ARTICLE

Understanding the factors that contribute to educator flourishing

Brittany Michael-Singh Rehal · **Christian van Nieuwerburgh**

Abstract: Recent research supports the use of positive psychology in education and sets out ideas for educators and leaders to promote and guide student flourishing in schools. There is significantly less research on how *educators* flourish. This study explores the conditions needed for educators to flourish by applying Constructivist Grounded Theory to uncover the experiences of people who identify as flourishing educators. The researchers conducted 13 interviews with self-identified flourishing educators and educational leaders and sought feedback from experts on a proposed theory. Participants included educators and educational leaders in various locations throughout the U.S.A., Europe, the Middle East, and the U.K. This resulted in the Ecological Model for Flourishing Educators which included these elements: authenticity, integrity, agency, autonomy, professional and personal growth, positive relationships, receiving recognition and acknowledgment, being treated as a professional and feeling seen, valued and trusted. The term 'flourishing educator' is used to be inclusive of all types of educators, not merely teachers. Based on the research, the researchers posit a new definition of flourishing educators: A flourishing educator is an educator who feels seen, trusted and valued. They are treated as a professional and encouraged to be authentic. They have autonomy, integrity, agency and experience positive relationships along with personal and professional growth. This study has implications for educators and educational leaders, and will hopefully encourage further research on educators within the field of positive education.

Keywords: flourishing educators; educational leaders; grounded theory; ecological model

1. Introduction

The literature on flourishing educators is scarce compared to the growing research on how educators can foster flourishing students through positive education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Elias & Arnold, 2006). Positive education, defined as education for both traditional skills and happiness (Seligman et al., 2009), has continued to evolve as researchers operationalize the role of trust for student wellbeing (Leighton et al., 2016), study the implications of positive education (White & Kern 2018), implement whole-school positive education approaches to foster positive mental health and wellbeing among school communities (Hoare et al., 2017) and engage parents in positive education (Dubroja et al., 2016). Positive education is a subfield of study within positive psychology, defined as the scientific study of optimal human functioning (Linley et al., 2006). While positive education is instrumental for students, this study focuses on educators and seeks to understand what educators need in order to experience flourishing for themselves. Viewing educators through a positive psychology lens is largely unexplored (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Murphy & Louis, 2018). As a result, the review of the literature is framed around

Brittany Michael-Singh Rehal
University of East London
brittany@educatorflourishing.com

key aspects of flourishing that are relevant for educators: positive relationships, meaning, accomplishment and trust.

1.1 Positive relationships

Meaningful relationships are part of a flourishing learning climate (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018) and according to the theory of PERMA (Seligman, 2011) and Ryff's 6-factor model of wellbeing (1995), positive relationships are essential for wellbeing. The effect of positive relationships are illustrated in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and have the potential to create lasting and sustainable change by expanding school capacity, educator growth, measurable improvement in student learning, and collective as well as individual development of professional skills (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Fullan, 2002; Hargreaves, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Toole & Louis, 2002).

1.2 Meaning

Meaning is a significant element of the PERMA theory and a distinct dimension of Ryff's model categorized as purpose in life (1995). Meaning can be channeled to create a shared vision when leadership is distributed, which can create more opportunities for educators to lead or actively contribute to the shared vision (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Finding meaning is an essential component of flourishing and experiencing a continuum of wellbeing (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Seligman, 2011; Lyubomirsky et al., 2006).

1.3 Accomplishment

In schools, accomplishment is often interpreted as academic achievement. However, there is currently increased attention on holistic education scaffolded by an education model that focuses on developing social and emotional competencies, in addition to intellectual competencies (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Cherkowski & Walker, 2014; Hayward et al., 2007). Several researchers have adopted a humanistic lens for viewing educators, looking at when educators receive compassion (McClain et al., 2010) and how wisdom can be integrated in schools (Ylimaki & McClain, 2009), which illuminates a parallel to the holistic education model as the call for humanistic education gains momentum. Educational environments rooted in humanistic education values might integrate the practice of recognizing educators' accomplishments.

1.4 Trust

While it could be argued that "trust" is a component of positive relationships, it is worth emphasising how educators benefit from being trusted in their professional roles. Studies show educators can benefit from receiving both affective trust (compassion for educator wellbeing) and cognitive trust (belief in educators' professional capabilities) (Murphy et al., 2017; Schaubroeck et al., 2011). Trust contributes to a positive social climate in schools, helps foster wellbeing, and builds psychologically safe environments for educators to talk about their teaching and take risks (Achor, 2011; Biron & Burke, 2014; Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Lambert, 2002; Murphy & Louis, 2018). While trust may be perceived as daunting, trust is often built in the smallest moments and creates a foundation for empathy (Brown, 2018; Gottman & Silver, 2012).

Some constituents of flourishing educators are in the literature and were starting points for our study. We aim to provide a working definition of flourishing educators and better understand the conditions for creating, sustaining and nourishing flourishing educators.

2. Method

Given the lack of research on flourishing educators, grounded theory was utilized to allow a theory to surface (Charmaz, 2006). All data was analyzed and collected through employing the grounded theory approach of theoretical sampling, writing memos, initial coding, focused coding and theoretical coding (Bohm, 2004; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The researchers' purpose is to invite educators, practitioners, policy-makers and educational leaders to engage with the proposed theory by exploring the theory's resonance and application to related and unrelated contexts.

2.1 Participants

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure the researchers could select people who met the requirements for flourishing and additionally guarantee diversity through the global lens and focus of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There were 13 participants in various countries who self-identified as flourishing teachers or currently served as educational leaders with perspectives to share on the topic. Of the 13 participants, 5 were male and 9 were female. Participants voluntarily participated after seeing the recruitment post or after being contacted through professional colleagues. Participants included educators and educational leaders who worked in local, primary and international schools in various locations throughout the U.S.A., Europe, the Middle East, and the U.K.

2.2 Procedures

The researchers obtained ethical approval from the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee and all participants completed a consent form. The researchers posted the criteria for participants on social media, professional databases and through professional contacts by defining flourishing and asking educators to participate if they self-identified as flourishing educators. A flourishing educator was defined as 'when teachers feel a sense of joy, play, laughter, and fun at work; when they are encouraged and supported to take risks in their teaching; and when they see they are making a difference in the lives of their students, school, and community' (Cherkowski & Walker, 2014 & 2018).

Each iteration included 5-8 participants who completed individual, 60-minute, semi-structured interviews via video call. One researcher conducted each interview and asked participants four standard, open-ended questions with follow-up questions differentiated to each participant's response. First, the researcher explained the interview process and answered any questions from participants. Second, the researcher began the audio recording and asked the standard questions with follow-up questions interspersed as needed. Third, the researcher concluded each interview by asking if there was anything else participants would like to say about being a flourishing educator. Fourth, the researcher transcribed and coded all interviews in addition to notation on body language, laughter and other non-verbal data.

The first iteration began with 5 self-identified flourishing educators (round 1). The researcher followed the format described above and asked the following questions:

1. What experiences led you to identify as a flourishing educator?
2. Of all the things that you've talked about, what do you feel are the most important elements of your flourishing as an educator?
3. What factors sustain your flourishing as an educator?
4. Is there anything else that you would like to say about being a flourishing educator?

After narrowing down the themes from all 5 participant interviews in round 1, the researchers constructed a table to represent and define the 7 themes identified in the interviews.

The second iteration included 8 participants who were educational leaders (round 2). One researcher followed the format described above and asked the following questions:

1. What are some factors that you believe contribute to educator flourishing?
2. Of the things you've talked about, what are the most important elements?
3. What keeps/sustains educator flourishing?
4. Is there anything else you would like to say about flourishing educators?

The researchers reviewed the new data from the interviews in round 2 and discovered new themes with some overlap from round 1. The themes and overarching concepts of the data were causal, thus the researchers redesigned the model and edited the theory to reflect the changes and illuminate the core components.

For the third iteration, the researchers requested feedback from experts on the flourishing educator model and theory created from the combined data of the first and second iteration (round 3). The researchers reached out to 11 experts and received responses from 5. The feedback was primarily positive and suggested that the proposed theory was consistent with current and ongoing research on flourishing educators. The experts' constructive feedback was applied and informs the final theory presented in this article.

2.3 Analysis

The researchers used a grounded theory approach to analyze the data throughout each iteration (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The primary objective was to create a theory to name the conditions and factors that create, support and nourish flourishing educators which could support policy-makers, educational leaders, school districts and universities. Due to the social constructivist grounded theory process, there were some modifications to questions after transcript analysis to investigate emerging concepts in greater depth (Charmaz, 2006). The researchers reached saturation with 13 participants and stopped interviews at this point. The final submission of the theory was complete when the researchers concluded that there was nothing more to add to the proposed theory.

3. Results and discussion

The term 'flourishing educator' is used to emphasize the inclusivity of all types of educators, not merely teachers. The model presented here is an "Ecological Model" per feedback from experts who incorporated ecological metaphors in past and ongoing research on educator and leader flourishing (Cherkowski et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2021). In this model, the flourishing educator (tree) is sustained by the sun (leaders earning trust), water (leaders demonstrating trust) and soil (leaders prioritizing educator flourishing). The elements of the model reflect the differentiation required to foster all types of flourishing educators, just as different types of trees have different needs to reach their full, abundant potential. Taylor discusses a similar idea likening the diversity of trees in nature to the diversity of each individual (2021).

Watering a tree is an action, as is demonstrating trust. The ways leaders demonstrate trust in their teams include observable actions such as empathy, granting educators autonomy, and presuming positive intentions. In contrast, the sun sustains the tree simply by being; the ways leaders earn trust are less through individual, specific actions, and more through embodying ways of being, such as vulnerability, integrity, and intellectual humility. For a seed to grow to its full potential, the seed needs ample space and the soil needs to contain nutrients that foster the

seed's growth. Similarly, flourishing educators require a seemingly paradoxical balance of space and nourishment from their leaders and environment.

The following section describes each element of the Ecological Model for Flourishing Educators.

3.1 Leaders prioritizing educator flourishing

Leaders prioritize educator flourishing by differentiating professional development to include opportunities for both personal and professional growth for educators, specifically educator-directed opportunities. This element is similar to Leithwood and colleagues' claim that successful schools have educational leaders who provide individualized support for educators to continue developing their knowledge and skills (2008, p. 30). A Head Teacher gave a poignant example about giving educators:

> 'the opportunity to research, reflect and lead some of their own professional learning in contrast to being directed in terms of what to learn, when to learn, how to learn, who to learn it from--the idea that a teacher is a leader in their own learning. There is a deep emphasis on reflective practice and practice-based research' (Participant H, p. 1).

