# Transcript

## Thought Leadership Series: Ryan Dunn on Managing Complexity in Schools

Duration 1:00:08

The views expressed here are those of the individuals involved, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership.

**LOUISE STEWART:**

Welcome, everyone. It's great to have so many of you joining us this afternoon. My name is Louise Stewart. I'm Acting Director at Bastow, I have recently joined at around March this year, and this is the first in our thought leadership series. We also have Pasi Sahlberg and Steve Munby coming up, which many of you have also registered for, which is fantastic. Today we are really excited to have Dr Ryan Dunn join us and I'll introduce him in just a minute.

Before we commence, I just want to do an acknowledgment of country and acknowledge the traditional owners on which we meet and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. Just some quick housekeeping while we're here. There's so many of us on the Zoom, which is just fantastic to have you all here with us today. We would really like it to be as interactive as possible by using the chat. We have opened the chat and asked you to please provide thoughts, observations and wonderings. It is an opportunity to share with each other and with Ryan what are some of the things that are top of mind in terms of leading in times of complexity, so a really good opportunity to share your thoughts and ideas in the chat and Ryan will also be looking at those. If you could just rename yourself and just some quick instructions there just so we know who we're talking to. You can put your school if you like or where you're from. As usual, all microphones will be put on mute. This is a webinar. But if you do want to make any observations or any chats, just pop it in the chat for us to have a look at.

So I'll just quickly introduce Dr Ryan Dunn. So as I mentioned, we are really excited and privileged to have him with us today. He has been incredibly busy, like all of us, since COVID-19 hit working with a lot of schools in Victoria. Of course, as many of you would know, Ryan has worked all over the world, in the United States, Canada, doing his research and he currently is at the University of Melbourne at MGSE. He's an academic and lectures in teacher professional learning and school leadership. So we are really privileged to have him here today.

Just so you all know, this will be recorded. It is an opportunity for many of you to take this back and the resources back with your teams and sort of work through some of the tools and resources that Ryan is going to talk us through and provide for us today. And on that note, I'm going to hand it over to Ryan and say thank you so much, Ryan, for making the time to launch our Thought Leadership Series.

**RYAN DUNN:**

No problem. Thank you. I just want to share my screen. Just bear with me for a second. Yes, thanks for that introduction, Louise. Always a little daunting and always feel like you're talking about someone else when you get introduced like that, but I suppose I'd just like to pick up on one of the points where Louise was talking about working all over the world, and I suppose that's true to a certain extent. I've spent a fair bit of time in the US working. I worked in New York City and Sacramento for about three or four years and have spent some time in Canada doing work. But I suppose the sort of caveat I'd put on that is what I've spent most of my time doing when I work all over the world is talking a lot about the Victorian system. I'm a former teacher in the state system, spent over a decade working in primary schools as a teacher before moving into some leadership positions, and so while I might sort of have broadened my horizons and do some work with other systems, the majority of my work is still really centred on the Victorian system and in fact what I'm going to talk about tonight are ideas that I don't want to be theoretical, so we're looking at theory and research, but really what we're doing is talking about some ideas that are being enacted in Victorian schools.

So we know that this stuff actually works and there's some solutions to some of the things that you might be dealing with at the moment. And I suppose when we're saying that we've got this Thought Leadership Series and we're putting it together and we're thinking about complexity, no-one would have thought that it would have been as complex as term 3 where to be where you are in the system will depend on whether you're sort of back to some sort of new normal or if you're in the sort of broader Melbourne area or the Mitchell Shire, you're dealing with remote teaching 2.0.

So we know that this idea of complexity is real, that it's probably heightened to what we'd anticipated when we were planning this, but still appropriate. And I suppose the other thing that I'd just like to point out is when we're talking about complexity, it's not necessarily just saying well, there's a pandemic so things are complex. Schools are complex and have been for a long time. So the ideas that we're working through should help if you're looking at remote teaching. But schools are complex places, they're relational, and so we want to think about some processes we can put in place to work through that complexity. And I suppose just sort of to really acknowledge that things have definitely changed, this is my middle child, 12 years old, in year 7, and when he gets up in the morning for his remote teaching he's highly organised. He gets up, has breakfast, you know, gets an organised space together. If I walk in and say, "How are things going, Darcy?", he'll tell me what his timetable is, you know, puts some exercise into each day.

The other thing with what's going on is I think that everyone's experienced this radically differently. So if I look at Darcy and think about how he's experienced this complex time, he's got a fairly solid structure in place. Whereas then if I walk down across the corridor to my 14-year-old, and I took this photo yesterday at 12.30 in the afternoon, same school, both go to Princes Hill Secondary, but their experience is radically different - same teachers, yet just sort of working through this in a different way, where he's a bit more ad hoc in his approach to it, finding some of the elements of it challenging. So I think it's really important when we've got a session like tonight that we don't want to generalise too much and just say everyone has had the same experience. It's been radically different for different people, and that's whether you're in the Melbourne area, whether you're in rural or regional parts.

