

*If you want to control, you design organizations for accountability.  
If you want to accomplish, you design for commitment.*  
- Tapscott and Caston, *Paradigm Shift*

**W**elcome to the first edition of *The OPERI Recap*. It has two main purposes. The first is to improve the way we share information. The second is to support the development of the Snowflakes Model. *The Recap* is circulated by email, so it also serves people who do not have Facebook accounts and people who wish to stay informed anonymously.

### Information Sharing

There is a growing wealth of information about learner-centered education. The volume can be overwhelming, but the OPERI Facebook group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1416370692001490/> is a place to share all relevant information. *The Recap* is created to provide an overview of the previous month's postings to allow people to turn off notifications from the OPERI Facebook group, but still remain informed. It will also serve as a reminder to visit the group and to scroll down through the recent postings for items of particular interest that weren't included in *The Recap*. To receive *The OPERI Recap*, please ensure that you are on the OPERI email list by sending your name and email address to OPERI - [http://operi.ca/?page\\_id=223](http://operi.ca/?page_id=223).

**Note:** OPERI is looking for secondary school educators who would be interested in implementing its pilot program - [http://operi.ca/?page\\_id=1811](http://operi.ca/?page_id=1811). The program promises a way to responsibly and effectively transition public education to a model that suits today's needs. If you know of any such educators, please encourage them to contact OPERI - [http://operi.ca/?page\\_id=223](http://operi.ca/?page_id=223).

### Supporting the Snowflake Model

The Snowflake Model is a method for organizing people to bring about a desired change. It is described in a guide titled *Organizing: People, Power, Change* - [http://operi.ca/?attachment\\_id=1976](http://operi.ca/?attachment_id=1976) that was produced through a collaborative effort by The David Suzuki Foundation, Leadnow and other reputable groups working to improve our lives. OPERI has adopted the model as the most effective way to build the grassroots movement needed to transform public education into something that is more humane and authentic, and more relevant. See below for more detail.

**Reminder:** August 2-6<sup>th</sup> are the dates of this year's AERO conference - <https://www.aeroconference.org>. For a reduced rate, join The Alliance for Self-Directed Education (ASDE) - <https://www.self-directed.org>. These two organizations are major contributors and leaders among those working to transform our schools. They strengthen local groups like OPERI. Following and supporting them advances our goals.

## The Recap of June 2017



Original post by Richard Cohen of *Zen and the Art of Early Childhood Education* - <https://www.facebook.com/artofearlychildhood>. This quote was also used in the film *Beyond Measure* - <http://beyondmeasurefilm.com>.

### Touching the Emotions

- Michelle Ferreri's "raw and unfiltered parenting rant for all those parents who have kids struggling in school" had broad appeal - <https://www.facebook.com/MichelleFerrericom/videos/618120915048097/>

### Local Initiatives

- *Loose Parts Adventure Play at Meadowlands Public School* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKLiJChLCXU&feature=share>. Thinking Outside - <http://www.thinkingoutside.ca> is a website that the Ottawa teachers in this video maintain to encourage learning in the out-of-doors. They are on Facebook @LearnOutside. They also take their students to the Ottawa Forest and Nature School - <http://childnature.ca/ottawa-forest-and-nature-school/>, which is a member of the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada - <http://childnature.ca>.
- La Fondation Momentum Jeunesse – is an Ottawa charity dedicated to the mental health of children. It promotes play and movement with posting such as *Kids and Free Play* - <https://www.tfo.org/en/universe/tfo-247/100929922/kids-and-free-play> and *Why Kids Shouldn't Sit Still In Class* - <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/03/21/well/family/why-kids-shouldnt-sit-still-in-class.html?smid=tw-share&r=0&referer=https%3A%2F%2Ft.co%2FPoxaIFh2Sy>.

### Postings of Initiatives taking Place Outside Public Education

While OPERI is committed to strengthening public education, it recognizes that today's children cannot wait for change to take place. Following are four not-for-profit Ottawa learning centers started by teachers and parents who felt unable to obtain through public schools the learning environments they want for children. From them we can gain more insight into learner-centered education and how to restructure the public system.

- Compass Centre for Self-Directed Learning - <http://www.compassteens.org>, an affiliate of North Star - <http://www.northstarteens.org/#learningisnatural>.
- Revel Academy - <https://www.revelacademy.ca>, an affiliate of Acton Academy - <http://www.actonabq.org>
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- Blue Sky School - <https://blueskyschool.ca>, describing itself as “The Experimental Prototype School of Tomorrow”.
- Blue Whale Childrens Centre - <http://www.bluewhalechildrenscentre.ca>, stressing community, individual uniqueness and balancing boundaries with freedom.

