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The Trouble With Implementation

(and how to make it better)

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Right now, no agenda is shared before the meeting and no minutes are taken during/after the meeting. I would reverse that. Meetings will have more impact if you have the agenda beforehand, and we should take minutes to reflect and move on to the next steps that were decided.

—Anonymous

SUCCESS CRITERIA

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to identify the following:

- Why we have a need to over-implement
- How we can improve implementation
- Five questions to help guide your implementation
- How to overcome our overconsumption mindset

Add two of your own success criteria:

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We are a world consumed with overconsumption. We are consistently hit with messages that we need new things to make us happy. When I was growing up, we lived in a house that our mom and dad built in

1959. Over the twenty years we lived in that house, which we recently sold after my mom passed, we had one green rotary phone hanging on the wall. Nowadays, the message is that we need to upgrade our phones every single year. We sit back and watch as others entertain us.

To some it is called progress, but to others it is called overconsumption. We passively consume curriculum, content, technology tools, and words at meetings as if we are playing the supporting role in our own lives. What makes it worse is that we consume because we have the fear of missing out (FOMO), so we begin to rally our troops in the war of overconsumption. This combination of FOMO and our need to consume new things contributes to why we over-implement and leads to the anxiety and exhaustion we feel.

What we all need is time to focus and cut down on the noise. We need time to breathe and engage in conversations that focus on deeper impact. We need time to feel inspired, time when we can curate new ideas and look for teachable moments, but we won't get that time back until we begin taking some things off our plates.



CASE IN POINT

The “More Is More” Philosophy

In my work, I coach school leaders and teams, facilitate workshops, and provide keynotes, both nationally and internationally. When I first began doing this work, I had lots of content that I felt I needed to cover. I had the “more is more” philosophy. For a full-day workshop I had at least a hundred slides. At the end of the day, my voice was raw from talking so much. But it took a road trip with colleagues to bring this into sharp relief.

A few years ago, I began working in partnership with the University of Oklahoma with several colleagues, facilitating sessions that included principals and assistant principals.

My colleagues and I would drive one hour and fifteen minutes to the venue, and during the car ride we would talk about the content for the day, even though we had already had a video call about it. At the venue, we would meet with the four coaches responsible for coaching participants within the group, and then I would meet with participants to facilitate the learning. At the end of the six-and-a-half-hour session, my colleagues and I would meet with the coaches for one hour to go over the pluses and deltas for the day. Then we would get in the car for

our hour-and-fifteen-minute drive back to the hotel, during which one of us read all the feedback out loud in detail. That was more than five hours of meeting for one session, which began to feel . . . excessive. However, during one of these car meetings, an important nugget of truth came out about how much *doing* I was doing during my sessions.

As we were driving back to the hotel, one of my colleagues asked me if I knew the ratio of my talking versus participants' talking. I said it was split evenly. I was wrong. I would speak for thirty minutes and give participants ten minutes to speak. I was consistently more concerned about covering content. I was hitting participants with everything, including the kitchen sink, because I felt that the more I gave them, the more they would see me as a credible source. This lined up with the written feedback I was getting from participants. While the audience noted that the information was great and I knew my stuff, some people wrote that they needed time to process. I thought they meant they needed to process it after they left, but what they really needed was for me to slow down so they could think during the session.

Upon reflection, our team worked to streamline our meeting time, and I changed the way I ran workshops. I still have the same time allotted as I did, but now I develop success criteria with the audience, talk for ten to fifteen minutes, and give them ten to fifteen minutes to process. And I took out a bunch of slides that did not matter. The result was more time for creative thinking and workshops that produced deeper conversations than ever before.

What are your thoughts on overconsumption in your personal life?

Do you have concerns about overconsumption within your school?

For those of you who are district leaders, how has overconsumption impacted you?

**CLUTTER
CHECK**



Educational Trends Over the Past Thirty Years

In the following chart, you will find a list of popular educational trends over the past thirty years or so. These educational trends are not just from the United States, because they have been found in and have impacted other countries as well. Take a moment to read through the list, and even add to it. This list has been broken up into the broad categories of districtwide/schoolwide, classroom, and leadership practices.

DISTRICTWIDE/ SCHOOLWIDE INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS	CLASSROOM PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES	LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES
Open classrooms	Fixed grouping/flexible grouping	No Child Left Behind
Standards-based bulletin boards	Lectures/student talk	Building management
D.A.R.E.	Turn and talk	Professional learning communities (PLCs)
Portfolios	Jigsaw	Evaluations (Danielson, Focused Teacher Evaluation Model)
Project-based learning	DEAR time	Walkthroughs
Whole word versus phonics	Popcorn reading	Staff meetings
Packaged programs (Houghton-Mifflin, Scholastic, Readers and Writers Workshop)	Extrinsic behavior incentive charts (red, yellow, green; ClassDojo)	Schoolwide professional development
Running records	Sound walls	One-on-ones
Multiple intelligences	Flexible seating	Japanese lesson study
Bloom’s taxonomy	Journaling	Differentiated supervision
Social-emotional learning	Understanding by Design	Snapshot feedback
Trauma-informed instruction	Small-group instruction	Instructional leadership
Leveled texts	Conferencing	Distributive leadership
Site-based professional development	Decodable texts	Site-based decision models
Social justice curriculum	Independent reading	Advanced certification
I-Ready	PowerPoint lessons	Various leadership standards
MAP assessments	Reading skills/strategies	Well-being leadership
Smartboards	Building knowledge	Look-fors
Blended learning	Correcting student work/ not correcting student work	Transparent/publicly shared data
Personalized learning	Daily homework/no homework	Instructional rounds
Math Talk	Exit slips	Transformational leadership
Common Core	Cold-calling	Community schools
High-stakes testing	Whole-class novels/ individual texts	Collective leadership
Singapore math	Direct/constructivist instruction	Leading for equity
Inquiry-based science	Socratic methods	Leading like a coach