I think we also need to acknowledge that it's not just our professional lives that have been experiencing this complexity, that we've also got a huge amount of complexity in our personal lives where we might have had extended absences from loved ones for long periods of time. I grew up in Pakenham, which is on the sort of outskirts of Melbourne, and I've got lots of friends that are in this weird situation where they're sort of moving in and out of the broader Melbourne area, so it's like all these things that are going on, they've got to go through check points just to go and visit people, or they live in Warragul, but their family lives in Pakenham and they can't visit them, whereas their other friends can go and visit people freely. So it's complex and not just in our professional lives, but also in our personal lives. And this is sort of - just to have some equity, this is the third child, this is all of my children, but when I walked into the lounge room last night this is what I was encountering and a 4-year-old should be making sock puppets, not making sock masks, so while it's sort of cute on one level, it's also this is the nature of the world that we're living in and sort of dealing with things going well, Mabel is going to be seeing people walking around the street, so we had a discussion about what that would mean and the sorts of things and we had a look at a YouTube clip and looked at making some things.

So this whole notion of complexity is around us. Some of the things that my colleague Simon Breakspear will talk about where we're talking about agile processes, you can see that it's almost common language now that we need to be more adaptive and we need to be agile, whereas 12 months ago people were sort of thinking well, really, what does that look like and is that something that schools and systems should be thinking about, whereas now it's sort of more heightened because of the things that we're working through.

So there is no doubt that there's an enormous amount of complexity and that doesn't matter whether you're in Melbourne, Mitchell Shire or whether you're in a rural or regional area, that schools are complex, we need to work through this complexity to be able to be effective in what we do. And so when the pandemic first started and everyone was experiencing this complexity, Alma Harris wrote a really nice piece which is freely available and started to talk about that the evidence base for school leadership practices within a pandemic is non-existent. And so I find that really fascinating to say well, when we're advocating for being evidence informed and we've got evidence-based approaches to education, when we're dealing with something like a pandemic or rapidly moving to remote teaching, what is the evidence base behind that?

So what does it actually look like to do that well? We can't necessarily just jump on to Google scholar and find a whole bunch of research-based pieces to give us ideas on what we can do. We might find some stuff on online learning, but that research would have been done where people were really thinking through what they were going to be doing, well this is the content we want to address, what could it look like in an online space, not necessarily coming in and saying you've got two weeks to turn your curriculum into being online. So there was real challenges when we were starting to work through this saying well, how do we actually work when we're not quite as sure about what the solutions might be.

So really that's because quite a lot of our improvement work in the past has been around dealing with technical problems. So if we're thinking about improvement processes, evidence-based strategies, quite often what we're doing is we're thinking of them as technical problems that require technical solutions. So they're problems that can be solved with the existing knowledge and skills that we've got.

So we think about all right, well, feedback might be an issue, we've identified what the problem is. We can go and have a look at what the solution would be, what are the evidence-based strategies that we could implement. We implement those with fidelity and then we monitor them to see if they work well. And a lot of the time when I'm talking about these sorts of ideas, technical problems, I talk about standard operating procedures, you know, what are the standard operating procedures that you can implement in your school that you know are effective. That might be thinking about things like as simple as fire drills and how we leave the room in an orderly way and a safe way and congregate on the oval - standard operating procedure, let's implement it with fidelity and let's just monitor and see how it's going. We also have some classroom-based practices that can be technical problems so we can think about things like maybe lesson structure.

You know, it might be how we undertake the reading block in a morning and these sorts of things and say let's have a structure, let's implement it with fidelity and we know we can get improvement. So we've got these technical problems. But that relies on having an evidence base around what we're actually tackling. And so the issue that Alma was talking about when she was saying that there's not a lot of evidence around dealing with a pandemic is this sort of idea that leading in difficult, challenging and unprecedented times where there is no predictability, no certainty, and potentially no end in sight requires a different type of leadership, a different form of leadership practice.

And so I agree with her, but I think there's also elements of research that we can look at that can give us really good guidance on the sorts of things that we could be doing. And so if we look at the work that colleagues of mine Lawrie Drysdale and David Gurr have been doing at Melbourne University - you can notice that this is from 2017, so this isn't in response to the pandemic and Coronavirus, this is just talking about schools as we know them are complex, and Lawrie and David talk about "In times of great change, complexity, and uncertainty, school leaders are challenged to adapt and to navigate their way through the tide of internal and external forces to create the best positive outcome for students and the school community. "So there's this notion that we know complexity is around and the best way to do that is to be adaptive. So what does that actually look like in practice? How can we adapt to the changing context and the uncertainty and the ambiguity that we're experiencing?

So the question for me then becomes as school leaders or as schoolteachers how can we start to build some resilience to the continual change in complexity that we're experiencing? Yes been heightened through Coronavirus, but I would argue that complexity has always been there and we need to be constantly thinking about these things. So how can we respond, how can we build teaching teams that are resilient to this idea, and that's what I want to explore with you tonight. And so while we've got these technical solutions that we can work through, and that's basically what Alma was talking about is we can't go the evidence base and tell us exactly what to do here. What we've actually got there is this idea of an adaptive challenge. So it's a little bit different.

