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Warm Bodies or Leaders of Learning

The original title for this book was *Succeeding Leaders*, which I felt rather cleverly captured my intent of dealing with the principles of succession management and encouraging schools, school districts, and other educational institutions to develop a coherent and cohesive approach to the ways in which they identify, recruit, develop, and sustain leaders of learning. The publisher's reviewers presciently suggested that I was too clever by half because my title was so enigmatic it sounded like a hundred other leadership books on the market. I then tried to be somewhat apocalyptic by offering *The Leadership Crisis*, but I soon realized that while leadership issues in many countries have created serious problems, they were far from a "crisis". The events of 9/11 were a crisis; the precipitous decline of the economy resulting from the bizarre lending practices of many banks and investment houses internationally was a crisis; the devastation of New Orleans by hurricane Katrina was a crisis; but based on the many impressive leadership programs and leadership networks that seem to be developing exponentially across the world,[1] I concluded that leadership succession is a big challenge but hardly a crisis. This led to the title *The Succession Challenge: Building and Sustaining Educational Leadership Capacity through Succession Management* – not terribly sexy I admit, but it does describe exactly what this book is about. My title begs the question, succession management for what purpose? Had there been room on the cover, the second subheading would have been *By Developing and Sustaining Leaders of Learning.*

It's about Learning and It's about Time

From one point of view succession is not a challenge; it is easy for school jurisdictions and other governing bodies to find warm bodies

to fill leadership positions. There are lots of people out there willing to run a school. The challenge of course is to find and assign or hire the the right warm body to the right place at the right time for the right reasons. Successful leadership succession therefore really depends on the purposes of educational jurisdictions and how well their prospective leaders can meet organizational goals. If all that counts in education is good accounting, paper management, and political score keeping, then anyone with a managerial background will probably do.[2] Some school jurisdictions that have defined their purposes in terms that valorize only improved test scores have done just that. For example, a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers has urged the British government to address its succession challenge by recruiting non-teachers to lead its schools.[3] Such a policy[4] would, as Helen Gunter and Gill Forrester have pointed out, downgrade the status of teaching "in comparison to generic leadership skills and attributes."[5] Stein and Nelson's examination of the interaction of instructional leaders supporting the teaching of mathematics suggests that leading learning is a complex process that requires learning content knowledge that they define as "the kind of knowledge that will equip administrators to be strong instructional leaders."[6] They indicate that instructional leadership requires four "layers" of knowledge:

- An innermost layer – knowledge of the substance and subject matter: what the work is about.
- A second layer – knowledge of how to facilitate the learning: the how of the work.
- A third layer – knowledge of how teachers learn to teach and how others can assist their learning: the how of learning for the previous two layers.
- A fourth layer – knowledge of how to guide the learning of other adult professionals: the how of learning for the previous three layers.

This is a level of sophisticated knowledge that requires an in-depth understanding of the teaching–learning process gained through experience, study, and reflection which non-educators and prematurely promoted educators would not normally possess or easily acquire in a short course or an immersion program. For example, a Canadian school leader described how her "sophisticated knowledge" contributed to her work with children and their parents:

> There's no way in five years of teaching experience that a person can know and understand all three divisions,[7] and that worries me because, number one, I don't know how you can support your staff, and number two, I don't know how you can be believable to parents that you really

have a clue on what's going on for their children. Whereas I pulled on my experience so often, especially working with parents of special needs kids, but also parents whose children were struggling in whatever way, or even parents whose kids were gifted and didn't understand why we might not want to identify that particular thing until later in their life.

If the educational goal of an organization or school jurisdiction is to mobilize teachers and students to achieve narrow short-term targets and they're not too choosy about how to get there, then a succession challenge really doesn't exist. They can manage by hiring people from outside education or just rushing young educators through preparatory courses in educational management. If, however, the concern is to recruit, select, and develop leaders of learning who possess the "learning content knowledge" to contribute to the preparation of young people for successful participation in a knowledge society, and are ready to treat teachers and other educational workers as professionals, and parents and communities as partners, then all those responsible for leadership succession have a real challenge in front of them.

There is no question that leadership is a crucial variable in determining whether students and schools succeed. It is second only to the in-school effects of classroom teachers in determining student success. As Ken Leithwood and his colleagues explain: "While leadership explains only five to seven per cent of the difference in pupil learning and achievement across schools (not to be confused with the typically very large differences among pupils within schools), this difference is actually about one-quarter of the total difference across schools (12 to 20 per cent) explained by all school-level variables, after controlling for pupil intake or background factors."[8] They continue:

> Our conclusion … is that leadership has very significant effects on the quality of school organisation[9] and on pupil learning. As far as we are aware, there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership. One explanation for this is that leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organisation.[10]

In a similar vein, well-known Australian researchers Halia Silins and Bill Mulford's comprehensive study of leadership effects on student learning reported that:[11]

- School-level factors have a stronger influence on students' academic achievement than do students' socioeconomic status or home background.

4   THE SUCCESSION CHALLENGE

• Leadership characteristics of a school are important factors in promoting systems and structures that enable it to operate as a learning organization. In recent years, it has become a well-accepted principle that school leadership makes a difference to student achievement.

