



REBUILDING SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN A COVID-19 WORLD



David Tranter, PhD

Invitation to Participate and Share

- ✓ Ask a question in the chat bar.
- ✓ Answer a question in the chat bar.
- ✓ We will use the last section of the webinar to answer questions.

Note: Supplementary 15 min video at:

<https://youtu.be/xSTAiPIK6p0>

(or search Rebuilding School Community)

THE BIG QUESTIONS

1. How do we and our students navigate through these tough times?
2. How can we best support the well-being of our students?
3. How can we best support our own well-being?
4. How might we use this time as an opportunity for learning and growth?

Sweden - Sept 3, 1967



First off, let's acknowledge that there is no easy solution to our collective situation.

We are living in uncertain times.



Our Context:

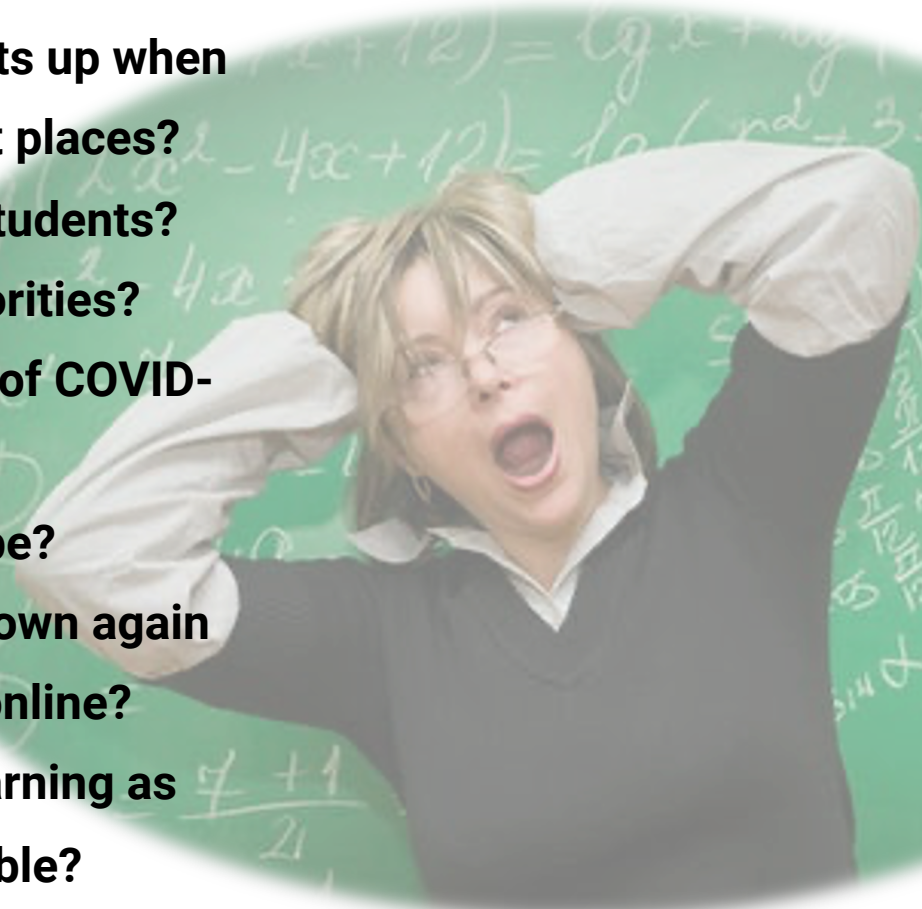
UNCERTAINTY

ACADEMICS

- How do I (re)engage my students?
- How can I catch my students up when they are at such different places?
- How can I motivate my students?
- What should be my priorities?
- How do I teach in the face of COVID-19 measures?
- How flexible can I be?
- What if the school shuts down again and we have to teach online?
- How do I make online learning as meaningful as possible?
- And more!

WELL-BEING

- What impact will the pandemic have on my students' well-being?
- What is and isn't my role when it comes to supporting student well-being?
- How can I support the needs of all of my students?
- How can I help students who are anxious, fearful, depressed or traumatized?
- How can I help my students when my own well-being isn't so great?
- How can I balance work, family and my own mental health?
- And more!



