Julien, A. A. I. (2024). A review of the book: *The advice trap: Be humble, stay curious & change the way you lead forever,* by M. Bungay Stanier, 2020**.** *International Journal for Leadership in Learning*, *24*(1), 1-4. https://doi.org/10.29173/ijll42

Book Review:
The Advice Trap: Be Humble, Stay Curious & Change the Way You Lead Forever

by M. Bungay Stanier (2020).

Adonaï Aly Isaac Julien

Abstract

The Advice Trap is a short book accessible to anyone who wants to improve their leadership and to those interested in coaching and business management. The central theme of the book is that giving advice about a problem, in general, does not actually solve the problem, much less benefit the person asking for it. Bungay Stanier explains why rushing to give advice during a conversation is a trap. Very interesting tools, applicable in several professional fields are developed throughout the book's 248 pages to help you control your desire to always want to give advice and to help be a good leader. This is a very practical book, very useful on several levels, and a good companion to help us tame our advice monster. We are led to evolve, surpass ourselves, and improve the quality of our relationships with others. And the advice trap has the necessary tools to help us do it.

Bungay Stanier, M. (2020). The advice trap: Be humble, stay curious and change the way you lead forever. Box of Crayons Press.

Keywords: leadership, coaching, humility

The Advice Trap is a short book accessible to anyone who wants to improve their leadership and to those interested in coaching and business management. It helps us understand that we all have an inner advice monster that surfaces in our interactions with others and prevents us from getting better results from the people we lead, mentor, or coach. We don't take the time to listen to identify the real challenges; we rush to speak. Bungay Stanier explains why rushing to give advice during a conversation is a trap. The central theme of the book is that giving advice about a problem, in general, does not actually solve the problem, much less benefit the person asking for it. Very interesting tools, applicable in several professional fields are developed throughout the book's 248 pages to help you control your desire to always want to give advice and to help be a good leader.

The book is structured in three chapters and contains exercises to help us use the tools offered by Bungay Stanier. The first part explains how difficult it is to deal with our urge to give advice and how we can change our behaviors. Change can be easy or difficult, but it is necessary to tame our advice monster. And for this process of change, Bungay Stanier presents us with four steps, which are: first, know what triggers our advice monster; then, understand our behavior after the trigger; then, analyze the benefits and punishments; and finally, visualize our future selves and how this process of change will benefit us. The second part details methods you can use to stay curious a little longer. In this chapter, he presents several techniques for practicing curiosity for longer. We also explored the importance of giving and receiving feedback. The last part explains how to apply and develop our coaching habits. Bungay Stanier shows us that being generous is important as a coach, and that it consists above all in the ability to see the good in every person and in any situation. Then we saw that to be a good coach, you also must be someone who can be

coached. The author then gives us the secret to mastering coaching, which is to continue learning, and finally, he explains how and when we can give advice.

In his previous book, **The Coaching Habit**, Bungay Stanier (2016) explains that by saying less and asking more, you can work less hard and have more impact. Having a good coaching habit means staying curious a little longer and rushing to give advice a little slower. Unfortunately, we are always inclined to speak and give advice automatically when someone starts talking to us; this is what Bungay Stanier calls the advice trap. So, he decided to share with us some tools to fight our advice monster and to be a better leader and coach.

As a recent medical graduate and master's student in health education, I find that the tools proposed in this book could help improve the quality of health services and medical training. A medical consultation is a conversation in which a health problem is investigated. Bungay Stanier presents six ways people fail to discover the real challenge (Chapter 2), which he describes as "foggy-fier". He emphasizes that "your job is to stop seeking for solutions and start finding challenges" (p. 84). Once we get a real medical problem, whether physical or psychological, it will be easier to help people. I really appreciated how Bungay Stanier linked the 7 essential coaching questions to the process of giving feedback. He showed us that "coaching and feedback are often collapsed into the same category" (p. 154). Although "coaching is the act of staying curious, feedback is when you need to share your point of view" (p. 155). Using some of the seven essential coaching questions for medical students on internship or for healthcare staff in a hospital can really contribute to the development of practical skills.

One of the interesting points of **The Advice Trap** is that it gives practical advice on how to stay curious longer and how to manage a conversation well, which is an essential skill in many professional fields and even in our personal lives. Controlling our advice monster can improve our leadership and our interactions with others. This is a very practical book, very useful on several levels, and a good companion to help us tame our advice monster. We are led to evolve, surpass ourselves, and improve the quality of our relationships with others. And the advice trap has the necessary tools to help us do it.

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***Corresponding author:** Adonaï Aly Isaac Julien, University of Ottawa.
(ajuli076@uottawa.ca)

Judson, G., & Dougherty, M. (2024). Imagination as a catalyst for relational leadership: Educational leaders' perspectives**.** *International Journal for Leadership in Learning*, *24*(1), 5–35. https://doi.org/10.29173/ijll43

Imagination as a Catalyst for Relational Leadership:

Educational Leaders' Perspectives

Gillian Judson & Meaghan Dougherty

Abstract

This research examines the role of imagination in relational leadership. Specifically, the following question was explored through a case study of a unique offering of an imagination-focused MEd program in Educational Leadership in a large, public research institution in British Columbia, Canada: How do participants understand imagination's role in leadership after completing a two-year imagination-focused MEd leadership program? The 13 participants—all aspiring and emerging leaders in their professional settings—shared their developing conceptions of leadership, imagination, and the role of imagination in educational leadership. Participants articulated how imagination contributes to understanding themselves as leaders, engaging others with empathy, and building connections. The *relational* role of imagination was a dominant theme. According to participants, imagination is necessary for forming and enriching relationships, and reciprocally, relationships enhance imagination. Participants indicated how imagination supports their sense of belonging; imagination allowed participants to see themselves as potential leaders, and to feel they belonged "at the leadership table." According to these preliminary findings, imagination may also create more opportunity in leadership. Overall, imagination emerges in this study as promoting not only relational, but *humanizing* leadership practices. This research contributes to understandings of relational leadership and highlights directions for future research. It identifies new directions for supporting equity and diversity in educational leadership and has clear implications for leadership education.

***Keywords*:** imagination; educational leadership; humanizing leadership; relational leadership; equity

Background

Human beings are relational; we need relationships to survive and thrive in the world. And yet, relationality has not always been a focus of research in leadership theory or practice (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). The "story most often told" in leadership has tended to emphasize individuals in formal positions of hierarchical power, and the traits, skills, and behaviors these individuals can universally employ to be effective (Dugan, 2017, p. xv). Leader-centric—or "heroic" (Sobral & Furtado, 2019)—approaches tend to disregard human connection and the emergent and contextual nature of leadership. Missing from these individualized conceptions of leadership is a concern for all the other people—the relational beings—that actively participate in and shape communities or organizations. Missing too is a sense of the complexity of contexts and the multiple ways in which processes, people, beliefs, and values interact. Clarke (2018) suggests that conceptions of leadership based on formalized hierarchies of power, top-down influence, and assumptions of universal applicability are no longer appropriate in a highly complex, diverse, and dynamic world. Rather, relationality and the multiple facets of a relational approach to understanding leadership are.

Scholarship on relational leadership theory and practice acknowledges the interconnected nature of human beings and the complexly interconnected nature of the world (Uhl-Bien, 2004, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). We seek to contribute to scholarship in this area. Our case study research focuses on a largely unexamined aspect of relational leadership: the role of imagination. Imagination is defined here as "the ability to envision the possible in all things; it is the generative feature of mind that enables understanding of the self, and others, and that fuels creativity and innovation" (Judson, 2020, p. 79). This article shares findings from a case study with 13 graduates of a two-year imagination-focused MEd program in a public research institution in British

Columbia, Canada. Through this research we sought to understand participants' perceptions of imagination's role in leadership. Our research question was: How do participants understand imagination's role in leadership after completing a two-year imagination-focused MEd leadership program?

While some of the themes expressed by participants predictably aligned with the goals and foci of the program, this research provided surprising findings on the relationship between imagination and leadership and on the potential of imagination in creating space for diversity at the leadership table. Interestingly, participants described imagination as a catalyst for a more humanizing future for education and educational leadership. Their responses also revealed a complex and dynamic relationship between imagination and relationship—imagination is integral to building relationships and is enriched and further cultivated through relationship. In addition, data revealed a connection between imagination and inclusion: several participants indicated that through developing understandings of imagination and leadership, they were able to envision themselves as belonging as leaders. The findings from this case study have notable implications for leadership education, diversifying leadership, and promoting inclusivity.

Following a review of literature on relational leadership and imagination, we describe our research methodology and case, and present our participants' conceptualizations of imagination, leadership, and the role of imagination in leadership. The paper concludes with a discussion of implications and recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

On Relational Leadership Theory

The field of leadership studies provides varied perspectives on what leadership is, what it does, and what is required to be an effective leader. Traditional theories of leadership emphasize

personal characteristics or traits that are necessary to lead, as well as the interactional style of leadership between leaders and their communities (Dugan, 2017). For example, "soft skills" like being responsible, flexible, and motivating are considered necessary to engage and influence others towards an identified goal (Tang, 2019). Using these skills, leaders may lead others in an authoritative, managerial, paternalistic, or democratic and transformational way (Tang, 2019). Sobral and Furtado (2019) call these traditional approaches "heroic" in that they are hierarchical and leader-centric with a sense that individual leaders have exemplary traits or skills to make change. These heroic traditions include charismatic, transformational, and visionary leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Blackmore, 2013; Kowalski, 2010; Sobral & Furtado, 2019; Sy et al., 2018). Sobral and Furtado argue that heroic approaches reveal thinking of a top-down industrial era in which leadership was considered unidirectional and originating from one person. These approaches reflect white-Western (i.e., colonial, racialized, and gendered) thinking about what leadership is and how it is enacted (Blackmore, 2013; Ladkin & Patrick, 2022; Wane et al., 2023). These leader-centric ways of theorizing, practicing, and researching leadership do not suit the culturally diverse and rapidly changing circumstances in knowledge societies today (Clarke, 2018; Sobral & Furtado, 2019).

No single leader can hold, as an asset or trait, the knowledge, expertise, and experience needed to navigate complex and rapidly changing contexts (Grint, 2010). Nor can a leader examine those contexts through all necessary perspectives. Instead, leaders work collaboratively and thus, leadership becomes a practice or enactment rather than a formal position. That is, leaders emerge in relation to particular contexts—in time, space, and in varied arrangements with others and in relation to specific ideas, concepts, or goals. Relational approaches to theorizing, practicing, and researching leadership bring into focus the connections and networks in process and in context that

constitute leadership (Clarke, 2018; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). Relational leadership takes as a core tenant that, as Clarke (2018) states, "leadership, first and foremost, takes place or is enacted through relationships and networks of relationships" (p. 12). He goes on to acknowledge the larger scope of who contributes to leadership stating, "many individuals may be required to exercise leadership irrespective of whether they occupy formal leader roles or not" and, how leadership is the result of collective capacity and action: "leadership should be seen more as a potential capacity in organisations, rather than simply the sum of recognised 'leaders'" (p. 12).

Relational leadership is challenging to define concisely as it involves a range of theoretical perspectives and practices from more entitative to more constructionist views (Hosking, 2000; Hosking & Morley, 1991). Entitative perspectives on relationality, for example, consider relationships, but do so in relation to individuals. For example, entitative approaches consider how individuals form relationships, and then how they each work as individuals with and in those dyadic relationships to make change. Relationships are the entities or things individuals work with to advance leadership goals (Clarke, 2018; Hosking, 2000). From an entitative perspective, relationship may be studied within a more traditional view of hierarchical power (e.g., power between formal leader and follower). Simply put, an entitative perspective recognizes that leaders build relationships with followers to influence and produce change.

In contrast, constructionist perspectives in relational leadership theory shift attention away from the individuals involved, to the shared spaces between. From a constructionist, relational leadership perspective, understanding leadership means understanding the processes of social construction between co-operating and coordinating stakeholders (Hosking, 2000). Leadership is understood as emerging between participants in dynamic and changing contexts. Leadership involves leaders and followers and exists in the space between these participants. The focus

therefore in this domain of relational leadership is on the "invisible threads" connecting all people engaged in leadership processes (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012, p. xx) and the responsibilities these people share. A constructionist, relational leadership approach reveals a shift, therefore, away from formalized leaders in positions of power, to connections between people in communities or collectives and the processes that generate change.

With relationality and connection situated at the core of this way of theorizing, practicing, and researching leadership, relational leadership theory acknowledges diversity in leadership in terms of who is recognized as a leader, what they do, who they are, and how they do their work. It acknowledges the multiple spaces in which leadership occurs and, thus, embraces different voices, ideas, beliefs, and values in leadership. As described below, this constructionist, relational leadership perspective aligns with our ontological and epistemological positionalities as educators and as researchers. Before exploring the role of imagination in leadership, and educational leadership specifically, we review the literature on imagination.

On Imagination

The human imagination is a capacity many people associate with whimsy, fantasy, and child's play (Judson, 2020, 2023b). This research works to expand and enrich this narrow conception of imagination, defining it as "the ability to envision the possible in all things; it is the generative feature of mind that enables understanding of the self, and others, and that fuels creativity and innovation" (Judson, 2020, p. 79). Informed by the work of imagination scholars such as Asma (2017), Egan (1992, 1997), Pendleton-Jullian and Brown (2018), and Stephenson (2009) among others, we are curious about how imagination contributes to relational leadership practices and, specifically, practices that support equity. While there is not much research on imagination in leadership (Judson, 2020), extant literature offers some insight.

First, research on imagination suggests that it is essential for change. Imagination comes before any creative solution or innovation (Judson, 2023b; Judson & Dougherty, 2023; Liu & Noppe-Brandon, 2009; Robinson, 2017); it represents a way to conceive of, and bridge, the gap between the now or known and the not-yet (Pendleton-Jullian & Brown, 2018). It is, indeed, involved in all the changes we do see in the world. Evoking this idea metaphorically, Judson (2023b) conceptualizes imagination as the soil out of what all innovations grow. Being the source of novel ideas and solutions, what leaders can possibly do is rooted in imagination (Beghetto, 2018; Cranston & Kusanovich, 2014; Greene, 1995; Spehler & Slattery, 1999). Cranston and Kusanovich (2014) note the importance of this possibility-seeking in leadership stating: "without imagination, school leaders cannot perceive even one outcome, let alone the infinite that are possible" (p. 59). Without imagination, we cannot envision how things may be better and how we can contribute to making them better (Pendleton-Jullian & Brown, 2018). Pendleton-Jullian and Brown (2018) argue that it is imagination tied to action that is required to navigate and thrive in a "broadly connected, rapidly changing, and radically contingent world" (p. 7). Imagination, thus, can offer the flexibility and capacity of mind to work for change within a dynamic environment.

It is important to remember that imagination, on its own, does not guarantee ethical leadership practice—using imagination says nothing of how this imagination is used (Asma, 2017). Imagination can be put to use to support action for social justice (Greene, 1995)—it offers a shared emotional space to envision the not-yet (Judson, 2022)[1]. Rapp (2002) suggests that leaders have a responsibility to engage the "oppositional imagination" in support of social justice (p. 226). Patricia Werhane's (e.g. 1998, 2002) extensive work in the realm of business ethics identifies the imagination—specifically the moral imagination—as essential to ethical decision-making. By

[1] While a fulsome discussion of 'social justice' is beyond the scope of this paper, we ground our work in Fraser's (2009) model, emphasizing justice through redistribution, recognition, and representation.

enabling understanding of other perspectives' and advocating for others, imagination helps equip leaders to address issues of ethics and social justice (Ciulla, 2015; Judson, 2022; Novak et al., 2014; Rapp, 2002). Our research digs more deeply into the role of imagination in relational leadership, and how this contributes to more inclusive, humanizing space for leaders.

Methodology and Analysis

In keeping with case study methodology (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) we begin by indicating the delimits of our research context, describing the participants, our data collection and analysis processes, and our positionality as researchers.

About The Case

Our case in this research was a unique offering of an imagination-focused Master of Education (MEd) in Educational Leadership program in a large, public research institution in British Columbia, Canada. The 18 students in the program were K-12 educators with varied backgrounds and experiences. Many of the cohort members were involved in informal leadership (e.g., mentoring new teachers, providing professional development sessions, engaging students in various initiatives) and some held formal administrative positions (e.g., head teacher, vice principal, principal). Thirteen of the students agreed to participate in our research.

The program was conceived as an imaginative project, where exploration of imagination, education, and leadership were woven into traditional educational leadership curriculum (including courses on leadership theory, organizational theory, educational policy, and research methods). The program applied a particular theoretical framework for imagination—called Imaginative Education—to educational leadership. Kieran Egan's (1997, 2005) theory of Imaginative Education (IE) largely focuses on teaching and learning for people of all ages. However, it has value for explaining leadership too as it is a sociocultural theory of human

development that describes how our imaginations grow, change and work throughout our lives. In line with Lev Vygotksy's understanding of human development, Egan (1997, 2005) describes how the human imagination and meaning-making are shaped by an array of different thinking tools—or what he calls "cognitive tools"—that they employ. These tools help human beings to think and remember because they bring emotion, imagination, and knowledge together. Egan's theory of IE describes different sets of cognitive tools that accompany orality (e.g., the story-form, mysteries and puzzles, dramatic tensions, metaphor, vivid mental imagery), literacy (e.g., humanization of meaning, sense of wonder, extremes of experience and limits of reality, heroic qualities), theoretical language (e.g., general ideas and their anomalies, sense of agency) and highly reflexive language (e.g., irony).

A portion of each course in the MEd program was allocated to developing understanding of imagination and connecting imagination to the specific content of the course. Cognitive tools of IE were employed to shape course content and applied to learning about key leadership processes including understanding self and other, cultivating equitable communities, and communicating in meaningful ways. In short, the cohort of MEd students learned about imagination in educational leadership while also experiencing an imaginative learning process.

Our desire to better understand imagination and to produce actionable knowledge for the field of leadership education led to our research question: How do participants understand imagination's role in leadership after completing a two-year imagination-focused MEd Leadership program?

Data Collection and Analysis

In line with best practices in case study research as outlined by Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995), data were drawn from multiple data sources: individual reflective assignments, a

collaborative manifesto, artefacts from a series of community-based sessions with practicing leaders, and individual interviews with the cohort members. We reviewed participants' assignments and artefacts collaboratively early in the research process to provide context and to structure the interviews with participants. Then, we conducted semi-structed interviews with each participant (n=13). Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Our questions focused on participants' perceptions of leadership, imagination, and the role of imagination in leadership, as well as their thoughts on the program pedagogy and structure.

Interviews occurred over Zoom (due to pandemic safety requirements), were audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim. The interviews focused on student intentions in entering the program, student learning (in imagination and leadership, explicitly), significant learning events, and how students were enacting their learning as educators and leaders. We were both involved in interviewing each participant. Following each interview, we engaged in a debrief and reflection on the content together, and individually kept ongoing research memos.

Processes of data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously and in an ongoing way as we engaged in examination of data as it emerged and recursively returned to data as more was gathered. We took an inductive analytic approach of in-case and cross-case coding of interview transcripts (see Miles et al., 2014). We each individually coded all transcripts and then we compared codes. We discussed our codes and were able to interrogate our analytic process and the code creation to come to agreement. Our initial analysis identified key areas for exploration from the semi-structured interviews, including developing conceptualizations of imagination and leadership, leadership practices, and the role of imagination in enacting leadership.

Researcher Positionality

We entered into this research as educators committed to cultivating imagination in ourselves and in others. We recognize the value of imagination in catalyzing curiosity, empathy, and connection in teaching and learning and in leadership. In our work as educators, we are committed to the potential of education to support anti-oppressive change, and of leadership to help envision and navigate change, in pursuit of equity and social justice. We are passionate about exploring this potentiality in our classrooms, communities, and in our research. As researchers, we see ourselves as always already in relationship; we do not exist outside of relational entanglements. We identify ourselves as actively becoming within relational arrangements and we recognize our knowledge as dynamic, partial, and relational (see Barad, 2007). Our intention is to produce actionable knowledge that contributes to our understanding of educational leadership and helps shape leadership education for the future.

We both were involved in the graduate program that our participants completed; Gillian taught in and co-designed the program and Meaghan worked as a teaching assistant with the cohort. We acknowledge that our relationships with the participants (as students) were potentially both productive and an impediment to our research process. It appeared that our existing relationships allowed the participants to trust in our intentions, the purpose of our research, and they seemed to feel comfortable discussing parts of the program that we had shared. This shared experience created a common language and understanding so participants could expand upon the significance of their different experiences. On the other hand, given our relationship with participants, explaining what did not work or was not helpful to their experience may have been more difficult for them to share. We acknowledge this is a potential weakness of this research.

Findings

Participants discussed how their ideas of leadership and imagination changed substantially through their studies. They also shared the importance of relational leadership and practical aspects of imagination. While these findings are congruent with the focus of the MEd program and the IE framework guiding their learning, participants also shared insights about imagination as a leadership process and capacity. This is the new knowledge we gained from engaging in this qualitative research. They explicated the relationship between imagination and leadership, highlighting necessary and connected aspects like empathy, connection, risk-taking, vulnerability, and collaboration. Of interest, the data showed a reciprocal relationship where imagination promotes human connection and this connection further cultivates imaginative potential. Also surprisingly, the participants shared how their reconceptualizations of imagination and leadership opened space for diversity and belonging in educational leadership. Below, we offer a rich description of these findings, and discuss the implications for leadership and leadership education.

Developing Conceptualizations of Leadership

Entering this program, participants' views of leadership were leader-centric and focused on desirable qualities, traits, or behaviors. Through the program they learned to see leadership as a relational practice. They discussed leadership in terms of processes of connecting to others for the purposes of empowering others, shared growth, development, and common work for the benefit of larger communities. Good leadership, according to Baljit[2], is not a "blueprint" or "top down" but is, rather, "all about relationships." As Angela succinctly stated: "leadership is less management, but more about creating relationships—maintaining them and just being there as a good human being for everybody that you come in contact with." Reflecting on what good

[2] All participants have been provided a pseudonym.

leadership entails, Jose stated, “it's the human element of it, it's the empathy behind it.” Clark stated that “relationships are foundational” for leadership. He went on to describe leadership as being about “empathy, relationships, seeing the whole picture, being holistic.”

Departing from a sense of the “all knowing” leader, participants identified leadership in terms of a collaborative process of growth and inquiry with a common purpose. Students recognized that leaders need to assess, imagine, and enact relational processes in various ways, with different people, in the various contexts within which these relational encounters occur. They spoke of how leaders must relate in multiple ways to lead in diverse communities. For example, Clark emphasized how leadership is not about having all the answers or necessarily being responsible for finding all the answers. Leadership does not mean you “know everything.” Rather, leadership involves growing and searching and seeking the possible with others; it is about growth and collaboration. For Baljit, leadership involves “looking for answers. Not necessarily having them but helping guide people, helping empower them to be better and believe in themselves as well.”

Connecting to Baljit’s point, Octovio offered that true collaboration involves inspiring others and growing others’ abilities to engage with possibility. Leadership thus involves shared decision-making, trust, and curiosity:

> I've always been someone who gravitates towards collaborative processes, but [this program] really caused me to think … how do I inspire other people's thinking and imagination? I think that shared decision making has become something that has evolved [for me] ... trusting the thoughts and the imaginings of my colleagues and that I don't have to be the one who comes up with the final piece—we're going to build this together. And I'm here to support your vision.

> We've got this wider vision, but my job now is to help you all tap into that vision and the best way to do that is to harness everybody else's thinking and wonderings and imaginings to say—What could this be and what do we want it to be? And I think that's been a real boost to my leadership.

Participants recognized that connecting collaboratively requires vulnerability, humility, empathy, and curiosity. It can be challenging to compromise a position of power and expertise to truly collaborate with others. For example, Yumiko shared:

> Leadership doesn't have to mean that you have all the answers. *It just means that you're the person that's willing to find answers with others.* It's okay to be vulnerable—as a learner, as a human, as a teacher, as a future leader—that's part of what we do as people. We're humans and we need to be vulnerable and that actually doesn't mean that you're weak or unsure what you're doing, it just means that you're human. (emphasis added)

Participants' understanding of leadership shifted from a sense of power and expertise sitting within one person's formal role, to seeing the processes involved in connecting, inspiring, and collaborating with others to expand what is possible. Participants recognized that a leader needs to be able to be vulnerable, show curiosity, and engage empathetically for authentic collaboration. The next two sections describe participants' developing understanding of imagination and how it directly contributes to leadership processes. Participants discussed imagination's roles in the relational and humanizing practices of good leaders, bringing into focus often unacknowledged ways in which imagination supports leadership. We connect humanizing leadership practices to opening up space for diversity and equity in leadership education, and subsequently, educational leadership.

Developing Conceptions of Imagination

Participants' conceptualizations of imagination developed throughout the program. Interestingly, most participants started with a narrow and stereotypical view of imagination as representing whimsy, fantasy, and the impractical. As their understandings expanded, participants found it difficult to define imagination as "one thing." For example, Angela's understanding of imagination went from "Disney" to "doable", from a sense of imaginary things to practical roles. She said:

> I started with sort of that Disneyland-style perspective of, "imagine outside of the box" … you can just imagine your way out of it. And it's just like as simple as that. You have your little feathery bird friends come along and help you out. It became so much more practical. It's applicable and everyone is already doing it.

Similarly, by the end of the program, Brian's understanding of imagination changed "from that kind of whimsy, high fantasy imagination to what's actually practical and usable and accessible." For Octovio, the scope and diversity of imagination makes it challenging to understand. They learned to "stop thinking about it as being only one thing and seeing that it can be so many things." For them, "the most challenging thing about imagination is that it can be so many things."

When asked why they chose this imagination-focused leadership program, some participants self-identified as imaginative and said they wanted to use this capacity in leadership. Others felt they wanted to develop their imaginations. Universally participants described imagination as a capacity everyone has that can and must be developed. For example, Hans reflected: "I feel that everyone is imaginative, that everyone can be more imaginative if they put

effort towards it." Similarly, Chen acknowledged how imagination is a kind of potential tool everyone has and that it is educable:

> it's something I came in with, but I think my understanding of what imagination is just got stronger or what it could be and how to access it maybe was something that allowed me to develop more through the program.

Overall, participants' initial conceptualizations of imagination in action as involving formal role plays, skits, or artistic creations changed to include broader and more subtle understandings of imagination. One theme emerging in relation to participants' broadened understanding was the role of imagination in seeing things differently. Participants described imagination as involving taking on new perspectives or, metaphorically speaking, looking at situations or ideas through different lenses. They described imagination as representing the new, novel, unique, and appealing. Imagination involves actively seeking out what is *not yet*. As Sebastien poetically stated, using imagination involves "some sort of ingenuity, or [finding] a stone that hasn't been turned over."

By seeking new ideas and new perspectives, imagination represents possibility. Clark expressed this similarly: "I understand imagination as perceiving, wanting, envisioning the possible and one of things I really appreciated [was] when you talked about the wonder-full and seeing the possibility in everything." Participants equated imagination in leadership with seeking and supporting alternatives to the status quo, new ideas, and actions. Octovio, for example, described imagination as co-seeking possibility:

> I [understand] imagination and leadership as possibility … I think that's the thing that I take away and put into practice every day now. What are the possibilities in this? And it's not just me imagining what might those possibilities be. But I really

> learned how to tap into other people as a resource to exploring possibility and deciding how might we take these possibilities. Which ones do we want to pursue as actual opportunities and bring to fruition?

Similarly, when asked about imagination's role in leadership Brian, replied:

> It's creating a culture and creating an environment where that bigger thinking and strange thinking ... is encouraged and is welcome and that might not be the idea that you go with, but it opens up the door to different possibilities. That's something I've always really tried to use in my classroom, and I've always really tried to use as a leader.

The next section elaborates on participants' understanding of how imagination is grounded and practical and how it supports relational leadership practices in subtle but profound ways. Specifically, we see the ways in which participants saw imagination as *required* in relational leadership practices. Imagination allows for connection and collaboration, which enable humanizing and relational leadership. However, imagination is also cultivated in and through relationship. In the following section, we examine the complex and reciprocal relationship of imagination and connection within the context of humanizing, relational leadership.

Imagination as a Catalyst for Relational Leadership

As indicated in the previous sections, participants expressed a strongly relational conception of leadership including the importance of connecting to others, demonstrating empathy, and understanding a wide range of perspectives. It was also clear from these data that participants identified imagination as necessary for inclusive leadership processes to occur. Imagination was identified as essential for engaging with knowledge and seeking new or novel ideas. For example, in terms of relationality, when asked what one of her main learnings was from the course, Clark

stated: “I think imagination is hugely intertwined and foundational for relationships.” To the same question, Angela replied “[I learned] that all leaders have to be imaginative in some capacity, in order to relate to every single person that you come across.” Noting the emotional aspect of imagination, Neha said: “[it’s] emotional engagement that I think I've learned about imagination ... that it is a way to connect with people.”

Many participants identified imagination’s role in empathy specifically. For example, Clark said, “imagination is needed for empathy for relationships, and for leadership as well. At least to be an effective leader in my mind.” No imagination, no empathy: “Relationships are foundational. Empathy is huge. And that takes imagination … you can't have empathy if you're not able to, to [understand] others’ perspectives.” When asked about how she understands imagination’s role in leadership, Angela stated: “it's really paying attention to that humanistic side ... and just being together. And I think that's what the biggest growth for me is, being able to imagine what's going on for other people.” Brian even acknowledged that studying imagination and working with imagination “made [him] a more empathetic leader.”

In addition to understanding others’ perspectives, participants suggested that imagination creates space for diverse ideas. For Yumiko, imagination gives meaning to seeking and valuing others’ perspectives:

> I want to be the understanding, the patient ... kind of leader that goes, Yeah, I understand what you're saying. And I'm hearing you and I'm understanding you. And here, let me give you another perspective to think about.

Brian was humbled by the advocacy imagination allowed:

> I found it a bit humbling, that through imagination, I could actually work even better and advocate for other people's ideas in different ways that maybe I hadn't

> been doing. And I also found the empathy piece of imagination helped me to understand other people's perspectives.

In addition to connecting with others personally and inclusive ways, imagination was identified as important for flexibility—it allows for changing ideas. Yumiko, for example, realized how imagination is necessary for rapidly changing and unprecedented circumstances:

> Before when I thought of leadership and imagination, I thought of them as two separate pieces. But now from my experiences in the program and also being a fly on the wall watching the principals and the leaders in my life, I think that they're connected and one and the same. I think good leadership needs imagination, especially now during COVID. In this uncertain time in our lives, nobody has the answer. Everyone's pivoting and making changes. And I think if you don't have an open mind, you're not willing to try new things, and use your imagination to come up with solutions.

Several participants described a process of questioning or what if'ing within their communities as an example of how imagination supports developing new ideas. Octovio, for example, explained how she introduces "beautiful questions" to her staff that evoke wonder and, in their open-endedness, bring people to a place of considering new ideas: "I start the year with beautiful questions now. And when we meet, we explore things through that, asking a question that opens up the realm of possibility. And then we start to turn over the stones together." Octovio's beautiful questions included prompts such as "Why did/do we…? What if we...? How might we…? How should we…?"

Finally, imagination was identified as necessary to ignite interest, passion, and make communications more meaningful. For example, Brian suggested:

> To me … an imaginative practice, is really about trying to like engage the parts of our students, or the people that we're working with, the parts of their mind, that kind of like sparks that wow feeling or that's interesting. It really sparks their interest, sparks their engagement.

Brian continued, saying imagination allows an emotional connection, a reaching or engagement:

> But it's how we reach that part of a person where they are feeling engaged and interested and their passion is kind of being ignited into a subject. So, to me, with leadership, it's like, how do we do that? How do we kind of like reach that part of the staff that we're working with? Or reach that part of the policy that we're working with or whatever, but how do we reach that inner piece that is really going to ignite interest, action in the person.

Our findings revealed a complex, nuanced understanding of imagination and its roles in relational leadership. Imagination is necessary for empathy and perspective-taking that are needed in building meaningful connections. These connections allow us to 'what if' new futurities together. While imagination is necessary for building connections, our connections also help us further cultivate our imagination.

