



Strategy @NIS

V2.2020



The Evolution of Strategy

This document builds on our current understanding of Strategy at NIS, how it works, what it looks like, and where we are heading.

Defining our strategy was a community collaboration that resulted in ***The Little Book of Nanjing (2015)*** - a blueprint for the way in which we 'do school' at NIS.

The evolution continues.

This is **V2.2020**

Our Vision



We see a school where students have agency to make deliberate choices about what they learn, how they learn, and who they learn with. A school where students learn as they **serve** others, take **environmental action**, and create **social solutions**, both inside and outside of the walls of our school.

Students of different ages share the same spaces at our school. Our work does not occur in isolation. We are a school where teachers are innovating around **best practice** to create learning environments that connect us all.

Strategy is the map we use to arrive at this new reality.





Strategy is Everything

Strategy is the lens through which we filter all that we do. Strategy is the best of **research-informed** and **innovative** practice in education applied to the needs of the NIS community.

Some examples are that we use Strategy to guide our thinking and decision making when we:

- Design learning spaces
- Discuss student achievement
- Plan for learning

NIS is an inclusive learning community inspiring international mindedness, creative thinking and personal excellence. The Strategy is how we make this happen.



Strategy Goals

Burst the Bubble.

At first, this goal seemed to be about getting involved in China beyond the confines of the school and to break down barriers that limited our interactions with our host country.

We want to expand the definition to include bursting all kinds of bubbles. We want our whole community to connect across cultures and **perspectives**. We want our students to be equipped with the skills that allow them to burst the bubble when they find themselves outside of their comfort zone: when they start out at college, work, or any other new environment.

“To burst the bubble is to be equipped with the skills that connect **learners** with nature, people, culture and places. ”



Student Voice & Student Choice.

When this goal was launched it rolled off the tongue in one mouthful: *studentvoiceandchoice*. We want to consider how both student voice and student choice are a part of what we do, and how both guide us in the journey to becoming a school where every student creates their own learning plan.

“To activate student voice and student choice is to involve students in the decisions about teaching and learning.”

It is an expectation that, to achieve these goals, the NIS Learning Community uses 8 **pathways** when making decisions about teaching and learning.



Strategy Pathways

The 8 **Strategy Pathways** act like **filters** to change and amplify what helps us achieve our Strategy Goals, and ditch the things that don't.

Student & Student Voice Choice

PERSONALIZE LEARNING



We provide opportunities for students to make decisions around when, where and what they learn, and how learning is demonstrated. No student learns in the same way. When students are involved in planning their own learning it leads to higher levels of engagement and deeper understanding.



REFINE INCLUSION

We ensure opportunities exist for all learners to grow and achieve success. All students have the right to become the best they can be.



BLEND DIGITAL & FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING

We incorporate technologies with elements of digital and face-to-face learning to enhance possibilities over when, what, why, where and how students learn.



SUSTAIN A CULTURE OF TRIAL AND ERROR

We sustain safe environments that promote confidence and learning from failures. This invites students to be courageous, which builds resilience. Success can also come from failures.



A group of students are working at long wooden tables outdoors. In the foreground, a young man in a black shirt is looking at a small object in his hands. Behind him, a young woman with long brown hair is also looking at something. To the right, another young man in a grey shirt is smiling. In the background, more students are visible, some standing and some sitting at tables. The setting appears to be a school courtyard with trees and a fence in the background.

PERSONALIZE LEARNING

知人者智，自知者明。胜
人者有力，自胜者强。
—老子

It is wisdom to know others; It is
enlightenment to know one's self.



REFINE INCLUSION

有教无类 - 孔子

There should be education for everyone without distinction.



BLEND DIGITAL & FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING

工欲善其事，必先利其器 - 《论语卫灵公》

It is necessary to have effective tools to do good work.



SUSTAIN A CULTURE OF TRIAL AND ERROR

失败是成功之母

Failure is the mother of success.



