COHERENCE
PUTTING YOUR INNER DRIVE INTO OVERDRIVE

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Strategies that give you the freedom to change and the power to make a real difference—personally and in your organization.

Short Keynote
2016
Coherence: *Putting your inner drive into overdrive*

**Freedom From Change**

Shifting to the Right Drivers

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Wrong</th>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
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<td>Collaborative work</td>
<td>Individual teacher and leadership quality</td>
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<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Systemness</td>
<td>Fragmented strategies</td>
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**The Concepts of Freedom**

- *Freedom from* is getting rid of the constraints.
- *Freedom to* is figuring out what to do when you become more liberated.

**Seeking Coherence**

- Within your table read the seven quotes from Coherence and circle the one you like the best.
- Go around the table and see who selected which quotes.
- As a group discuss what ‘coherence’ means.
## Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts, and Systems


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is only one way to achieve greater coherence, and that is through purposeful action and interaction, working on capacity, clarity, precision of practice, transparency, monitoring of progress, and continuous correction. All of this requires the right mixture of “pressure and support”: the press for progress within supportive and focused cultures. p. 2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Coherence making in other words is a continuous process of making and remaking meaning in your own mind and in your culture. Our framework shows you how to do this. p. 3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Effective change processes shape and reshape good ideas as they build capacity and ownership among participants. There are two components: the quality of the idea and the quality of the process. p. 14</td>
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<td>... that these highly successful organizations learned from the success of others but never tried to imitate what others did. Instead, they found their own pathway to success. They did many of the right things, and they learned and adjusted as they proceeded. p. 15</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Most people would rather be challenged by change and helped to progress than be mired in frustration. Best of all, this work tackles “whole systems” and uses the group to change the group. People know they are engaged in something beyond their narrow role. It is human nature to rise to a larger call if the problems are serious enough and if there is a way forward where they can play a role with others. Coherence making is the pathway that does this. p. ix</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>What we need is consistency of purpose, policy, and practice. Structure and strategy are not enough. The solution requires the individual and collective ability to build shared meaning, capacity, and commitment to action. When large numbers of people have a deeply understood sense of what needs to be done—and see their part in achieving that purpose—coherence emerges and powerful things happen. p. 1</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Coherence pertains to people individually and especially collectively. To cut to the chase, coherence consists of the shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work. Coherence, then, is what is in the minds and actions of people individually and especially collectively. p. 1-2</td>
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### The Coherence Framework

- **Focusing Direction**
- **Cultivating Collaborative Cultures**
- **Securing Accountability**
- **Deepening Learning**

**Leadership**
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Focusing Direction

Purpose Driven: Quick Write

Clarify your own moral purpose by reflecting and recording your thoughts about these four questions using the quick write protocol:

1. What is my moral purpose?
2. What actions do I take to realize this moral purpose?
3. How do I help others clarify their moral purpose?
4. Am I making progress in realizing my moral purpose with students?

Share your thoughts with other members of your team and discuss themes that emerge.
Clarity of Strategy

- Successful change processes are a function of shaping and reshaping good ideas as they build capacity and ownership.
- Clarity about goals is not sufficient. Leaders must develop shared understanding in people’s minds and collective action. Coherence becomes a function of the interplay between the growing explicitness of the strategy and the change culture. The two variables of explicitness of strategy and quality of the change culture interact creating four different results.

Change Quality Protocol

1. Superficiality
When the strategy is not very precise, actionable or clear (low explicitness) and people are comfortable in the culture, we may see activity but at very superficial levels.

2. Inertia
This quadrant represents the history of the teaching profession—behind the classroom door, where teachers left each other alone with a license to be creative or ineffective.
Innovative teachers receive little feedback on their ideas, nor do these ideas become available to others and isolated, less than effective teachers get little help to improve.

3. Resistance
When innovations are highly prescribed (often detailed programs bought off the shelf) but culture is weak and teachers have not been involved sufficiently in developing ownership and new capacities, the result is pushback and resistance. If the programs are sound, they can result in short term gains (tightening an otherwise loose system), but because teachers have not been engaged in shaping the ideas or the strategy there is little willingness to take risks.