If leadership is such a significant factor in determining student success, then successful leadership succession becomes crucial. Leithwood and his colleagues make the connection when they state that:

> The leadership succession research indicates that unplanned headteacher[12] succession is one of the most common sources of schools' failure to progress,[13] in spite of what teachers might do. These studies demonstrate the devastating effects of unplanned headteacher succession, especially on initiatives intended to increase pupil achievement. The appointment and retention of a new headteacher[14] is emerging from the evidence as one of the most important strategies for turning around struggling schools or schools in special measures.[15]

This statement is accurate if the purposes of education are narrowed to increasing test scores and achieving short-term targets like "adequate yearly progress." With this quite limited definition of improvement, there are innumerable examples of school and system "turnarounds." But if sustained improvement over extended periods of time in deep learning for all children is the goal, then there are very few documented cases. While education as part of a national transformation in Finland provides a well-documented exception,[16] some of the most publicized "turnarounds" such as the so-called "Texas miracle"[17] and the recently abandoned British literacy strategy[18] have proven illusory.[19]

Our best information, therefore, on the long-term effects of leadership succession comes from the fields of business and professional sports where the goals are well and easily defined: to win and to make a profit in both cases. Glenn Rowe and his associates' examination of sports teams, and especially the National Hockey League teams over a 60-year period, provides insight into how leadership succession impacts on performance.[20] The authors use three theories of succession. The first, the "vicious circle theory," portrays leadership succession as "a naturally disruptive and destabilizing force in organizations"[21] because it leads to new policies, and challenges the prevailing organizational culture and practices. While succession can add new ideas, this theory holds that lowered morale and reduced efficiency leading to further succession usually

offset any gains. The second theory, "ritual scapegoating," suggests that the major factor in team performance in sports like baseball, hockey, and North American football is the quality of the players provided by the team owner or the general manager. This is little different from the situation new principals or heads face when they assume the leadership of a teaching staff assembled by previous principals or heads, school districts, local authorities, or governors. When the team or school fails to improve quickly, it is easier to unload the coach, manager, principal, or head, and blame the organization's futility on the departed leader, than to admit that the governing policies, personnel, or conditions that the leader inherited were at fault. England, with its intrusive inspectoral system, provides an unfortunate educational example of ritual scapegoating.[22] Third, successful teams such as the Pittsburgh Steelers of the National Football League and Manchester United of the British Premier football League have followed a "common-sense theory" of succession, ensuring stability and continuity by limiting disruptive succession episodes. While tending to short-term goals, they address long-term success. Their purpose is to win today but, more importantly, to keep on winning season after season. They have avoided the pathologies of both vicious circle succession and scapegoating – theories that describe the mindset of the terminally impatient. The need for stability appears to be also true in schools. John Howson's research in the United Kingdom shows a strong positive relationship between a school's performance and the stability of its leadership.[23]

Rowe and his colleagues argue that successful teams and businesses have followed a common-sense theory of succession that posits that leadership succession does improve organizational performance under certain conditions. As they explain: "the often-observed negative correlation between firm performance and leaders' succession is usually assumed to be the result of organizations striving for strategic renewal by changing their leaders."[24] Organizational learning is the key ingredient in strategic renewal and leaders need time for their own learning and that of their colleagues to occur. According to Mary Crossan and her associates, organizational learning involves four mental processes: intuiting, interpreting, integrating, and institutionalizing.[25] Intuiting is the preconscious recognition of the possibilities or patterns inherent in one's personal experience; interpreting is the explanation of an idea or insight; integrating occurs when a shared understanding develops; and institutionalizing is turning these understandings into routine actions. These processes take time to transfer knowledge from individuals to groups and from groups to entire organizations. Even the addition of money, such as

has occurred in Ontario's literacy initiative in elementary schools, the British literacy and numeracy strategies, or the American "No Child Left Behind," is not going to speed up the ability of the members of an organization to jointly make sense of new ideas and practices, especially with a newly appointed unfamiliar leader.

Intuition is a key skill for leaders and is often unavailable to freshly minted leaders. It may take as long as 10 years and the acquisition of 50,000 chunks of knowledge to become expert based on intuiting historical patterns.[26] As Rowe and his colleagues state, the intent is not to suggest "new leaders need time to learn 'how to do things here'. Indeed our intent is to argue that new leaders need time to lead the organization to reconstruct (learn) new ways to 'do things here'."[27] This would be particularly challenging for leaders without a background in education. It is a mistake to assume that competence in one field is always transferable. Even in business there are many examples of leaders who failed to transfer their learning from one business to another. Carly Fiorina, deposed CEO of Hewlett Packard, is one of the most egregious casualties.[28] Not only does it take time for staff members to learn new ways, it takes time for leaders to recruit new people, and in light of union contracts, to dismiss the unproductive or dysfunctional. One of the keys to successful "turnarounds," according to Collins and Porras, is to get "the right people on the bus":[29] that's much easier to do in business and on professional sports' teams than in schools and school districts. Attempts to force any of these processes "will lead to diseconomies – that is worsening performance."[30]

To begin the process of organizational turnaround or renewal, the first question the late management expert Peter Drucker used to ask business executives was, "what business do you think you are in?" For Drucker, a clearly articulated sense of purpose and direction was the first step to renewal. The same is true in education: if you don't know where you are going, any place will do. What differentiates business and education, however, is that business purposes may not always be moral. Some businesses produce products that cure cancer and some produce products that cause cancer. Some businesses produce products that support the environment and others produce products that degrade the environment. What matters in a business is pretty straightforward: make a profit and a good return for the investors.

