

ONTARIO PUBLIC SUPERVISORY OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

And

ONTARIO PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL

**BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF LEADERS: CHANGE WARS –
A HOPEFUL STRUGGLE**

Featuring: Dr. Michael Fullan and Dr. Andy Hargeaves

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Report of Proceedings

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BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF LEADERS: CHANGE WARS – A HOPEFUL STRUGGLE

**Welcome/Opening Remarks: Michelle Forge, OPSOA
Joanne Robinson, OPC**

On behalf of OPSOA and OPC, Michelle Forge and Joanne Robinson welcomed participants to this sixth leadership symposium. They pointed out that the intent of the symposium was to provide teams with the opportunity to share ideas regarding system leadership, as well as ways to work together to implement change in their districts, understanding that effective change is about learning and determining the best way forward for the general good. They concluded by explaining that Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves had been invited to present an agenda that embodied a hopeful struggle for worthwhile change.

**Greetings: Lise Haman, President of OPSOA
Laura Hodgins, President of OPC**

Speaking on behalf of their respective organizations, Lise Haman and Laura Hodgins welcomed participants. Lise Haman pointed out the exciting opportunity the conference provided for professional learning and reflection. Laura Hodgins addressed the importance of building a community of learners and the value of modeling such a community at the conference, with directors, supervisory officers and principals working and reflecting together.

Change Wars – A Hopeful Struggle:

**Dr. Michael Fullan, Professor Emeritus, O.I.S.E./UT
Special Advisor to the Premier and Minister of Education in Ontario**

**Dr. Andy Hargreaves, The Thomas More Brennan Chair of Education
Lynch School of Education, Boston University**

Introduction

Ontario is one of the highest performing districts in the world, ranking just behind Alberta, but unlike Alberta, deals with a much higher level of diversity. The purpose of the symposium is to take what is known and to push forward to further improvement.

Andy Hargreaves

In beginning his presentation, Hargreaves referred to the book, *The Fourth Turning*, by William Strauss and Neil Howe, in order to put recent history into perspective. These two authors state that throughout history, humanity has gone through a series of cycles, each consisting of 80 years. The latest cycle began just after World War II.

Its first segment, called the 'first turning', was a period of safety and security. There was a focus on steady jobs, women returned to working in the home, pension benefits and national health services were introduced, improvements were made in education, the suburbs came into being, etc.

The 'second turning', beginning in the 1960s, was a period of change in which there was a push against the conservative culture. It was a time of awakening, when young people pushed for change, the women's liberation movement emerged, individuals fought for civil rights, and many protested against the war in Vietnam.

Beginning in the 1980s, the 'third turning' introduced an age of unraveling. Cultural individualism became material individualism, where the emphasis centred on greed and reduced commitment to the common good.

Society has now entered the 'fourth turning'. Whereas in the past, there was an understanding of the connection between effort and reward, this has gone by the wayside, as has any sense of a commitment to the common good. Debt at the individual, municipal and state level has increased to the point that society is in crisis, and the only known is that everything once understood and accepted has totally disappeared. In this situation, the necessity to determine exactly what is required is crucial.

Once this historical outline was completed, Hargreaves summarized the development in education from the 1960s to the present. In describing each period, he pointed out those features that should be retained because they continue to have value and relevance and those which should be discarded, because their impact is negative.

The First Way

This period of the 60s to mid 70s exhibited the following characteristics:

- Many teachers were the first in their family to receive a higher education.
- Teachers felt inspired to change people's lives.
- Teachers had the freedom and flexibility to develop curriculum and teach it in a manner they chose.

The First Way had high points of inspiration, innovation and autonomy that should be retained, but low points of inconsistency and professional license that should be abandoned.

The Interregnum

From the late 70s to the mid 90s, a transitional period set in, an interregnum of complexity and contradiction. There were attempts to develop greater collaboration, to destream classes, and to integrate the curriculum. The move to outcomes-based education and standards-based reform was considered a way to build common understandings and commitments to more challenging learning, but implementation depended on the quality of the school leaders. There was a lack of consistent investment

in professional development for teachers and leadership development for principals/vice principals.