4. Depth
A strong climate for change with an explicitness of strategy is optimal. People operating in conditions of high trust, collaboration, and effective leadership, are more willing to innovate and take risks. If we balance that with a strategy that has precision, clarity, and measures of success, changes implemented will be deep and have impact.
Change Quality Quadrant

<table>
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<th>Change Climate (vertical axis):</th>
<th>Explicitness (horizontal axis):</th>
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<td>§ Describes the degree to which a culture supports change by fostering trust, nonjudgmentalism, leadership, innovation, and collaboration.</td>
<td>§ Describes the degree of explicitness of the strategy, including precision of the goals, clarity of the strategy, use of data, and supports.</td>
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Three Keys to Maximizing Impact

The Lead Learner:
The Principal’s New Role

To increase impact, principals should use their time differently: they should direct their energies to developing the group.

The Principal’s New Role

To lead the school’s teachers in a process of learning to improve their teaching, while learning alongside them about what works and what doesn’t.
Introduction


The Largest Barrier to Student Learning: Within-School Variability

If we are to truly improve student learning, it is vital that we identify the most important barrier to such improvement. And that barrier is the effect of within-school variability on learning. The variability between schools in most Western countries is far smaller than the variability within schools (Hattie 2015). For example, the 2009 PISA results for reading across all OECD countries shows that the variability between schools is 36 per cent, while the variance within schools is 64 per cent (OECD 2010).

There are many causes of this variance within schools, but I would argue that the most important (and one that we have some influence to reduce) is the variability in the effectiveness of teachers. I don’t mean to suggest that all teachers are bad; I mean that there is a great deal of variability among teachers in the effect that they have on student learning. This variability is well known, but rarely discussed, perhaps because this type of discussion would necessitate potentially uncomfortable questions. Hence, the politics of distraction are often invoked to avoid asking them.
Overcoming Variability Through Collaborative Expertise

There is every reason to assume that by attending to the problem of variability within a school and increasing the effectiveness of all teachers there will be a marked overall increase in achievement. So the aim is to bring the effect of all teachers on student learning up to a very high standard. The ‘No Child Left Behind’ policy should have been named ‘No Teacher Left Behind’.

This is not asking teachers and school leaders to attain some impossibly high set of dream standards; this is merely asking for all teachers to have the same impact as our best teachers. Let’s consider some analogies: not all doctors have high levels of expertise, and not all are in an elite college of surgeons; not all architects are in royal societies; and not all engineers are in academies of engineers. Just because a doctor, architect or engineer is not a member of these august bodies, however, does not mean that they are not worth consulting. They may not have achieved the upper echelon, but they will still have reached a necessary level of expertise to practise.

Similarly, the teaching profession needs to recognise expertise and create a profession of educators in which all teachers aspire to become members of the college, society or academy of highly effective and expert teachers. Such entry has to be based on dependable measures based on expertise. In this way, we can drive all upwards and not only reduce the variability among teachers and school leaders but also demonstrate to all (voters, parents, politicians, press) that there is a ‘practice of teaching’; that there is a difference between experienced teachers and expert teachers; and that some practices have a higher probability of being successful than others. The alternative is the demise of teacher expertise and a continuation of the politics of distraction.

So, my claim is that the greatest influence on student progression in learning is having highly expert, inspired and passionate teachers and school leaders working together to maximise the effect of their teaching on all students in their care. There is a major role for school leaders: to harness the expertise in their schools and to lead successful transformations. There is also a role for the system: to provide the support, time and resources for this to happen. Putting all three of these (teachers, leaders, system) together gets at the heart of collaborative expertise.
School Cultures
- Talented schools improve weak teachers
- Talented teachers leave weak schools
- Good collaboration reduces bad variation
- The sustainability of an organization is a function of the quality of its lateral relationships

Freedom To Means
- Autonomy & Cooperation

Balancing Autonomy & Cooperation
- If you choose being on your own you lose the human connection necessary for life.
- If you succumb to the extreme of being absorbed in a group, you lose your identity.