So really what we're doing when we've got an adaptive challenge is we're starting to hypothesise what might be a solution. So we think this might work and then the best approach is then to do some testing and learning, so let's try some things out. So in a school you should have both. We're not saying adaptive challenge is where we should be going towards and that's all we should be working on. We'll have some things that we need to be more directive around. And I was working with the Catholic Education Office this morning and we were talking about that for their experience with remote teaching in term 3 saying we can be far more directive in term 3 than probably what we were in term 2 because we've learnt things.

So we've gone through these adaptive challenges, we actually know what some of the solutions now might be and we can be quite directive and say hey, we learnt and these are the sorts of things that we can now look at, and a lot of that was around the structure of learning, the rhythm of the learning week in remote learning. But what we've also got are these adaptive challenges. So that's where we move beyond what we sort of know, understand and currently do. So we go, well, we think this might work, but really the best way to do it is just to test and learn. Let's see how it goes. If it works, let's build on it. If it doesn't, let's pivot and try something else.

So what I want you to think about is how teams of teachers can become more adaptive so they're more responsive to the context that they're working within. And so in highly complex places, when we've got a lot of uncertainty, it doesn't make as much sense to have these really long, detailed linear plans. What we want to do is make sure that we're thinking a little bit more short term and learning from early implementation. So we've got that adaptive challenge, let's try some things out and let's really monitor how it's going, what's our early evidence telling us or, as the people in the Mitchell Shire and Greater Melbourne area have realised, the context changes.

So we're being forced to change things because of certain issues that are happening that we can't control. Okay, well, we need to be responsive to that. So we need to adapt as we're moving. You know, a long, detailed linear plan doesn't quite work now. Even in terms of putting this session together tonight, there's been far more meetings leading up to it because we know the context is currently changing, you know, rapidly. We can't really predict what the next three weeks would look like. So let's be responsive to what's actually happening in front of us. And so what I'm positioning is that if we want to be more adaptive in our schools and be able to respond to the ambiguity and the uncertainty and the complexity, that one way we can think about it is to future proof some of our schools by cultivating these cohesive and adaptive teams, so teams of teachers that are empowered to respond to what's happening in their context.

So interestingly, a lot of the research around adaptive teams has come out of the military. So if you're thinking about the military - I haven't been in the military, so my experience with the military is looking at movies and sort of seeing drill sergeants that are telling people what to do, you know, these mindless soldiers going "do this" and they do it, but that's not the reality of the modern military, and they've spent a lot of time actually looking at developing adaptive teams with the idea that rigid adherence to rules and procedures can actually be catastrophic on the battlefield. So we don't want them just mindlessly following rules when it's not the right thing to do. We want them to know the rules well enough to also make decisions about when they might need to move outside of those, which is an interesting thing to think about. So the military have moved more into these adaptive teams.

One of the other reasons that they've looked at it, and I think moving through sort of this highly complex time in education, is that they know that they've got a really long chain of command. So if you think about soldiers on the front line that are dealing with the context and going well, this is what we're actually dealing with now, they don't want everything to be this long chain of command where it's, well, they default back in to someone else to make a decision, then that person defaults back in to someone else to make a decision and what actually happens is nothing changes. So what they've done is they've started to look at how can we actually empower teams to make in the moment decisions, informed decisions, evidence-based decisions, about what they could do so they don't have that long chain of command. Yes, there's still engagement from levels above about critical decisions, but the teams are also empowered to move the situation through action.

Let's make some decisions, let's think about what we could do. So we can learn a lot I think from looking at the military and how they've approached developing adaptive teams. So what they've started to do is really work towards over the last 10 years to make teams that exhibit critical thinking so they're constantly thinking about their context, looking at what's happening and making decisions based on that. So there's a lot of communication that would happen, there's a lot of analysis of evidence to make those decisions. The other thing that they talk about is making sure that the teams are comfortable with ambiguity and that decentralisation so they understand that they won't know or have all the answers and that's actually a natural part of the way that they work, that there will be some unknowns, and they do have some decision making power that they can go, "Well, we don't have all the information we need, but we think this might work. "It's an evidence informed approach, let's try it and see how it goes. So building on that, one of the other things that they work towards is this willingness to accept prudent risk and I think everyone through the remote teaching period in term 2 would understand that everyone sort of went through that, that if you were going to really rapidly change some of the practices that you were working on, there had to be some level of prudent risk. I mean, you just have a look at how people use technology now and how adept people are at using it compared to what they might have been in term 1.

So the amount of people that are quite comfortable jumping on to a Zoom session and running breakout groups and things like that, whereas you think the first time you did that you're going "I'm not sure if this is going to work. I'm going to put kids into a breakout group, how do I know that they're doing the right thing? "So there's an element of saying well, it should work, we want kids to have some discourse and discussion and I've set it up and scaffolded it, but I've got to also then go I'm going to take that risk and put them into those groups and see how they go. So we want teams to be able to do that, take that risk, that informed risk, to get things moving, see how it goes, test it, analyse what it's looking like. So we're constantly making these rapid adjustments based on the assessment of the situation that's in front of us. And so when we're thinking about adaptive ways of working in teaching teams, so groups of teachers becoming more adaptive, for the leaders online tonight we want to be thinking about how we're leading adaptive teams. For the teachers that are here, if you want to think about, well, how could I actually cultivate working within an adaptive team?

