

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Volume 10

A publication for Alberta's school administrators

Number 7



iTunes U

Imagine attending a workshop or presentation and having the opportunity to dive deeper with your understanding, either prior to the event or in the weeks that follow—all in the palm of your hand. The ATA has recently become an iTunes U affiliate, and the first courses and collections are beginning to make their way to the site. Over 60 principals and assistant principals are already receiving training in how to create courses in iTunes U and in the creation of multi-touch iBooks that will be part of many courses. These colleagues are working to create a range of courses that will populate the site. The courses they design will connect directly to Alberta's Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders and will offer participating Alberta school leaders the opportunity to share their leadership stories and knowledge not only with colleagues in their own school districts but with school leaders throughout Alberta, across Canada and around the world.

iTunes U course materials can include any or all of the following:

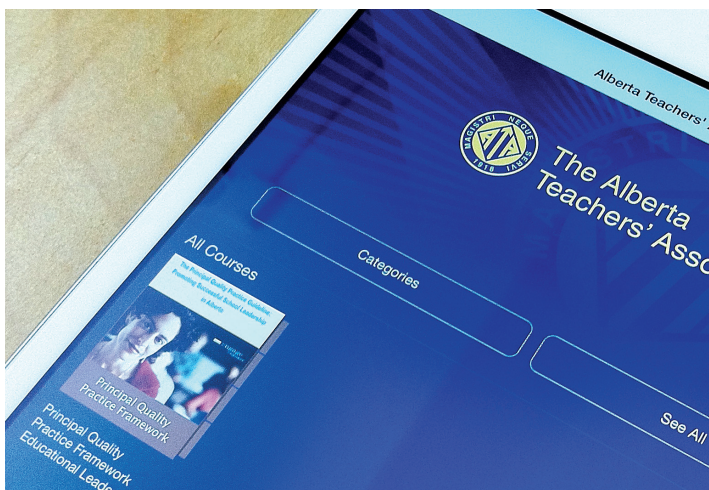
- Audio and video
- Presentations
- Documents
- PDFs
- iBooks textbooks for iPad
- ePub books
- iOS apps
- Web links

The ATA on iTunes U site will allow public lectures, events, and digitized collections in audio, video and PDF format to be easily shared without cost. The new iTunes U service offers an option for easily publishing media into the most popular (legal) online content distribution system on the planet. The courses you will see on the site—designed by your colleagues—will join the world's largest online catalogue of free education content on iTunes U. Stanford, Yale, Oxford, UC Berkeley, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary and the New York

Public Library are among the hundreds of institutions that are sharing courses, lectures, videos, books and other resources with students and lifelong learners all over the world. The site offers a new way to obtain digital lectures, PDF materials, presentations and courses in which Alberta's school leaders can participate at their own pace. It will not replace the access you already enjoy to professional materials on the ATA website, but is a way to access supplemental

**Relationships
are the
killer app
of
education.**

**—Simon
Breakspear**



The Alberta Teachers' Association on iTunes U

ERIN SOLANO



Council for
School Leadership

professional learning materials for you and your teachers. These resources and learning experiences will be searchable and accessible in a very familiar manner—just like obtaining music or apps from iTunes.

Users install free iTunes software on their devices (PC, Mac or a wide array of portable devices) to access content by searching or browsing the iTunes store. An option exists to download the iTunes U app on your iPad; it provides enhanced capabilities, such as note-taking, for students participating in a course. Each course is conveniently divided into Info, Posts, Notes and Materials sections. Interactive assignments can be made part of courses during their design or even

after a course has been launched. Interactivity is further enhanced because participants can share their notes with one another.

iTunes U can increase teacher efficacy, agency and autonomy. It enhances the ability of both classroom teachers and school leaders to create locally relevant curricular material and to manage access to that material. It also greatly magnifies the voice of individuals and therefore increases the impact of that voice. iTunes U places a multitude of incredible classroom resources at a teacher's disposal. It's a repository of entire courses of educational content for K–12 institutions, universities and colleges, and a wide array of other organizations,

including the Alberta Teachers' Association and institutions such as museums or national opera houses, beyond the campus. For Alberta school leaders, the new ATA on iTunes U will offer convenient, fully searchable access to important tools for growing as a professional and for fulfilling your role in the school.