If school leadership matters, and leadership succession matters, then the moral purposes that motivate leadership matter more. Paul Begley, a Canadian scholar respected for his research and writing on ethical issues, contends that people.

working in professional roles require purposes and goals every bit as
much as they do in their personal lives. Without purposes educational
leaders are, at minimum, vulnerable to directing energy to inappropriate
or wasteful tasks, and at worst, subject to manipulation and exploitation
by individuals, organizations and special interest groups bent on pursuing
their self interests.[31]

He suggests that educational purposes relate to leadership in three
ways:

1   They help leaders to understand the cognitive processes of individuals
    and groups of individuals that affect their values, motivations, and
    attitudes.
2   They provide a guide to action in solving educational problems or
    resolving ethical dilemmas.
3   Educational purposes become tools to "support actions taken, model
    ideal practice, and/or promote particular kinds of organizational or
    societal activity."[32]

It seems logical, therefore, in a book about leadership succession
to ask the question: leadership succession for what purpose? In the
remainder of this chapter I lay out a perspective on the purposes of
education that is ethical and sustainable, and a view of leadership
that provides the rationale for my subsequent discussion of leader-
ship succession that not only provides warm bodies, but provides the
right warm bodies for the right reasons.

Schools as Living Systems

Let's begin with a really wide lens – Fritjof Capra's *The Hidden
Connections: a Science for Sustainable Living*[33] – and then narrow down
to some specifics. In *The Hidden Connections*, Capra links the laws of
nature to human organizations. From his perspective, schools, states,
or nations are "living systems" interconnected in spheres of mutual
influence; each is a network of strong cells organized through
cohesive diversity rather then mechanical alignment, and with
permeable membranes of influence between the spheres. Schools,
districts, and other educational jurisdictions are ecosystems within
ecosystems: classrooms connected to schools, connected to school
districts or authorities, connected to communities and their agencies,
and so on. Like a web, each has an essential skeletal structure of rules
and regulations that frame relationships among people and tasks,
distribute political power, and guide daily practice. In education

these formal arrangements appear in seating plans for the children in a classroom, policy documents, organizational charts, written contracts, and budgets. These are the structures, forms, and functions designed by policy makers, leaders, and teachers to provide stability, order, and direction to organizations and classrooms. This ability to design is solely a human function.

In nature all change occurs through emergence, evolution, and the survival of the fittest. All living systems, both natural and human, possess two qualities:

- They are self-organizing networks of communication. "Wherever we see life, we see networks."[34] Schools, districts, and indeed nations are organized into a myriad of communities of practice[35] that can interconnect to move society forward, such as the civil rights or the environmental movements, or conversely join together to inhibit changes or block new directions, like the coalition to block health care reform in the United States.
- Creativity, learning, and growth are inherent in all living systems and the appearance of a qualitatively new order of things emerges with the creation of meaningful novelty in the environment. This novelty may be as small as an insightful remark or as large as a new government policy. It can be spontaneous or by design.

It is human design that keeps society from becoming a jungle, and provides purpose, meaning, cohesion, and stability. Human design taken too far, however, can overwhelm and stifle emergence within the various ecosystems. It is the informal interconnections and inter-relationships among people that cut across formal structures and intersect with an organization's informal structures, "the fluid and fluctuating networks of communications" that give the web its "aliveness."[36]

Most policy arguments in education and other fields evolve around the relationships of human design, usually defined in terms of government policies, plans, and structures, and the innate human urge for emergence – to be free, to be creative, to be liberated. For example, if society allowed everyone to drive on our roads any way they wished – to be as free, creative, or as liberated as they wanted – then anarchy would result. Emergence taken too far, therefore, can become chaotic, and in the extreme, anarchic. As a result, govern-ments over time have designed rules of the road, developed licensing procedures and the like, to bring some order to our daily drive to work or play. To continue the driving analogy further, if the rules of the road become too restrictive, licensing becomes too limiting, and tolls are enforced on most roads, then driving would become

restricted to a select few who can conform, and above all pay. Design taken too far can result in inequities, autocracy, or oligarchy, and the stifling of human creativity, ingenuity, and opportunities. It is this interplay between design and emergence that fuels our economic, political, and educational debates. The challenge at all levels is to find a balance that ensures excellence of results, fairness for all, within a paradigm that is affordable in terms of human, environmental, and material resources. The cross-currents created by conflicting views of what should be designed and what should be left to emerge lead to policy conflicts over the rights of individuals versus the needs of society, the requirements of a globalized economy versus the preservation of indigenous cultures, and the demands of international corporatism versus the democratic rights of citizens. All these themes, among many others, have infused the debate over educational purposes and policies that affect school leaders on a daily basis.

Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley's recent book *The Fourth Way: the Inspiring Future of Educational Change* describes four eras of educational change.[37] These provide a convenient historical context and organizer to help us understand how these forces have influenced education and particularly educational leadership over time, and some idea as to where they might be taking us. In the First Way in most developed nations, the state supported everything in the public domain. It created conditions for opportunity and social mobility, set out an inspirational vision of social change and common good, and allowed professionals to get on with the job. The spirit of the times drew many inspired and innovative teachers into the profession but it also tolerated incompetence and eccentricity (Ibid., p. 4). School leaders were remembered as larger-than-life figures (in good and bad ways) who were emotionally attached to their schools, stayed with them and placed their stamp on them (Ibid., p. 4) The First Way brought innovation, but unacceptable variation in student performance and a perceived lack of accountability to taxpayers. Many critics have argued that state supported education was monopolistic and monolithic. In other words, there was too much design and not enough opportunity for emergence.

The Perfect Storm

During the Thatcher years in the United Kingdom and the Reagan years in the United States, a "Second Way" of markets and competition emerged in most western countries, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States, where schools competed for clients, performance results were published, and services were increasingly privatized and

outsourced. Market norms of competition and self-reliance replaced the cooperative, high-trust social norms of the First Way. An entrepreneurial-managerial model of leadership, usually described as site-based management, that decentralized budgetary and staffing decisions to schools, gradually replaced the bureaucratic-professional model of leadership of the First Way. Initially, these neoliberal approaches generated energy and initiative, especially in secondary education. But they became increasingly mixed with neoconservative policies intended to return to some mythical age of accountability, discipline, and traditional knowledge. These strategies, which reserved to the state the power to design a standardized curriculum for all children, standardized tests to ensure accountability, standardized inspectoral regimens, and increasingly standardized teaching methods, euphemistically called 'best' practices, compromised emergence through genuinely free educational markets and short-circuited any potential for creativity and innovativeness in the Second Way. The Second Way for school leaders resulted in shifting "geographies of power"[38] that gave them considerable control over managerial issues such as budgets, staffing, and maintenance of buildings but little influence over older autonomies such as curriculum, teaching, and testing.[39]

Michael Apple argues that a "perfect storm" has connected the neoliberals' privatization agenda, the neoconservatives' nostalgia, and the religious fundamentalists' and evangelicals' desire to "return to (their) God in all our institutions"[40] with a growing cadre of middle class technocrats who are more interested in forms, functions, and efficiency than human beings, to drive the forces of the Second Way in directions that have produced a confused and confusing educational agenda. This agenda calls for personalized learning programs for children within a policy framework of standardization; requires principals and school heads to be leaders of learning while being excellent managers and creative entrepreneurs; exhorts teachers and schools to cooperate but at the same time to compete with their colleagues and other schools; and advocates for schools that are responsive to the needs and abilities of everyone's child but encourages selective schools for some and exclusive religious schools for others, all paid for by the state.

How did this happen? In the *The Shock Doctrine*, Canadian writer Naomi Klein describes how the radical right has taken advantage of international disasters such as the 2004 tsunami, the Iraq War, and the devastation of New Orleans to surreptitiously implement its privatization agenda in what previously had been the public sphere.[41] She provides vivid and sometimes tragic examples of how the influence of the prophet of unfettered markets, Milton Friedman, extends far

beyond his grave, and intentionally or unintentionally influences public policies including educational policies that in turn determine how our school systems operate. As she explains, if one were to venture into the economics department of the University of Chicago in the heyday of Friedman and his followers in the 1960s you would have read a sign that said "Science is Measurement." By reducing economics to that which was measurable, and ignoring the human costs of an ideology that asserted that government has a very limited role to play in the economy except to create a climate for investment, and that everything else, including education, health care, and social security, can best be handled by the private sector, they gave an intellectual veneer to hyper-individualism and a rationale for ignoring social needs and economic inequities.[42] Although the recent economic slump has challenged these assumptions, Friedman's followers still are providing leadership to countries like the United States, Canada, and until very recently Australia, and to international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Even though the applications of their economic theories in Pinochet's Chile and Suharto's Indonesia failed miserably, and caused untold horror for vast numbers of people,[43] Friedman's true believers and their supporters remain convinced that where society has a choice, private interests always trump public interests. For example, when Katrina wiped out many of the poorest neighborhoods in New Orleans and destroyed most of its schools, the aged Friedman wrote, "Most New Orleans schools are in ruins as are the homes of the children who have attended them. The children are now scattered all over the country. This is tragedy. It is also an opportunity to radically reform the education system."[44] Before Katrina the public school system ran 123 public schools, and they now operate four; before Katrina there were seven charter schools run by private operators, and there are now 31. A total of 4,700 members of the New Orleans teachers union were fired and replaced by younger and cheaper teachers.[45]