But there's a few big things that I want you to be thinking about because it can sound nice but you go what's the reality, like how do you actually get this working? So one of the big things with an adaptive way of working is having an adaptive mindset. So that's talking about understanding that taking the first step is important. So if we think about the military and what they do, they have this idea that they want to actually develop the situation through action.

So it's actually taking the first step is really important - not the long linear plan, let's take that first step because once we've taken that first step, we then discover what the most appropriate second step could be. So we want to get into it. Let's get into the work, let's have that bias towards action, take that first step, and then once we've taken it, really think about what that means for what we could do next. So building an adaptive mindset where we're used to that ambiguity and that uncertainty becomes really important.

So a lot of the work that I've done over the last decade with schools and also with networks of schools is talked about individual expertise and so professional learning was what I did my PhD in. Over the last 20 years of my career, that's what I've been working in, professional learning teams as a teacher, leading those in schools before then moving into an area where I run professional learning around different pedagogical approaches. And so a lot of the work that I've done is looking at individual expertise, how can we support teachers, individual teachers, to get better. But increasingly over the last probably three or four years I've got a strong interest in this idea of team mental models, how can we get teams being fluent in the way that they work and develop this idea of collective expertise. If I think about the state system, the Victorian state system at the moment, there's a big push for PLCs and really what I'd be thinking about within a PLC is that we're developing collective expertise.

So leaders need to be thinking about how they spend some time establishing group norms around interaction and communication and ways of working and those sorts of ideas. We want teams to become really adept at communication, decision making and having that contextual awareness. So when we're thinking about developing expertise in schools, it's not just enough to think about individuals. What we also want to do is spend some time thinking about how groups of teachers work together, how can we be really deliberate and intentional about the way that groups of teachers come together, challenge each other, critically think about what's happening and make decisions about the things that they can be doing to move things forward. And so we want to develop these team mental models.

So really that's sort of a bit of the background on the research and the ideas that sit behind what we're going to spend some time thinking about, but what I really want you to do is start to think about what are some of the organisational structures. So I always go back to Michael Fullan that talks about educational improvement is technically simple but socially complex and think about what are those technically simple structures. So what kinds of organisational structures might need to be introduced to empower teaching teams, groups of teachers, to ensure that they have high levels of readiness for change, self-efficacy, they believe they can make a difference, and innovation adoption. So when we're thinking about getting groups of teachers together, getting them to work in a really meaningful way, making decisions, being empowered to make those decisions, having that bias towards action, what are the sorts of structures that we might need to have in place.

Now, if you're in the Greater Melbourne or Mitchell Shire, that might make you think about well, and how do we do that when we've got to distribute a team where people aren't actually on site together. So that's been some of the challenges over the last three months that I've been working with schools on, saying we've got some really great team structures in place for when we're face to face. What does that now look like when we've got groups of people that are all over the place, like how do we meet together? Do we constantly need to have Webex meetings or is it that we can actually do a lot of this stuff in more informal conversations?

One of the things that I've been advocating for that's really simple is setting up group text messages. Most of the teams that I work within we've got a group text message where we stay in touch with each other, so whether that's a WhatsApp group or a group text message, but just an informal way that we can keep lines of communication open. Just before I got on tonight there was lots of people texting through because they knew I was doing this to say good luck and things like that, so think about what your context is. If it's face to face, what do those sorts of structures look like. If you've got a distributed team that are over different geographic areas, you want to be thinking about well, how does that change things, what are some of the things that we might introduce? Great schools have good corridor conversations. Those informal conversations that just happen in a high-functioning school are so meaningful. So if you don't have that, we don't have the corridor conversations, how can we up some of the informal structures that people can keep lines of communication open that it doesn't always have to be a scheduled meeting.

So they're some of the things that we can be thinking about. And so if you're interested in dealing with complexity, if you're interested in exploring adaptive ways of working and leading adaptive teaching teams, so we're talking about groups of teachers, there's a few key elements that we can consider and principles and practices that we can consider to put in place. And so the first one that I'd really like to talk to you about and give you time to think through this after I've sort of gone through these is this idea that we want to develop a mindset of acceptance, and so that's a lot of what I've been talking about now, or this afternoon, is really sort of this notion of accepting ambiguity and uncertainty just being as a natural part of working in a school, not necessarily as a part of the Coronavirus, but just understanding that complexity is a part of our space, we work in a complex environment, and that we need to understand that there's going to always be some sort of ambiguity and uncertainty around what we do.

The other thing with the developing a mindset of acceptance is really thinking about that nothing is static and everything is always changing. So if we know that, we can still have structures around how we work and not say that everything needs to be all crazy and all over the place, so let's have a structure to how we work, but understand that yeah, things might change. The context might change. Daniel Andrews might say we go to a different phase in our response to Coronavirus and that changes. All right, well, we've got structures in place. Let's understand that these things happen. What can we now do to work through them.