To access the site, please visit tinyurl.com/ATAiTunes or scan the QR code on this page.



Scan this QR code to visit ATAiTunes

The Alberta Distance Learning Centre Continues to Serve

There is good news for learners in Alberta! We are pleased to announce that the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (www.adlc.ca) now has a service agreement extending to August 2016. The Alberta Distance Learning Centre is a critical partner in the Alberta education system, providing 21st-century learning opportunities to meet the diverse and evolving needs of Alberta's students and the workplace. The ADLC offers core and complementary courses as outlined in Alberta Education's programs of study. In doing so, it supports the work of school districts throughout Alberta. More than 800 educational partners have chosen to work with the ADLC because it offers flexibility for students working from home, abroad or in the traditional school environment and provides adaptable resources for teachers.

The ADLC has served the province in distributed learning for 90 years, since its founding in 1923, and is looking forward to continuing to serve students and stakeholders in Alberta. The ADLC is currently consulting with its partners to determine how to best provide access to flexible learning opportunities for students and partner schools; it plans to report by mid-April about how it can assist in enhancing opportunities for students.

Teacher Growth, Supervision, Evaluation and Practice Review Workshop

You are invited to attend a Teacher Growth, Supervision, Evaluation and Practice Review Workshop August 18–19, 2014, at Barnett House, in Edmonton

The provincial Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy (policy 2.1.5) deals with accountability and continuous professional growth, and ensures that a teacher's professional practice is under ongoing supervision. The Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy defines the process and the Teacher Quality Standard defines the competencies for professional practice. This workshop reviews with principals their critical role and the duties they must perform as outlined in the *School Act* and policy 2.1.5.

For information and registration forms, visit www.teachers.ab.ca and go to For Members>Events Calendar.



Cognitive Coaching Foundations Series

The Council for School Leadership—the ATA specialist council for school leaders—will sponsor the Cognitive Coaching Foundations Series in the coming academic year. This leadership development program provides participants with the knowledge and skills essential for a positive professional coaching relationship. Cognitive coaching is a process that supports individuals to become self-directed persons with the cognitive capacity for developing excellence both independently and as members of a community. The Cognitive Coaching Series is a registered program of the Centre for Cognitive Coaching, in Denver, Colorado, cofounded by Art Costa and Bob Garmston.

The workshop series is open to all teachers and school and system leaders interested in peer coaching, mentorship, curriculum leadership, teacher supervision and school/system leadership development. This series will be offered in both Edmonton and Calgary. Participants will receive a certificate upon completion of this six-workshop series. Please watch upcoming editions of the *ATA News* and the *Leadership Update* for further information, dates and the process for registration.

Save The Dates!

uLead 2015

In March, 2014 Alberta will have the honour of hosting two world-class professional learning events at the beautiful Banff Springs Hotel. uLead 2015 will be Canada's premier professional learning event for provincial, state and national ministry leaders, district superintendents, central administrative leaders and school-based leaders. With presenters and attendees coming from throughout Alberta and all around the world, uLead 2015 will see Alberta play host to an education-leadership event that will be without precedent in Canada. The conference will attract hundreds of registrants from all over the world; 1,000 delegates are expected to attend.

uLead 2015 will begin on Sunday evening, March 15, 2015, and will continue through to Wednesday, March 18, 2015. School district leaders may wish to make this the leadership event for your district leadership teams for the year. Watch for information on both the program and registration in upcoming editions of the *Leadership Update*.

