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## Introduction

By now, we all have a pretty clear understanding of what is meant by differentiated instruction. The idea of differentiated instruction is to apply the most current brain-based research to the design of lessons so as to accommodate and motivate the various types of learners in each classroom. This requires that teachers have an understanding of the learning modalities and multiple intelligences to create lessons that captivate and engage all of their students. Put simply, differentiated instruction is about teaching the whole student. When teachers design lessons for the whole student, they design lessons for all students. In the spirit of recognising diverse learners and providing instruction for them, I want school leaders to see that they can also differentiate *leadership*.

Every school has staff members with diverse motivations, skill levels and interests. Differentiated leadership is using the knowledge of brain-compatible learning and applying it to the staff, as well as to the students. Some teachers have stronger student management skills or curriculum development skills, while others have strengths in lesson design or are more creative. Some teachers have very good people skills and relate well with students and parents; but others – not so much. Savvy administrators create ways to stimulate staff participation in programs that take advantage of their learning preferences and offer opportunities for continuous professional growth.

In Chapter 6, I share how to develop activities that will motivate staff members to participate. When there are activities and assignments that appeal to each of the multiple intelligences, administrators will find greater staff participation and ownership. I even have a chapter to demonstrate how administrators can differentiate staff meetings. When administrators design activity systems for the whole teacher, they design activities and systems for the whole school.

This book is about practical applications for leaders. Every chapter in this book has strategies to demonstrate how administrators can make accommodations and modifications to motivate and develop every staff member. Some staff members (“Negative Nelly”, “Rumor Mill Rudy” or, my personal favourite, “Carl Came with the Building”) are perceived as antagonists and seem to be against anything new or different. What I have found is that when I can put Carl, Rudy and Ms Nelly in the correct situations, they become positive contributors to the school.

Differentiated leadership is about creating systems in the school that motivate and actively engage all of the stakeholders. Administrators need to understand and plan for the interaction within, and between, all of the systems in the school. In Chapter 2, leaders will see the eight school performance management systems. Planning for each of the systems is often done in isolation and without considering the impact a change in one system might have on the other systems. Administrators will see how the systems in the school interact, and how to plan for all of the systems simultaneously. There are easy-to-use forms and other tools provided for school leaders to help them differentiate the planning process.

Administrators who practise differentiated leadership find ways to transform the systems in their school into learning systems. A learning system is a system where, as the system carries out its purpose or function, the participants in that system also learn and grow professionally. For example, one of the purposes of the student management system in most schools is administering the student code of conduct and dealing with disciplinary issues. For the student management system to also be a learning system, everyone involved must freely provide and receive feedback in a way that allows for individual and cumulative growth. Since continual feedback and self-assessment are built into this system, its members are continually learning and improving, and the system constantly becomes more effective. Learning systems are designed to continually improve and become self-perpetuating.

Administrators will see that all the systems I share in this book are designed to be learning systems. For example, in the chapter on student management, I share two systems that enable staff members and administrators to share disciplinary issues and specific strategies. The systems I will share in Chapter 4 demonstrate how to get staff members interested in each other's referrals and then willing to share strategies for situations as they arise. After receiving input from other staff members and administrators, teachers can make better decisions regarding discipline. Likewise, the administrators will receive the feedback they need to ensure that discipline is being handled consistently across the school.

Another aspect of differentiated leadership is the grouping and regrouping of staff members to investigate and accomplish tasks. These groups include, but are certainly not limited to, departments, teams, various school improvement committees as well as parent and community groups. The diversity of the individual members of all of these groups generate another set of challenges for administrators in creating and maintaining productive groups.

The purpose of Chapter 3, "Group Dynamics", is to assist administrative teams in managing groups. The leaders and group members will see how groups change from simple gatherings of individuals into working and productive groups. I have included several scenarios that administrators are sure to face when working with the various groups in their schools. Each scenario demonstrates possible issues that cause dysfunction within the group. With each scenario, leaders will be given the probable causes for that type of situation, along with suggestions for working the group through each particular issue.

In the last chapter, I share how all of the strategies in this book are practices that lead to cognaffective schools. Yes, I know that cognaffective is not a word, and you probably see that I created it by combining the words "cognitive" and "affective". A cognaffective school is a school in which an equal focus is placed on the development of both cognitive and affective skills. There is a more detailed description of the balance between cognitive and affective skill development in the cognaffective school in the last chapter.

I wanted to share this information here in the introduction because the affective skills of staff members are at least as critical as the cognitive skills. For example, a person with great knowledge of content or policies and procedures is only an asset if that person collaborates well with other staff members, relates effectively to students and clearly understands the process of learning. It is the combination of cognitive and affective skills that allows staff members to be most productive. Differentiated leadership is about developing the learning systems that allow the whole teacher to flourish by continuing to learn and grow professionally and personally. The cognaffective school requires differentiated leadership because it requires leadership for the whole school.