Struggle Between Autonomy and Cooperation
- Countries granting schools independent status freer from traditional bureaucracies find pockets of innovation among a larger number of pockets of failure.
- What is needed for success is to combine flexibility with requirements for cooperation.
### Coherence: Putting your inner drive into overdrive

#### Forms of Cooperation
- Building collaborative cultures
- Participating in networks of schools or districts to learn from each other
- Relating to state policies and priorities

#### School Cultures
- Focus on pedagogy
- Link to measurable results
- Non-judgmental
- Transparent
- Develop individuals
- Mobilize collective efficacy
- Combine principal and teacher leaders
- Are outward facing

#### Groupthink
- …situations where groups are cohesive, have highly directive leadership, and fail to seek external information. Such groups strive for unanimity, failing to consider alternative courses of action.

#### Deepening Learning
- Clarity of Learning Goals
- Precision in Pedagogy
- Shift Practices Through Capacity Building
Deep Learning Competencies

The 6C’s provide an advance organizer for thinking about Deep Learning Competencies as identified by New Pedagogies for Deep Learning. The placemat organizer can be used to activate prior knowledge about the 6C’s or to look for examples of the 6C’s using video exemplars.

### DEEP LEARNING PROGRESSIONS

**Creativity**
Having an ‘entrepreneurial eye’ for economic and social opportunities, asking the right inquiry questions to generate novel ideas, and leadership to pursue those ideas and turn them into action.

**Critical Thinking**
Critically evaluating information and arguments, seeing patterns and connections, constructing meaningful knowledge, and applying it in the real world.

**Communication**
Communicating effectively with a variety of styles, modes, and tools (including digital tools), tailored for a range of audiences.

**Character**
Learning to deep learn, armed with the essential character traits of grit, tenacity, perseverance, and resilience; and the ability to make learning an integral part of living.

**Citizenship**
Thinking like global citizens, considering global issues based on a deep understanding of diverse values and worldviews, and with a genuine interest and ability to solve ambiguous and complex real-world problems that impact human and environmental sustainability.

**Collaboration**
Work interdependently and synergistically in teams with strong interpersonal and team-related skills, including effective management of team dynamics and challenges, making substantive decisions together, and learning from and contributing to the learning of others.
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Exciting new learning needs to be:
- Irresistibly engaging
- Elegantly efficient
- Technologically ubiquitous
- Steeped in real life problem solving
- Involve deep learning

New Pedagogical Practices

My Learning
Deepening Learning

My Learning
- The first element refers to the need for students to take responsibility for their learning and to understand the process of learning, if it is to be maximized. This requires students to develop skills in learning to learn, giving and receiving feedback, and enacting student agency.

- Learning to learn requires that students build metacognition about their learning. They begin to define their own learning goals and success criteria; monitor their own learning and critically examine their work; and incorporate feedback from peers, teachers, and others to deepen their awareness of how they function in the learning process.

- Feedback is essential to improving performance. As students make progress in mastering the learning process, the role of the teacher gradually shifts from explicitly structuring the learning task, toward providing feedback, activating the next learning challenge, and continuously developing the learning environment.

- Student agency emerges as students take a more active role in codeveloping learning tasks and assessing results. It is more than participation; it is engaging students in real decision-making and a willingness to learn together.

My Belonging
- The second element of belonging is a crucial foundation for all human beings who are social by nature and crave purpose, meaning, and connectedness to others.

- Caring environments help students to flourish and meet the basic need of all humans to feel they are respected and belong.

- Relationships are integral to preparing for authentic learning. As students develop both interpersonal connections and intrapersonal insight, they are able to move to successively more complex tasks in groups and independently. Managing collaborative relationships and being self-monitoring are skills for life.

My Aspirations
- Student results can be dramatically affected by the expectations they hold of themselves and the perceptions they believe others have for them (see also Quaglia & Corso, 2014).

- Expectations are a key determinant of success, as noted in Hattie’s research. Students must believe they can achieve and also feel that others believe that. They must codetermine success criteria and be engaged in measuring their growth. Families, students, and teachers can together foster higher expectations through deliberate means—sometimes simply by discussing current and ideal expectations and what might make them possible to achieve.

- Needs and interests are a powerful accelerator for motivation and engagement. Teachers who tap into the natural curiosity and interest of students are able to use that as a springboard to deeply engage students in tasks that are relevant, authentic, and examine concepts and problems in depth.

