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# MOTION LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

MORE SKINNY  
on Becoming  
Change Savvy




## Study Guide

### Motion Leadership in Action More Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy



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## BOOK SUMMARY (CORWIN)

Do your school reform efforts frequently sputter or stall? In this indispensable sequel to the bestseller *Motion Leadership*, Michael Fullan shares the real-life strategies and results of educators who have used motion leadership to propel entire organizations and systems forward. Success stories from the US and around the world illustrate how educators can use a small number of specific actions to generate momentum for lasting change. ***Motion Leadership in Action*** addresses:

- Creating and leading movement in the right direction and at the right time
- Implementing a "ready-fire-aim" mindset
- Emphasizing the importance of collaboration
- Forging relationships while handling resistance
- Establishing your change stance in order to get better results

Get the skinny on what works in setting educational change in motion!

This study guide is a companion to the book by Michael Fullan: ***Motion Leadership in Action: More Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy***. This guide has been developed to support reflection about professional conversations with suggested topics and questions for collaborative dialogues.

*Note: The Professional Learning Team Schedule is intended as a suggestion for how a team might pace readings, meetings, and activities. Pacing and assignments should be adapted to meet a learning team's needs.*

**Introduction Part 1 of 2: Identify our students' knowledge and skills**

Key Ideas - Learning Outcomes

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- Establish learning needs: what is the impetus for engaging in this book study?
- Establish student learning needs.
- Determine what is limiting student engagement and learning.

Pre-Meeting Thinking Question

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What are the student engagement and learning issues that will be met through this professional learning?

Meeting Questions

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1. What knowledge and skills do our students need to meet curricula, personal and social goals?
2. What do they already know?
3. What sources of evidence have we used and how adequate are they?
4. What do they need to learn and do?
5. How do we build on what they know?

Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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Give careful consideration to your own learning needs for supporting the student learning goals identified at this meeting.

**Introduction Part 2 of 2: Determine what we need to know and be able to do**

Key Ideas

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Identify our learning needs for impacting student-centered leadership.

Pre-Meeting Thinking Question

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What are our learning team needs to impact student learning outcomes identified at our last meeting?

Meeting Questions

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1. What knowledge and skills do we, as professionals, need to meet the needs of our students (learning goals)?
2. In what areas and with whom are we effective?
3. In what areas and with whom are we less effective and why?
4. What do we need to learn and do to promote these outcomes and what are our learning goals?
5. What sources of evidence and knowledge can we use to assess what is working, what is not working?

Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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As you consider improvement efforts of yesteryear, why and how did efforts succeed, sputter, or stall?

## Chapter 1: Not-so-Skinny Change Problems

### Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

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- Begin to understand the meanings of ‘motion leadership’ and ‘the skinny’.
- Underline our push for a strong student achievement focus as a crucial condition for motion leadership and change.

### Pre-Reading for this Meeting

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Chapter 1 (pp. 1–9).

### Pre-Reading Questions

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What do the terms ‘motion leadership’ and ‘the skinny’ mean to you?

### Meeting Questions

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1. How do we work on the moral imperative of educating all of our students regardless of their starting points?
2. What more could we be doing to realize the moral imperative?
3. As ‘motion leaders’ who by definition mobilize the leadership of others and end up being part of a system that is palpably on the move, how can we leverage the leadership of ‘others’ (colleagues in our learning team, school, district, other districts, external others) to realize the moral imperative?

### Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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What will we try out in practice and check to see if students are responding differently, and whether learning has deepened?

## Chapter 2: The Skinny at Work

### SECTION 1

### Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

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- Uncover some of the subtleties of ‘push and pull’ of change.
- Define ‘push’ and ‘pull’ change strategies.
- Understand what ‘nudge’ means as a change strategy.

### Pre-Reading for this Meeting

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Chapter 2 (pp. 11–21).

### Pre-reading Questions

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1. In your opinion, what is more effective for enabling change: push or pull?
2. Reflect on your own style and the relative merits of push and pull.

### Meeting Questions

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1. What expertise do we have in our school, our district, system?
2. How do you practice focused collaboration within and across schools?

3. As you consider the Hackney story, consider this judicious combination of push, pull, and persistence in action. Reflect as a team, and assess where your system is at on with the following activities on a basic or developing level:
4. The setting of the highest expectations of everyone's performance for student achievement:
  - a) ferocious assertion that failure is unacceptable (a push factor);
  - b) the investment in leadership capacity,
  - c) providing the best support for educators to get success (pull).
5. Decide together what each of you needs to do to move your system forward, what evidence you might collect to monitor, and decide when you will check progress and how you will do it.

