



The HX research digest

Signals, issues 001 to 005

One paper per issue, translated into something a team can do on purpose. The compounding argument for the CARE framework, told through the research it stands on.

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let.ai HX research · research@let.ai

Signals 001 · The progress principle

Amabile, T. M., and Kramer, S. J. (2011). *The Progress Principle*. Harvard Business Review Press.

The finding. Across roughly 12,000 diary entries from professionals doing creative work, the single strongest driver of a good inner work life was not recognition, incentives, or even interpersonal warmth. It was making progress on meaningful work, and the worst days were defined by setbacks. Small wins counted far beyond their objective size: visible movement, even minor, changed how people felt, and how people felt changed how they performed the next day.

One move to try. Most organizations instrument output and ignore progress, which is experienced daily and is the thing the diary study says actually moves people. Make progress visible on purpose: a coach that names what improved this week, a feed where movement is seen sideways, a receipt that shows a voiced friction going somewhere.

In CARE terms. Reflection runs on this finding: the coach's practical job is manufacturing and protecting visible progress. Time-to-receipt is the same principle applied to listening, because a receipt is progress made visible.

Signals 002 · When a measure becomes a target

Goodhart, C. A. E. (1975), in *Papers in Monetary Economics*; Strathern, M. (1997), *European Review* 5(3).

The finding. Goodhart observed in monetary policy what Strathern later generalized for institutions: when a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure. The mechanism is not dishonesty but rational adaptation; people optimize what is rewarded, and the statistical relationship that made the measure informative collapses under the optimization.

One move to try. Assume any number you manage to will be gamed, and design so the gaming has no payoff. Route each signal's first benefit to its subject; keep diagnostics off performance reviews; watch for the divergence between what the dashboards say and what people report, because that split is your earliest corruption alarm.

In CARE terms. CARE's integrity model is Goodhart instrumented: the felt/structural Gap turns the split into a reading, and benefit routing removes the payoff that makes gaming rational in the first place.

Signals 003 • Ambient awareness

Leonardi, P. M. (2014). Social media, knowledge sharing, and innovation: toward a theory of communication visibility. *Information Systems Research*, 25(4).

The finding. When work communication becomes visible to third parties, something changes that direct messaging can never deliver: people learn vicariously, from exchanges they were never part of. Leonardi's field study found that visibility improved knowledge of who knows what and what is going on, and that the learning happened ambiently, without anyone scheduling it.

One move to try. The status meeting is a visibility workaround, and a costly one. Give lateral visibility a surface of its own: a feed people actually read, where what teams ship, decide, and learn travels sideways without a meeting or a chase.

In CARE terms. Awareness is this finding as a module, with one rule the research implies: awareness flows sideways before it flows up. A feed built chiefly to brief leadership is reporting, and people perform for it instead of learning from it.

Signals 004 • Psychological safety

Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2).

The finding. In a study of hospital and manufacturing teams, the teams that admitted and discussed errors learned, and the ones that could not, did not. Psychological safety, the shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk, predicted learning behavior better than team composition or resources. The uncomfortable corollary: the best-looking error rates often belong to the teams hiding the most.

One move to try. Treat safety as an architectural property, not a poster. If admitting a skill gap can reach a dashboard, it will not be admitted; the data improves while the team gets worse. Build the confessional boundary first, then ask people to learn.

In CARE terms. Reflection's house rule is Edmondson with teeth: coach transcripts and quiz scores feed the person and their coach, never a dashboard, because that boundary is the price of honest improvement.

Signals 005 · The reflective practitioner

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Basic Books.

The finding. Schön's account of how professionals actually improve dismantled the idea that competence is applied classroom knowledge. Practitioners get better through reflection on their own practice: surfacing what they did, why it worked or failed, and what the next case should borrow. The material of growth is the professional's own work, not generic curriculum.

One move to try. Training content alone changes little; examination of one's own work changes practice. Put the review where the work is: sessions, decisions, and drafts revisited with a guide, on a cadence, with the learner holding the results.

In CARE terms. Reflection is named for this book. The CARE coach reviews your sessions, not a syllabus, and the quizzes are self-checks the learner sees first, because the learner is the practice's owner.
