



Reflections

Fall 2005

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A Message from the Editor...

Gwen Watson, Winnipeg School Division

Leading and Learning

Vision - Initiative - Belief - Commitment - Empowerment - these qualities come to mind when I think of leadership. Based on my own experiences as an educator (and, as a mom with years of experience on parent councils, with Girl Guides and with various sporting groups) I know that things rarely happen without someone working hard (often behind the scenes) to make sure a goal is attained.

The theme of this year's journal, "*Leading and Learning*" and the articles submitted by your colleagues reflect these qualities of leadership. As you read, you will recognize the vision behind the projects, the initiative to try something new, the belief that we can improve student learning, the commitment to move forward and the empowerment of various stakeholders to continue the change process. Building leadership capacity, initiating change for improvement and sustaining positive changes are educational issues we now face.

Michael Fullan from OISE, internationally respected expert on the topics of leadership and educational change, identifies the following eight elements of sustainability in his book, *Leadership and Sustainability: System Thinkers in Action*:

1. *Moral purpose*
2. *Commitment to changing context at all levels*
3. *Lateral capacity building through networks*
4. *Intelligent accountability and vertical relationships*
5. *Deep learning*
6. *Dual commitment to short-term and long-term results*
7. *Cyclical energizing*
8. *The long lever of leadership*

Key elements of sustainability for change as identified by Michael Fullan are evident in each of the articles in this issue.

Dr. Anne Davies, whose work in classroom-based assessment is internationally recognized, is an outstanding role model and mentor for many Manitoba educators. Her article on using exemplars in the classroom, first published in New Zealand, illustrates how teachers can implement research-based practice that improves student achievement in their classrooms. We thank Anne for contributing her timely article to our journal for its first Canadian publication. By helping students develop an understanding of what is important, teachers can make their vision of success evident for all the learners in their classrooms. By making "the target" visible, we transform students into reflective learners.

Your Manitoba colleagues who have contributed to this issue are true risk-takers. They are engaged in *reflective practice*, stepping outside of their usual roles to think about their experiences and to write about their projects. They want to share their observations and their awareness of what they have learned with you, so that you may take their ideas even farther.

Karen Botting and Sharon Pekrul remind us of the importance of networking, using the voices of three different Manitoba School Improvement Program participants to illustrate the potential of networked relationships. Their article illustrates Fullan's concept of "lateral capacity building through networks". Gay Sul illustrates Fullan's concept of "deep learning" as she describes the implementation of the Math Recovery program in Frontier School Division. The model used for professional learning opportunities

provides an example to all those searching for a means to change classroom practice and to improve student learning.

His article reflects many of Fullan's concepts, including the idea of serving with "moral purpose".

Lorraine Prokopchuk and Carol Simpson explain the positive benefits of the Formal Induction Program for new teachers and their mentors in St. James-Assiniboia School Division. This program exemplifies aspects of "cyclical energizing" and provides a nurturing model for supporting teachers.

Guy LaCroix, Roy Seidler and Eileen Sutherland examine the role of the superintendent in school improvement. Their article supports both "the long lever of leadership" and "commitment to changing context at all levels" advocated by Fullan.

Kathy Collis provides insights on the use of study groups in her article illustrating the power of focused professional conversations on classroom practice. Kathy's observations reflect many aspects of sustainability supported by Fullan.

In this issue, you will see that Manitoba ASCD has cause to celebrate its achievements during our 10th anniversary year, 2005-2006. Our impressive list of high quality professional development continues to grow with the distinguished lecture by Carl Glickman in the spring. Our new affiliate website will be launched this fall. Manitoba ASCD continues to provide dynamic, collaborative leadership to Manitoba educators.

A year ago in September, in the warm glow of limitless possibilities presented by a new school year, I agreed to assume the role of editor for *Reflections*, our Manitoba ASCD journal. By "stepping up" to assume this leadership role, I have already learned many things to approach differently next year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Joan McCreath and Brenda Lanoway and the Manitoba ASCD Communications Committee for their support. I would also like to thank the educators who "walk the talk" by committing their time to contribute the articles you find in these pages.

John F. Kennedy, the American leader, recognized the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between leading and learning when he wrote, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." This statement captures the reflective aspect of leadership. We wholeheartedly learn from our experiences, and, in turn, our understanding influences those who follow. When we address the hard issues of educational change we see how critical this relationship is.

References

Fullan, Michael. (2004). *Leadership and Sustainability: System Thinkers in Action*. Corwin Press.

(If you are interested in reading more about sustainability, I invite you to read the article "*Resiliency and Sustainability: Eight elements for superintendents who want to make a difference and have the resolve to do so*" available on-line under *Articles 2005* at www.michaelfullan.ca.)