Building Coherence

What It Is

◗ Develop alignment between activity across all levels of the system, from classrooms to principal's office and ideally to the district office.

◗ Work to align documents, actions, evidence gathering, analysis, and conceptual frameworks to build a coherent picture.

◗ Develop a principled rather than ad hoc approach.

◗ Use theories and frameworks as appropriate.

Why It Matters

◗ When there is visible coherence, with all educators and their community seeing where things fit together, confusion and inertia will be reduced.

◗ Coherence makes visible the links and connections that lead to deep learning.

◗ When things are coherent, all levels of the organization can learn together and enhance each other, enabling greater change for improvement.

How I Do It

◗ Develop a shared language and understandings.

◗ Promote work across levels in the organization.

◗ Relate all actions back to the focus (how does this fit with what we are trying to do?).

◗ Look for how things link together, and make this explicit.

◗ Use conceptual and theoretical frameworks to express how things fit together.

◗ Test new ideas against the agreed frameworks for coherence.

Key Challenges for Me

◗ Seeing the links between actual actions and theories of action to determine the degree of coherence

◗ Holding on to the idea of "focused and deep" when new avenues open up in the work

◗ Supporting leaders to avoid distractions and competing demands in order to create coherence

◗ Realizing that building coherence is an ongoing challenge

What I Should Notice

◗ To what extent is there shared language and understanding about what is being worked on? Across the school? Across the district?

◗ How clearly can people articulate the focus and the reasons for the activities being undertaken?

◗ Are new initiatives explicitly linked to the main focus or are they ad hoc?