Burst the Bubble



CREATE SOLUTIONS

We develop and learn from innovative solutions to **local and global issues**. Seeing success stories inspires our own innovation.



MAKE CONNECTIONS

Our learning is enriched through authentic connections to nature, people, things and places beyond our **immediate environment**.



SERVE OTHERS

We prepare learners for a life of **civic and social responsibility**. We empathize with others to create a better reality for everyone. Learning with and about others also helps us learn more about ourselves.

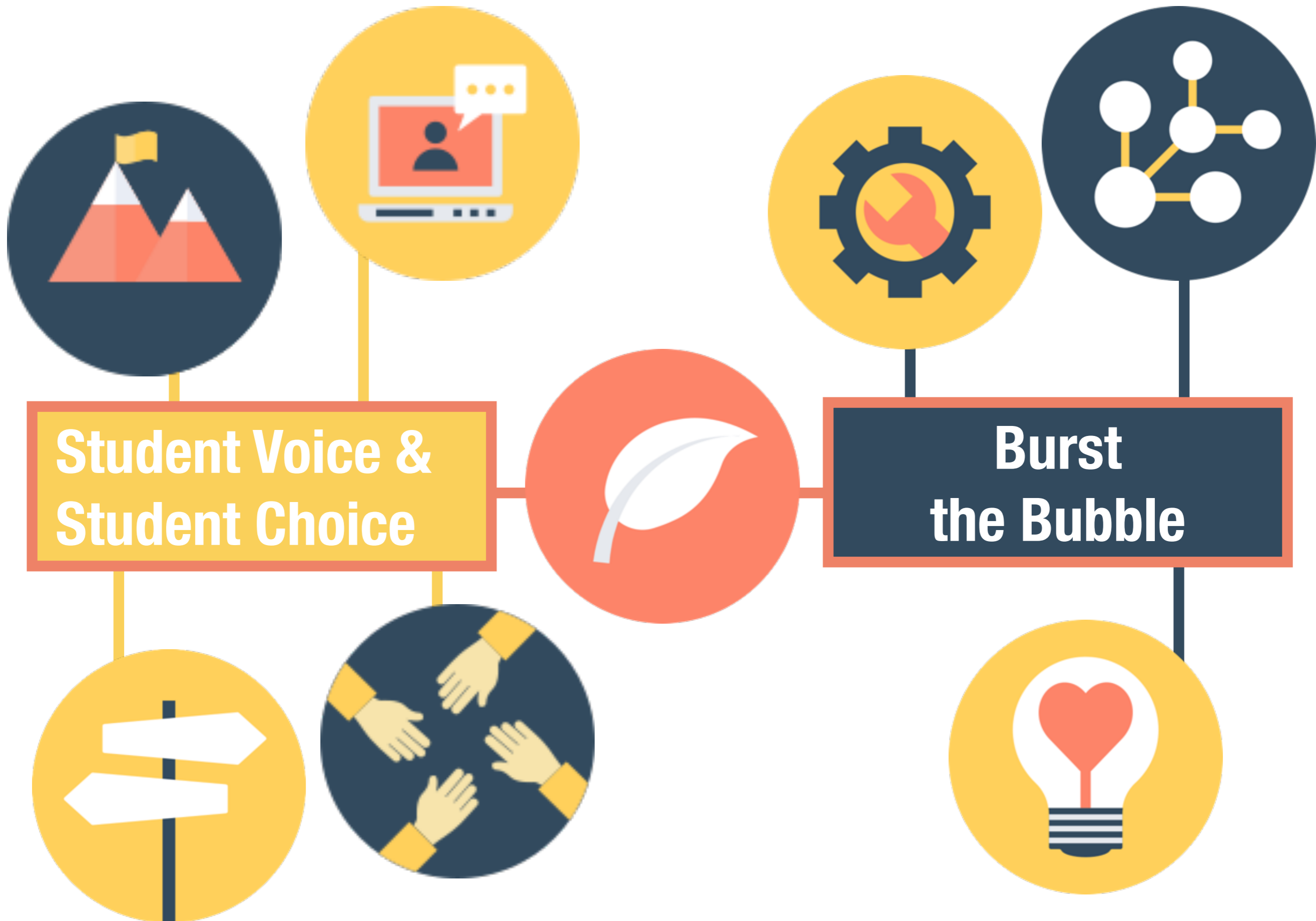
All Goals Share the Pathway to



TAKE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

