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Introduction

How to Use the Guide

This guide is designed to accompany the study of the book *Breakthrough*, by Michael Fullan, Peter Hill, and Carmel Crévola, and the corresponding DVD. It is designed to provide assistance to group facilitators, such as school leaders, professional development coordinators, peer coaches, team leaders, mentors, and professors. Along with a summary of each chapter in the book, this guide provides chapter discussion questions for the book and DVD, activities, and suggestions for further application. Reading this guide will give facilitators a solid background on successfully leading a study of both the book and the video.

When using this guide during **Independent Study**, participants may wish to

1. Read the assigned chapter in the book
2. Watch the corresponding video clip
3. Reflect on (or answer) the discussion questions

For **Small Study Groups**, facilitators can

1. Invite participants to read the assigned chapter in the book in advance
2. Allow participants to view the corresponding video clip
3. Engage participants in answering the discussion questions
4. Involve group members in one or more of the workshop activities
5. Ask participants to complete the application activity

For **Small- or Large-Group Workshops**, facilitators may wish to

1. Present the corresponding video clip
2. Engage participants in answering the discussion questions
3. Involve group members in one or more of the workshop activities
4. Ask participants to complete the application activity

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide

Breakthrough: A Multimedia Kit for Professional Development

by Michael Fullan, Peter Hill,
and Carmel Crévola

Preface

- The primary purpose of this book is to present a radically different way of thinking about classroom instruction. The current model is in need of a major transformation.
- A breakthrough is predicted and sought for improving classroom instruction on a universal scale. Conceivably, a new “tipping point” could be reached within five years.
- This book outlines how a practical day-to-day transformation of instruction can be realized for all students.
- The key to the breakthrough is the smart use of data-driven instruction to deliver a personalized and precise, not prescriptive, approach that addresses all learners in the classroom.

Discussion Questions

Time: 10–15 minutes

1. What is a breakthrough? What is the breakthrough presented in this book?

3. Consider this: We know from all the evidence that in pedagogy it is the precision that makes all the difference. How could you or do you use precision in refining your classroom instruction strategies?
4. The video shows teachers working together in a small group to share ideas and collaborate on solutions. What are the benefits to teachers and students when teachers engage in collaborative professional learning experiences?
5. In the video, professional learning is defined as “every teacher learns every day, individually and collectively, to get better and better.” Does this definition characterize your professional development experiences? Why or why not?

Chapter 3: Transforming Classroom Instruction

- Coherence between the multiple levels of schooling (the classroom, school, district, etc.) is an important precondition for successful school reform. Quality classroom instruction, however, is the most important *condition*.
- The transformation of classroom instruction will occur quite quickly and the authors anticipate many examples of breakthrough thinking in diverse locations. Many classrooms are already on the brink and ready to reach the “tipping point.”
- Instruction is an extremely complex and interactive process that many find mysterious. The current model of instruction denies individual differences.
- The crux of the breakthrough is the concept of focused teaching, teaching that is focused on the learning needs of each student. Specifically
 - Knowing in a precise way the strengths and weaknesses of each student through accurate formative assessment
 - Knowing the appropriate instructional response
 - Having the classroom structures, routines, and tools to deliver differentiated instruction and focused teaching on a daily basis
- Instruction is powerful when it is sufficiently precise and focused to build directly on what students already know and to take them to the next level.
- Focused teaching can and should be a reality in the regular classroom. The transformation of classroom instruction requires that two key assumptions or ingredients already exist or can be set up:
 1. A detailed curriculum map with clear specifications of learning objectives, standards, and indicators of student progress

Discussion Questions

Time: 10–15 minutes

1. What type of tools or documents do you use when mapping curriculum? How do they differ from a CLIP?
2. Review the developmental stages presented on pages 60–61. Are these stages consistent with descriptions you have used to characterize your students' progress? Why or why not?
3. What are "indicators of progress"? Why is developing a comprehensive set of indicators one of the most vital steps in constructing a CLIP?
4. Consider this comment about Figure 5.1 on page 63: ". . . although Figure 5.1 is unremarkable from a theoretical point of view, it is alien in terms of everyday practice." Do you have experience using preassessments or in screening all students to establish starting points for instruction? If so, explain how you have used pretesting.
5. Does establishing students' starting points seem like too hard a task? If so, what are your reasons?
6. Describe the purpose or function of Focus Sheets. How would you use Focus Sheets in your classroom or school?
7. How is small-group instruction more efficient than individual conferencing?
8. Why is building an instructional system a major task? Who needs to be involved to make it a success?

Workshop Activities

● *Activity: Building a CLIP 2-4-8*

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Chart paper, pens

Group Size: Pairs, groups of four, groups of eight

Directions: This is a school-based or district-based activity. It requires participants to have access to their school, district, or state curriculum documents.

Ask participants to choose a partner. Pass out sheets of chart paper to each pair. Have each pair look through their curriculum documents and discuss how they are constructed. Their discussions should address statements of aim, scope, and sequence charts, grade-level standards, etc.

Have the pairs create a three-column table on the chart paper with the headings as shown in the example. Direct the pairs to list the curriculum document components and the type of information provided in each component. Then have them identify and record ways that they use these organizational structures to inform and guide their instruction.