Giving educators an abundance of choice aligns with Eger's work that links choice to freedom and agency (2017). Flourishing educators felt their flourishing was a priority to leaders who: invested time and curiosity in them by offering ongoing coaching conversations, used shared language such as the inclusive 'we' and demonstrated consistent actions that intentionally removed barriers obstructing or delaying the growth of flourishing educators.

One participant shared, 'support looks like removing barriers' (Participant M, p. 5). Another leader remarked on the ripple-effect of coaching:

> 'it doesn't need to be just me coaching staff, the ideal level is when staff members are coaching each other' (Participant N, p. 7).

This view echoes the findings of O'Connor's study on the ripple-effect of coaching at an organizational level (2013). Rather than a linear model of change, the ripple-effect and Complex Adaptive Systems theory addresses the complexity of organizational change along with the impact on the wellbeing of individuals within these systems (O'Connor, 2013).

3.2 Feeling seen, valued and trusted

Flourishing educators described how feeling seen, valued and trusted unlocked their potential and gave them permission to be fully authentic. These feelings were fostered by leaders, coaches, mentors, students and/or colleagues in the educators' current or past environment. Research has identified valuing, hearing and seeing educators as important components to leadership for school improvement (Harris et al., 2013; Hopkins et al., 2014; Jacobson et al., 2005). The specific phrase, 'what support do you need?' asked in a safe space contributed to educators feeling heard when there was actionable follow-up. Educators felt seen when their contributions and perspectives were incorporated into decision-making and when they were asked what they wanted feedback on rather than told what they should work on. Heintzelman and King include 'mattering' as an important aspect of meaning in life (2014) and Steger specifically identified finding meaning in work as a key contributor to finding meaning in life (Steger et al., 2012).

Educators felt valued when they were given opportunities to lead and share their knowledge. An Assistant Head Teacher stated:

> 'I feel like I've gone even further than I ever thought I would or could/As soon as I set foot there [current school], as a classroom assistant, I just propelled into leadership'

(Participant D, pp. 4, 1)

This element is consistent with research that distributed/transformational leadership relies on building capacity in others, sharing decision making responsibilities with teachers and seeing the relationship between teachers and leaders as a reciprocal partnership rather than a hierarchy (Cherkowski, 2018; Lambert, 2002; Leithwood & Poplin, 1992; Muijs & Harris, 2006).

Educators felt trusted when they were given unstructured time and when they were encouraged to attain school-wide learning goals in unique, creative and authentic ways. The absence of the expectation of compliance leaves room for educators to appreciate and utilize their freedom in ways that ultimately benefit their students' learning and build their professional capacity. Knight's suggestion of using the 'freedom within form' theory is based on a similar idea that a balance of structure and choice intentionally honors the voice of teachers (2010).

3.3 Treated as a professional

Leaders treat educators as professionals by how they choose to respond versus react in high-stress situations, giving permission and encouragement for educators to take risks in their teaching, how they *consistently* speak to educators and through creating opportunities for educators to grow and authentically exist rather than micromanaging. A principal reflected on her past experience as a teacher:

> 'I felt that I should be trusted as an instructional leader to reach students by any means necessary. Even if that meant going outside the frame of what was prescribed by the department or school or district to reach those students. I try to support teachers in that and treat them as professionals' (Participant L, p. 4).

From the perspective of an educator:

> 'the fact that I'm left to do what's best inside my classroom tells me that I'm trusted to do what I need to do as a professional' (Participant C, p. 8).

From a leadership perspective:

> 'we tell them [educators] the basic foundation and they can decide how to use the pieces we give them for how to build it and make it. If you don't micromanage teachers, it gives them the latitude to design their program or classroom for how they see fit. Sometimes, as an administrator, you have to get out of the way and let the teacher do what they've been doing. They're successful' (Participant K, pp. 4-5).

These quotes align with studies showing school leaders are more influential when they display both affective trust, compassion for educator wellbeing, cognitive trust and belief in educators' professional capabilities (Murphy et al., 2017; Schaubroeck et al., 2011).

3.4 Receive recognition and acknowledgement

Educators report recognition accompanies wisdom when leaders show 'lack of ego, willingness to give credit' (McClain et al., 2010, p. 337). The results of this study support the importance of receiving recognition as one leader defined education as a, 'high stress, low thank' profession (Participant I, p. 5). Another participant shared:

> 'I'm in a school where the administration doesn't micromanage, she [administrator] will walk through occasionally and give positive words of encouragement and we are trusted to be professional adults and to do our job to the best of our ability'. (Participant C, p. 7).

This suggests that school leaders who embrace a humanistic approach to leadership might be more likely to recognize educators which is consistent with the accomplishment component of

the PERMA theory (McClain et al., 2010, Seligman, 2011). There is a paradoxical tension here of educators being recognized and being left alone to do their best. As with most themes, distinguishing how and when to choose either option is subjective to individual educators and should be differentiated. A leader stated:

'you have to know your teachers. Do they like praise, do they like recognition, what type of things make those teachers tick? Individually making sure that teachers' effort has not gone unnoticed. Just like with students, when they've made improvements and gains it's important to recognize that' (Participant K, p. 3).

3.5 Positive relationships

Several participants echoed findings from previous studies that leaders and educators need to build positive relationships and leaders need to know educators individually in order to best promote educator growth (Fullan, 2002). One educator stated:

'in my flourishing, I think the most important thing for me is my relationship with the staff and the people I work with' (Participant E, p. 1).

This data supports the positive relationship component identified in Seligman's PERMA theory (2011). Another educator reflected:

'I find that when administration respects my decisions as to what I do in the classroom, it helps me to become what I believe would be a flourishing teacher' (Participant C, p. 1).

This quote demonstrates how leaders promote educator growth by granting autonomy and choice to educators which simultaneously builds relationships.

3.6 Autonomy

An important aspect of the description for what autonomy means in this study posited by a leader in an HEI:

'professional autonomy is teachers using their skill set to implement things that they know will work in their classroom based on the students they see everyday that they built relationships with' (Participant I, p. 3).

In this study, autonomy is giving teachers permission to use their skill set within their classroom as well as control in making decisions regarding their professional development and other aspects of teaching that directly impact their daily routines. Autonomy can be understood as the gift of unstructured time (i.e. 'prep periods' for educators to plan on their own rather than go to mandatory meetings), intentional and self-selected goals for growth, and curriculum options shared as helpful resources rather than monolithic scripts. An educator described:

'I was given complete flexibility and control over my schedule, and how I structure my day' (Participant B, p. 2).

A leader succinctly stated:

'an important factor is giving teachers autonomy to go from compliance to innovation' (Participant M, p. 1).

Providing educators with autonomy allows educators to integrate wisdom from personal life experiences and connections to their current and past students to tailor curriculum, content and learning experiences to best meet the needs of their students. A participant reflected:

'all of our research questions are different. So with 24, 25 teachers, every single one of us has a different question that we want to answer. If anything it's pretty clever of the Head

[Teacher], because we'll have some knowledgeable others around the building who will feel like they've had the autonomy to go away and learn something new, but in turn this benefits the whole school' (Participant D, p. 12).

This excerpt unpacks the paradox of how educator autonomy can lead to an increase of shared knowledge and connection among educators, leaders and school communities. Another educator explored the benefits of shared knowledge:

'...when you're excited about what you're doing you share it with others. No teacher is an island. When people start sharing then you're getting all these wonderful ideas from all different types of perspectives and backgrounds and it just helps to make for a really forward-thinking environment for the kids' (Participant C, p. 7).

These findings support Self-Determination Theory-that basic needs of competence, autonomy and connection must be fulfilled in order for people to be motivated to change and grow (Deci & Ryan, 2004).

3.7 Agency

The following quote serves as the definition for agency in this study:

'when I talk about agency, I'm talking about where there is scope and where we have supported, developed people making informed choices about their work, their time, their space, their instructional practice' (Participant H, p. 2).

The phrase, 'supported, developed decision-capital' by Participant H neatly summarizes the essence of the experiences described by other participants as a paramount aspect of agency throughout educator and leader interviews and emerged as the most important contributor to educator flourishing. This element supports Hope Theory, which contends agency thinking is the level of confidence, intention and the human ability to take various routes to an ideal future (Snyder et al., 2002). Here's one example of agency for an educator's personal and professional growth:

'I was allowed to be out every Friday to attend Uni. When I needed to do a Practicum, like a placement, in another school for 10-weeks, I could go off and do my practice for 10-weeks in another school and know that my job was still safe. If I needed a study day at home because my assignments were due I was given a study day and my pay wasn't docked. If I needed to do an observation or I needed to observe somebody else, that was all put in place instantly, with no arguments. I just felt like they really wanted me to do well' (Participant D, p. 3).

Here's another example of agency in a school setting:

'a big part of flourishing is the autonomy to know what makes the most sense for you and the freedom to choose what makes the most sense as a teacher, because that's the way to get the best out of that individual teacher' (Participant B, p. 6).

This participant illuminates the connection between supported, developed decision-capital and leaders prioritizing her flourishing as an educator and as a person.

3.8 Integrity

Integrity is evidenced in how flourishing educators own their values and see their values reflected in their school through actionable ways values are lived out rather than simply written. According to researcher Brene Brown, 'Integrity is choosing courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than

simply professing them' (Brown, 2018, p. 188). A participant shared:

'I remember when I walked into the Education Board, she used a phrase, "we take the job very seriously but we never take ourselves too seriously." That aligned with my values and now my own staff and I recognize that phrase. We take our job seriously but we don't take ourselves too seriously' (Participant N, p. 2).

The paradoxical tension in integrity is the balance between educators owning their authentic values and also recognizing alignments to core values of their school which provides opportunities for authentic contribution. As one leader shared:

'I have to feel a part of a team, I have to feel a connectedness to the overall overarching goals of education' (Participant L, p. 6).

3.9 Authenticity

One participant claims:

'the ability to be my most authentic self is giving me the opportunity to be my most effective and know it' (Participant B, p. 11).

This participant addresses the connection between permission to be authentic and increased effectiveness as an educator. Furthermore, another participant stated:

'I need to speak my own truth, I need to be a person of authenticity, according to myself, and that is important to me as a teacher and as a person.' (Participant A, p. 16).

She went on to share:

'As a teacher, you actually teach how you are and who you are' (p. 7).

This quote embodies the prevalent connection several educators identified between who they are as individuals and how they educate their students through their way of being. Several educators and leaders discussed the salient need to be their full, holistic selves in order to best serve their students and feel consistent alignment with their values. From a leader's perspective:

'the most important element to teachers flourishing in an environment would be feeling safe to be authentic' (Participant L, p. 5).

These perspectives about the importance of authenticity align well with the conclusions of Stephen Joseph that when people feel accepted, understood and valued they are more open to learning and are more likely to experience wellbeing (2016).