The Chicago school of economics not only influences the educational policy environment in New Orleans, to say nothing of the scandalous privatization of the disaster cleanup;[46] we see it in the educational policies of many educational jurisdictions around the world. The dramatic increase in voucher programs and charter schools in the US, the "for-sale" signs on UK academies, where for the bargain price of £2 million wealthy people or organizations can buy into state schools, the P3 program of private–public partnerships to build and influence schools in Alberta,[47] and the increasing need for schools to turn to private funding sources to remain viable, all point to the work of Friedman and his supporters. Similarly the

measurement sign on the University of Chicago door has been given a life of its own through a plethora of testing and inspectoral schemes that in many situations determine the success or failure of students, teachers, principals, and schools on very narrow measures of human potential. The strategy of the Friedman acolytes is always the same: find a crisis like Katrina, or create one; use it as an excuse to undermine the public services; and, while people are otherwise engaged, begin the process of privatizing education, health care, and other social functions by turning these services into commodities to be bought and sold. In this model of how the world should work, citizens become customers of these formerly public commodities, rather than citizens who share these services with their neighbors and pay for them with their taxes.[48]

In Ontario in 1995, the then Minister of Education unintentionally articulated this approach when he was surreptitiously videotaped telling his subordinates that, "Creating a useful crisis is part of what this will be about. So the first bunch of communications that the public might hear might be more negative than I would be inclined to talk about [otherwise] … Yeah, we need to invent a crisis, and that's not just an act of courage; there's some skill involved."[49] In the United States the language of "crisis" permeated educational discourse as early as 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, which declared that "Our nation is at risk … The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people."[50] David Berliner and Bruce Biddle in *The Manufactured Crisis* document how data, particularly from international comparisons, have been twisted by successive American administrations to ratchet up the sense of education in crisis.[51] In Australia the Minister of Education under the Howard government pushed the crisis theme by downplaying educational successes such as Australia's high standing on various international comparisons and actively fostering the view that teachers and schools in the public sector were failing. He implied that parents who do not do everything possible to get their children into private education are failing them. Gene Glass captures this "crisis" rhetoric when he states that the old adage "if it ain't broke don't fix it" has been replaced by a new corollary, "if you want to fix it, declare it broken."[52]

Glass, a renowned American researcher and statistician, argues that shifting demographics and political manipulation fuel the Second Way in the US. He contends that medical and technological advances such as the birth control pill have affected the numbers of children especially white children who attend school, extended

lifespans which has significantly increased the number of adults without school age children, and contributed to a "hyper consuming middle class culture producing growing debt and eradicating savings" that "quickly loses sympathy for public institutions that attempt to serve the common good" and "find it more and more unappealing to support the institutions that are 'stewards' of other people's children."[53] He sees the push for privatization of social institutions such as schools, and related to this the reduction of taxes, as the result of the desire of "White voters to preserve wealth, consume material goods, and provide a quasi-private education for their children at public expense."[54] While difficult to prove, this theory is worth investigating in countries with ever increasing numbers of recent immigrants like the UK, Australia, and Canada. In the balance between design and emergence, the Second Way seeks to reduce the "design" structures that inhibit the emergence of commercial and market operations. Governments exist to protect the market and it is up to individuals to look after themselves. As Margaret Thatcher so famously said:

> I think we've been through a period where too many people have been given to understand that if they have a problem, it's the government's job to cope with it. "I have a problem, I'll get a grant." "I'm homeless, the government must house me." They're casting their problem on society. And, you know, there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first. It's our duty to look after ourselves and then, also to look after our neighbour. People have got the entitlements too much in mind, without the obligations. There's no such thing as entitlement, unless someone has first met an obligation.[55]

Targets, Tests, and Tunnel Vision

The excesses and unpopularity of the Second Way policies in the UK led Tony Blair and his New Labour government to articulate and act on a "Third Way". Like Bill Clinton's administration in the US, Blair's "New" Labour promised a Third Way between and beyond the market and the state – a rather inventive blend of design and emergence. As opposed to the Second Way approaches of the Thatcher and Major governments in the UK, the Howard government in Australia, and the Bush government's under-funded "No Child Left Behind" in the US, the Blair government provided substantially more support by restoring educators' salaries, improving working conditions, providing a focus on literacy and numeracy, investing in a massive

regeneration program, establishing networks of schools helping schools, and creating policies and programs to attend to growing shortages of school leaders, particularly principals. At the same time it kept the Second Way strategies of competition, and significantly ratcheted up the pressure on schools and educators by widening and tightening targets and prescription. Moreover, its consuming motivation for change was unapologetically and narrowly economic. In the words of the government's education ministry, "We are talking about investing in human capital in an age of knowledge – to compete in the global economy."[56] Schools and the public sector as a whole had to become more business-like, target-driven, and responsive to their customers, the parents, and more productive as measured by standardized tests. Policy became centralized and designed and driven from Whitehall. Curriculum, testing, teaching, and school organization became standardized and enforced by government inspectors. The emphasis on accountability, oversight, and conformity to government policies has stifled creativity and innovation in many schools, especially those in less affluent areas. Stephen Ball in his *The Education Debate* traces the evolution of Third Way policies in the UK and concludes that the Third Way has profoundly changed the role of government and the direction of education: "The state is increasingly dispersed and in some respects smaller, as it moves from public sector provisions to outsourcing, contracting and monitoring roles, from rowing to steering, but also at the same time more extensive, intrusive, surveillant and centred."[57] Ironically, the driving purpose behind the Third Way is "to make the most of ourselves – to be creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial … this is driven by the subordination of social policy to the demands of the labour market flexibility and/or employability and the perceived imperatives of international competitiveness in the name of which the individual and 'its' society become ever more interwoven."[58] While the UK, particularly England, provides the best (or worst) example of the Third Way, we see manifestations of it in plans for performance pay in Victoria, Australia,[59] literacy targets in Ontario, Canada, and the introduction of standardized tests to replace an extensive and widely accepted system of local student assessments in Nebraska, US. But Ball asks the pertinent question of whether the standardized outcomes determined by external (to schools) testing "actually stand for and thus represent valid, worthwhile or meaningful outputs. Does increased emphasis on preparation for the tests and the adaptation of pedagogy and curriculum to the requirements of test performance constitute worthwhile effects of 'improvement'? In terms of economic competitiveness, is what is measured here what is needed?"[60]

