The Model Thinker by Scott E. Page

Think you might want to read this book?
Are you aware that there are many diverse models of behavior, such as the dichotomous behavior between cooperation and personal value of items? In *The Model Thinker*, Scott E. Page takes the reader through the whys and hows of this kind of thinking followed by dozens of models to help us understand the world. He notes that "school choice" comes with a "zero-sum game." In other words, unless new schools open up or existing ones drastically improve, school choice will not have an overall positive impact. The proactive or lucky student will continue to go to the best schools, and the less proactive, or simply unlucky student will most likely go to the ones that are focused on school survival, rather than good teaching and deep learning. However, in the final analysis, this book is lacking in models that are directly impactful for educators, but knowing there are models out there that drive policy will cause all of us to make decisions using logic and data via the models we find adjacently relatable.

What would Socrates ask?

- Are there model concerns from teachers that can be addressed using modeling so that responses are more likely to be satisfactory?
- Does offering school choice without opening new schools or improving the current ones give us a false sense of overall improvement since it's a zero-sum game?
- How do we pilot programs or approach professional development if 20% initial buy-in is needed for strategy to trump culture?
- What are the models of different parent concerns, and how do we track different solutions?
- What are the models of different student learning or behavioral concerns, and how do we track different solutions?
- Which hiring practices should serve as the model, as they produce the best fit for educators and schools?

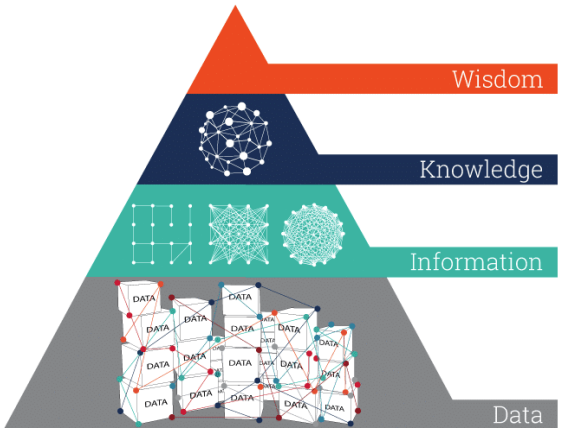
Relevant Statistics

- An initial buy-in of 20% of the people is needed for strategy to trump culture.
- Six degrees of separation phenomena originated with the Stanley Milgram experiment in which they sent boxes from Omaha and Wichita to Boston, and the average package that arrived was handled by six people.

Concepts

- "Models are formal structures represented in mathematics and diagrams that help us to understand the world. Mastery of models improves your ability to reason, explain, design, communicate, act, predict and explore."

- Knowing how models work will allow you to identify flaws in logic, in addition to when ideology is supplanting reason.
- All models are wrong in that they simplify and omit details. We overcome this single-model issue by using multiple models.
- Models transform data into wisdom. A Model: Wisdom Hierarchy (information puts data into categories, knowledge organizes the information into a holistic understanding, and wisdom allows us to identify relevant knowledge)



Each step up the pyramid answers questions about and adds value to the initial data.

- The “prospect theory” is that we are loss averse, in other words, the pain of losing “x” amount is stronger than the same force of joy we receive if we gain “x.”
- There is strength in our weak ties to others as they connect us to diverse worlds and ways of thinking.
- There are people in many organizations who fill “structural holes,” for instance, they use their talents and abilities to fill in gaps and gain much influence over time, as they tend to have access to information from multiple communities.
- We need to understand that school choice is not an option that improves the education for more children, but rather shuffles them around, so that some are in a better situation while some are in a worse one since it’s a zero-sum situation.
- Adding local context to any modeling is key.

Quotes from the author

- “... when our thinking is informed by diverse logically consistent, empirically validated frames, we are more likely to make wise choices.”
- “Modeling is a craft, mastered through engagement; it is not a spectator sport. It requires deliberate practice. In modeling, mathematics and logic play the role of an expert coach. They correct our flaws.”
- “As a general rule of thumb, the more data we have, the more granular we should make our model.”
- The Challenge of Modeling People: “People are diverse, we are socially influenced, we are error-prone, we are purposive, and we learn. In addition, people possess agency - we have the capacity to act.”

Quotes in the book from others

- “Your value will be not what you know; it will be what you share.” - Ginni Rometty
- “What kinds of networks should we build, and for what purposes?” - Anne-Marie Slaughter
- “The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning.” - John Dewey

Gateways to further learning

- Model Thinking

Referenced books with the potential to impact leading and learning

Author(s) Last Name	Title
Allison	Essence of Decision
Schelling	Micromotives and Macrobehavior

The applicability of this book to education is ….