Five Education Thinking Traps in Times of **Uncertainty**

(That drive
educators apart,
not together)

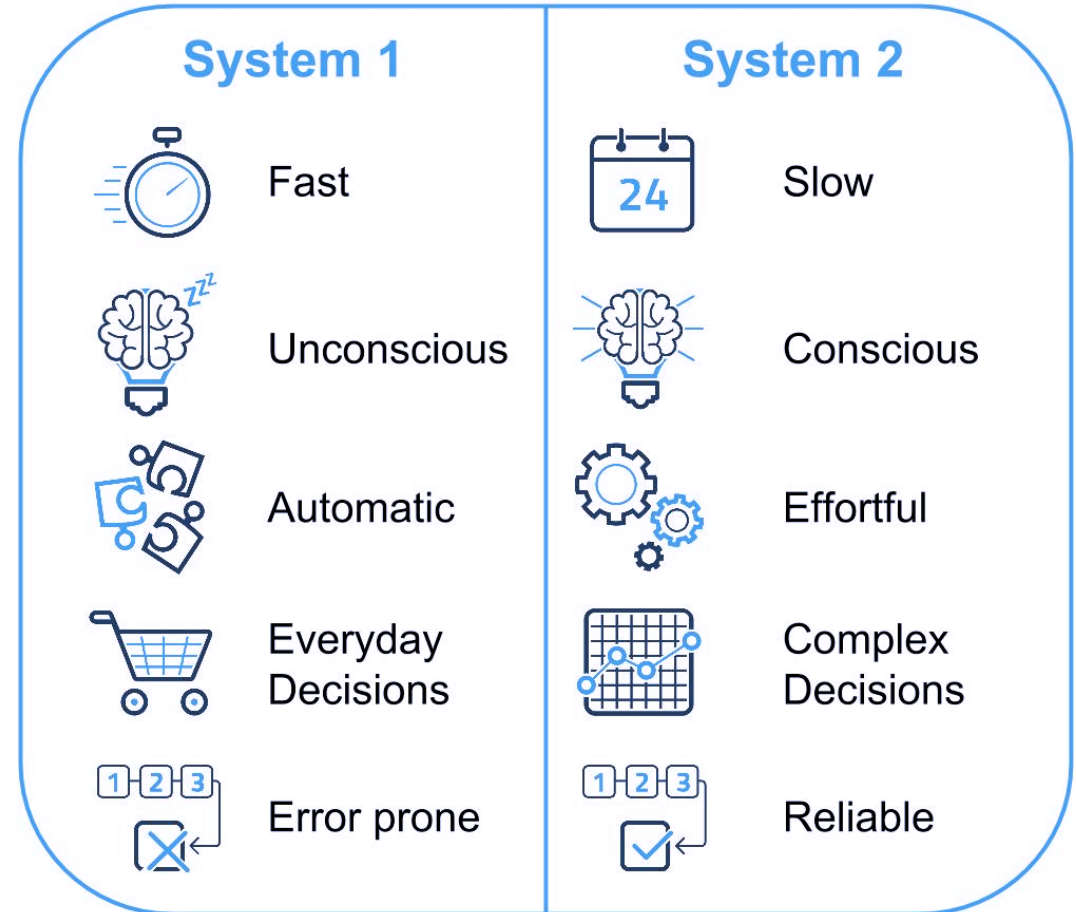


DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY: FROM COMPLEX TO SIMPLE:

Nobel prize winning behavioural economist Daniel Kahneman found that we have two thinking systems: **FAST and SLOW**.

We rely on our FAST thinking system as much as possible. It is our default thinking system since it saves time and mental effort.

FAST thinking relies on the use of heuristics (i.e., mental shortcuts).



WICKED PROBLEMS

The Problem:

- ✓ Multiple causes
- ✓ Many people involved
- ✓ Hidden information
- ✓ Connected to other problems
- ✓ Different views of the problem
- ✓ Requires deeper understanding

The Solution:

- ✓ Not fully solvable
- ✓ No clear test for solution
- ✓ Numerous possible interventions
- ✓ Constraints to possible solutions
- ✓ Solutions often reveal deeper problems
- ✓ Iterative discovery
- ✓ Understanding of problem changes
- ✓ Goal is improvement, not solution
- ✓ Never finished

**From
Wicked to
Tame**



TAME PROBLEMS

The Problem:

- ✓ Single cause
- ✓ One person involved
- ✓ Know all information required
- ✓ Not influenced by other problems
- ✓ Fully understood

The Solution:

- ✓ Clear solution
- ✓ Clear test for success
- ✓ Problem can be completed

Wicked, Non-Academic Initiatives

Well-Being
Flourishing
Success

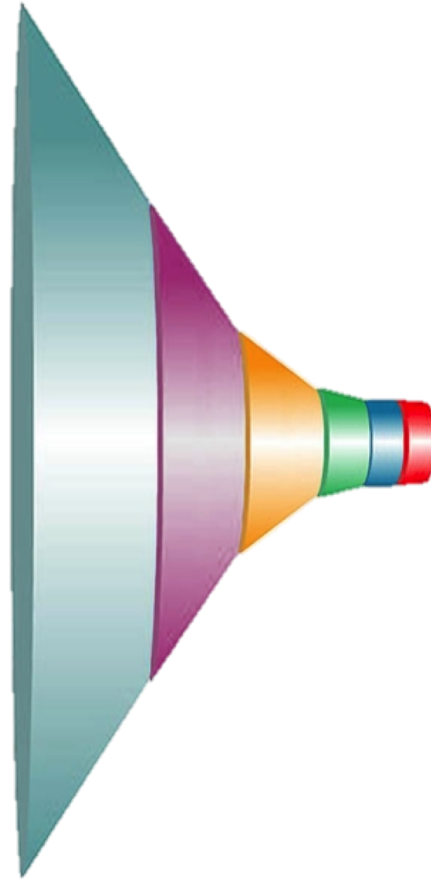
Mental Health

Social Emotional Skills

Trauma Recovery

Restorative Practice

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion



Tame, Subjects & Skills

Resilience

Happiness

Grit

Positive Thinking

Extroversion

Calm

Sitting in a Circle

Special Events

Trap 1:

**Back to
Business as
Usual.**

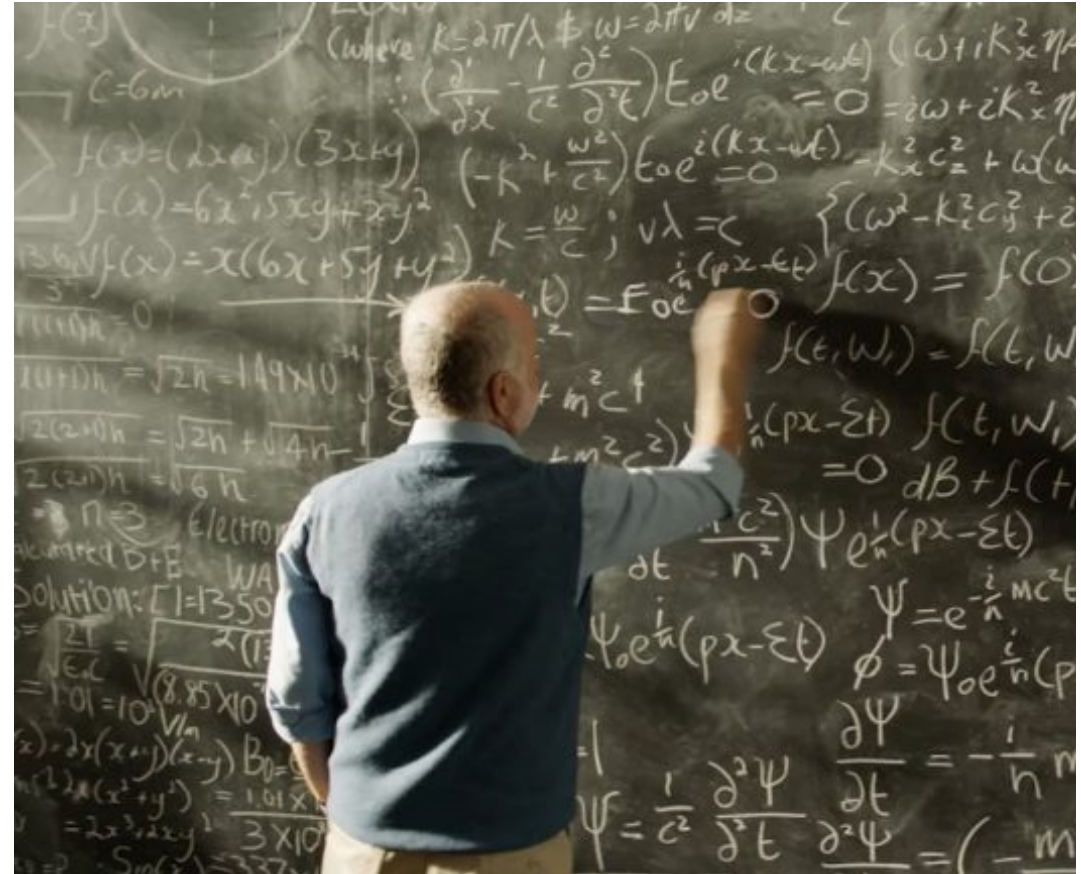


Trap 2:

Searching
outside for a
one-size-fits-
all solution.