As leaders will see in Chapter 7, “Differentiated Curriculum Development”, the system for curriculum development requires that teachers be content specialists and collaborate with teachers from other content areas. The way the process is set up enables administrators to help teachers learn from each other and continuously improve their content knowledge as well as their collaborative skills. The same goes for community and business involvement. In Chapter 8, I will present a system for developing community and business involvement by differentiating the ways that partnerships can be developed. The process I will share appeals to the diverse skill sets used in each business, and allows them to select the type of participation that fits the applications for their particular business. The reason these two systems work is because they are simple in practice and impressive in product.

Finally, this book is for anyone given leadership responsibilities or anyone interested in leadership and how they can make a positive impact on school performance. I will use the terms *administrator*, *leader*, *the leadership* and *the administrative team* interchangeably in this book. These terms are meant to refer to any person in a leadership position for which the circumstances apply. For example, in the curriculum development chapter, all of the references to leadership in any form could mean any or all of the following: principals, assistant principals, curriculum leaders, team leaders, teacher leaders or committee members.

This book is not a scholarly presentation of leadership research, but rather a very practical application of the research that has been done by many others. People that are in leadership positions in education at any level are faced with incredible challenges every day. Leaders have no choice but to take the job with them wherever they go. The aim of this book, then, is to help all leaders in education by giving them a few more tools to add to their toolboxes.



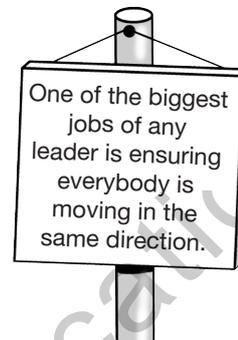
*“If the only tool you have is a hammer, then everything looks like a nail.”*  
– Mark Twain



# The Involvement Model of Change



Once heard someone say that trying to lead change in schools is like changing the tyres on a moving car. We know what we want to do, but we can never quite catch up to it, and even if we did, it would be pretty hard to get the tool on the lug nuts. The other popular comparison to being a leader in education is that it is much like herding cats! No matter how you say it, leadership in schools today is a tremendous challenge.



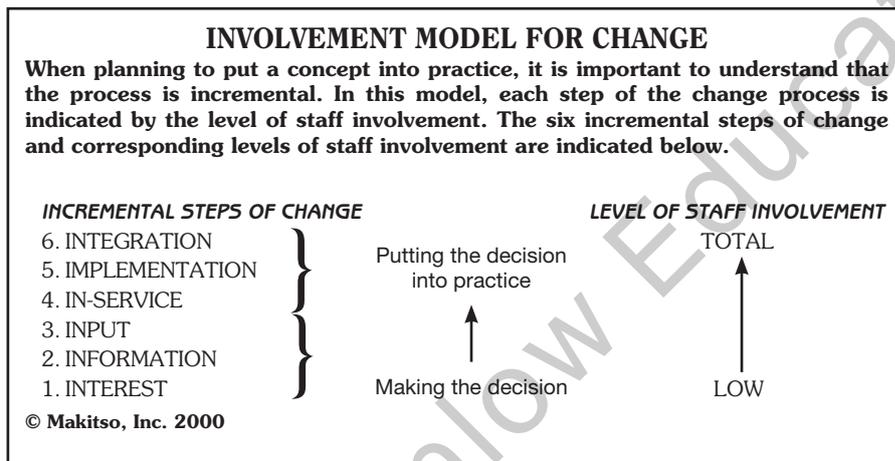
One of the most challenging tasks of any leader is ensuring everyone on the staff is moving in the same direction at any one time. Administrative teams must be able to work with the staff to develop and communicate a common vision. Only then can decisions be made for the best ways to proceed. The trick is getting everyone invested in the process so that they will do whatever it takes for success. In this chapter, I am going to share some very practical strategies for achieving consensus and making the required decisions.

When the direction is determined, and the leadership and staff are in alignment, the training needed for everyone to accomplish the necessary tasks must be identified and provided. This requires appropriate initial in-service to get the staff ready, and then adequate follow-up training to ensure that successful implementation is maintained. Follow-up training with continuous monitoring and adjusting assures the staff that the concept being implemented is here to stay. It is this continuous support that creates the conditions for success and builds trust.

Successful leaders are careful to develop staff ownership before moving ahead with any new concept or process. These leaders will actively involve their staff from the initial proposal to the decision-making process, and all the way to implementation. Leaders know they have been successful when the changes are not only implemented, but have become common practice. Every administrative team has to work with staff members of widely diverse talents, interests and motivations. Differentiated leadership is about understanding how change occurs, and how to lead every member of the staff through any change.

## The Six Steps of Change

Taking a new idea from concept to practice occurs in six steps, regardless of how simple or complex the new idea may be. These six steps are labelled according to the level of involvement of the participants, as demonstrated by the chart below. As you will see later in this chapter, trying to skip one of the steps pretty much always leads to problems. But if administrative teams do follow the six steps, they will give themselves the best chances for success, ensuring that no teacher is left behind.



### Interest

**I** The change process begins when interest is generated by some potential action. Generating interest is the first step in introducing any type of change and has the lowest level of involvement for the staff. Nevertheless, without at least some interest in the action, the response will be apathetic, and the potential for success is dead in the water before it even gets going.

