough of a  
difference?  
**CHECKING**

# What **Checking** is and isn't

- Based on high expectations that action will make a difference for **all** learners
- Turns assessment data into information about the effectiveness of teaching and what can be done about it
- Not just a routine to follow at the end of each year
- Assessment data is dismissed as being about the capacity of learners



# Some Ways to Scan



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- Students' academic profiles (big picture and just-in-time)
- Students' social / emotional / engagement profiles
- Interviewing students
- Observing how they solve literacy / numeracy problems
- The ability to engage in self-regulated learning processes
- Their ability to reflect meta-cognitively

## **Possible Desired State:**

All (adults- leaders, teachers..) using **disciplined inquiry** to improve student outcomes in writing (maths, reading...)

### **Disciplined inquiry as ...**

- Collaborative, open-minded, honest, beginning with the students, rigour, relevant for improving student learning, supported systemically, embedded practice-schools' culture of inquiry, ongoing, brings research, takes action, shared responsibility, accept teacher learning (learning through our 'failures') strongly evaluative throughout, and drives understanding and innovation.



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