Trap 3: Teaching the curriculum (not people).



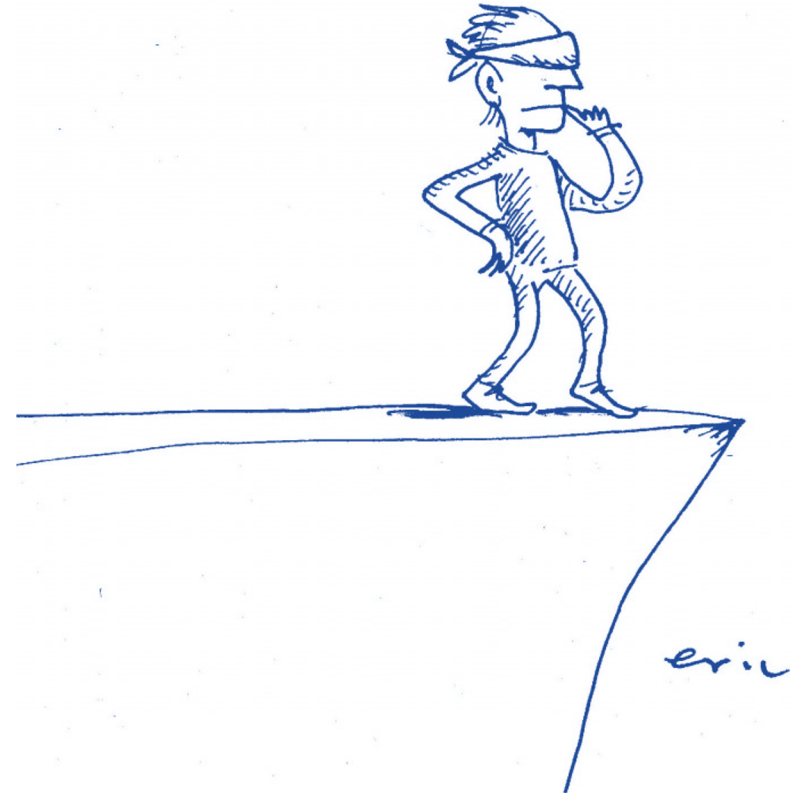
Trap 4:

Instructing a narrow set of “skills for success”.



Trap 5:

**Keep your
head down
and keep
pushing
forward.**



Seven Strategies to Cultivate Resilience and Strengthen Community in Our Students and Ourselves



STRATEGY 1:

WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY BECOMES THE WAY.

- This is a teachable moment.
- It's a chance to practice our virtues.
- It is an opportunity and source for genuine growth.
- It's a chance to go through it, look back, and add notches of success to our students' belt of experience.

“THE IMPEDIMENT TO ACTION ADVANCES ACTION. WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY BECOMES THE WAY.”



MARCUS AURELIUS
ROMAN EMPEROR FROM 161 TO 180

STRATEGY 2:

CLARIFY YOUR COMMANDER'S INTENT.

- This is your true north, your moral compass.
- It is a brief statement of what you value above all else.
- It also clarifies your “bright lines”
- It’s useful to have a personal one, and a collective one.



STRATEGY 3:

TAKE SMALL STEPS, MAKE SMALL BETS.

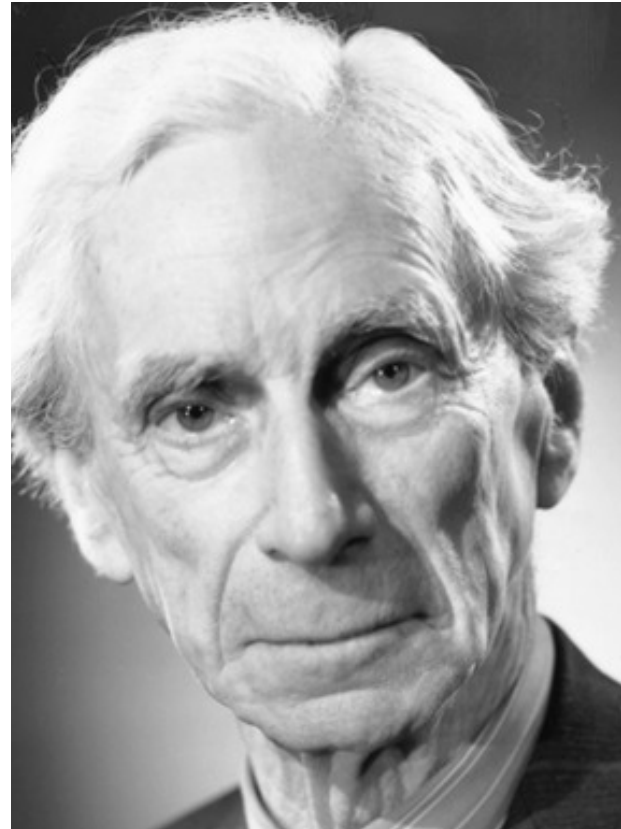
- Don't think too far ahead.
- Break things down into manageable pieces.
- Experiment with different strategies.
- Walk away from those that don't pay off.
- Focus on accumulating small wins.