Global Emerging Leaders' Summit

Just prior to uLead 2015, the Global Emerging Leaders' Summit will offer two days of collaborations, leadership development and exposure to the most innovative educational ideas on the planet. This summit will be an "incubator" for emerging educational thought leaders throughout Alberta, Canada and the world. It will be held in Banff over two days—Saturday, March 14 and Sunday, March 15, 2015.

The summit is an intensive and customized leadership development experience. This tailored two-day program will take participants through a process of leadership discovery and development. Participants will be equipped with the mindsets, capabilities and network to influence their school and system. Among the goals of the summit are those of developing change leaders and connecting a network of innovative school leaders.

The summit will be curated by Simon Breakspear, a leading expert in educational futures, innovation and change leadership, in collaboration with leading local scholars and practitioners in the field of educational leadership and change. District leaders and principals or assistant principals attending uLead 2015 may wish to attend the Global Emerging Leaders' Summit as well, but—more important—may wish to ensure that emerging leaders in their school are able to attend the Global Emerging Leaders' Summit.

To find archived issues of *Leadership Update*, go to www.teachers.ab.ca and click on Other Publications (under Publications), then go to School Administrators.

Feedback is welcome. Please contact Jeff Johnson, executive staff officer, Professional Development, at jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca.

GOALS GONE WILD

The Canadian Principal and Assessing School Performance

Dennis Shirley and J-C Couture

Before he was murdered by one of Ancient Rome's most horrific tyrants, Nero, the Stoic philosopher Seneca coined a dictum which has been passed down through the ages: *Non vitae sed scholae discimus*, or "Learn not for school, but for life." It's a timeless quote, especially for anyone trying to understand the labyrinthine realities of today's schools. Its relevance endures because, in spite of an apparently endless tsunami of reforms sweeping schools around the world, we continue to ignore Seneca.

We continue to organize our schools such that students are compelled to learn only what governments decree and instead of learning for life. Because of this, school leaders are implicated in the increasingly untenable work of helping teachers do the wrong things better. This is one of the underlying themes emerging in the national study *The Future of the Principalship in Canada*, to be published early in the coming year.¹

While critical thinking and problem solving, framed as "21st-century skills," are touted by many policy makers, the torqued-up rhetoric of competition distracts us from long-term improvement. Much of the slick and gimmicky diet of "21st-century skills" simply embodies what Hannah Arendt (1954) called "the pathos of the new." Arendt observed just how popular and fashionable is the idea that simply by declaring that one has a novel idea it must inherently be better than older, more time-tested virtues.

Globally, the distortion of true learning is evident everywhere: in crammed schools in East Asia that pound facts into the minds of



¹ A thorough description of the study involving 615 principals across the country was published in the fall, 2013, issue of the *CAP Journal*.

bewildered students until late at night on schooldays and on weekends; in parental obsessions in North America to place children in the most expensive private schools that will push their children's test scores ever higher; in the simmering competition, visible just below the carefully sustained taciturn surface, of Nordic professionals who are keen to place their sons and daughters in their city's most prestigious secondary schools. In Singapore it is called *kiasu*, "the fear of being left behind."

As illustrated in *Changing Landscapes in Co-Creating a Learning Canada*,² school leaders are not immune in this country. One-third of Canadian parents have hired a tutor for their child while, typically, the child is already an honours student. Further, 88 per cent of parents expect their children to attend a postsecondary institution and 57 per cent expect university attendance. This almost obsessive focus on achievement over learning for life drives parents to rank their children's schools with one another even when ministries of education discourage this practice. There is little doubt that Canadian principals struggle to sustain the kind of teaching and learning our society needs the most at the beginning of this fragile and vulnerable new millennium.

There may be some benefits to all of this hyperventilating competitive energy. It works in sports, business and entertainment—why not in schools? The short answer is that excessively achievement-oriented cultures breed

systemic distortions that distract us from the deeper and more rewarding parts of the human condition and perpetuate social and political divisions. Among peer countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Canada ranks 17th out of 20 in terms of income inequality. Across Canada, school leaders are compelled to mitigate the negative impacts of income inequality.

