Innovations in Thinking and Learning
Michael Fullan – The Three Approaches

MICHAEL: We know them quite well, Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia's work. I was dean of OISE, they were doing this in the Institute of Child Study. Roger Martin we work with quite a bit. So we're fairly clear about it, first to say is that those two pedagogies are fundamental; that is, the knowledge building and the integrative thinking. They are fundamental transformation. Second is to say that the three of us are fully compatible, so they say that, we say that, we know that. The third is that, I would say each of their works zeros in more deeply on the integrative thinking as tools and processes around some of the Cs; so, obviously Collaboration, Creativity, Critical thinking. But it doesn't represent a full solution, I'm going to say it this way, because our students and teachers will say when we use the six Cs, we feel like we are covering everything. And therefore, in this sense, I see the six Cs as covering everything. And I see knowledge building and integrative thinking as tools that allow one to go deeper, so that's very important. Also in our model is not just the pedagogy part, but the conditions for supporting change -- I'll call it change leadership. So these are conditions at the school level, collaborative cultures, school leadership, their conditions at the district level, the role of the district and working with schools and causing system change district-wide. And then at the province level, where we're also working to have the right policies and the right coordination.

So ours is, I'm going to say, a full service model. We know that some of our NPDL districts are embracing integrative thinking, for example Hamilton-Wentworth District school board, where they work with both integrative thinking and NPDL. And they find them they just leverage each other. So I think ours is more fundamental and comprehensive, fully compatible with the other two. They're going deeper into the cognitive side. And I think they do encounter Citizenship and Character education, but we have put it so that we think the six Cs are comprehensive on the one hand, and they're a model of change because it's layered to change the system, is also more comprehensive.

We have 15 districts, we have several hundred schools that are implementing deep learning, systematically. They all say this enables us to go further into the Ontario curriculum, it's compatible, so that for sure we know not only is it compatible, deep learning is leveraging it better, more deeply, literally. So that's one thing. The second thing they say is the enteral curriculum -- not so much the curriculum, but the practices of the last, let's say 15 years since we've been doing this new work -- it's too narrow with literacy and numeracy. So they feel that it's not an ultimate constraint, but they feel it's not liberating enough, even though the curriculum is liberating, if you look at it
closely. They feel it's not liberating enough. In this way, they're going into the six Cs, and then they're also going to do better, we know this, literacy and numeracy, because the six Cs are, when you do the work, it actually sticks better. That's another relationship we're looking at. But if you take the actual curriculum in the policy, the policy has four things in it in the Achieving Excellence policy. It has excellence which is higher achievement, literacy, numeracy, other aspects of the curriculum, and we're getting that achievement in the subject. It's got equity, which is, raise the bar, close the gap, the moral imperative. It's got well-being, and the well-being is our flourishing in a complex society. The students are steeped in the six Cs, are great citizens and more stable and more innovative for the future, more entrepreneurial, better participators.

So it really addresses the well-being. Then the fourth one in the policy is increasing public confidence, the public education system. That's a big statement. But we're seeing in our examples that parents now are being really pulled in, wanting to come into the equation because their students are coming home and saying, "Wow, I'm doing this character education, citizenship. We're studying the role of water, Lake Ontario. Now we're seeing what's the role of water in the world." And they become much more excited, students, much more knowledgeable. Much more talking about real things that are mattering to them and to the world. And parents are noticing and wanting, and becoming a big part of it. I think one aspect of the public confidence will be when scores of parents say, "Wow, these schools are changing in a great way, and I appreciate it. I want to be part of it."