The second thing that if you want to work towards more adaptive ways of sort of operating is to think about how we can empower teachers to respond to their unique context. And so at Melbourne University I work in the Master of Instructional Leadership and I often talk about instructional leadership, I also talk about agile leadership, but I also think one of the leadership practices that we need to be thinking about is this idea of servant leadership, and when I say servant leadership, it's not going around and picking up papers in the schoolyard, what I'm talking about is a servant leader really looks out for impediments and inhibitors that are getting in the way of teachers being able to undertake the work.

And so we're saying look, if we want groups of teachers to get together and to be empowered to be able to do the work that they need to do, what are the things that I can do that might be getting in the way of them undertaking that work. So we want to empower those teams to do that, and there's elements of servant leadership that come up through that. Like I've spoken about already, we want our teams to be able to develop the situation through action and so really we're talking about having that bias towards action.

One of the things for me when we talk about professional learning communities, PLCs or PLTs or whatever you want to refer to them as, is the litmus-test for me on a PLC is that they're influential. So it's not a talkfest. We do want people to talk and think through things, we want them to communicate ideas, we want them to critically think about what the solutions might be, so there is definitely an element of conversation and discussion and critique, but really the litmus-test for a PLC is are they influential, do they actually influence what is happening in the classroom? And so the element for an adaptive way of working is really to think about developing that situation through action - you know, let's test and learn, let's try some things out, I think we've got some good ideas. Let's see how this works, let's try it out.

And like I was saying with the team mental models, increasingly the emerging research is looking at focusing on teams and not just on individuals. So if we look at what's coming out of MIT, they found that while individual intelligence is really important, it's not as important as the collective intelligence of a team. So if we're really focusing on teams, that can be really important. For the schools that I work with and the network of schools that I work with, I found that at the start of term 2 when we first went to remote teaching, it went back to a lot of individuals, individual teachers just saying, "I've got to work out how I'm going to turn my curriculum into being online as opposed to being face to face" and then slowly what happened is we emerged from that saying, "No, let's actually get back to work in teams, how can we support each other through this important work?"

And then the final part when we're starting to think about leading adaptive ways of working with teams of teachers is always looking at designing some lean improvement processes. So for me when I started my PhD, I looked at action research. One of the things that I found fascinating is when I started to interview people as a part of that research process that people would say things like, "Oh, it was transformative, it was one of the most transformative experiences of my life, I learnt so much through that action research project. "And then I'd say to them, " So what are you doing in your next action research project?", and they'd say things like, "Oh, I'm not doing another one, it was overwhelming. "And so to me you go all right, well, there's a bit of tension here that we need to work through. One, yeah, it's powerful, but then on another level it's been so overwhelming that they don't want to engage in it in a sustainable way.

So I think things like action research are really important and a lot of schools use it in a sustainable way, so I'm not saying let go of it, but what we also want to do is have some processes in place where we can actually go through the adaptive challenges, those testing and learning cycles, really rapidly. Let's try some things out.

Let's get some early implementation evidence about how this is going. So that might be looking at how do we implement things like learning walks to learn how things are going, how do we run check-ins or scrums on a regular basis to make sure that we're getting evidence of how things are going. It might be looking at peer observations, it could be looking at teaching sprints and things like this. So let's have some processes where we can say the actual idea here is to try stuff out and do it rapidly to get a sense of how we're working.

So just like I was saying, these things become critically important if we want to work through these adaptive processes for teaching teams. And so in your guide book you've got some extra information about that. There's also a link which if you want to take a photo of this screen, you can see that that will link you back to the paper where this has come from, so by all means go and have a look and do some deeper thinking about it. But what I want to do is break just for about three to five minutes now and for you just to work through and what you've got is just a brief example of that.

So just go through those principles and practices that I just talked through really quickly and I want you to think about just in a top line where do you think the team - if you're a teacher, think about the team that you work within, if you're a school leader, maybe think about your school as a whole, but think about for each one of those adaptive ways of working and just really sort of quickly rate where you think your school or a team within your school currently is. So you can say look, if we want to actually look at this a little bit more deeply, where are some things that we might need to put some resources? Like you might say you've got a great team that love to read research, love to talk about research, but if we actually think about how they develop the situation through action, if we're really honest, they might not actually do a lot of implementation.

All right, well, let's talk to them about that, let's think about what are some processes we could put in place for them to be able to do that. Four minutes, just a quick think for you to work through that process and to think about where you're currently placed. If you've got any questions, please feel free to put them into the chat box and I can start to have a look at those and respond to them as we move into the next part of the session. I'll give you a 30-second warning just as we're about to come back. One minute and then we'll come back together. Make sure you're putting your thoughts into the Zoom group chat so we can have a look at some of the things that you're thinking about.