School goals gone wild

One of the best ways to apprehend these negative aspects of competitive energy gone awry is to read a counterintuitive study published by Harvard Business School entitled *Goals Gone Wild* (Ordóñez et al., 2009) Challenging a core tenet of modern management—that the setting of ambitious goals and relentlessly pursuing them is imperative for organizational success—the authors have compiled research showing that an excessive focus on achievement leads to a narrowing of focus that can blind individuals to unethical dimensions of their work and to necessary modifications that need to be made en route to achieving goals.

In the US, the most spectacular example of "goals gone wild" in education surfaced when the award-winning superintendent of Atlanta's public schools, Beverly Hall, was found guilty (along with 34 colleagues) of massive cheating to reach goals established by the federal government's

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. While we might consider this simply an example of American excess, one needs to look only to the growing questions regarding the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) testing program that has tilted education programs of the OECD countries towards a focus on short-term gains in a narrow band of educational goals. Further, a growing body of researchers is drawing into question the integrity of entire PISA program—not only in terms of its problematic sampling processes but also the tendency of participating countries to attempt to "game" the outcomes.³

Across Canada we heard many school leaders in the principals' study focus groups asking for a counter-narrative to the contrived, fear-driven catalysts of social and educational Darwinism. As documented in *Changing Landscapes in Co-Creating a Learning Canada*, teachers, students, and parents are eager for ways of understanding themselves and the global forces shaping their communities. The paradoxes and promises that principals face in their schools and communities will be explored in the final full report coming out early next year. It will be important to recognize three of the biggest challenges:

- *Connectivity does not mean connection.* Canadian youth in Grades 6–10 average 7 hours and 25 minutes per day of screen time on weekends and 5 hours and 56

2 *Changing Landscapes in Co-Creating a Learning Canada* is an environmental scan developed in collaboration with experts on a variety of key sectors. The trend data cited in this article are all drawn from this document, available at <http://bit.ly/1fyB76N>.

3 See Pereyra, Miguel A., Hans-Georg Kotthoff, and Robert Cowen (eds.) 2011. *PISA Under Examination*. Rotterdam: Sense. Also see Heinz-Dieter Meyer and Aaron Benavot (eds.) 2012. *PISA, Power, and Policy: The Emergence of Global Educational Governance*. Oxford, UK: Symposium Books. The recent release of the 2012 PISA results also produced a flurry of similar commentary.

minutes per day on weekdays.
(Active Healthy Kids Canada)

- *Equity continues to elude us.* We are the some of the richest people on the planet, yet Canada is at the bottom of the 25 economically advanced countries with respect to children's readiness to learn by age six. (UNICEF 2009)
- *Increasingly we will need to manage significant economic growth.* Viable communities and neighbourhoods must be sustained in the face of the jobless economic recovery that is occurring in many jurisdictions.

Signals of hope

The global forces shaping Canadian schools have created important opportunities and challenges that were given voice in focus groups of principals across the country starting in 2012. A recurring challenge echoed by the study's participants was the complexity of mediating conflicting definitions of student learning through the ephemeral quality called "instructional leadership."

In the face of these global forces, Canadian principals alongside other educators and students are looking for an alternative approach to improving schools and society that deepens active citizenship and lifelong learning. Many of their aspirations and concerns are captured in two books coauthored with Andy Hargreaves entitled *The Fourth Way: The Inspiring Future of Educational Change* (2009) and *The Global Fourth Way: The Quest for Educational Excellence* (2012). These

books describe educational reform efforts since World War II through three definitive transformations.

The initial shift that helps to define our current era was characterized by high teacher autonomy and few governmental prescriptions (the First Way). This phase was supplanted by punitive market-driven standard reforms under Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan (the Second Way). This then gave way to a Third Way that still prevails today. It is a combination of pressure and support strategies initiated by Tony Blair in the UK and Bill Clinton in the US in the 1990s, and compelled by technology-driven decision making leading to school rankings and mechanisms of bureaucratic control far removed from classrooms.