Teachers, schools, and districts that combine strategies to unlock the three elements in their students will foster untapped potential and form meaningful learning partnerships.
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**Students as Change Agents**
- Students as catalysts for pedagogical change
- Students as partners in organizational change
- Students as forces for societal change

**Radical Leadership**
- Respect and reject the status quo
- Expertise and apprenticeship
- Experiment and commit

—Adapted from Martin and Osberg, 2015

**The New Leadership**
- Comes from many quarters
- Leaders listen, learn, leverage, lead
- Help crystallize, act on emerging solutions
- Treats impact as fundamental

**Leadership in the Learning Age:**
*Direction, Exploring, Consolidating*
- A cycle of trying things & making meaning
- Co-learning dominates
- Listen, learn, ask questions, leverage, & lead
- Help articulate what is happening & how it relates to impact
- Role of tools & protocols: Guide focus without constraining

**The New Job Description**

HELPING
HUMANITY!
Simply stated, accountability is taking responsibility for one’s actions. At the core of accountability in educational systems is student learning. As City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel (2009) argue, “the real accountability system is in the tasks that students are asked to do” (p. 23). Constantly improving and refining instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks is perhaps the single most important responsibility of the teaching profession and educational systems as a whole. In this sense, accountability as defined here is not limited to mere gains in test scores but on deeper and more meaningful learning for all students.

**Internal accountability** occurs when individuals and groups willingly take on personal, professional, and collective responsibility for continuous improvement and success for all students (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). “p. 110-111

**External accountability** is when system leaders reassure the public through transparency, monitoring, and selective intervention that their system is performing in line with societal expectations and requirements. The priority for policy makers, we argue, should be to lead with creating the conditions for internal accountability, because they are more effective in achieving greater overall accountability, including external accountability. Policy makers also have direct responsibilities to address external accountability, but this latter function will be far more effective if they get the internal part right.
# Quote

1. Accountability is now primarily described as an accountability for student learning. It is less about some test result and more about accepting ownership of the moral imperative of having every student learn. Teachers talk about “monitoring” differently. As they engage in greater sharing of the work, they talk about being accountable as people in the school community know what they are doing and looking to see what is changing for students as a result. And as they continue to deprivatize teaching, they talk about their principal and peers coming into their classrooms and expecting to see the work [of agreed-upon practices] reflected in their teaching, their classroom walls, and student work. (Anonymous, personal communication, November 2014)

2. Teachers and administrators talk about accountability by deprivatizing their practice. If everyone knows what the other teacher or administrator is working on and how they are working on it with students, it becomes a lot easier to talk about accountability. When everyone has an understanding of accountability, creating clear goals and steps to reach those goals, it makes it easier for everyone to talk and work in accountable environments. (Elementary principal, personal communication, November 2014)

3. We are moving to define accountability as responsibility. My district has been engaged in some important work that speaks to intrinsic motivation, efficacy, perseverance, etc., and accountability is seen as doing what is best for students . . . working together to tackle any challenge and being motivated by our commitment as opposed to some external direction. (Superintendent, personal communication, November 2014)

4. I do believe that a lot of work remains to be done on building common understanding on the notion of accountability. Many people still believe that someone above them in the hierarchy is accountable. Very few take personal accountability for student learning and achievement. There are still those who blame parents and students’ background for achievement. (Consultant, personal communication, November 2014)

5. In one school, the talk about accountability was pervasive as the school became designated as underperforming. The morale of the school went down significantly, and the tension was omnipresent at every meeting. The team switched the conversation to motivation, innovation, and teamwork and the culture changed. The school is energized and the test scores went up in one year. The team is now committed to results and continuous improvement. (Consultant, personal communication, November 2014)
The model advanced here is that the school leader is responsible for asking on a continual basis about the impact of all the adults on the learning of the students. Of course, I am not forgetting that the students are players in improving their learning. But that is the bonus, the compound-interest component. What is requested is that school leaders become leaders in evaluating the impact of all in the school on the progress of all students; the same for teachers; and the same for students.

School leaders need to be continually working with their staff to evaluate the impact of all on student progression. Leaders need to create a trusting environment where staff can debate the effect they have and use the information to devise future innovations. And leaders need to communicate the information on impact and progression to the students and parents. Schools need to become incubators of programs, evaluators of impact and experts at interpreting the effects of teachers and teaching on all students.