3.10 Professional and personal growth

Throughout the transcripts, there is an overarching emphasis on 'finding better ways' in reference to teaching, leading, and throughout personal growth. This data supports findings that professional learning communities contribute to capacity building (Stoll, 2009; Stoll & Louis, 2007; Vescio et al., 2008). One participant summarized:

'if you're not understanding different ways of achieving high results, if you're not asking yourself challenging questions about how people work and how the organization works and how it can work better ... If you're not asking yourself challenging questions as a leader, you're never going to find better answers' (Participant H, p. 11).

The act of asking challenging questions links to the importance of coaching cultures and a way leaders can model taking risks and actively seeking out better ways. Another participant reflected:

'I feel like a lot of teachers, that 5-year burnout or whatever burnout, it happens because

they are not also focusing on themselves because we are so student-oriented and student-focused. One thing that helped me tremendously in the last 4-5 years is being able to take some time for myself and for my family' (Participant C, p. 11).

This quote illustrates how educators acknowledging and prioritizing their own wellbeing through permission from leaders or from themselves could combat teacher burn-out and increase flourishing educators. Research on the importance of integrating faculty wellbeing within the workplace supports this finding (Achor, 2011; Cherkowski & Walker, 2014; Seligman, 2011).

3.11 Leaders demonstrating trust

Throughout each component, the act of responding rather than reacting is evidenced. As one leader proposed:

'the key components to a relationship of trust is how you react to people who take risks or make errors for a lack of better words. The leaders' responses to those things sort of...they start to build walls or a space of trust' (Participant I, p. 3).

This element is supported by Covey who proposes trust increases through individual effort as well as through consistent contributions (2006). Additionally, trust has been identified as a key virtue of educational leaders (Cherkowski, 2018).

3.12 Empathy

Empathy can be understood as acknowledgement of the lives educators live outside of school and is often experienced through the way leaders communicate more so than what leaders say. As one leader expressed:

'it's not about what you say, it's about how you say it that's pivotal to how the information will be received. That goes with students as well as teachers' (Participant K, p. 3).

Another leader discussed:

'so often in schools there are so many other things going on. Maybe they're going through a messy divorce, maybe somebody close to them is dying; there are all sorts of factors that take place in one's life that can affect performance. Assuming kindness and understanding that we're all going through stuff is helpful and I think people flourish in that environment where they feel understood and treated like a normal person. There's lots of pressure and change that has to be dealt with. For teachers to be in a flourishing environment I think the first thing is that you [leaders] need to default to kindness, empathy and trust' (Participant H, p. 4).

This link between empathy and trust corroborates research claiming trust is often built in the smallest moments and creates a foundation for empathy (Brown, 2018; Gottman & Silver, 2012).

3.13 Presuming positive intentions

Leaders who submit to the challenging yet simultaneously rewarding outcomes of vulnerability give themselves permission to presume positive intentions for the educators they lead. Presumption of positive intent can be evidenced in how leaders respond, for example one leader explained:

'I try to say yes to everything I can. If teachers have an idea I try to say yes as often as I can' (Participant M, p. 1).

Another leader noted:

'leaders can take as much off of educators' plates as possible. That is my goal as a leader. As a Principal, I figure out what needs to be done to satisfy the people above me (superintendents) and board members, what are their expectations. We would sit down and we would say "okay, this is what needs to be done, what can we do to take this off the educator's plate." And we don't take it off to put something else there. We take it OFF. That's how you help teachers unplug. You give them less to do' (Participant I, p. 8).

This example displays how empathy can be demonstrated by intentionally respecting and valuing educators' time.

3.14 Granting educators autonomy

From an educator's perspective:

'I don't have to turn in a set of lesson plans every week to be scrutinized. I don't have to show what standards I'm checking off. It comes from a very supportive environment. So kind of the fact that I'm left alone is what makes me feel like I'm being trusted' (Participant C, pp. 7-8).

From a leader's perspective:

'what we would do is have a conversation about strategies, and it didn't have to be something that I agreed with, it was me trusting their professional judgment and expertise regardless of their experience; whether you're a first-year teacher or a twenty-year teacher. It was just me saying, "Okay, we're going to try this, great! Let me know how this works. When we come back we're going to revisit it. When I come in, I'm going to look for this and give you a little feedback' (Participant I, p. 4).

Autonomy is experienced as 'leaving educators alone', providing feedback on specific areas identified by educators themselves, giving educators supported, developed decision-capital, and then following up by providing educators with what they need.

3.15 Educator-driven decision making

Educator-driven decision making looks like collaborative decisions in which educators are not merely consulted to check the box for evidence of 'collaboration', rather educators are active and influential stakeholders in decision-making processes regarding policies, school values and ongoing changes that directly affect educators. This data adds credibility to studies showing leaders who develop a shared vision for the school with educators succeed in not only empowering educators, but generating hope, optimism, and a greater commitment and sense of responsibility when educators feel they have a voice in matters that affect them (Fullan, 2002; Leithwood & Poplin, 1992).

'You need to find a way to balance what the national aims are with what your aims as a school are and then collaboratively and collectively make decisions about how you're going to achieve those things' (Participant H, p. 2).

3.16 Leaders earning trust

This element is aligned to Cherkowski's suggestion that teacher leaders' mindset and way of viewing their role contributes to educator flourishing and potentially whole school cultures (2018).

3.17 Transparency and vulnerability

Transparency and vulnerability go hand-in-hand because intentional transparency is underpinned by leaders submitting to the discomfort of vulnerability. One leader gave an example of how vulnerability can be modeled through transparency stating:

'showing vulnerability as a Head Teacher. Being open with staff about things that aren't going right and things that are a real challenge to me.' (Participant N, p. 6).

Transparency and lived vulnerability can be understood as reciprocal accountability between educators and leaders. One leader discussed:

'we care about equity and we hold each other accountable for that' (Participant M, p. 4).

3.18 Intellectual humility and will

Participant data revealed a paradoxical balance between leaders demonstrating intellectual humility and professional will, a concept consistent with Collins' theory on Level 5 Leadership (2007). Leaders talked about when they recognized the need to seek help or expertise for an educator or challenge balanced with the need for determined, professional will. For example, one leader courageously shared:

'sometimes the feedback is out of my realm of expertise so I need to pass you on to human resources or the nurse. I've had to refer teachers to get some psychological assistance that I didn't feel qualified to give. I think this is another way to establish trust because even if I want to help they may need to have someone more qualified' (Participant L, p. 4).

Another leader expressed:

'for once the leader can stop being the hero for a change. I think that's a very powerful idea that this one person isn't going to solve all the problems, isn't going to come up with all the answers, etc. I think for the staff to accept that is hugely helpful because they see the side of you that's human' (Participant N, p. 6).

This element is similar to Grant's idea that leaders owning and admitting what they don't know leads to increased creativity and opportunities to build cultures that encourage rethinking (2021). At the same time, leaders own their responsibility to utilize their professional will to facilitate the empowerment of educators. As one participant shared:

'I like to empower teachers to own their own place within schools' (Participant G, p. 4).

3.19 Integrity

The data may relate to a leadership concept of 'infinite mindset' coined by Sinek positing leaders who adopt an infinite mindset see change and challenge as an opportunity for transformation, value long-term and lasting solutions over short-term and temporary fixes, advance a just cause and live lives of service (2019). As one leader pointed out:

'if everything surrounds a very clear, values-based vision that we've decided together by staff telling me why they think we're doing what we're doing; we agree "this is the direction we're going" we decide "that's it" and we head towards it. The structure that it takes, the what and the how-it doesn't really matter what we choose as long as we do it in one way or another' (Participant G, p. 8).

The influence of a leader's vision aligns with Penlington and colleagues' study finding clearly communicated and positive visions from Head Teachers are an essential component to cultivating school cultures with mutual trust (2008). Living a life of service is evidenced in this

excerpt stating:

'there will come a time when some of the teachers that are here need to leave here to continue to grow. So knowing your staff really well and being able to have open and honest conversations with them about their career goals, about their development priorities, about who they are and what it is they're willing to achieve. It's also about connecting them and signposting them to those sorts of opportunities" (Participant H, p. 13).

Below is the final version of the Ecological Model for Flourishing Educators.

Figure 1

Ecological Model for Flourishing Educators

Artist: Shannon Potts

Conclusion

This study set out to better understand the experience of educator flourishing and then present a way of conceptualizing it to support those who are interested in pursuing the objective of enhancing the wellbeing of educators and support the endeavour of naming, creating and supporting flourishing educators. The Ecological Model for Flourishing Educators shown above (fig. 2) names the elements that could be considered when prioritizing educator flourishing and provides a metaphor that may be helpful for practitioners and policymakers. Some implications for policy-makers include increasing investment in educator wellbeing, providing more opportunities for educator-directed professional learning, and teaching the elements of educator flourishing in educator training programs. The implications for educational leaders include providing training for leaders on demonstrating trust, earning trust, and prioritizing educator flourishing to best encourage and sustain empowering leadership styles. Educators can consider the elements of this theory when applying for new positions by assessing what conditions are in place to best promote their flourishing.

Figure 2

Ecological Model for Flourishing Educators Explanation

Leadership = sun, water, soil	Flourishing educator = tree
Water = "leaders demonstrating trust" *Looks like:* ● Empathy ● Presuming positive intentions ● Granting educators autonomy ● Educator-driven decision making Sun = "leaders earning trust" *Looks like:* ● Transparency ● Vulnerability ● Intellectual Humility ● Will ● Integrity (alignment with values evidenced through behaviour) Soil = "leaders *prioritizing* educator flourishing" *Looks like:* ● Shared language and inclusive 'we' ● Professional/personal growth ● Creating an environment for growth ● Coaching	Roots (things educators need, nourishment from students, mentors, coaches, leaders, etc.): ● Feeling seen ● Feeling trusted ● Feeling valued ● Treated as a professional ● Receive recognition and acknowledgment Leaves (the educators' identity and visible traits that are given permission to exist from the nourishment in the roots and soil): ● Positive relationships ● Agency ● Authenticity ● Autonomy ● Integrity ● Professional and personal growth

This study invites further research into the elements required to create and sustain the conditions for flourishing educators. Specifically, this data aligns with Harris and colleagues' question of the limitations of current professional development for educational leaders and could lead to research on what investment in leaders' growth looks like (2013). It would be useful to extend the current findings by examining the leadership requirements for flourishing educators and understand how to help leaders learn how to adopt this leadership approach. Considering this research took place with English-speaking educators, it would be helpful to undertake a comparative study in non-English-speaking contexts. Quantitative research can be conducted to evaluate whether flourishing educators have an impact on student wellbeing and student academic performance. As the research seeks to be inclusive of all educators, it may be helpful to apply similar research in HEIs. This research invites fellow educators, researchers, educational leaders and lifelong learners to ask better questions about how flourishing can be sustained and fostered systemically.

