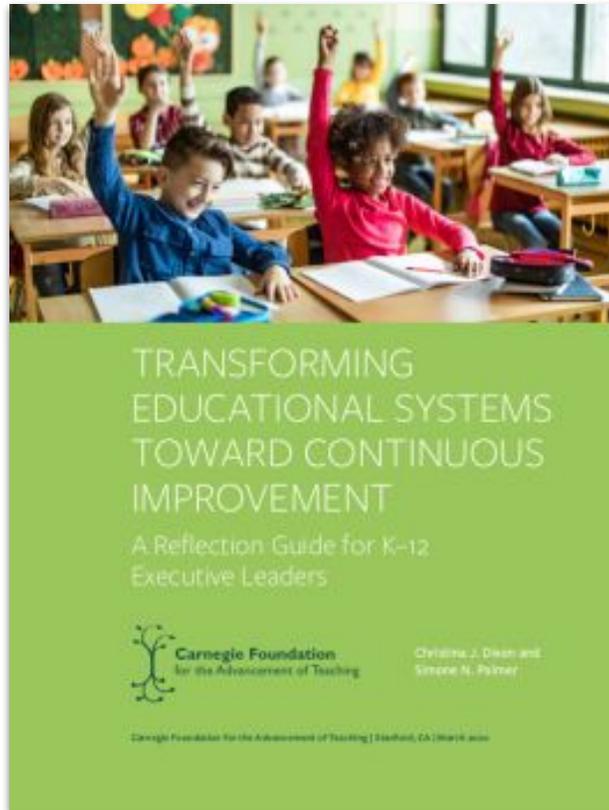


System Leader Toolkit: Tools for Growth



A companion resource to

**Transforming Educational Systems Toward
Continuous Improvement**
A Reflection Guide for K-12 Executive Leaders



Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement of Teaching

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Leading System Transformation

Transforming Educational Systems Toward Continuous Improvement: A Reflection Guide for K-12 Executive Leaders summarizes the findings of a Carnegie Foundation project to understand how executive leaders in education transform their organizations to be capable of producing new levels of system performance through the use of improvement science principles. The guide describes the key dispositions, core practices, and levers of transformation used by executive leaders. Within each of these categories, vital elements of successful executive leadership of such a transformation are identified. Each element includes a description accompanied by an illustration drawn from the experience of an executive leader. Some of these elements may be familiar, but others are likely to be new or offer “stretch goals” for leadership practice.



Few leaders in our field routinely incorporate all elements into how they lead, and learning to lead improvement, like improvement itself, is a never-ending journey. For this reason, each category concludes with questions to stimulate reflection and deeper learning to support leaders in self-discovering opportunities for changing their own thinking and behavior to advance continuous improvement in their contexts.

The leadership categories and elements described in the Guide are not meant to represent a menu of choices. Just as elements of a system can't be improved in isolation, the elements of this guide are unlikely to produce transformational results if enacted individually without attention to the whole.

It is highly recommended that you read the [reflection guide](#) and complete the System Leader Toolkit: Diagnostic Tool for Reflection before using the tools in this toolkit. Becoming familiar with dispositions, practices and system levers described in the guide and engaging in self-reflection prior to using the Mini 360 Feedback Tool will make the data you collect richer and more meaningful to you. In addition, the self reflection provides additional evidence to help you create a growth plan using the Personal A3 tool.

Introduction to Tools for Growth

Tools for Growth is a companion resource to the publication [*Transforming Educational Systems Toward Continuous Improvement: A Reflection Guide for K-12 Executive Leaders*](#). There are two tools in this resource - the **Mini 360 Feedback Tool** and the **Personal A3**. The purpose of these two instruments is to help system-level leaders gain additional insight about their strengths and opportunities for growth as a leaders of transformation, reflect on how they might further develop as a driver of systemwide continuous improvement, and act on their learning by crafting an action plan for personal development. While these tools are powerful when used together, they can still be effective if implemented separately. Asking for feedback from others, while it requires vulnerability, is an impactful way for leaders to gain additional insight on how others experience their leadership. Completing the Mini 360 Feedback survey also provides more data to inform the leader's Personal A3.

