

Guiding Insight into Action: A Three-Part Leadership Framework

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Leadership grows from within, not imposed from above

Priorities of This Framework

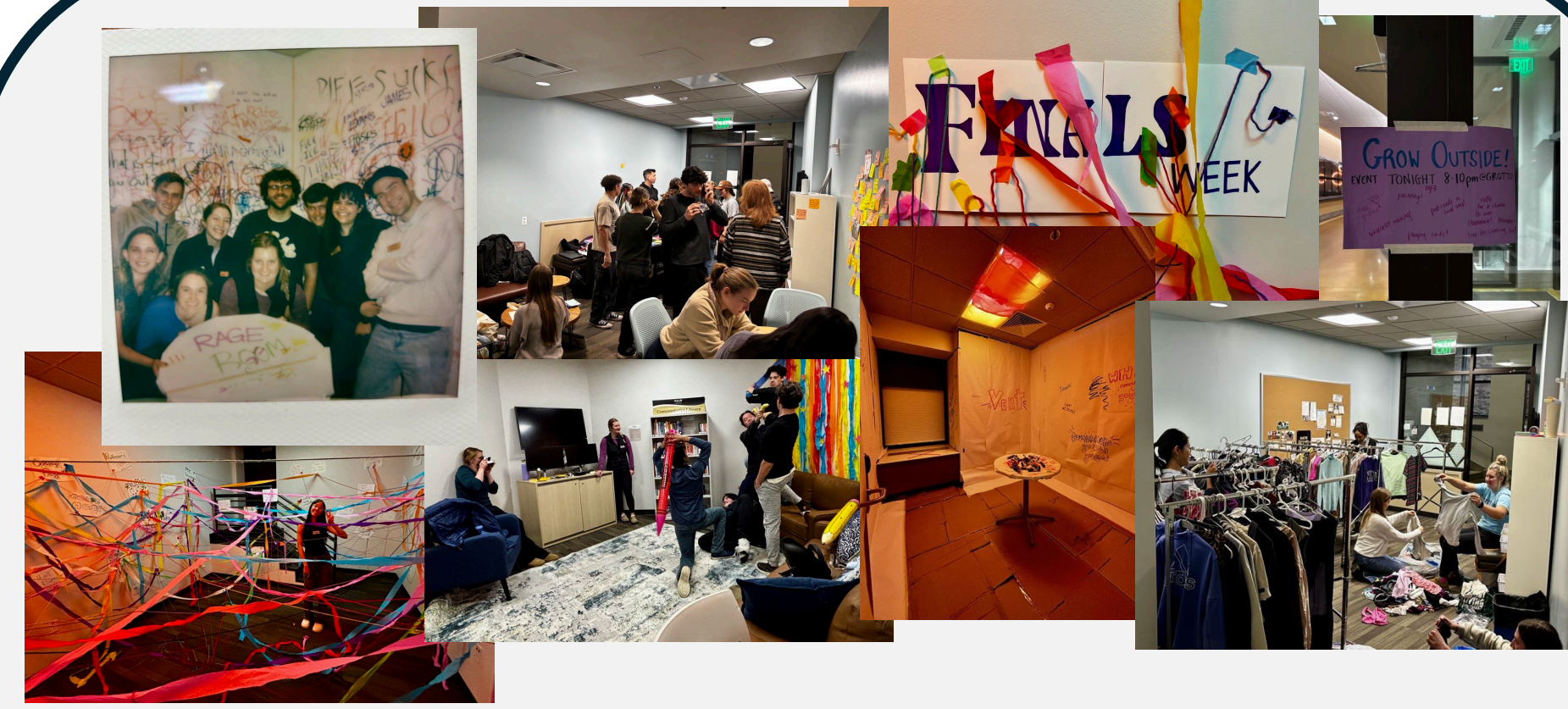
- Human connection as the foundation for leadership
- Curiosity over control
- Reflection that allows insight to connect with action
- Psychological ownership rather than compliance
- Growth that belongs to the individual, not the system

What This Framework Responds To

- Leadership that prioritizes outputs over humans
- Skill-building that remains abstract or disconnected from lived experience
- Punitive accountability
- Engagement efforts that are forced or lack relevancy

Who This is For

- Educators and student affairs professionals
- Managers and team leads
- Mentors, coaches, and project managers
- Leaders in complex, team environments
- Anyone who wants to improve their leadership



Student Testimonies

"Special projects have been an amazing way to get hands on experience for event planning and coordination within a professional setting"

"...it gives me autonomy as a student to attempt to create change in my community..."