One of the limitations of this study is the inclusion of only English-speaking participants. Thus further research needs to be undertaken in different cultures. The first author is an educator, thus the possibility of bias was addressed through regular meetings with the second author to manage any bias throughout data analysis. Participants were educators or educational leaders primarily from K-12 schools with the exception of one participant who is a leader in an HEI, therefore the researcher has been explicit about the type of educational institutions involved in

the demographic data table (Appendix A).

Based on the research, a new definition of flourishing educators is suggested for future research. A flourishing educator is an educator who feels seen, trusted and valued. They are treated as professionals and encouraged to be authentic. They have autonomy, integrity, agency and experience positive relationships along with personal and professional growth. This Ecological Model for Flourishing Educators is intended to push forward the research agenda on the topic of positive education. It is not intended to be the final theory on flourishing educators or identify the only elements needed to foster flourishing educators. Education is fluid and evolving, thus the theory seeks to continue the work of previous research on what elements are needed for educators to flourish. The findings propose many of these elements are needed to foster and sustain educator flourishing. The researchers believe flourishing educators will be able to create a ripple effect of flourishing students, flourishing schools and flourishing communities.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

Authors

Brittany Michael-Singh Rehal
University of East London
brittany@educatorflourishing.com

Christian van Nieuwerburgh
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

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Appendix A

Demographic data table for all participants

Participant A

Gender	Female
Current role/title	Permanent Primary School Teacher
Country you're teaching in	Ireland
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Urban, local school in the village - with approx 286 pupils.

Participant B

Gender	Female
Current role/title	Kindergarten Teacher
Country you're teaching in	California, USA
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Local, Montessori school

Participant C

Gender	Female
Current role/title	Fourth-Grade Teacher
Country you're teaching in	USA
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Local/public

Participant D

Gender	Female
Current role/title	Assistant headteacher & Y6 teacher-transitioning from primary school to secondary school
Country you're teaching in	UK
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Public school

Participant E

Gender	Female
Current role/title	Special Education Teacher (grade 3-6)
Country you're teaching in	Ireland
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Local, Primary School

Participant F

Gender	Female
Current role/title	Head Teacher
Country you're teaching in	London
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Local, Primary School

Participant G

Gender	Male
Current role/title	Executive Principal
Country you're teaching in	North England
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Community school, an Academy, non-selected government funded school. School in a deprived area, 70% of students receiving free meals, significantly high on the deprivation scales.

Participant H

Gender	Male
Current role/title	Head Teacher
Country you're teaching in	England
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Public

Participant I

Gender	Female
Current role/title	Director of Student Success
Country you're teaching in	Kuwait
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	International University

Participant J

Gender	Male
Current role/title	Educator, Author, teaching 7th Grade Science, Director of Dean of Students Office, Blue and Gold Officer (naval academy)
Country you're teaching in	North Carolina, USA
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Local school

Participant K

Gender	Male
Current role/title	Assistant Principal
Country you're teaching in	Ohio, USA
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Public

Participant L

Gender	Female
Current role/title	Principal
Country you're teaching in	Kuwait
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Local school with International/American curriculum

Participant M

Gender	Female
Current role/title	Principal
Country you're teaching in	USA
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Public

Participant N

Gender	Male
Current role/title	Head Teacher
Country you're teaching in	Northern Ireland
Type of school (international, local, etc.)	Local school

Appendix B

Coded transcripts (2 examples)

Participant B (educator)

Code	Raw Transcript	Thoughts/noticings
Boundaries Personal growth Autonomy Supportive Leadership Authenticity SEL Classroom /school Ethics Positive relationships *=name changed to anonymize data	Researcher: Can you tell me what experiences led you to identify as a flourishing teacher? Participant B: I had three years of teaching experience in environments that I would say are the exact opposite of flourishing. [brief laughter] I was not flourishing, no one around me was flourishing, these were in urban charter schools in Brooklyn. These charter schools are known for their high turnover, my last year in central Brooklyn, when I quit that school out of I believe 46 staff, 46 teaching staff, only six returned the next year. 50% turnover would be really high, would be really typical at these schools, and so those experiences showed me what the worst teaching environment...and then now I am working for a school that, I'm working for a family partnership in California, and it's the exact opposite of all of the things that I hated. I just recognize that I'm so...I feel so super supported, and I feel successful, I feel like my opinion counts, I feel like I matter, I feel like what I'm doing is seen-I feel like that's the biggest thing, I feel really seen and recognized. Both as an individual and as a competent teacher. I think for me, the biggest marker of what I define for me as "yes I am a flourishing teacher" is I feel like I get to be myself at work and I just get to do the job that I love. I think especially the contrast of having had the prior	-contrasting -awareness -"high turnover" =big predictor for teacher happiness -specific examples -Supportive leadership -"feel successful" = great feeling, what could this be called? -"opinion counts"=not only listened to but heard -seen -"individual and as a teacher" -authenticity -contrast

| | experiences and now having this, just it just puts it in relief you know.

Researcher: When you say that you feel super supported, tell me what that feels like on a daily basis.

Participant B: From the beginning, I came into a situation where they wanted to redo the physical environment of the classroom and I have a lot of strong opinions about that and they were like "great, what do you want? Let's do it." So I was allowed perfect freedom to design the physical environment of my classroom within the confines of the building. The room shape is weird but other than the physical structure, I was given complete freedom to design that physical space. I was coming in new to the school and with my experiences and my curriculums that I was familiar with. One of the curriculums I've used in the past is called "fundations" it's a phonics curriculum, I really like it. I know how to use it, I'm very successful with it, and I told them- even though they have an existing phonics program, I told them I really want this and I will show you that it's really good and it's better than what you had before and they were like "okay, how much? Okay, that's reasonable". It was like, $600.00 and they were like "sure, OK, we can do that". That blanket trust of like "we saw something in you that made us want to hire you, we clearly think that you're competent for this job, you are telling us that you believe this tool would be the best way for you to accomplish it, sure-we can get that tool for you". Again, obviously everything | -"they wanted" -administrative direction/decision

-authenticity

-autonomy

-supportive admin

-experience, familiar curriculums

-phonics is so important

-authenticity
-awareness

-trust
-supportive leadership
-respecting her as a competent teacher
-Curriculum as a tool, not a script

-boundaries
-autonomy

-trusted "by people who are above me"
-supportive admin |

within reason. I was given complete flexibility and control over my schedule, and how I structure my day, again, within reason and coordinating with the other teachers for lunch and recess and all of that. I think overwhelmingly I feel very trusted by the people who are above me. My site coordinator, who I call my principal but he's not really my principal, he's more of an administrator and then the CEO of the charter. My site coordinator is Jason* and the CEO is Kevin* and he runs all of the family partnership schools. There's two elementary, two high/middle schools, I'm not sure how many total but he runs all of them. The autonomy that I have...from the very beginning I didn't feel like I had to prove myself. I felt like I had the benefit of trust and then, obviously, as I got results, that trust increased. But I wasn't fighting an uphill battle to convince people of anything. They were on my side from the beginning. As I got more successful, I got more trust and more wiggle room to have even more freedom. Their basic position was "yeah, we trust you, we believe you're going to do great." versus "wait and see" or "ok, prove it". I had one experience early on with parents who were really difficult and both Jason and Kevin and the whole administration and staff just 100% had my back. He was physically threatening and immediately it was "no, you're not allowed on campus without an appointment and without one of us. You're not allowed anywhere near her". So it was very clear. Again, there was no questioning of "what did you do to piss him off or what did you do...?" none of that. And, you know, other teachers and staff have had difficulties with this

-specific details about school and how admin is set up

-autonomy mentioned
-"didn't feel like I had to prove myself"
-powerful, empowering

-trust as a continuum, beginning with trust and gradually building more
-contrasting, not fighting

-"on my side" = support, backup, belief in her

-increased success = increased 'wiggle room' and trust for more freedom

-"we believe you're going to do great" = positive beliefs about her capability

-"100% had my back" = prioritize teachers over parents

-immediate consequences for parents who overstep

-contrasting, rather than blame her

-this parent had a record with other teachers and staff
-school somewhat expected this

-"swiftness with which they had my back and the unquestioning" = the school/school leaders have their own boundaries and will not question the consequences to ensure teachers safety.
-"Just left me to do my best job" = support is the absence of the admin at times
-"just leave me alone" -direct same quote as Participant C
-balance between support when needed

person so it's not like they didn't expect it in a way but the swiftness with which they had my back and the unquestioning like "no, you don't feel safe, so we're going to fix that". Again, just left me to do my best job. I feel like the biggest thing that they've done is just leave me alone when I just need room to do my job and supported me when I needed support.

and trust and distance when she needs room to 'do her job'

Researcher: You mentioned before that you felt you had freedom in designing the physical space, you mentioned that you felt that you had autonomy from the very beginning and once you continued to get results you felt the trust increased and that you had even more freedom. Can you tell me more about the freedom that you feel as a flourishing teacher?

-"I don't have someone checking up on me very often" = this is seen/felt as an invasion of trust or lack of trust

-COVID is providing more autonomy for some teachers

-meetings at school referenced

-walk by referenced
-this teacher specified that the drop-ins are okay

Participant B: Yeah, I don't have someone checking up on me very often. Especially right now, you know, we have distance-learning happening, and it's very...admin has less of an opportunity to kind of "check-in" on what's going on with the students. Previously, it wouldn't be uncommon for there to be a meeting at school and they'd perhaps walk by my classroom, and I've said that their always welcome to just walk by, or walk in and observe, they don't need to tell me ahead of time, which again, was respectful, because Kevin told me in the beginning that he would always let me know ahead of time before he came to observe and I was the one who said "no it's fine" because that's just my personality. So before, there was a little more accountability in that he could walk in at any time and see what's

-seen as respectful
-authenticity - connection to her personality as well as autonomy

-interesting, his focus is on the kids-most supervisors are focused on the teacher, what is the teacher doing

-less accountability, yet kids are still learning and teachers are still teaching...interesting

-'foundation of trust' = something built over time and in the beginning of her role
-data - potentially helpful strategy to demonstrate student growth

going on "oh yeah, the kids are learning" but now, there really isn't that kind of accountability. No one has dropped in on a zoom lesson, no one is checking in on my kids and seeing how they're reading, but I built up enough of a foundation of trust that when I present my data, it's not questioned. When admin asks, and it's not just me-it's all of the teachers at my school, "So what are you doing?" I can just answer and it's not an accusation it's genuinely a question that is asked to gather information. I feel like that's a big one; the communication towards me is never accusatory or judgmental, there's no subtext, no secret test that I have to pass, you know, their not trying to like "catch me", if their asking a question, it's genuinely to gather information that they need and my answer is accepted at face value.

Researcher: So you feel that the communication is genuine when their talking to you, is that correct?

Participant B: Genuine, respectful, complimentary, positive, validating, acknowledging.

