



## **In seeking greater equity for our students, how do we break down barriers in education?**

Ask this question to a group of educators and one gets many opinions. We are not lacking interest on this subject but moving opinion and hopes to purposeful, sustained action within school settings is a challenging reality. It can be done but requires sustained and inspired leadership. The question above represents our theme for the 2019-2020 year.

A teacher cited in the following link suggests that engaging more with the community, experimenting with technology and encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration is a good

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starting point. What would you say when asked this question in our Ontario context? We are seeking your input. Please consider leaving a response at [@learningforwardontario.ca](https://www.learningforwardontario.ca). It will help us in planning our spring and summer face-to-face events and will be weaved into two upcoming book studies. We would love to hear from you.

<https://www.waldenu.edu/connect/newsroom/publications/articles/2019/01-insights-breaking-down-barriers-in-education>



Why is it that new practices work well in one setting and not in another?

Andy Hargreaves and Michael T. O'Connor's article from **Learning Forward's, *The Learning Professional (June 2019)*** sheds some light on a process to probe readiness for implementation and change:

## **“HOW TO ADAPT OTHER PEOPLE’S PRACTICES AND MAKE THEM STICK”**

*“Asking probing questions and digging beneath the surface are essential for understanding what makes a particular model of teacher collaboration (or other innovation) successful. To help educators engage in this kind of thinking, we have developed a model we call the four B’s” (p. 54).*

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## **THE 4 B’S OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:**

### **BEFORE**

- How long has the principal or school leader been there?*
- Did people ever collaborate badly before they collaborated well?*
- Did the principal lead the learning teams before the teachers did?*
- Did people collaborate informally before they did so formally? Or vice versa?*
- Did the present practice evolve through different stages?*
- What happened to people who were skeptical at first?*

## THE 4 B'S OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:

### **BESIDE**

- How does the practice relate to current district, state (provincial), and federal policies?
- How does it fit with other school, district, or system priorities?
- What funds have been available for it?
- Does it have advocates and ambassadors in the system?
- Is the school going it alone, or are other schools participating as well?

### **BEYOND**

- Where did the school see or hear about this new practice?
- How does the school learn from other schools about this and other innovations?
- What networks is the school part of?
- Does the school invite people to come and work with it from other schools or universities?
- How does the school read or learn about other practices?
- What conferences or workshops do teachers go to, and how do they share what they learn with others?

### **BETWIXT**

- How do educators collaborate outside this practice, as well as in it?
- How do they collaborate after school, outdoors, over lunch, or socially, as well as in this practice?
- What does collaboration look like in the culture of the whole society, and how is it similar to or different from your own?

*From the Learning Professional June, 2019, p. 53. Article by A. Hargreaves & M. T. O'Connor. Used with permission of Learning Forward, [www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org). All rights reserved.*



How might the above questions spark some conversations regarding effective planning in your educational context?

For further information see: “**The Learning Professional** “(June, 2019), published six times a year by Learning Forward.



### **Growing our understanding of critical pedagogy:**

*“Viewing pedagogy from a critical perspective leads educators to question practices they never doubted before. As a result, educators implement strategies that promote a holistic view of education in consideration of the effects of race, culture, class, gender and language on student learning experience.”*

*(Linda Jawad, 2018) retrieved from:*

<https://medium.com/national-center-for-institutional-diversity/becoming-a-critical-educator-critical-pedagogy-in-community-colleges-b51523bcffe8>

Deeply understanding critical pedagogy requires a strong understanding of how to employ the process of critical inquiry as we examine our teaching and learning processes. It also requires educators to look at their own biases, assumptions and values. This is worthwhile but challenging personal work. So much of what we believe resides in our own life experiences which may differ substantially from more vulnerable stakeholders in our schools and in our communities. Learning Forward Ontario is embarking on an opportunity to collaborate with others to probe more deeply how we as educators can examine our own beliefs to deepen our ability to move equity issues forward. We will be undertaking two book studies this year as the basis for shared collaborative inquiry and invite other interested educators to join us.

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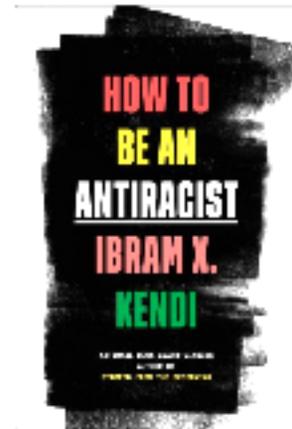
***“Based on critical theory, pedagogical practices should be relevant to students’ cultural backgrounds and historical experiences. Learning should be grounded in the culture, experience and language of the student” (Jawad, 2018).***

## LFO- Book Study Coming Soon!

Our first book study will be facilitated by Noa Daniel and Moses Velasco – Learning Forward Directors. Noa is a teacher from YRDSB and Moses is an Ontario Ministry of Education Student Achievement Officer. The shared basis for our conversation is the book, “How to be an Antiracist” by Ibram X Kendi.