Increasingly evidence is mounting that this change strategy based on standardized tests, short-term targets, and teaching aligned to tests is not working in improving student and school performance. Peter Tymms and his colleagues at Durham University have concluded:

> Evidence from the U.K., U.S. and elsewhere suggests that within educational systems, hugely expensive policy initiatives have often failed to lead to significant positive improvements. For instance the National Literacy Strategy in England cost £500 million but appears to have had almost no impact on literacy levels of 11-year-olds in English primary schools despite widespread claims to the contrary. Indeed it has been questioned whether it has ever been shown that educational standards have in fact risen by any significant amount over any time period anywhere as a result of policy.[61]

In spite of this compelling evidence, many governments persist in pursuing untested and empirically unsupported change strategies based on short-term curricula aligned to targets,[62] and an array of accountability measures that have led to such "collateral damage"[63] as guilt and hopelessness for teachers, superficial, narrow, mind-numbing curriculum and teaching for students, and high stress and low morale for school leaders. In England the government has expanded target setting into a series of increasingly complex and hierarchical expectations with very much of a top-down thrust. For example the British government, in a complex directive on target setting to education authorities and schools, declared: "We have announced an aspiration that 85% of young people will achieve level 2 at 19 by 2013."[64] This and similar top-down targets take micro-management to new highs (or is it lows?). There is little evidence that this kind of target setting gains support or even compliance, or justifies the time and energy of the people who have to implement the targets. Ontario, which has also hitched its policy horse to the short-term targets wagon, continues to focus on literacy and numeracy in spite of the fact that the achievement of Ontario's students in literacy and numeracy is among the highest in both Canada and the world.[65] This myopia has resulted in little serious attention to the arts and other important areas of the curriculum, as well as only modest efforts to attend to the province's burgeoning multicultural population. Most evidence of successful target setting as a change strategy comes from very small-scale studies of relatively simple tasks, primarily in the United States. There is no compelling evidence to support target setting as a long-term change strategy in organizations as complex as an educational institution.[66] This is not to say that short-term targets have no use. Short-term gains can provide

"quick wins" for teachers and others to demonstrate that change is possible and it is worth their time and effort to invest in more difficult long-term change strategies.[67] David Hopkins supports the quick-wins notion and convincingly argues that short-term "changes to the school environment, attendance and uniform can result in tangible gains"[68] that lift morale. Similarly, community activists know that when disempowered groups such as ethnic minority parents agitate for change, concrete early victories demonstrate that their investments of energy can indeed get results.[69] But perseverating on a series of short-term targets or arbitrary politically inspired targets creates the feeling among the people involved of being in an ongoing series of sprints to the finish, only to be faced with another and another sprint to achieve targets in which they have little personal investment. The target becomes *the* purpose rather than the learning involved in achieving the target. Curriculum begins to narrow and become focused on approaches to raising test scores rather than long-term sustainable learning strategies for students.[70] The human cost of this tunnel vision shows up in failed students, cynical teachers, harried school leaders, and disenchanted communities.

As previously mentioned, the all-purpose argument for this systemic, radical, and frenetic change over the past 20 years has been narrowly based on the instrumental imperatives of the corporate world for increased productivity and profitability. I have had the opportunity of hearing presidents, prime ministers, secretaries of state for education, ministers of education, corporate leaders, and senior political and bureaucratic leaders from around the world, and they all give essentially the same speech: "we must improve our educational system so that our country (province, state) can compete in the globalized marketplace." Improvement is usually defined in terms of test scores although there is little correlation between test scores and national productivity. For example, my country of Canada ranks highly on most international comparisons of student achievement such as PISA, but is 13th in national productivity.[71] The most productive economy is still that of the United States, yet on international educational comparisons the US is at or below the median on many measures. The pundits of profitability declare that "we need more math, more science, more engineers, more university graduates" to meet the competition of a knowledge economy. Where's the evidence? In Ontario for example the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers state that:

> Growing evidence suggests that Canada, and specifically Ontario, is not keeping up with the creation of jobs specific to the skills of available

engineers. As a result engineers are either becoming unemployed, or working in non-engineering related areas. In addition, graduating engineers are finding it more and more difficult to find employment that would fulfill their licensure requirements. Finally, many internationally educated engineering graduates still have a great deal of difficulty getting their one year of Canadian work experience.[72]

