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# Introduction

As school restructuring efforts are initiated across the country, many schools are calling upon facilitators to guide the change process. Schools and regions often find that the tasks involved in such momentous change are greater than their ability to manage them. In *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, Michael Fullan observes:

As the kinds of changes introduced to schools have increased in complexity over the last decade—from curriculum- and classroom-based innovations to ‘restructuring’ whole systems—the skills required of schools to implement them have also become more complex. The goals of change are becoming more comprehensive and require greater assistance to achieve. More frequently, schools are turning to internal and external ‘helpers’ to fill gaps in expertise and to assist in charting and implementing courses of action (1991, p. 215).

Systemic change entails moving from one paradigm to another, from one approach to tasks to another, from one form of organisation to another. This shift is complex and unsettling, the course often uncharted. Schools accustomed to a slower change timeline may be adept at handling incremental changes but are thrown into turmoil when faced with demands for drastic restructuring. Consequently, many schools have used outside facilitators or have designated internal facilitators to help oversee the change process.

Who plays the roles of the facilitator for change? Many people both inside and outside the school system can play these roles. School administrators, teachers, principals and community leaders can, as called for, assume any of the many roles of the facilitator.

Most educators are not prepared for facilitating school change. Some educators are designated as facilitators and survive by a ‘catch-as-catch-can’ method. Unfortunately, this method often results in failure and illuminates the fact that facilitators need numerous specific skills to implement successful, lasting and beneficial changes. This book is dedicated to those assisting in the process of school change and offers a number of helpful tools and approaches.

Many recent reform efforts have been initiated from state and federal levels. These efforts have failed to account for local school needs and limitations. Top-down proposals often create anger, frustration and resentment (Fullan, 1991). For reforms to have enduring value, local constituents, who will implement the changes, need to understand both the need for change and the process of change. They participate in the conception, planning, and implementation of change. This requires that they have the facilitation skills needed for orchestrating and supporting the process, along with an awareness of the resources needed to make the change take hold.

A common misconception among administrators is that local stakeholders have little skill or motivation to implement local school reform. Therefore, administrators often feel they need to hire outside specialists to wring out changes from the local system. 'A contrasting view of the process of reform, which is supported by empirical research on change in public and private organisations, emphasises the role of change agents as facilitators, providers of resources, and consultants' (Astuto *et al.* 1994, p. 93). In other words, having facilitators work from the bottom up is just as important as having educational reform imposed from the top down. When people at the local level are trained to assume the many roles of facilitator, they can create a 'home-grown' capacity for renewal (Astuto *et al.* 1994). The roles of the facilitator are absolutely essential to successful school change efforts, regardless of whether they are assumed by local people or by outside consultants.

### Functions of Facilitators

The vast dimensions of school change require four major functions in facilitators:

- Process Leadership
- Skill Training
- Resource Consulting
- Group Energising

These four functions are both diverse enough and specific enough that no one person is able to assume them all. The functions may be assumed by a group of three or four or they may be distributed among a group of 10 or 12. Regardless, all four are critical to the implementation of an effective change process.

First, the change process needs a guide or leader, to keep everyone focused and targeted in their specific duties—the Process Leader. Second, school change requires an instructor or trainer, to impart new skills demanded by the change process and to enable participants to practice these skills—the Skills Trainer. Third, school change calls for someone to discover how the school can connect with the available resources that support and empower the change process—the Resource Consultant. Last, school change requires tireless

work from someone who, week after week, month after month, year after year, finds ingenious ways to summon up the commitment and energy needed for the change process—the Group Energiser. (*Note: For a detailed discussion on each function, see each section introduction—page 2 for process leader, page 46 for skills trainer, page 92 for resource consultant, and page 134 for group energiser.*)

### Three Elements of the Change Process

There is broad agreement among writers and thinkers in the area of school change that supports three major elements as aspects of each of the four facilitator functions. These three elements are

1. focusing long-range goals and short-range tasks on *student learning and achievement*;
2. promoting *shared decision-making* among the members of all concerned constituencies; and
3. keeping communication and interaction centred on *visible achievements*.

