The Roots of Learning

**Personal Competency in
School Improvement and Turnaround
Sam Redding**

Turnaround (Change) from Top Down

- Governance—restart or oversight
- Leadership—new principal
- Teachers—new teachers
- Partners—external expertise
- Time—change schedule
- Instruction—new materials and plans
- Professional Development—train staff
- Data—test and track
- Culture—safe and orderly
- Families—engage

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What's Missing?

The *Something Other*

- Parents seek the *something other* and turn to extracurricular activities and out-of-school experiences to find it.

- Teachers know that each student brings to a learning task a *something other*—certain attributes that affect how the student responds to the challenge.

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Personal Competencies—The *Something Other*

Mastery

- Knowledge and Skill

Personal Competencies

- Cognitive
- Metacognitive
- Motivational
- Social/Emotional

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MetaAnalysis of Influences on Learning

- Student Attributes and School Effects

1.	Classroom Management	Cognitive Competency
2.	**Metacognitive Processes**	Metacognitive Competency
3.	**Cognitive Processes**	Cognitive Competency
4.	Home Environment/Support	Social/Emotional Competency
5.	Student-Teacher Social Interactions	Social/Emotional Competency
6.	**Student-Behavioral Attributes**	Social/Emotional Competency
7.	**Motivational-Affective Attributes**	Motivational Competency
8.	Peer Group	Social/Emotional Competency
9.	Quality of Instruction—student engagement	Cognitive Competency
10.	School Culture	Social/Emotional Competency
11.	Classroom Climate	Social/Emotional Competency
12.	Classroom Instruction—clear and organized	Cognitive Competency
13.	Curriculum Design	Cognitive Competency
14.	Academic Interactions	Cognitive Competency
15.	Classroom Assessment	Cognitive Competency

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(Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993, 1997)

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Personal Competency Framework
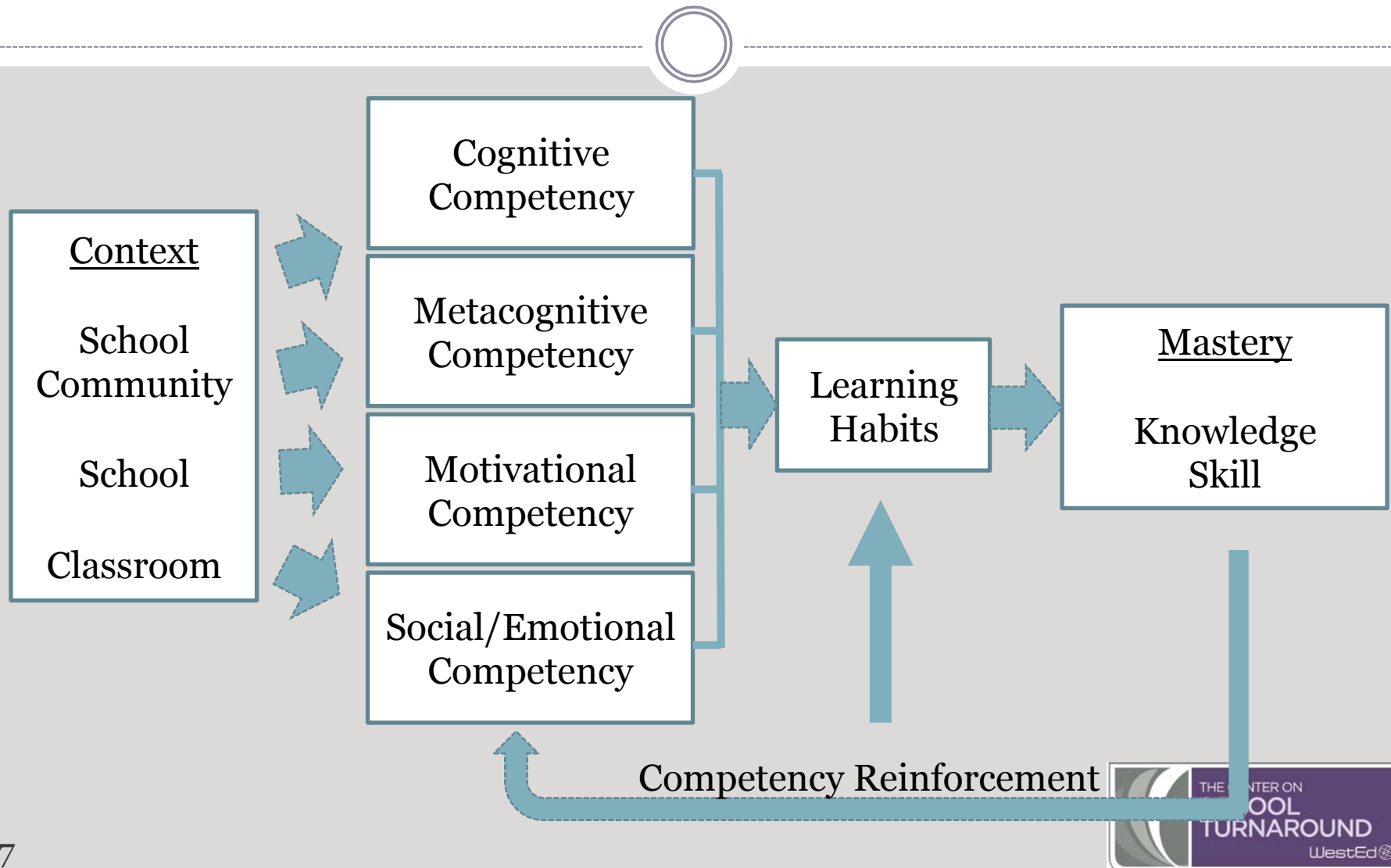
Contexts for Competency Enhancement