The US has more engineers now than it can use.[73] Moreover, why the big panic to push more and more young people through university, when it is estimated that only 30 percent of the jobs in the United States available in 2010 will require university or college graduation?[74] The American Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that, by 2015, 13 million new jobs will be created that do not require post-secondary education, and the number of new jobs that will require at least a bachelor degree is 6 million.[75] I doubt the ratio is higher elsewhere. As Michael Crawford explains in the *New York Times Magazine*:

> The current downturn is likely to pass eventually. But there are also systemic changes in the economy, arising from information technology, that have the surprising effect of making the manual trades – plumbing, electrical work, car repair – more attractive as careers. The Princeton economist Alan Blinder argues that the crucial distinction in the emerging labor market is not between those with more or less education, but between those whose services can be delivered over a wire and those who must do their work in person or on site. The latter will find their livelihoods more secure against outsourcing to distant countries. As Blinder puts it, "You can't hammer a nail over the Internet." Nor can the Indians fix your car. Because they are in India.[76]

If this is the case, how can policy makers justify "one size fits all" curriculum and testing programs, unless there is another motive? A cynic might suggest that the corporate demand for more highly educated engineers, software developers, and the like is more of a market-driven strategy to increase the numbers of these high-paid professionals as a way to drive down their wages than a national approach to international competitiveness and economic wellbeing. Perhaps this is just one more way for those social elements that already control the levers of political and economic power to perpetuate their dominance; or it could be social snobbery towards people who work with their hands; or then again, maybe the whole knowledge economy thing has been oversold. Regardless of motive, there has to be more to education than preparing our students to make a living sitting in front of a computer as a drone in the knowledge economy. There is a better way.

The Moral Purpose for Educational Leadership

This better way begins with the question: what is the moral purpose of education in the twenty-first century?[77] History provides some guidance. David McCullough's superb Pulitzer Prize winning biography *John Adams* stimulated my interest in the second and sixth presidents of the United States, John Adams and his son John Quincy Adams, two of the most maligned yet brilliant American presidents, both of whom faced incredible adversity but remained dedicated to larger moral principles.[78] Only in recent years have they received the historical recognition they deserve. At a time when the United States was fighting for its independence from the British Empire, the emergent nation sent John Adams and his son, who acted as his father's secretary, to Paris to try gain French support for their new nation. To explain to his lonely wife Abigail why he was prepared to give up everything he loved for the cause of American independence, John Adams described his vision of the future:

> I must study politics and war, that our sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.[79]

In these few words John Adams captured the essence of why educational leaders must continue to struggle against the attempts to privatize and commodify education. Adams believed that the role of government was to protect and empower all of its citizens so that they could pursue their goals; that the purpose of education was not for purely utilitarian purposes, but to enrich the lives of all citizens and to help them achieve their potential. This is a broad liberal education that includes not only mathematics and the sciences, but also the humanities and the arts. It is deep and engaging and not for just an elite but for everyone. As Adams stated in another letter to Abigail in 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence: "Laws for the liberal education of youth, especially for the lower classes of people, are so extremely wise and useful, that, to a humane and generous mind, no expense for this purpose would be thought extravagant."[80] Later, in 1786, he wrote: "The education of a nation instead of being confined to a few schools and universities for the instruction of the few must become the national care and expense for the formation of the many."[81]

While the foregoing could be easily relegated to the dustbin of irrelevant history, consider this very recently published long-term

study of secondary education in England and Wales by leading scholars from four major British institutions. The Nuffield Report makes five overarching demands of British policy makers:

- *The reassertion of a broader vision of education* in which there is a profound respect for the whole person (not just the narrowly conceived "intellectual excellence" or "skills for economic prosperity"), irrespective of ability or cultural and social background, in which there is a broader vision of learning and in which the learning contributes to a more just and cohesive society.
- *System performance indicators fit for purpose* in which the "measures of success" reflect this range of educational aims, not simply those which are easy to measure or which please certain stakeholders only.
- *The redistribution of power and decision-making* such that there can be greater room for the voice of the learner, for the expertise of the teacher, and for the concerns of other stakeholders in the response to the learning needs of all young people in their different economic and social settings.
- *The creation of strongly collaborative local learning systems* in which schools, colleges, higher education institutions, the youth service, independent training providers, employers, and voluntary bodies can work together for the common good – in curriculum development, in provision of opportunities for all learners in a locality, and in ensuring appropriate progression into further education, training, and employment.
- *The development of a more unified system of qualifications* which meets the diverse talents of young people, the different levels and styles of learning, and the varied needs of the wider community, but which avoids the fragmentation, divisiveness, and inequalities to which the present system is prone.[82]

Whether we are talking about founding an educational system over 300 years ago or critiquing an existing system, the moral purpose for educators remains the same, and involves "convictions about, and unwavering commitments to, enhancing deep and broad learning, not merely tested achievement, for *all* students."[83] To explain the meaning of "deep and broad" learning, Andy Hargreaves and I borrowed from the UNESCO Commission that proposed "four fundamental types of learning which, throughout a person's life, will be the pillars of knowledge:"[84]

