



Design Thinking for School Leaders by Alyssa Gallagher and Kami Thordarson

Think you might want to read this book?

If you've ever thought that it would be easier to scrap the current system of education and start over... then this book was written for you. Gallagher and Thordarson show how empathy combines with being an "opportunity seeker", "experience architect", "rule breaker", "producer", and "storyteller" to create a culture where designing change becomes the norm. Design Thinking is a great read for anyone looking to implement thoughtful and lasting educational change.

What would Socrates ask?

- What if the role of every administrator formally changed each year as demands shift?
- What can school leaders learn from the recent changes in music, journalism, entertainment, or retail?
- What if you started the school year asking your students what they would like to learn?
- How often is the right interval to ask students how they are feeling about their learning experiences?
- What if all school leaders followed a student schedule for a full day at least once each year?
- How often do you seek the opinion of often marginalized students?
- What does it mean if you do or don't openly display curiosity or vulnerability in front of others?
- How often is student work shared online?
- What if the professional growth of your teachers was always shared online?
- What if schools posted on social media a new student learning experience each day?

Research

- Annually, there is a 20 percent turnover rate among public school principals. Year after year, approximately 12 percent of all school principals leave the profession, either to retirement or other careers, and 8 percent move on to other roles within education.
- ... the things we say account for only 7 percent of the total message that other people receive. The other 93 percent of the message that we communicate when we speak is in our tone of voice and body language.

Concepts

- Design Inspired Leadership- a shift from the traditional view or role from leader as manager to leader as designer
- Design Inspired Leadership roles- Opportunity Seeker; Experience Architect; Rule Breaker; Producer; Storyteller
- Design Thinking Process: Empathize; Define; Ideate; Prototype; Test

- Moonshot Thinking- a project that addresses a huge problem, proposes a radical solution, and uses breakthrough technology instead of a mere 10 percent gain, a moonshot aims for a 10x improvement over what currently exists.
- Filter bubble- a distorted view of the world resulting from uber-personalized experiences.
- Experience Architects- a person who maps out how to turn something ordinary into something distinctive - even delightful - every chance they get.

Quotes from the authors

- “Could we create a new profile of the school leader that is more effective and therefore more appealing?”
- “For the first time in history, people of all ages can learn anything they want at any time of day with little more than a device and internet connection.”
- “We are at the forefront of the design + education movement.”
- “Shifting beliefs is always harder than shifting actions. People need time to grieve over things that they might be letting go. Find ways to support people in this process and meet them where they are.”
- “Empathy is king in Design Thinking, which differentiates it from many approaches that are also used to tackle problems.”
- “We believe our primary end users are our students. They should always be first and foremost in our minds when designing experiences, with secondary users being parents and possibly even the broader community.”
- “The difference in teachers who understand the why is that they are inspired by the work because of their clarity and connection to the why.”
- “No learning journey follows a linear path, and those moments of losing ground are actually important moments of unlearning, which you can best experience through action.”

Quotes from others

- “A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don’t necessarily want to go, but ought to be.” - Rosalynn Carter, former First Lady
- “The main tenet of Design Thinking is empathy for the people you’re trying to design for. Leadership is exactly the same thing - building empathy for the people you’re entrusted to help.” - David Kelley, co-founder of IDEO
- “We don’t see things the way they are. We see things the way we are.” - Talmud
- “The culture of school is radically at odds with the culture of learning necessary for innovation.” - Tony Wagner, professor, Harvard University
- “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” - Peter Drucker, author and business consultant
- “The job of an educator is to teach students to see vitality in themselves.” - Joseph Campbell, American author

Implement tomorrow?

- Walk around your school and notice every sign. What signs promote thinking and which stifle creativity? Which highlight student work? Which could simply be removed? Which could be reworded? Where could signs be added? Are there any signs that directly link to the Mission or Values of your school?

Organizations/schools working on answers

- [School Retool](#)
- [SXSW EDU](#)
- [Vista Innovation Design Academy](#)
- [Education Reimagined](#)

Gateways to further learning

- [The Empathy Quiz](#)
- [The New Yorker Cartoon Caption Contest](#)

Referenced books with the potential to impact leading and learning in education

Author(s) Last Name	Title
Wiseman	<i>The Multiplier Effect</i>
Sinek	<i>Start with Why</i>
Duhigg	<i>The Power of Habit</i>

The applicability of this book to education is



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