In short, we need to develop an evaluation climate in our education system.

Experience has shown that ten- to twelve-week cycles of evaluation are about optimal. Fewer weeks tend to lead to over-assessment or insufficient time to detect change; more weeks and the damage or success is done. We should know this and react appropriately. It does mean asking teachers to be clear about what success or impact would look like before they start to teach a series of lessons.

Of course, this must start by asking the questions, ‘Impact on what? To what magnitude? Impact for whom?’ Evaluating impact requires analyses of what a year’s growth looks like, and it is likely it may differ depending on where the student begins in this growth. Evaluating impact asks schools and systems to be clearer about what it means to be good at various disciplines, to be clearer about what a year’s progress looks like and to provide staff with collaborative opportunities to make these decisions.

This is the hardest part of our work, as teachers we have been so ingrained to wait and see what the students do, to see which students attend and then to pick out examples of successful progress. Our alternative model asks that teachers be clearer about what success would look like and the magnitude of the impact, and we ask them to prepare assessments to administer at the end – before they start teaching. The bonus of this latter preparation is that it ensures that teachers understand what success is meant to look like before they start teaching, and it increases the likelihood that teachers communicate these notions of success to the students.

There is also a need to include the student voice about teacher impact in the learning/teaching debates; that is, to hear the students’ view of how they are cared about and respected as learners, how captivated they are by the lessons, how they can see errors as opportunities for learning, how they can speak up and share their understanding and how they can provide and seek feedback so they know where to go next. As the Visible Learning research has shown, the student voice can be highly reliable, rarely includes personality comments and, appropriately used, can be a major resource for understanding and promoting high-impact teaching and learning.
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**Taking Action**

**Feedback Forum**  
Meet up with another colleague from a different district. Use the following questions as the basis for your discussion.

- Think of a time when you received powerful feedback. Why was it powerful? What did you learn from it?
- What are the challenges of giving feedback?
- Describe feedback that inspires growth.

**Freedom To World**  
- If we recast its role, feedback can become one of the most powerful forces for the betterment of the individual and the organization.

**Best Advice**  
- Take a risk and seek feedback, both because you will be worse off if you do nothing and because you will learn from it.

**System Change**  
- Leadership from the middle
- Effective networks
- Change agent skills

**Leadership from the Middle**  
- A strategy that increases the capacity of the middle as it becomes a better partner upward and downward.

**Definition of the Middle**  
- Taking the state as a whole, the middle is the district and/or networks of schools.
- Taking districts or networks, leadership from the middle is schools.
Benefits of Leadership from the Middle

- Unleashes badly needed innovation on a large scale while at the same time helping to assess and sort out what should be retained and spread.

Characteristics of Effective Networks

- Focusing on Ambitious Student Learning Outcomes Linked to Effective Pedagogy
- Developing Strong Relationships of Trust and Internal Accountability
- Continuously Improving Practice and Systems through Cycles of Collaborative Inquiry
- Using Deliberate Leadership and Skilled Facilitation within Flat Power Structures
- Frequently Interacting and Learning Inwards
- Connecting Outwards to Learn from Others
- Forming New Partnership among Students, Teachers, Families, and Communities
- Securing Adequate Resources to Sustain the Work


Leadership for Change Competencies

1. Challenges the status quo
2. Builds trust through clear communication and expectations
3. Creates a commonly owned plan for success
4. Focuses on team over self
5. Has a high sense of urgency for change and sustainable results in improving student achievement
6. Has a commitment to continuous improvement for self and organization
7. Builds external networks and partnerships

—Kirtman & Fullan, 2015
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Fullan has won numerous awards for his more than thirty books, including the 2015 Grawemeyer prize with Andy Hargreaves for Professional Capital. His books include the best sellers Leading in a Culture of Change, The Six Secrets of Change, Change Leader, All Systems Go, Motion Leadership, and The Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact. His latest books are Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action (with Joanne Quinn), Evaluating and Assessing Tools in the Digital Swamp (with Katelyn Donnelly), Leadership: Key Competencies (with Lyle Kirtman), and Freedom to Change.

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