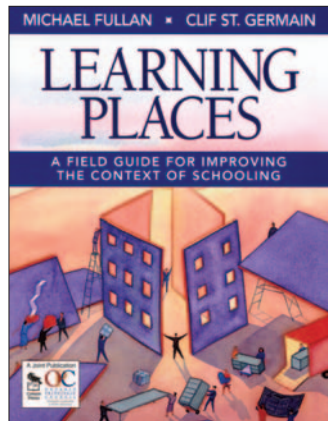


REVIEW

LEARNING PLACES: A Field Guide for Improving the Context of Schooling

By Michael Fullan and Clif St. Germain
Corwin Press/OPC, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2006
ISBN 1-4129-4233-0

As schools continue to work their way through the challenging process of school improvement, there is now a promising, user-friendly field guide to translate theory into practice. Michael Fullan and Clif St. Germain have combined their respective expertise in school improvement and reform to create a manual focussed on helping



schools ask the right questions to achieve better results. *Learning Places* helps readers develop best practices to continue school improvement within a culture of learning.

The intent of the field guide is to point out the potential that exists for making a difference, not only in the classroom, but also at school and system levels. To encour-

age this change, people within school systems must be supported through effective staff development that helps provide ideas, resources, planning/assessment tools and opportunities to meet and share. Specifically, support must lead educators to begin this change process at the level of their own practice.

Learning Places is a compilation of practical strategies and interactive resources such as self-assessment tools, discussion worksheets/templates and suggestions for reflecting on practices within the school. This rich collection of resources provides clear direction for engaging teachers, staff, students and parents in school reform, through the use of study groups, data collection and walk-through ideas.

The most enticing aspect is that each chapter contains a plan for moving from collective empowerment to action. The authors include a combination of steps to strategically guide readers in our search for school improvement. The art of actively engaging in change is promoted through the inclusion of tasks that translate real experiences and beliefs into a plan to move forward.

The authors support the work of each chapter with tools such as “Making Sense” and “Looking Wide.” Seeking evidence of change following the implementation of an area of action is also made easier with guidelines and checklists in the segments.

Fullan and St. Germain leave readers with a message for using the guide. “Don’t worry about doing everything at once. Start small, think big. Don’t wait for the system to get its act together. Lead by example. *Learning Places* is, both a point of departure and a destination.” In busy schools, readers will welcome the guidance. ●

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