This high point of the Interregnum period consisted of the common standards with local interpretation, but the low point was the weak development of teachers, leaders and communities.

The Second Way

This was a time, beginning in the latter half of the 1990s, of increased competition between schools, an encouragement of private education, a narrowing of the curriculum and increased standardization. There was also a downscaling in the support for education and the profession of teaching. The negative results were the disillusionment of teachers and a lack of interest on the part of teachers to pursue leadership roles. A positive result was that standardization led to an increased emphasis on meeting the needs of *all* students in every school.

The urgency, consistency and all-inclusive equity are the positive qualities of the period that should be retained, while cut-throat competition and excessive standardization are qualities to be abandoned.

The Third Way

This is an emerging age, in which there is a realization that markets and standardization have progressed too far in the recent past, but, also, that a return to the 70s culture would be inappropriate given the current reality. The best path forward is one that includes a blending of the best qualities from the past and the introduction of some new directions.

In this new age, at the top, government defines the goals, levels of performance and targets, while from the bottom, there is much more support in both financial and human terms. In addition, there is a lateral element where there is evidence of teachers working together to increase their learning and schools working with other schools to build networks. There is also increased public engagement at the lateral level.

The positive features of the Third Way include balance and inclusiveness, public involvement, financial reinvestment, better use of evidence, and professional networks. Areas of concern are persistent autocracy, imposed targets, obsession with data and effervescent interactions (i.e. educators rushing around delivering the government's targets and purposes rather than developing and realizing purposes of their own).

The Fourth Way

The theory-in-action of the Fourth Way has much in common with the Third Way:

- Moral purpose
- Support of public education
- Investment in public education

- Ethical partnerships between the public and private sector (market and government should work together in ethical partnerships)
- Emphasis on high-quality teaching
- Reinstatement of the professional status of teaching
- Acknowledgement of the teacher unions
- Professional Learning Communities
- Lateral energy stemming from the development of school to school and district to district networks
- The strong helping the weak (those with more helping those with less)
- Leadership development
- Sophisticated accountability data

There are four areas within the above list which require additional pressure or push:

- Balance and inclusiveness
- Public involvement
- Financial reinvestment in education
- Development of networks

Issues to Pursue: As Ontario moves forward in its efforts to improve education, there are a number of issues to address:

1. Mission – A need exists for an inspiring mission. The focus on raising the bar and closing the gap is a good plan, but it is not a vision or dream to inspire.
2. Data – Data-driven improvement does not work, whereas evidence-informed improvement does so. It is important to concentrate on building the relationships first, and once a climate of trust is formed, to study the data and establish the goal or goals. There is a stronger probability that individuals will commit to the accomplishment of a goal and work together toward achieving it once strong relationships have been formed.
3. Accountability – Testing by samples needs to be considered.
4. Targets – Shared targets work best in motivating people to work towards reaching the targets. In certain instances, leaders will have to impose targets and, when such an action is required, it should occur in a climate where trust has been cultivated.
5. Community – Members of the community should have a strong presence within the school so that teachers and community workers combine their efforts on behalf of students.
6. Leadership – It is imperative to build systemic leadership from below so that those above are challenged from below to do what is best for students. It is also important to connect leaders across districts and boards so that they work together to improve education.

Michael Fullan

In his introduction, Fullan stated that he and Hargreaves agree on the big issues. It is, however, important to consider the nuances of these big issues. Discussion is essential to understand the depth of the nuance of an issue in order to recommend and take appropriate action.

The Six Secrets of Change

Fullan presented his theory, “The Six Secrets of Change”, noting that each of them has a deep nuance that is problematic and requires depth of understanding. Each “secret” has extremes to be avoided; the goal is to find a balance, what can be termed the “sweet spot”.

