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FACES on the Data.

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PREFACE

Statistics are a wonderful servant and an appalling master.

—Hopper and Hopper (2009)

There are certain fundamental questions that plague educational practice, none more perplexing than: How do we know specifically THAT something has been accomplished; exactly HOW was it carried out; and WHAT should we do to make it better the next time? To make it more complicated, how can all this be done in times of constant upheaval?

It turns out that when people make changes in dynamic times, they must also build the capacity to continue to make changes. The good news is that *when they learn to change in “changing times” they also build their capacity to keep on changing*. In this edition we once again show how to focus on the details of essential changes even when *everything* is changing around us.

“FACES” is a metaphor. It was difficult enough in 2012 to get the best fix on the personalized performance of hundreds of thousands of students, but it became possible as we got a better fix on the goals, the means of implementation, and the nature of outcomes of desired reforms in literacy, numeracy, and high school completion. Ontario had just come off a successful decade of increased capacity and performance of its 5,000 schools and 72 districts in its public school system. We were able to make wide-spread and in-depth observations of positive changes across Ontario.

Now it is incredibly more difficult to get that same sort of system fix or perspective on performance because the learning goals go beyond the important basics into “deep learning” such as 6 Global Competencies (character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking) in our work. And COVID has dramatically imposed itself, simultaneously stopping education systems in their tracks, causing them to pivot continuously between

remote, hybrid, and classroom models of learning and creating cracks and gaps where major innovations (in assessment, for example) may seem more obvious. We are producing this *FACES* edition before the full consequences of COVID play themselves out. We are doing so because getting the important basics right and finding ways to ensure deeper learning can occur are vitally important to educators, to students, and to us.

In this 10th anniversary edition of *FACES*, we go deeper in the quest to balance and integrate two critical aspects of school improvement that look like they can't be brought together: On the one hand is the question of how to personalize data for all students so that each is treated as a real person and helped to learn according to their own individual needs; on the other hand is the question of how to do this for 100,000 students at a time without losing the human touch. *FACES* does just this, honoring and helping educators work with the individual and giving educators the tools to learn how to make the changes in their own practice, thereby improving the system.

We are fortunate to have Sir Michael Barber “playing along” in real time tackling the same issues. Sir Michael was the architect of Tony Blair’s British reform of “literacy and numeracy” that began in 1997. It was during this time and into the first decade of the 2000s that Sharratt (with Fullan as an external consultant) developed the fundamentals of *FACES* in York Region, Ontario, with its 150+ schools. Sharratt and Fullan have worked together and independently in the two decades of this century to develop the ideas and practices of *FACES* initially in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and eventually in more than 20 countries. It is this fully extended work that we report on in this anniversary edition.

In Chapter 1, we set the context and mode, via Case Studies, of how we and others use data to create impact, a practice we carry through every chapter. Chapter 2 examines what we found from our key research questions. Then we focus on assessment (Chapter 3) and instruction (Chapter 4), the inseparable conjoined twins. In Chapter 5, we examine the leadership required to make balanced and integrated systems work. Finally, in Chapter 6, we consider ownership—who is responsible and accountable for putting *FACES* on the data.

We have always recognized that *practice drives practice*, or more accurately *best practice drives better practice*. All our work—small and big examples—is based on close partnerships with practitioners,

ranging from students to policy makers. We believe that this *action pact* force will take off within the next year given the pent-up frustrations in society and in schools.

We are excited to publish our new edition in real time alongside these developments. Even better, we are again accompanied by Sir Michael Barber who wrote the foreword to our first edition in 2012. As if it were on cue, Sir Michael has just published his own major set of lessons in a magnificent book, *Accomplishment: How to achieve ambitious and challenging things* (2021). His chapters on “Getting Ready” and “Getting it Done” are compatible with our book. We are incredibly fortunate to have Michael join us in this anniversary edition.

It is time to put our new FACES forward as we have found the *wonderful servant* for which the Hopper Brothers yearned—10 years on!

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