STRATEGY 4:

CONNECTION BEFORE CONTENT.

- Lay the groundwork for success.
- Go slow now, to go faster later.
- Connection is what motivates all of us to learn.
- This is even more important when teaching virtually.



The good life is
one inspired
by love and
guided by
knowledge.

-Bertrand Russel

STRATEGY 5:

KNOW THYSELF.

- Real flourishing is self-knowledge, not happiness.
- Trying times reveal our strengths and struggles,
- Support students to know themselves better.
- Name their strengths.
- Reframe their struggles.



STRATEGY 6:

CREATE A SUSTAINING ENVIRONMENT.

- Teaching skills will “fade out” in the absence of a sustaining environment.
- Relationships raise resilience.
- Focus on creating a safe and positive environment.
- Think gardener, not carpenter.
- Enable students to grow in ways that activate their unique potential.



STRATEGY 7:

COMMIT TO MUTUAL CARE

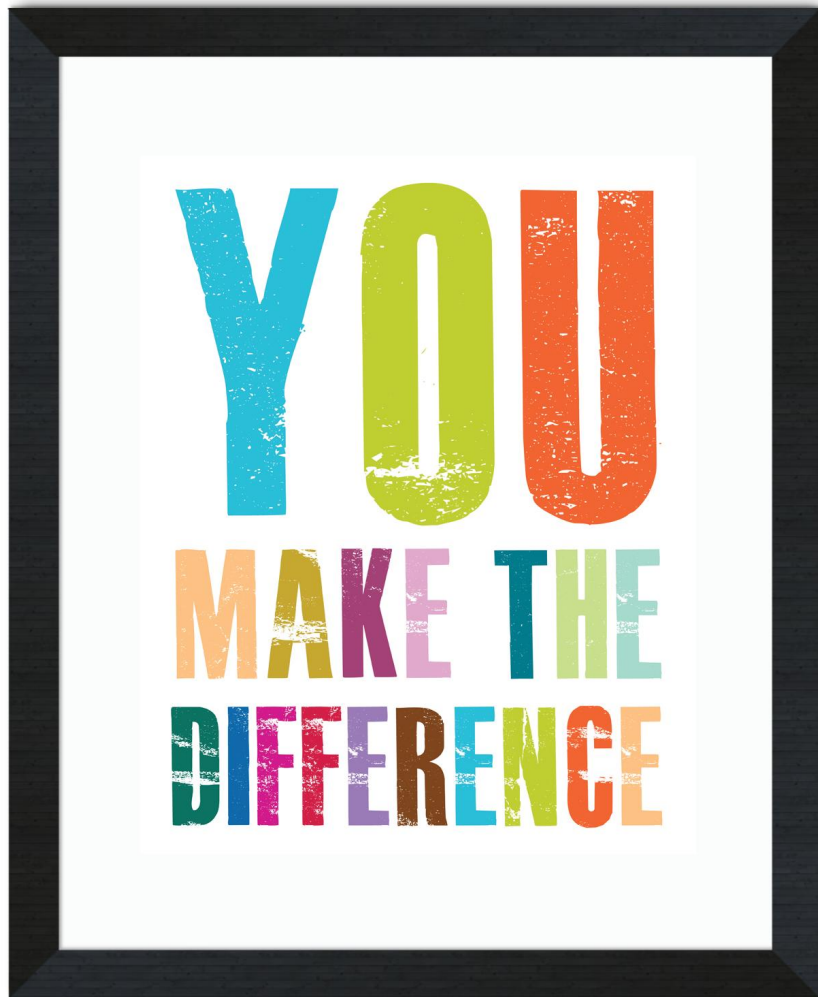
- Deepening trust is key.
- Mutual care is stronger than self-care.
- Ask each other how they are doing and stop to listen to the answer.
- We are all in this together!



Let's return to Sweden...



You Are the Strategy



We are living in
uncertain times:

*Be Kind.
Be Calm.
And Be Safe.*

Dr. Bonnie Henry
B.C. Provincial Health Officer