An unexpected theme arose from the notion of relational leadership. Participants recognized that empathy and perspective-taking promote inclusion, providing space for all people and ideas. This can translate into providing space for more diversity in leadership, in education and beyond.

Creating Space at the Leadership Table

A common theme that emerged from our data was how imagination was diverse and also how it supported diversity. As a space of and for diversity, imagination ultimately allowed people to feel a sense of belonging. For example, Ciara emphasized the difference that imagination

involves: “I see imagination brought through in different ways from different people … carried out or defined differently by different people too.” Yumiko, a student who expressed her concern about “belonging” in the group, associated imagination with an inclusive space for learning. They said imagination offers “a soft start for everyone. Everyone has something to contribute which I really like.” Imagination created a space for all to belong: “I felt like I had a seat at the table; everyone was able to give me space and I was able to share my ideas.”

Picking up the theme of imagination and inclusion, Yumiko stated that imagination created a space for all to contribute:

> And I think that's one really powerful tool of imagination, being able to solve problems and come up with solutions in interesting ways and also to be able to give space to people that maybe historically weren't always given space traditionally, because it's everyone's learning and everyone's coming from their own experience.

Imagination opens doors to seeing things differently; this includes seeing leadership—and one's potential place at the leadership table—differently. A more nuanced and practical understanding of imagination allows for empathy, perspective-taking, and more space for belonging. This has significant implications for leadership education and improving equity and diversity in educational leadership.

In the following discussion, we examine the significance of a nuanced understanding of imagination for *humanizing* relational leadership and consider broader implications for research and practice.

Discussion

We began by pointing to the need to deepen understanding of *relationality* in leadership. We learned through this research, that participants understand imagination as integral to

relationships. The educational leaders we interviewed, described connecting—understanding others' perspectives and their stories—as the work of imagination. These findings align with other scholarship in the field of imagination generally that indicates the powerful connective power of imagination (Asma, 2017; Egan, 2005). For example, as Maxine Greene's (1995) famously said, it is "imagination, above all, that makes empathy possible" (p. 3). Participant responses indicated that imagination enables empathy, vulnerability, perspective-taking, and risk-taking; all of which are necessary in building positive collaborative relationships. It is through imagination that one can empathize and engage with a situation or new knowledge from various perspectives.

Egan (1997, 2005) describes humanizing as an imaginative process. Humanizing is an act that involves connecting on the plane of shared human emotion: it involves imagination as we connect with others' hopes, fears, and passions (Egan, 1997, 2005). This research supports this idea. The data suggest that imagination is necessary for empathy, understanding, and true connection. This understanding of self and other also promotes inclusivity in educational leadership; emerging leaders are able to envision themselves as leaders and feel like they belong at the leadership table. However, relational leadership is not necessarily inclusive or humanizing. For example, entitative conceptions of relational leadership can be purpose-driven and support leader-centric processes. Relational leadership that is more entitative in nature may use connection as a tool to influence others towards pre-determined, and possibly inequitable ends. In contrast, our participants suggested that imagination supports more equitable relationships that honour diversity and provide space for varied backgrounds and experiences. This is the humanizing potential of employing imagination in relational leadership.

Humanizing leadership involves connection and relationality; engaging in the risky and vulnerable collaborative work of the possible requires connection. Imagination is necessary for

collectively envisioning an equitable and just education system and connection is necessary to work towards possible futurities (Judson, 2022). These findings add to understanding of what constitutes and drives humanizing processes. They confirm the importance of relationships for leadership and also contribute to better understanding of what drives the formation and growth of relationships. Acknowledging imagination's roles in connecting to people and to ideas is a step towards improving how these processes occur.

Interestingly, our data suggest a complex and dynamic relationship between imagination and relationship—imagination is both a catalyst for relationship and is also enriched by relationship. As Clark stated, "especially in leadership, imagination is not a solo thing. You need other people." So, connection serves to further cultivate imagination; relationships with people with varied experiences and backgrounds expand our understanding and ability to imagine things differently. Within this culture of connection, *humanizing* relational leadership is possible. Rather than the power and answers residing with a single "leader," ideas, questions, and possible solutions emerge from the spaces in between, from within the connections. This allows for various leaders to emerge in various contexts, regardless of their formal role. This increases diversity in leadership and promotes a sense of belonging. To paraphrase one participant, it allows more people to see themselves "at the leadership table." Imagination may be understood as opening spaces of shared human emotion for everyone. We can imagine leadership differently; we can understand leadership as a relational process of connection that is inclusive and diverse.

Conclusion

These research findings add new knowledge to constructionist understandings of relational leadership theory and practice by highlighting the role of imagination in humanizing connections. They enrich understanding of relational practices in leadership that support and empower others,

rather than simply meet instrumental leader-centric goals. Future research on imagination in leadership might usefully consider *how* imagination develops within the relationships that constitute leadership. We wonder: How do people experience imagining together? How does imagining possibilities inform leadership choices? What influences processes of imagining in relationships? How do different stakeholders experience, engage, and participate in imagining? How does power play out in shared spaces of imagination as stakeholders inter-act around leadership issues? Future research might usefully look at how the cultivation of imagination with/in organizations/communities contributes to individual and collective identity formation and how the development of imagination is affected by positionality and subjectivities, including race, class, gender, and ability.

Based on our findings, there are also clear implications for leadership education. Imagine with us for a moment that increasing calls to imagination (see for example Ardichvili et al., 2016; Anderson, 2023; Brandon, 2023; Judson, 2023a; Paxton & Van Stralen, 2015; Raptis et al., 2021) represent an *imaginative* turn in leadership scholarship. What new pedagogical practices and theories of learning in leadership are required? In an article focusing on arts-based imaginative pedagogy in leadership education, Judson (2023a) points to possible limitations of current leadership education approaches, asking:

> Are current leadership education instructional strategies multi-dimensional or multi-modal enough to cultivate leadership imagination? How well will leadership education instructional strategies support this *imaginative* turn in leadership theory? And importantly, what *theories of learning* are available to support this imaginative pedagogical turn? (p. 76)

While this paper focuses on participants' understandings of imagination, leadership, and imagination's roles in leadership, our broader case study also considers the educational practices in the program itself that developed and enriched participants' understandings of what imagination is and does and how they practice leadership. Future research will hone in on the pedagogical practices and tools of imagination employed in this program that grew these leaders' understandings of imagination and their comfort in employing imagination in their professional lives. This pedagogy will be of value in wider contexts interested in humanizing relational work, and in changing the status quo to support inclusion, equity, and social justice.

Imaginative pedagogical approaches in educational leadership may also promote a ripple effect. That is, imaginative practices promote humanizing relational leadership and disrupt who is traditionally viewed as a leader. This may result in more people seeing themselves as belonging at the leadership table and in others recognizing the value that diverse leaders bring to educational leadership. This process could expand recruitment and retention strategies for educational leadership programs. Will more people seek out leadership positions if imagination and the relational spaces it offers are inclusive to all leaders? How might the "faces" of leadership change? How might new leaders work to humanize education? What new possibilities arise for the future of education? Using this research as a stepping stone, we hope others will join us in pushing past misconceptions of imagination as mere whimsy and acknowledge its role in inclusive relational work in all contexts.

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Biographies

Gillian Judson is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. She gratefully works and learns on unceded traditional Indigenous territories, including those of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem), Kwantlen, Qayqayt and Tsawwassen Nations. She researches the role of imagination in educational leadership, with a specific focus on leadership for social and ecological justice. Dr. Judson also investigates imaginative and ecological teaching practices (PreK through post-secondary) with expertise in a pedagogy called Imaginative Education. Her latest books are entitled *Cultivating Imagination in Leadership: Transforming Schools and Communities* (Judson & Dougherty, Eds., Teachers College Press, 2023), *Imagination and the Engaged Learner: Cognitive Tools for the Classroom.* (Egan & Judson, 2016), *Engaging Imagination in Ecological Education: Practical Strategies for Teaching* (Judson, 2015), and *A Walking Curriculum* (Judson, 2018/2019).

***Corresponding author:** gillian_judson@sfu.ca

Meaghan Dougherty is faculty at Douglas College in the Department of Child and Youth Care. Meaghan is grateful to live on and learn from the traditional, shared, and unceded territories of the šxʷməθkʷəy̓əmaʔɬ təməxʷ (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh-ulh Temíx̱w (Squamish), and sə̓lilwətaʔɬ təməxʷ (Tsleil-Waututh) people. Dr. Dougherty's research interests include imagination and educational leadership, the complex relationship between education and the labour market, relational practice and teaching/learning encounters, and using relational and performative ontologies and methodologies that explore more-than-human entanglements. Most recent projects include: *The Need to Get Somewhere Fast: A Critical Examination of the Transition from Post-secondary Education to Work* (DIO Press, 2022) and co-editing *Cultivating Imagination in Leadership: Transforming Schools and Communities* (Teachers' College Press, 2023) with Gillian Judson.

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https://doi.org/10.29173/ijll44

Preservice Teachers Learning to Teach Online: Developing Teacher Leaders

Rebecca Cooper, Samantha Mrstik, Joye Cauthen, & Jillian Schreffler

Abstract

Technology is woven throughout our daily lives now more than ever. Therefore, teacher education programs need to meet this digital demand and begin to prepare teacher candidates for their future in teaching with technology. Even before COVID-19, K-12 education included virtual schools, therefore, the necessity of preparing teacher candidates for the successful implementation of online instruction are of utmost importance. To meet the needs of their future students, candidates must be prepared to integrate technology into their teaching as well as be prepared to teach online. To prepare 21st century learners, teacher candidates must create learning opportunities for their students to learn with and through technology. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) structure was designed for teachers to understand the relationships between and among technology, pedagogy, and content. The purpose of this research was to revise traditional instruction where the professor models and implements technology tools to allow candidates the opportunity to develop their TPACK in their two years in a teacher education program. To develop the TPACK of teacher candidates, education preparation professionals worked together to design and implement the School of Education, Technology Integration Project. Through this innovative approach developed by a team of professors, the School of Education has changed its' coursework in all programs to include more online teaching, the inclusion of technology for teaching content, and the use of assistive technology. As a result, student teachers and graduates are reporting that they are now being recognized as teacher technology leaders and are showcasing technology lessons at their schools.

***Keywords**:* educator preparation program, TPACK, technology education, online courses, online instruction, educational technology leadership

Literature Review

Why Prepare Teachers to Teach Online?

An increased use of online and virtual learning is becoming wide-spread and is enabling the delivery of educational opportunities beyond the boundaries of face-to-face instruction (Horn, Christensen, & Staker, 2014; Namukasa & Gadanidis, 2011**).** Online or virtual learning options have increased exponentially since the early 2000s (Gulosino & Miron, 2017). The National Center for Educational Statistics (2014, Table 218.20) reported an increase from 317,000 K-12 students in 2002 to 1,816,390 K-12 students in 2010 who were enrolled in online learning courses. Public schools are using three basic online models: supplemental online coursework, all coursework being conducted online, hybrid, or blended instruction (Gemin et al., 2017). It has become increasingly evident that today's educators must be able to combine the teaching of interpersonal relationships/communications with the expanding digital landscape present in their students' lives (International Literacy Association, 2018; Bergeson & Beschorner, 2021). To address this increased enrolment in online and blended courses in the K-12 schooling environment, teachers now need adequate preparation in online/blended pedagogy because online teaching calls for a different skill set than that of face-to-face classroom teaching (McAllister & Graham, 2016). The primary modes of preparing teachers in such practices are through preservice and professional development programs (McAllister & Graham, 2016). As our educational school systems continue to advance in technology, our teachers must be prepared and able to adapt (Starkey, 2020).

Given the paradigm shift prompted by teaching online, it is not surprising that teacher accreditation agencies have now instituted new mandates for educator preparation programs to equip teachers to teach online. Upon graduation, preservice teachers should be competent in teaching with technology and must stay current with their skillsets in the ever-changing digital landscape (Kaufman, 2015). For today's youth and our educators, technology plays a vital role (Birch & Lewis, 2020). All educators, those preparing teacher candidates, teacher candidates, and current K-12 teachers, must learn how to navigate the ever-changing landscape of information technology (Truesdell & Birch, 2013). When teachers have a strong foundation in technology, they have the ability to supplement the content being taught with media and other digital sources which makes for a more effective learning environment and an enhanced scholastic experience for all (Judge & O'Bannon 2008; Krumsvik, 2008; Voithofer et al., 2019).

It is becoming increasingly likely that new teachers who complete an educator preparation program will have online instruction in their curriculum (NEA, 2017) because the profession of teaching is changing rapidly with technology as its driving force (Thomas et al., 2013). With public schools infusing more online course options, teacher candidates need to be equipped to provide online instruction in a variety of learning environments and therefore, more educator preparation programs are committing to educating preservice teachers about online education (Luo et al., 2017). As online learning becomes more relevant in the future of education, the technological skillset required for teaching must adapt (Gille & Britton, 2020) and K-12 teachers must be prepared and able to adapt to this new way of teaching (Starkey, 2020).

Benefits of E-Learning for K-12 Schools

Experts are finding benefits to teaching and learning online. Researchers suggest that the wealth of availability of online resources lessens the need for printed materials. Innovations in problem solving can be displayed and shared through technology. Exemplary work and activities that are imperative for student success can also be shared through this mode. Online learning provides space for the use of videos, discussion forums, and it can be used as a hub for teachers to share ideas (Namukasa & Gadanidis, 2011).

Several states within the United States are opting to add more K-12 online courses to prepare students for college and career readiness and to add more course options to a larger pool of students (Archambault et al., 2016). Archambault et al. (2016) evaluated states' online accountability systems for both students and teachers. Their findings present the need for states to establish clear expectations and communication for instructors.

In addition to flexible timing, Watson and Gemin (2008) found online learning could assist migratory families or students who move often. Repetto et al. (2010) report that online education is particularly beneficial for students with disabilities and students at-risk for dropping out of school. They also suggest that teachers must prepare to teach students to use an online platform through educator preparation programs or professional development (Repetto et al., 2010).

Educators have had to transition away from in person teaching to an effective online learning experience that is filled with all facets of technology. The combination of digital and non-digital tool sets to enhance the teacher/student communication will allow for a more well-rounded

21st century student (Bergeson & Beschorner, 2021). Today's teachers and students are dependent on technology for "communication, information, and learning" (Ellis et al., 2021, p. 697).

E-Learning and PreService Teacher Impact

Shulman (1987) examined teacher education and determined effective teaching relies on pedagogical content knowledge. The evolution of this has changed to add teaching with technology. The term technological pedagogy content knowledge (TPACK), coined by Koehler and Mishra (2009), is a framework where technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge are used to create an approach for technology integration in classes.

Thomas et al. (2013) suggested that the most effective way to prepare teacher candidates in the use of education technology is for TPACK to be used and modelled in the teacher education curriculum. To ensure that preservice teachers are adept and confident using available technology, it is essential that TPACK be integrated fully into teacher preparatory programs. The involvement of leadership can facilitate this change and encourage teacher educators to fully embrace the TPACK framework.

In a review of literature, online teacher education preparation has been inconsistent and has not produced best practices. Clear direction and effective pedagogy are needed to prepare teachers for their increasing role as online educators. The technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) framework has been recommended as the theoretical basis for which educator preparation programs begin the work of designing and implementing effective online teacher preparation (Moore-Adams, Jones, & Cohen, 2016). New teachers must have an awareness of technology limitations, i.e., computer equipment and internet access, that may play a part in their course delivery and design. Field experience in the actual school district will provide preservice teachers first-hand knowledge of any potential technological barriers they may face (Tondeur et al., 2016; Voithofer & Nelson, 2021).

Teacher Training Institutions (TTI) throughout the world are assessing teacher candidate curriculum and developing best practices for increasing knowledge of technology, pedagogy, and content: TPACK (Mouza et al., 2017; Sun et al., 2017). Six hundred and eighty-eight final year preservice teachers in Belgium were surveyed to examine the efficacy of strategies in place to prepare them for technological pedagogical content knowledge: TPACK. Preservice training is crucial to develop TPACK competency. Future teachers need model lessons, which integrate

subject content with pedagogy and technology. The survey revealed the importance of assisting preservice teachers with their own TPACK curriculum design, which they can test first-hand for effectiveness during field experiences (Tondeur et al., 2019).

A Response to the Pandemic

In March 2020, most schools and universities across the United States were shuttered. Thousands of teacher education candidates enrolled in field experiences and student teaching were affected as well as all K-12 teachers and students. Devising a plan to assist these up-and-coming teachers with field experience/student teaching was of utmost importance at the University of Nevada, USA as well as at other teacher preparation programs across the nation. Faculty and stakeholders provided leadership and support with the creation of virtual environments to connect with and reassure their candidates. This allowed for a means to continue to mentor and supervise the candidates. The candidates in turn were able to demonstrate their competency as teachers. Developing a plan to accommodate preservice teachers in their field experiences/student teaching and implementing best practices helped to smooth the unexpected and immediate transition to an online teaching experience. As a result, teacher education faculty at the University of Nevada established a process they called Consistency, Access, Supervision, and Evaluation (CASE). The writers of CASE detailed possible future online teaching and learning scenarios and dealt with different ways barriers can be addressed and opportunities realized. Before the worldwide pandemic, the field experience of being in a physical classroom laid the practical foundation and best understanding of the profession. The necessity of these online student teaching experiences has "made it possible for the teacher education program to be better prepared if school closures should arise in the future" (Quinn & Paretti, 2021, p. 100). Educators demonstrated the ability to drastically change their approach to teaching at a moment's notice. Flexibility and ingenuity have spawn innovative practices and the lessons learned from the COVID-19 shutdown will continue in normal times (Quinn & Paretti, 2021). "What educators did to continue candidate and student learning during Spring 2020 is evidence that professional educators know what can and should happen when closures occur" (Quinn & Paretti, 2021, p. 100).

After Covid-19 moved the university's instruction online, faculty at the University of West Georgia, USA adjusted the remaining assignments for those students who were engaged in field experiences to give them insight into how K-12 teachers were adjusting their own pedagogy to digital learning. Teacher candidates were asked to present samplings of their online teaching

experience via video to explain their approach to this pedagogical challenge. These videos assisted peers by sharing techniques others used in their online classrooms. The teacher candidates also created an online science learning activity that could be done remotely and interviewed their cooperating classroom teachers to better understand the obstacles faced when making the shift to online instruction. By redesigning the remaining assignments, preservice teachers gained a better understanding of how the pandemic was affecting schools and educators alike and how they must all adapt quickly. This practice of having preservice teachers design new implementations of online learning will fortify their ability to deliver knowledge to their students in the future. The quick actions of these teacher candidate educators ensured a meaningful and beneficial field experience. Many schools across the USA have already begun to offer eLearning days intermixed with normal in person school schedules as this will help with the transition should the need arise. Due to a growing demand for online learning, teachers must be able to switch between eLearning and in person teaching effortlessly as circumstances dictate (Gille & Britton, 2020).

Two professors in the teacher preparation program at the Dominican University of California, USA responded to community need by accepting an invitation from the local school system. At the start of the global pandemic, they were asked to teach technology training sessions for K-12 teachers to support the rapid move to remote learning (Birch & Lewis, 2020). The professional development classes were attended by K-12 teachers and staff of public and private schools in the area. Prior to the global pandemic, Professors Birch and Lewis had observed that "many preservice and in-service teachers did not feel comfortable and confident with technology" (Birch & Lewis, 2020, p. 151). This inspired them to develop instructional technology training that emphasized virtual learning methods during the 2019-2020 school year (Birch & Lewis, 2020).

The College of Education's teacher preparation program at New Mexico State University, USA quickly revised the technology integration course to adjust to necessary shifts cause by COVID-19 (Chattrjee & Parra, 2020). Integrating Technology with Teaching (ITT) is a course which provides preservice teachers the opportunity to utilize technology in course planning and development. Aware that a sudden change to the syllabus at mid semester along with the stresses and anxiety caused by the global pandemic could negatively influence student participation and success, the instructor used a student-centred approach to the course redesign. Addressing the unexpected shift to online learning and the shorter semester length, while keeping in mind the students' individual and collective needs, the course content was redesigned, and activities

streamlined. Zoom, Twitter, and more use of TPACK were instrumental in accomplishing positive learning outcomes. By integrating social media in the course, these future teachers experienced the impact and value of staying connected when socially isolated and could better "reflect on the issues such as distance barriers and affordances involving student learning and communication in a diverse community" (Chattrjee & Parra, 2020, p. 433). The ITT course is the only technology course in the teacher preparation program at New Mexico State University. The faculty teaching the course continue to evaluate and look for innovative ways to expose preservice teachers to the best tools and methods for integrating technology in the classroom (Chattrjee & Parra, 2020).

After widespread school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning became critical for school systems all over the world. Face to face teaching was replaced with online learning to protect students and teachers from the coronavirus. Results of a study by Velichová et al. (2020) offer insight on the perception of online learning by students and educators at selected secondary schools in Slovakia. The students in this age group are identified as Generation Y and are considered proficient and receptive to changing digital technologies in coursework. Improvement in digital skills and more independence and responsibility for tasks were positive results identified by teachers of their students' online learning experience. Having a solid technical structure already in place was important for success along with previous experience in the online platform. The teachers are at the centre of the educational experience whether online or face to face, and they "contribute with their professional, moral, and pedagogical-psychological qualities to the outcome of this process" (Velichová et al., 2020, p. 1639).

The global pandemic was thrust upon the world, and the world had to acclimate to a new normal Although many educator preparation programs worldwide were providing online instruction before COVID-19, they were not providing all the instruction online. The examples in this section are only a meagre sample of the educators who became technology leaders at their institutions.

The Role of Faculty Leadership in Implementing Technology into Preservice Teacher Curriculum

As faculty technology leaders emerged in university classrooms throughout the world, changes were made to Educator Preparation Programs. A prepandemic study by Instefjord and Munthe (2017) shed light on the challenges teacher educators face when preparing their preservice

teachers with the technological tools necessary for success in their future classrooms. Measuring the digital competency of preservice teaches covered several key areas: educating their students on how to use digital tools, being able to explain the ethical use of social media, promoting learning with the use of digital technology, being competent in the use of interactive whiteboards and other visual displays and being a role model for their students. The findings show the importance of a teacher's ability to integrate digital/technological skills into practice for a successful learning experience (Starkey, 2020).

As a result of a professional collaboration at the 2018 National Technology Leadership Summit (NTLS), education technology teacher educators from six different institutions across the United States surveyed teacher education faculty on their perspectives and experience with integrating technology into their teacher preparatory programs (Foulger, 2020). The goal was to gain a better understanding in how education faculty rank the importance of technology for learning, their confidence in providing instruction for technology use in PK-12 teaching, and support from leadership for immersing technology into the curriculum (Clausen et al., 2021).

It has become abundantly clear that after the rapid changes in the use of technology and online teaching that were made due to the pandemic, teaching will never be the same. Our society has shifted to include more technology than ever before. We, as technology leaders in the field of education, must prepare preservice teachers to, not just teach online but, thrive in an online environment and become teacher technology leaders at their schools.

Theoretical Framework

Koehler and Mishra (2006) developed the framework for this study: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge was developed for teachers to understand the interplay between and among technology, pedagogy, and content (Young et al., 2012). To establish the necessary TPACK with any content, preservice teachers need consistent training, relevant professional development, and hands-on experiences with the technology they will be using in their classrooms (Baran et al., 2016). Preservice teachers should be prepared to integrate student-centred technology to promote active learning (Maeng et al., 2013). To develop TPACK, preservice teachers must participate in trainings that allows them to collaborate with other preservice teachers and experts, apply technology in actual classrooms with students, and be provided with feedback on their progress (Jimoyiannis, 2010).

Mishra and Koehler (2006) identified seven components of TPACK—Technological Knowledge (TK), Content Knowledge (CK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK), Technological Content Knowledge (TCK), Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPK), and Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). The framework consists of components that interact with each other. Technological knowledge (TK) refers to being computer literate and understanding information technology enough to be able to apply it in everyday life (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). Technological knowledge includes knowledge of both software and hardware and how these resources work. Pedagogical knowledge (PK) is teachers' knowledge of the practices of teaching and learning and is essential so that teachers know how to teach students; they need to understand the strategies and methods that make learning accessible. Content knowledge (CK) is teachers' knowledge of the subject matter they teach and includes knowledge of concepts, theories, and ideas. Technological content knowledge (TCK) represents the interplay between technology and content and how they influence and constrain one another. When teachers possess TCK, they can integrate technology in a purposeful way that enhances the learning of a particular discipline. Technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK) is an understanding of how certain technologies can be used for teaching and learning purposes. Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) then, is the interweaving of all these components, and it is the understanding of how to integrate technology tools in a teaching and learning context to help others develop knowledge of a particular discipline (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). Preservice teachers' TPACK, can be defined as understanding how technology uncovers student misconceptions about a subject matter, transforms student thinking about the different methods and inquiries of the content, and plays a role in creating a positive classroom environment through effective classroom management (Baran et al., 2016).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the implementation of the School of Education Technology Integration Project that was designed to not only prepare candidates to teach online, but to increase their TPACK.

Participants

The candidates who were involved in this study were in their final semester of year-long student teaching. All candidates were in the Elementary Education Program in the School of Education at a large public college in northeast Georgia, USA. There were 78 participants of which 74 were female and 4 were male. They ranged in age from 21-50 with the majority between the ages of 22-25.

Methods

The School of Education at a large public college in northeast Georgia, USA designed a systematic plan to provide candidates with assignments that would increase their Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge. In this multi-phase project, candidates designed, implemented, and assessed learning experiences in an online environment. In addition, candidates experienced the perspective of being an online learner by serving as a "student" in the online course sections of their peers. They also reviewed how to analyse data in a learning management system (LMS) and learned how to leverage technology to assess and maximize learning for all students. Each assignment was part of the School of Education Technology Integration Project and was tied to the International Society of Technology Education (ISTE) standards for educators and students (see Table 1). With author permission, this study used the survey that was developed in the article "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK): The Development and Validation of an Assessment Instrument for Preservice Teachers" (Schmidt et al., 2009) to assess the candidates' TPACK. All participants were provided with an online version of this Likert Scale survey.

Table 1:

ISTE Standards by Semester

Semester	ISTE Student Standards	ISTE Educator Standards Technology Assignment
First	1d, 3b, 5b 2c, 4b, 3b, 6a, 7b	Technology D2L Assignment
Second	1d, 1a, 4d, 6b 2c, 3b 4b 4c 6a, 7b 5b	Technology Peer Evaluation Assignment
Third	7c	Technology Data Analysis Assignment

Beginning with their first semester in the teacher education program, candidates learned about curriculum and the Georgia State Standards; as part of this process, they had their first exposure to the use of technology in the instructional process and were starting to learn how to use technology in their teaching. They were exposed to a variety of technology tools for teaching and learning and had the unique opportunity to create an online lesson in an LMS Brightspace- D2L sandbox). Candidates were put in the driver's seat and were able to create an online lesson from standards to assessment. They were required to have at least three objectives each tied to a different assessment: quiz, assignment, and discussion board. Teacher candidates were also required to create a video of themselves teaching content to place in their D2L sandbox as well as use at least two other online technology tools for lesson introduction, review, or assessment.

In their second semester, candidates critiqued the online lessons of their peers. This assignment allowed candidates to not only explore a peer's online class as a "student", but also provide them the opportunity to receive constructive feedback on how they might enhance their own digital learning environment for their future students.

During their third semester, in the teacher education program, the School of Education Technology Integration Project allowed teacher candidates to review how to analyse data in a learning management system (Brightspace). Candidates also compared the data analysis features of Excel to that of a learning management system. They discussed the pros and cons of both data analysis platforms.

Also, in their third and fourth (student teaching) semesters of the program, candidates continued to plan and deliver instruction that included the appropriate use of technology. During these semesters, candidates are also collected data for the purpose of analysing the impact of their instruction on student learning. Candidates had to select or design assessments that were appropriate for the desired learning outcomes as well as collect data, analyse the results and draw conclusions regarding the degree to which their students met the learning outcomes (See Table 2).

All these course-embedded technology experiences in the School of Education Technology Integration Project allowed our teacher candidates to model and apply the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards for educators and students by using, evaluating, discussing, and building technology experiences through their Brightspace sandbox project as well as through data analysis, and implementing lessons in their student teaching semesters. Our candidates graduated knowing how to use a variety of technology tools to introduce, teach, review, and assess content. They know how to hook and engage students with technology as well as use technology to analyse data to inform instruction.

Table 2:
Evolution of technology project over time

Objectives	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4
Explore curriculum and standards	X			
Create an online lesson in LMS	X			
Record video teaching content	X			
Critique peer course		X		
Receive constructive feedback		X		
Analyse data in an LMS setting			X	
Compare and contrast LMS data analysis to Excel data analysis			X	
Plan and deliver instruction using technology			X	X
Collect data on impact of instruction			X	X
Collect, analyse, and draw conclusions based on data			X	X

Results

The online survey results indicated that over the course of four semesters, candidates developed strong TPACK (see Table 3). Most of the candidates' highest responses were to agree or strongly agree to the questions that they are able to select technologies to use in their classrooms that enhance what they teach, how they teach and what students learn, use strategies that combine content, technologies and teaching approaches that they learned about in their coursework in their classroom, provide leadership in helping others to coordinate the use of content, technologies and teaching approaches at their school and/or district, and choose technologies that enhance the content for a lesson. The highest responses were to agree or strongly agree that candidates can teach lessons that appropriately combine literacy, technologies, and teaching approaches. The lower responses to agree or strongly agree were that candidates can teach lessons that appropriately

combine mathematics, technologies, and teaching approaches, can teach lessons that appropriately combine science, technologies, and teaching approaches, and can teach lessons that appropriately combine social studies, technologies and teaching approaches.

Conclusions

"We are going into a world of education where technology is very present." This was a quote from one of the participants in this study. It speaks to the importance of creating a course that focuses on the development of TPACK. Most of the candidates responded that they were able to select the appropriate technology for their classrooms and students. Candidates were able to combine technology, content, and strategies to enhance the content of their classes. Specifically, candidates scored highest on being to be able to combine literacy and technology into lessons. Moreover, candidates were becoming emerging teacher leaders, helping others to coordinate the use of content. Candidates voiced that they had more difficulty combining mathematics, science, and social studies with technology and this is most likely because they do not have specific methods courses in these subjects. Their elementary methods course focuses more on literacy and general teaching methods. This is an area for growth for this school of education.

Table 3

Survey Questions Pertaining to Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

Question	Agree	Strongly Agree	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree
I can teach lessons that appropriately combine mathematics, technologies, and teaching approaches.	46	22	**88**
I can teach lessons that appropriately combine literacy, technologies, and teaching approaches.	51	25	**99**
I can teach lessons that appropriately combine science, technologies, and teaching approaches.	45	21	**86**
I can teach lessons that appropriately combine social studies, technologies, and teaching approaches.	42	22	**83**
I can select technologies to use in my classroom that enhance what I teach, how I teach and what students learn.	50	23	**95**
I can use strategies that combine content, technologies, and teaching approaches that I learned about in my coursework in my classroom.	51	24	**97**
I can provide leadership in helping others to coordinate the use of content, technologies, and teaching approaches at my school and/or district.	51	20	**92**
I can choose technologies that enhance the content for a lesson.	50	23	**95**

Among participant responses, two candidates chose to give oral statements to enhance their online survey answers. Both participants had positive reactions to the study and their ability to now use an LMS system to integrate technology into their lessons. Participant one stated, “Learning how to use D2L in college has been the most underrated skill we learned, just because it’s made it so much easier. There is so much you can do that it’s a little overwhelming as

a new teacher." Participant two had similar responses to the benefit of learning to use an LMS system in college: "D2L has a lot of different gadgets and tools that you use to enhance the classroom and if you don't know how to use them, well, what's the point?" Both participants spoke of how grateful they were to have a foundation in technology as a first-year teacher. Participant one stated "It's been really helpful, and it's something I can say it made me a much better teacher for it."

