

15th Annual
Hawker Brownlow
**Thinking &
Learning**
Conference

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TOM HIERCK

SATURDAY 19 MAY

Session 1

**Where Passion Meets Purpose:
Moving from Believe to Achieve**

MELBOURNE

TOM HIERCK

Tom Hierck has been an educator since 1983, in a career that has spanned all year levels and included many roles in public education. His experiences as a teacher, school leader, department of education project leader and executive director have provided a unique context for his education philosophy. Tom is a compelling presenter, infusing his message of hope with strategies culled from the real world. He understands that educators face unprecedented challenges and knows which strategies will best serve learning communities. Tom has presented to schools across North America and internationally, imparting a message of celebration for educators seeking to make a difference in the lives of students.



A message from Hawker Brownlow Education

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The WHY

"We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far."

—Ron Edmonds, Harvard University

The WHY is the **process** of exploring your school's core beliefs, habits and assumptions. The goal is to get clear on your school's fundamental purpose. The end product of the **WHY** is the development of your school's guiding mantra.

What is your school's current mission or guiding statement?

What two words would you use to describe your school's culture?

Developing Your School's Guiding Mantra

What is a mantra?

A mantra is a 3 to 5 word statement that clearly defines who your school is, and why you matter to people. A mantra is a powerful, energy infused chant that everyone inside and outside your organisation can instantly get his or her heads around.

A mantra is defined as a word, sound or statement repeated frequently to aid in concentration of thought. In Sanskrit, mantra literally means "instrument of thought". In schools, we suggest a mantra is a highly effective organising principle easily shared by people who care.

Your school's mantra should be created collaboratively, and meet the following criteria:

Mantra Criteria

Memorable

It is vital that your guiding school mantra finds its way into your schools' subconscious, as Velcro attaching your mission to your commitments, behaviours and decisions.

Simple

In order to be memorable, your guiding school mantra should get one simple idea across in as few words as possible, we recommend 3-5. You can't mean everything to everybody, so just focus on one specific thing. Say ONE thing well.

Credible

At the same time, remember that your guiding school mantra won't be worth anything if you're not walking your talk. Everything you say and do should align with your guiding school mantra.

Positive

It almost goes without saying that your guiding school mantra should take an affirmative tone, stated in terms of what you're seeking, not avoiding.

Uniquely Yours

Make sure your guiding school mantra is unmistakably about your school.

Staff members should develop a commitment statement (I message) based on the context of their individual role at the school. Some examples of guiding school mantras and I- messages are provided on the following page.

Mantra Examples

While your school's mantra is a unifying principle, it's critical that you make personal commitments to that end. Collective mobilization begins with individual responsibility. That's why we've included examples of I-messages below.

Mantra	Mantra in practice (I-message)
We work as a village	ALL of us are smarter than one of us. I commit to embrace a true collaborative culture. I will pull my weight as part of my interdependent team.
We believe you can achieve!	I embrace accountability for our results, and I am constantly asking, " <i>Is there something else I can do?</i> "
Every Child Is My Child	I consider every child my child, and the failure of any one of them is not an option. I am humble enough to ask for help, and think abundantly enough to share resources and best practices.
Tomorrow depends upon TODAY!	I will spend time focusing on factors I can control, and hold my teammates accountable to do the same.
Act as if	I operate each day as if we are already the ideal school we described.

In 3-5 words, what would you suggest for your school's guiding mantra?

I-Message Commitment

For Clarifying Your Fundamental Purpose and Your School's Mantra, Ask:

1. What is our school's fundamental purpose? What is our school's unshakable sense of mission?
2. What makes our school special and unique?
3. What do we mean when we say that ALL students can learn? Does ALL really mean ALL?
4. Was our school built as a place where teachers come and teach or as a place where students come and learn? What evidence do we have to support our choice?
5. What happens in our school when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
6. What is our school's one non-negotiable that serves as a lens for everything we do?
7. Why did you become an educator?

At the heart of every Great Group is a shared dream. All Great Groups believe that they are on a mission and that they could change the world, make a dent in the universe. They are obsessed with their work. It becomes not a job but a fervent quest. That belief is what brings the necessary cohesion and energy to their work.

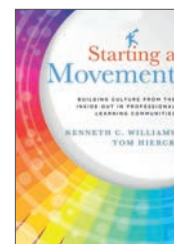
(Warren G. Bennis, "The Secrets of Great Groups,"
Leader to Leader Journal, No. 3, 1997)

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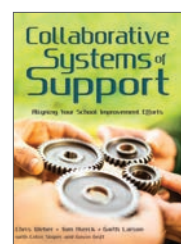
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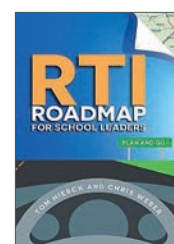
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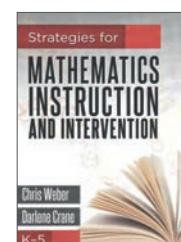
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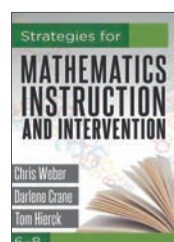
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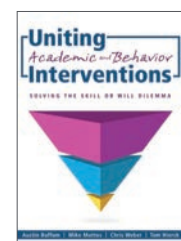
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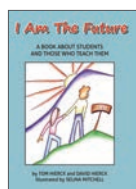
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