Okay, if we can come back together as a group. The idea is just to do some initial thinking around those ideas. You know, if you're a school leader, I'd be suggesting that a really good process is to get everyone in your school improvement team to go through and rate as a school how you're going and then come back and have some discussion about the consistent way you've rated things, but also if there's some differences then talk through those. So I understand that in three minutes you're not going to have done deep thinking, but the idea is just to have a quick think about those things. The main sorts of questions that have been coming up is this idea of lean processes, people asking about what they're like, and I suppose the example I was using is something like action research, where in my experience great process, it's why I actually undertook a PhD, I did an action research project as part of my master's, I found it to be a really powerful process for me as a school leader, but also the feedback from the teachers that I was working with at the time at Flemington Primary really enjoyed it.

So it was something that I'm like, well, there's something in this, I want to look at it, but it wasn't necessarily what I would refer to as lean. And in a lot of ways things like action research can end up being term 1 we do a lot of reading about the research, term 2 we start to think about what the intervention might be, term 3 we actually do something, and then term 4 we start to analyse the results. And I'm not being condescending to that process, I think there's merit in undertaking that, but it's not what I'd refer to as being lean. So what we're talking about with a lean process is saying can we simplify some of those things so we're really starting to think about that principle 3 where we're developing the situation through action.

So what we're talking about is saying let's get things into action, let's talk and let's think about it, but with the idea that we're going to rapidly actually try some things out. So we don't want to be reckless with the students, but what we want to do is have some evidence-based practices that we can be trying really rapidly. So I can see people putting in the chat box things like teaching sprints. I know Simon Breakspear did the last Bastow webinar where he was talking about building back better, and so if you have a look at that website, there's certainly some really good ideas about how you can rapidly undertake some of this work. In saying that, you should have multiple structures in your school, so like I was saying, action research I think is a really important one that if you're doing please keep doing, but I think we also need some structures where we can say hey, what are the structures where we can rapidly try some things and see how they work and that might not be scaling across the school.

So one of the things that Simon Breakspear will often talk about is working with a small group of committed educators. So the lean process might be also smaller numbers of people that are working within the process. So we're going to do a peer observation, but I'm just going to do that with the maths faculty or the grade 3/4 team and we're going to see if we can get this working. Let's really quickly over the next three weeks try some things out, see if we can get it working, with the idea that then we scale it across the school. So just thinking about how we can get those iterative, rapid sort of cycles happening in school.

So they're the sort of things that we need to be thinking about if we're leading this. So, you know, a lot of inquiry takes place over long periods of time. I remember when I was doing action research they'd often talk about it being an iterative process, but actually when you read a lot of the literature or research that's come out of action research, they very rarely talk about any implementation that's more than just one iteration of the process. So quite often we say it's an iterative process, but it actually isn't. So that's what we're talking about with lean implementation cycles. So hopefully that answers your question. I can see that people have been putting in the chat box some links to some other work that you can explore if you want to look at lean processes and it's a really great thing to explore, so this rapid idea of let's get in and do the work and let's see how it's working in our unique context. Even for things that aren't related to, you know, Coronavirus and online teaching, I think that rapid processes are really important.

So if we want to think about well, what does peer feedback look like? Well, let's actually learn really quickly about how it works within our unique context becomes critically important. So they're the sort of key things and principles and practices that when we're working with teaching teams we can be starting to think about. If you're a school leader and a part of your role might be working with middle-level leaders, there's certainly some principles and practices that we can start to be talking about with them on hey, these are the sorts of things that become critically important when we're dealing with complexity. So what I want to do is change tack a little bit and just sort of link it back to the first webinar that was a response to the Coronavirus that Simon Breakspear did and just sort of talk more broadly about some of the things that we can be experiencing when we're going through this really complex time.

So if I look at the work of Michael Fullan and some of the stuff that he's released recently as a response to what's been happening globally and through the new pedagogies for deep learning project, he talks about a three-phase process, so that we've got this disruption phase, we then move into this transition phase and then hopefully in the near future for all of the schools in Victoria then we get back into this reimagining phase. You can see that when we're in this reimagining phase, one of the things that he advocates for is that we've got more agile and innovative future-focused learning and so we're starting to really get into these ideas of adaptive and agile processes become critically important. If I just sort of link back to the first webinar that Bastow did as a response to the pandemic, Simon walked through this three-phase process that people are working through saying initially at the start of term 2 what we had was this sort of crisis phase, and really what you're doing there is stabilising your work force, saying, well, these are the things that are important, let's come together and really talk about those things, and then moving through that into an adaptation phase where we're becoming resourceful, really thinking about adaptive processes before then moving into this opportunity phase. And I suppose at that stage when Simon was presenting that, you know, we were probably all thinking that about now would be when all the schools were moving into the opportunity phase, where the reality is that some of us will be, we'll be back to our new normal.

Over the next couple of weeks I'm out at Orbost working with a group of schools in Far East Gippsland and I'll also be working remotely with a group of schools in Horsham. So when I'm talking to those communities of practice and those networks of schools that I work with, in a lot of ways they're in the opportunity phase saying we're really thinking about what the new normal looks like, we're back to face-to-face teaching, whereas the schools that I work with in the Greater Melbourne area really are sort of back in this adaptation phase going well, what did we learn from remote learning 1.0.