A common theme among participants was the feeling of being a leader among their colleagues, even as first year teachers. Participant one stated, "I have teachers coming in all the time, that didn't go to the same college as me that are just kinda, almost, they are really overwhelmed, they don't know exactly what to expect and it's nice that they can come see me even in my first year of teaching." Having the knowledge of TPACK gained in this study, participants became leaders that other colleagues felt comfortable asking questions relating to their own gaps of knowledge surrounding an LMS, technology, and online teaching. This makes our graduates stand out in this new era of technology and online teaching. Our education faculty plan to continue in this endeavour of training preservice teachers to be technological and online teaching leaders in their future classrooms. The technology and online teaching landscape will be forever changed due to COVID-19, but our teachers will now be prepared more than ever to provide a successful online teaching environment for their students as well as be technology teacher leaders in their schools. Candidates feel confident in their ability to select and use technology in their future classrooms to enhance what and how they teach and how students learn. As novice teachers, they can provide leadership in using content, technology, and pedagogy at their school and/or district. Also, their education preparation coursework provided them with strategies to combine content, technologies, and teaching approaches that they felt confident in implementing in their future classrooms. This data supports the systematic implementation of technology into the teacher education program. The highest result was how the teacher candidates felt about combining literacy with technology and teaching. This can be attributed to the literacy courses that the candidates take and the reading endorsement that they receive upon graduation. The lower results were how candidates felt about combing mathematics, science, and social studies with technology and teaching. This is an area where faculty can focus future teaching efforts. Candidates do not take specific coursework in the teacher education program pertaining to the teaching of

mathematics, science, and social studies. Therefore, content methods courses should provide more integration in the use of teaching with technology and these content areas.

Further support for teacher candidates' TPACK comes from course evaluations and class discussions which included comments about specific assignments linked to technology integration as being beneficial and generative to future professional growth. A candidate summed up the entire School of Education Technology Integration Project experience as:

> Based on the technology project building my own online class and taking a class online, I feel prepared to use my skills at my field placement. I have also added to my repertoire and abundance of technology tools that can be used to enhance and accommodate students' learning. I have no doubt that I will be able to succeed in utilizing technology tools.

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Biographies

Rebecca Cooper, PhD

Rcooper5@ggc.edu

Dr. Rebecca Cooper is a professor in the School of Education at Georgia Gwinnett College in Lawrenceville, Georgia, USA. She has a background in biology, environmental science, and science education. Dr. Cooper has served in a leadership position for eight years as Chair of Assessment and Graduate Department Chair. In her 21 years of higher education experience, she has taught general education and science content and science methods courses online and on ground for graduate (MAT, M.Ed., and Ed.S.) and undergraduate students. Dr. Cooper has developed and taught online courses for 15 years. She works with education faculty to incorporate technology into their courses and provides online teaching support and training. Her areas of interest include assessment, incorporating environmental issues with STEM learning in the K-12 classroom, K-12 students' attitude toward science, the integration of technology tools in K-12 learning environments, and K-12 online teaching barriers and ways to over them.

Samantha Mrstik, PhD

Dr. Samantha Mrstik is an associate professor in the Special Education and Social Foundations Department in the School of Education at Georgia Gwinnett College in Lawrenceville, Georgia, USA. Prior to her role as a professor, she was a special education teacher in high schools outside of Orlando, Florida, USA for 15 years. Besides teaching special education coursework to preservice teachers, she supervises preservice, special education students, and teacher candidates and serves as the School of Education's Simulation Specialist. Her areas of interest are technology in the classroom and international special education.

***Corresponding Author**: smrstik@ggc.edu

Joye Cauthen, MLIS

Joye Cauthen is an Assistant Professor and the Librarian Liaison for the School of Education at Georgia Gwinnett College, Lawrenceville, GA, USA. She serves as the Acquisitions Librarian for the Daniel J. Kaufman Library and Learning Centre and is a member of Beta Phi Mu, the International Library and Information Studies Honour Society. Her leadership roles include the Faculty Senate and service in the American Library Association. Her professional areas of

expertise include collection development, procurement, and evaluation of electronic resources. “Digital resources are vitally important. They equal the playing field and empower and equip our students and faculty to reach their fullest potentials.”

Jillian Schreffler, PhD

jschreffler@cvschools.org

Dr. Jillian Schreffler is an Instructional Advisor in the Cumberland Valley School District in Mechanicsburg, PA. She works with secondary, special education teachers to build their instructional practices, and she works with novice teachers to help them integrate into the special education classrooms. Dr. Schreffler earned her doctorate at the University of Central Florida. Her research interests include Universal Design for Learning and the sexual education of students with disabilities.

Slavik, C. (2024). An exploration of generativity in faculty group processes in post-secondary. *International Journal for Leadership in Learning*, *24*(1), 59–102. https://doi.org/10.29173/ijll45

An Exploration of Generativity in Faculty Group Processes in Post-Secondary

Christine Slavik

Abstract

Like most organizations, a university needs to plan for its success. The environment in which universities operate continues to shift and change consequent to economic realities, changing demographics, changes in technology, and most recently a global pandemic. Planning in higher education must be creative and responsive to address multifaceted demands. To sustain post-secondary education, institutional leaders need to develop skill sets that promote effective dialogue, group work, and generativity within internal organizations. Concepts of leadership for the 21st century shift focus away from the previous approaches of making incremental improvements to already existing processes toward discovering possibilities, exploring potential innovations, and generating actions (Burgess & Newton, 2015; Webber, 2016). Building on existing frameworks for understanding generativity in group work and planning, this study sought to understand generative processes and conversations that compel people to act upon thoughts and feelings arising from social interactions. A descriptive study design was utilized to explore and summarize the experiences of faculty involved in three different group planning processes: brainstorming (Osborn 1953, 1957, 1963), a force field analysis (Lewin, 1947), and a variation of an appreciative inquiry process (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The development of a generative conversations survey tool focused on how the faculty participants perceived the qualities of their experiences. A key outcome of the research was the creation of a set of recommendations for thinking about the design of group sessions and meetings that can transmethodologically enhance chances for generative results.

Keywords: generativity, generative dialogue, generative outcomes, organization development, appreciative inquiry

Introduction

> "One good conversation can shift the direction of change forever" (Lambert, as cited in Good News Network, 2009, para. 1).

Universities are complex organizations experiencing a period of rapid change and facing many challenges (Beach et al., 2005; Bess & Dee, 2012; Charbonneau, 2013; Grant, 2016). There are expectations for universities to do more to reach out to students and their communities and respond to the market realities of decreased funding, increased costs, changing demographics, and changes in technology. Now they must also consider the impacts of the disruption caused by a global pandemic and determine the risks and opportunities that follow this period of instability. Higher education is changing. Universities are redefining and redesigning how they operate and are transforming their practices (Amrhein et al., 2013). In order to sustain higher education institutions during this period of change, post-secondary leaders need to develop new skills sets for new markets and a changing world (Bess & Dee, 2012). Leaders will have to develop and deploy the capacity to sense and enact upon emergent opportunities (Fullan, 2001; Scharmer, 2009).

This chapter explores insights from a study concerned with generativity (a generative state) and generative conversations (dialogic processes) that compel participants to act upon thoughts and feelings produced as a result of the interactions. To generate is to produce something, or cause something to come about ("Generate", n.d.). The term generative refers to having the power or function of generating, originating, producing or reproducing ("Generate", n.d.). For the purposes of this study, a generative conversation is defined as a dialogue that compels participants to act upon thoughts and feelings produced as a result of the interaction. These definitions have been inspired by the writings of several authors (Avital & van Osch, 2013; Bushe, 2013; Erikson, 1950; Gergen, 1978; Marshak, 2004; Zandee, 2004). The term dialogue may be defined as an interaction between two or more people or groups, especially one directed toward exploration of a particular subject or resolution of a problem, a description compatible with the focus of this study on generative conversations. Conversations have been identified as the building blocks of organizations (Bright et al., 2010; Cooren et al., 2006). Block (2010) claimed people who are interested in how new ideas are generated and how learning and change take place must observe conversations. Watching change in action, one does not see minds working but rather observes people meeting and conversing with each other. In this context, the way people experience coming

together becomes a major concern for how change happens (Block, 2010). In everyday experience, people do not see what precedes action and generativity. They do not see the full process of coming-into-being of action: they do not see its descending movement from thought and consciousness to language, behaviour, and action. People see what others actually do, how they act (Scharmer, 2009). In short, the ultimate evidence for generativity is productive action, action consistent with and appropriate to intents—not what is said, but what is done. However, all the same, it can be important and useful to seek to appreciate how the participants in planned and organized dialogues and conversations perceive and reflect on their experiences.

The Challenge of Change in Higher Education

Universities are often characterized as large and stable institutions and, as a result, are not seen to be particularly nimble or collaborative (Kezar, 2009). In my experience, post-secondary environments tend to be organized in departmental silos and are framed by bureaucratic or hierarchical administrative structures and policies. Steeped in tradition, the norms and values of this sort of complex administrative structure may limit communication, renewal, and innovation (Bess & Dee, 2012; Burgess & Newton, 2015; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). People in a hierarchical or bureaucratic structure are encouraged to share information along the line of command, reproducing certain patterns of communication and limiting others. Cross communication or horizontal patterns of interactions are more difficult in this formalized and traditional structure (Scharmer, 2009). Mintzberg (1979) found that there is a body of evidence that suggests the older the organization, the more formalized, routinized and standardized its behaviour. As organizations age, all other things being equal, they repeat their work, with the result that it becomes more predictable, and so more easily formalized (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 228).

Vertical organizations shaped by control-and-command leadership with well-developed standard policies and procedures that dictate behaviour and ensure uniformity fit well with previous approaches to leadership and planning, which often involved creating a fixed strategic plan and working toward incremental improvements of already existing processes (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Scharmer, 2009). Mintzberg (1979) proposed a relationship between external control of an organization and the extent to which it is centralized and/or bureaucratized (p. 288). The greater the external control of the organization, the more likely its structure is formalized.

Emergent opportunities, discovering possibilities, innovation, and generating action are stifled by bureaucratic process in which standardization or conformity rather than innovation are the cultural norms (Laloux, 2014).

In traditional and more stable environments, the way we do things governs people's actions (Deal & Kennedy, 2000). The unknowns are perceived as blind spots or threats to be managed rather than nurtured as undiscovered possibilities. In today's more organic and dynamic environments, the intangible dimension (i.e., the generative domain of human action and relationships) is moving from the periphery as something to be managed and into the center stage as something to be cultivated (Scharmer, 2009). For generative conversations to happen, a process must be in place whereby communication in an organization flows more freely and the emphasis on individualistic work and the reporting of such is consciously changed. Redesigning conversations to discover emergent ideas and compel actions is a process that universities can utilize to redefine and redesign how they operate and transform practice in meaningful ways (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012; Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2013; Laloux, 2014).

Can Generativity be Fostered?

The purpose of this study was to investigate which processes are likely to lead to generative conversations in post-secondary organizations. The study explored three research questions.

1. What considerations are critical to the design and implementation of organized meetings and social interactions planned and structured to foster generative dialog?

2. Do the experiences reported by the participants in group meetings organized by processes claimed to foster generative outcomes indicate that the meetings supported generative capacity?

3. Do follow-up reports from the meeting participants and the results of an independent review of the meeting outcomes indicate that the sessions were generative?

This research project has both theoretical (deductive) and empirical (inductive) objectives. The theoretical objective was to build upon existing frameworks for understanding generativity in group work and planning through an exploration of existing work and theories (Bushe, 2007, 2013; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Elliot, 2002; Gergen, 1978; Marshak, 2004; Paranjpey, 2013; Topp, 2000). Attention was also directed toward previous writings in appreciative inquiry (Bushe, 2009, 2010, 2013; Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider et al., 1995; Cooperrider et al., 2009; Watkins & Mohr, 2001). In addition, writings in positive organizational psychology (Fredrickson, 2003; Linley et al., 2009; Lopez & Gallagher, 2009; Losada & Heaphy, 2004; Peterson, 2008) were reviewed and the concept of generativity was defined and clarified.

The empirical objective was to derive evidence and verify findings through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. The study included the development of a survey tool in which each item was derived from literature that described indicators of generativity. Having reviewed the literature and developed a conceptual understanding of generativity as a construct, the construct was then studied in practice. The survey focused on how the participants in meetings that were structured by processes that are claimed to foster generativity actually perceived the qualities of the experience.

Generativity

To be able to answer the research questions posed by this study, a definition of generativity needed to be developed and understood. How has generativity been defined and expressed? The concept of generativity as it relates to people, interactions, and behaviours can be found in the literature of the mid-20th century. Erikson (1950) described a stage of adult development in which in later life one feels compelled to give back or leave something of substance for the next generation. Since this early reference in social psychology the concept has been utilized in various other frameworks by authors interested how and why people relate to each other in specific ways. Table 1 notes some of the ways generativity has been characterized by various authors.

Table 1:
Generativity as Defined or Applied in the Works of Various Authors

Authors	Key concepts and definitions of generativity
Erikson (1950)	Stage of adult development – generativity vs stagnation.
Jung (1953)	Generative Archetypes.
Freire (1970)	Linguistic discourse, Generative words, Dialogic generative themes as part of pedagogy.
Gergen (1978)	Meaning making, relational dialogic.
Schön (1979)	Generative metaphor.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987)	Methodological aim of AI – generative theoretical springboard, Generative capacity, generative possibilities.
Topp (2000)	Generative conversations – creative linking of concepts, emergence of new themes.
Elliot (2002)	Importance of generative questions.
Zandee (2004)	Relational and open-ended nature of inquiry as a generative process.
Marshak (2004)	Generative conversation – dialogic versus diagnostic.
Kikoski and Kikoski (2004)	Inquiring organization – mutually generative – humanistic perspective of collaboration.
Chait (2005)	Sense-making, reframing the work.
Scharmer (2007)	Presencing – generative flow.
Bushe (2007)	Generative questions, generative conversations, generative action. Synergenisis.
Bright et al. (2010)	Generative state.
Bushe (1998)	Generative images.
Bushe (2013)	Generative process, generative capacity, generative outcomes.
Avital and van Osch (2013)	Black box of idea generation – fundamental mechanisms based on Jungian (1953) generation of process ideas – thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting.
Paranjpey (2013)	Generativity is created when people gather together and produce ideas that they believe in and that help in creating a collective action for the future.

The concept of generative theory (Gergen,1978) was first introduced into a community of scholars who viewed social science from a logical positivist stance (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). This was a bold shift in attention whereby theoretical accounts are no longer judged in terms of their predictive capacity, but instead are judged in terms of their generative capacity: their ability to foster dialogue about that which is taken for granted and their capacity for generating fresh alternatives for social action (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, p. 69). Gergen (1978) proposed, "It is the generative theory that can provoke debate, transform social reality, and ultimately serve to reorder conduct" (p. 1346). It is through engaging in the act of challenging prevailing assumptions that the potential for generating new possibilities is created. New thoughts potentially lead to new actions, to the extent that actions are generated from beliefs, values, and thoughts.

In developing Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology, Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) noted, "It has one and only one aim—to provide a generative theoretical springboard for normative dialogue that is conducive to self-directed experimentation in social innovation" (p. 97). AI "opens the status quo to possible transformations in collective action" (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, p. 97). By focusing on a paradigm that moved toward generating possibilities, AI transformed action research away from a continuous problem-solving model for organizations. These few quotes support the notion that the positive focus in AI is useful, but it is not its purpose. The one and only aim, the purpose of AI, is to generate new and better futures (Bushe, 2007). From its inception, the concepts of generative theory have clearly been core to AI.

Barrett and Cooperrider (1990) described the use of "generative metaphor" (p. 219) as an intervention with an organization experiencing conflict. The use of metaphor allowed the work group to refocus on another (metaphorical) organization that was free of the dysfunctional schemas of their own organization. Distanced from their issues and feeling a sense of safety with the process, the novel situation stimulated interest among the group members. They became active inquirers in another domain. Metaphor is generative to the extent that it serves to reorganize schemas and helps provide positive and compelling images (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990).

What is the relationship between hope and generativity? Positive, hopeful images can be generated through discourse. Does hope then generate action? In reviewing the literature across a range of fields, Ludema (2005) suggested there are four enduring qualities that give hope its power

in social and organizational transformation: it is (a) born in relationship, (b) inspired by the conviction that the future is open and can be influenced, (c) sustained by dialogue about high human ideals, and (d) generative of positive affect and action (p. 529). Ludema claimed that hoping is an essential ingredient in social and organizational transformation because it spawns generative action (p. 534).

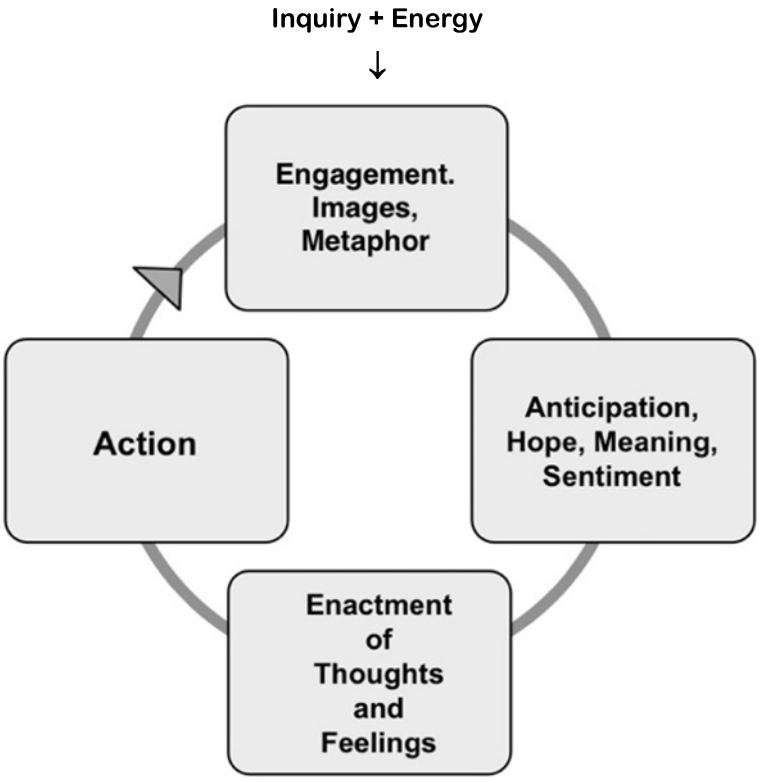
Bushe (2007) suggested generativity can and should be built into the design and facilitation of group ideation processes like AI through generative questions, conversations, and actions (p. 4). Generative questions have the following four qualities: (a) they are surprising, (b) they touch people's heart and spirit, (c) talking about and listening to these stories and answers will build relationships, and (d) the questions force people to look at reality a little differently, either because of how they ask individuals to think or because of who they are listening to (Bushe, 2007, p. 5).

Generative actions can be nurtured by ensuring that people believe they have permission to act. Leaders need to clarify what the boundaries of authority are and then get out of the way (Bushe, 2007). When everyone makes commitments to some kind of action, leadership should acknowledge any and all acts that move the organization in the collective desired direction, and those efforts should be elevated and supported. In this way leaders are supporting generativity. Generativity in application to organizational development occurs when a group of people discover and create new ideas that are compelling to them and others and provoke new actions (Bushe, 2009).

Through an exploration of cynical conversations, Bright et al. (2010) highlight the nature of negative and positive sentiments in relation to generativity. Sentiment refers to the lasting affective attachment people experience with the narratives they hear and share. Positive sentiment promotes engagement and commitment in people, while negative sentiment tends to erode trust and promote scepticism. Sentiments are "conversational markers" (Bright et al., 2010, p. 147), indicators of the degree to which people find their narratives and metaphors to be hopeful and motivating or discouraging and undesirable. Negative sentiment has been shown to have a greater impact on attentiveness than positive impact (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). The implications for this are that positive sentiments need to be nourished and built to dominate the ratio of positive to negative. Bright et al. (2010) characterized the cynical mode as dominated by negative sentiment

and the anticipatory mode as one full of positive sentiment. The anticipatory mode is foundational if generativity is to emerge in dialogue. A person is in a generative state (Bright et al., 2010) if they can consider new, future possibilities. Generativity emerges from the anticipatory mode when positive sentiment is directed towards the enactment of hopeful, organizing images and possibilities. Figure 1 presents a graphic representation of generativity.

Figure 1:
Representation of the Components of Generativity



After considering a range of work, an understanding of generativity emerges. A crucial element is the process of inquiry and discovery in which conversations and dialogue begin. It is there that narratives and dominant modes of conversation are shared. If people feel valued and heard, positive sentiment with its arousal state and energy are created. Generative questions can foster this process. The result of this is an anticipatory mode that is foundational to generativity. Through generative conversations, hopeful images of the future can be shared and co-constructed resulting in a generative state. Building on positive sentiments and energy, the possibilities and positive images can fuel generative actions. The creation of positive images on a collective basis opens up consideration of the future. As they emerge, these positive images can be captured and

developed, for example, through graphic facilitation or concept mapping. Generative actions can be nurtured through freedom to act and the belief that one has the authority and permission to do so. Hope, shared publicly, is stronger and can sustain actions. A guiding image of the future exists in the living dialogue that flows through every institution (Cooperrider, 1990).

Applying the concept of generativity to organizations means that people come up with new ideas, challenge the old ways of acting, and foster possibilities of a collective future, thereby transforming the social reality. Generativity can be thought of as driving change in organizations (Paranjpey, 2013). It is not like a personality trait within individuals; rather, it is a concept that links individuals with the society. It is a relational construct comprising multiple individual and social constructs (Paranjpey, 2013). Generativity is (or arises from) a social-psychological environment from which (or in which) the potential for actions is enhanced or potentiated. Group ideation processes directed toward change can also be viewed as learning processes that take place in communities of practice. By reassessing the way work is conducted in groups as learning opportunities, it is possible to redesign organization work to enhance generativity.

Generative Conversations

What has the literature reported about the factors that create generative conversations? Much like the representation of generativity described in Figure 1, there is a pattern of involvement in generative conversations. People come together, converse, and co-construct meaning. This form of experience expands thoughts, promotes learning, and is dynamic. People are continually generating a sense of what is real (Gergen, 2009). Through listening, learning is possible and new ideas and images are generated. Generative relational processes are catalytic; they inject relations with vitality. New and enriching potentials are opened through the flow of interchange (Gergen, 2009, p. 47). The first stage, then, of a generative conversation is engaged listening and learning.

Hope is an essential ingredient in social and organizational transformation because it spawns generative action (Ludema, 2005, p. 534). The next stage of a generative conversation relates to the experience of thoughts and feelings of hope and anticipation. Hope promotes the sort of listening or hearing that is not confined merely to having one's own discourse somehow confirmed (Ludema, 2005, p. 534). Hope is most generative when it is inclusive; it inspires

collective action most powerfully when it is shared with other participants in a dialogue (Ludema, 2005, p. 536). Together, the first two stages of a generative conversation are about expansion.

With the pump primed for generativity, the next stage of a generative conversation involves the enactment of thoughts and feelings. The concept that the future is being constructed when people engage in meaningful conversation with others is at the heart of enacting ideals. Once people begin to talk to one another, co-construct new structures and systems of working together, they can make enormous progress toward ideals (Ludema et al., 2003, p. 23). Having socially constructed the vision of a future that is important to them, thoughts and feelings are now oriented toward a collective focus and action. Results are gained through connection, making meaning, and, ultimately, taking action, the final stage of a generative conversation. Generative conversations help groups learn and mobilize collective action.

A generative conversation can be defined as a dialogue that compels participants to act upon thoughts and feelings produced as a result of the conversational interaction. A conversation is generative if ultimately there is some productive or practical action that can be seen to have occurred. Having explored the literature on what sorts of thoughts and feelings create generativity, key concepts were utilized to develop a generative conversations survey tool for this study. The survey, which contains 17 items, was constructed to reflect general concepts of generativity in groups and was derived from the review of relevant studies on generativity and ideation, with an emphasis on the application of processes intended to foster these (see Table 2).

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.**:**
Generative Conversations Survey Items Derived from Related Research.

Research & Scholarship related to the Survey Item	**Survey Item**
Gergen (1978) Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Topp (2000) Marshak (2004) Bushe (2007, 2013)	1. I heard new information when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) Bushe (2007, 2013)	2. I learned from a colleague when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2002) Bushe (2013) Schon (1979)	3. I was surprised by what I heard when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) Ludema et al. (2003) Bushe (2013)	4. As a result of participation in this group process I have developed an action plan related to the topic of an exceptional practicum experience.
Gergen (1978) Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987)	5. I experienced the group process as creative.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	6. I was fully engaged in the group process.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	7. I feel motivated to act as a result of the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	8. I felt emotionally engaged during participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.

Research & Scholarship related to the Survey Item	Survey Item
Barrett and Cooperrider (1990)	9. I was able to suspend self -interest during participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2005)	10. As a result of participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience, I think there will be some change in what we do.
Gergen (1978) Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003)	11. During participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience I felt a sense of connectedness to my colleagues.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2005) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	12. During participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience I felt energized.
Gergen (1978) Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Topp (2000) Marshak (2004) Bushe (2007, 2013)	13. I heard new ideas when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Gergen (1978) Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Topp (2000) Marshak (2004) Bushe (2007, 2013)	14. My thoughts were expanded when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	15. As a result of participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience, I feel a sense of hopefulness.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2002) Bushe (2013) Schön (1979)	16. I saw old things in new ways as a result of participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.

Research & Scholarship related to the Survey Item	Survey Item
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2005) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	17. Participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience compels me to act upon the points raised.

Note: This table refers to group exploration of a topical question, the nature of an exceptional practicum experience, that was relevant to the participants and their organizational units within the university where the draft survey was trialled.

It is worth pointing out that when it comes to group ideation processes, a number of terms are used to describe how people interact: conversations, discussion, dialogue, and debate. These terms are often utilized interchangeably so as to become conflated. Senge (1990), in his book *The Fifth Discipline*, described two primary forms of discourse, dialogue and discussion, and claimed both are important to a team capable of continual generative learning (p. 240). Senge made a distinction between the two, describing discussion as opposing perspectives being presented and defended and dialogue as people freely and creatively exploring ideas, listening deeply to others, and suspending their own views in search of a common understanding. A discussion can turn into a debate of one idea over another, and in an the extreme, a person can dominate a discussion to try and get support from others. In a dialogue people explore complex issues from many points of view (Senge, 1990, p. 241).

Methodology

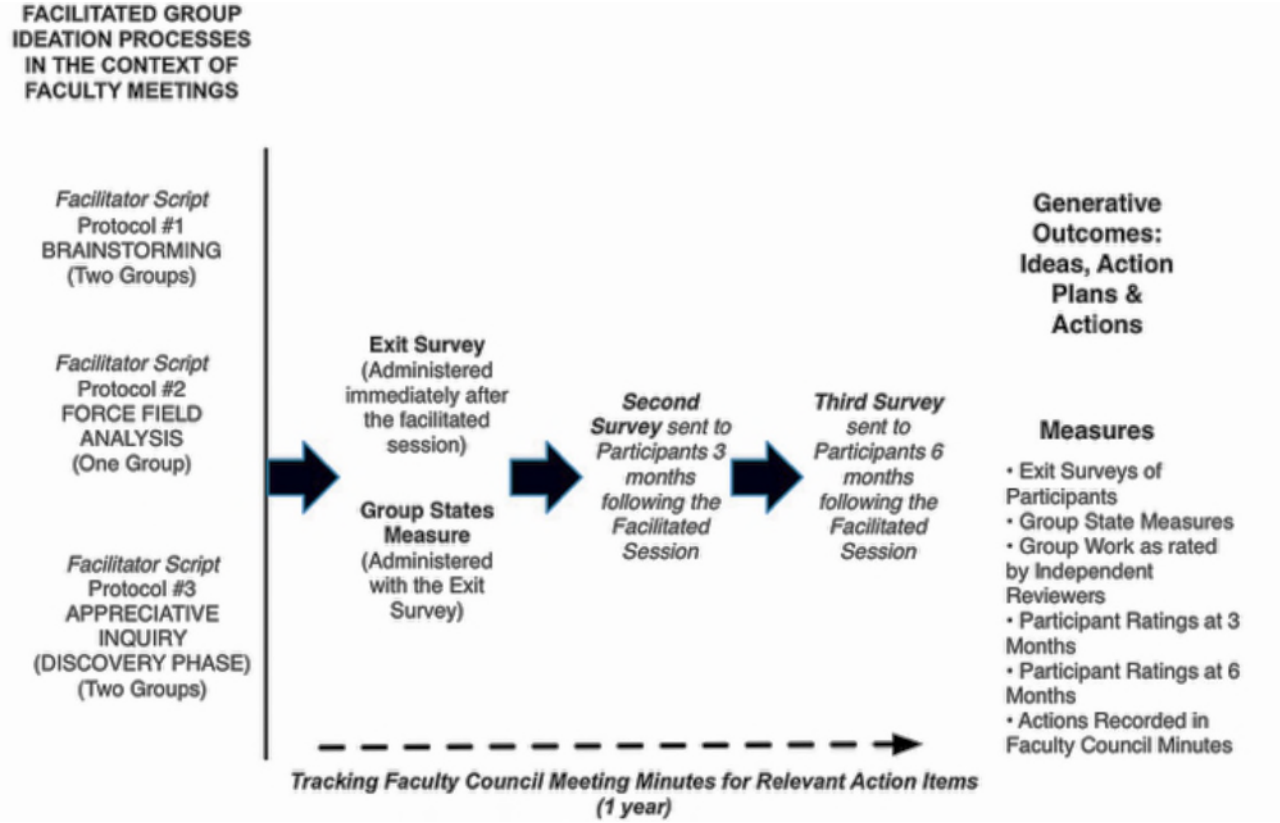
The purpose of the study was to examine the experiences described by participants who had been involved in meetings structured by processes that are widely claimed to support generative conversations. The focus of the study was on whether the participants in the studied processes perceived their conversations as having attributes of generativity. The participants were all members of faculty and staff in a post-secondary organization. This study was conducted in a mid-sized university within a selected geographical area, utilizing specific departments and schools within a single, larger faculty. The sample size was small (five groups, 27 individual respondents, and three independent reviewers). The research entailed the development of an original survey tool that was utilized for the first time in an attempt to explore and assess

participants' perceptions of generativity. Multiple strategies (i.e., mixed methods) were utilized to increase construct validity. The research entailed conducting meetings with university staff and faculty using three different group ideation processes: brainstorming (Osborn, 1953, 1957, 1963), a force field analysis (Lewin, 1947), and a variation of an AI process (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The research goal was to identify the antecedent conditions, group properties, and ideation processes that lead to generative conversations as well as to determine participants' perceptions of generativity resulting from these sessions. In each case, the different sessions were facilitated and arranged using the protocols normally prescribed for each process. In order to control for bias, the selected group ideation processes were randomly assigned to the study groups.

Data was collected from the following sources. First, a Generative Conversations Survey as developed for the project was administered to solicit the participants' experiences of generativity. Semi-quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to analyze the data from the survey. Second, three independent reviewers were selected to review the ideas produced by the groups and complete a survey rating the total pool of ideas produced by the sessions in terms of their novelty, practicality, and whether or not they were compelling. An examination of the group processes utilized in the groups studied sought to discover the mediators and conditions that aid generativity. A visual model representing the sequential mixed methods design for this study is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Sequential Mixed-Methods Design: An Exploration of Generativity in Faculty Group Processes in a University Setting



The setting and selected participants were chosen through convenience sampling (Creswell, 2008). The faculty groups represented six distinct departments and schools in the study. The question proposed as a focus for the group dialogues (i.e., What makes an exceptional practicum experience) was one that would have current or prospective future relevance to these working units. For the purposes of this study, meeting groups were randomly assigned to one of the three different group processes that have been claimed to foster generativity: brainstorming (Osborn, 1953, 1957, 1963), a force field analysis (Lewin, 1947), and a variation of an AI process (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The focus of the research was not on the mechanics of the different approaches, but rather on making a qualitative review of the perceptions of the participants as to whether they had personally experienced the session as having attributes associated with generativity. In total, five groups participated of which only one group participated in a force field analysis (Lewin, 1947), while both brainstorming (Osborn, 1953, 1957, 1963) and

the adapted AI (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) processes were facilitated in sessions with two faculty groups for each process. In total, 27 participants generated work from the facilitated dialogue sessions and completed the GCSs. One group was not able to participate due to organizational time constraints. Follow-Up surveys were sent (different from the original GCS) to all participants at 3 months and 6 months after the initial sessions. The Follow-Up survey had six items and focused on actions related to the initial respondent dialogues.