The **Mini 360 Feedback Tool** is a tool to collect feedback from other people about your leadership practice. It is intended to function like a lens to give K-12 system-level leaders a snapshot of their current leadership and the state of their organization from multiple perspectives. This tool, an abbreviated version of the Diagnostic Reflection Tool for K12 Leaders, enables leaders to gather specific details from others about their strengths and areas for growth in the key dispositions and core practices, as well as the extent to which they have acted on system levers in their quest to drive continuous improvement across their organizations. The holistic picture that emerges can serve as vital data to guide leaders in the development and implementation of a personal growth plan.

A **Personal A3** offers leaders a framework for organizing and acting on their learning about their leadership. This tool prompts individual reflection and helps leaders engage in evidence-based thinking to identify changes they need to make in their own behavior to advance organizational transformation. Completing a Personal A3 is the first step in implementing a growth plan for personal development. According to Dr. John Toussaint of Catalysis, *"In doing the work of a personal A3, leaders learn to see more clearly how they are facilitating change - toward becoming that organization of problem solvers - and how they are getting in the way."* (Toussaint et al., 2021)¹

You can find specific instructions for each of these tools on the next few pages. A data protocol and reflection questions are also provided to help you reflect on your learning and determine what additional inquiry or actions you might pursue in your ongoing personal development.

¹ Toussaint, J., Barnas, K., & Adams, E. (2021). *Becoming the change: Leadership behavior strategies for continuous improvement in healthcare*. McGraw-Hill.

Instructions for Using the Mini 360 Feedback Tool

Objective: To gather feedback from others about one's leadership aligned to the key dispositions, core practices, and use of system levers described in *Transforming Educational Systems Toward Continuous Improvement: A Reflection Guide for K-12 Executive Leaders*.

1. Make a list of 4-6 people who can give you insight from a different perspective. Aim for diversity of experience, role in your community, professional relationship, etc. Consider the level of trust you have established with each individual and power dynamics, and whether they are likely to feel safe sharing honest feedback.
2. Communicate with each of the people on your list to invite them to fill out the short feedback tool. Explain the purpose of the Mini 360 and ask if they'd be willing to complete one on your behalf.

For example: *I'm currently reflecting on my own strengths and challenges as a leader of continuous improvement and seeking input from you and a few others who can give me honest feedback about my leadership. Would you be willing to respond to a 15-minute survey to help me with my learning? I will use the information to build an action plan to help me grow in my ability to lead our organization's improvement efforts.*

3. Send each person a unique copy of the Mini 360 tool and brief instructions on how to complete the survey. You can do this by either downloading an Excel copy for each respondent and emailing it as an attachment OR by creating a copy of the [Google Sheets version](#) to share with each respondent.

For example: *Thank you for being willing to complete this feedback survey on my leadership. Please use the [attached file/ linked file] to complete the Mini 360. Open the first tab of the workbook to read the instructions, then enter responses on the 2nd tab. Please send the file back to me when you are finished.*

4. Review the completed Mini 360s you receive back. If you need clarification on any of the responses, reach out to the person and ask them to help you better understand the response(s). Remember to take a listening learner stance.
5. Use the "Making Sense of Your Results" section on the next few pages to analyze and interpret your results.
6. Reflect on on what you learned by using the questions provided in the "Reflecting on Your Mini 360 Results" section.

Making Sense of Your Results

To help you make sense of your results, the Carnegie Foundation offers a basic data protocol that can help ground you in facts and observations before making inferences or deciding what to do. The protocol can help you understand the meaning of the trends you see across the data you collected from multiple sources and identify questions or actions to pursue as you plan the next steps for your personal growth and organizational change.

Carnegie Foundation 5-Step Data Protocol

1. **UNDERSTAND** Does everyone understand what is being shown in this display?
2. **DESCRIBE** What do you see and notice?
3. **INTERPRET** What hypotheses or explanations do you have about what you see? What are alternative hypotheses?
4. **INQUIRE** What questions does this raise for you? What additional data might you need to answer those questions?
5. **ACT** What would you do next?