- *Learning to know* includes the acquisition of a broad general knowledge, intellectual curiosity, the instruments of understanding, independence of judgment, and the impetus and foundation for being able to continue

learning throughout life. Additionally, learning to know "presupposes learning to learn, calling upon the power of concentration, memory and thought."[85] To do this Guy Claxton explains that students and all other learners need to acquire *resilience*, the ability to "stay intelligently engaged with learning challenges" despite difficulties and setbacks;[86] *resourcefulness*, the capacity to use a range of intellectual tools including imagination and intuition to address learning challenges; and *reflection*, the facility to "monitor one's own learning and take a strategic overview."[87]

- *Learning to do* involves the competence to put what one has learned into practice (even when it is unclear how future work will evolve), to deal with many situations, and to act creatively in and on one's environment. It includes teamwork, initiative, readiness to take risks, being able to process information and communicate with others, and also to manage and resolve conflicts. In *A Whole New Mind*, Daniel Pink argues that the technology that has allowed low-paid Asian workers to replace high-paid western workers in manufacturing has now spread to "white-collar" work. He states, "Any job that depends on routines – that can be reduced to a set of rules, or broken down into a set of repeatable steps – is at risk."[88] Paid tasks that have primarily required left brain thinking, that are logical, linear, and rational – like writing a will, completing tax forms, writing up an insurance policy, or even diagnosing illnesses – will either move offshore to low-pay environments, or be done by people at home on their computers. The future, therefore, belongs to those who engage the right side of the brain, with its abilities to think holistically and long term, recognize patterns, and interpret emotions and non-verbal communications, in partnership with the left side of the brain. In addition to doing mathematics and science, students will need to engage in such right brain dominated activities as designing buildings and works of art, telling stories, composing music, and volunteering in hospitals, schools, and old age homes. The top jobs of the future are in the helping professions, designing new or modifying old products, and creating new technologies. At the same time we will still need people who can build houses, repair the plumbing, put in sewers, and attend to all the services that make modern life livable.

- *Learning to be* addresses who we are, and how we are with people. It incorporates our aspects of the self – mind and body, emotion and intellect, aesthetic sensitivity and spiritual values. People who have "learned to be" can understand themselves and their world, and solve their own problems. Learning to be means giving people the freedom of thought, judgment, feeling, and imagination they need in order to develop their talents and take control of their lives as much as possible.[89] The Body Shop, in one of its many publications, captured the need for such learning goals when it declared:

> Let's help our children to develop the habit of freedom. To encourage them to celebrate who and what they are.
>
> Let's stop teaching children to fear change and protect the status quo. Let's teach them to enquire and debate. To ask questions until they hear answers. And the way to do it is to change the way of our traditional schooling.
>
> Our educational system does its best to ignore and suppress the creative spirit of children. It teaches them to listen unquestioningly to authority. It insists that education is just knowledge contained in subjects and the purpose of education is to get a job. What's left out is sensitivity to others, non-violent behavior, respect, intuition, imagination, and a sense of awe and wonderment.[90]

Education is more than preparing students to make a living, although that is important; it is also about preparing them to make a life.

- *Learning to live together* calls upon students and others to develop understanding of, respect for, and engagement with other people's cultures and spiritual values. It calls for empathy for others' points of view, understanding of diversity and similarities among people, appreciation of interdependence, and ability to engage in dialogue and debate, in order to improve relationships, cooperate with others, and reduce violence and conflict. Learning to live together is an essential element of deep and broad learning in an increasingly multicultural world where millions of families and their children have been mired in decades or even centuries of racial hatred, religious bigotry, or totalitarian control. It is truly amazing how many ways policy makers find to separate students from each other – socioeconomically, racially, religiously, by gender, and so on. How can we learn to live together if we never get to know "the other"?

To these four pillars, we added a fifth:

- *Learning to live sustainably* is about learning to respect and protect the earth which gives us life; to work with diverse others to secure the long-term benefits of economic and ecological life in all communities; to adopt behaviors and practices that restrain and minimize our ecological footprint on the world around us without depriving us of opportunities for development and fulfillment; and to coexist and cooperate with nature and natural design, whenever possible, rather than always seeking to conquer and control them.[91]

The title of the book my colleagues Louise Stoll and Lorna Earl wrote a few years ago, *It's about Learning and It's about Time*, goes to the very heart of what I believe education in the twenty-first century should

be about, and therefore what educational leadership and leadership succession should be about.[92] It is "about time" we focused on learning and not on all the artifacts of learning that tend to dehumanize children by reducing them to aggregated and disaggregated numbers; and "about time" we gave students, teachers, and school leaders the time to focus on what the job is all about; and "about time" we began to actively seek, develop, select, and sustain "leaders of learning" rather than just "managers of things" in all of our schools and school districts. At the heart of the succession challenge is the reluctance on the part of many dedicated educators to risk their personal security and professional ethics in the pursuit of policies that are at odds with the reasons they became teachers in the first place.

Notes

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7   This refers to primary, age 4 to 8; junior, age 9 to 11; and intermediate, 12 to 15 or 16.

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