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#### Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

Contribute to system-wide collaboration by sharing your experience with other schools, and researching expertise available to your learning team that reflects your learning goals for student improvement. Decide how you will do this with specific action items to be completed before the next meeting.

## SECTION 2

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### Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

Distinguish between alignment (about structures) and coherence (about mindsets).

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### Pre-Reading for this Meeting

Chapter 2 (pp. 21-29).

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### Pre-Reading Questions

How would you rate your system's shared vision and focus on instruction and achievement?

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### Meeting Questions

1. Build capacity, ownership focus, and clarity by listening to each member of the learning team's input about:
  - a. What are you proud of in our system (school, district, province depending on your position)?
  - b. What are you concerned about?
  - c. What suggestions or insights for improvement would you like to offer?

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#### Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

How will we support each other prior to the next meeting in our identified learning needs for improving student outcomes?

## SECTION 3

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### Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

- Become familiar with the terms "mutual allegiance", "collaborative competition."
- Understand the notions of 'imposter syndrome' and 'activity traps'.
- Clarify the focus of 'academic optimism' and conditions that would model optimism.

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### Pre-Reading for this Meeting

Chapter 2 (pp. 29–36).

### Pre-Reading Questions

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1. Consider the nature of your system. Are there any pockets of low performance that are left unattended?
2. How does your system foster what Fullan calls “learning is the work” (p. 23)?

As you learn more about what you need to know, consider privately what you feel you should know more about but may not have asked for help.

### Meeting Questions

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1. Discuss where your system is at in relation to the eight factors that ACT considered and integrated (p. 25).
2. What conditions would promote ‘Academic Optimism’; what might this look like in practice?

### Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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Watchword Activity Trap: Until the next meeting, be relentless about focus in the face of multiple distractions and stop to ask yourself: “Is this essential to our core work, or does it take us away from it?” Make a note of reflections to share with your learning team. If your group’s focus is on increasing capacity building, instruction and the improvement of student learning, write down six core principles that would apply to your system as a whole.

## SECTION 4

### Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

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Reflect on the value of a ready, fire, aim approach

### Pre-Reading for this Meeting

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Chapter 2 (pp. 36–50).

### Pre-Reading Questions

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1. When might a ‘learning and dissemination strategy as you go’ make sense?
2. How does your system ‘put the faces on data’ so that all students are tracked according to progress for all teachers to see and learn from?

### Meeting Questions

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1. How can you and your system do more to promote the collective work of teachers?
2. Review your system’s pedagogical focus related to specific goals and success criteria. How does the success criteria link to evidence of accomplishments (what success looks and sounds like; what students are doing, saying, and producing)?
3. Bring forward the Action Research Activity and the group’s thoughts about six core principles.

### Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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If you were to revision inertia more as ‘things that like to keep on doing what they’re already doing’, how might you tweak that direction into a new course?

## Chapter 3: The Skinny Leader's Guide to Action

### SECTION 1

#### Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

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- Understand the three tranches of the skinny on motion leadership: A. the change stance, B. the implementation stance, and C. The sustainability stance.
- Revision inertia as drift.
- Understand the components of the change stance.

#### Pre-Reading for this Meeting

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Chapter 3 (pp. 51–60).

#### Pre-reading Questions

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In order to have an imperative, you must be making evidential progress going down the road of realization. Begin thinking about what success would like, how you would move the yardsticks, and how you would know that you are progressing.

#### Meeting Questions

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1. What ideas did the learning team come up with as a result of the action research activity?
2. Refer to pp. 58–59 to complete the 3-part activity as a learning team
  - a. answer the four questions,
  - b. circle two quotes that you most connect with
  - c. complete the two sentences at the top of p. 59.
3. Discuss the impact of getting the idea of *realization* firmly established at the outset.

#### Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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Until the next meeting, commit to spending a minimum of 10 minutes a day talking to a student whom you don't know very well.

### SECTION 2

#### Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

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- Continue to learn about the components of the change stance.
- Understand what is meant by the term 'impressive empathy'.
- Delve into the possibilities of 'push, pull, and nudge'.
- Understand the necessity of becoming obsessive about the implementation stance.

#### Pre-Reading for this Meeting

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Chapter 3 (pp. 60–74).

#### Pre-Reading Questions

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1. What is your organization's approach to accountability?
2. In the day-to-day culture of your organization, what learning happens in-between workshops? (How is learning reinforced every day in what comes to be the normal quotidian pattern of your organizational life?)

3. Reflect privately on your tendency on one or the other trait (push or pull), and get feedback about how to build up your weaker side.