We develop behaviors that reduce negative human impact and result in clean air and natural resources, and a non-toxic environment.







CREATE SOLUTIONS

三人行，必有我师焉；择其善者
而从之，其不善者而改之。-
《论语·述而》

I can always be certain of learning from
those people around me. There will be
good qualities that I can select for
imitation and bad ones that will teach me
what requires correction in myself.





MAKE CONNECTIONS

不闻不若闻之，闻之不
若见之，见之不若之知
之不若行之。 荀况



The more you connect, the
greater the the understanding will
be.



SERVE OTHERS



工欲善其事，必先利其器 - 《论语卫灵公》

What I hear I forget, what I see I remember, what I do I understand.



TAKE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

士不可以不弘毅，任重
而道远。- 《论语·泰伯》

An educated person cannot but be
resolute and broad-minded, for they
have taken on a heavy responsibility
and a long course.

A Traveler's Mindset



When arriving at a new destination, a traveler is acutely aware of the environment, noticing the smells, sights, and sounds of this amazing new place. The more time spent in immersion, the more the traveler understands the culture.

A **traveler's mindset** helps us become constantly aware of our practice. It means we constantly seek insights that can lead to questions that allow us to enter the design cycle.

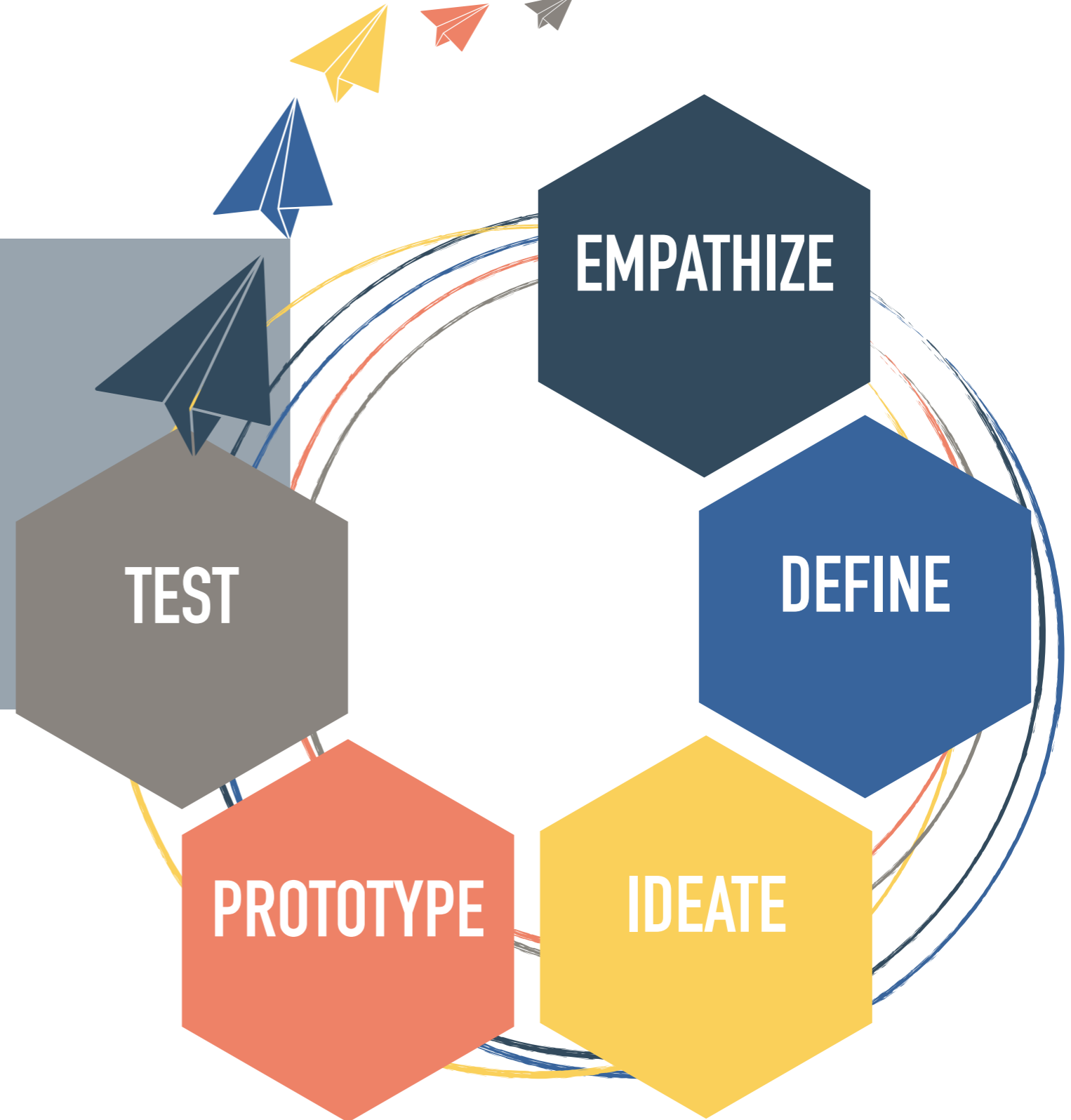
At NIS, we use **Design Thinking** as a way of moving from observation to action.