The statements were as follows:

1. Specific action plans emerged (either during or after) from the [*specific ideation process inserted here*] about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
2. The school/department has taken actions related to those plans in the last 3 months?
3. I have personally taken action related to those plans in the last 3 months.
4. Others in your my school/department have taken action related to those plans in the last 3 months.
5. I have been involved in further conversations about practicums in the last 3 months.
6. I feel compelled to act upon some of the points raised during the *[Brainstorming, AI or Force Field Analysis inserted here*] 3 months ago.

Three independent faculty reviewers were chosen to look at the ideas produced by the groups and independently complete scales rating the generativity of the ideas. The independent reviewers were chosen from faculty at a variety of departments and schools that were not participants in the facilitated sessions. The reviewers were also experienced with the choice of the focal topic, the nature of student practicum experiences, that was offered as a focus for the session dialogues. The independent reviewers had between 3 and 13 years of experience at the university and were considered to have the knowledge necessary to understand the context of the participants' ideas that they were reviewing. The survey tool used by the reviewers for evaluating the work of the groups drew upon the same body of literature utilized to develop the GCS. In assessing generativity, the independent reviewers were asked to evaluate the degree to which the work generated by the groups was novel, compelling, and practical. These measures of generativity were decided upon as they have been utilized in previous studies (Bushe, 2013; Bushe & Paranjpey,

2014; Paranjpey, 2013) comparing the experiences of participants during different group ideation processes.

The final part of the data collection process was the review the minutes of Faculty Council meetings for a period of 1 year following the initial group-ideation processes to determine if any changes or motions were made to programs or curriculum that could be seen as related to the topics discussed with each group during the facilitation.

Conclusions

Given the small number of study participants and the manner of their recruitment, it was not possible to make statements that would quantitatively compare the effectiveness of the processes of brainstorming versus AI, versus force field analysis. However, it was possible to apply and assess the utility of the GCS as a tool to reveal whether the experiences of the session participants matched the elements of generative dialogue as proposed in relevant research and scholarship. Further, the reports of the independent raters provided another lens into the session outcomes.

Five different faculty groups participated in the facilitated sessions and each group composed ideas about what makes an exceptional practicum experience. Twenty-seven faculty completed the GCS. While differences in the formats of the five sessions and in the numbers of participants involved made statistical comparisons unreliable, a preliminary analysis of the variance in the post-ideation survey responses indicated that there was about the same amount of variance within groups who utilized the same group ideation process as there was among the sessions that used different group ideation processes. The results of a factor analysis utilizing a correlation matrix, found the GCS statements assess participant responses to their experience of the generativity of their sessions and the survey statements are different ways of describing various facets of generativity.

A question that framed the research for this project asked, “Do follow-up reports from the meeting participants and the results of an independent review of the meeting outcomes indicate that the sessions were generative?” If group sessions are conducted in ways that satisfy the conditions proposed as fostering generativity or generative capacity, then the session should

produce generative outcomes. The ultimate generative outcome might be considered to be action taken on identified projects or shared goals. Generative outcomes can be assessed according to whether proposals and ideas generated in a group are compelling, novel, and practical. A panel of three independent judges was convened to review the ideas produced by the five working groups. The reviewers were asked to rate the ideas as being compelling, novel, or practical using a 5-point scale.

The ratings of novelty and compelling, at the group level, were significantly and negatively related. If something was compelling, it wasn't novel, and vice versa. Further, all the items on the GCS had a negative relationship to novelty. If the conversation was generative, as defined by the GCS, it didn't produce novel ideas. The analysis of the panel review data also found that there was some inconsistency among the judges in the application of the ratings of the ideas in the three categories. This might suggest a need for better orientation about the task for the judges and perhaps closer communication among them and with me as researcher during the process.

A goal of the design for this study was to follow up the group sessions to see whether there had been any actions taken in regard to the focal topic of the meetings, namely the development of student practicum experiences. At the 3- and 6- month points after the group meetings, a short survey was distributed to the original participants. The survey included open-ended questions. The results were somewhat disappointing, as only 11 participants returned responses at 3 months, and at the 6-month point just nine responses were returned. It was, therefore, problematic to really evaluate the degree to which perceptions of generativity persisted among all the original participants with so few responding after time passed. It is also difficult to know why the follow-up responses were so limited.

At the time of the actual meetings, some written comments from participants on the open-ended section of the GCS indicated that the sessions had at least provoked some future-oriented thinking and action, as shown in the following examples of comments from Group 5 in the study.

- The process will inform the department’s program review and discussions about workload;

- As we embark on a program review this is likely to have incredible influence over how we define ourselves.

What is interesting here is that change in thinking occurs not about the core issue of the practicum as much as about the process and how the participants in the department define themselves. Changes in those factors might enable action in regard to the practicum but may be more likely to change how the department or organizational unit operates and as a secondary output that might lead to action on the practicum.

Further follow-up information was obtained from an examination of the archives of the Faculty Council agendas and minutes. This review showed that Group 2, who engaged with the AI process, put forward a new elective course that introduced a field experience component as integral to the content. The faculty member who spoke to the new course outline was part of the initial facilitation process with Group 2. In the case of Groups 3, and 5, the department head of each of the respective programs represented the departments in proposing changes to existing course outlines. The department heads were also part of the group ideation process in each instance. Both Groups 3 and 5 proposed to meetings of the Faculty Council changes to courses that were about practicum and field experience. The rationale given involved adjustments to the course description, learning objectives, and course outcomes to improve overall student learning opportunities.

Of the three faculty units that were associated with proposals to Faculty Council regarding the student practicum, and that had also participated in the facilitated dialogues, two sessions had utilized the adapted AI process and the third utilized brainstorming. However, it is not possible to make a claim that the proposals to Faculty Council were clearly direct outcomes of the sessions described in this research. Further, the data from the GCS shows that the majority of participants in the three groups that were associated with the proposals to Faculty Council in regard to student practica indicated that they "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" with the following survey statements. That is, they agreed that they (a) heard new information, (b) learned from a colleague, (c) had expanded their thoughts, (d) heard new ideas, (e) experienced the process as creative, (f) were emotionally engaged, (g) felt connectedness to colleagues, (h) felt energized, (i) were fully engaged, and (j) saw old things in new ways.

Given that proposals for changes to student practica were moved forward to the Faculty Council by the departments whose faculty had been involved in the sessions described in this research, it is possible that the participants' experiences may have played a role in generating these actions. Further, since two of the three departments that initiated actions at Faculty Council had employed the AI approach in their sessions it might be tempting to suggest that AI could be viewed as being particularly effective as a generative approach. However, coincidence or concurrence is not necessarily causation, so caution is exercised in making these observations.

A second research question addressed in this study was, "What considerations are critical for the design and implementation of meetings and social interactions planned and structured to foster generative dialog?"

It would seem that under certain conditions thoughts and feelings are changed and can mobilize people to act. However, the changes as reported by the participants above were not directly related to the issue of the practicum as much as they concerned how the process affected the departmental review or how the session affected how the people in the department were defined. In designing the survey tool for this study, each statement represented an attribute or condition that has been described in various research and writings as providing a foundation for a generative social environment, largely in group settings. Building on this concept, it is possible that the GCS tool can be utilized as a checklist of general design criteria for the organization of sessions intended to foster transmethodological group generativity. In other words, no matter what group ideation process is used, if the intention is to develop a social setting in which people are encouraged to ideate and generate, the statements that framed the GCS in this research can be restated as potentially useful considerations for the planning of a group session in which generative outcomes are desired or expected. Group meetings, like learning experiences more generally, can be seen as meaning driven, identity forming, and socially situated (Brown & Duguid, 2000).

The design of the study allowed groups to come together to think about context-driven, creative alternatives to best practices in regard to student practicum experiences. Good questions (or provocative issues) can stimulate generative ways of thinking that may move towards outcomes. The issue of an exceptional practicum served as the basis for dialogue during the group ideation processes. The topic promoted a different focus, one that participants had not experienced

before. Bushe (2013) suggests that more attention be paid to the potency that a generative image, as the affirmative topic, can have (p. 8).

Generative capacity

Group session participants' responses to a series of statements and open-ended questions included in the GCS were important data sources for this research. A question always to be addressed in survey construction is whether or not the survey items validly reflect the constructs that they assess. A table showing the derivation of the 17 statements that comprise the GCS from relevant literature on the nature of generative dialogue and interactions was highlighted earlier in this chapter.

Gergen (2009) has described generative processes as those that stimulate the expansion and flow of meaning (p. 47). Gergen's description highlights the concept that when an interaction is generative, changes occur in thoughts and feelings and that potential for action unfolds as a result. Bushe (2013) described generative capacity as the ability of people, individually and collectively, to reconsider that which is taken for granted and to open up to new possibilities (p. 4). Generative capacity addresses that which drives a person or group to act on thoughts and feelings. I would propose that when head (thoughts) and heart (feelings) are touched and changed, space is created for new understandings and the capacity for action is enhanced. Scharmer (2009) asserted a dialogue that moves toward collective creativity is a social field that needs a container, that is the conditions that allow people to shift their attention toward a collective whole. Social fields are characterized by high degrees of trust, respect, and creative engagement among participants (Scharmer, 2009, p. 294). Social fields are founded on relationships. Higher level conversations like dialogue and collective creativity require higher quality containers and holding spaces. Transforming the quality of conversation in a system means altering the quality of relationships and thoughts, and subsequently the quality of future results or actions (Scharmer, 2009). A relational space is opened when participants listen and attune to each other, thereby increasing generative capacity.

A generative image (i.e., seeing something in a new way) is a component of generative capacity (Bushe, 2013). For some of the groups involved in this study, the dialogue that occurred during the group ideation processes created the possibility for the participants to engage, connect,

and learn with images of a desired future being generated. Generative capacity connected to generative imagery is reflected in the results of this project in the following (Group 3) participants' comments on the open-ended section of the GCS "The use of metaphor as a powerful organizer of thinking."

- "I liked that we changed chairs when we told our story, seemed to privilege our words."
- "Great process."
- "Each story drew out different pieces."
- "I could hear every individual voice."

Bushe (2013) further defined generativity as

> the creation of new images, metaphors, physical representations, and so on that have two qualities: they change how people think so that new options for decisions and/or actions become available to them, and they are compelling images that people want to act on. (p. 1)

Thoughts and feelings are the fuel for generative capacity in the form of future-oriented thinking and action, as shown in the following examples of comments from Group 5 in the study:

- "The process will inform the department's program review and discussions about workload."
- "As we embark on a program review this is likely to have incredible influence over how we define ourselves."

Paranjpey (2013) described generative capacity as being configured by five constructs that involve cognition or the capacity of individuals to challenge the guiding assumptions and question them and the psychosocial functions that relate the person with the social world. (p. 19). She defined the constructs of generative capacity as curiosity, hope, self-efficacy, group efficacy or group potency, and positive affect (Paranjpey, 2013). Curiosity is described as driving people to look around, discover, and question taken for granted assumptions, and is concerned with the cognitive ability of people to think in new ways with consequent results in action. Paranjpey (2013)

contended that hope and self-efficacy combine to promote action and stated that generativity entails a desire for engaging in purposeful activities that will be an extension to one's self, as well as to make a difference in the lives of others (Bradley, as cited in Paranjpey, 2013). The attribute of positive affect relates to generativity in that it requires an individual to have a belief in self in order to engage in action (Paranjpey, 2013, p. 21). As Luthans and Church (2002) noted, "Self-efficacy is a personal judgement or belief in how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (p. 60). Group potency is described as entailing the belief that a group has the resources and competencies to accomplish a task.

Generative Dialogue

An important element of the psychosocial environment of group-based generative conversations is dialogue. Dialogue is a creative, open-ended activity of two or more people thinking together (Paranjpey, 2013). Gergen et al., (2004) state the following about dialogue: (a) dialogue originates in the public sphere; (b) dialogue is a form of coordinated action; (c) dialogue efficacy is bodily and contextually embedded; (d) dialogue efficacy is historically and culturally situated; and (e) dialogue may serve many different purposes, both positive and negative. Gergen et al. also proposed that dialogue is generative when it is (a) affirmative (i.e., it values the opinions of others) and (b) repetitive, which means it is discussed again and again in the group. Each discussion helps in learning and reflection and brings out productive differences, thus enabling the participants to reach a new level of shared meaning and a vision for the future. Effective dialogue can facilitate the social construction of knowledge (Perkins, 1992) and also inspire creativity.

Generative Questions

If dialogue is important to generative conversations, generative questions can be the spark that initiatives (or necessitates) generative dialogue. Generative questions can help change the ways people look at the world and escape unquestioning or unrecognized assumptions. Bushe (2007) proposed that generative questions have four qualities: they are surprising, they touch people's emotions, they build relationships, and they invite looking at reality differently. Research on brainstorming (Gregersen, 2018), for example, emphasizes the importance of good questions as much or more than ideas to address the questions.

The design of the study allowed groups to come together to think about context-driven, creative alternatives to best practices in regard to student practicum experiences. Good questions (or provocative issues) can stimulate generative ways of thinking that may move towards outcomes. The issue of an exceptional practicum, served as the basis for dialogue during the group ideation processes. The way the topic was framed promoted a different focus, one that participants had not experienced before. Bushe (2013) suggested that more attention be paid to the potency that a generative image, as the affirmative topic, can have (p. 8). For one of the groups in this study (Group 2) the word "practicum" was initially a barrier that implicitly challenged the relevance of the focal topic for them. This will be explored further in Section 5.9, which discusses the limitations of this study.

A process to empower generative change should elicit new images and ideas that provide people with new eyes to see old things, resulting in new options for decisions and actions that they find appealing (Bushe & Marshak, 2015, p. 45). It is worth noting that the GCS statements that produced the most positive Likert responses were those that referred to "hearing new information," "hearing new ideas," and "having thoughts expanded." Then it would seem that being asked to look at reality differently can refocus people on a topic in ways that are more generative (Bushe & Marshak, 2015, 2016). Lang (2014) similarly suggested that innovators ask more and better questions. In industries in which fast-paced change is the norm, innovation has become the holy grail (Lang, 2014). Lang advocated for asking the right questions, opening to new possibilities, promoting divergent thinking, and focusing on questions not answers.

Group Size and Organization

A common factor emerged from examining the experience of the three generative group conversations that appeared to lead to specific actions, that is, the opportunity to work in dyads. Both Groups 2 and 3 engaged with the adapted AI process in which each participant had the opportunity to be an interviewer and interviewee, a dyad within a small group of four. In Group 5, there were only two participants who worked as a dyad during a brainstorming process. The literature on the brainstorming process suggested there are ways to improve the process through specific group discussion procedures that include beginning dialog in dyads (Diehl & Stroebe, 1987, 1991).

In examining what processes and social or physical environmental conditions can aid generativity, and what elements are critical in the design of organized meetings and social interactions planned to foster generative dialogue, consideration of pairing or dyad work seems to be important. Recent research and proposals on the characteristics of agile organizations (Barton et al., 2018) suggested that deploying people into tribes, squads, and chapters can resolve issues more quickly than many of the conventional department, work group, or project-based organizations. In this terminology the term squad refers to a cross-functional group of nine or fewer people charged with meeting a specific task. The term tribe refers to a collection of squads focused on the same overall issue. A chapter combines people who share common workplace or organizational disciplines and skills (Barton et al., 2018, p. 60). The point here is that new ideas are emerging in the field of OD around how to group people around issues, opportunities, or problems. Educational organizations may largely still be very conservative in their structures—departments, faculties, centres.

Institutional Context

In examining what processes and social or physical environmental conditions can aid generativity, and what elements are critical in the design of organized meetings and social interactions planned to foster generative dialogue, consideration of pairing or dyad work seems to be important. When conducting a research project in the field, there are often many variables that may influence the experiences of the participants and outcomes of the study. In the case of this project there are several such factors to consider. The institution in this study has a history of moving from a college to a university college and then to a new designation as a teaching intensive, regional university. Organizational change was very salient during the time the study was completed. Two of the faculty groups chosen for the study were in the process of institutional program reviews. As a result, they appeared to perceive the group ideation activity as an opportunity to contribute to the work of the ongoing review process and were motivated to explore the practicum topic. These two groups represented two of the three departments from which members subsequently took actions toward the practicum issue by bringing recommendations to the Faculty Council within the year of the study. At the very least the sessions described in this research may have contributed somewhat to the actions that were taken at the Council level.

Another factor to consider was the nature of the topic chosen for discussion during the group ideation processes. While the university as a whole is promoting innovation through scholarship on teaching and learning that includes the exploration of experiential and place-based learning, the faculty groups involved in this study were in very different stages with regard to the use of practica in their programs. The goals and norms related to high impact practices and experiential learning also varied across the disciplines represented in the study. This influenced the focusing task's relevance for some of the groups with some having strong familiarity with practica as integral parts of their programs (Groups 1 and 3) and others (Groups 2 and 4) not currently engaged in practica as instructional strategies. This may have affected the levels of participant engagement with the group ideation process.

The Generative Conversations Survey as a Design Tool

In addition to thoughtfully establishing an inquiry stance to promote generativity, Storch (2015) explored the way meaning influences actions suggesting that everything matters when it comes to considerations (plans for meetings and group dialogue) for scene-setting activities. Examples of these activities include considering what kind of conversations need to be pursued, where and when they will occur, how the room will be arranged, and how much time is needed (Storch, 2015). Time is often neglected as a factor in planning sessions, especially in organizations in which the timetable or schedule dominates (e.g., in schools) or when the time-is-money theme is stressed and there are always concerns about "time wasting".

How one choreographs group dialogue may aid or hamper what one hopes to realize. Zandee (2013) suggested that relational engagement is pivotal for change. Relational engagement refers to establishing opportunities for shared inquiry, understanding and values exploration. Building on the work of these authors who have previously explored what needs attention when it comes to group process and generativity, I suggest that the GCS tool as developed for this research can be used as a way of thinking about process design.

In designing the survey tool for this study, each statement represented an attribute or condition that has been described in various research and writings as providing a foundation for a generative social environment, largely in group settings. Building on this concept, it is possible that the GCS tool can be utilized as a checklist of general design criteria for the organization of

sessions intended to foster transmethodological group generativity. In other words, no matter what group ideation process is used, if the intention is to develop a social setting in which people are encouraged to ideate and generate, the statements that framed the GCS in this research can be restated as potentially useful considerations for the planning of a group session in which generative outcomes are desired or expected.

In a sense, the survey represents a descriptive theory about the planning and conduct of a generative group session. Table highlights each statement from the GCS and links the statement to its potential implications for designing and facilitating a generative learning environment.

Table 3.

Generative Conversations survey statements linked to their potential applications in the planning and implementation of sessions intended to foster ideation and generativity

GSC Survey Item	Implications for learning environment and facilitation/Session Design Goals
*(1) I heard **new information** when I participated in the group process about the topic of the session.*	*In order for people to hear new information the session should establish and sustain a climate that encourages and enables active listening. This means paying attention to how conversations are structured, and teaching active listening skills as needed. New information or data about the focal issue can also provoke or stimulate engagement and help participants see the relevance of the meeting.* *If there is important data/information about the focal issue, then it should be distributed prior to the meeting. The facilitator should be prepared to "frame" the situation, including the new data, in in a concise, clear presentation format that frames the information in a way participants have not likely considered before.*
*(2) I **learned** from a colleague when I participated in the group process about the topic of the session.*	*Breaking into dyads or small groups may give more chance for people to be heard and to explain their ideas to a colleague or small group and may promote inquiry-based dialogue.* *Paying attention to the composition of pairs or small groups can increase the likelihood of participants learning from colleagues. An example of this approach can be found in the work of Ludema, Whitney, Mohr and Griffin, (2003, pp. 82–83 regarding putting together "improbable pairs" that is, bringing people together who may have differing perspectives in a way that voices get heard and colleagues learn from and about each other.*
*(3) I was **surprised** by what I heard when I participated in the group process about the topic of the session.*	*When people are exposed to new information, they are more likely to be surprised and see thoughts or ideas in ways they have not applied before.* *A useful approach may be to structure the group ideation process utilizing questions that haven't been discussed or thought about before (Bushe, 2013). It may be helpful to consider utilizing provocative propositions.*

	Partnering participants in improbable pairs to increase the likelihood of hearing surprising stories and information may also be considered. *Encouraging storytelling and reflection as a method of sharing among group participants can help them to structure questions that are personally meaningful and have emotional attachment.*
*(4) As a result of participation in this group process I have **developed an action plan** related to the topic.*	*To close the session have participants complete a brief reflection exercise where they consider the ideas generated and record one thing they personally intend to do immediately, in one week, in one month. Record and share commitments to action from as many participants as possible.* *Where it makes sense to the organization, ensure participants know they have the authority to move their ideas into actions.*
*(5) I experienced the group process as **creative**.*	*Frame the session around questions and images that can spark feelings and motivations.* *In order to promote a climate that supports creative or lateral thinking set up guidelines as to openness to ideas, positivity, and exploration and acceptance of diverse perspectives.* *Utilize experiential activities that allow participants a forum to express ideas differently: art, media, performance.* *Engage in an opportunity mapping exercise participants create the future. Eg: you wake up after a long sleep (5 years) and you look around and everything is as you hoped. Describe what you see?* *Enlist the use of graphic facilitation in order the support different modes of expression and the* *use of a range of metaphors and images.*

(6) *I was **fully engaged** in the group process.*	*In order for people to engage they need to intend to be part of the process and to have the opportunity to engage personally. Open the session with a brief mindfulness-based activity that attunes participants to the present moment.* *Invite discussion of the personal relevance of the discussion topic for individuals, the group and the organization. Consider a potent generative image to begin the dialogue.* *Focus on what people think. Utilize dyads and small group activities that have every individual tell their story or share their experience.* *Ensure an open, safe environment where differing perspectives can emerge.* *Consider the organizational status of the group and build in specific group development activities as needed.*
*(7) I feel **motivated to act as a result** of the group process about the focal topic or issue.*	*In order to feel motivated to act participants need to believe their actions are accepted and can be supported. Motivation can be linked to having a sense of locus of control, and that one can actually influence results. Acknowledge new ideas as they emerge and are accepted. Encourage the development of many potential opportunities to transform rather than aiming to find just one solution.* *Feeling heard, understood and valued can contribute to a sense of motivation. Providing opportunities for participants to share their experiences promotes both engagement and motivation.* *Observe when participants feel motivated and support innovation where possible.* *Ensure authority to act upon ideas and innovations is defined and communicated to participants.*
*(8) I felt **emotionally engaged** during participation in the group process about the focal question.*	*For people to emotionally engage they need to feel relationally safe, and to have opportunities to share and make meaning of the group process.* *Consider the group state and stage of development. Build in opportunities to have participants spend time getting to know each other in dyads and smaller groups. Review active listening skills and ensure an understanding of group dynamics.*

	Establish climate goals for group behavior and discuss them with the participants to get their inputs and any concerns. *Observe and guide relational and task related behaviours of the group.*
(9) *I was able to **suspend self -interest** during participation in the group process about the focal question.*	*In order to suspend self-interest one needs to be able to focus on another or a larger picture.* *The more supportive, accepting and caring the social environment, the freer a person is to experiment with new behaviours, attitudes, and action (Johnson & Johnson, 2013, p. 52).* *Establish a common, shared understanding of the topic for discussion.* *Encourage active listening and reflection beginning in dyads. Structure a series of questions to invite one person at a time to share their story. The role of the listener is to capture the essence of the other's story and reflect on what they heard and learned, as well as making notes about values and beliefs they hear. Ensure every participant has a chance to be the one sharing and one being listened to. This might be done in small groups or pairs and people could be asked to introduce another member to the group.*
*(10) As a result of participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience **I think there will be some change** in what we do.*	*Close the meeting by having the participants write a short, 1 paragraph **personal** statement concerning their views about how to obtain or follow up action of the focal issue. Share those short **personal** Action Statements before adjournment or use a follow up online forum.* *Ensure that decisions are being recorded and specific action plans shared with timelines and person(s) accountable noted. Distribute to the participants following up on the meeting within a reasonable time.*
*(11) During participation in the group process about the focal topic, I felt **a sense of connectedness** to my colleagues.*	*Connectedness can be about joining together to find a way forward, it can also be about learning and understanding another's point of view.*

	Provide opportunities for participants to work together on tasks and experiential activities to find mutual goals. Cooperative experiences promote more positive, committed, and caring relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 2013, p. 403).
(12) During participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience I felt ***energized.***	*To be energized is to feel alive and experience a sense of enthusiasm. This can be physical in a kinetic sense, emotional as a drive state, and cognitive as believing something is going somewhere. Provide opportunities to be physically active and engaged in experiential learning together.* *Check with the participants concerning how they view the personal relevance of the topic. Help participants understand the boundaries and parameters of influence at the start. Empower participants with authority to act where possible. Recognize contributions and celebrate individual and group accomplishments frequently.* *Provide opportunities to be physically active and engaged in experiential learning together.*
(13) I heard ***new ideas*** *when I participated in the group process about the focal topic.*	*Focus on new knowing, rather than new knowledge (Whitney, Cooperrider, Trosten-Bloom and Kaplin, 2005). Utilize structured inquiry to explore what participants know, with each other.* *Breaking into pairs or small groups may give more chance for people to be heard and to explain their ideas to a colleague or small group.* *Structure dialogue around specific questions that focus on areas/topics not considered before.* *Clearly signal shifts from focus on data/information → idea generation.* *Ask participants to reflect on what they heard and learned.*
(14) My ***thoughts were expanded*** *when I participated in the group process about the focal topic.*	*If a graphic facilitator is available then they might be able to create a cartoon illustrating some of the "expansions".* *Engage the group in an opportunity mapping exercise that build upon the initial group ideation process.*

	Participants might be given a handout frame with two columns—where I started---- where I am now (in my thinking).
(15) As a result of participation in the group process about the focus of the session I feel a sense of ***hopefulness****.*	*Encouragement and optimism are synonyms of hope. Hope can be experienced by an individual and as an organizational collective.* *Provide an opportunity for individuals to describe their hopes and aspirations as you begin the discussion. Start in dyads and then working out into small groups, participants can begin to form a collective concept of hope.* *Once a guiding image has been created by the group have them build out the social architecture (physical, relational) that would support the image. This can be in the form of a concept map or graphic illustration.*
(16) I ***saw old things in new ways*** *as a result of participation in the group process about the focal topic.*	*In order to see old things in new ways the group members should share their understandings of the current state of things. A starting point for understanding is the opportunity for each group member to share their experiences and perspectives.* *An instrument like the Group States measure could be useful here.* *Encourage the use of "why" questions. Engage a stance of inquiry, asking questions and critically evaluating practices in light of the diverse experiences among participants.* *Invite curiosity through structured interviews in dyads that explore and probe members' previous experiences with the topic of discussion.* *Focus on questions not answers. Question what seems obvious and unquestionable. Offer some examples of this sort of question. Think divergently, not trying to come up with one right solution. Seek context driven creative possibilities as an alternative to best practice. You might also invite people to explore their concepts of "best practice".*
(17) Participation in the group process about ***compels me to act*** *upon the points raised.*	*At the close of the group process have participants declare what service they personally will contribute. Have participants complete a brief reflection exercise where they consider the ideas generated and record one thing they intend to do immediately, in one week, in one month.*

	Before closing the session have participants anticipate what resources and supports are likely to be needed and are available, and where possible, communicate that people can move their new and innovative ideas forward as it makes sense to the group and the organization. *Ensure participants know they have authority to move ideas into actions. Record commitments to action from as many participants as possible. You could even formalize this by having people sign "contracts" which could be sealed with Wax or other sort of marker.*

Recommendations for Educational Leadership

Institutions of higher education are currently under considerable pressure to become more responsive, relevant, efficient, and effective (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 3). As a result, many have responded to these pressures by adopting methods and processes from the realm of ideas and theories of the organization development in the context of business systems. This thesis explored generativity in university faculty group processes. A key outcome of the research was the development of a survey tool that can be used transmethodologically to set help the stage for generative group work and assess the outcomes of group work. Table 3 provides a way of thinking about the design of faculty group processes to enhance generativity. It is not proposed that the identified attributes will cause generative responses, but rather that they may have implications for thinking about the design of group sessions and meetings that have enhanced chances to yield generative outcomes. The attributes and design elements listed have potential applicability across meeting types and processes (i.e., they are transmethodological).

The survey tool and the linked session design elements could be applied in the development of faculty groups and to enhancement of the work they do together. Perhaps, as a faculty member steps into leadership and assumes the role of chair or department head, this could be a useful tool to orient them to organizing faculty meetings and program planning and review. It is suggested that the survey could also be used in the development of student project teams and in university committees at large. The 17 survey items and their correlated design factors are interrelated and none stand alone. In group work, the whole may be more than the sum of its parts, but the parts are also significant and depending on particular contexts and mediating factors, some may be critical.

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Biography

Dr. Christine Slavik is an Associate Professor at the University of the Fraser Valley, is currently the Head of the Child, Youth and Family Studies Department, and is an elected faculty representative on the Board of Governors for the university. Prior to her appointment at the university, Christine worked as a Psychiatric Nurse, a Child and Youth Care Counselor, and a Child Life Specialist. In each of her roles over her 40+ years in human service and education, she engages with others in a relational and strength-based manner, open and curious, to lead is to learn and share meaning. Christine has held a variety of leadership roles in both health care and education. She is a past president of the Canadian Association of Child Life Leaders; past Chair of the Child and Youth Care Education Consortium of BC; Director of Child Life at BC Children's Hospital; past Board member of the Child Life Council (now Association of Child Life Professionals); and former Head of the Teacher Education Program. Her research focus is in wellness, mindfulness-based practices, planning, generative conversations, and Appreciative Inquiry as a model of transformational change process. In addition to holding various administrative and leadership roles in both the hospital and the academy, Christine has engaged in numerous strategic planning opportunities utilizing a strength-based approach to these processes. Christine has a personal commitment to meditation and mindfulness-based practices and incorporates this into her teaching and leadership.

***Corresponding Author:** Dr. Christine Slavik (Christine.Slavik@ufv.ca)

Pearce, A., Anholt, M., Markides, J., Darlington, M., Brown, B., & Roy, S. (2024). Breaking down silos: Postsecondary leaders collaborating to advance One Health in education. *International Journal for Leadership in Learning, 24*(1), 103–127. https://doi.org/10.29173/ijll46

Breaking Down Silos: Postsecondary Leaders Collaborating to Advance One Health in Education

Alyse Pearce, Michele Anholt, Jennifer Markides, MacKinley Darlington, Barbara Brown, & Sylvie Roy

Abstract

This contribution describes how leaders from the University of Calgary Knowledge Engagement team, the manager of One Health at UCalgary and faculty members from Werklund School of Education came together to form a leadership team and plan a transdisciplinary initiative for future implementation in K-12 schools. The One Health initiative at the University of Calgary is committed to tackling complex problems at the convergence of people, animals, and the environment, and the underlying economic and social factors that determine the opportunities for health across all ecosystems. Systems thinking and inviting different perspectives into the conversation provided a greater understanding of the scope of global challenges and how our individual actions impact others and the environment we all share. The authors used a collaborative and dialogic approach to plan a knowledge engagement session with regional public-school educators to consider how inclusion of the One Health approach into existing curriculum could benefit students. In this chapter, the authors reflected on how matchmaking brought the team together as a boundary-spanning and transdisciplinary team and describe their collective actions and leadership in building collaboration and connections with community partners to lay the foundation for a robust outreach program. The reflections suggest that leaders in higher education can break down silos using a complexity paradigm for their leadership and work together across different departments to combine diverse expertise for community engagement.

Keywords: One Health, education, partnership, boundary-spanning, collaborative leadership, knowledge engagement

Introduction

One Health at the University of Calgary (OH@UC, research.ucalgary.ca/one-health) was founded in 2019 as an emerging cross-cutting research theme from the Office of the Vice-President, Research. The decision by the University leaders to support One Health scholarship and research was consistent with a global movement to take a holistic and collaborative approach to understanding and mitigating wellness challenges with the goal of improving the health of all ecosystems. Growing numbers of programs, research projects and discussions on the value of a One Health approach have been inspired by numerous complex global challenges such as emerging and re-emerging zoonoses, climate change, antimicrobial resistance, plastics pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss (MacKenzie & Jeggo, 2019; Schneider et al., 2019). Combining diverse expertise has great potential to yield innovative adaptations to address these complex scientific and social challenges. Lessons learned from the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic have further emphasized the importance of a new approach and the imperative of re-evaluating our relationships with each other, between and within the disciplines and sectors, and most importantly – nature (El Zowalaty & Järhult, 2020; Zinsstag et al., 2020).