Researcher: You talked about trust and how you were listened to when you brought up new ideas, you feel that you're able to get to do the job that you love. Tell me more about getting to do the job you love.

-"it's not an accusation" - such an interesting contrast of what it's not.
-style of communication
-contrasting
-'no secret test that I have to pass' = powerful description
-"catch me" - similar to 'firing line' quote from Participant A
-"genuinely to gather information" - even though this is for their benefit, she feels safe and trusted to answer honestly.
-description of communication
-supportive leadership
-authenticity
-specific examples from first grade
-autonomy
-connection to student autonomy and teacher autonomy
-authenticity

Participant B: I mean I love teaching. I love working with this age group. I teach kindergarten and first grade and it's my favorite age group. It's the exact, ideal age group that I want and I love having the kids make connections and figure out language and figure out numbers and our number system and put things together and think deeply about character motivation and figure out why a book is funny and get the jokes that the author kind of sprinkles into the chapter. All of those things I love and so the autonomy that I have lets me do that in the way that is most effective for me. I think just like our students function best in different mediums and different ways, I know how my brain works and I have a very good sense of how I can teach and what materials and methods are most effective from me then to the kids. So the autonomy that I have allows me to flourish and allows my students to flourish, which is ultimately the best part, because I'm allowed to teach in the way that's most authentic to me. If I had, and I have had, to do...follow a certain lesson plan structure or a curriculum that for someone else may have been great, but for me, didn't work. It just wasn't authentic to me, so it wasn't effective, or as effective because it wasn't authentic. I think a big part of flourishing is the autonomy to know what makes the most sense for you and the freedom to choose what makes the most sense as a teacher, because that's the way to get the best out of that individual teacher, right? Then, therefore, the kids are going to flourish, which makes that teacher happy. Then I think, you know, the opposite, where I was in NY a big thing that I hated was norming for the sense of

-ripple effect of flourishing**mentioned in several transcripts

-authenticity is 'allowed' = supportive leadership/environment

-structure in lesson plans or curriculum can be an inhibitor to some. It's not a one-size-fits-all deal.
-contrasting
-when something isn't authentic, it's less effective = interesting

-autonomy

-trust and support from leadership
-'to get the best out of that individual teacher' = choice and freedom which ripple effect to kids

-contrasting
-opposite = 'norming for the sense of norming'

-'easiest for admin' - rather than 'best for student learning' or 'most helpful for teachers'. Interesting.

-"instead of making me change myself to make it easier for them to assess me, they do the heavy lifting" = such a powerful quote

-authenticity

-'shifting the burden' =supportive leadership

norming. So a big thing was across classrooms, across grades, things had to be the same for the sake of being the same because it was easiest for administrators to judge what was happening in a small amount of time or the same amount of time because everything was supposed to be the same. So I appreciate here that my administration, instead of making me change myself to make it easier for them to assess me, they do the heavy lifting of adapting their understanding around what they're looking at so that I can just be myself, right. It's shifting the burden of figuring out the different things from me to them. The two elementary schools that we have are very, very different. Ultimately, obviously, we want the same things, we want our kids to achieve similar benchmarks. But I will never teach the way that Sara teaches and she will never teach the way I teach and the fact that that's OK, and that neither one of us is being forced to be the other person contributes greatly to my sense of happiness. When Kevin comes to observe me, he's not comparing us. He's asking me questions to find out what's going on so he can assess the learning environment, the student achievement, the student talk, you know all of those things, it's not "well I saw this in Sara's class, what's the equivalent here" or vice versa, right. It's like "well, we all want the babies to read, so how are you getting towards reading?" and, again, it makes me feel very seen as an individual and appreciated for who I am as opposed to they put up with me in spite of it.	-supportive admin -authenticity -'he's not comparing us' -letting teachers be authentic -all things being assessed are in relation to students -"very seen" = such a good feeling -supportive leadership -authenticity -contrasting -awareness -personality in context of a place -contrasting -specific memory -such an impactful question, "how can I support you" -authentic answer -authenticity

Researcher: You mentioned that before, you said previously that you felt really seen and recognized as an individual and as a teacher. So tell me more about feeling seen.

Participant B: I have a very strong personality [laughter] and...I have NY in my blood, I lived in NY and there's definitely a big part of me that's NY tough and not California hippy-dippy-woo-woo [laughter]. One of the things that I [laughter] appreciate the most about Jason, and even Kevin but mostly Jason, is he asked me in the beginning of the year, "So how can I support you? What's the best way for me to support you?" and I told him, "the best way for you to support me is to let me always speak freely to you and reign me in when I'm getting a little too heated." [laughter]. So I am able... when I talk to Jason I drop f-bombs all the time, if I'm annoyed or getting frustrated or passionate about...and I'm not directing them at him, obviously, I'm not being mean to him. But I express myself in the full breadth of my NY personality [laughter] without having to sensor myself. Then he does the interpreting for me, he goes, "OK, I'll talk to so-and-so about that for you, so you don't have to drop f-bombs" and, you know I told him to reign me in and I mean that so he's like, "you gotta calm down about that one, you know, you're just gonna have to deal with that" and I'm like "okay, you're right". I'm not judged for what I say, I'm not annoying, I'm not difficult, I'm not a trouble-maker, all those negative things that people get labeled as when they speak out and they're passionate about what they do; I don't get that. You know, he knows I'm fiery and partly that's

-feels trusted enough to vent her frustration or passion
-interesting that frustration and passion are closely related and can produce similar results

-authenticity

-supportive leadership

-supportive leadership/a type of leadership that fits this teachers' needs. Something here about differentiating leadership for teachers the way teachers differentiate content for students.

-interesting, people are labeled as such when they 'speak out and they're passionate'
-autonomy
-authenticity
-'that's real'= humanity, real life

-supportive admin

-speculation about teacher tie to education and learning

-interesting reflection on how teacher passion is "extinguished" yet also

	why I'm good at my job because I'm super passionate. Instead of asking me to relegate my passion to a narrowly defined box that is only for students, he just lets me be myself and then helps navigate situations where you can't drop f-bombs [laughter] right? Like that's real. Even Kevin, I feel like I've dropped fewer f-bombs with him, but I've definitely cursed with him and I've definitely been like, "no this is fucking stupid, like I hate this, blah blah blah" and he just kind of goes, "yeah okay, hmm, so what do you want to do about it" and to be able to talk to the CEO about that, like in that way, again I think teachers, if they aren't anymore, at least once were, incredibly, deeply passionate about education and learning and students and children and…I don't think that it's possible to ask someone to temper their passion in some placed without having it extinguish their passion in other places. So, if you're asking me to work hard, stay up late, work on weekends, figure out how to do this for my students and I'm willing to do it because I love them and I adore them and I want what's best for them, but then calm the fuck down about these other things. I just don't think it's possible. I think you either get it all or you don't get any of it. Or some sort of like sedated version in between. I think asking teachers to do that, to temper themselves because then their going to be labeled troublemakers or blah, blah, blah, or rioters, but then asking them to still be super passionate about their students…I think that's what eventually burns them out. So allowing teachers to be their full selves, even when it's not polite, in appropriate environments you know, I'm not dropping f-bombs with parents,	called upon -contrasting of boundaries -interesting, boundaries can be broken as long as allowances are made for "these other things" (i.e. lesson plans, scripted curriculum, etc.) -all or nothing type of analogy for passion -contrasting -reference to burn out -authenticity -'emotional drain' = more impactful on her teaching performance than they may realize -at 100 all the time- how amazing if this is possible for a majority of teachers. Interestingly this is also identified as 'nourishing' for her! -another contrasting, specifically being 'caught' -'no trap' = another powerful visual -amazing feeling -supportive admin

but I need to be...if you're talking to me about my opinion about something I need to be able to express it fully and not filter it for you. Because the act of filtering is such an emotional drain that it can't help but affect me in other ways. So the fact that I don't have to filter myself, that I can just be at 100 all the time, in my school, is so nourishing. Not only be at 100, but also know that I'm not secretly being judged, or I'm gonna feel the effects two months down the line at my observation or someones gonna try and catch me in something because I pissed them off you know, there's no trap about it. When I'm speaking my administrators, I never feel like I'm walking into a trap.	-authenticity -classroom ethics
Researcher: Part of what you said earlier that might...that I saw and noted down is you said the word authentic. So tell me more about being authentic.	-autonomy -supportive leadership -authenticity
Participant B: I just get to be myself. I get to be my personality. I get to move and talk and teach and organize and plan and present and design and record and...the way that works for me and that is me. My classroom looks very different from the 2nd and 3rd grade classroom because Carrie is a different person and the way that she works and organizes and all of that. Within the basic requirements of -our students are meeting the standards, and -there's vertical alignment in terms of the skills and fundamental understandings that they have, we're allowed to just do it our way. I really have not been asked to adapt to somebody	-authenticity potentially leading to effectiveness and flourishing (?) -self-awareness -speculation many teachers are reflective and self-aware -many teachers 'prevented' from doing the best job -more trust in teachers to know their best -authenticity

else's way and I deeply appreciate that. I just get to do my thing the way that I want to do it. I think authenticity is such a deeply important aspect of flourishing in teaching because ultimately the point of good teaching is that the children are flourishing, and I know that you're not asking about that, but, I recognize that when I am most myself, I am most effective. Seeing myself be effective is a big part of that feeling of flourishing. I'm been in situations where I felt hamstrung, right? Like, I'm very self-aware and I think a lot of teachers are pretty reflective and self-aware so we know when we're not doing our best job and we also know when somebody, like kneecapped us, and is preventing us from doing our best job. We know what it looks like when we're doing our best, we know how our kids respond, we know what it looks like in our classroom, we know what it feels like and so that knowledge combined with not being there is devastating. The ability to be my most authentic self is giving me the opportunity to be my most effective and know it. I have days where obviously things didn't go as well as planned and blah, blah blah but by and large... I'm killin' it and I know it [laughter]. And that's because I know I don't have to put up with a lot of bullshit. I just get to go in and do my job. I don't have to spend my emotional or intellectual energy on satisfying a bunch of administrative bullshit and then feel drained by the time I get to actual teaching. I...some people, everybody plans in different ways. I don't write lesson plans anymore. Like, I haven't written lesson plans since I was forced to in my first year of teaching, and I hated it then and I never wrote