Not all nations pursued this same path of the First, Second, and Third Ways of change. Finland, for example, recognized that the First Way did not respond to voters' aspirations for a just and humane society and went straight to a Fourth Way of innovation and sustainable transformation. Finland, however, is a striking exception to global trends. Overall, the categorization of four different ways of change has proven to have some staying power even in jurisdictions with separate paths because these jurisdictions now increasingly find themselves pulled into the vortex of Second and Third Way policies. International tests, such as PISA of the OECD, are playing a major role here as policy-makers seek to use them to burnish their credentials and to

reassure anxious publics that their children will be well prepared for the future. Major educational companies and consultancies, such as McKinsey & Company and Pearson Incorporated, have swept into many jurisdictions to profit from the public's anxiety with a battery of new assessments and reports. The public has often not been aware of the ways in which the creation of societal fear and the pursuit of corporate profit can be tightly interlaced with one another.

Increasingly, however, activist educators and vigilant parents and community members are coming to see that we do indeed need something different. Fear and sanctions only go so far. Education addresses our deepest longings and aspirations for our children, not just a quick scan of the latest spreadsheet of testing results. The promise of a Fourth Way of change is enticing for those who seek something more and, as a result, we are seeing a major shift of the tectonic plates of educational change under way.

In jurisdictions such as Texas⁴ and Alberta, long known for their high-stakes accountability cultures, testing programs are being dialled down and replaced with more meaningful assessments. Even Singapore, although well known for its hypercompetitive spirit, increasingly counterbalances this individualism with a strong professional ethos by continuously moving educators from a given school to the Ministry of Education and to the National Institute of Education, where teachers and school principals are increasingly supported to focus on

4 The National Resolution on High Stakes Testing, which calls on government officials to reduce standardized testing in schools, has been endorsed by hundreds of organizations and over 13,000 individuals.

empathy and equity. In 2005, the California Teachers' Association sued former Governor Schwarzenegger and reached a major settlement to fund networks of schools in the state's poorest and most disenfranchised communities. Much of this work is still being driven by collaborations focused on shifting from intrusive accountability to professional responsibility.

From the perspective of a Canadian principal, these changes may seem small and remote. The prosaic demands of leading a building full of restless youth and diverse staff are always front and centre in a principal's life. However, the signals are clear, strong and irreversible—globally we are seeing a turning of the tide that promises to enhance the instructional leadership role of the principal. Rather than having to continue to engage the contradictory student-centred goals of supporting teacher innovation and creativity while assuaging growing educational bureaucracies and their high-stakes testing programs, principals may soon see greater fidelity in their work as instructional leaders. We are beginning to see evidence that governments committed to working hand in hand with teachers can actually turn the page on the Second and the Third Way and achieve their stated aims of improving education for all.

To move beyond the current orthodoxies of global school reform, we need school leaders—parents, teachers and school principals—to play an educative role in society and develop into lifelong learners who are not afraid to challenge what John Stuart Mill

called “the deep slumber of a decided opinion.” We need principals who are educational provocateurs that combine eccentric and iconoclastic views of their diverse and lively students with a steady and persistent dedication to the public good.

In the interim it is up to all of us, and above all Canada's principals, to model lifelong learning and active citizenship in our homes, our workplaces and our communities. We all need to roll up our sleeves to model active learning in our everyday lives in a way that inspires others. So check out a demanding book from your local library on a topic that intimidates you and work through it chapter by chapter until you're satisfied that you've mastered its contents. Front the essential facts of life by hurtling all that you have against seemingly impermeable systems that assault human dignity in ways big and small. Reread Seneca and ask educators and students if they are teaching and learning for school or for life. Explore with your colleagues the troublesome question posed by the curriculum theorist Madeline Grumet, “Where does the world go when schooling is about schooling and not about life?”⁵