One Health at UCalgary (OH@UC) is committed to tackling complex problems at the convergence of people, animals, and the environment and the underlying economic and social factors that determine the opportunities for health across all ecosystems. The concepts embraced by One Health date back thousands of years. In the fall of 2019, OH@UC hosted two One Health Strategy Town Halls with University faculty, staff, and students to help us define our strategic plan and priorities for research, training, and outreach. We asked the question, “How do we develop and maintain a One Health philosophy and approach at the center of our research, in practice and in policy development?” The overwhelming response was that we needed to start early to establish an informed basis for One Health and to learn the skills required for collaboration. Our participants clearly recognized that children are our future. If we aspire to live in a more collaborative and connected world in which One Health is commonly understood and operationalized, then, we must start educating children today about One Health.

On a similar timeline of the establishment of the One Health initiative, a team dedicated to supporting knowledge engagement was formed within the University of Calgary’s Research Services Office. Knowledge engagement (KE) is a dynamic and reciprocal process in which

multiple stakeholders come together to address mutually identified problems (Research at UCalgary, 2024). The term knowledge engagement is unique to the University of Calgary and was developed to reflect potential and to frame our focus in a forward-thinking way. The purpose of this deliberate engagement is for the co-creation, synthesis, and application of knowledge and evidence to benefit the community at large. The KE team was given a broad mandate to build capacity, facilitate the development of partnerships for research, and provide a robust support structure for those on campus and in community doing knowledge engagement. The KE team provides a diverse range of core service offerings which includes a matchmaking function primarily supported by the team's coordinator. Very early in its tenure, the KE team identified One Health and the Werklund School of Education as being KE-active and potentially important connections for the networking and nexus providing activities being rolled out by the team.

One Health was already working with the KE team to develop outreach programs to assist with actioning the commitment to bring One Health to the classroom. A request for support was extended to the KE team for further assistance in developing plans, making connections, and building relationships with school-based stakeholders. The KE team suggested that an internal collaboration with faculty members from the Werklund School of Education could be beneficial to realizing the goal of bringing One Health to the classroom. The KE team connected (matchmaking) the OH team with faculty members who were active in partnering with schools for research and knowledge mobilization purposes.

The Werklund School of Education has been partnering with school districts for research purposes through an initiative called Partner Research Schools and Communities and they were open to extending these school partnerships to include other faculties and initiatives at the university. Over the past decade, this partnership program has successfully supported education faculty in making connections with practitioners in schools and communities for leading innovation and research. Werklund School of Education provides support for partnerships and is also committed to be change leaders in education and to be responsible to individuals, partners, and future generations of learners. Werklund School's mission is to embrace diversity of identities and further the betterment of societies through scholarship that is mindful of wellness, social justice, and ecological sustainability. Werklund School of Education scholars offer an educational space for learning and bringing changes and transdisciplinary work that demonstrate examples of good practices in different disciplines (Alonso-Yanez et al., 2021; Takeuchi et al., 2020). In

addition to provide a space for diversity, the Werklund School has several Indigenous scholars to help curriculum and school leaders understand different ways of knowing and representing knowledge. Indigenous peoples have held the relationships between human beings, non-human animals, and the environment as central to health and wellbeing since time immemorial. These Indigenous worldviews and epistemologies precede and inform the origins of One Health as it is known today. Leaders from the One Health team, the Knowledge Engagement team, educators and Indigenous scholars from Werklund School of Education came together to work together and break silos in a postsecondary institution.

The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate how leaders from One Health, Knowledge Engagement and School of Education used reflection and collaboration to break down silos using a complexity paradigm for their leadership. Working together across different departments and combining diverse expertise in community engagement created a space for the creativity required to meaningfully engage and collaborate to advance a One Health approach. The next section will introduce and discuss complex problems and how matchmaking and leadership can bring about change.

Literature

Complex problems are intractable, open-ended, unpredictable, and costly. There are dozens of specialized disciplines that can effectively describe a component of the system, but complex problems exist where biology and ecology have become entangled with economics, social expectations, and politics. Hierarchical leadership that seeks simple solutions and paternalistic environmental management have made progress in some areas such as management of infectious diseases (Shuman & Malani, 2018) but the drivers of complex problems have worsened (Waltner-Toews, 2017). Economic inequities, loss of biodiversity, and ecological degradation are increasing, and ecosystems are showing signs of being unable to meet the needs of the lives (human and non-human) occupying them (Hassan et al., 2005). Transdisciplinary research, practice, and policy development that are applied to real-word problems require authentic collaboration and co-leadership of scientists, practitioners, and other stakeholders. One Health provides a basis for growing communities of learning and practice (Binot et al., 2015).

Collaboration has been identified as a useful method for advancing shared goals in many disciplines and sectors such as the social sciences, non-profit practitioners (Levine, 2020), industry

(Venghaus & Stummer, 2015), and biological sciences (Lewis, 2010). Successful collaborations require competent team members who have developed relationships built on trust and respect (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). Identifying skilled team members from outside your disciplinary silo and who are curious and willing to engage in transdisciplinary projects can be challenging. Experienced researchers can rely on their professional networks developed over years to identify individuals with the desired skills (Anholt et al., 2012). Matchmaking can also assist with team building.

Institutions and individuals use a variety of tools or mechanisms for matchmaking. Lewis (2010) highlights the success of speed dating style events for matching scientists across disciplines. Levine (2020) describes a step-by-step approach for making connections between social sciences researchers and practitioners working in non-profit organizations. Other mechanisms rely on a digital tool such as a smartphone application (Kopplin, 2020) or a virtual platform such as Memorial University of Newfoundland's Yaffle web site (https://mun.yaffle.ca/).

There are many different names for the professionals who work in the spaces between disciplines and organizations: partnership broker, industry or community liaison, inter-cultural facilitator to name a few. Common across descriptions is the idea that these roles lead the connections and fill the spaces between previously (and traditionally) detached entities. Of knowledge brokers, Phipps and Morton (2013) describe that "[r]ather than walking a tightrope between two communities, they need to have the courage to step ahead and encourage others to follow" (p. 260). Lewis (2010) characterizes these roles as "the interdisciplinary project manager who uses exploratory leadership and management skills" and "interactional expertise" to lead collaborations across disciplines (p. 191). University faculty members are often uncertain about how to broker these types of relationships if there are limited supports within a faculty or institution to help navigate knowledge engagement and the development of partnerships.

Engaging in university-school partnership work requires a commitment and leadership among the partner organizations (Brown, 2021; Friesen & Brown, 2023). Collaborative approaches and shared leadership are often discussed in the research-practice partnerships literature (Coburn et al., 2013; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Terminology, such as distributed leadership is used in the literature to describe a shared approach to leadership (Harris, 2009). Leaders taking a distributed leadership approach can support communities of practitioners to

achieve a shared vision and work collaboratively in the service of a common goal (Fasso et al., 2016; Hartley, 2009; Torrance, 2013). Extending this beyond the local context requires transformative leadership (Bass, 1998; Riggio & Bass, 2006) and having an educational vision to bring changes to society. Transformational leaders empower school staff, students (and parents) to create a culture of innovation and improvement with shared purpose. Drawing on transformative leadership theory, these leaders use a critical approach grounded in the values of equity, inclusion, excellence, and social justice (Shields, 2010, 2019) and this can support a commitment to research-practice partnerships where all members are positioned as equal and valuable contributors (Snow, 2015). Partnerships in learning organizations have demonstrated positive results (Coburn & Penuel, 2016) particularly when supported by transformative leaders who embrace distributed leadership approaches and collaborative relationships (Stephens & Boldt, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

Our understanding of leadership, that grounded our interdependent interactions and transdisciplinary work, is underpinned by Davis et al.'s (2000) complexity lens in education and Uhl-Bien et al.'s (2007) Complexity Leadership Theory. We begin with the assumption that complex systems comprise a collection of individual actions and actors who create relationships and respond to events within a larger system. The relationships that are formed are more than a description of a combination of actions and become interconnected and entangled. Qualities commonly described when discussing complexity include emergence and self-organized forms and these "coherent collective behaviors and characters emerge in the activities and interactivities of individual agents" (Davis & Sumara, 2005, p. 455). Similarly, in Complex Leadership Theory, Uhl-Bien et al., (2007) described adaptive leadership as emergent and informal within an organization involving adaptive challenges that require innovative ways of working together, an openness to new possibilities, and the use of new or different repertoires of practices to solve a problem. For example, design thinking is an adaptive practice and can be described as "a set of tools applied to achieve human centered innovation" (Arena & Uhl-Bien, 2016, p. 26).

Complexity Leadership Theory identifies three intertwined leadership functions: (a) Adaptive leadership activity informally emerges from dynamic interactions; (b) Administrative leadership activity refers to actions accomplished by members of the team who might hold formal managerial or coordination roles; and (c) Enabling leadership activities that help navigate the

entanglement between the adaptive and administrative activity to promote innovation and creativity (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Davis et al. (2000) argued that "events of learning are about constant co-adaptations of interacting parts—an ongoing structural dance" (p. 58). Despite constant change and interacting parts, in education, research often focuses on events of learning within perceived boundaries. Some authors use terms such as boundary practices and boundary crossing to discuss intersections that go beyond a bounded domain (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Boundary practices can refer to the repertoire of routines or practices that can highlight different approaches and contexts among team members involved in a project (Penuel et al., 2015). Boundary crossing can refer to an individual's role in navigating interactions and differences among members of teams and sites (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Another term used in the literature is boundary-spanning in reference to employees that work across departments, networking processes, and initiatives (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). Our understanding of boundary-spanning is also multilayered and "not confined to an individual job description" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 638). The four-part boundary-spanning model framework (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010; Weerts, 2019) provided a lens to explore the roles and approaches of the collaborative leadership team: (a) community-based problem solver, (b) technical expert, (c) engagement champion, and (d) internal engagement advocate.

Methodology

In our collaborative inquiry, we chose steps provided by Creswell and Guetterman (2019). We started by identifying a phenomenon to explore and to address an educational problem. We worked together to provide an understanding of the phenomenon and collected narrative reflections from our team. We collaborated to write about our experiences in forming a leadership team to engage later on in partnerships with K-12 schools. In that way, our reflections focused on identifying the experiences of several individuals:

> A good narrative study reports the stories of lived experiences of an individual (or individuals: our emphasis), organizes them into a chronology, situates them within the setting or context, derives several themes that the stories will address, and demonstrates a close collaboration in the narrative project between the researcher and the participant. (p. 529)

We decided to come together as a group of leaders that were interested in looking at how we can plan a transdisciplinary initiative with One Health and Education and provide a knowledge engagement opportunity for teachers in schools. Two leaders from the UCalgary Knowledge Engagement team, a manager from One Health, and three faculty members in Education formed a team to explore introducing the One Health approach into the classroom.

Just as diverse practitioners come together to approach complex problems in innovative ways, our team reflects diverse background knowledge and expertise while holding common threads of interest in education and addressing issues relating to humans, animals, and the environment. While Michele has a managerial leadership role within One Health, we consider our leadership team as decentralized, and members share leadership. The leadership is dynamic, responsive, and emergent depending on the contexts and goals of the team at the time. Reflecting on our roles and engaging in dialogue about our work was an important part of the process we used to recognize how each of us influenced the work in pragmatic, organizational, or theoretical ways. Each member of our team reflected on the following questions:

- How did you come together as a boundary-spanning team?
- What are the successes and challenges of your boundary-spanning team?

Following this, we used the four boundary-spanning descriptions (see Table 1) as a lens to analyze our reflections and understand our interconnected roles, keep track of our procedures for collaboration, and to deepen our understanding about our collaborative leadership.

Table 1:
Boundary-Spanning Model Focus and Tasks

Boundary-Spanning Model (Weerts-Sandmann, 2010)	Focus	Tasks
Community-Based Problem Solver	Community	Technical and practical tasks Provides site-based problem-solving support, the acquisition of resources, and the development of partnerships Manages relationships between community and university
Technical Expert	Institution	Technical and practical tasks Emphasis on knowledge creation for applied purposes
Engagement Champion	Community	Socio-emotional and leadership tasks Build external political and intraorganizational support
Internal Engagement Advocate	Institution	Socio-emotional and leadership tasks at the institution

The boundary-spanning model in conjunction with the leadership functions (adaptive, administrative, enabling) in Complexity Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) provided a useful conceptual lens for our reflections, dialogue, and analysis of our roles and collaborative approach to leadership.

Reflective Practices

In this section we provide excerpts from each of our reflections outlining the unique roles as part of a leadership team. We will begin by introducing the One Health Project manager, followed by two members of the Knowledge Engagement (KE) team, and three faculty members from the Werklund School of Education comprising the leadership team for the project.

Michele, One Health Initiative

Prior to my role at University of Calgary, I provided epidemiological research consulting services. My favorite projects were those where I was part of a transdisciplinary team; a team that involved scientists from diverse academic disciplines and research partners from government,

industry, and the communities. They were not easy problems. They included questions such as, "How can we improve early detection of wild bird avian influenza?" or "How do we define a healthy wildlife population so that we understand when an intervention is necessary?" As individuals we brought our knowledge to the question but as a team, we could use everyone's perspectives to better understand the problem and to find sustainable and effective solutions.

My role at the university is to support faculty and trainees as they develop the necessary relationships to build research teams to answer some of the world's complex problems. So, I have been thinking about how researchers get good at One Health. Learning the skills necessary for transdisciplinary and cross sectoral research is a skill that will benefit learners in any field they choose. The skills or competencies important for One Health work (aside from disciplinary training) include a holistic understanding of health, systems thinking, problem solving, critical thinking, and the value of resilience. One Health practitioners will develop skills in leadership, collaboration, and an appreciation for examining a problem from different perspectives. Skills best taught early. However, I did not know how to connect with the schools nor what One Health resources teachers would find useful; I did not know how to move this idea across the boundaries.

MacKinley, Knowledge Engagement

As part of our core service offerings, the KE team provides partnership matchmaking support to a dual client base that includes both UCalgary researchers and community. For this initiative we began by focusing on making an internal, transdisciplinary match and our involvement and support has not stopped there. We have provided ongoing partnership brokering and facilitation support to help develop a strong foundation for these newly formed, transdisciplinary relationships. In terms of a case study for the KE team, this initiative has proved to be invaluable! We are a relatively new team, and this is one of the first initiatives that has allowed us to test out and refine our service offerings while monitoring a project as it moves through the knowledge engagement lifecycle. From my perspective, as the Manager of the Knowledge Engagement team, this initiative and the role that our team has played is a wonderful example of the benefit of having a centralized support department with a goal of supporting collaborative efforts to create knowledge with impact for the benefit of the community at large.

Alyse, Knowledge Engagement

As a large and complex organization, the University of Calgary already interacts with the wider local, provincial, national, and global communities around it in innumerable ways. I look for ways to make meaningful connections among those groups without duplicating efforts, undermining work already started, or stepping on any toes. I brought a background in partnerships with community organizations to my new role at the University of Calgary and was primarily focused on building connections between the University and community organizations. When I first consulted with the team in the One Health Office, they came to that meeting with an already clear sense of gaps which they wanted to fill. They knew that they wanted to create resources for teacher use in the classroom but needed guidance on how to do that. This presented an interesting new facet to my matchmaking role. I usually connect groups or individuals from the University directly to external organizations, but in this case, I knew there were people within the University better suited to facilitate this process. I made introductions to our Werklund School of Education team members; and at that point my role in the collaboration became one of facilitation and support.

Within a large institution a leader in the spaces between groups (a boundary-spanner) can activate collaborations which may never have come about otherwise. These advocates and champions take on accountability when faced with a need that can only be met through collaboration and partnership across disciplines or teams. This combination of (theoretical) location and responsibility leads to deliberately moving ideas forward by actively bringing collaborators together. The explicit and deliberate nature of the work is one of the defining characteristics of knowledge engagement work at the University of Calgary.

Jennifer, Education Faculty

As a Métis educator and researcher, I came to this role with community in mind. The OH@UC leadership team aimed to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their planning, engagements, and resource creation, and wanted to ensure that they were taking up Indigenous perspectives in good ways. Recognizing that learning about and through Indigenous teachings is a lifelong endeavor, I come with the knowledge that I am not an expert (Markides, 2018, 2022). I can only offer what I know based on my experiences to this point. Being tasked with bringing an Indigenous lens and voice to the work, I do so with great humility and a sense of immense

responsibility. The insights and advice I offer have the potential to help or hinder the relationships with Indigenous community partners and people. Therefore, my boundary-spanning role as an Indigenous educator and researcher requires that I put community first in all aspects of my work. At times it has been tempting to take up the perspective of a K-12 teacher—with over a decade of experience as an elementary Montessori educator—it is a role that I slide into with the ease of familiarity. I hear the team's enthusiasm for developing resources and partnerships with a critical problem-solving and student-centered focus, and I lean into that area of my expertise. With the knowledge that there are other engagement champions on the team, I remind myself to take a step back and prioritize: listening over speaking; the wholeness of the team's vision over the individual parts it creates; and the fostering of relationships over the development of resources.

Barbara, Education Faculty

As the Associate Dean Teaching and Learning in the Werklund School of Education and previously Director of Partner Research Schools and Communities, I would describe myself as one of the engagement champions for the partnerships between the education faculty and K-12 schools. I provided intraorganizational support between researchers and practitioners. With experience as a classroom teacher and school district leader, I have a strong understanding of schools and classrooms. I view myself in a boundary-spanning role as a practitioner and researcher and provide a focus on school communities when meeting with the OH@UC leadership team. For example, I helped advise on the procedures for communicating with our school partners, selecting appropriate dates for scheduling stakeholder consultations, and offered feedback on the materials shared with school leaders and teachers.

Sylvie, Education Faculty

As the Associate Dean Research in Werklund School of Education, I was part of the initial conversation when the President (Vice President Research at the time) introduced the Cross Cutting themes at the University level. I understood quickly that Academic staff in Werklund School would have a lot to share working with other faculty members on the One Health initiative. Educational researchers work in different topics and their involvement is very important. At first, my role on this team was to help by suggesting and inviting key people in order to include all voices necessary for the success of this initiative. I am also able to suggest any grants or partners that we might need in the future. My personal interest grew while working with the team because,

personally, I think that One Health's goals are what all educators are trying to achieve: making the world better for future generations.

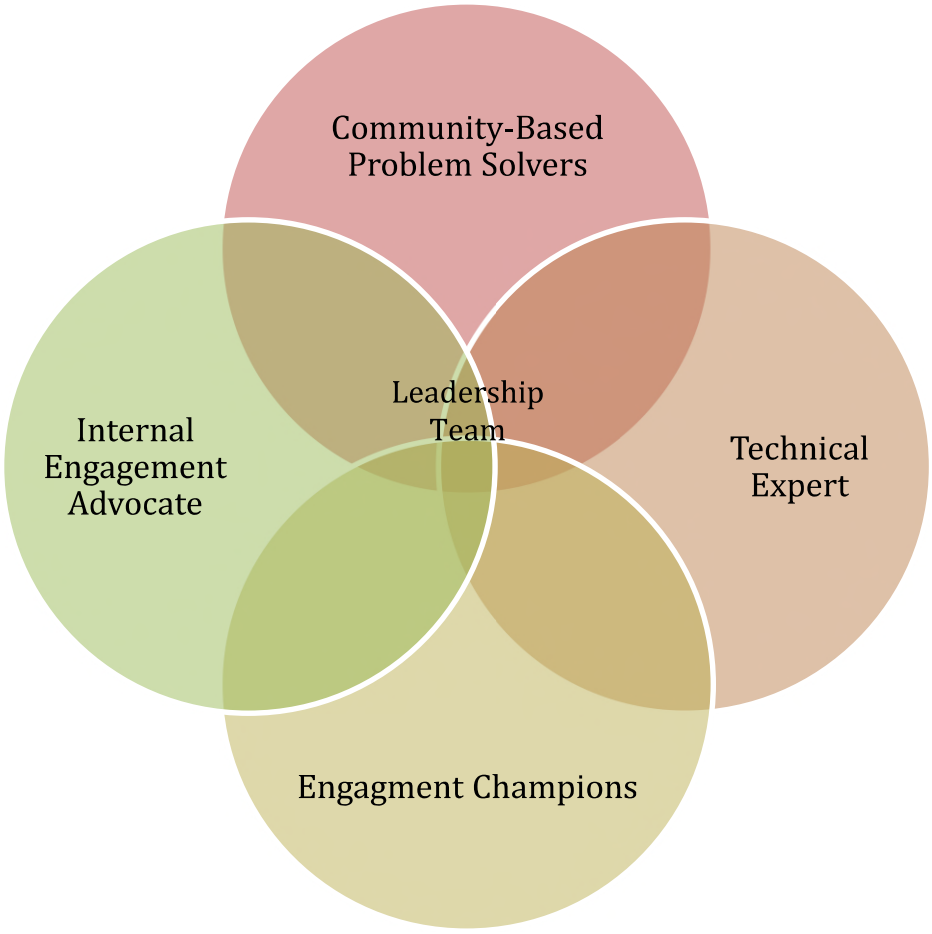
Through our reflections, dialogue, and collective analysis, we found it useful to use the boundary-spanning descriptions (Weerts-Sandmann Boundary Spanning Model, 2010) to help describe our roles. Table 2 summarizes the different roles and the names of the team members who situated themselves in these roles either through their reflections or through our OH@UC leadership team dialogue.

Table 2:
Boundary-Spanning Roles

Role	Team Members
Community-based Problem Solvers	Alyse, Jennifer, Michele
Technical Expert	Michele, Jennifer, Barbara, Sylvie
Engagement Champions	Barbara, Sylvie
Internal Engagement Advocate	MacKinley, Alyse

As we reviewed our reflections and discussed the roles, we noted that combining our diverse expertise and boundary-spanning roles provided the foundation for forming our leadership team. In other words, this model helped us collectively understand our individual and collaborative efforts that contributed to forming a leadership team. We noted the unique contributions that each person offered to our leadership team, as well as the overlap among the roles of our team members as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1:
Leadership Team's Boundary-Spanning Roles



As a team, we also reflected and engaged in dialogue about our challenges. Next, we interweave insights about our collaboration and leadership roles and discuss our challenges.

Challenges

While it is desirable in many fields for practitioners to develop skills in leadership, collaboration, and an appreciation for examining problems from different perspectives, these skills need to be taught and fostered across diverse groups. For Michele, she came to this work not sure how to move the OH@UC transdisciplinary skill building across the boundaries and saw the need to form a boundary-spanning team to help lead the partnership work with teachers in K-12 schools. Looking in, questions one might ask are: What choices do you make when building a team? How do you choose who to invite? Who facilitates the formation of such groups? What support does

the group need? And, who leads the group? Through the KE team's matchmaking support and Sylvie and Barb's work to bring together the needed people representing diverse perspectives and skill sets from Werklund, our group was formed. Initially it can be daunting to take on a new role in a new organization and team. This is amplified when the work is part of a pilot project where the future of the initiative (and its funding) is uncertain. Alyse was conscious of making meaningful connections, without duplicating efforts, undermining work already started, or stepping on any toes. Having a shared goal or purpose is key to gaining the interest of potential team members, especially when they each have competing commitments and responsibilities vying for their time. Fortunately, members of the group were also interested in supporting K-12 school engagement, creating meaningful impact, and fostering respectful relationships with community partners.

Discussion

Using the four-part boundary-spanning model framework (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010; Weerts, 2019) as a lens to reflect on our leadership roles individually and collectively helped us recognize how we formed the leadership team and had overlapping roles: (a) community-based problem solver, (b) technical expert, (c) engagement champion, and (d) internal engagement advocate. Through analyzing our reflections and engaging in dialogue as a team, we recognized that combining our diverse expertise and boundary-spanning roles helped us with forming a team to embark on work that will eventually lead to community engagement activities and developing high quality educational resources with potential to impact learning experiences for K-12 students. Shifting away from the discussion of "leaders" and actions of individuals or university departments to "leadership" and interdependent actions, we also recognized our boundary-spanning team exhibited characteristics of Complexity Leadership Theory, such as adaptive leadership, administrative leadership and enabling leadership activities (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Adaptive Leadership

Critical to the success of this collaboration was the ongoing involvement and interaction of multiple members from the University of Calgary's KE team and faculty from the Werklund School of Education working collaboratively with the manager from One Health. The key difference in the work of this team in comparison to other methods of "matchmaking" or sparking collaboration among different departments is the deliberate nature of their work. Having a

dedicated matchmaker on staff in a department, such as the KE team, gives someone the clear mandate to take the initiative on making introductions and connections with a clear purpose. However, this did not minimize the need for dynamic interactions and the ability to adapt to changes. Turnover for transdisciplinary and partnership work is common particularly for longitudinal projects and can cause disequilibrium among a leadership team (Brown, 2021). When new people joined the team, the history of the group was shared—from its inception to its shared vision. Our reflections and dialogue have become an important resource to support the ongoing work of the leadership team. For example, the recent addition of a student assistant researcher to the team has highlighted the ways that the team shared the organizational memory and vision, while welcoming new perspectives and approaches to the work. The group has adapted and evolved over time to include greater diversity as needed, while maintaining core beliefs and values in transdisciplinary, community-engagement, and education. Team members in boundary-spanning roles, by nature, embrace the learning that comes from having diversity and redundancy within the team to foster adaptive leadership.

Administrative Leadership

All of the members of the leadership team held roles with a specified focus and tasks due their administrative roles. However, the nature of their roles was different and the extent of decision-making power at the organizational level also differed. The KE team, for instance, held formal roles at the organizational level connected to the implementation of matchmaking activities across faculties in the institution. The Werklund School of Education team provided administrative leadership for Partner Research Schools and Communities and helped with formalizing partnerships with K-12 schools in addition to an Indigenous lens. Michele, the One Health manager was in a formal administrative role responsible for strategic planning, resources, implementation, and administration of the One Health activities. Although many of the members of the team held formal leadership roles responsible for implementation and administration of activities, the group discussed and made decisions collectively. One decision could simultaneously benefit one department and at the same time negatively impact another department (Uhl Bien et al., 2007). We recognized the value of having members in boundary-spanning roles provide their input and unique perspectives when making administrative decisions. For example, the leadership team discussed when to reach out to K-12 schools and invite teachers to a session to learn more about the One Health group. Even though the timing seemed suitable for some members of the organizing group,

we recognized other members in the group as well as the educators in schools might not be able to attend due to the increased pressures during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we postponed our invitation to a later date. The unique expertise and perspectives shared by the boundary-spanning team helped the team make thoughtful administrative decisions.

Enabling Leadership Activities

Fostering interaction, interdependency, and injecting adaptive tension contribute to enabling leadership activities (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). The leadership team self-organized and each member of the group had autonomy to determine if they wanted to be involved and the extent of their involvement and interaction among the group. The group remained connected with a shared commitment to yield innovative educational resources that address complex scientific and social challenges. At times different members of the group stepped forward to take lead on different activities. This required an adaptability among the group to adjust to the different ways each member of the team works and leads the work. Michele reflected that her original vision for the project had little resemblance to the shared vision that evolved through working with a leadership team. Initially, the vision was to develop worksheets that would be shared with teachers through a website. The newly formed vision was built on relationships and a commitment to understanding and integrating multiple perspectives from across disciplines and sectors. Instead of worksheets, teachers and students could be guided through a learning experience using essential questions to drive the inquiry, such as "Why is water worth protecting?" As noted by Weerts and Sandmann (2010) in their conceptualization of the boundary-spanning roles, is that the categories are fluid and dynamic and members "do not occupy blunt categories: rather, spanners may lean toward one direction or another" (p. 650). Furthermore, boundary-spanning "is not confined to an individual job description; rather it refers to the broader institutional strategies to engage with external partners" (p. 638). It was this broader goal of engagement with K-12 external partners that first brought our leadership team together and continued to enable the development of a stronger vision for community engagement in One Health activities.

Recommendations

We offer the following recommendations to other boundary-spanning teams for knowledge and community engagement activities:

- At large and dispersed institutions, creating collaborations between departments can break down silos. Boundary-spanning roles involving "matchmaking" can be useful to establish transdisciplinary leadership teams. Start local and when possible, ask people in your own organization to make introductions for you.
- Devote extra time to relationship building for the team and reflecting with members of the team. This information can be helpful for onboarding new members or as members transition to different positions.
- A shared leadership structure and commitment to collaboration developed from the early days of the project can help support shared and sustained interest in the project. Collaboration is an investment in both time and a commitment to continually strengthen the work. Different and unique expertise, perspectives, and members with boundary-spanning roles and a range of experiences can benefit the team and enable leadership activities.

Conclusion

The leadership team is committed to combining diverse expertise to address complex scientific and social challenges. Werklund School of Education leadership team and scholars are experienced in transdisciplinary teamwork in different disciplines and their continuous work with Partner Schools and Communities engagement. This approach for breaking down silos and working together in boundary-spanning roles using a complexity paradigm holds promise for transforming the way we look at postsecondary disciplines and has implications beyond academic, community engagement, and leadership. As we are commencing the second year of our collaboration, the challenge will be to continue to lead the project and outreach activities with K-12 schools, and to invite new partners in dialogue about ideas of One Health where animals, people and the environment are interconnected.

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Author Biographies:

Alyse Pearce was the Knowledge Engagement Coordinator, Research Services, University of Calgary at the time of writing. Alyse played a key role in brokering partnerships between community and academic partners for research and acted as a point of contact for external organizations looking to partner with University of Calgary researchers. Her work also included providing collaboration support for research partnerships and building capacity for knowledge engagement across campus. She now enables collaborative research at Athabasca University as Research Partnerships Broker.

Alyse Pearce
Research Partnerships Broker
Athabasca University
***Corresponding Author –** apearce@athabascau.ca

Michele Anholt is a veterinary epidemiologist. As manager of One Health at UCalgary, she supports transdisciplinary approaches to research, training, and engagement to find meaningful solutions to improve the health and wellness of people, animals, and the environment.

Dr. Michele Anholt,
Manager, One Health at UCalgary,
University of Calgary
rmanholt@ucalgary.ca

Dr. Jennifer Markides is Métis, Assistant Professor, Curriculum and Learning in the Werklund School of Education and Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. Her research interests include the holistic wellbeing of youth, Indigenous education, and emancipatory pedagogies.

Dr. Jennifer Markides
Assistant Professor,
Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary
jmmarkid@ucalgary.ca

MacKinley Darlington was the inaugural manager of the Knowledge Engagement team at the University of Calgary and was responsible for the strategic planning of the portfolio's initiatives and assessing incoming project opportunities for impact and partnership potential. MacKinley has transitioned within the post-secondary sector and now provides leadership and vision for growing knowledge mobilization and research impact at Athabasca University.

MacKinley Darlington
Knowledge Mobilization Specialist
Research Office, Athabasca University
mdarlington@athabascau.ca

Dr. Barbara Brown is Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. Her research interests include research-practice partnerships, professional learning, and instructional design in digital learning environments.

Dr. Barbara Brown
Associate Dean Teaching & Learning, Associate Professor,
Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary
babrown@ucalgary.ca

Dr. Sylvie Roy was Associate Dean, Research in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary when writing this paper. She is a professor in Language and Literacy. Her research interests include teaching and learning languages, sociolinguistics, ideologies and policies.

Dr. Sylvie Roy
Associate Dean Research, Professor,
Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary
syroy@ucalgary.ca

Pozzobon, T., & Scott, S. (2024). Bridging the divide: Exploring inequities between sworn and civilian leaders in a Canadian Police Service. *International Journal for Leadership in Learning*, *24*(1), 128–153. https://doi.org/10.29173/ijll47

Bridging the Divide: Exploring Inequities Between Sworn and Civilian Leaders in a Canadian Police Service.