#### Meeting Questions

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1. Debrief about reflections related to the action research activity.
2. If we were to enlarge our scope by at least one notch, what might that look like?
3. How do we create more opportunities (as part and parcel of *learning is the work*) to make the capacities essential for accomplishing our few ambitious goals?

#### Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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Since the reality of implementation is a two-way partnership and learning journey, give careful thought to what is working so far, what might be problematic, and be prepared to share and problem-solve at the next meeting.

### SECTION 3

#### Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

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- Redefine the meaning of how data are primarily used.
- Learn how internal accountability comes about.
- Learn what ‘systemness’ is all about, and how to be successful in ‘systemness’.

#### Pre-Reading for this Meeting

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Chapter 3 (pp. 75–87).

#### Pre-Reading Question

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Consider your system’s use of data and assess the organization’s capacity to put a face on data as well as have purposeful data permeate day to day practice and decisions.

#### Meeting Questions

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1. Debrief about the action research activity.
2. How are our strategies for improvement based on developing social capital?
3. How can we do more to build collaborative cultures in our school(s), establish clusters of school that learn from each other, and foster a sense of ‘systemness’?

#### Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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As you are constantly honing your skinny skills of motion leadership, consider the three stances and their components in exhibit 3.5 on page 87. Take action by using this checklist to target personal areas of improvement with a mentor.



**SECTION 1**

Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

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Understand the meaning of 'reciprocal accountability'.

Pre-Reading for this Meeting

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Chapter 4 (pp. 89–100).

Pre-reading Questions

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1. How do you solicit feedback formally and informally?
2. How might you do more to foster collaboration up, down, and across the system as a vehicle for continuous learning and shared accountability?

Meeting Questions

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1. As we consider the importance of relentless focus, how and why are we progressing?
2. What more can we do to create and mobilize sufficient sustained attention to actual implementation?

Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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Take another look at your strategy document or action plan. How does this plan rate for including ideas for specific actions to take, and for *how* to get there?

**SECTION 2**

Key Ideas – Learning Outcomes

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- Learn more from motion leaders about what they think as accounted for their success.
- Learn about the areas of a simple *why*, *how* and *what* focus of a strategy.

Pre-Reading for this Meeting

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Chapter 4 (pp. 100–110).

Pre-Reading Questions

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1. What do you think accounts for your success, for your system's success?
2. If we share a commitment to continuous professional learning, in what areas might there be room to go from good to great?

Meeting Questions

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1. Define together what makes us (as a learning team) successful, and the *how*.
2. Use Trish's predict-and-prevent strategy to brainstorm ways to support young people earlier (versus playing excellent catch-up or revision work later).

Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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If your strategy and emphasis is the need to intervene as early as possible, what more could be done to take action to fix problems relating to student achievement?

## Moving Forward

### Key Ideas – Learning Objectives

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- Make connections between the impact of professional learning and 'learning is the work'.
- Support our cycle of inquiry by identifying new learning needs.

### Pre-Reading Questions - N/A

### Pre-Meeting Questions

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1. What has been the impact of our changed actions?
2. What knowledge and skills do we need?

### Questions

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1. What knowledge and skills have we learned as a result of engagement in this activity or process?
2. How effective has what we have learned and done been in promoting our students' learning?
3. What gains are we making for students as a result of fundamental shifts in thinking about motion leadership in action and classroom practice?
4. What should we continue?
5. What should we refine?
6. What should we stop doing?

### Action Research Activity for Next Meeting

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What evidence might we collect to monitor if we are developing knowledge and skills to impact student improvement outcomes?

## Learning Extensions

### Review Prior to Meeting

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Review ideas and reflections from the last 'Moving Forward' meeting discussion.

### Prior to Meeting Thinking Question

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As you review learning and monitor effectiveness in terms of the engagement, learning, and well-being of all students in your care, what new areas of learning and inquiry would make sense for you, for your team?

### Questions

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1. What new challenges have become evident? What more do we need to learn?
2. What knowledge and skills do we, as lead learners, need to develop the relevant knowledge and skills for students?
3. If we were to rethink what we are doing, how can we find out what will make a difference?

### Action Plan Options

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Use HWDSB's 3-part meaning-making process on p. 32, then collaborate to complete a one-page similar to HWDSB's one-page Annual Operating Plan on p. 33 with three knowings (students, staff, parents and community) and areas of focus, strategies and indicators.

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Pre- and Post- Book Study questions have been adapted from the work of Helen Timperley (*Realizing the Power of Professional Learning*, 2011, McGraw-Hill Education – Open University Press).

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