Design Thinking

Instead of trying to recreate the same journeys as other schools, we hope to create **solutions** specific to NIS and our students.

There are many models of Design Thinking. At NIS, we **develop empathy, define the problem, ideate, and prototype** solutions and then **test** them.



Modified from: Stanford d.School



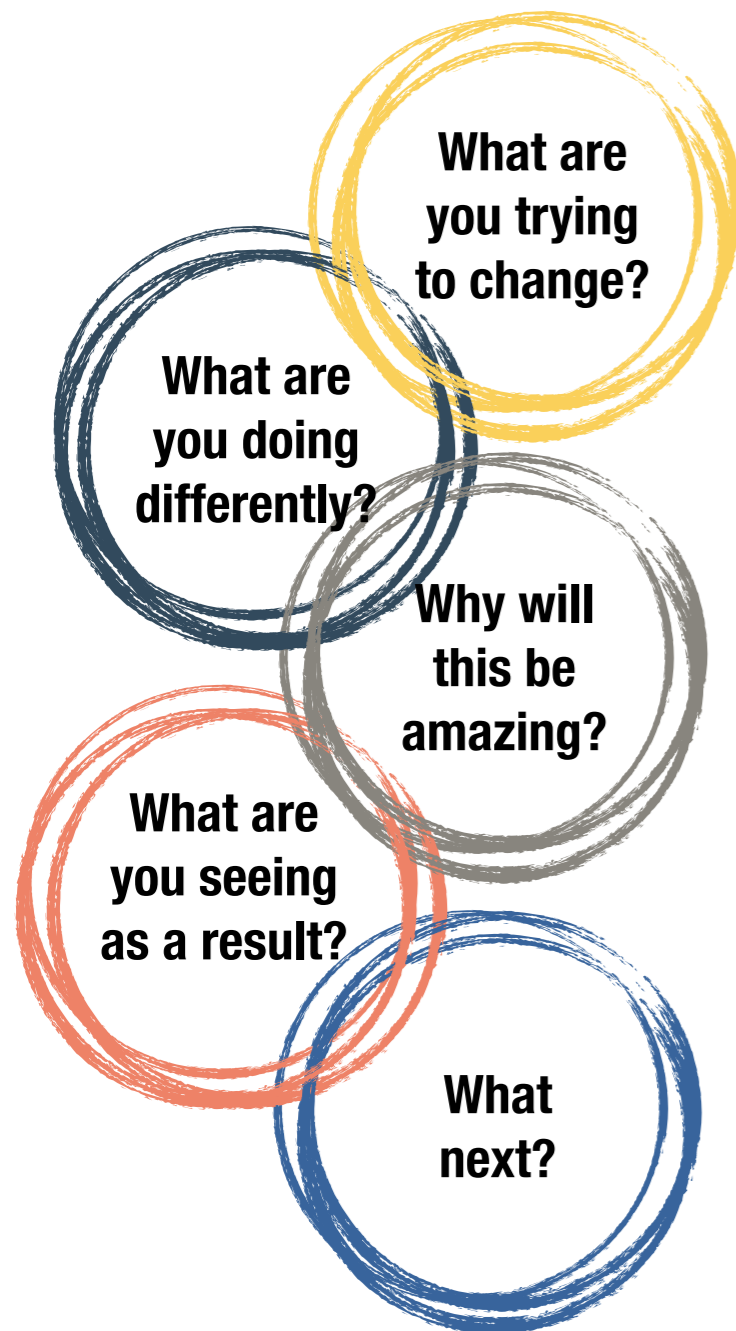
Strategy is Everyone's Responsibility

Strategy at NIS works because no one waits for permission to get started.

Design Thinking tools and a culture of trial and error can improve the experience of our students through small, incremental changes.

What **Story** Will You Tell?

We use this format to share our Strategy stories which helps us measure and celebrate our movement towards the two Strategy goals in a visual and easy-to-access format. These **stories** also have the potential to spark ideas in other areas of school life.



Who can Help Me?

The Strategy Team can support you in getting your story off the ground.

New ideas may also need a **champion** to rally behind them and to move obstacles out of the way. The champion can support by providing time, effort and resources required to spark **change**. This role is best fulfilled by heads of schools and other leaders with the power to generate support and identify resources to get the idea off the ground.

Someone not directly involved in the work of a team, looking in from outside, is in a great position to offer insights that can identify opportunities and roadblocks. We call this role the **perfector**.



Team(s) Work



Teams already exist throughout the school, or can be assembled for specific tasks. They might not always need to work in the same way or capacity, or even at the same time. The next pages present the continuum of team structures we use to drive change, which include: **functional**, **lightweight**, **heavyweight**, and **autonomous** teams.

The difference between them is largely based on the size of the change being implemented. Teams can also change into different types as needed.





When innovators work, alone or in small groups, within their learning environments; the work is generally independent and does not effect other teachers, departments, or school divisions.



When innovators are confronted by a task where improvement might affect how other people perform their jobs *in a predictable way*.



Innovators can encounter challenges that transcend their own learning environments. There are opportunities that challenge the **status quo** that can have significant effects on our **system**.



These teams investigate **disruptive** innovations that can bring about significant, system-wide change – with the authority to implement these changes.

