

Preface

Do you remember life as a classroom teacher? As classroom teachers, we had a tendency to think everyone taught like we did. We assumed that everyone had discussions with students and established cooperative learning groups. We also assumed that everyone treated students with a great deal of respect and helped foster student voice. Not that we couldn't improve on our practice, because we always could, but we thought that all teachers reflected and researched innovative ideas like we did. Then we became building leaders and realized that not all teachers were the same. Some needed a great deal of growth while others were our high flyers who we learned a great deal from every time we walked into their classrooms.

The same can be said for when our perspective changed to realize that not all leaders led their buildings or districts the same. As an author and consultant, my perspective has changed greatly when it comes to leadership, much the same as it did when I took on the building role from being in the classroom. Not all leaders are the same, but regardless of whether they have large areas of growth or are high flyers, they need help "moving their dial," which means they need help moving beyond their own expectations.

That's why I wrote this book. It is written for every leader who wants to collaborate more effectively around influences that matter and provide impact for student learning. Over the last year, I have reflected on how I led a school and have had the luxury of learning from great leaders around North America and internationally, all of whom have helped expand

my thinking about leadership. Besides the practical and innovative ideas that I picked up, I have been profoundly impacted by working with John Hattie, Jim Knight, and Russ Quaglia. Their advice, innovative research, and ideas have all influenced me over the year I have taken to write this book. I went from focusing on instructional leadership to realizing there is so much more needed than just being good with instructional practices and that's when I decided to focus on collaboration. I know what you may be thinking: Do we really need a new type of leadership?

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

What's wrong with instructional or transformational leadership? Collaborative leadership is preferable to transformational and instructional leadership because it is more comprehensive and holistic in that it incorporates both transformational leadership and instructional leadership, as well as other tenets of good leadership while also ensuring that all stakeholders are included as active participants and ensuring that collaborative objectives are carried out. We have seen far too many initiatives and innovative ideas fail because parents and students had no idea what was going on in the school. Collaborative leaders find a balance between leading initiatives and fostering cooperative learning between adults with diverse ideas. And they have to do it during the good times that seem like each day is easy, as well as the tough times when it seems like they're faced with one more mandate every day. Collaborative leaders are responsible for inspiring and modeling learning, but they must also make sure that the co-constructed objectives they set out to accomplish have the support and understanding of the various stakeholders involved, whether that be parents, teachers, other district officials, or relevant community members.

Why collaborative leadership? Because it is more inclusive of all parties and therefore more effective in the long run. Collaborative leadership has as an objective finding the most informed, most capable person or persons to lead the charge.

At the same time, the leader is effectively communicating changes to parties who can't be involved at the time; not every stakeholder has the time, opportunity, or ability to be involved each time a new initiative is implemented. Sometimes the best leader for a specific job is not the titular leader; sometimes it is a fellow administrator, teacher, staff member, parent, or, in some cases, a student.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS BOOK

This book draws on my experiences as a teacher and principal, as well as my experience working with John Hattie over the last two years. Hattie has the largest research base of any researcher in the world of education, and I have learned a lot from him. However, I also understand, from my experiences of providing professional development on the road, that leaders are looking for starting points, which I also provide in this book. Additionally, it brings together a great deal of practical advice from leaders at the elementary, middle, and high school levels from all around North America.

WHY THIS BOOK?

This book is different because

- it focuses on collaborative leadership and explains why collaborative leadership (either on its own or in conjunction with transformation and instructional leadership) is preferable to other types of leadership in isolation.
- it highlights six of John Hattie's influences that foster collaborative leadership so that leaders can place a laser-like focus on these few influences rather than being overwhelmed by the many.
- it draws on the excellent work and research of great educational thinkers such as Hattie, Quaglia, and Knight.

- it helps leaders understand why some teachers may not be as invested as they could be and the research behind collective teacher efficacy to get those teachers more engaged.

After you read this book, you will be able to

- transform your leadership practice into one that is more collaborative, research based, and effective.
- understand where you can start making changes that will help foster growth in students and teachers. Each chapter focuses on a different influence researched by Hattie.
- build a leadership team that relies more on each member and the team as a whole rather than looking to you as the primary leader.
- provide more stakeholders with a voice in the school community. This doesn't mean they will always get what they want, but it does mean they will feel welcome and heard as active participants.
- empower key members of your staff to be part of a collaborative leadership team.
- draw a variety of stakeholders into your leadership plan and activities including teachers, parents, and community members.