1. Love Your Employees: The extremes are blind love and indifference. The question to ask is, “How do we develop community in order to accomplish our dreams?”
2. Connect Peers With Purpose: Here the extremes are command/control and fragmentation. The question in this case is, “How do we arrive at coherence?”
3. Capacity Building Prevails: On the one extreme is ‘judgmentalism’, which means reaching punitive conclusions about individuals, and, on the other is ‘laissez-faire’, which means there are no standards. The question becomes, “How do we develop the individual and the system without attacking the person?”
4. Learning Is The Work: The one extreme is relentless consistency and the other is autonomy that often leads to bad practice. It is a difficult balance to achieve, but learning should be an inherent part of the school culture so that teachers understand evidence-informed best practice and develop precision in the way they apply this knowledge in their instruction.
5. Transparency Rules: Aimless transparency, which is an overdose of data, is just as inappropriate as too much privatization. Census data collection is one strategy for improvement, but it is a form of external accountability. A stronger strategy involves internal accountability, where teachers exhibit a sense of responsibility. This outweighs external accountability and brings about improvement in learning and achievement.
6. Systems Learn: The future is unpredictable. Knowing this, some leaders act with dead certainty while others react like deer in the headlights. The question becomes, “How should a leader act given the unpredictability of the future?” The answer is that the leader who shows more confidence and hope than the situation warrants is most effective.

Theory of Action

Both Fullan and Hargreaves are committed to a theory of system reform that includes the following components:

1. Two-way communication

2. Director and sector engagement
3. Capacity building linked to results
4. Supportive infrastructure and leadership
5. Management of the distractors
6. Continuous evaluation and inquiry

This theory of action has been implemented in Ontario in order to bring about continuing and sustainable improvement in education.

Jersey Public School (Video Clip)

The efforts at improvement in this school in York Region display a number of positive characteristics:

1. a focus on student work (student work is the starting point);
2. building capacity of teachers (knowledge, instructional practice, evaluation skill);
3. teamwork (working together in teams to analyze, plan, assess);
4. lack of defensiveness in dialogue (culture of trust);
5. discussion of practice (professional dialogue);
6. exemplars (produced by the school, not imported from outside);
7. ongoing assessment and reflection (awareness of where they started, how far they have come and where they have to go);
8. active involvement of the principal (the degree to which the principal participates with teachers in the learning process has a significant impact on the level of improvement).

Future Directions

In the next two years, three developments are likely to occur in the education landscape:

1. There will be a doubling back to an emphasis on age 0 to 5. This will give schools the opportunity to act as the conduit for building community with non-school factors.
2. An evolution in the meaning of literacy and numeracy will take place.
3. An understanding will develop of those innovations at the high school level that have significant impact on student success.

Activity #1

Participants referred to three documents that had been used in Hargreaves and Fullan's presentations:

- "Nuances By Secret"
- "What To Retain And Abandon"(Figure 3.1)
- "Third Way New Orthodoxy To Fourth Way Solutions" (Figure 4.3)

Through interactive discussion in groups of three, participants determined the following:

- Green Ideas – ideas about which they felt positive and gave strong support to their implementation;

- Red Ideas – ideas that they found disturbing and/or felt should be abandoned;
- Amber Ideas – ideas that merited more clarification or discussion.

Sample Green Ideas	Sample Red Ideas	Sample Amber Ideas
Demanding and Responsive Teaching – Teachers are developing an understanding of what this entails and are moving forward in this direction.	Teacher Unions – The lack of trust is a distractor to improvement; the question focuses on how to get unions, the government and principals’ associations working together.	Data-Driven Interventions – What is the balance between data collection and good relationships?
Evidence-Informed - This involves a move from a quantitative to qualitative focus based on student work.	Leadership Development – There is an inconsistency in determining good leadership qualities; not all principals have the leadership tools required to move forward	Testing by Census or Testing by Samples – Which of these methods of testing is most effective?
Targets – Teachers are taking ownership of targets.		Diversity – How do we address the issue of diversity and teach effectively so that minority groups achieve success?
Inspiring, Innovative and Inclusive Mission – Individuals in the profession are becoming energized.		Professional Learning - What is an effective way to implement job-embedded learning within the school?