Now we're back into this, what are the things that we could be doing more effectively as we move through it, knowing that really we've got a whole lot of teachers that have dialled up their willpower over the last three months and are starting to go, well, we need some sustainable practices. Like it's one thing to say hey, remote learning worked really well, but it's taking me 12 hours a day to actually develop those resources. So the adaptation phase is really saying, you know, what are some sustainable practices when we're thinking about remote learning.

So what I want to do is get you to think about that adaptation phase and that opportunity phase and I know depending on your context will be dependent on what phase you're in. It's not a criticism of your school if you feel like you're back in the crisis stage, like I showed pictures of my kids. Princes Hill has been shut down, so it wouldn't be - and I don't know the leadership team at Princes Hill, but it wouldn't be unrealistic that some schools are dealing with some things that actually put them back in the crisis phase and going we need to stabilise our workforce. So it's not a criticism of school, you should be in one place or another. It depends on your context on where you're at. But what I'd like to do is just think about the adaptation and the opportunity phase.

So just to frame that thinking, what I want you to do is just in the chat box, so we can get a sense of some awesome things that started to emerge as a result of remote teaching, what are some of the practices that you saw happening in schools that you say hey, this is great, these are new emerging practices that we might not have anticipated teachers would be doing so rapidly, or there's cool use of technology. But just in the chat box just put in some things that you saw or you might have undertaken if you're in the classroom that you think were really nice emerging practices that occurred as a result of remote teaching, or if you're still in remote teaching that are happening now. Just one minute really rapidly if we can get as many as possible in there, that would be great. Different ways of connecting with kids - yes, I agree, lots of conversation around that. Lots of conversation about differentiation. Formative assessment. Using iPhones to record worked examples. Connection to parents - totally agree. A lot of schools I work with have had a really strong emphasis on that. Multimodal assessment tasks. Filming of explicit lessons. Videoing lessons. Really great. So lots of things and we could keep going, and I think that's a really nice thing that's come out of this is we've got all of these emerging practices that have come out of this remote learning period in term 2. For some of us we're still looking at well, what does that look like as we're still in remote learning in term 3, but as some of us have moved out of it we're more into this opportunity phase.

So I want you to think about how we can frame some of these discussions around some of the opportunities because I think it's one thing to say there's great opportunities that have come out of remote teaching, but I also think we need to be really clear about framing the discussions about what we want to let back in and continue with. And so for the people that are still in remote learning, Simon said in his webinar that what we should be doing is really thinking about documenting some of that, so I'd strongly encourage you to take that advice on board and document these great practices that you're seeing happening. For those of you that have moved out of the remote teaching and are back to face-to-face teaching, there's really a time to build in a discussion about well, what are we going to let back in. So I want you to think about how we frame some of those discussions.

So how do we start to really think about those emerging practices, think about that chat box and all the things that were in there and start to discuss these in terms of what we know about effective teaching and learning. So yeah, all right, teachers were filming themselves, teachers are using MS Teams really effectively, but what does that help us with in terms of teaching and learning or maybe teacher collaboration? So when we're talking about what we keep back in, I think we need to have some sort of frame to make some decisions about what are the practices. I had a concern early on with some of the schools that I worked with that a lot of the conversation was around technology. So we're talking about platforms, but not talking about the practice. So what was the practice that that platform allowed us to do? Do we want to continue with that practice? And what would it look like?

So just to finish off, I want you to be thinking about as you go through a process of looking at some of the opportunities, like what Michael Fullan was talking about, the reimagining, like what Simon was talking about with the opportunity phase, I really strongly encourage you to map some of those opportunities against some sort of instructional model. And I know the state system that schools were working towards instructional model, so I want you to be thinking about your instructional model. If you don't quite have one in place, there's lots of different places we can go to get a sense of what this would look like. So it might be in terms of let's map these back against what we know about learning and that might be going to the Science of Learning website and looking at the PEN principles and saying well, if we were doing this, how does it actually fit in with what we know about learning? It might be that we start to think about also what we know about instruction. So it might be hey, let's map this back against something like the e5 instructional model. When we're using videos in this way, where would this fit in an e5 instructional model? Does it actually support learning? Or it might be - if you look at the bottom right-hand side of the slide, it might be thinking about the gradual release of responsibility and how we've done things.

But I think there was really great conversations that emerged from the first remote learning period about what is learning because people were acutely aware that if I can't scaffold them in that way that I normally would face to face, there's got to be some alternate ways that I do it and some of those alternate ways were fantastic. So I can see in the chat box that there's things like worked examples. All right, well, if I'm not on the board actually showing that worked example, how can I share that with students? You know, is it somewhere that I upload on to a digital platform that kids can access it? Do we get kids to actually annotate some work and look at a rubric and say, well, where would you mark this and why?