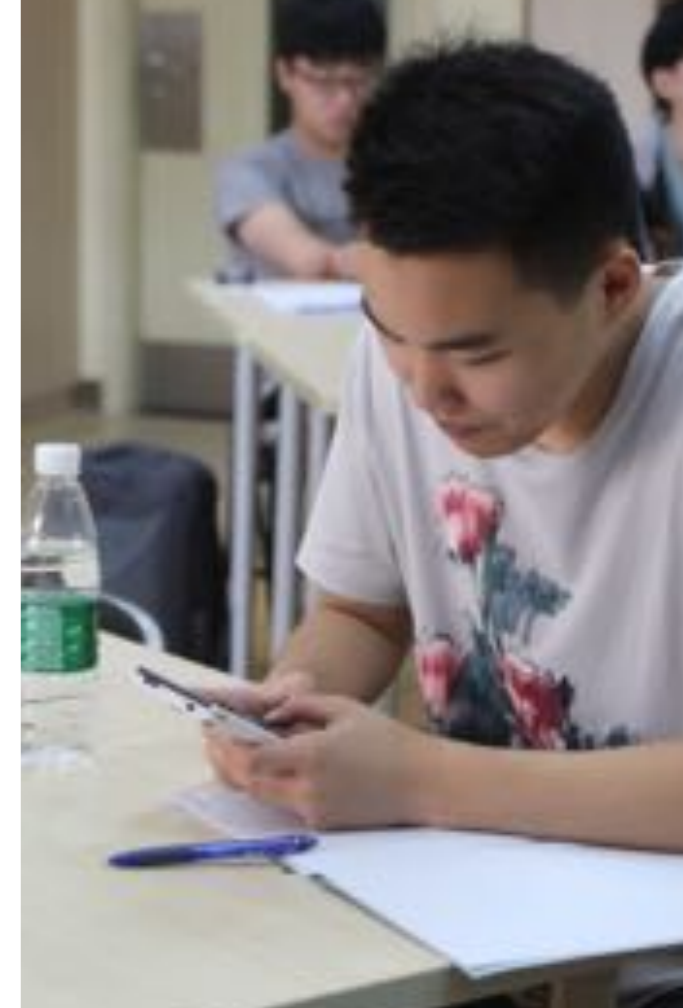


Team types referenced from: Wheelwright and Clark (1992)

How Does it **Measure** Up?

Our NIS stories show Strategy in action and act as valuable data points for demonstrating progress.

Focus groups, interviews and surveys also help provide evidence of Strategy becoming part of the school culture.



A photograph of children in a park wearing raincoats and riding red tricycles. The background shows green trees and a wooden play structure. The image is partially covered by a grey overlay on the right side which contains text.

Ready? Let's Go!

The Strategy Team is made up of NIS community members in a **flat structure** with **shared leadership**.

The role of this team and its members is to:

- Support teachers and students in the use of Design Thinking as a way of doing things;
- Align teaching and learning at NIS with the two Strategy goals;
- Clarify and communicate the current collective understanding of Strategy;
- Evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness of Strategy.

Conversations spark innovation and the team is here to listen, to help ideas take root, and to connect. Write to strategy@nanjing-school.com or see any of the Strategy Team members to get started.

Ditch Change Amplify

NIS started way before our Strategy. There are things we do that either get in the way, or are not helping towards our goals. There are also practices that already align with our Strategy; we need to amplify these cases by sharing these stories.

All community members should move Strategy forward by constantly examining what practices we need to **ditch**, **change** or **amplify**.



What has NO impact and needs to be ditched?
Stop doing things that get in the way of innovation in order to design better learning experiences at NIS.



What has LOW impact and needs a redesign?
What are small changes we can make that will have the biggest impact?



What has a HIGH impact?
What inspiration can come from these shared success stories?

Amplify Possibilities

At NIS, we love small wins. Where it makes sense, positive change should spread to reach all students.

The Strategy Team leverages members of the community to amplify these ideas so they can become massive gains for more learners.



Start **Small** Start **Today**



Success happens when we *do* Strategy.

Small **changes** require less effort, time and resources. It is the combined result of several small, incremental improvements that create momentum for large, system-wide innovation.

Recommended Reading

The End of Average – Unlocking Our Potential by Embracing What Makes us Different. Todd Rose. HarperOne Publishing, November 14, 2017.

Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change the World. Tony Wagner. Scribner. February 10, 2015.

Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era. Tony Wagner and Ted Dintersmith. Scribner. August 16, 2016.

设计思维：右脑时代创新思考力

设计思维 第2版 第二版 刘静伟