Tammy Pozzobon & Shelleyann Scott

Abstract

Policing in the 21st century has rapidly become more complex, accountable, and changeable. Concern has emerged across the globe over the sustainability of public policing. Empirical research has supported that effective leadership at all levels of an organization is necessary to achieve success. Much has been said about the importance of effective leadership in policing. This paper explores an unexpected key finding from a mixed-methods, explanatory sequential design doctoral study that examined the self-efficacy beliefs and the factors that have influenced the leader effectiveness of sworn and civilian police leaders in a major Canadian police organization.

***Keywords*:** leadership, organizational culture, healthy workplace, psychological safety, organizational change

Introduction

The 21st century's rapid-paced change has provided many challenges to Canadian municipal police services. Changing community demographics, growing operational complexity, enhanced public accountability, and a global pandemic have placed significant pressure on police organizations to adapt and respond at an unprecedented pace. In Canada, policing is a provincial responsibility, and the rising cost of policing has made it one of the largest consumers of provincial and municipal tax dollars, surpassed only by health care and education. If today's police organizations are to be successful, they must engage and optimize all police leaders' knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure organizational effectiveness. However, it has been posited there has been a deficit of effective leaders in police organizations (Haberfeld, 2006; Rowe, 2006), and the Police Sector Council (2011) reported that over half of the current police leaders in Canada would be eligible for retirement within five years. Hence, today, police services across the nation are facing a crisis in leadership.

This article discusses a key finding from my mixed-methods doctoral research study which explored the relationship between senior police leaders' self-efficacy and their conceptualizations of effective leadership within a major Canadian police organization. The conceptual framework of the study included the following themes: leadership theory (Kouzes & Posner, 2017), Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, mentorship, organizational culture and change, and learning organization research (Senge, 2006). I found that despite being more highly educated and holding positions with equal authority, civilian leaders within this police organization experienced marginalization and inequity compared with their sworn counterparts.

We begin with an overview of the entire study and its findings. It provides a short review of the literature about favoured leadership theory in police organizations, police organizational culture, and the history of civilians in police organizations. The article concludes with a discussion about the implications of failing to address the leadership inequity and equality between senior sworn and civilians in police organizations. It offers the framework or lens of 'intersectionality' to assist police executives in identifying, understanding, and addressing hidden inequities and marginalization in their organizations.

Leadership Theory and Policing

Although there is a paucity of research that examines civilian leadership in policing, leadership theory within a policing context has been studied for decades through a variety of lenses, including traits and characteristics (Jermier & Berkes, 1979; Kuykendall & Unsinger, 1982), women in police leadership roles (Price, 1974; Roberg et al., 2002), and behavioural, contingency, and situational leadership theory (Brief et al., 1976). Until the late 1990s, no specific theory or approach was widely accepted (Dobby et al., 2004). In 1998, the release of New York City Police Chief William Bratten's book Turnaround*: How America's top cop reversed the crime epidemic* challenged police leadership to become more proactive in their crime management strategies. He posited it was not the ability of police agencies to deal with crime that defined their success; instead, it was the absence of crime. He declared a transformational approach to leadership was required to create the necessary sustained change to achieve this goal. Hence, for over two decades, the call for a transformational leadership approach in policing has dominated discussion amongst academics, policymakers, and police executives to address the increased pressure for systemic change within police organizations (Anderson, 2000; Dean & Gottschalk, 2013).

Transformational Leadership

In his seminal book, Leadership, Burns (1978) proposed two primary types of leadership, transactional and transformational, fell on a continuum where transactional leadership entailed individuals reaching out for an exchange of value, which related to motivation via rewards and punishments for work or role compliance; whereas transformational was where motivation was garnered through higher-order intrinsic needs and engagement and understanding of the importance of the task rather than using punishment and micro-management. Bass (2008) expanded upon this work, suggesting transformational leadership was a multidimensional construct composing several behaviours, including: (a) idealized influence—the arousing of definite emotions from followers which helps to generate identity with the leader; (b) inspirational motivation—communicating an appealing vision, using symbols to focus effort, and modelling the appropriate behaviour; (c) intellectual stimulation—increasing follower awareness about problems and encouraging them to resolve them in new ways; and (d) individualized consideration—providing support, coaching, and development (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These behaviours are often referred to as the four I's of transformational leadership.

Kouzes and Posner (2017) further refined and expanded transformational leadership to explore the relational aspects of leadership to create positive change to employees' behaviours. They asserted that transformational leadership is learnable and could be practiced. This prescriptive approach has gained popularity in leadership development and organizational training practices in a wide variety of organizations. For example, the current and previous chiefs of the PO in this study have consistently referenced the importance of taking a transformational approach to all leadership initiatives. Additionally, behaviours associated with transformational leadership were embedded in this organization's leadership competencies and performance evaluations, and transformational leadership has become the cornerstone to ongoing leadership development initiatives. Even so, although two decades have passed since the call to action by Bratten (1998), there remains little evidence that transformational leadership has produced any significant systemic change in police organizations.

The ongoing preoccupation with applying transformational leadership in policing has faced criticism. Neyroud (2011) proposed that transformational leadership theory did not go far enough to address the challenges facing police organizations and highlighted the need for a moral and ethics-based leadership theory. Cockcroft (2014) posited that the binary argument used to contrast virtues of transactional leadership and transformational leadership failed to consider the complexities of the 21st century police organization.

Organizational design and leadership approaches play a role in an organization's ability to create and sustain change. Police organizations remain hierarchical organizations with an entrenched, para-military rank structure. An established chain of command, extensive bureaucratic processes, and top-down decision-making creates significant barriers to any change initiative, let alone large-scale transformational change. This presents a problem for many police organizations. Those who are successful at working within rigid bureaucracies often embrace the hierarchal structure and top-down decision-making. As such, the status quo is perpetuated and reinforced through the ongoing promotion and integration of leaders at all organizational levels who are resistant to transformational change and who actively discourage others from challenging current practices (Tan & Heracleous, 2001).

Recently, there has been a call for more contemporary models of leadership to be embraced in policing. Collaborative, participatory, and coalition approaches to leadership have proven

effective for not-for-profit organizations, government agencies, and philanthropic entities that require collaboration within and across organizations and sectors (Kim et al., 2017). It could be argued that while Canadian police organizations have successfully engaged in collaborative leadership partnerships with external social agencies to respond to addiction, homelessness, and mental health concerns, bringing a collaborative and participatory approach to the internal police leadership structure remains a significant challenge for senior police leaders.

Although the organizational structure of police organizations is a significant barrier to transformational change, it is not the only one. Ongoing systemic resistance to transformational change has also been attributed to the presence of a robust occupational police culture (Van Craen & Skogan, 2017).

A Little About Police Occupational Culture

Police work itself has distinctive qualities. Things such as danger, authority, high autonomy, high risk, shift work, long hours, and conflict continuously contribute to an uncertain, stressful, and often hostile work environment for sworn members. This uncertainty and risk have created a reactionary and protective occupational culture.

Most democratic police organizations evolved from historical military origins. To respond to emergencies in a safe, coordinated, and timely fashion, police organizations are organized as strict bureaucracies. Today's police organization's responsibilities to the public have grown significantly. They must deliver a broad range of public safety initiatives in addition to the traditional law enforcement activity of years past. However, most modern police organizations do not look dissimilar to those that existed several decades ago. Although a few police organizations have embraced newer theories of organizational structuring, most remain highly centralized and hierarchical.

Police culture has been studied extensively for several decades. Most focused on police culture from the occupational perspective. Early conclusions were that all police officers shared the same values regardless of where they worked, resulting in a monolithic culture in police organizations (Loftus, 2010). Early work by Wilson (1978) studied how culture was influenced by the leadership styles of executive police leaders and how interactions with their communities influenced the culture within their respective police organizations. Later, research conducted by Reuss-Ianni and Ianni (1983) concluded there were two existing police cultures in police

organizations. The first was the 'street cop' culture wherein officers coveted the days when police were respected and admired by the public, fellow officers, and their bosses were part of the police family. This culture reflects the characteristics of the monolithic culture once prevalent in police organizations. While officers felt a sense of belonging and camaraderie, it created and promoted an 'us versus them' mentality. The second culture was a 'management cop culture'. In this culture, officers were focused on professionalizing the occupation to make police organizations more productive, efficient, and responsive to community needs. Paoline (2004) and Chan (1997) built upon the work of Reuss-Ianni and Ianni (1983) and later concluded there was enough evidence to posit that police officers could not be grouped into specific subgroups and did not represent a single traditional characterization of police culture. This evolution away from the traditional monolithic culture was often attributed to introducing female police officers, racial minorities, university-educated officers, and civilian members (Chan, 1997; Paoline, 2004).

Despite studies differing around the description of police occupational culture, Murphy and McKenna (2007) found agreement in the literature around seven core values and qualities of police culture:

1. *Solidarity*: Emphasis on shared responsibility and loyalty to other police officers above all others;
2. *Authoritarianism*: Belief in and willingness to exercise power over others, believed to be either a job function or personality type;
3. *Suspicion*: Mistrust of people gained from limited and often negative contact with the public; a protective response from the uncertainty of the operational environment;
4. *Conservative*: Political and social outlook either caused by the moralistic and negative nature of police work or those who are attracted to police work;
5. *Prejudicial*: Tendency to prejudge others based on values, behaviour, and work experience. This stereotyping gets the job done but can lead to negative consequences such as racism and sexism;
6. *Cynicism*: Tendency to regard all non-police as potentially unreliable, unsympathetic, and critical of police; and
7. *Blue-collar*: Describes the class background and values of most police officers as blue-collar or working-class and suggests that police cultural values reflect many of the general values and attitudes of working-class white males.

(Murphy & McKenna, 2007, p. 6)

Murphy and McKenna (2007) further argued these values and characteristics, although understandable in police culture, were also perceived as linked to longstanding systemic problems associated with policing. As stated earlier, the study of police culture, like that of police leadership, has focused almost exclusively on the experiences of sworn officers. It is difficult to discern the impact of police culture on civilian leaders in police organizations, as even those who might share the dominant groups' traits (cis-gendered white male) could still be perceived as outsiders and potential threats to the status quo. Within this context, it is not unreasonable to assume the cultural values of police organizations could contribute to organizational blindness around the experiences of individuals who do not fit the dominant cultural norms.

History and Evolution of Civilian Members in Police Organizations

The addition of civilian members to police organizations is not a new phenomenon. The first record of civilians employed in police organizations is attributed to the United Kingdom's Metropolitan Police of London in 1829, when four civilian clerical jobs were created. While considered novel and a little controversial at the time, by the 1920s, civilian administrative hires were commonplace in the United Kingdom. Several factors led to the increase of civilians in policing in North America. First, the rapid growth of American and Canadian cities following World War II resulted in increased crime and disorder (Schwartz et al., 1975). In addition, the emergence of the Professional Era of Policing (1930–1980) occurred in the United States. Police experts at the time began advocating for the hiring of civilians for specialized roles that included finance, human resources, and data processing (Forst, 2000; Wilson & McLaren, 1972). Increasing civilian membership was also associated with improving efficiencies, addressing areas of specialization, and reducing overall operational costs (Dick & Metcalf, 2001). In a similar effort to achieve better value for money spent in policing, the United Kingdom's Home Office began offering financial incentives to those police services recruiting civilian staff in the 1980s (Jones & Newburg, 2002; Loveday, 2006).

Data collection about civilians in police organizations in Canada did not begin until 1962. At that time, the ratio between sworn and civilian personnel was 4.6:1 sworn to civilian, respectively. This ratio declined to 2.8:1 in the early 1980s until 2014, when it fell to 2.4:1 (Public Safety Canada, 2017). In May of 2014, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics reported that

civilians comprised 29% of police personnel. This was up three percent from the previous decade, and since 2003, the number of civilian employees has grown twice as quickly as that of sworn officers. The report also noted over half (57%) of civilian positions were occupied by women, which supports Alderden and Skogan's (2012) assertion that hiring civilians provided a quick way to alter organizational demographics and respond to the increased political pressures around diversity within police organizations.

As the number of civilians within police organizations has grown, so have the roles and functions they fulfill. Public Safety Canada (2017) stated civilian positions in police organizations can be classified into four operational categories: administration, special uniformed services, investigative support, and areas involving highly specialized knowledge, often of a technical or technological nature. Regardless of their role, civilians contribute significantly to the effectiveness of police organizations, yet despite these contributions, civilian personnel's experiences are seldom reflected in police research studies. Those who do speak to civilians focus on what positions would be best suited for them, where integration into traditional policing roles could occur, and what economic benefits could be leveraged by doing so.

Civilian roles in police organizations have evolved significantly since the 1940s. Like the United Kingdom, sizeable municipal police services in Canada hire executive-level civilians to lead critical organization components such as finance, technology, legal, public relations, and human resources. To address the highly specialized and complex work areas, senior civilian police leaders are usually highly educated, have extensive experience working in other sectors, and often have worked in collaborative, participatory, and coalition leadership environments. While little research reflects the experience of civilians in police organizations, given the occupational culture within which they operate, their ascent into more senior leadership positions could not have been easy. Alderden and Skogan (2012) reported civilians often found themselves marginalized by the sworn members of their police organization. Civilians are generally paid a lower salary than their sworn peers, have limited opportunities for promotion or advancement, and are 'politically' easier to lay off than sworn members during an economic recession. These factors make hiring and retaining highly skilled civilians in today's market difficult. Those who join and stay on have historically reported having their contributions unappreciated and, at times, disrespected by their sworn peers. Historically, these challenges were attributed to disinterested senior police executives who were more concerned with maintaining the traditional policing model than creating an

equitable workplace (Chess, 1960). All these factors support the notion that civilian members in POs work within an inequality regime.

Inequality regime refers to the interrelated practices, processes, and actions resulting in and maintaining class, gender, and racial inequalities within organizations. Inequality regimes are present in all organizations and represent the systemic disparities between those who have the power to make decisions, access resources, and maintain employment security (Acker, 2006). In addition to the sworn/civilian dichotomy in policing, there are several other areas where inequality regimes are potentially thriving in police organizations. These would include inequality regimes that focus on gender, race, and sexuality. Most organizations wanting to address these tend to focus on one type of oppression (Breslin et al., 2017). This can create a false sense that everyone within that dimension shares the same experience. Often, there is more than one inequality regime present. For example, in examining the inequities between sworn and civilian police leaders, the barriers, challenges, and opportunities for a civilian, cis-gendered, white male might look entirely different than those of a lesbian of colour who occupies the same leadership position. When classism, racism, sexism, ageism, and ableism combine, it can amplify the experience of oppression.

Police organizations are not immune to the increased societal pressure to ensure a diverse and inclusive workplace for their members. Most have focused on expanding the presence of visible minorities through proactive recruitment strategies within the communities they are responsible for policing, rather than exploring the internal systemic barriers that may prevent diverse hires from reaching their full potential once hired. As inequity regimes can remain hidden from the 'dominant culture'-leaders, police organizations might benefit from applying a lens of intersectionality to their internal processes and systems.

Research Design & Analysis

The Context

This research study was conducted in a large urban police service in a vibrant, multicultural city in Western Canada. At the time of the study, which was pre-pandemic, the police organization (PO) was the third-largest municipal police service in Canada. It employed 2,720 people, which comprised 2,006 sworn police officers and 714 civilian employees (T. Duke, personal communication, April 14, 2014). The PO, like all police services in North America, has a

hierarchical rank structure that defines authority for its organizational structure. The scope of this research was limited to senior leaders within one PO to ensure results and subsequent recommendations were relevant and actionable within the organization. However, outside of a few contextual nuances between the provinces, there is little change to the core business of policing across Canada, in that, all police services require their members to operate in high-risk, high-autonomy environments. The findings of this study would likely be transferable to other major Canadian city police organizations, with similar demographic features.

Methodology

The methodology in this research was mixed methods and aligned with the pragmatic paradigm, as a critical aim of this research was to inform leadership development programming within the police organization (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). There were two phases as part of Creswell's (2012) explanatory sequential strategy: phase 1 (P1), the collection of quantitative data and analysis, followed by phase 2 (P2) qualitative data collection and analysis, which elaborated and provided context and explanations of the quantitative results and ended with the interpretation of the entire analysis. In P1, two quantitative instruments were administered: Hannah and Avolio's (2013) Leader Efficacy Questionnaire (LEQ) and Posner and Kouzes's (1988) Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The LEQ (Hannah & Avolio, 2013) was a relatively newer instrument in leader efficacy research. It was selected because it is one of a few instruments that solely measured leadership self-efficacy in an organizational environment. The LEQ has been validated across seven diverse sample groups and has predicted outcomes related to highly effective leadership styles, leader performance, and enhanced motivation to lead others (Hannah & Avolio, 2013). The second instrument (LPI) was selected due to its two decades track record in numerous studies and was found to be reliable and valid in identifying transformational leadership practices (Pozner & Kouzes, 1988). Transformational leadership was an essential theory, as this theory tends to prevail in many leadership development programs and strategic directions within policing.

Following the administration of the questionnaires in P1, participants were invited to participate in P2 semi-structured personal interviews of approximately one-hour duration. The eight interview questions focused on the participant's leadership journey and their conceptualizations of effective police leadership. In addition to describing how they became

effective senior police leaders, participants were asked to identify and reflect on the behaviours they associated with effective and non-effective police leadership.

Sample

This study used purposeful sampling of only sworn officers, at the rank of inspector or higher ranks (considered senior officers in this PO), and civilian members, with equal positional authority, within the police organization. This limited the study to a total population of 55 potential participants. For the quantitative component of this study, all 55 prospective participants were invited to participate via email; 36 submitted the questionnaires/inventories (65% response rate), and 34 were interviewed (62% response rate). Two civilian participants were unavailable for interviews. Of the 36 participants: 26 identified as male and 10 as female. There were 11 civilian managers and 25 sworn participants who varied in rank from inspector to deputy chief. In total, 34 participants completed all study components, yielding a 62% response rate. Table 1 depicts the relationship between the sample and target population for this study and identifies the numbers and types of officers who participated.

Table 1
Population and Target Population

Participants	Questionnaires (P1) (n)		Interview (P2) (n)		Total (N)		Response Percentage of P1 and P2 (%)		
	Sworn	Civilian	Sworn	Civilian	P1	P2	Sworn	Civilian	All
Sample frame: senior officers & civilian equivalent	43	12	43	12	55	55	100	100	100
Participants in this study	25	11	25	9	36	34	58	75	62

Note. Questionnaires were LEQ and LPI.

The average age of all participants was 50 years old, with an average of 22 years of employment with the police service. Participants' educational backgrounds were clustered into five categories outlined in Table 2.

Table 2
Participants' Attained Educational Level

Education level attained	Sworn participants *f*	Civilian participants *f*	Percentage (%) of sworn participants	Percentage (%) of civilian participants
High school	2	0	12.5	0
Trade technical	8	0	32	0
Associate degree	2	0	8	0
Bachelor's degree	10	4	25	33.33
Master's degree	3	6	12	50
Professional degree	0	1	0	8.3
Doctorate	0	1	0	8.3

Analysis

The quantitative data collected in P1 were aggregated into two comparison groupings (male/female and sworn/civilian). Both instrument scores and participants' demographic information were entered into SPSS for further analysis. Two independent sample t-tests and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test with education being the independent variable were completed. The qualitative data collected from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using iterative thematic coding and compared against the research questions and the conceptual framework of the study, which included leadership theory, organizational change theory, social cognitive theory, mentorship, learning organizations, and culture. Coding frequencies were analyzed and placed into MS Excel spreadsheets to "quantitize" the qualitative data as a dimension of the legitimation approach advised by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2011, p. 1263). The coding was subsequently examined for patterns or anomalies. Inter-rater reliability, where comparisons were made between my coding regime and those of two doctoral peers, who had each coded one interview to assess alignment between my coding schema and theirs, was used to interrogate and validate the legitimacy of my codes. A final phase of data interpretation occurred when the quantitative findings were compared and integrated with the qualitative results. In this chapter, findings came primarily from the qualitative phase of research.

Findings

Analysis revealed six overarching themes about highly effective leadership in the PO: (a) learning to lead, (b) exemplary interpersonal skills, (c) values-centric leadership, (d) leader competency, (e) leader self-awareness, and (f) creating a positive work environment. There were also four potential barriers to effective leadership identified: (1) strong personal relationships, (2) promotional and transfer processes, (3) organizational structure, and (4) organizational culture. The six themes of highly effective leadership and four barriers, the conceptual framework, and academic literature were analyzed in relation to each other, which led to the identification of five key findings:

1. *Effective police leadership was learned*. Leaders in the PO developed their effectiveness by combining various learning experiences garnered over a lifetime. Observational and experiential learning were central to all participants' perception of efficacy and played a critical role in their leadership journey;

2. *Civilian leaders perceived marginalization and inequity in relation to sworn leaders*;
3. *Effective police leaders articulated a pluralistic approach to leadership practice*;
4. *Psychological safety in the PO was a concern for leaders*; and
5. *Evolving organizational culture, systems, and processes have created uncertainty* for leaders.

This chapter focuses on the second major finding: civilian *leaders perceive marginalization and inequity in relation to sworn leaders* although there may be some linkages and overlap with other themes.

Equity and Equality

Most civilian leaders in this study emphasized the need for effective police leaders to treat all members (sworn and civilian) equally and equitably. "Equality" was defined as being treated the same as their same-similar ranked sworn counterparts; while "equity" was framed as receiving consideration due to a particular expertise or specialization that others did not have. Civilian leaders expressed a sentiment of unfairness, particularly regarding having access and influence with the senior executive team (i.e., the chief *and* deputies). In contrast, only one sworn participant identified this as a concern. This finding suggested that civilian leaders are not maximizing their leadership potential within POs, and their sworn peers were unaware of their challenges.

Despite leading large divisions and having specialized expertise in their fields, civilian leaders' contributions were not *perceived* as valued as those of sworn officers. One participant expressed frustration at how wearing the uniform granted more accessible access to the sworn senior executive decision-makers. The "easier access" was perceived as providing sworn leaders more opportunity to influence organizational decisions, often resulting in civilian leaders being left out of or late to the discussion.

Inequity *and* inequality were the most significant findings that differentiated civilian leader participants from sworn:

> *It's that sworn versus civilian piece. Maybe we are not as supported as the sworn are, just because this is a dominantly sworn organization, and we are the support people, I totally get that. But without us, you can't do your job. We are support, but we still do a vital piece.*

Civilian participants also pointed out how they were denied access to senior executive leaders because of the existing inequality and strong personal relationships between sworn leaders:

> *I still see that senior officer's rank as kind of an old boys' club. And it is. And I know even the women in there don't always feel totally comfortable. But it's so unavailable to civilians. And maybe it's gender, maybe it's rank, maybe it's a sworn/civilian thing. I don't know. But those informal networks are there—and the reality is, we know that those informal networks are where people make decisions, where business is discussed, where strategy is—as civilian managers, we just don't have access to that.*

Others articulated how the inequity resulted in civilians leaving the organization: "They [civilian employees who left the CPS] were never in the mainstream. … They weren't equal." Another participant said:

> *Some of the people I have known that have left here; part of my perception of what wasn't working for them was that they always felt as a civilian they were never in the mainstream. Whether you were promoted as a civilian or not, I don't think they ever felt it was the same. It wasn't equal.*

Although less than one percent of sworn participants specifically identified the need for police leaders to be inclusive of civilian employees, there was an acknowledgement of the inequity:

> *I don't think sometimes we recognize and value what the strengths in our civilian staff are. ... . We have some exceptionally talented civilians who make this organization what it is and bring exceptional strength to the organization. And sometimes I don't think they get the same recognition or value placed on their efforts as, perhaps, some other individual who holds the rank of "X."*

Hence, in the consideration of equity and equality, civilians perceived themselves as secondary within the organization due to their deficit in holding sworn status which trumped their greater expertise or voice at the decision making table.

Value of Education

Civilian leaders in this study had significantly higher levels of education than their sworn counterparts. While not surprising, as the roles most civilian leaders fulfill in police organizations require discipline expertise, there were contrasting beliefs between sworn and civilian leaders concerning the role of formal education and leadership efficacy. Sworn participants indicated effective leadership required balancing formal education and on-the-job experience. One participant stated formal education was not unto itself an indicator of leadership, and a lack of it should never be a barrier to individuals becoming police leaders:

> *I find that the people with the most education are generally the ones most distanced from what is going on. I would like to see it balanced. Could I use more education—absolutely I could, but does education itself make you a good leader? No, it does not. I think if we made the educational portion of it something that determines whether you make chief or not, then I think we are making a huge mistake. It* [good leadership] *is a combination of things.*

Other sworn participants failed to connect formal education to leadership effectiveness. While speaking about a recently completed leadership course, one participant stated,

> *It* [the course] *counts for half a masters, and it's about a 14-month long thing. It was a lot of work actually, as I'm not much for fancy book learning. End of the day, I don't know the value of it, really.*

This contrast in educational importance was not evident with the civilian participants. Civilian leaders were statistically more highly educated than sworn members and credited formal learning as integral to their leadership development.

Civilian and sworn participants also differed in terms of learning leadership by making mistakes. Sworn participants (48%) specifically articulated how they learned to be good leaders by making mistakes, while few civilians (22%) mentioned this. As stated by one sworn participant, "I don't think I really knew what I was doing. You learn from your mistakes very quickly, which I think is a good thing. I think mistakes are the biggest learning tools sometimes". This difference is most likely attributed to the sworn/civilian roles within police organizations. Hired as generalists, sworn members acquire their work expertise as their career progresses. Sworn

members also have considerable autonomy in their work. Mistakes can occur with little or no formal oversight by direct supervisors. In contrast, civilian members are generally hired as discipline (e.g., finance, IT, etc.) experts, and any mistakes are visible and potentially problematic to operational effectiveness.

Summary of Findings

The main theme that emerged from this study was the sense of inequity and inequality that civilian participants felt in relation to their sworn counterparts. The civilian participants reported feeling less supported, valued, and included by the sworn leaders and the organizational culture. They also expressed how this affected their access to decision-making, career advancement, and retention. On the other hand, the sworn participants showed limited awareness of the need for greater inclusion and recognition of their civilian counterparts. The findings suggested there is a gap between the experiences and expectations of the two groups, and this may have implications for the effectiveness and well-being of the police organization.

Discussion

Research into the experiences of civilians in police organizations is limited and we could not locate any police research that included or considered civilian leaders' perspectives. However, the findings of inequity and marginalization between sworn and civilians in POs are consistent with those of earlier civilian police studies (Alderden & Skogan, 2012). Despite several decades of civilian integration and increasing responsibility and authority, civilian police leaders continue to experience a systemic undertone of inequity, inequality, and marginalization in their POs.

These ongoing inequities can potentially negatively impact the leadership effectiveness in POs in several ways. First, they could impede the organization's ability to adapt to emerging change. The lack of systemic change in police organizations has been attributed to an absence of change leadership and an inertial police culture (Duxbury et al., 2018). However, the two concepts are undoubtedly interconnected. Executive and senior leaders play an important role in sustaining an organization's culture, and its readiness for change (Schein, 1999). Senior police leaders will need to shift from a siloed perspective to that of seeing the entire system. To accomplish this, police leadership must evolve to include more contemporary models of leadership that promote collaboration, innovation, and creativity. Senior civilian police leaders are uniquely placed to help facilitate that evolution. They are recruited and hired for specific discipline expertise, possess

leadership experience which often reflects and aligns with more participatory or collaborative approaches, and hold significantly higher levels of education than their sworn counterparts. More importantly, civilian leaders are often crucial participants in cross-bureau leadership teams. If organizational culture and effectiveness are to be improved in police organizations, and if they are to become more adept at innovation, then civilian leaders must be treated with greater equity and equality within them. Second, inequities between civilian and sworn leaders on executive teams are likely to contribute to team misalignment. Misalignment on senior executive teams can often result in wasted effort and increased frustration (Senge, 1990). Third, civilian leaders who continue to feel undervalued and unappreciated may choose to leave the police organization at a time when their expertise and unique perspective are needed most. Finally, failing to address unequal regimes ultimately reinforces the status quo, potentially undermining ongoing proactive leadership initiatives that are attempting to evolve the current police culture.

There is a saying in operational policing that 'if it is predictable, it is preventable', meaning that if police can predict where crime will occur, proactive steps can be taken to ensure it does not happen. The complex challenges and increasing public and political pressure for police organizations to transform are predictable (Duxbury et al., 2018). The unsustainability of the current model due to rising costs is predictable (Fantino, 2011). Arguably the call for widespread reform goes beyond the predictable, it is being publicly demanded. Yet, as highlighted in this study, long-standing inequities and inequalities remain largely unnoticed, ignored, or unacknowledged in police organizations.

According to Scharmer (2018) there is a blind spot in leadership. He argued the blind spot is in the inner place from where leaders perceive, act, communicate, and think. A leader can see results (what they do), and the process they create (how they do it), but often do not see or reflect upon the 'inner place' that leaders draw from (the who). Scharmer (2018) believes the inner place is more than a person's values, beliefs or identity, but also includes how they relate to the world and the future state they wish to create. He described this as form must follow consciousness. Scharmer (2018) pointed out that for the individual leader, this manifests as mindfulness, but at the team level, the system can see itself, its assumptions, and its patterns. Police organizations need to enhance their ability to see and recognize the inequities within their systems. First, leaders must be able to see the system and develop awareness of hidden assumptions they contain. One approach

that POs could employ is to examine the experiences of their members through the lens of intersectionality.

The term intersectionality has been attributed to Crenshaw (1991), who used it to describe "the various ways race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of black women's employment experiences" (p. 1244). Crenshaw (1989, 1994) used the metaphor of intersecting roads to describe and explain how racial and gender discrimination compounded each other. Over the past two decades, researchers from various disciplines have expanded the conversation surrounding intersectionality, including sociology, political geography, economics, critical psychotherapy, and postcolonial studies (Grabham et al., 2009).

Police organizations have historically struggled with workplace equality and equity. This might be attributed to the sizeable dominant group and strong occupational cultures keeping leadership ignorant of the oppression within the systems. Civilians' presence, roles, responsibilities, and diversity of expertise within police organizations have grown in complexity and responsibility over the past several decades. In some cases, sworn officers now report directly to civilian leaders. This would indicate that some aspects of the equality between the two groups have been addressed. It is, therefore, unlikely that being a non-sworn member is the only issue facing civilian leaders in policing. As most civilian hires are female (57%), and the hiring of civilians provides a quick way for POs to alter organizational demographics in response to political demands for increased diversity (Alderden & Skogan, 2012), civilian leaders are likely dealing with several intersecting inequalities and inequities. Using intersectionality as a framework or lens to examine the day-to-day experiences of civilian leaders in POs could help identify specific areas where organizational resources and effort would be best placed to address systemic oppression. For example, an intersectional analysis of POs' policies, practices, and culture would assist in identifying how current systems reinforce barriers for marginalized organizational groups. This would allow POs to apply their resources in the areas that would provide the most benefit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the role and responsibilities of civilian leaders in Canadian police organizations have evolved significantly over the past few decades, there is little research into their unique experiences. The findings from this study identified how perceived inequity, inequality, and marginalization of civilian leaders might negatively impact overall leadership efficacy in police

organizations. Complicating this is that most sworn leaders in this study were unaware of their civilian peers' negative experiences or perceptions. To address the growing complexities of today's society and maintain public trust, POs must ensure that all leaders can utilize their knowledge, skills, and abilities to the fullest. We argue that police organizations must address these issues and embrace more collaborative and innovative leadership models or risk failing to adapt to the changing environment and demands. Awareness of inequity and inequality is the first step in this journey. By looking through the lens of intersectionality, police leaders can identify and surface systemic systems of oppression of which they might otherwise remain ignorant.

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Biography

Dr. Tammy Pozzobon M.O.M. is an Assistant Professor and program head for the multi-sectoral Master of Arts in Leadership in the School of Leadership Studies at Royal Roads University, Canada. Tam was a career police officer for 31 years and held many varied leadership positions within policing, including Superintendent of Operations at Calgary Police Service, Alberta, Canada. In 2019, Tam was a recipient of the ***Order of Merit of the Police Forces*** for exceptional service to community and country. Her passion is helping leaders become better leaders. Tam's research interests include police reform, leadership development, change leadership, values-based leadership, and building inclusive organizational cultures.
Corresponding author*:* Tammy.1pozzobon@royalroads.ca

Dr Shelleyann Scott (PhD) is a Professor, and Chair of the Leadership, Policy & Governance specialization, University of Calgary, Canada. Shelley is the coordinator of the doctoral programs in Leadership (Senior Leadership & Post-secondary Leadership programs – EdD & PhD). She is currently President of the *Canadian Society for Studies in Education* (CSSE). She has international experience as an educator, leader, and professional developer working across 15 countries. Her research is multi-sector and includes: leadership, leadership development, professional development, assessment, and teaching and learning. Her leadership roles include: school district curriculum leadership, university chair of department, associate dean, director, and program designer and coordinator roles.

