



CHAPTER 5 TRY THIS: APPLY THE SIX LEADERSHIP PARADIGM SHIFTS



Use this tool to reflect on your leadership mental models and develop actionable steps for using the six paradigm shifts to frame your work. For each shift, consider how the mindset is reflected in your practice, identify barriers, and plan a next step to move the disposition forward.

Paradigm Shift 1: Staff Are Knowledge Creators, Not Just Implementers

Reflection: How often do staff in your organization engage in creating local knowledge through inquiry?

Current Reality: How are staff seen and treated as the creators of change ideas?

Barriers: What gets in the way of staff engaging in action research and inquiry?

Next Step: What is one concrete action you can take to empower staff as knowledge creators?



Paradigm Shift 2: Improvement Is a Team Effort, Not an Individual Act

Reflection: Does collaboration in your school or district extend beyond surface-level cooperation into true team-driven learning?

Current Reality: How do teams currently engage in joint problem-solving and sharing?

Barriers: What conditions or mindsets prevent deep team-based learning and collaboration?

Next Step: How can you strengthen team structures and routines to foster collaborative teamwork?

Paradigm Shift 3: Failure Is a Learning Opportunity, Not a Setback

Reflection: Is failure seen as a necessary part of learning, or is something to be avoided?

Current Reality: How does your system respond to setbacks or when improvement efforts don't go as planned?

Barriers: What cultural or structural factors make staff hesitant to experiment or take risks?



Next Step: What leadership move can you take to model or normalize failure as part of the learning process?

Paradigm Shift 4: Knowledge Must Be Shared to Accelerate System Learning, Not Just Individual Learning

Reflection: How does learning get shared across teams, schools, or departments in your system?

Current Reality: What structures exist for staff to share insights, successful practices, and lessons learned?

Barriers: What limits knowledge-sharing across teams, schools, or departments?

Next Step: What is one way you can create or strengthen structures for sharing learning?



Paradigm Shift 5: Meaningful Data Should Drive Learning, Not Just Accountability

Reflection: Do staff view data as a tool for their own learning or for compliance?

Current Reality: What types of data are most valued, and how are they used in decision-making?

Barriers: What makes it difficult for staff to access or act on data that informs their practice in a timely way?

Next Step: What is one way you can ensure data is used at the most local level for meaningful improvement?

Paradigm Shift 6: Improvement is Shaped by Culture, Not Just Strategy

Reflection: Does your workplace culture encourage trust, collaboration, and open communication?

Current Reality: How would you describe the current workplace culture in your school or district?

Barriers: What challenges are getting in the way of creating a culture of trust, joy, and shared purpose?



Next Step: What leadership move could strengthen a more positive improvement culture?

Action Planning: Moving Forward

After reflecting on the six shifts, identify one area where you want to take immediate action:

- Which paradigm shift do you want to focus on first?
- What is one specific leadership move you will make in the next month?
- How will you measure progress and impact?

Note: What would your team say? This tool can be used as a team discussion tool in leadership meetings.