The next ring refers to high-leverage teaching as a matter of course in their learning. Do this by transforming the school into a thoroughgoing unknown, rapidly-transforming world? We believe we can such that the ways students learn, the skills they develop, and the competencies they master prepare them for an uncharted, rapidly-transforming world. We believe we can do this by transforming the school into a thoroughly transforming CULTURE OF THINKING. From this, students will, as a matter of course in their learning, develop dispositions for a world where innovation will be imperative.

1. At the very center is the school’s core belief: learning is a result of experiences where deep, sustained thinking takes place. While McDonogh is a school invested in preparing students with the core knowledge and disciplinary narratives of its liberal arts curriculum, it does so such that students’ thinking provides the pathway to learn for understanding as well as to develop the competencies, dispositions, and dispositions that will likely be demanded of them in their lifetimes. This idea might seem abstract and amorphous: a culture of thinking? Certainly, one might ask, we all believe that students should think. Yes, of course. But how does a school itself understand it, real, deep thinking is the day-to-day mechanism of action that generates learners of the future? McDonogh took many “day hikes” in the last ten years, individuals, teams, and cross-divisional groupings experimented with a variety of approaches to learning and to innovation. These day hikes, however, began to point the school to a deeper belief about learning—the anchor idea steering the variety of teaching and learning practices with which a McDonogh sought to engage.

2. The next ring refers to high-leverage teaching and learning frameworks and practices designed to ensure that thinking can be seen, nurtured, and figures. What are those practices a school can use that ensure our academic vision for the school. As the Director conducted research on learning and the brain and began to identify the next driver of the vision for teaching and learning, which eventually led the school to the research and tools from Project Zero, it became clear that the school had to focus on the axiom that learning is a consequence of thinking. As the Director conducted research on learning and the brain and began to identify the next driver of the vision for teaching and learning, which eventually led the school to the research and tools from Project Zero, it became clear that the why had to focus on the axiom that learning is a consequence of thinking. As the Director conducted research on learning and the brain and began to identify the next driver of the vision for teaching and learning, which eventually led the school to the research and tools from Project Zero, it became clear that the why had to focus on the axiom that learning is a consequence of thinking.

3. This third and final ring indicates those ideas and, in some instances, practices that might lead to desired outcomes. But, at the same time, the frameworks, practices, and tools in the first two circles will not enough. They might, however, begin to point the school to a deeper belief about learning—the anchor idea steering the variety of teaching and learning practices with which a McDonogh sought to engage.


IDEA

Our summit idea—the thing that we want everyone in the school to be able to talk about—is the BELIEF THAT LEARNING IS A RESULT OF EXPERIENCES WHERE DEEP, SUSTAINED THINKING TAKES PLACE. While McDonogh is a school invested in preparing students with the core knowledge and disciplinary narratives of its liberal arts curriculum, it does so such that students’ thinking provides the pathway to learn for understanding as well as to develop the competencies, dispositions, and dispositions that will likely be demanded of them in their lifetimes. This idea might seem abstract and amorphous: a culture of thinking? Certainly, one might ask, we all believe that students should think. Yes, of course. But how does a school itself understand it, real, deep thinking is the day-to-day mechanism of action that generates learners of the future? McDonogh took many “day hikes” in the last ten years, individuals, teams, and cross-divisional groupings experimented with a variety of approaches to learning and to innovation. These day hikes, however, began to point the school to a deeper belief about learning—the anchor idea steering the variety of teaching and learning practices with which a McDonogh sought to engage.

IMPLEMENTATION

Once McDonogh developed clearly on its “summit” vision—a vision designed by its strategic plan LIFEREADY—the school began to tell the story of this taxonomy, promoting a culture of thinking as the core driver to all our other decisions. At that point, the Director of Innovation & Learning steered financial resources, developed school-year and summer professional learning planning, and identified other professional development opportunities so that faculty could have ample opportunities to develop their own expertise in teaching and learning methods that would ensure our academic vision for the school. We are certainly early in our implementation phase. The task was to take LifeReady and to develop a concrete vision of what a tactical plan would be. What should we be doing to support innovation at McDonogh? How should we do it? At the center of all this is the need to tell a CLEAR, AUTHENTIC, and COMPELLING story about what we truly believe is at the center of relevant & transcendent teaching and learning. At this point, we were “flooding the plain” with opportunities and resources so that teachers can find their way into this new phase in the school’s history. Eventually, though this must not be rushed, we will communicate expectations for evidence of a culture of thinking—and the kinds of teaching practices supporting these outcomes—and review this in our evaluation protocols.

What would we do differently? When we first developed LifeReady, our excitement and enthusiasm caused us to try out many different frameworks from project-based learning to team-based learning, etc. We were focused too much on the what and how and not enough on the WHY. As the Director conducted research on learning and the brain and began to identify the next driver of the vision for teaching and learning, which eventually led the school to the research and tools from Project Zero, it became clear that the why had to focus on the axiom that learning is a consequence of thinking. As the Director conducted research on learning and the brain and began to identify the next driver of the vision for teaching and learning, which eventually led the school to the research and tools from Project Zero, it became clear that the why had to focus on the axiom that learning is a consequence of thinking.

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