

Dr Dennis Shirley

Dr Dennis Shirley's work in education spans from the microlevel of assisting beginning teachers to the macrolevel of designing and guiding large-scale research and intervention projects for school districts, states, and nonprofit agencies. Dr. Shirley recently collaborated with Andy Hargreaves on a study of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust Raising Achievement Transforming Learning Project, which raised pupil learning results in over 200 schools in England at double the national rate in a 2-year period. The findings of that research have been presented in Hargreaves' and Shirley's first collaboratively authored book, *The Fourth Way*.

For 4 years, Dr. Shirley has led a teacher inquiry project along with Boston Public Schools teacher-leader Elizabeth MacDonald; their research has been published in *The Mindful Teacher*. Dr. Shirley serves on the Scholars Forum of the Public Education Network, advises the One Square Kilometer of Education school improvement project of the Freudenberg Foundation in Berlin, and collaborates with the California Teachers Association on improving 480 schools in struggling circumstances. He has led three school improvement efforts with more than 13 million dollars in funding, and his research has been translated into German, Swedish, Spanish, and French. He holds a doctorate from Harvard University.

Courses Available:

- The Mindful Teacher

Educators across the globe are living in the midst of a policy epidemic of reforms that hold enormous promise as well as hidden costs. The temptation to solve complex problems through mandates and prescriptions lures reformers eager for quick victories but when overly indulged leaves educators in the role of passive implementers of others' ideas. Yet teachers above all need activity settings that allow them to cultivate mindfulness, defined here as attunement to the present moment, awareness of a broad range of professional practices, and openness to multiple points of view. To identify the problems that emerge in their classrooms, explore potential solutions, and assess their consequences educators need professional learning communities of peers with high levels of expertise, an ethic of care, and respect for the evidence of emerging practice.

Drawing upon the presenter's recent book entitled *The Mindful Teacher* (Teachers College Press, 2009) co-authored with Boston Public Schools teacher leader Elizabeth MacDonald, participants in this workshop will learn about concrete strategies for identifying critical incidents in teachers' classrooms and working upon them persistently and creatively in collaborative teams.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify patterns of defensiveness and isolation that prevent educators from addressing shared problems together;
- Develop an engaging repertoire of strategies for eliciting the most pressing and

important problems of practice;

- Assist students with learning issues that might be most on the periphery of their awareness;
- Use formative and summative data wisely and with precision to improve pupil learning;
- Cultivate Mindful Teacher networks where educators embed inquiry, reflection, and adaptation into all of their ongoing professional activities.

Workshop Highlights

Participants will learn how to do all of these things with reference to Seven Synergies of Mindful Teaching that allow them to probe deeply into real-world problems of school improvement. They will do this in relation to their own schools and districts. The workshop will engage participants in hands-on learning through a variety of stimulating and reflective individual and group activities that combine humor, insight, and creativity. These will be related to Anchoring Illustrations of Mindful Teaching described in *The Mindful Teacher* that convey the manner in which teachers everywhere can use principles of mindfulness to attend to and address the many pressing everyday issues that arise in their classrooms. The presenter will share research findings that will be published in the near future in *Mindful Teacher Leadership* (Teachers College Press) and *The Mindful Teacher's Companion* (Heinemann). Teachers and educational leaders of all levels will find many practical tools in this workshop that can be applied immediately in their schools.

To find out more about the above course, or to engage us to conduct a session for your organization, please contact us at info@pai.sg.

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- **The Fourth Way & Change in Education**

We are living through profound transformations in our world and our schools. A generation of aging baby boomers is retiring and a new generation of multi-tasking millennials is taking their place. Economies are collapsing and budgets are being decimated, and yet hope is rising from these ashes. Quality is on the rise. Students and their increasingly youthful teachers have the edge on electronic communication from social networking to Skype. Change is no longer other people's unwanted reforms, but something we can all believe in again.

In these turbulent times older forms of leadership are called into question and the public hungers for new and inspiring change strategies. Drawing on the presenter's new book with Andy Hargreaves, *The Fourth Way: The Inspiring Future for Educational Change* (Corwin), participants in this workshop will learn how to:

- Understand the impact of generations and memory in the first three ways of leadership and change;
- Engage with their professional pasts and determine what to keep and what to leave behind as they strive for a better future;
- Involve parents, communities, and the public in relationships of active trust that build change by working together;

- Use data intelligently in evidence-informed communities of improvement rather than being driven blindly by data in panic-stricken avoidances of punishment and failure;
- Acquire powerful forms of improvement through networks across and beyond districts where professionals work with professionals and the strong help the weak; and
- Develop sustainable leadership that runs across schools and systems—distributing leadership wisely, attending to succession, and supporting other leaders in less successful schools.

Workshop Highlights

Participants will learn how to do all of these things within the Five Pillars of Purpose and Partnership, the Three Principles of Professionalism, and the Four Catalysts of Coherence that make up the new Fourth Way of educational change. They will do this in relation to their own schools and districts. The workshop will engage participants in discussions through a variety of stimulating and reflective individual and group activities. The presenter will also share new research data from the forthcoming Fourth Way in Action (Corwin, 2010), also co-authored with Andy Hargreaves.

Actual and intending school leaders, staff developers, teachers of leadership programs and institutes, and leaders of school systems will find this workshop intellectually challenging, emotionally inspiring, and strategically powerful.

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