On the next few pages, you will find each of these steps followed by a fillable space where you can record your thoughts and reflections. The first step, **UNDERSTAND**, is completed for you on the next page in the form of an explanation of radar charts and specifically how to read the ones generated by the reflection tool.

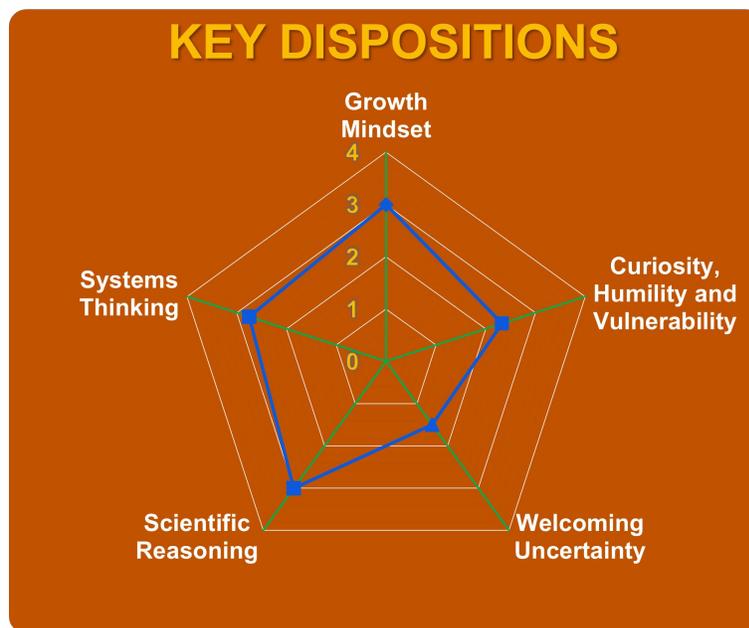
After the 5-step protocol, some additional reflection questions are provided to help you synthesize and articulate what you have learned about your leadership and your system and to consider next steps in your improvement journey.

Making Sense of Your Results

UNDERSTAND Does everyone understand what is being shown in this display?

Radar charts, also known as spider, radial or web charts, are charts that show a two-dimensional visual of quantitative measures that represent multiple variables. Each axis represents a variable and is labeled with the name of the variable. Quantitative values for the variables are represented as points along the spokes (axes). The shape formed by connecting the points forms a useful visual for comparing the variables.

For example, the sample radar chart below shows results of a summary of results related to the Key Dispositions. *Note: the Google version of the reflection tool will generate radar charts that appear different from the example shown below but contain the same information.*



In the chart, you can see that each of the five axes in green is labeled with the key disposition it represents. The blue point* on each axis is determined from the individual's survey responses, and represents the average rating across the set of responses aligned to each disposition. In the example above, the shape formed by connecting the points shows that the rater considers the leader's strengths to be growth mindset, systems thinking, and scientific reasoning and their areas for growth to be curiosity, humility and vulnerability and welcoming uncertainty.

To continue the steps of the data protocol, please proceed to the next pages. As you answer the questions for each step, note any trends, similarities or differences across the different rater responses and consider why these might have arisen.

**In the Excel workbook, if you hover the mouse over any of the points of the radar charts, the average rating will be shown to the nearest tenth.*

Making Sense of Your Results

DESCRIBE What do you see and notice? Facts and observations only.

INTERPRET What hypotheses or explanations do you have about what you see? What are alternative hypotheses?

Making Sense of Your Results

INQUIRE What questions does this raise for you? What additional data might you need to answer those questions?

ACT What would you do next? *At this point, you may consider ways to gather more data about your leadership.*

Basic Instructions on Completing a Personal A3

Objective: To identify key strengths and limiting behaviors related to leading organizational transformation and develop a personal growth plan to make changes in their behavior.

1. Download the personal A3 template at this [link](#).
2. Follow the prompts for each section in the template. Complete the left side of the A3 (understanding the current state) before starting on the right side (planning and taking action to improve).
3. Once you have completed your A3,
 - a. implement your first action step
 - b. record what happens, and
 - c. reflect on what you learned

There are more detailed and customized prompts and explanations for each section of the A3 on the following pages.