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Experiencing Leadership: Perceptions of Leadership Development for Higher Education Contexts

Cristina L. Eftenaru

Abstract

Higher education is complex and so is the leadership needed in this context. Educational leadership is not well understood despite an increasing interest in studying the phenomenon. This interpretive study aimed to identify aspects of leadership theory found in practice and implications for leadership education by exploring, analyzing, and interpreting experiences of people who earned an Educational Leadership Doctorate at Simon Fraser University. I conducted in-depth interviews and analyzed data to identify themes within and across interviews while also triangulating with my systematic reflections. This paper presents findings on leadership development, focusing on four themes that emerged from 18 interviews with higher education participants: Pathways to Formal Leadership, Learning "How to Be a Leader", Learning "About Leadership", and Learning "the Dialogue of Practice". Leadership was perceived as an intricate lifelong journey. Overall, participants developed their leadership through their own experiences as leaders, followers, or observers of leadership, by engaging in leadership education (formal, informal, and non-formal), and by interacting with others. Finally, both successes and challenges supported learning, yet challenges were more salient and had more memorable lessons. This paper provides valuable insights on leadership development to leadership scholars and practitioners, as well as organizations offering leadership education.

Keywords: leadership, higher education leadership, leadership development, qualitative interpretive study, leadership education

Experiencing Leadership: Perceptions of Leadership Development for Higher Education Contexts

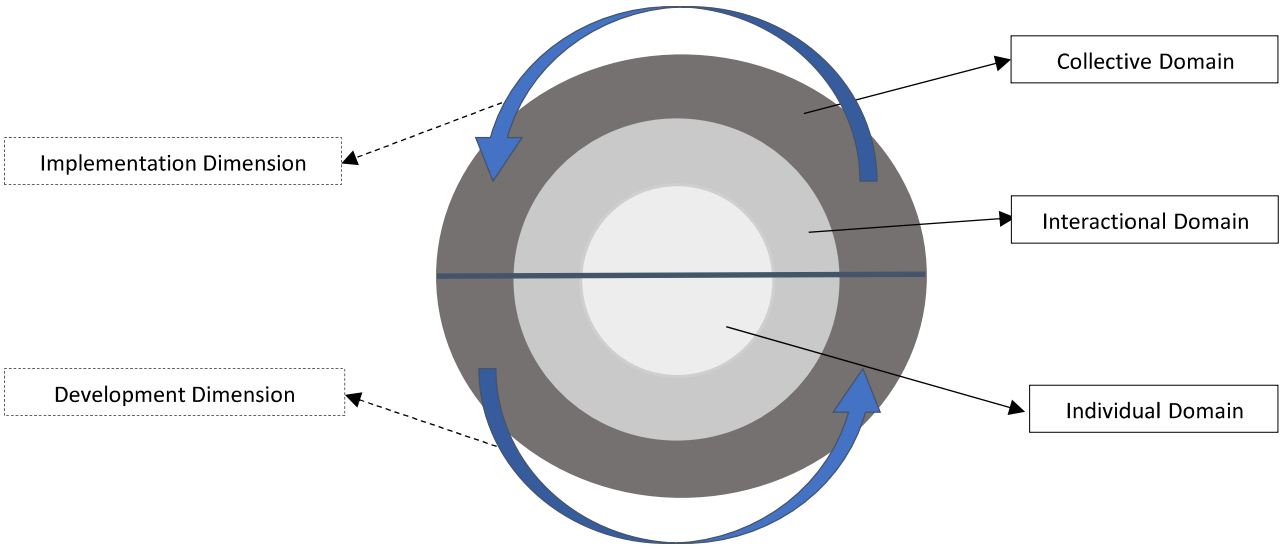
Leadership research has expanded in recent years, but the phenomenon is still not completely understood (Gronn, 2016; Northouse, 2016; Simkins, 2005). It seems that studying leadership systematically and connecting theory to practice contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon. Eftenaru (2020) was framed within this paradigm and used a conceptual framework grounded in key themes emerging from the literature, called Leadership Domains (Individual, Interactional, and Collective) and Leadership Dimensions (Development and Implementation). The study's overarching purpose was to identify elements of leadership theory found in practice by exploring, analyzing, and interpreting how people who earned an Educational Leadership Doctorate (EdD) at Simon Fraser University (SFU) experienced leadership. Specifically, it aimed to provide a better understanding of how participants perceived, defined, and experienced leadership, to determine leadership theories that prevailed in practice, to find approaches that supported leadership development and helped alleviate challenges occurring in practice, and to inform the design of leadership education. Data were collected via in-depth interviews and the researcher's reflections and analyzed to identify themes within and across interviews. This paper presents the study findings focusing on the leadership development themes that emerged from the interviews with higher education participants. Participants developed their leadership through the various experiences, interactions, and forms of education. This study also showed the importance of leaders' development of numerous skills and abilities to draw from in practice. The study is helpful to leadership scholars and practitioners, as well as organizations offering leadership education.

Literature Review

Despite an increasing interest in studying leadership, the phenomenon is not well defined and understood (Gronn, 2016; Northouse, 2016). The complexity of higher education adds to the ambiguity of conceptualizing leadership that occurs in these settings and thus, there are few leadership theories tailored to education (Cardno, 2013; Sathye, 2004; Wang & Sedivy-Benton, 2016). Although there has been an "explosion of leadership literature" (Simkins, 2005), this has not led to a consensus of what leadership is and how it is understood (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). On a broader spectrum, Northouse (2016) identified 130 leadership definitions and more than 60 existing leadership classification systems whereas Dinh et al. (2014) identified 23 thematic categories and 66 domains of leadership theory. There is a need for more systematic research to generate a better picture of educational leadership. One way to accomplish this task is by mapping leadership theory and practice (Dinh et al., 2014; Lamm et al., 2016; Simkins, 2005). This interpretive study falls within this realm. The study's conceptual framework (Figure 1) was constructed by integrating three major themes (domains) and two subthemes (dimensions) identified during the literature review. The Leadership Domains—Individual, Interactional, and Collective—represent the spheres where leadership occurs and reflect the major shifts in leadership conceptualization. The Leadership Dimensions—Development and Implementation—showcase how leadership is learned and practiced within each domain.

Figure 1.

Conceptual Framework: Leadership Domains and Dimensions



In this conceptual framework, the *individual leadership domain* shows the variety of skills, behaviours, and styles that leaders need to develop and apply, as well as which ones may be suitable to educational settings. Catalfamo (2010) claimed that leadership could be developed in formal (academic programs), informal (work experience, on-the-job training, mentoring, networking), or non-formal (workshops, seminars, training courses) settings. As leadership was embedded in everyday organizational practices, all members needed to understand how they related to their team and/or organization in order to contribute in meaningful ways. Thus, personal characteristics and interpersonal skills development of individuals engaged in assigned or emergent leadership were of utmost importance (Lamm et al., 2016; Temple & Ylitalo, 2009; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

The *interactional leadership domain* focuses on the interactions and influence processes between leaders and followers. Leaders were responsible for developing profound relationships with followers and for facilitating their followers' professional development (Avolio et al., 2009;

Uhl-Bien, 2006). Depending on what followers needed and/or expected from their leaders, one leadership style might be preferred over another (Northouse, 2016). Hence, leaders needed to be adept at adjusting their styles to respond to situations they encountered and support follower, team, and organizational growth (Bryman & Lilley, 2009; Riley & Russell, 2013; Woodard et al., 2000).

The *collective leadership domain* shows that organizations are complex systems where people influence one another and/or work together toward common goals regardless of their formal role. A positive work environment benefited everyone as it generated a climate where dialogue and feedback were encouraged, and self-awareness and welfare improved (Uusiautti, 2013). All members had an important role in their organization. By applying their professional capabilities and expertise, people would take initiative, influence change, and contribute to important decisions (Bolden et al., 2008; Cloud, 2010; Fullan, 2005; Torres & Evans, 2005). Individuals are valued for their contributions, yet work interdependently, are interconnected, and depend on one another.

This conceptual framework grounded in a select body of leadership literature informed the data collection by guiding the instrument development and the analysis by connecting participant leadership perceptions and practices to theoretical concepts identified in the literature review. A complete account of the framework development process and description may be found in Eftenaru (2020).

Methods

This study aimed to investigate the leadership phenomenon as it emerged from analyzing the participant leadership experiences. I recruited 22 SFU EdD Leadership alumni primarily for two reasons: (a) they self-identified as interested in the scholarship of leadership and broadening their leadership understanding; and (b) they considered their studies as an opportunity for

meaningful leadership development, which informed better practice. To collect data, I developed a 10-question interview guide, which was pilot-tested in a three-phase process. The questions focused on three leadership areas: perspective, development, and implementation. I analyzed the dataset to identify emerging themes within and across the interviews and integrated my systematic reflections (Eftenaru, 2020; Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Saldaña, 2013). To ensure the study trustworthiness, I used the following techniques: member-checking, transcript verification, journaling; developing a coding system; and data triangulation within and across the interviews as well as with my systematic reflections (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2020; Patton, 2015). These techniques ensured that the data enabled me to see different perspectives of how participants perceived the phenomenon.

Findings

The 22 participants interviewed in this study worked in multiple roles and organizations, some across sectors or geographical areas. Eighteen participants worked in higher education at some point in their career and the findings are drawn from these interviews. Participants' leadership developed by gaining experience, pursuing education, and interacting with or observing others. There were four emerging leadership development themes that are presented next: *Pathways to Formal Leadership, Learning "How to Be a Leader", Learning "About Leadership", and Learning the "Dialogue of Practice"*.

Pathways to Formal Leadership

Although participants acknowledged that leadership emerged informally, it was perceived as mostly occurring in connection to formal roles. The first theme describes participants' pathways to formal leadership and how their leadership conceptualization developed over time or by

changing organizations or roles. In higher education, the pathways to formal leadership were described as non-linear and as depending on the organization size and focus (e.g., university/college, research/teaching, community-focused unit). This section presents findings related to stages of leadership development, career transitions, and challenges and rewards of leadership.

Leadership Development Stages

Participants distinguished between leadership development stages and shared the different expectations depending on one's experience level. For example, Avery indicated that experience taught him *"how to be a leader"* whereas education taught him *"about leadership"*. Emma and Sunny claimed that student or early-career leadership *"in less sophisticated roles"* involved following instructions to complete tasks and having an *"instrumental understanding of leadership"*. Jake's leadership approach changed with learning more about leadership. These participants also noted gaining maturity in thought and action by engaging in learning and undertaking leadership roles. Timothy argued that leaders needed more than "cooking recipes", which presented leadership as transactional or cause-effect, as these would "*point out situations, but they don't necessarily change your attitude and it becomes more like a conditioned response"*. He highlighted that only the long-term exposure to and *"interactions with philosophical frameworks and constructs"* changed one's leadership perception. Alex preferred the *"academic leadership perspective"* as it seemed appropriate for educational contexts. But Maggie chose to explore *why* leadership concepts and practices established in a context were not suitable or transferable to other contexts rather than disregarding the differences altogether. It seemed that leadership development was a lifelong process that required continuous commitment to learning.

Career Transitions

Hope referred to her career path as "unorthodox", Jake as "circuitous" and "eclectic", and several others as "complex". Several highlighted that life experiences helped them develop compassion, gave them the courage to advocate for people or causes, and to eliminate systemic or organizational barriers. But many recognized that "I needed a degree" or "I needed a doctorate" to move into roles where they could initiate change and "make a difference".

Participants who worked across sectors (i.e., K-12, post-secondary, or corporate) acknowledged that they were searching for *"adventure [or] progressive and diverse opportunities"* (Noah) or better-suited responsibilities. Some changed sectors because of organizational changes, involuntary termination, or retirement. Transitions within the sector were motivated by career advancement prospects, lack of professional growth, or negative leadership experiences. Leadership approaches were not the same across sectors. For example, Sunny highlighted that his consultative and participative approaches were not transferable between corporate and education. Ernest also commented that the *"educational leader brand"* might prevent someone from *"climbing the corporate ladder"*. Jake shared his challenges in transitioning to a non-academic leadership role, as well:

> I didn't really know much about being [a leader] in the university. I was quite ignorant about how things worked [there]… I found that everything I did I got push back from somebody. People would get outraged about different things. I didn't have any power.

Career transitions required dedication, grit, and continuous learning. Pursuing leadership in education was motivated by the prospects to make a difference in the organization or field. But

transitions to senior educational leadership involved a "decision to stay" in those roles long enough to reap the results of their work. Two participants considered senior educational leadership but realized that such roles would not be a good fit. Others moving to leadership mentioned their "missing working with students" and assumed short-term teaching opportunities. When discussing what contributed to their career transitions, several participants mentioned their being prompted by challenges related to socio-economic or political factors, organizational changes, and life events. Timing was also an important element and so was the alignment between their own and the organization's values and goals.

Challenges and Rewards

Leadership comes inherently with challenges. Acknowledging that one cannot *know* or *do* everything prompts leaders to seek advice and support from others. When referring to formal leadership in education, participants linked it to "a great deal of transactional leadership" and interest in and knowledge of the political system. Some challenges highlighted were leading large teams, managing large budgets, dealing with human resources and/or union issues, and completing "mountains of paperwork". Handling these challenges involved working long hours, stress, lack of life-play balance, and facing others' preconceived ideas about formal leadership. For instance, Hope mentioned *"being unhappy and burnt out",* Sunny met with others' *"distrust of management"*, and Alex said that *"even when you think you're acceding to people's wishes, they'll still find something [to complain about]".* I heard "you can't please everyone" and "you can't control everything" many times during the interviews. Though reflection was crucial for leadership development, the challenging and complex situations leaders faced often hindered it:

> reflection is a huge piece of experiential learning and I think it's a downside of the huge and often impossible role those senior leaders take on. The workloads are ridiculous! […] You realize that you get so caught up in that business that you lose that time for reflection that I think is critical for leaders. (Hope)

Formal leaders needed not only to be reflective but also comfortable with their vulnerability. Along these lines, Hannah pinpointed how she strived to find new ways to connect with learners and *"remember what it's like to start at the beginning [and be] vulnerable"*.

Overall, participants found their work rewarding as it supported the development of people and organizations. Many participants stressed that they were not driven by titles or paycheques. In fact, Hope emphasized that *"if* [paycheques are] *your driver, or if the title of the position is your driver* […] *I think, it's leaders like that people should run away from"*. The primary goal of participants' pursuing formal leadership was to make a difference in others' lives—students, colleagues, or clients.

Learning "How to Be a Leader"

The second theme reflects leadership as evolving with gaining experience. Participants' leadership developed by approaching situations arising in practice through trial and error and by experiencing moments that offered life-changing lessons.

Trial and Error

Participants shared that approaching issues through trial and error offered meaningful leadership development opportunities. The process entailed deploying new strategies to find viable

solutions for practice, influencing how people perceived challenges, and dealing with uncertainty and perceived risks. In a sense, it was a "refining-by-doing" process, which offered participants new motivation to undertake challenges and to persevere in finding better strategies to address issues. What seemed to help in the pressing moments of ambiguity were: being comfortable with the unknown, openness to disagreement, resourcefulness, persistence, organizational support, curiosity, and courage. Participants acknowledged that, though not always easy, their leadership was meant to inspire change, encourage initiative, and empower others "to do their best work" and "be their best self".

Defining Moments

Participants recognized that leadership involved both successes and struggles. Jake and Hope shared life changing events that provided lessons transferable to the professional realm. Also, seeing and partaking in *"the acts of courage and bravery, ... being empathetic, and understanding the [crisis] situation, doing whatever you could to make a difference"* had "huge impact" on Hannah's leadership development. Many shared that success motivated them and increased their confidence. Yet Noah was somewhat reserved about celebrating achievements:

> what I take pride in and what I like to do is lead in ways in which I can move organizations forward. Sometimes there are successes and sometimes there are challenges. Sometimes we win, sometimes we fail. Don't take too much credit for the wins and try not to personalize the losses.

Although all experiences provided learning, the struggles were most impactful. The *feeling* sparked by the "*memorable teeny, tiny little blips"* (Timothy) when participants were set up for failure, undermined, devalued, silenced, or coerced into something was the most prominent.

Perhaps, challenges left a bigger imprint because they stimulated reflection. Recalling these moments was often followed by "I don't want anyone else to feel that" or "I don't want to be like that". Zachary evoked how he felt after a meeting where his responsibilities were changed without consultation:

> I walked away from that experience thinking 'Wow, that is something that I will never do to somebody else!' If I ever have the chance to be in a formal leadership role, given *that* negative experience of just being told what to do without prior consultation, I will never do that to another person or another faculty member.

Ernest talked about the impact of observing the disconnect between words and actions in a higher education context:

> if you're saying to your direct reports 'It's really important that you develop good relationships with your people and that you listen to them', then, I think, it's important for strong leaders to do that. […But in that context,] it wasn't done! […] it was something that I saw that changed my approach to leadership.

Other participants shared lessons learned as new leaders. For example, Maggie talked about a *"public demonstration of dissent"* as being the turning point for her team, which resulted in better capacity to solve conflict and participate in discussions that improved teamwork. Reflecting on a specific role, Shirley said: "*I don't think I did a very good job as I would've hoped in bringing those values [diversity, engaging conflict and different perspectives] into the team"*. Ernest shared his struggles when dealing with the misalignment between his own values and expectations and the deep-seated unprofessional behaviours of his new team. Other defining moments, such as

overcoming failures and disappointments, making or correcting mistakes, and job loss were also memorable. As Hope stated,

> while it's very difficult, many leaders, at some point in their career have to face up to a failure—whether it's a failed project, whether it is leaving a role, or being asked to leave a role, or being terminated from a role.

A "good support network", resilience, and reflecting on questions such as "what did I learn from this?" or "what is my part in this?" helped participants overcome these challenges faced in leadership roles.

Learning "About Leadership"

The third theme shows how pursuing various types of learning opportunities—formal, non-formal, or informal—contributed to participants' leadership development. This learning equipped them for formal (assigned) and/or informal (emergent) leadership.

The Doctoral Journey

The doctoral program contributed the most to participants' leadership development. Their journeys varied, but they all evoked the impact of their learning. They shared what motivated them to pursue further education, their experiences in the program, and the perceived program benefits. These findings are presented next.

Motivators. The main reasons to pursue doctoral studies were the desire to improve their practice and inspire change in their organizations or field. Some participants were motivated by curiosity or personal and professional growth. For instance, Ernest decided *"to go back to school*

and learn about leadership and higher education and policy" upon observing a lack of leadership. Maggie shared that the program helped her shift her perspective. She recalled that at the beginning,

> I was paralyzed! […] I was learning so many conflicting aspects of what I had previously been doing […] I was finding new ways in which I could reconcile my work that would still allow me to be curious.

Mercedes said she had *"more questions than answers as a practitioner",* Noah had a keen interest in research and program development, and Timothy wanted *"to stimulate the other part of the brain".* The primary reason for choosing this particular doctoral program was the cohort model, which was conducive to discussions and collaboration.

Experience in the program. Participants shared what they appreciated in the program. Working collaboratively, sharing ideas, celebrating milestones, and walking through challenges together offered support, structure, and abundant learning opportunities during coursework. *"The richness of the education in my doctoral degree was in the dialogue with my cohort",* Zachary said. Some participants also listed what they found useful and directly applicable to their practice: Johnny talked about topics related to policy and engaging diversity; Avery referred to courses about leadership theory and research trends; and Timothy highlighted educational theory and research, along with assignments addressing issues in practice. Several others enjoyed the cohort diversity in terms of roles, institutions, and career stages whereas one participant referred to the cohort as "homogeneous". Storytelling allowed for sharing and learning about what worked and what did not in others' practice. But awareness of others' practices alone was not enough. Participants emphasized the need to be receptive and eager to apply what was suitable to their own practice. Some skills developed in the program that were vital in practice were dealing with

uncertainty, being able to clearly articulate and defend one's perspective, and complex problem solving.

There was consensus that education was about learning and change and participants were aware of their responsibility in this regard. Jake's concern that *"some students go through [a graduate program] pretty much unchanged"* could apply more widely. This change was a two-way street. Hope, Noah, and Mercedes gave examples of their impact on students' careers, which showed that the responsibility for learning was not only of educators, but students, too. The attitude toward learning in school may translate in the attitude toward learning or performance in the workplace. Others, like Maggie, also inspired their coworkers to continue their formal education in their areas of interest. It seemed that the participants' doctoral experience set the stage for lifelong learning "about leadership".

Participants talked about several challenges encountered during their program. What seemed to affect them the most was the disconnect from their classmates after coursework completion and dealing with the *"big void [after defence, when] nobody has any interest anymore in you"* (Timothy). Three participants felt that their leaders or organizations did not support their pursuing leadership education. Other ones mentioned that "life did not stop" just because they were doing a doctorate. Many had to navigate life altering events while in the program. But in the midst of these "life lessons", they had to "make it work", to "keep going", "draw on their inner reserves", and build resilience and endurance. *"Doctorate is very hard, and it plays on your emotions",* Emma said. It seemed that the doctoral experience was preparing participants for leadership as an emotional endeavour and a challenging journey.

The program's flexible structure helped participants integrate it within their complex lives by creating "the space for learning". Nevertheless, their own perseverance was not enough to handle the *"tremendous amount of work"* (Ernest) that going through a doctorate involved. Thus, participants needed others' support to succeed. They often leaned on their classmates and "thesis buddies" with whom they forged relationships and shared in the challenges encountered on their journeys. Many participants highlighted that their family's "altruistic support and push" and the committee members' dedication and encouragement were key in moving forward and completing the program. Joy's quote demonstrates leadership enacted by the faculty members: "*The professors were amazing! They knew when to step back and let us move forward or if they needed to intervene, or question, or suggest, they did."* In a sense, all the supporters modeled leadership, offering valuable lessons to participants.

Benefits. When talking about how the program benefited their leadership development, participants highlighted that they learned about "what reflection really was" and how being a reflective practitioner improved practice. Other benefits were networking and career advancement. Sunny credited the program for broadening his understanding of leadership, emphasizing that *"the EdD definitely elevated my leadership, no question"*. The program's reputation helped Hope *"make up for unusual credentials"* whereas the "formal paper" helped her build credibility and access new career opportunities. Many participants changed their jobs or organizations during or upon completing the program. Others were in formal roles that required a doctorate. Some started with a goal in mind (e.g., targeted role, sector, or organization), but the goal changed when finding a better fit or a different purpose.

The EdD program gave participants a basis for leadership development and access to leadership terminology and literature. By being exposed to theory and research, participants'

understanding of leadership deepened. The program offered opportunities to explore topics of interest (usually emerging from practice) and included readings that laid a solid theoretical foundation for their work. Many participants referred to becoming more grounded in their perspective or to experiencing a change in perspective, discourse, or leadership approach during their studies. Shirley described the newly found "comradery" in academic settings and Victoria mentioned her increased awareness of different leadership roles and responsibilities within her institution. Finally, the program offered several participants new beginnings for post-retirement endeavours.

The doctoral thesis was an important component of participants' leadership development. Their research was grounded in personal interests or issues related to their practice. For instance, Mercedes said that engaging in her research *"brought me solace because I answered [important] questions";* Sunny discovered that he was not "alone in his questions"; Emma and Ernest referred to developing self-confidence and skills such as writing, researching, and presenting; and Jake's research helped him find "meaning and understanding". Other lessons learned and program benefits stated were:

> I was finally able to address [others'] questions differently, and we had a different level of conversation. (Shirley)

> [the doctorate] helps you articulate yourself a little bit in front of yourself. You always knew what you knew, but you never really had a way to write it down in five sentences… and now, you can do that. (Timothy)

> it showed me that post-secondary is a different world than corporate. In post-secondary, to solve an issue, you need not only to understand it, but have

> evidence. [PSE is] a world [where] you can't wing it on opinion. And there's a lot of opinion out in the hallways [of organizations]. […] EdD gave me an understanding of leadership, and confidence and strength to be a better leader and decision-maker. (Sunny)

> absolutely without question, [the EdD experience] was transformative. (Joy)

Continuous Learning

Leadership, learning, and reflection were perceived as closely connected. Participants saw leadership development as a lifelong learning process and not confined within a timeframe or space:

> Good grief, I had an EdD in Educational Leadership! I thought I had thought and studied and reflected a lot on what it meant to be a leader, and yet when I got into the [formal leadership] role, there were still things that [were new]. (Hope)

> Certainly, you never stop learning how to be a leader, or educator, or researcher, or whatever your role is. (Zachary)

> I firmly believe in lifelong learning […] and never stop learning. (Ernest)

> Oh, definitely keep learning! Leadership it is all about learning and it's about dealing with people, but definitely learning, [and] facilitating. (Emma)

> We lead for different reasons: we lead to have power, we lead because it's more fun than being led sometimes. But [leadership is] about mentoring, supporting

> your people, and protecting your people who support you in turn. [It is] about learning and personal growth, I think, as much as anything. (Jake)

> I honestly believe that I don't know everything […] I know there's so much I don't know, not that I just don't know everything. There's so much I don't know that the people that work with me need to be able to step in confidently to share what they know. Because then, we will—when we have everyone in the room—we'll have a more complete picture… still not totally complete. There's always a more complete picture [of leadership]. (Maggie)

Reflection also played an essential role in improving practice. It appeared that reflection became integral to participants' professional practice and helped them address complex situations by examining different facets thoroughly. For instance, Mercedes would gage *"what I'm experiencing, taking that moment to carve out, to understand what's happening and then, understand my role in it",* which suggests internalized learning and reflection on practice. Engaging in reflective processes helped participants learn from mistakes, identify and share *"promising practices"* (Victoria), analyze situations and differentiate between paradigms or practices; and recognize that some issues are beyond one's control.

Often, participants took part in workshops, conferences, and networking events. Many such events seemed too short to address complex leadership issues and seemed to focus on transactional and operational leadership. But these opportunities helped participants develop connections, begin conversations, and disseminate knowledge.

Participants highlighted their learning while undertaking new leadership roles. Those who were in or were transitioning to new roles when the interviews were conducted were excited to

find out what the roles entailed and seemed inspired by the possibility to make a more significant difference in their new setting. These new opportunities required them *"to learn a new way of being"* (Mercedes). Learning in new roles involved aspects such as: slowing down in making decisions and taking time to gather all information before making big changes; dealing with frustrations and the urge to "fix right now"; system thinking and *"strategies for navigating more complex settings"* (Maril); adapting to new situations; addressing conflicting demands; and helping others better understand their environment. Despite being somewhat anxious, these participants looked hopeful, determined to face new challenges and to discover new *"pathways to the possible"* (Noah). Like Maril, many were continuously looking for *"ways to update my skills to provide me with the competencies to manage those [new] aspects of my job"*.

Learning the "Dialogue of Practice"

The fourth emerging theme focuses on learning through interacting, working with, or observing others. Participants often referred to developing their leadership by engaging in dialogue and by receiving feedback from other leaders, collaborators, critical friends, mentors, and role models.

The Case of Dialogue

Participants emphasized that bringing stakeholders together, including them in decision making, and encouraging collaboration offered multiple perspectives of working through leadership issues. Avery highlighted that it was in a trusting environment and "*in the dialogue of practice that leadership can evolve"*. Several others stated that by establishing trust and participating in dialogue, people would share their experiences, expertise, and challenges without

the fear of being judged. Through dialogue, people found solutions to discipline-specific issues, supported one another, and disseminated knowledge. These learning spaces were created in their doctoral classes, through mentorship, within community partnerships, or through professional associations and events. Like Zachary commented: *"it's not only attending these formal [events,] but it's also being cognisant and aware of what's happening in the practice of other leaders around you"*. Mercedes emphasized that creating space and dedicating time for discussions allowed people to *"connect and sense-make together and really feel that belonging, [the] membership to community"*. Open conversations allowed community members to contribute to change and learn by asking the *"really tough questions [before] moving forward on initiatives and [seeing] if they work or not"* (Mercedes). These inviting spaces and trial-and-error approaches created opportunities for non-leaders, informal leaders, and students to have their voices heard.

Mentorship

Mentorship provided the space for relationship building and feedback. In professional settings, mentoring relationships tended to be formalized. A mentor was someone people learned from, interacted with, or whose leadership approach they modeled. Participants shared that observing and emulating others' practices, creating meaningful alliances, consulting with others about challenging situations or dilemmas, receiving feedback, and finding support with innovative ideas added value to their leadership journeys. Hannah highlighted the impact of her trusted supporters— whom she called the "rocks of Gibraltar"—who offered authentic feedback and advice when *"not so good intentions or self-serving tensions"* seemed to surface. Along these lines, Hope emphasized that leaders needed to intentionally seek mentors and reliable colleagues to hold them accountable as "*the higher up you get, the easier it is to dismiss [others' feedback]"*. She continued, *"I think it's very important that—as a leader—you be willing to be challenged and*

hear ideas other than your own.". Hence, building relationships with trustworthy people who encouraged leaders to think critically and/or challenge decisions and actions were crucial.

Participants considered mentoring others *"the point of being an educator"* (Hope). Finding mentors for themselves was important and so were being mentors and helping others grow. Noah "learned tremendously" from his mentors and felt *"an obligation to do the same for others"*. Johnny also felt responsible for his faculty's professional development. Many other participants commented on how rewarding the mentoring others was, especially on the long-term journeys. They shared stories of colleagues, leaders, followers, and students whom they mentored along the way and impacted their careers. Several insights emerged about meaningful mentorship. For example, mentors challenged their mentee's perspective and offered constructive feedback. They were also comfortable with their vulnerability. By sharing their own life journeys, mentors inspired confidence, trust, and hope. But often, mentors learned from their mentees, too. Approaching mentorship with humility and respect for one another was key in leadership development. These reciprocal relationships of support, feedback, and recognition allowed for professional and personal growth. But rather than merely copying others' practices or following their advice, participants encouraged reflection, astuteness, and authentic dialogue in a non-judgmental environment.

Open communication and trust were central in developing lasting and profound relationships. Participants admired their mentors' dedication, fairness, thoughtfulness, humility, steadiness, and curiosity. Their mentors were courageous and influential people who left a legacy in their organizations. They were supportive, encouraging, and inspiring. Often, mentors were persuasive in guiding and helping their mentees gain clarity through questioning. Thus, mentors modeled leadership and inspired participants to become *"one of those [strong] leaders"* (Ernest),

who were described as balancing work and play, being honest, and knowing when and how to "show disappointment" in followers' actions. Joy's mentors were authentic, calm in crises, and good listeners, Victoria's mentors inspired innovation, and one of Timothy's mentors *"combined authenticity and scholarship perfectly"*. In short, mentors modeled leadership and helped participants become better leaders.

Key Findings

This paper offers insights into leadership development as they emerged from exploring, analyzing, and interpreting how participants experienced leadership in higher education. The study aimed to reveal aspects of leadership theory that were found in practice and implications for leadership education. In the context of this paper, which reported on major findings related to leadership development, there were two key findings that emerged from the data:

1. *Leadership is an evolving, multifaceted, and contextual phenomenon.* This key finding shows how people conceptualize leadership and how their perspectives advance and/or change with the studying and exercising of leadership.

2. *Leadership development is a lifelong journey of learning and growth.* This key finding shows how people embarking on leadership development journeys engage constantly in learning the various aspects of leadership.

Discussion

The two key findings related to leadership development emerged from the data collected by interviewing 18 (out of 22) people who completed a doctoral program in leadership at Simon Fraser University and had experience in higher education settings. The full study was framed using

a conceptual framework (see Figure 1) that demonstrated how leadership conceptualization shifted over time, along with the spheres where leadership was developed and exercised.