**As a review from Ericka Taylor of Kendi’s book on the NPR website outlines:**

*“The effort may be daunting, but it's one we must take on if we are to dismantle the policies that continue to produce racially inequitable results in every measure of health, wealth, and well-being. Thankfully, **How to Be an Antiracist** gives us a clear and compelling way to approach, as Kendi puts it in his introduction, "the basic struggle we're all in, the struggle to be fully human and to see that others are fully human.”*



**For more information on the book, here is an NPR link that you will find interesting:**

<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/15/751070344/theres-no-such-thing-as-not-racist-in-ibram-x-kendis-how-to-be-an-anitracist>

### **SIGN UP NOW!**

We invite you to engage in a book study of Ibram X Kendi's, *How to Be an Anti Racist*, with us. We hope to explore the definitions, help to tool our thinking around equity, fuel our conversations on the text and co-create a meaningful learning space. We will have our **first meeting on Zoom on Dec 10th from 7-8 pm** to discuss the introduction, so please obtain the book by then.

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## LFO Website Update

We are currently working on updating our Learning Forward Ontario Website. Be sure to check it out at [www.learningforwardontario.ca](http://www.learningforwardontario.ca)



## LFO - 2020 Networking Dinner and Ignite Evening

*“Inspire us, but keep it brief!”*

*That is the premise of Ignite talks, which are inspiring, brief 5 minute talks.*

**Upcoming in the new year**– Learning Forward Ontario’s first scheduled 2020 Networking Dinner and Ignite Evening - What can we learn in 20 slides that change every 15 seconds followed by a conversation? It sounds like the slides must say a lot without a lot of words! Stay tuned! We will be calling for interested parties to present and details on the evening will be released early in the New Year. Our scheduled date for this event is **Tuesday, Apr 21st, 2020**. This event will be held at the **Mindshare Workspace in Erin Mills Town Centre, Mississauga**.

If you want to know more about what an Ignite presentation is all about, this website is a beginning point: <http://www.ignitetalks.io/> Mark your calendars!

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## Sharing Resources: Learning Forward Ontario will be posting resources of interest monthly.



This month, building on the work of Jenni Donohoo, well known for her work on **“Collective Efficacy”**, Present Chair of Learning Forward Ontario, Beate Planche shares the following article, **“Harnessing the Power of the Collective”** published in the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) journal, October, 2019. Jenni is a Learning Forward Ontario Director & Past Chair.

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What can a school leader contribute to the growth of collaborative learning cultures and collective efficacy? School leaders are key influencers and communicators. Learn more about the various roles a school leader plays and manages in making this happen. See the link below:

<https://cdnprincipals.com/harnessing-the-power-of-the-collective/>

*“When school leaders and school staff work in a manner that demonstrates that “we are in this together”, a sense of efficacy - a belief that we can make a difference - grows for both individuals and a collective who are committed to the same goals” (Planche, 2019).*

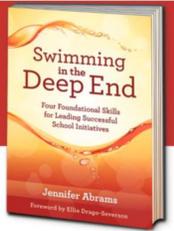
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## Director Reflections on a Day of Swimming in the Deep End

Learning Forward Ontario and Ontario Principals' Council present

**Jennifer Abrams**  
**Swimming in the Deep End**  
**What Does It Take?**  
August 20, 2019  
Richmond Green Secondary School - Richmond Hill, Ontario

This session will support teachers and school leaders in the development of the educational leadership skills needed to create real change in their schools.



For more information and registration, visit [www.learningforwardontario.ca](http://www.learningforwardontario.ca)



[Visit our website for reflections](#) on our wonderful day with Jennifer Abrams held this past August. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. We partnered with the Ontario Principals Council (OPC) at Richmond Green Secondary School, in Richmond Hill, Ontario. It was an inspiring day for the 150 people who were able to attend.

*Stay tuned in the new year for information regarding an upcoming August, 2020 event*

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## LFO- Monthly Twitter Chats @LearningFwdON #LearnfwdON



We invite you to join our monthly #LearnfwdON twitter chats. They are held usually held on the second Monday of each month. Be sure to check the website for more details, and follow @LearningFwdON on Twitter where we will post topics and questions prior to the chat.

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On Monday, November 11th our #LearnFwdON twitter chat was focused on How we can break down barriers to success. You can check out the archive by searching our hashtag #LearnfwdON

Our next @LearningFwdON Twitter chat will be on **Monday, December 9 @ 8 p.m. E.S.T.**



**Join the Conversation second Monday each month!**  
**#LearnfwdON**

### **Protocols.....structures for learning conversations.**

A reminder that Learning Forward Ontario has protocol resources to share at the following link:

<https://www.learningforwardontario.ca/highlights>

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### **How do we as a collective break or break down the barriers to learning - for our students - for ourselves?**

If you have thoughts to share, please email us at:



- General Inquiries      **@learningforwardontario.ca**
- Membership Questions      **membership@learningforwardontario.ca**
- Newsletter Submissions      **editor@learningforwardontario**