- School community—families, students, school personnel, volunteers

- School—curriculum, programs, school culture

- Classroom—instruction, classroom culture

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Enhancement and Reinforcement

- **Competency Enhancement**: the intentional development of students' personal competencies within the contexts of the school community, school, and classroom

- **Competency Reinforcement**: the strengthening and modification of personal competencies and patterns of behavior that results from both the process of pursuing mastery and mastery itself

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Mastery and Learning Habits

- **Mastery**: meeting criteria for specific objectives related to knowledge and skills

- **Learning Habits**: the conversion of individual competencies into coordinated patterns of behavior activated when confronting new learning tasks

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Cognitive Competency

- Prior learning that organizes the mind and provides associations and understanding to facilitate new learning
- Memory—cognitive content
- Curiosity

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Metacognitive Competency

- Self-regulation of learning and use of learning strategies
- Logical and divergent thinking

1. Goal setting and planning (including choice of strategies)
2. Monitoring progress through the plan's implementation
3. Adapting the plan based on feedback (self-appraisal or from the teacher or program)

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Motivational Competency

- Engagement and persistence in pursuit of learning goals

1. Agency and Self-Efficacy
2. Value
3. Growth Mindset—Carol Dweck

- Aspirations
- Intrinsic—mastery, purpose, autonomy (Pink)
- Extrinsic—reward and consequences
- **Mastery** (Brophy)

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Social/Emotional Competency

- Sense of self-worth, regard for others, and emotional understanding and management to set positive goals and make responsible decisions
  1. Manage Emotions
  2. Set and Achieve Positive Goals
  3. Show Empathy for Others
  4. Establish and Maintain Positive Relationships
  5. Make Responsible Decisions
- **Traits**—Grit and Resilience
  - **See Angela Duckworth on grit**
  - **See Reclaiming Youth International--Circle of Courage**® :
    - Native American values
    - belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity

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Relational Suasion

- The teacher's ability to influence a student's learning and personal competency by virtue of the teacher's personal knowledge of and interaction with the student and the student's family

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Enhancing Cognitive Competency

1. Review prior learning, connecting to new topics.
2. Expect that specific knowledge is memorized.
3. Reinforce mastered knowledge through review, questioning, and inclusion in subsequent assignments.
4. Include vocabulary development as learning objectives.
5. Identify and teach common facts, ideas, phrases, and quotations.
6. Assign rich reading and its application in written work and discussion.
7. Use writing assignments to encourage the association and integration of new learning and deep understanding.
8. Encourage each student's natural curiosity by providing pathways of exploration and discovery.

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Enhancing Metacognitive Competency

1. Think out loud to show how a learning task is approached and pursued.
2. Pair students as problem solver and active listener.
3. Teach specific learning strategies and techniques.
4. Teach the process of (a) goal setting and planning; (b) progress monitoring; and (c) adaptation from feedback.
5. Include self-checks and peer-checks as part of assignment completion.
6. Show how to chart and graph assignment completion and objective mastery.
7. Include the documentation of learning processes and strategies employed in the completion of an assignment.
8. Teach procedures of logic, synthesis, and evaluation to employ in critical thinking.
9. Teach techniques for divergent thinking to expand the universe of considerations in creative thinking.

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Enhancing Motivational Competency

1. Promote a growth mindset.
2. Connect learning tasks to the student's personal aspirations.
3. Differentiate assignments.
4. Help students "find the fun" in learning rather than simply making tasks fun.
5. Stretch the student's interests to find value in new topics (acquired relevance).
6. Celebrate mastery.
7. Help parents understand their influence on their children's mindset.

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Enhancing Social/Emotional Competency

1. Include social/emotional objectives in the instructional plan.
2. Teach and reinforce positive social skills and relationships.
3. Model responsible behavior, caring, optimism, and positive verbal interactions.
4. Adopt evidence-based programs that enhance social/emotional competency.
5. Establish classroom norms for personal responsibility, cooperation, and concern for others.
6. Be attentive to students' emotional states and guide students in managing their emotions.
7. Help students set constructive goals for learning and social relationships.
8. Teach students to understand the consequences of their decisions and to take responsibility for them.
9. Use cooperative learning methods.
10. Encourage questioning, seeking help from others, and offering help to others.
11. Arrange for support services from psychologists and social workers when students demonstrate a need for support.
12. Work closely with parents to promote social/emotional competency at home.

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Personal Competency in School Turnaround and Improvement Strategies

Context	Cognitive	Metacognitive	Motivational	Social/ Emotional
School Community (families)				
School (curriculum, programs, school culture)				
Classroom (instruction, classroom culture)				

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Resources

- **Center on School Turnaround**
  - www.centeronschoolturnaround.org
- **Center on Innovations in Learning**
  - www.centeril.org

  See Research and Practice Briefs

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