As we look forward to the publication and discussion of the Canadian Association of Principals' national study—the *Future of the Principalship* National Report—one hopeful possibility remains compelling: if school leaders can find the courage to improve their craft with patience, integrity and compassion, they can reclaim the life of the mind. They can

relearn the electrifying experience of discovering that while the quest for meaning is often elusive, it can be found in thousands of small acts that make up the everyday work lives of Canada's principals. These are professionals whose aspirations for their students are crystal clear and who persevere with dignity and integrity. We invite you to study the upcoming report carefully so that we all endeavour anew to support the entire united educational profession in giving our students the very best futures we can secure for them.

References

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5 Grumet, M. 2006. “Where Does the World Go when Schooling Is About Schooling?” *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 22, no 3:4–53.

Council for School Leadership

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Council for
School Leadership

You Must Be A
CSL Member
Before Mid-May,
2014 to be
Eligible for
the Draw

CAP 2015 – Whistler – Spring, 2015

This May, the Council for School Leadership will select from its membership list 1 member to attend the CAP 2015 conference in Whistler, B.C.

If you are a school principal, assistant principal, or district leader join the CSL today to be eligible for our spring PD draw. Find out more at...

bit.ly/joincsl

2014 Educational Leadership Academy

presents

Leading School Change: Bringing Everyone on Board

with



Dr Todd Whitaker, an internationally recognized speaker on a variety of educational topics, including teacher leadership, instructional improvement, change and leadership effectiveness. Dr Whitaker has published work in all these areas, as well as technology and middle-level practices.

Banff Park Lodge, Banff, Alberta

July 6–10, 2014

This workshop provides a step-by-step approach to successfully implementing the change you want to bring to your school. Leading School Change is perfect for individual leaders, leadership teams or any combination of people whose mission is to effectively lead change throughout their school or district.

Workshop participants will learn how to

- understand the three levels of change—procedural, structural and cultural;
- ensure that the first exposure to the change idea is compelling;
- work with “superstars,” “backbones” and “mediocres,” and understand who matters most to the change process;
- find and understand the entry points to change;
- learn how to diminish the influence of resisters; and
- look past buy-in to action and make it happen together.

Space is limited; early registration is recommended.

Register online at <https://event-wizard.com/events/ELA2014>

For additional information, contact Leslie Kaun at 780-447-9410 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (elsewhere in Alberta); e-mail: ELA@ata.ab.ca.



• A program for those who hold or aspire to leadership positions in schools





The Alberta Teachers' Association

Are You Interested in Becoming an Association Administrator Instructor?

Now is the time to apply.

Association administrator instructors present workshops for the ATA at conventions, conferences, and district or local PD days and for school-based PD programs. They are involved in creating and delivering professional learning opportunities for Alberta's school leaders and in authoring, curating and sharing courses and materials through the ATA iTunes U affiliate site. All Association administrator instructors will receive training to support the work they will do.

In your application, you will be asked to describe the following:

1. Your professional experience: school leadership assignments and teaching experience
2. Areas of interest and expertise: leadership in a professional learning community; creating a school vision; school leader resiliency; supporting teacher professional growth, assessment, inclusion and diversity; leadership for pedagogy with 21st-century tools; relationship building; and so on
3. Your professional development leadership experiences
4. Your reasons for applying
5. The names of two professional references
6. Your language capability: English, French or both

Successful candidates are expected to deliver a range of workshops and must attend two training meetings per year. Initial training for new instructors will occur in the late spring and autumn of 2014. All expenses and an honorarium are paid by the Association. Please notify your superintendent prior to applying. All applicants must be active or associate members of the ATA.

Applications must be submitted by Friday, April 25, 2014 at 4:30 PM.

To submit an application, please visit tinyurl.com/ATALEADERSHIP.

In making application to become an Association administrator instructor for the Alberta Teachers' Association you are voluntarily providing your personal information to the ATA.