### Concern for “Successful” Students

- *Wondering What Happened to Your Class Valedictorian? Not Much, Research Shows* by Eric Baker for *Money*, a publication of Time Inc. - <http://money.us/2rhVVNm>)
- *Is the U.S. Education System Producing a Society of “Smart Fools”?* by Claudia Wallis for *Scientific American* - [https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/is-the-u-s-education-system-producing-a-society-of-ldquo-smart-fools-rdquo/?wt.mc=SA\\_Facebook-Share](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/is-the-u-s-education-system-producing-a-society-of-ldquo-smart-fools-rdquo/?wt.mc=SA_Facebook-Share))
- *Why Grades Shouldn’t Exist*: video by Alfie Kohn - <https://youtu.be/lfRALeA3mdU>
- *Prepare Our Kids for Life, Not Standardized Tests*: video by Ted Dintersmith - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rvvh9aoyeZs&feature=youtu.be>
- *Education Is a System of Indoctrination of the Young*: video by Noam Chomsky - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVqMAlgAnlo>
- *How Society Kills Our Creativity*, an award-winning short film - <http://www.upliftedlife.com/how-society-kills-our-creativity-in-a-breathtaking-award-winning-short-film/>

### Self-directed and learner centered developments

- *Unconventional self-directed learning a hit at Hamilton high school* by Caroline Alphonso for the *Globe and Mail* - [https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/unconventional-self-directed-learning-a-hit-at-hamilton-high-school/article29045081/?utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_medium=Referrer%3A+Social+Network+%2F+Media&utm\\_campaign=Shared+Web+Article+Links](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/unconventional-self-directed-learning-a-hit-at-hamilton-high-school/article29045081/?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=Referrer%3A+Social+Network+%2F+Media&utm_campaign=Shared+Web+Article+Links). The Westmount Secondary School described in this article is a member of the *Canadian Coalition of Self-Directed Learners* - <http://ccsdl.ca>
- *Self-Directed Education—Unschooling and Democratic Schooling* by Peter Gray for *Oxford Research Encyclopedias* - <http://ow.ly/S5PV30cjNHA>

- *A Survey of Grown Unschoolers: Overview of Findings* by Peter Gray for *Psychology Today* - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/201406/survey-grown-unschoolers-i-overview-findings>.
- *The Alliance for Self-Directed Education* (ASDE) - <https://www.self-directed.org>
- *School's Over: How to Have Freedom & Democracy in Education*, new book by Jerry Mintz - <http://www.educationrevolution.org/store/product/schools-out-how-to-have-freedom-and-democracy-in-education/>.

### **A Finale**

*How to Start a Movement* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXMnDG3QzxE&sns=em>, a TED Talk by Derek Sivers.

### **The Snowflake Model**

The Snowflake Model provides a fun and meaningful way for people to organize for change with little effort. Successfully implemented, it forms the strong network of like-minded people essential to a movement for change. It allows members to remain anonymous, except to a few trusted friends, while they stay informed.

It begins with a couple of friends identifying others with the same concerns. Together they form a snowflake of up to 8 members. One of them acts as the head of the group. As the group identifies more concerned people, a second snowflake is formed with a member of the first one serving as its head. From the initial snowflake, an endless number of interconnected groups are formed.

The role of the head is to make a monthly personal contact with each member of his or her group. The task is simple. It can be seen as an excuse to stay in touch with friends on a regular basis and to build new friendships. Members of snowflakes will receive by email the latest issue of *The OPERI Recap*. When contacting their snowflake members, heads can confirm that members have received *The Recap* and perhaps draw attention to some item of particular interest. They can also remind people to visit the OPERI Facebook group and scroll down to review items of possible interest that were not included in *The Recap*. Other members of a snowflake have little to do beyond the monthly talk with their head.

In addition to organizing individuals for change, OPERI is working to develop the model as a coalition of groups dedicated to the wellbeing of children. Uniting such groups increases the possibilities for hosting significant events such as conferences and film screenings. It also helps to bring attention to some of the many ways people are working to improve the lives of young people.

If you would like to be a member of a snowflake, please send your name and email address to [contact@operi.ca](mailto:contact@operi.ca) - [http://operi.ca/?page\\_id=223](http://operi.ca/?page_id=223). Your personal information will be kept private.