If you want to learn more about personal A3s and how to use them, you can read an [overview article](#) or view a [video tutorial](#) from Catalysis' Dr. John Toussaint [Timestamp 16:11-31:48].

Personal Improvement A3 Title:		Date:
		Authored by:
		Coach:
Background Why should I improve myself in order to be a coach / leader who creates an organization filled with problem solvers? Why this, why now?	Proposed Countermeasures What experiments will I try on myself to become a better coach / leader of problem solvers?	
Current State Habits / Actions I Currently Take -----> Outcomes From My Current Habits / Actions (Strengths and Limitations)		
Opportunity Statement - 1 Concise Sentence	Plan / Next Steps What steps will I take and when? What is my practice plan to develop new habits?	
Goals / Targets New Desired Condition. What does better look like for me? What, How Much, By When?		
Analysis Reasons for My Personal Performance/ for My Current Strong Habits and Limiting (Gap) Habits	Follow Up How will I know if there's improvement? How will I know if things are off plan? How will I make time to practice? What is my process for ongoing reflection / P-D-C-A? Who else will I involve?	

Step-by-Step Directions for Completing Your Personal A3

Complete each field of the A3 template:

Title

- Explains your purpose, i.e. what you are trying to accomplish through the use of the personal A3 tool, and focuses on you, rather than the organization
Ex: Learning to model improvement dispositions

Date

- Enter today's date. Ideally, you can use this tool iteratively and update it on a regular cadence. Write a new date each time you update your A3

Author

- Add your name

Coach

- It is recommended that you engage a trusted colleague or professional coach to support you in staying disciplined and personal in the work.

Background

- Consider the nature of the issue that you want to address. What patterns do you notice that concern you?
Ex: My colleagues are good people and try hard, but they often miss the mark on when completing important tasks that I delegate to them
- Consider how your behavior may contribute to concerning patterns or situations.
Ex: I tend to give specific instructions focused on 'how', without explaining 'why' or specifying expected outcomes
- Articulate your own rationale for making change. You need to be clear about your reasons to change to sustain your motivation for the hard work ahead.
 - Why do you need to change?
 - What are the possible consequences of not changing?

Current State

- Review the elements of leadership outlined in the [reflection guide](#) as well as evidence about the current state of your leadership from your Diagnostic Reflection Tool results and/or your learning from the Mini 360 Feedback Tool (if applicable). Use this evidence to identify your key strengths and limiting behaviors related to leading your system toward continuous improvement.

Continued on next page

Step-by-Step Directions for Completing Your Personal A3 (cont'd)

Continued from previous page

Opportunity Statement

- Reflect on your current state to identify a meaningful opportunity for personal change in your own behavior. A good opportunity often addresses a gap that causes discomfort for you.

Ex: *I will clarify the purpose and the expected outcome of every project or task.*

Goals/Targets

- Identify observable actions you will take that can be monitored. Consider the following:
 - How will you behave differently in the future?
 - What goal will be meaningful for you personally and benefit the organization?
 - How will you know if you are making progress toward your goal?

Analysis

- Reflect on why you act the way you currently do. What root causes contribute to the gap between your current and desired behavior?
- Use your insights to guide your action plans.

Proposed Countermeasures:

- How will you take action on your opportunity statement? List ideas of changes you will try in order to reach your goals/ targets.

Plan/Next Steps:

- Plan how you will implement the changes you identified.
 - What will you do? Use "I" statements to describe what you will do.
Ex: *I will ask more questions and listen to the answers.*
 - When will you complete each step?
 - How will you study your results and make adjustments based on what you learn?
- Include a plan to practice new behaviors every day, if possible.

Follow Up:

- Ask yourself the questions in the template
- Be sure to collect evidence of the results
- Build time into your schedule to regularly reflect on whether you are doing the work and if your changes are making a difference.

On the next page there are prompts to help you reflect on what you learned through developing your Personal A3 plan and initiating its implementation.

Adapted from Toussaint, J., Barnas, K., & Adams, E. (2021). *Becoming the change: Leadership behavior strategies for continuous improvement in healthcare*. McGraw-Hill.