"I've learned a lot about collaboration and the importance of shared resources through my work on the special projects team."

Utilize This Framework Tomorrow

Foundational Knowledge

- Ask about the human before you ask about the task.

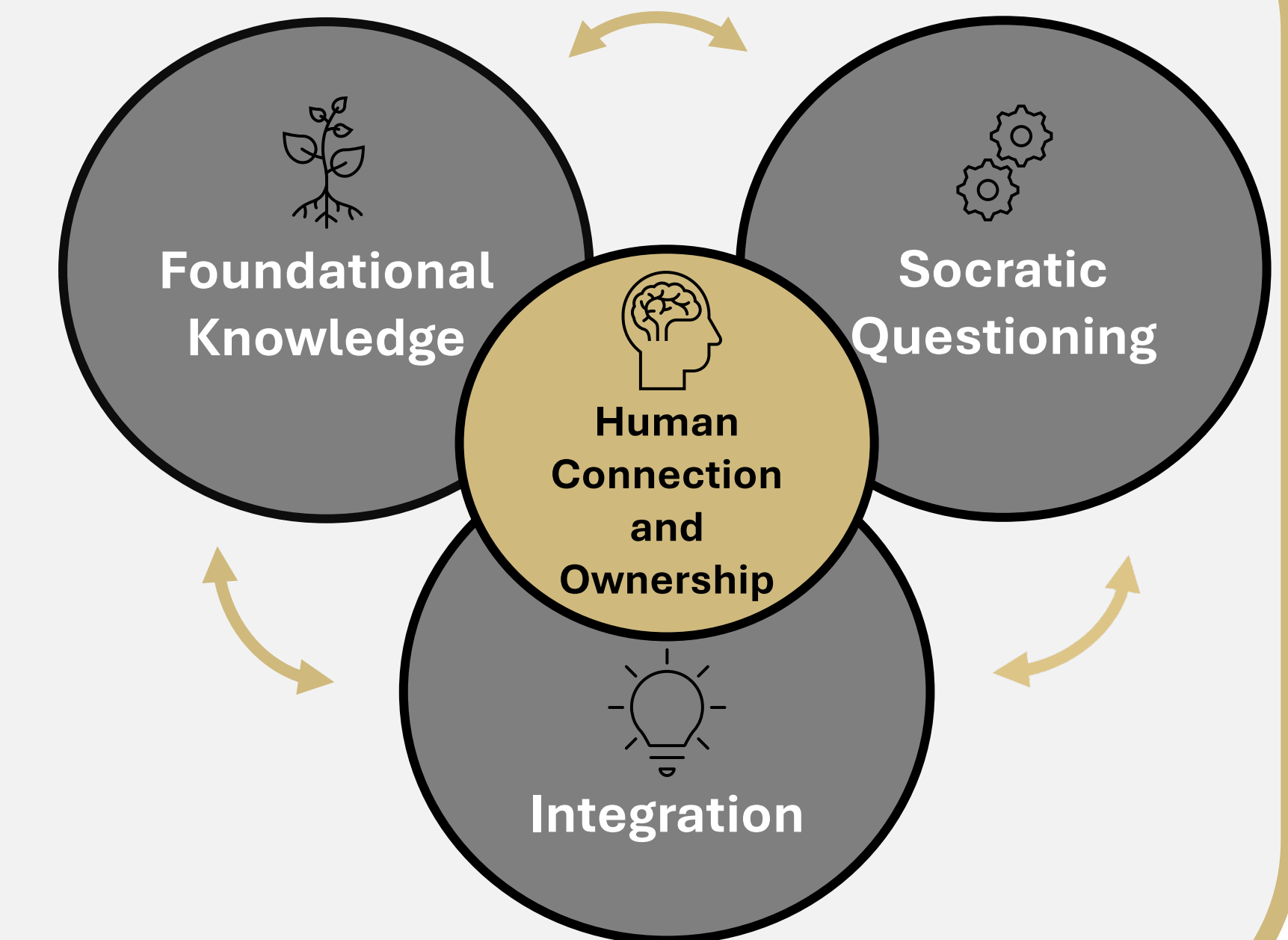
Socratic Questioning

- Start your next meeting with a question rather than an agenda. Try asking "What's the best way to spend our time together today?"

