

CTA Institute for Teaching- 2011

Harnessing the Power of What Works

Teacher Think Tank Guide to
Strength-Based Thinking



INSTITUTE forTEACHING

The Think Tank Approach

- Change does not occur in a coherent, linear fashion.
- Conversations may appear to be chaotic, discontinuous, undetermined.
- Ask “Why Not.”
- Novelty over consensus.
- Through strength-based thinking we create a highly intensive and energizing conversation.
- We improve the teaching and learning process through conversations.

What is Strength-based Thinking?

- Focusing on what works.
- Seeking objections and alternatives.
- Believing untapped valuable resources are everywhere.
- Understanding discovery begins with a single question.
- Finding what we seek.
- Ignoring deficits.

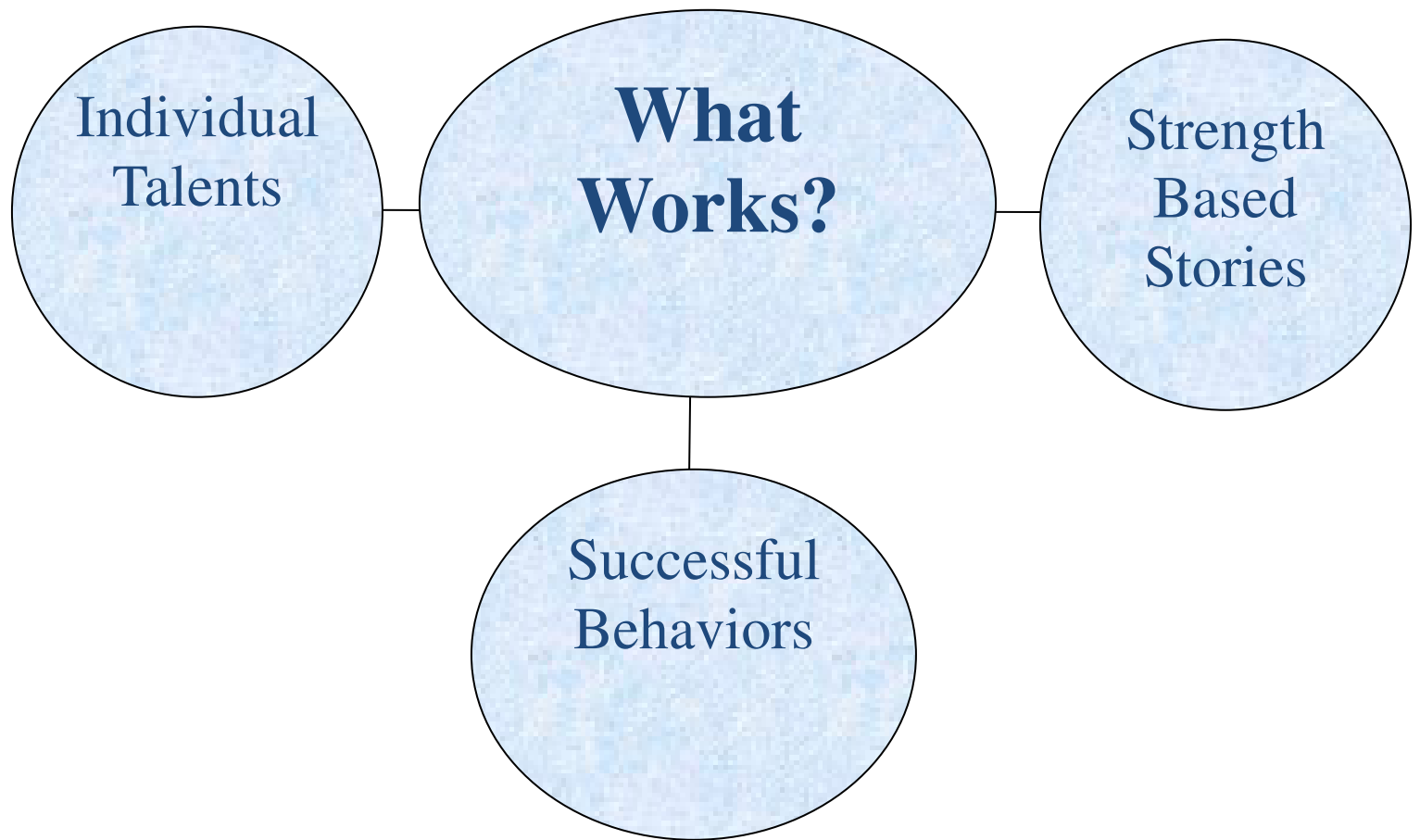
By Focusing on Problems...

- We discount the power of strengths.
- We become experts on problems - not solutions.
- We become divided and frustrated.
- We waste energy.
- We look for heroes and villains.
- We become dependent on others.

The Power of Our Thoughts

- No one is expendable.
- Individual thoughts sustain and reject what is believed to be true.
- Change begins when we change our mind.
- Our beliefs and strengths are a powerful force for change.
- We co-construct our reality.

Blueprint for School Change



School Change Begins With What Works

- **Identifying talents -**
Discover Your Strengths
- **Putting strength-based stories to work -**
Appreciative Inquiry
- **Identifying successful behaviors -**
Positive Deviance