So one of the things that I suggest as a really nice frame to make some decisions about when we're looking at opportunities and things that we might want to keep as we're moving forward based on the remote learning period is this idea of Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction. Now, I'm not sure if everyone is familiar with it. I'm definitely not going to be reading through all 10 principles. But they're things that we're probably all aware of, but I think it's just a nice package to say if we're going to talk about opportunities and things we should be keeping, let's have a discussion about how they fit in with what we know about good teaching.

And so the other thing that comes out of this is we might need to change some of the things that we've acknowledged as being emerging practices. So one of the things that I could see that Bron Jones put on the chat box was around her father that's a music teacher that's now using short, sharp video recordings and that's one that's come out of many schools that I've worked with where teachers are saying, "It actually worked really well. What I did was recorded these short little intense instructional videos for students to look at. "And so for me that fits in really nicely with the top right-hand side of that slide and a principal instruction which is you present new material in small steps.

So we know that's really important for teaching and learning. But the question is do you maintain recording YouTube clips as a part of your instruction so you're starting to think about maybe flipped learning, and some schools I've had teachers say yes and in other schools I've had teachers saying, "No, that's not something I'm going to continue, but what I'm going to do is continue that practice of really making sure when I'm in face-to-face learning that I present new material in really small steps, bite-sized chunks that students can understand. "So it might be the same practice, but it might not look the same as what happened in the remote teaching.

So think through those things as well. Not everything will be let's keep the technology, let's keep it the same. Sometimes it might be let it go, but actually keep the practice. And so just to finish off the session, I want you to be thinking about Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, those 10 principles, think about the things that you put into the chat box and what I want to do is jump into a Google form together, or a Google Doc. So if you go to that short url, you'll find an open Google Doc that we're all going to be in and I want you to think about what were some of the opportunities that come out of remote teaching, if you're still in it what are some of the opportunities that are emerging as you're undertaking it now back into your fourth day of remote teaching in the Victorian system, and also think about would you need to modify them?

So would the practice stay exactly the same or might it be a modification of that practice like the example I used with the short, sharp video clips? So if we can jump in there and spend five minutes just getting a sense of what are the great things that we're seeing and then also referencing it back or mapping it back to a framework of excellence, the instructional model of Rosenshine's Principles of instruction. So if you can jump into there and just spend five minutes and then I'll call you back as a group. Lots of great stuff going in there. We'll leave this open. Feel free to download it. then we'll come back together.

Okay, and if you can start to bring your attention back to the main group. Like I said, we'll leave that open, so feel free if you want to download it and have a look at it. The idea is to say that there are some great opportunities that have emerged out of the remote teaching period. What we want to be able to do is make some informed decisions about what we would keep. So I think it's really important to come back to that instructional model. Things like Rosenshine's Principle I think are critically important to make some decisions about, well, if these things worked, why did they work and where does it fit in with the learning framework?

So just to finish off, the last thing that I'd get you to do is to just put in the chat box if there's some specific ideas that you found useful - the Bastow team would be interested in that - but also if you've got any questions for me, we've got a couple of minutes and I'm happy to address them just like we did with the lean processes one after the first part of the session. So if you're a leader, really thinking about how we can empower teams. I think that's a really important thing to be future proofing our workforce to say that if we can get teaching teams to be more empowered and adaptive, then they're set up really well to deal with the complexity and uncertainty and the ambiguity that's actually happening in our workforce, and will continue to happen, and also when we're making decisions about opportunities that have come out of this crazy period, that we're really strategic about the sorts of things that we choose to continue with would be really important. So please feel free to put some things into the chat box if you've got some questions and if there's some specific ideas that you found useful, feel free to put those in there just as we continue on.

I'd like to thank you for your time. If we had have known that this was going to be the reality of your working week, you know, fourth day of remote teaching for the Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, you know, some of our rural and regional schools actually being closed at the moment through Coronavirus as well, probably we would have said, "Oh, maybe people will be a little bit busy", so it's been a real privilege to see how many people have come on tonight. We've got over 140 with us and I appreciate you taking the time out to come and explore some ideas with me and hopefully they're useful and practical for you in your settings. Thank you.

**LOUISE:**

I'll just jump in there just to say a big thank you to Ryan. We actually had 160 people at the peak, Ryan, so you were able to share your expertise and knowledge with lots of people across Victoria, as did many of the teachers, regional staff, principals in the chat tonight. So thank you so much for coming along, participating and sharing. A hugely valuable webinar series, Ryan. So from the big picture, theory, research and evidence, right down grounding us back into teacher practice and, most importantly, student learning and what we need to focus on, hugely important and really practical. So thank you so much for your time and for beginning the Thought Leadership Series. I'm sure many people are taking away lots of ideas and practical tools and research back to their teams.

Just to remind you this is being recorded and you will be able to access it on the Bastow website. We have two more coming up in our series. We have Pasi Sahlberg, who will be talking around the issues of equity. That's on 30 July. And then we have Steve Munby on 20 August. So those links are up now. We hope to continue a rolling series of this thought leadership work at Bastow. So once again, thank you all for attending and thank you so much for your time, Ryan. Much appreciated. Have a good evening, everyone. Good night. See you, guys.