### Student Learning and Achievement

The first element, focusing long-range goals and short-range tasks on student learning and achievement, may be extremely difficult to accomplish amidst the complexity of school reform. At any moment attention can dramatically shift from student learning to staff development or to school safety. However,

The centrality of student learning is the driving purpose of all activities... Major school improvement efforts can be sustained only when the context promises student learning. Otherwise, the changes in organisational behaviour and the struggle for implementation are likely to be perceived as too stressful to be worthwhile. Essentially, the mission is lost unless learning remains at the core. (Joyce *et al.* 1993, pp. 19, 20)

## The Multidimensional Role of the Facilitator in School Change

Functions Elements	Process Leader	Skills Trainer	Resource Consultant	Group Energiser
<b>Student Learning and Achievement</b>	<p>The <b>Architect</b> sees the big picture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focusing on student learning</li> <li>• expanding traditional boundaries</li> <li>• considering all viewpoints</li> <li>• seeking order instead of control</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Coach</b> devises strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• choosing relevant curriculum</li> <li>• creating collaborative classrooms</li> <li>• expanding instructional skills and strategies</li> <li>• building a supportive school environment</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Producer</b> organises the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• battling the scarcity mindset</li> <li>• empowering resource-gathering teams</li> <li>• creating situations that attract resources</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Conductor</b> stays true to the score.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aprising the real situation</li> <li>• thwarting attempts to retreat</li> <li>• focusing on the core task</li> </ul>
<b>Shared Decision- Making</b>	<p>The <b>Carpenter</b> builds consensus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• building trust</li> <li>• focusing on substantial issues</li> <li>• shifting to participatory decision-making</li> <li>• getting input from all stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Captain</b> leads the team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• building communities of learners</li> <li>• creating stakeholder teams</li> <li>• teaching team-building skills</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Director</b> overcomes obstacles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facing obstacles head-on</li> <li>• addressing the true obstacle</li> <li>• enabling teams to challenge obstacles</li> <li>• reflecting on the process</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Concertmaster</b> harmonises the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting flexible structures</li> <li>• sharing decision-making power</li> <li>• promoting teamwork</li> <li>• fostering intrinsic motivation</li> </ul>
<b>Visible Achievements</b>	<p>The <b>Contractor</b> steers the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• translating vision into action</li> <li>• moving from simple victories to long-term successes</li> <li>• aligning victories with targeted aims</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Sports Commentator</b> announces the game.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing knowledge</li> <li>• reflecting on the process</li> <li>• communicating victories</li> <li>• promoting ownership</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Promoter</b> advertises successes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eliminating isolation and building alliances</li> <li>• connecting schools with outside sources</li> <li>• modelling collaboration</li> <li>• sustaining lifelines of communication</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Critic</b> celebrates the performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gathering data</li> <li>• spotlighting accomplishments</li> <li>• creating stories</li> </ul>

Figure 1

# Chapter 1

## The Architect Sees the Big Picture

**The Architect is the Process Leader who focuses on student learning and achievement.**

### Role Description

The architect keeps school teams focused on the big picture—an overall view of what to change and how to work toward change. She does not impose her own ideas on the group, she allows them to discover the big picture for themselves. She keeps pushing for agreement on the big picture as a way to transcend the differences among those holding limited perspectives. She enables people with conflicting viewpoints to look above, beyond, around and under their views to see the larger perspectives that connect them.

### Focusing on Student Learning

The first task of the architect is to remind educators that their central goal is improving student learning and achievement. Teaching and learning focuses on meeting children's needs rather than catering to the needs of everyone else in society (Astuto *et al.* 1994). While education may validly serve other social, political and cultural functions: 'Education's first responsibilities are to ensure the entitlement of the young to the best that society has to offer and

to serve as an agent of societal improvement and transformation' (Astuto *et al.* 1994, p. 88).

The educator's essential challenge is to provide each child with a successful learning experience in school. Any other focus diverts attention and energies away from the essential task. The architect of school change keeps groups focused on their crucial task.

### Expanding Traditional Boundaries

Most educational institutions are purely preservational (Astuto *et al.* 1994). In many ways, education is conducted today just as it was one hundred years ago. Society has progressed but schools have not.

School reforms are failing, because educators fail to break out of their preservational, outdated modes of thinking. 'Breaking out of our circular loop of reform strategies will require a novel look at the situation' (Deal, 1990, p. 7). 'The basic causes of the failure [of reform strategies], we will argue, are the narrow limits of imagination that have governed the reform proposals' (Astuto *et al.* 1994, p. 1).

The architect moves educators out of their traditional, outdated, narrow perspectives. 'As Einstein is often quoted as saying: No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew' (Wheatley 1992, p. 5). The architect starts by

# Practical Tool 1

## Needs Assessment Grid

### Description

The Needs Assessment Grid helps a group collect and organise information about regional and community needs. When all data is gathered, the facilitator leads the group to analyse the information and to make plans for the future.

### Example