-authenticity	
-contrasting, able to know that it's not always great	
-so much value in 'getting to go in and do my job'	
-administrative requests are draining and take away from actual teaching	
-authenticity	
-supportive leadership	
-giving teachers options -autonomy	
-meeting teachers where they are, different for different people/teachers -supportive leadership	

	them before. I would plan my lesson, I would do all my prep, and then I would sit down and write the lesson plan, because lesson plans don't help me. I'm sure they help some people, they don't help me. No one has ever asked me here to write a lesson for them. When Kevin came to observe me, he had a pre-observation meeting and I had the opportunity to…there was like a form we needed to fill out, you know, he has a bunch of forms and stuff, and so he sent it to me ahead of time and he said "you can fill it out ahead of time if you want or we can fill it out together when I'm there". I am not a form-filler-outer so he sat there and he just asked me the questions and I just talked to him and then he filled out what he needed, right? For somebody else, they probably would've wanted to like sit down and think and type, you know, and have it all ready before they talked and like, that's what I mean when I say authentic, I wasn't forced to do something a way that doesn't work for me and is just extra steps because that's just not how my brain works and there was no judgment about it, right?	-authenticity -success measured by her students success (connection to Participant C and Participant E) -teacher knowledge, content knowledge -classroom ethics/community -specific example from her current students
	Researcher: Earlier you mentioned that you feel successful. Tell me more about feeling successful.	-keeping the next teacher in mind by making sure she does what she can to prepare her kiddos
	Participant B: My students are killin' it. I mean, you know, I have benchmarks for..I know what on grade level looks like and what it means and what phonics patterns mean and I know what above grade level is and I have a very clear picture of that and ⅔ of my class is well above	-compassion for their next teacher and their individual studies as students -"measure" referenced -SEL

grade level. I have some kids who are behind, for various reasons but I have a solid group of kindergarteners coming into next year reading on a mid-first grade level already, half of my first graders are already going to second grade reading on a third grade level, beginning third grade level already. And they came in high, it's not like I did all of it, I had a high group in both grades. But, yeah my success is...I consider myself successful if I feel like I am adequately preparing my kids for the next grade, and not just they're on grade level but my goal is for them to be above. Especially for the ones going to second grade because it's a different teacher. So I want them to enter...I want things to be a little bit easier for them then she might expect. So they can dive deeper. That's one measure, but also the like social-emotional environment. I had two kids in first grade that were...one especially was pretty much the reason the other teacher retired, you know, the ones we love the most, the difficult kids and we got that shit turned around real fuckin' fast. You're changing all the names anyway so Susie came in not knowing her letter sounds in first grade because she was just, you know, quote end quote "silly" and she would just roll around on the floor and do nothing I don't even know what she would do but...we just cut that shit out within like two weeks. And within two weeks she was working independently! And it's not because I was being a bitch to her, it's because she got 0 reinforcement for being silly, I was just like, "no, we're not doing that" [laughter] and she's so proud of herself. Like, she's so proud of herself. The fact that she can read and...she came in and didn't even really

-specific example

-student success after 2 weeks

-classroom ethics

-SEL

-academic success coupled with SEL success (?)

-specific example

-SEL

-classroom ethics

	know how to count properly and the other day I did a number talk with her and it was like 4 + 7 + 9 + 3 + 6, I think, like I can't remember the numbers but there were two pairs that added up to ten and then like a fifth number and she was able to walk me through, "Well I know 7+3 is 10 and I know 6 + 4 is 10 so that makes 20 and I just have the 9 so that makes 29." and she's so proud of herself! And Ethan, who was in trouble all the time and just...I don't know, he just got away with murder last year and he has given me very few problems, once we got him on a check-in, check-out behavior chart system. He loves me and he loves school and he does what he needs to do and...so another marker would be creating an environment where my kids can feel academically successful, be academically successful but also feel it, like, they recognize it in themselves and where we don't have kids like wilin' out. [laughter] You know, because it's not good for them, you know, it's not good for children to tantrum. And one of my kids, Quinn, was apparently a huge crier and like his parents were so concerned, they brought like a 'calm down box' and extra snacks because he just goes...I mean, I don't know, I never saw it because he never tantrumed in my class because the very first time he started I was like, "na uh, we don't do that here." And he was like, "oh, I guess we don't do that here" [laughter] and he's never tantrumed in my class. Not one time. And that I consider to be very successful. I feel successful that I don't have children crying in my classroom….out of manipulation, frustration, or any other big...traumatic emotions that really shouldn't be associated with school. You know,	-SEL -SEL -teacher modeling SEL and reinforcing consistent behavior -personal growth -authenticity -SEL *clear -said without hesitation -balance between semi-regular basis -asking a question that is vague enough to be answered directly

	I'm very big...I joke about it, but trauma reduction is a huge marker of success because it can be very traumatic to not know things and get things wrong but it can also be like no deal at all and that's successful. Like if my kids can get something wrong and it's not even a thing then great, that's...I've been successful. And they know that I love them and I care about them and I'm happy to see them. Researcher: So of all of the things that you've talked about that are the experiences of you as a flourishing teacher, what are the most important elements? Participant B: Autonomy, trust and authenticity. Empowerment. Researcher: What would you say keeps you/or sustains your flourishing? Participant B: Honestly, Jason is really great at checking in on a semi-regular basis. Not annoyingly often, but often enough, and asking like "is there anything you need? Can I help support you?" and if I answer that question with something that might be annoying like, "can you scan all these report cards for me because I didn't know I had to scan them. He'll go, "sure!" and, he'll do it, even though it's not really his job, like however I answer the question. And if I go, "nah, I'm good." he'll go, "okay" and then he goes away for a few weeks. [laughter]	-supportive leadership -"even though it's not really his job" -connection to admin who help teachers "above" or "below" their job description -again, being left along when needed -autonomy -"leaves me alone" -support is the absence of their presence and persistence sometimes -"biggest thing" -strong language -distinction between new teachers and experienced teachers. They have different needs, also a connection to autonomy / authenticity. -again, repetition of "leave us alone" -"annoying, adds unnecessary things"= detracting from 100% teaching -supportive leadership -connection to teacher happiness (?)

Like, literally, I mean not really because you know we have our weekly meetings when we have to talk about random things but you know he's not specifically bugging me. If I say, "Nah, I'm good" he goes, "okay", and then he leaves me alone. Like so many times in NY, I really think that the biggest thing administrators can do to support teachers who know what they're doing and are experienced and are not asking for mentoring and, you know, new teachers have different needs, but for teachers that are experienced; that feel capable and confident and basically have it down, just go away. [laughter] Just leave us alone and we will be fine [laughter]. The more you poke your nose in...that's just annoying and adds unnecessary things. It's almost like..they really don't need to do much. They just need to get out of our way. I really think that if every administrator could just get out of your way like 50% more then their doing, they'd probably be great. Like teacher happiness would skyrocket. [laughter]

-another contrast between beginning teachers and experienced teachers
-interesting point, possibly not possible for beginning teachers (?)

-"competent and capable" = connection to flourishing ?

-trial and error,
-personal growth

-mentors, could be a connection to coaching

Researcher: I will read you the definition that I posted to show what flourishing looks like in my research and then I will ask you if there is anything else you'd like to say about being a flourishing teacher. The definition is, "when teachers feel a sense of joy, play, laughter, and fun at work; when they are encouraged and supported to take risks in their teaching; and when they see they are making a difference in the lives of their students, school, and community". So is there anything else you'd

-contrasting experience

-different view of flourishing depending on where teachers are in their experience? Interesting.

like to add about yourself being a flourishing teacher?

Participant B: I don't know whether it's truly possible to be a beginning and flourishing teacher. Like, I think a big part of my flourishing and the teachers that I see flourishing around me is the fact that I feel competent and capable. I don't know that it's possible to really flourish like your first year of teaching. I think a lot of the reasons that I flourish now are because of mistakes that I've made and learning things the hard way and falling flat on my face and learning things the hard way and having some great mentors that dragged me along a little bit. So, yeah. Just as you were reading that I was thinking about that. I think it requires a certain level of experience and you know, again, this is only my 4th year in the classroom so it's not like I'm a veteran right now but urban charters are a pressure cooker so 1 or 2 years there...and you're..you got it or you don't' and you're not teaching anymore but, yeah. That's not really here nor there but I just thought about it as you were reading it. What it would mean for a first-year teacher or like a second-year teacher and what they need to get to flourishing probably looks very different.

Participant H (educational leader)

Themes used throughout:

Actionable steps or examples of providing teachers with autonomy

Trust

Experience of Personal growth

Coaching/coaching approach

Vulnerability required from leaders

Empathy

Humanity modeled from leaders

Educator vs. teacher/ treated as a professional?

Presuming positive intentions for educators/everyone?

Infinite vs. Finite Mindset

Getting rid of things for educators and leaders

Raw Transcript	Thoughts/noticings	Thoughts/noticings
That's a big question. I was recently reading an updated journal article that kind of concedes the leadership in 2007 and then they rewrote/updated their position in 2019. It was interesting because what it suggests is that leaders are only 2nd to teachers in terms of having an impact on student growth and achievement. I think it's an interesting statement. They revised it slightly but the overarching emphasis is the same. Leaders creating the conditions for which teachers can do really well. Some of them are the opportunity to research, reflect and lead some of their own professional learning in contrast to being directed in terms of what to learn, when to learn, how to learn, who to learn it from—the idea that a teacher is a	2/23/2021 Importance of teachers being allowed and supported to take charge over their learning.	3/5/2021

leader in their own learning. There is a deep emphasis on reflective practice and practice-based research.	→ interesting aspect about 'systems in place that promote collaboration. Potentially flourishing?	-assumption collaboration = coaching
The climate in which the teachers work in. Factors like their ability to collaborate with other teachers, their openness to communication, their orientation to change...things like that are what systems are in place in the school that promote teachers working collaboratively with one another. Is the culture one that facilitates things like learning lesson studies, teacher research groups, coaching, or is it one that is quite top-down and senior staff are giving directives to teaching staff about what they're to be doing and how to do it.		
In terms of their orientation to change and openness to communication, I think the way leaders communicate to their staff is also quite important. I'm referring to how often is that communication? Is the communication 1-way communication or are there opportunities for teachers themselves to lead the communication or have more of a dialogic relationship?	→ is dialogic conversation/communication a potential theme?	
I'm trying to think of some of the things that don't go well in places I've worked and some things I've tried to make a little bit better.	--communication 'the way leaders communicate'	
I write about this a lot from a lot of different angles. Some of the things that I think would support teachers flourishing in England may sound irrelevant in other contexts. When I think about teacher flourishing, I think about concepts like teacher wellbeing. You know teachers being well. I know from an English perspective and leading an English Primary School, I think about the concept of agency. The idea of supported, developed decision-capital. Teachers having a greater power and greater control to make decisions that impact their day, their professional time, their instructional practice, and I think that often gets confused with "do whatever, do whatever you want." But I don't think that's what it is at all.	"Supported, developed, decision-capital" , great wording	-what trust looks like in actionable ways
Agency is doing a million and one things that are less noticeable. Some may be consistent and some less so.	→ agency and autonomy; synonymous?	