Activity #2

Four Case Studies:

1. Alberta (Whelan excerpt: pp. 185 - 187)
2. Finland (“The Four Horizons of Hope”: pp. 16 - 22)
3. Ontario’s Success Story (Levin, Glaze, Fullan: pp. 274 – 280)
4. Tower Hamlets, London (The Four Horizons of Hope: pp. 23 – 31)

Four Themes:

1. Diversity in Teaching (meeting needs of minority groups)
2. Data/Targets/Accountability
3. Community/Parent Engagement
4. Development of the Teaching Profession/Leadership

Task:

1. Each theme was linked to the case study with the same number designation.
2. Participants at the various tables in the room numbered off “1” to “4”.
3. Participants then read the case study with the number that corresponded to their designated number; they also considered the manner in which the theme assigned to their case study was reflected in the study.
4. Participants gathered in expert groups (those who have read the same case study) and shared information.
5. Participants returned to their original tables and shared the following information regarding their case study:
 - What were the main points of the case study?
 - What were the implications for your work situation?
 - In linking the theme to the case study, what Big Green idea emerged?
 - In linking the theme to the case study, what Big Red idea emerged?

Sample Green Ideas	Sample Red Ideas
The school as a community hub, a centre for the community	Stakeholder involvement – a potential ‘distractor’ to the important focus on student needs and learning when stakeholder is more concerned with his/her personal agenda
Community engagement – crossing borders to engage the community	Top down direction – initiatives driven from above are not sustainable
Flexibility – wherever possible giving the school and teachers choice over how to achieve their goals	Community involvement – implementation is superficial at this point
Shared ownership – all teachers taking responsibility for all students and working together for all students	Data – can develop as a vicious force that disenfranchises parts of the community
Leadership opportunities – the importance of supporting teachers through leadership opportunities; focusing on teachers who support the moral purpose of student learning	Collaboration – forced collaboration can lead to contrived collegiality
Capacity building – the importance of building the knowledge and skills of teachers and members of the community	Stagnation – organizations that become entrenched in their structures do not have a collective approach to helping students
Equity – everyone has an opportunity to achieve regardless of socio-economic status	Diversity – a lack of a higher level definition of diversity and deeper conversations on diversity
Targets – there is a need for targets in order to measure success; challenging targets are superior to easy or mediocre ones	Homogeneity – success in homogeneous populations has been recorded, but success in diverse populations is more difficult to achieve

Summary Remarks

Hargreaves and Fullan reviewed a number of issues that came forward during the course of the symposium and made the following concluding remarks:

- **Review the past** and decide what to keep and what to abandon.
- **Give people more than one exemplar** to consider; it means a slower implementation, but it reveals the key practices and common themes contained in each.
- Study Finland and note that the gap between high and low achievement is fairly narrow; in addition, well-being, social cohesion and achievement are aligned; the **balance of achievement and well-being should be a focus of governments**; creating a good working environment is one strategy that leads to success in well-being and achievement.
- **Take advantage of the 0 to 5 initiative** to build community engagement; use the school as a hub to combine poverty, health and educational agendas; build teachers' confidence and they will take more risks to reach out to the community and parents.
- **Consider multiple indicators of success** – e.g. literacy, enjoyment of learning, and lifelong learning.
- Bring to the forefront the reality that minority groups are continuing to have difficulty achieving success; **become explicit about issues related to diversity**, one of which is race and ethno-culture; acknowledge the increased challenge of teaching a child who thinks, prays, dresses, speaks, etc. in a different way; examine the curriculum to determine whether it connects to the students' experience; use testing to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching diverse groups; advocate for change.

Note: While presenting his concluding comments, Hargreaves referred to three books:
Spirit Level, by Richard Wilkinson
The Selfish Capitalist: Origins of Affluenza, by Oliver James
Under Pressure: Rescuing Our Children from the Culture of Hyper-Parenting, by Carl Honore

**Closing: Linda Fabi, President Elect, OPSOA
Doug Morrell, President Elect, OPC**

Next Symposium: April 21, 2010