

Afterword

As you will have seen from the previous chapters, *Leading Collaborative Learning* is at once comprehensive and concise; big and small picture; theoretical and practical; ideas and tools in equal measure; and puts educators and students in the star roles of a great production that serves all aspects of the system. The core content chapters are deceptively seductive in making the reader realize that he or she not only has a role, but also is in fact part and parcel of the *system*.

The reader is cumulatively drawn to personal and collective action through the main Chapters 3 through 6: System Leaders Working Alongside School Leaders, School Leaders Working Alongside Teacher-Leaders, Teachers Working Alongside Teachers, and Teachers and Students Working Alongside Each Other. *Alongside* means participating as mutual learners in moving learning forward day after day.

This is a book that has crystal clear concepts, co-learning galore, guided by research, grounded in practice—all devoted to deep learning by students and adults alike. Chapter 1 established what Collaborative Learning is and is not (hint: it is a precise, focused daily devotion to learning linked to results). I love the basic premise: “Collaborative Learning cultivates *title-free* leadership” (my italics). Everyone is a leader, everyone is a learner—there is no distinction. And above all everyone is responsible for his or her own learning and for enabling the learning of others. Indeed, to do the latter is to learn oneself.

The theory of collaboration is captured early, but the real stars of the book are practitioners—by name and from around the world. They give detail to the actions that generate results, but you never get the sense that you are bogged down in descriptive accounts. The actions are clear, vivid—we know what leads to what. There is a familiar structure to each chapter: lots of vivid vignettes, two “non-negotiables” introduced in each chapter for a total of 10; use of matrixes to capture the essence of core concepts; tools for action; and a directed “pause

for reflection” at the end of each chapter. The blend of scores of clear vignettes that reflect widespread take-up of the ideas, along with summary tables that specify key skills in relation to the concepts, makes for memorable images to guide follow-up.

This is a book that is brimming with ideas and specific suggestions. The appendices contain a treasure trove of tools for analysis, actions, reflection, and evaluation: practical beginnings to guided inquiry, benefits and challenges of Networked Learning Communities, and a protocol for co-learning, with and without release time, are among the many gems found in the back of the book.

It is clear that Sharratt and Planche have themselves done everything that is in the book. What is even clearer is that they have helped scores of others engage in these actions suited to their own situations. *Leading Collaborative Learning* is not a cookie-cutter solution but the concepts, themes, and strategies are cut from the same cloth. This cloth—Collaborative Inquiry—embeds non-negotiable principles and actions. There are certain *sine qua non*s that must be incorporated, but they guide rather than suffocate choices; they liberate rather than constrain; they focus while giving discretion.

All in all, *Leading Collaborative Learning* is a more detailed but fundamentally compatible book of action to our own recent publication, *Coherence: Putting the Right Drivers in Action* (Fullan & Quinn, 2015). Our four-part Coherence Framework—Focusing Direction, Cultivating Collaborative Cultures, Deepening Learning, and Securing Accountability—and this book readily map on to each other.

At a time when collaboration is everywhere but often superficial, it is crucial that we have serious players doing, probing, pulling out lessons, and otherwise making effective collaboration happen. Whether in Hamilton, Ontario, or Hamilton, New Zealand, or Townsville, Australia, Sharratt and Planche are bringing practitioners to the world, and vice versa. *Leading Collaborative Learning* is what these authors do every day of their lives. It gets better and better, more and more powerful, and it shows on every page of this book.

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