Integration

- Invite a person to name their own takeaways before suggesting action items.

Interconnected Framework



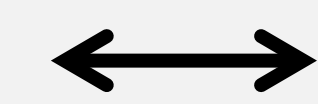
The Framework

Foundational Knowledge

Spend time to get to know and understand the human(s) you are working with. Beginning to establish psychological safety is crucial here. Through getting to know them you will be able to define boundaries around their needs, create accountability, and make them feel like a human being. This will unlock all the wonderful things the humans you work with are capable of and create psychological safety.

In practice, this can look like:

- Exploring a student's favorite part about their work, school, or project.
- Talking about their passions or interests outside of work.
- Having them reflect on previous relationships or experiences that feel similar.
- Investigating motivations and aspirations for their future.
- Sharing your own interests or values to establish mutual connection.
- Discussing boundaries in the relationship to build clarity and trust.



Socratic Questioning

Using curiosity to open exploration while also guiding students to make meaning of their experiences, connect patterns, and articulate emerging insights. This catalyzes the process of building out psychological ownership.

In practice, this can look like:

- "What do you mean when you say ___?" or "What's worked for you in the past?"
- "Tell me more" or the "Five Whys" technique to help uncover underlying motivations or challenges.
- Encouraging the student to connect current experiences to previous successes, challenges, or learnings.
- Staying curious longer than is comfortable — allowing space for silence, thought, and genuine discovery.



Integration

Bringing together generative critique, reflection, and ownership. In this stage, you offer constructive, forward-moving feedback while prompting the student to reflect and name their own takeaways. It shifts the process from your guidance to their ownership, turning insight into growth and action that belongs to them.

In practice, this can look like:

- Asking the individual to describe what they learned or what they would do differently next time.
- Inviting them to summarize their key takeaways before you share your own feedback.
- Reinforcing autonomy by asking, "What's one thing you want to carry forward from this experience?"
- Collaboratively creating action items that connect reflection to next steps.

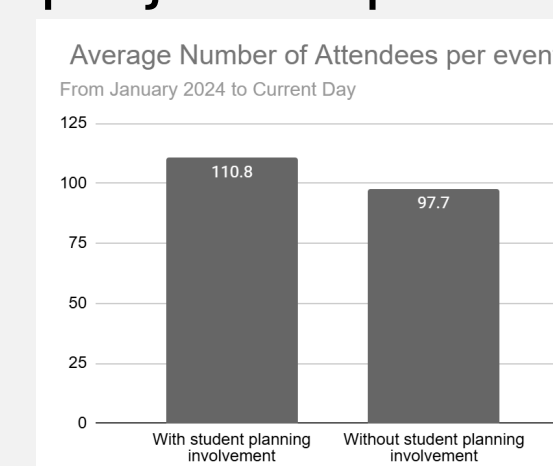
*Socratic questioning opens exploration by guiding students to think more deeply, while Integration closes the loop by combining feedback with reflection and ownership.

What Changes When You Lead This Way

- Accountability belongs to the person, not enforced from above.
- Engagement increases because people feel ownership.
- Skill development becomes visible and transferable, not abstract and lost.
- Feedback is constructive and forward moving.
- Leaders spend less time pushing and more time guiding.
- Leadership grows from to create sustainable, positive impact.

Results

- Student's skill development aligns with individual passions, causing larger reach of project impact.



~8% increase in program attendance

- Student's have reported skill development in communication, collaboration, research, and project management skills.

Limitations

- Full utilization of framework is time and energy intensive.
- Assumes psychological ownership can be built. May not be possible due to relationship and/or institutional culture.
- Without strong leader discernment, it can become overly facilitative.
- Focus is on long term success and engagement, which can cause lack of understanding and resistance in the short term.

Opportunities for Future Growth

- Applying framework to larger team settings. Currently it is limited to 1:1 and small group environments.
- Transferring framework skillset to team members through various trainings, delegation and processes.
- Opportunities to further develop leadership trainings in emotional intelligence, self reflection, and various other soft skills needed for effective use of framework.
- What are your thoughts?

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