When I think about agency, I think about marking, planning, admin, their planning time. Teachers allocating a part of their week to assessment and planning and so it's giving professional people the decision to do those sorts of things as they see fit in alignment with the school goals for growth and opportunity. Their planning time in my school doesn't need to be taken on site, they can plan at home, they can plan at a pub, they may want to do it virtually...it's the idea that there are certain things at school that need to be told. If a fire breaks out, I'm going to tell them what they need to be doing. I think there's absolutely a place for that in leadership, but far too often it's become the default.

When I talk about agency I'm talking about where there is scope and where we have supported, developed people to make informed choices about their work, their time, their space, their instructional practice, that we do that as often as possible. We continue to keep systems in place for them to further develop themselves as professional people.

That also comes down to the ideas of monitoring, scrutiny, accountability as it relates to agency and teachers flourishing. I think the implicit message in all of those mechanisms is "we don't trust you. If you're left to your own devices you're not going to do a great job." I think that relates directly to teacher flourishing because if the implicit message is always "we don't trust you. We think you need to be monitored or you wont perform well. We think you need to be scrutinized." It's always this deficit model. Within the teacher is the problem and someone else needs to come in and solve it. I think it implicitly weakens everybody on staff. I think people are far less likely to flourish in those conditions.

I also think its about professional challenge and inspiration that leaders have a responsibility to challenge their professional people. So it doesn't mean "do whatever you want and let's hope it works out." It means leaders asking teachers the right kinds of questions to help them solve instructional problems, fall in love with their work again if that's what's necessary. I think leaders have a job to influence

→ this idea that two truths can be true. You can have agency and autonomy and also be directive when needed.

Potential definition for autonomy in schools/among educators?

→ what flourishing is NOT

→ also related to systemic structure of educational hierarchies

→ could this theme be personal/professional growth? Are they synonymous?

→ idea of 'systems in place for them to __.' really important. Where does this go?

Is this part of

professional teachers and help them to be their very best. That involves challenging them and inspiring them. That involves a note and a level in kindness in all of that. If there is a teacher that is performing not in the standard they normally do or not to the standard that we expect, I don't think it's about more monitoring, more scrutiny, more accountability measures; I think it's about how we influence that person to be their very best. But it's also a vulnerable position from a school leaders perspective in understanding why it is that person's not performing. Because sometimes it's technical; you can look at it as 'skill' or 'will'. You know they don't have the skill set to perform fully or they don't want to perform well, they're lazy and they're not performing well so they're not happy. But so often in schools there are so many other things going on. Maybe they're going through a messy divorce, maybe somebody close to them is dying, there are all sorts of factors that take place in one's life that can affect performance. Assuming kindness and understanding that we're all going through stuff is helpful and I think people flourish in that environment where they feel understood and treated like a normal person. There's lots of pressure and change that has to be dealth with. For teachers to be in a flourishing environment I think the first thing is that you need to default to kindness, empathy and trust.

I think the way we respond to people. Calm, caring, considerate responses rather than emotional, or emotive responses to teachers in the working environment.

I think it's also about purpose. Getting teachers to work together is an incredible thing and I think there are benefits to that on it's own, especially when there is a focus on learners and learning. The other side of that and thinking about the idea of agency is voice. If we're going to have people working together collaboratively, there has to be an end, a result that's going to come from that. It can't be that we ask people to come together to talk about how we teach math and then they come back to us with their ideas and then those ideas get shelved. If we're going to have teachers in collaborative environments then they need | → kindness = humanity?

→ I like this concept of 'skill or will'

→ beautiful example of humanity and empathy. Could empathy encompass humanity and kindness towards self and others (in terms of themes?)

→ mores about HOW we speak than what we say

→ professional/education as a calling vs. job.

→ I don't know what this theme sounds like yet but I'm curious about what this concept is regarding voice, meaningful contribution and co-creation. Maybe this is a balance of the paradox between autonomy and | wanting teachers to flourish? Having that challenge that may be personal/professional?

-idea of *how* we speak is here again. |

to be meaningfully collaborative environments. They need to have a point. I think that often there are lots of initiatives that take place at school where people are tokenistically put into collaborative working groups or professional learning communities or any other incarnation of teacher collaboration and at the end of all of it, it doesn't go very far. So people don't engage as meaningfully because at the end it all just goes away. All of this referencing my core idea that the wellbeing, the flourishing needs to be in the work itself. The work needs to be the joy. There are all sorts of things that I hear about in England at least that are wellbeing or environmental flourishing initiatives that all have to do with distracting people from the fact that their work is not great. You know the work is crappy or we get treated poorly but if we bring in a yoga instructor once a week that will distract people from the fact that this work isn't great or if we bring in tea, coffee and cookies in the staffroom it makes up for the fact that we're observing them six times a year and giving them one-way feedback. The idea of a teacher flourishing has to be inside the work itself. All of these things that I'm speaking about, all are adjustments, in the English context, to the traditional, relationship between the school leadership and teachers themselves. My view is that if we get the work right, then a lot of the initiatives that we put in place to help teachers flourish or improve their state of being well-a lot of that stuff disappears. Because when the work is the joy, people far more naturally flourish in that environment. People want to be their best in that kind of environment. As an example, at my school the way that we do "performance management" which is the traditional term how it's described in England and in itself sounds unpleasant. The idea that if we want to challenge our professional people, allowing them to be in a condition whereby they can ask questions, lines of inquiry, about their own professional growth and development. They can ask questions about their own teaching that is of interest to them. Throughout	collective voice? → potential theme or theme integration of 'meaning' (also part of PERMA) → what collaborative learning / creation is NOT → I want to explore this idea, "the work needs to be the joy". Very insightful look into what wellbeing is not. It's not a distraction from a toxic work environment, it's an intentional target. → a better way to evaluate educators/progress → coaching culture,	-meaning, being a stakeholder having a voice as an educator Example of setting a 'just cause' for educators - connection to Simon Sineck

the course of the year they can meet with another teacher for a coaching conversation about their journey towards answering that question and they can meet with someone like me as their line manager, a few times a year, about how answering that question that they asked is having an impact on them professionally and the children that they serve. In terms of challenging our professional people, outside of the view of actual capability or performance. If a teacher is neglecting or abusing some of the children, obviously the response is not a line of inquiry-those things are taken much more seriously. But in a general sense believing and understanding that all our teachers wants to be the very best teacher they can possibly be; the idea of challenging professional people means involving ourselves in conversations with them where we're creating a framework whereby they can ask challenging questions of themselves and their profession and professional development. Then we provide the conditions to which they can go and answer those questions. I think that that's part of it. Also having an ambitious set of overarching priorities for the development of the school. That doesn't need to come solely from the Principal. It might be the Principal who lays the groundwork or asks the staff the right questions in the direction we want to go. But it's also important to have ambitious targets for the whole school. Both for pupil achievement but also around the wider development of the whole person. We have three kind of overarching development themes. 1 is the development of the whole person and we call that the 'whole family'. So it's looking at the children, the staff, governors, the community and how it is that we're being ambitious with their growth, development and achievement as children, maybe for parents the courses we're running, the opportunities we're providing them with, and it's more than just quantitative data. Asking the community the things that are important to them and then it's about supporting them achieving the things that are important to them. Ambitious targets for teachers that are about the development of the school	coaching 'norm', normalizing questions and introspection and also personal growth → balance of the paradox of autonomy/agency → again, this idea of a collective purpose that educators are stakeholders in. → autonomy balance with community and connection	-the coaching questions are professional growth that are self-selected "Of interest to THEM" → actionable step of creating the conditions -something deeper here about ambitious priorities. Does this tie into Simon

but are aligned with the teaching staff themselves.		Sinecks 'just cause'?
In the last few years, we've been trying to rewrite our curriculum in a way that diversifies, decolonizes and includes a variety of voices, perspectives and people; but those aren't targets that were driven by me. Those are conversations that we've had as a staff so that all of us are bringing these targets along together and then supporting teachers in how their individually determining how they want to contribute.		
Which is where the challenge is. If we're trying to develop the whole schools approach to curriculum, the challenge is aligning each of the teacher's to their contribution of that.		
In terms of creating the right culture, I think the most important overarching philosophy I wrote about a year or two ago. It was a philosophy from the company Huel. Which has a slogan, you know their main slogan on the side of their wall which is, "don't be a dick". I don't know if that's quotable for your research. Because I think it's really important and it gets overlooked a lot. There are school leaders in tons of countries and there's lots of pressure and change that has to be dealt with, you're dealing with money, you're dealing with HR, you're dealing with the human beings in the building, your dealing with attainment; there's lots of different angles and there's lots of different pressure and the easiest position to default to is just short, curt, and I guess it's kind of what we were saying before. When things aren't going well, people default to what they know and what's easiest to them. Which in many cases is to protect themselves and treat other people poorly and blame other people.	Funny and so relevant, "don't be a dick". → example of impact and actionable step taking AFTER LISTENING to what teachers want → again, concept of kindness, empathy, humanity. Can I find a definition of empathy that encompasses self-kindness and kindness towards others? → what flourishing leading is not and what happens when it gets tested.	→ actionable step to support them achieve "Alignment with educators"
There are always going to be people who take advantage and who don't live up to their expectations of themselves or your expectations of them but that's not true for most people. Erring on the side of kindness will often win you far more than you will lose in the short term of the 1 person who's going to take advantage.	→ SOLID GOLD	Paradox of autonomy
Finding a way to get rid of things like the high-stakes	--->Big connection to Simon Sinnek= infinite vs. finite mindset, long-term	

accountability regimes in schools. That doesn't resonate in every country, like in Canada, Ontario we don't have that kind of system so it would be irrelevant. That's one of the things in a system like that which allows teachers to flourish. They're not jumping through hoops of high stakes accountability at the expense of everything else. What their able to do is ensure children achieve through some of the methods we talked about earlier; collaboration and community	vs. short-term	
	→ #thereisabetterway	
	→ is this positive relationships or is it something else? The paradoxical community that's created when we have autonomy?	
Treating people kindly is the most important thing and the second thing is finding a way to change all or most of the things that place the greatest amount of stress, anxiety and pressure on teachers and find a way to turn those things into something else. Reflective time for self-directed learning, turn them into instructional consistency so maybe monitoring isn't as important; moving people away from the cliff edge. Being kind to people and being certain that the system structures metrics you have for measuring or enacting change in your school are not like do or die. Their not sudden death. If it doesn't work you're going to get fired. There needs to be an element of trust built into them, there needs to be an element of time built into them and, there needs to be elements of support, challenge and development built into them.		-Connection to Jim Collins, 'opening bid of trust'
	→ strong language 'sudden death' 'going to get fired'	Great quote about 'buffering teachers' and example of transforming the old or replacing the old traditions
Treating people kindly, erring on the side of kindness and then replacing anything that is cliff edge, high-stakes, anxiety inducing. Buffering teachers from anything that's a distraction to growing, developing and helping children achieve.		
There needs to be real clarity around "what is it that we're here to do". For example in England, or there historically has been a heavy emphasis on standardized tests as a measure, I should say the measure of school effectiveness. If that is the overarching end goal; that all children achieve well on standardized tests and that's the only goal that you set for yourself. Then you need to brand yourself really clearly that that's what you're out here to do, you need to attract the right kind of people to your organization who also believe in that as their passion and mission as well and you need to check everything	→ not only protecting time but being proactive in terms of distractions because distractrations for teachers take away from the growth, development of children.	
	→ importance of knowing our 'why'	
	→ paradox of two truths being true and that we can find and	

that you're doing in your school against that as the overarching target. Now the challenge that I faced with that in particular is that I don't believe that is…I think one of the core ideas is that children can leave here and read, write and solve problems, they're academically strong, but I was really clear with staff from the start that that's only part of the puzzle. That needs to be balanced with developing young people who are critical, happy and fierce, sassy, courageous. It's a piece of the puzzle.