Interest can be generated in several ways and generally relate to some perception of need. For instance, the recognition of the need for change can be driven by external influences:

- School funding reform may mean that your school is going to have to cut its budget next year (or alternatively, decide what to do with any extra funding).
- The education department may notify you that standardised test results are not meeting the required measurements for success and will undertake some corrective action.
- The Parents and Friends committee may raise concerns about student welfare policies.

On the other hand, recognising the need for change may be internal:

- The student population may be growing rapidly, and new policies and procedures may need to be developed in order to better serve the needs of a larger school.
- Your staff may recognise issues in the daily operations of the school. For example: many students are taking too much time to get to class, students are regularly late to school or discipline is becoming an issue on the playground and in the classroom.

Teachers and administrators are introduced to new concepts in many ways, including professional journals, attendance at conferences and visitations to other schools. They may become interested in pursuing an idea and having it introduced school wide. Regardless of where it begins, the interest phase of change is time for exploring new ideas and possibilities.

This phase is the lowest level of involvement. It is the time for an initial introduction to the new idea and the changes it may imply. The interest may be forced as in the budget cut example above, or it may be voluntary, as when it comes from a staff suggestion. Regardless, people who have some level of interest are ready for information to be provided. Once everyone has been introduced to an idea and has some understanding of why it is being considered, they are ready to actually study the idea, process the information and put it into context.



## Information

All decisions and actions are based on the information you have. It is absolutely critical that accurate information be provided in order to ensure that the best decisions can be made. With ample information, you can be certain that everyone is on the same page. The information you provide needs to answer the questions *Who? What? When? Where? How?* and perhaps most importantly, *Why?* Without adequate information, there is confusion, and the rumour mill begins to grind!

The professional learning communities (PLCs) will undertake studies of the proposed concepts and actions being considered. Sometimes the study will initially explore the viability of the proposal and then move on to determining the best ways to put the proposal into practice. Other times there is no “if”, as the decision has been made by the education department. But consideration must always be given to the best ways to carry out the decision.

The amount and quality of the information provided can determine the eventual success (or lack thereof) for the implementation of changes. This is one area in which quality and quantity are both needed. There are many ways to get the information out, and since different staff members will absorb information in different ways, administrators need to use all the means of communication at their disposal. Administrators who communicate only via emails and staff meetings wonder why some staff members always seem to be misinformed. As with teaching a lesson, administrators need to focus on getting the information out in as many ways as possible. In doing so, we continually generate more interest!

### Getting the Information Out!

- Set up discussion or study groups, multimedia presentations and presentations to small groups such as teams, year levels or departments.
- Provide literature to staff members.
- Do book reviews.
- Have guest speakers.
- Provide graphics that breakdown key components.
- Have the music teachers put information into a song.
- Provide drawings, sketches and diagrams to demonstrate concepts.



### Input

It is critical that we get input from the stakeholders about their perceptions and understandings of the issues and changes being considered. As we gauge the level of understanding, we also determine the additional information required. We need to assess the amount of interest and the levels of understanding. Only when the input from staff indicates that they are ready do we move forward.

Getting regular input from the staff ensures that administrators make decisions based on where the staff is. This also means that the ownership of the staff goes up dramatically since they know that their input is sought and valued. The administrative team must therefore have processes in place for gathering input from the staff and disaggregating the data as it comes in. Simply put, teachers need and want to give their input. If we do not have processes in place, it will happen informally and destructively.

For input to be valuable, it must be gathered from the widest base possible. Every individual needs to know that their opinion is being heard. We need to know how the various groups in the school are discussing the issues at hand, and we need to know where the rest of the administrative team is on the issues.

**O**ne school has their TLC for gathering input and disseminating certain types of information in the school. TLC stands for tender loving care, and is comprised of department heads, team leaders, committee leaders and members of the administrative team (including office and cleaning staff). In this particular school, parents are represented on the TLC once a month. The TLC functions as their site-based, decision-making group. As such, this is where input is given since all factions in the school are represented. The school monitors and adjusts according to the input. We move forward when the input indicates that the staff are ready.



*During the input stage, leaders gauge interest and information levels, and provide more of each as needed until the input shows the school is ready to move forward. Most of the schools I work with like to use a two-thirds majority vote to indicate when staff are ready. If the school is not yet at the two-thirds majority, they should continue to generate interest and provide the information needed to move the staff forward. It is very important to note that generating interest and providing information never stops.*

### **In-Service/Planning**



In this step, it is time to get the staff ready for what is ahead. The administrative team has worked through the first three steps to ensure that the staff is on board. Now they need to make sure the staff has the support to move ahead. In some instances, as in creating a new staff or student recognition system, there is little training and more planning to lay out the specifics of the system. The training involves having the staff who worked on the program share the particulars and answer questions. This process continues until the rest of the staff feels comfortable implementing the new recognition system.

In this step it is also very important to include how the administrative team will assess the progress of the concept during the implementation. Information must be gathered for monitoring so that if adjustments are required, they are made in a timely