Once you've established what it is your setting out to do, which in our case was different to the national aims. You need to find a way to balance what the national aims are with what your aims as a school are and then collaboratively and collectively make decisions about how you're going to achieve those things. For us I guess, it was important that in order to remove the handcuffs of monitoring, scrutiny and high-stakes accountability, which often is very much directed at the teacher. The reason it's primarily directed at teachers is because school leaders need some form of certainty that students are going to do well on the standardized test. So it's kind of going back a level and saying okay if we want them to do well on a standardized test, what are the key ingredients. For our school it was having a consistent and evidence-based instructional program was the key. Our school didn't have that when I came here. In order for children to achieve consistently well, everyone doing their own thing, especially when there is high turnover in inner London schools, doesn't make any sense. Because all you have to do then is turn up the monitoring, scrutiny and accountability regimes. If your workforce is constantly in it's infancy, you have to manage complexity. The only way to do that is to have somebody go in your class, tell you if what you're doing is good enough or not and then if it's not good enough tell you what you need to do to make it better and if it is good enough tell you to help other people be better. But the problem with that is that it leaves most people on that cliff edge. They are constantly worried that the next time somebody comes in and watches it's not going to be very good, or they have a disagreement about what that person thinks about as

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Annotations (middle column):

create better ways to achieve goals
→ clarity, "clear is kind, unclear is unkind" from Brene Brown, also using data to drive innovation/reflection

→ this concept of teachers flourishing potentially leading to educators who can develop the 'whole person' including courage-building, happiness, etc.

→ hold the tension of paradox between what you want, what teachers and community wants, and national aims

→ example of how the intention is often good or at least understandable, yet the actions or way to get results is what negatively impacts teachers/schools/social climates

→ another paradox of what autonomy is not

→ this makes me think of schools that are not new, yet they feel new because the vision is wishy washy

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Annotations (right column):

→ Where does this go?!?

→ actionable step is figuring out the way to balance

Super strong language about what high-stakes accountability feels like for teachers "handcuffs"

→ maybe this is an example of transparency and collective alignment/ collaboration?

good and what they think is good and it's never going to align and therefore their job is at risk so they leave. It's always this volatile, volatility that always exists there.

The easiest way to sort that out is come up with a consistent view of what great instructional practice in a specific subjects looks like. That, in a nutshell in it's simplest form, summarizes how we got away with the idea that people don't need to be monitored and scrutinized all the time because we collaboratively designed a consistent instructional program for the time children start with us to the time they leave. That took time, but once that was established, people can step away from the cliff edge because we weren't talking about whether what people were doing was good enough or not, we were all doing the same kind of thing.

The only way to buffer teachers from those sorts of distractions and the anxiety and stress that comes along with high stakes stuff is to ask what it is that's creating that issue in the first place and then creatively solve it.

Inside of that process there are more specific things that take place. Working in this school, working in a previous school, working in different roles, I ask people what it is that was driving them out and making them stressed and anxious and unhappy and there were common themes there. Often the high-stakes accountability, the constant monitoring, scrutiny and pressure. I just implemented practices that took that pressure and stress away but solved the problem they were trying to get at anyway.

I guess that's it. When you ask people why they do those things; why do they observe teachers and grade them, why do they monitor them and scrutinize their books and their planning, they'll often talk about consistencies or they want better results or to be able to predict how kids are going to do on a test, they want the highest quality of education or teaching. They come up with answers that I don't think anybody would consider wrong. I want the children to have a world class education for our students, I

Annotations (middle column):

or has nothing to do with student/teacher learning and there is no shared purpose

→ personal connection to how awful this is. Especially educators who feel teaching as a calling and then aggressive critique or tumultuous relationships are an attack on our self-worth.

→ what theme is this? I'm not sure but this is important. This idea of clarity, defining the problem in order to have a great solution. This takes away personal judgment and makes this tangible (Einstein, "If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes defining the problem and 5 minutes solving it.")
→ asking coaching questions to better understand

→ negative ways of accomplishing goals
→ ability to see merit even when the way it's gone about isn't agreed with

→ again, this theme emerges of 'there is a better way, and if there isn't YET-YOU create it as a leader with your community

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Annotations (right column):

The new way doesn't terminate the overarching goal of the old way of monitoring and scrutinizing, it's just a better way. For everyone.

→ open-minded that it's not only ONE way to do this.

want them to achieve really well, I want them to understand deeply and understand lots of things, as many as they possibly can understand deeply. But the view that there's only one way to do that and that way is cliff edge is wrong. At the root of all of that is how do we buffer teachers from these things; as leaders we need to be experienced enough to know a variety of ways of getting to the same endpoint. If you're not reading as a leader, if you're not visiting other schools and other systems, if you're not understanding different ways of achieving high results, if you're not asking yourself challenging questions about how people work and how the organization works and how it can work better. If you're not asking yourself challenging questions as a leader, you're never going to find better answers.

You can't buffer teachers unless you know better and you're confident. There needs to be an emphasis on the development of leaders. The same way I'm talking about the support and growth of teaching staff, leaders need to embrace that same culture themselves.

Alignment. In the development of the ambitious things we're trying to achieve at the school, at the school level it's making sure those conditions for teachers to flourish are responses to the needs of the teaching group that you have. There was a time a few years ago that teachers really wanted to get into other teachers' classrooms to experience how other teachers are teaching. I think we called it 'sharing incredible practice' where every teacher had an opportunity to go and see another teacher teaching, write a reflection on it and then debrief and talk about the decisions they made. But if we did that today, I don't think they would get the same things out of it and I don't think they would want to do that necessarily. It's really about adapting and adjusting the systems you have in place for teachers to flourish, to meet the needs of those teachers. Sometimes, that means asking them. "What is it that you would want to do, what is it that you would find beneficial?" But sometimes you get to the point where the knowledge in the room is only the knowledge in the room. There's a really great Henry Forb quote where he says, "if I asked them what they wanted, they would have said faster

of teachers, parents, children, etc.'

-Fantastic quote. Connection to how leaders must also experience personal and professional growth, infinite mindset and a growth-oriented mindset
→ GOLD
→ this is really interesting and personally relatable. The same way educators need challenge, leaders also need challenge and need context in terms of knowing the environment and having experience as a teacher to make better decisions as a leader. I don't know if this is personal growth or something bigger. Maybe a theme about the need for educational leaders to lead from experience as a teacher? Or is this part of 'there is a better way'?

→ temporary highlight for authenticity but this is something bigger. Being able to recognize when something is bigger than what leaders can handle/know. Maybe intellectual humility?

→ there is something here about personal growth as leaders and the constant seeking of better ways to do things. Does this connect to mindset?
**important

Differentiation for teachers.

-intellectual humility and how it benefits educators

→ again, a collective vision

horses." You get to a point where you can ask your staff over and over again but they're limited by what they know. So part of the leadership experience is going beyond what is known in your building and coming up with alternatives and different ideas. Part of that is experience. Part of that is having been through all of those things yourself as a teacher. So when it comes time to help support and develop your own staff, you've got an array of views and opportunities that they don't know exist yet. It's about all the factors I think.

At the teacher level, they need to feel quite aligned to who we are as an organization. That means constantly involving them in processes so that the direction the school is taking isn't just the direction of one person. It's not just the Head Teacher or the Principal. The direction the school is taking it has involved the students, it's involved the staff, it's involved the community so that people are coming to work in a place and trying to achieve things for themself professionally in a school that they feel deeply aligned to.

Helping people continue to flourish means ensuring the system adapts to meet the needs of people, it means involving then in those design processes and whatever ambitious targets your setting for yourselves in a given period of time, they feel aligned to it and they understand how they're going to contribute. I think that it's also knowing when you need to let go of people. I think our school is really great, I feel lucky to work here and I know other people feel the same. There will come a time when some of the teachers that are here need to leave here to continue to grow. So knowing your staff really well and being able to have open and honest conversations with them about their career goals, about their development priorities, about who they are and what it is they're willing to achieve. It's also about connecting them and signposting them to those sorts of opportunities.

→ this idea that the 'better way' is fluid and not fixed.

→ a potential theme about differentiating for educators the way educators are taught to differentiate for students. Or maybe a broader theme of alignment in terms of schools with clarity in what they expect from students, expect similar from educators/leaders and thus all members of staff demonstrate, model and embody best practices. One of which is differentiation and meeting people/students where they are.

→ aspect of alignment. Does this come up in other transcripts?

-not sure if this is the accurate theme about educators contributing. I'm thinking that when educators are respected as professionals, they're involved in the overall process. But there is something bigger here about community and inclusion. Also about alignment for educators.

***very strong quote to demonstrate infinite mindset "knowing when you need to let go of people"
→ the 'dark side' of flourishing?
→ personal connection to 'honest conversations'. How I felt when my supervisor helped me find/create opportunities. This bigger picture thinking advances the whole field of education far beyond one school.

Appendix C

First iteration of flourishing educator theory

Factors that influence the flourishing of educators:

Theme:	Definition:
Experience of Personal Growth	Engaging in activities, events, opportunities both within and outside of school to support personal growth.
Feeling seen and celebrated	Feeling a sense of connection and belonging in being seen. Feeling celebrated by earning promotions, acknowledgment, etc.
Feeling a sense of autonomy	Educators are allowed to teach in different ways and with different skills, they feel trusted and they feel they have choice.
Experience and benefit/grow from holistic leadership	The Administrative Team or Head Administrator models growth by creating opportunities for educators, shows empathy, seeks to understand and leans into leadership rather than managing/scrutinizing.
Authenticity	In school, being authentic looks like teaching in a style that's authentic/natural to who they are as a person rather than how the school wants them to teach. Allowed to be who they are and bring their strengths to their work environment.
Own their calling as a holistic educator rather than a temporary 'job' of teacher	Calling vs. profession. Educators educate the whole child and own their responsibility as role models, regardless of if they are "off" work or not.
Positive relationships	Positive relationships among students, staff, admin, etc.

Appendix D

Second iteration model