Leadership is an evolving, multifaceted, and contextual phenomenon

The first key finding shows how conceptualizing leadership changed over time, shifting from being associated with individuals in formal roles in organizations to leadership exercised by many within a context, and as a practice dispersed in organizations. Participants perceived leadership as a multifaceted and evolving phenomenon. They referred to changes in conceptualization from top-down to more participative leadership. Top-down approaches were more consistent with managerial, instructional, or transactional leadership and not always suitable to education (Bush, 2011; Middlehurst, 2008; Yielder & Codling, 2004). Participants shared early career experiences that revealed more transactional and authoritarian leadership approaches. But informal leadership has increased in education in the forms of project or committee work, and cross-department or community-oriented initiatives. Hence, development opportunities diversified and were made available to all people aspiring to be engaged in the various forms of leadership. In this study, leadership occurred within the individual, interactional, and collective domains, meaning that leaders, followers, and peers interacted with one another and took leading roles and initiatives when opportunities surfaced. Hence, leadership development needed to involve not only people in formal leadership positions, but everyone in the organization. These findings align with the literature focusing on the shifts in defining leadership and exercising educational leadership (Kezar et al., 2006; Northouse, 2016; Ramsden, 1998; Simkins, 2005).

Participants described leadership using established terminology, analogies, and metaphors. They perceived teaching and parenting as similar to leadership. Also, they mostly referred to what

the literature distinguishes as *the people-side of organizations*—individuals, relationship, influence, and change. Aspects of relational (Uhl-Bien, 2006), authentic (Avolio et al., 2009), servant (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), caring (Uusiautti, 2013), and transformational (Stewart, 2006) leadership emerged from the dataset. In participants' perspectives, leaders were responsible for the people in their organizations and for reaching goals intended to move people and organizations forward. There was also a sense of shared responsibility and high moral and ethical standards, which aligned with the literature (Bouchamma & Brie, 2014; Cloud, 2010; Fullan, 2005; Humphreys, 2013; Torres & Evans, 2005). Finally, participants mentioned collaboration and dialogue, which are aspects consistent with participative (Bush, 2011), shared (Avolio et al., 2009), and distributed (Bolden et al., 2008) leadership. Given the wealth of theoretical concepts that emerged from the dataset, it is vital that leaders access various forms of education to explore the leadership theory and research, as well as find relevant ways to exercise them in practice.

This study shows that leadership is contextual and multifaceted. Long-term mentorship and learning the contextual aspects of organizations helped those who transitioned to new roles or organizations. As these transitions involve steep learning curves and dealing with uncertainty, leaders often approached practical issues by trial-and-error and sought input from others. Bryman and Lilley (2009) argued that "higher education is itself a distinctive context and that therefore many of the leadership principles that are known to work in other spheres or sectors cannot be transplanted into universities" (p. 338). Hence, gaining experience, reflection, and building meaningful relationships supported participants' leadership development and career transitions. These findings are in line with the recommendations found in the literature that leaders need to develop awareness, adaptability, system thinking, and foresight (Kezar et al., 2006; Minarik et al., 2003; Thornton et al., 2004).

In summary, the complexity of leadership, the shifts in its conceptualization, the vast terminology available to define and describe leadership and its contextual nature align with what was found in the select body literature that informed the conceptual framework constructed for this study (e.g., Avolio et al., 2009; Bryman & Lilley, 2009; Dinh et al., 2014; Kezar et al., 2006; Sathye, 2004; Simkins, 2005).

Leadership development is a lifelong journey of learning and growth

The second key finding shows that participants' leadership perspectives developed over time and were informed by numerous sources such as the environment they grew up in, their interactions with others, and their education and experience. Their leadership approach changed upon accessing leadership theory, conducting research, or gaining experience. Their doctoral studies had the most impact, which contrasts the findings of Bryman and Lilley (2009), who claimed that engaging in leadership research did not always influence the practice of higher education leaders. In this study, participants' formal education enhanced how they defined and described leadership by expanding their use of terminology in interviews. But in their descriptions, they also drew analogies and metaphors from other aspects of life. Sharing experiences from various stages of life showed that leadership development could not be restricted to particular times and spaces (e.g., leadership role, organization, or classroom). The journey is never complete and does not follow a straight line. Studies that discussed different leadership development stages and how learning contributed to leadership development were conducted by Allison and Ramirez (2016), Amey (2005), Jameson (2012), and Madsen (2007).

There are many facets of leadership development that emerged from this study. For example, leadership developed through meaningful interactions between leaders, peers, and

followers. Participants emphasized the importance of interpersonal skills such as authenticity, active listening, relationship building, feedback, stakeholder engagement, and transparent communication. These are skills that the literature deems as essential to leadership (Avolio et al., 2009; Basham & Mathur, 2010; Cloud, 2010; Dinh et al., 2014; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Learning from others through observation, mentorship, and dialogue had major influences on participants' leadership development. These interactions and forged relationships offered a critical eye, advice, or a non-judgemental space for thoughtful discussions. The impact of such forms of learning were also provided by Bryman (2007), Catalfamo (2010), Lawler and Sillitoe (2013), and Sathye (2004).

Through continuous learning and reflection on past experiences, participants improved their skills and practices. They also helped other leaders, colleagues, and students do the same. By being aware of and learning from both positive and negative experiences, participants improved their problem-solving skills and expanded their strategies to overcome future challenges. Studying leadership, engaging in reflection, and gaining leadership experience conferred participants opportunities to deeply analyze their experiences, draw lessons, and strengthen their perspectives of leadership. Avolio et al. (2009), Amey (2005, 2006), Kezar et al. (2006) and Schön (1983) argued that learning and reflection were central to leadership development and professional practice. Moreover, emotional intelligence promoted self-awareness and helped with relationship and culture building. As leaders' behaviours and actions influenced people's emotions and performance, the various leader-follower interactions impacted organizational culture and growth (Goleman, 2006; Lamm et al., 2016). Considering that the demands and complexity of higher education leadership are increasing, leaders need to develop capacity to evaluate priorities, cope with stress, and find support networks to ensure their own and others' well-being (Allison & Ramirez, 2016; Catalfamo, 2010; Lovelace et al., 2007).

In summary, learning "about leadership", "how to be a leader" and the "dialogue of practice" is a lifelong journey that has lasting effects on both people and organizations. Participants strived to engage in various forms of learning to develop personal characteristics, relevant skills, and a "toolbox" of styles to draw from and adapt within their context. These approaches to leadership development are consistent with the literature (Amey, 2005, 2006; Dinh et al., 2014; Lamm et al., 2016; Northouse, 2016).

Implications and Recommendations

The wide range of existing theories uncovers the various leadership facets, but the phenomenon is still not completely understood. This study shows the complexity and the multifaceted nature of leadership. It also shows that planned leadership development equips people to engage in their work more meaningfully. Leadership is contextual. Although the theory of leadership and general approaches are transferable between contexts, leaders need to continuously learn and adapt their approaches to the needs of the organization and those whom they lead. Catalfamo (2010) differentiated between three forms of leadership development: formal, non-formal, and informal. Regardless of where participants' learning journey began, they engaged in all three forms of leadership development at some point in their career. Their formal education (i.e., doctoral program) had the most impact, followed by the long term informal and non-formal learning opportunities. Hence, it is recommended that current leaders and those aspiring to leadership pursue such learning for the best outcomes. In challenging times, during resource deficits or other crises, well-prepared leaders are assets to organizations. But some participants encountered challenges in engaging in leadership development activities such as heavy workloads, stress and burnout, lack of their leaders' interest in, recognition of, or use of newly developed skills, and lack of financial support. Hence, educational institutions need to work with leaders on

identifying skill gaps and to offer adequate support to allow them to engage in relevant development opportunities.

There were numerous experiences that informed participants' leadership, which showed that leadership development could not be confined within one single approach, timeframe, or setting. The struggles offered valuable lessons whereas successes motivated them to persevere. Reflecting on learning and experience helped participants improve relevant leadership skills as well as better understand their enacted behaviours and how these affected others' performance and wellbeing. Consistent with what the literature shows (Lamm et al., 2016; Middlehurst, 2008; Minarik et al., 2003; Ramsden, 1998), participants needed to constantly renew their commitment to becoming skilled leaders and helping others develop their leadership. Thus, it is recommended that leaders engage in meaningful interactions and develop long-lasting relationships to offer and receive valuable input, support, and critical feedback. As purposeful relationship development takes time, they need to be a priority for leaders regardless of the other demands of their jobs.

Leadership is contextual and one's leadership style may take a different shape depending on where it is exercised. Designing leadership development opportunities—formal, informal, or non-formal—to address the needs and expectations of all leaders and/or organizations may not be possible. However, it is recommended that leadership education incorporate learning from both theory and practice. These programs need to allow people to consolidate and apply their learning. Thus, longer-term engagement and relevant activities (e.g., self-directed learning, groupwork, case studies, research, mentorship, and networking) are required to create opportunities to incorporate systematic studying of leadership and practical skills development. As Bush (2011) argued, for a "good practice", leaders need to better understand how theory, research, and practice connect, as

well as integrate them into their day-to-day work. In some ways, participants engaged in these processes of "good practice" building throughout their careers.

Limitations and Future Research

This paper provides valuable insights on leadership development to leadership scholars and practitioners, as well as organizations offering leadership education. The first study limitation is its focus on *leadership* and not on other overlapping concepts such as *management* or *administration* (Bush, 2011; Northouse, 2016; Yielder & Codling, 2004). As it emerged from the data, formal leadership, in particular, seemed to incorporate all three concepts. Secondly, the conceptual framework constructed for this study informed the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes. Hence, the findings need to be considered within the context of this framework. Further research is recommended to incorporate the related concepts and/or expand the conceptual framework. Also, by focusing on a small group of participants who completed a doctorate in leadership at one university and worked in higher education settings, the study does not offer a full picture of what leadership development entails. To enhance the understanding, it would be valuable to engage and/or compare perspectives of people who pursued a doctorate in leadership (in education and/or another field) at another university or other forms of leadership education. Further research is also recommended to better understand how the conceptual framework constructed by Eftenaru (2020) may be used specifically in leadership development in formal, informal, or non-formal settings. Finally, the study was not meant to be used to generalize or to describe a larger population or the entire field (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). However, it shows that the incorporation of theory, research, and practice along with the long-term engagement in learning play major roles in leadership development. As it emerged from the study, leaders need to be prepared to handle complex challenges, identify structure and policy changes, and implement

processes that help people and organizations grow. There are numerous leadership development opportunities available. Leaders should assess and pursue those that are relevant to them in terms of needs, interests, resources, and anticipated outcomes. Future research is suggested to identify areas of development for specific leadership roles.

Conclusion

Being grounded in participants' experiences, this study provides new insights associated with leadership development within the individual, interactional, and collective leadership domains. Higher education institutions have become more complex, and leaders face increasing demands. There are no quick solutions to issues arising in practice. Leaders need to be equipped to undertake challenges and promote growth. Learning "about leadership" by engaging in various forms of education and "how to be leaders" by applying learning to practice, along with developing the "dialogue of practice" are part of a lifelong journey. Participants in this study developed their leadership through their own experiences as leaders, followers, or observers of leadership, by engaging in various forms of leadership education (formal, informal, and non-formal), and by interacting with others. As leadership in higher education is multifaceted and evolving, it requires constant personal and professional growth of the leaders themselves, those whom they lead, and their organizations.

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Biography

Cristina L. Eftenaru earned a Doctorate in Education Leadership from Simon Fraser University. She considers herself a lifelong learner who eagerly engages in exploring new topics using a variety of conventional and creative approaches. Cristina is a passionate researcher of leadership and learning. Her systematic approach to research along with her endeavor to bridge theory and practice and cross paradigm lines allow her to challenge viewpoints and weave in concepts that various perspectives reveal in new and innovative ways. Cristina enjoys tapping into her own and others' expertise and experiences and is committed to disseminating widely the findings of her work. Her career path has taken her into areas such as teaching, leadership, experiential learning, and consulting. Cristina works as an Instructor at Langara College and is a Coordinator in Work Integrated Learning at Simon Fraser University. She serves on ACE-WIL Board and on several institutional, provincial, and international committees.

***Corresponding Author:** Cristina L. Eftenaru, Simon Fraser University. Email: cristina_eftenaru@sfu.ca

Maduforo, A. N.., Scott, S., & Scott, D. E. (2024). Navigating neoliberal waters: Building capacities and skills for effective instructional leadership in higher education. *International Journal for Leadership in Learning*, *24*(1), 191–225. https://doi.org/ 10.29173/ijll48

Navigating Neoliberal Waters: Building Capacities and Skills for Effective Instructional Leadership in Higher Education

Aloysius Nwabugo Maduforo, Shelleyann Scott, & Donald E. Scott

Abstract

In the current era, leadership in higher education faces unprecedented challenges as a result of neoliberalism's influence. To effectively provide instructional leadership, higher education leaders and administrators need to acquire new skills and strategies. The issues of inadequate funding, increased workload, massification, and marketization in universities necessitate skillful navigation to uphold educational quality. This integrated literature review examines the impact of neoliberalism on teaching and learning and explores the specific skills and capacities required by university leaders to deliver effective instructional leadership. Through a comprehensive review, we shed light on the essential leadership skills necessary within the context of neoliberalism. By addressing these challenges head-on, leaders can navigate the neoliberal waters and build the capacities needed for successful instructional leadership in higher education.

Keywords: ethical leadership, ethics, higher education, doctoral supervision, well-being, Canadian universities.

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of post-secondary education, the appointment of leaders worldwide often overlooks the importance of their academic background and instead prioritizes other criteria (Kri et al., 2021). Consequently, this practice has resulted in the appointment of numerous inexperienced leaders who lack the qualifications necessary to effectively lead higher education institutions (HEIs) around the globe. However, it is essential to recognize that leadership is a skill that can be acquired (Kouzes & Posner, 2019). Therefore, a research paper addressing the concept of instructional leadership and the requisite skills and capacities needed to provide exceptional leadership in the neoliberal era of education is both timely and relevant.

The 21st century presents an array of challenges for leaders in post-secondary institutions. These challenges encompass the complexities of striving to become a top-ranked university, grappling with political issues, navigating the influences of neoliberalism, managing issues related to massification, securing competitive funding, addressing student fees, attracting international students, handling labor concerns, maintaining financial autonomy, upholding instructional leadership, responding to pandemics, adapting to international, state, or regional movement restrictions, and embracing technological advancements (Elrehail et al., 2018; Genty, 2014; Kember et al., 2019; Lee & Stensaker, 2021; Marginson, 2013). These challenges are just a few of the multifaceted issues confronting leaders in higher education institutions worldwide.

This integrated literature review systematically explores various aspects of leadership, including instructional leadership, and examines the challenges posed by factors such as neoliberalism, massification, globalization, and labor issues. Furthermore, it elucidates the essential skills required by leaders to effectively navigate and mitigate the challenges associated with higher education leadership in the neoliberal era. By developing the capacities and skills necessary to

thrive amidst the intricacies of neoliberalism, leaders can successfully provide effective instructional leadership in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education. Consequently, the subsequent section delves into the concept of leadership.**Overview of Leadership**

Effective leadership goes beyond holding a position or bearing a title. To be considered a true leader, one must have followers. A leader cannot operate in isolation; instead, they must cultivate strong relationships with people and possess the ability to organize individuals to accomplish tasks and achieve organizational goals. While classroom teaching is recognized as the primary factor influencing learner and school outcomes, leadership assumes a crucial role as the second most essential factor (Leithwood et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2007).

In the present context, the leadership challenges faced by higher education institutions call for a pragmatic leader who is well-informed about the prevailing conditions and adept at navigating the complexities of the neoliberalism era. Such a leader must possess the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively lead higher education institutions in this changing landscape.

It is important to note that a person in the position of leadership is not necessarily the wisest or the most knowledgeable, but they must know how to harness the potential in the team to achieve the general goal (Kouzes & Posner, 2019; Ramsden, 2003). A leader is not just one that inherited leadership from ancestral roots or one appointed by the government to a political position. In the introductory section of Ramsden's *Learning to Lead in Higher Institutions*, he attempted to delineate a leader in the higher education systems, not just the vice-chancellors, deans, heads of department, directors, and others that retain a position of title, but also colleagues who support, manage, develop and inspire other colleagues to achieve institutional goals (Ramsden, 2003). Thus, leadership is not reserved only for those with formal positions with titles in higher education although the bulk of the responsibilities are on them, but leadership trickles from the vice

chancellor to the least casual worker (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Ramsden, 2003). Each person exercises leadership at various levels. Hence, leadership is how people relate with each other (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Ramsden, 2003).

The challenge of leadership is how leaders can get extraordinary things accomplished by mobilizing resources, especially people (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Ramsden, 2003). This is about the lifestyle and examples leaders show to their followers. Several scholars have written on the five exemplary leadership practices that enhance the performance of leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Northouse, 2022; Ramsden, 2003). These five exemplary leadership practices are not exclusive to leaders in higher education but incorporate leaders in every work of life (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The five exemplary leadership practices are as follows (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, 2019):

1. **Challenge the Process:** Until there is a change in the method of achieving a result, the outcome will remain the same all the time. Challenges stimulate innovation and opportunities. To make a positive difference, leaders must challenge the status quo, seek for opportunities, innovate, and mobilize resources to improve conditions.
2. **Model the Way:** Behavior is what earns leaders respect among their peers. Political associates, traditionally, positions of authority and titles can be granted but the life leaders live is what people venerate to follow or detest to jettison. Leaders model the attributes they anticipate from others. To effectively model the way, leaders are expected to have a guiding principle and have clear core values others can follow. A clear description of a leader's core values and principles will stimulate sharing them with others both vocally and in action. Thus, "exemplary leaders walk the talk" (Kouzes & Posner, 2019).

3. **Inspire a Shared Vision:** Visionary leadership is required to effectively lead an institution to an enviable height. It is required for leaders to see a picture of the future they desire for their organization which helps them to work towards a goal and until they actualize it, they will not give up. Because leaders are not loners, they need to share this vision with their followers in a convincing way so that they will own the vision and work towards actualizing it like the leader. Communicating the vision in a clear manner to followers by the leader is essential to get everyone on board with the organization's goal and thus get inspired to work towards actualizing the shared vision.
4. **Enable Others to Act:** What leaders do to enable others to act involves building a team and allowing team members to bring in their expertise in achieving the organizational goal. Model leaders perform their functions as a team, and allow team members to express their ideas and imaginations to achieve the team's goal. To effectively achieve greater success by the team, the leader encourages collaboration among the team members instead of working alone or acting as a boss to suppress the ideas of others.
5. **Encourage the Heart:** Motivation, reward, and encouragement are what leaders do to encourage the heart of their workers. Appreciation, awards, and recognition for exceptional performance by team members encourage the heart to do more. Appreciating innovative and hardworking staff stimulates the desire to work harder. Encouraging the heart brings about healthy competition in the workplace to be more innovative in service delivery by workers.

The outlined practices of leaders (challenge the process, model the way, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, and encourage the heart) are the secrets to successful leadership in any organization and institution when they are effectively applied by leaders (Elrehail et al., 2018;

Kouzes & Posner, 2012, 2019; Ramsden, 2003). These practices help leaders to manage the people working under them and for followers not to see them as tyrants or destructive leaders. The contemporary challenges confronting the leadership of postsecondary institutions necessitate the application of these practices to form a formidable team to be innovative in troubleshooting and staying on top in instructional leadership.

One of the major goals of this integrative literature review is to explore how the field of leadership is impacted by the evolving challenges facing post-secondary institutions and the skills required by leaders to adapt to the challenges and stay afloat. Nowadays, the leadership field does not just pay attention to the individual leader but also devotes attention to supervisors, followers, work setting/context, peers, and culture, including all individuals in the organization which represents diversity (Avolio, 2007; Yukl, 2006). Different leaders utilize different leadership styles depending on the situation in leading organizations. Several leadership styles are documented in the literature (Avolio, 2007; Avolio et al., 2009; Barnes, 2015; Genty, 2014; Mohammed & Hankebo, 2019; Nathan et al., 2019; Northouse, 2022; Shaked, 2021). This integrated literature review concentrates on leadership skills required by leaders in the emerging challenges facing post-secondary education globally to provide effective instructional leadership.

The Concept of Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership can be defined as a leadership approach in educational institutions whereby school leaders exhibit ongoing and deep participation in curriculum and instruction issues, and get involved in several activities targeted at enhancing teaching and learning in schools (Brazer & Bauer, 2013; Neumerski et al., 2018; Shaked, 2021). Instructional leadership is effective when leaders in educational institutions become intensely involved in improving teaching and learning (Mohammed & Hankebo, 2019; Shaked, 2021). Extensive research has found

instructional leadership to be useful in primary and secondary school settings, however, there is insufficient studies on its effectiveness in post-secondary education (Mohammed & Hankebo, 2019; Shaked, 2021; Smith et al., 2017). Thus, the provision of a conducive environment for teaching and learning, as well as regular review of the curriculum to fit into the current social demands for graduates of post-secondary institutions is a major consideration for instructional leadership (Brazer & Bauer, 2013; Neumerski et al., 2018; Shaked, 2021). Instructional leadership expects educational leaders to concentrate their energy on enhancing the academic performance of students more than other areas of management (Rigby, 2014; Shaked, 2021).

The concept of instructional leadership has been discussed in literature extensively with many of the definitions, research, and discussions centering on the secondary school system (Brazer & Bauer, 2013; Brolund, 2016; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Rigby, 2014; Robinson, 2007; Shaked, 2021). This review synthesizes these discussions to situate the review of instructional leadership concepts in post-secondary institutions. Instructional leadership in the post-secondary institution is a type of educational leadership in which the leaders collaboratively work with instructors and administrators to provide guidance and support in instituting best instructional practices with the ultimate aim of improvement in teaching and learning (Brolund, 2016). An instructional leader in a post-secondary institution is expected to possess a high level of accountability to instructors, students, parents, and the institutional community (Brolund, 2016). The leader must communicate the clear goals related to teaching and learning in the institution to the followers to actualize them. A post-secondary institution leader who is modeling instructional leadership could utilize various leadership theories (Genty, 2014; Northouse, 2022; Smith et al., 2017) depending on the situation in the institution. It is well-recognized that an experienced leader will employ a variety of leadership styles that will utilize several models of leadership (Brolund,

2016; Northouse, 2022; Robinson et al., 2007). Instructional leadership is known to provide the platform for setting and communicating clear goals and vision for instructors and learners and assisting instructors through training, professional development, and mentoring (Brolund, 2016; Robinson et al., 2008; Shaked, 2021). It can result in positive outcomes in teaching and learning, but there are many challenges contending against effective instructional leadership in post-secondary institutions in recent times (Brazer & Bauer, 2013; Brolund, 2016; Lee & Stensaker, 2021; Robinson et al., 2008; Scott, 2021; Scott & Scott, 2012).

Challenges to Instructional Leadership in Post-Secondary Institutions

Several challenges confronting instructional leaders in post-secondary institutions are discussed in this section. Starting with the neoliberalism of education, massification, marketization, internationalization and globalization, poor funding, tension/strikes, pandemic, technological challenges among others.

Neoliberalism

It is widely acknowledged that neoliberalism is a fairly topical economic and political scheme (Jeffrey, 2017). Harvey (2005) gives a precise description of neoliberalism as a political-economic practice ideology in which the well-being of humans is assumed to be best promoted by privatizing the public facilities owned by the government to individual capitalists. Neoliberalism promotes an institutionalized framework for entrepreneurial skills and freedom characterized by rights to own private properties, free market, and trade (Harvey, 2005; Lee & Stensaker, 2021; Zepke, 2017). The State performs the function of creating and preserving an institutionalized framework for such economic practices (Harvey, 2005). The State makes monetary policies that will provide assurance of maintaining the integrity and quality of money and set up security and legal structures to guarantee the security of property and rights (Harvey, 2005). The State also

provides a functional market but the state involvement in the market must be minimized because neoliberalism theory posits that the state does not possess sufficient information to predict prices because the entrepreneur and capitalist will target to invest to make maximum profit (Marginson, 2013). Neoliberalism theory aims to reduce government expenditure on public facilities of the State such as healthcare, water, education, social security, and environmental pollution among others (Harvey, 2005; Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005). The state only provides these services if a market does not exist for them (Harvey, 2005).

Today, neoliberalism is the prevailing economic policy in operation in many higher institutions in the world. This has greatly affected government funding of post-secondary institutions, thus transforming these institutions into capitalistic ventures (Gupta et al., 2016; Kapoor, 2005; Donskis et al., 2019; Stein & de Andreotti, 2016; Zepke, 2017). Education is no longer available to everybody, rather, only to those that can afford it. It is commonly said by those impacted by this economic policy in education that "if education is costly, try ignorance". Tuition fees have increased beyond the capacity of the common man in many countries. Facilities for teaching and learning are poorly funded by the governments, especially in developing countries and there is an increase in tuition and cost of housing in schools among other things affecting teaching and learning (Kapoor, 2005).

Massification

Possessing a qualification from an HEIs is regarded as a means to social mobility, that of, living a better life, developing skills, increasing the employability capacity, and developing better business ideas and networking (Gumport et al., 1997; Mok & Jiang, 2018; Noui, 2020; Selyutin et al., 2017). This has drastically increased the number of persons attending HEIs around the world. The government of different countries has made higher education available to everyone (although

this largely depends on whether or not they or their family can afford the education costs), and thus, there is a massive number of persons entering HEIs and a considerable proliferation of HEIs to meet the need of this demand (Gumport et al., 1997). Massification has consequences in that the workload of instructors has increased; instructors now have more people to teach, more scripts to mark, and more assessments to design, as well as more students to supervise for research, which could hamper the quality of education (Mok & Jiang, 2018; Noui, 2020; Selyutin et al., 2017). Instructional leaders must provide support to instructors and students through diverse means such as supervision, training and capacity building, and facilities to meet the demand of an increased number of students all with the aim of ensuring quality teaching and learning (Brolund, 2016; Shaked, 2021). To provide sufficient support, there is a need to fund training and resources for teaching and learning. However, funding is another big challenge confronting instructional leaders in providing excellent leadership in post-secondary institutions globally.

Poor Funding

Another dimension of the neoliberal economic policy has been the decline of funding of post-secondary institutions globally (Marginson, 2013; Donskis et al., 2019; Stein & de Andreotti, 2016). To provide facilities for effective teaching and learning in post-secondary institutions which is the main goal of instructional leadership, funding is needed (Shaked, 2021). Conducting cutting-edge research which forms the basis of evidenced-based teaching and learning demands funding. The government of many countries have considerably reduced funding of post-secondary institutions which invariably affects the teaching and learning in higher education institutions (HEI). One example of such was a report in Canada where there is a drastic reduction in the government funding of the operating cost of universities from approximately 81% in 1985 to 50% in 2015 (Ross et al., 2020). Poor funding has produced many negative outcomes in HEI which

included: HEIs operating like profit oriented organisations (Drori, 2018; Marginson, 2013; Donskis et al., 2019), increased tuition fees for both local and international students, aggressive marketing and recruitment of international students to generate more revenues (Lee & Stensaker, 2021; Marginson, 2013; Scott, 2021), conflicts and strikes among HEI workers (Oyewunmi et al., 2015; Ross et al., 2020; Ukeje et al., 2015), more administrators with lower number of instructors, thus more responsibilities for tutors with lesser remuneration (Ross et al., 2020), the increase of the consumer mentality among students/learners, rise in class sizes and questionably diminishing instructive quality (massification), the increased expectation of academic to hunt for external research funding, intense upsurge in contract academic faculty (Jeffrey, 2017; Robinson et al., 2008; Donskis et al., 2019; Ross et al., 2020; Zepke, 2017). Instructional leaders, therefore, require the requisite skill of rebranding, marketing, and innovation to attract and generate funding for the HEIs effective teaching and learning.

Marketization

Neoliberal economic policies gave rise to HEIs around the world devising different methodologies to attract international students to their HEIs to generate funds for the running of the institutions as part of the privatizing of public institutions (Jeffrey, 2017; Gupta et al., 2016; Hurt, 2012; Donskis et al., 2019; Ross et al., 2020; Stein & de Andreotti, 2016; Zepke, 2017). This posed a challenge to the instructional leader who wants to satisfy the customer as well as maintain quality of education through standard curricula which is not at the detects of the consumer (student). Marketization gave rise to proliferation of private HEIs which are highly profitable capitalist organizations (Marginson, 2013; Stein & de Andreotti, 2016).

The core tenets of HEIs which promote critical inquiry and analysis has experienced a paradigm shifts to acting as a service industry that seeks to please the desires of the student

("customer") as a result of marketization (Hurt, 2012; Macheridis et al., 2020). Tutors are hired on a sessional basis with a meager salary and higher workload to conserve resources. These tutors are also expected to satisfy the "customers" to ensure they continue to patronize the business. The instructional leader needs the requisite skills to balance the pressure posed by the marketization of HEIs. These pressures result in tension and conflict among employees and employers.

Tension and Conflict in HEIs

Neoliberalism and poor funding of HEIs have resulted in labour conflicts and strikes in HEIs all over the world. A case study of Nigeria in 2020 resulted in a 9-months strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities which is an umbrella body of all lecturers in public Universities in Nigeria (Akinpelu, 2020). The strike action resulted from several unfulfilled government agreements, poor funding of universities, poor teaching and learning environment as a result of poor funding, and government interference with the university autonomy, among others. The strike paralyzed the academic activity of all public universities in Nigeria, keeping students at home; several of the students were engaged in various non-academic pursuits (Akinpelu, 2020; Ogugua, 2020). Prior to the strike, many of these students had completed the learning component of the courses for the semester, however, they were yet to write their final examination for the semester which invariably has the potential to affect students' performance in assessment and evaluation after a long period of being out of school. Different news reports/documentaries on different television and radio stations reported students who get involved in learning different crafts outside their academia. This case study of Nigeria is not isolated, although it might be the longest strike action in Nigeria, recently in Ghana, the news media also reported that lecturers embarked on strike as a result of poor funding and poor basic salary for lecturers (Darko, 2021).

Strikes in the University system in Nigeria did not affect private universities which were definitively capitalist in their economic policy with exorbitant tuition, not affordable for the average Nigerian (Adavbiele, 2015; Anonaba, 2015; Offem et al., 2018). The political class have their children in these private universities and/or sent their children abroad for studies, excluding them from the consequences of strikes which extended the period of study, longer than the normal period for students (Adavbiele, 2015; Anonaba, 2015; Offem et al., 2018; Ukeje et al., 2015). There is apathy therefore to effectively mitigate the root causes of strikes by the policy-makers, including the serving President, because their children were not in the public schools in Nigeria (Premium Times, 2016).

The impact of strikes in the HEIs included disruption to the academic calendar, rushed teaching which hampered the learning of students, delays in students' graduation, distraction from academic programming, and many others (Adavbiele, 2015; Anonaba, 2015; Darko, 2021; Offem et al., 2018). Tensions in HEIs affects the goal of effective instructional leadership (Brolund, 2016; Shaked, 2021). Therefore, the negotiation, mediation, and collaboration skills, as well as knowledge of effective collective bargaining are essential for an instructional leader to provide their direction related to teaching and learning in their institutions. The approach should have been to avoid the strike from occurring in the first place. Due to tension and persistent strikes in many countries, students travel from their home countries to other countries for a better educations while some attend online classes to obtain quality education.

Internationalization and globalization

There is a global drive for international students to attend institutions. There was over 4.5 million international students in G-20 countries in 2012, and it is estimated to increase to 7 million by 2025 (Lee & Stensaker, 2021; Stein & de Andreotti, 2016). The majority of students travel from

the Global South to study in the North (Lee & Stensaker, 2021; Stein & de Andreotti, 2016). There is a 350% increase in the number of international students recruited in Canada from the year 2000 to 2014. This was the outcome of a national survey by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) which also identified that the majority (95%) of Canadian HEIs have included internationalization as a priority in their strategic plan. A federal target set by the Canadian government is to increase the number of international students at all levels of education to more than 450,000 by 2022 (Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development, 2014; Stein & de Andreotti, 2016).

This increase in interational students, indicates that instructional leaders must recognize the diversity of students in their HEIs, and the challenges international students face, such as: education system differences; differences in culture and adjustment to unfamiliar cultural norms; discrimination and racism; values and customs; communication/language difficulties; financial hardships; lack of appropriate accommodation; isolation and loneliness; homesickness; and loss of established support and social networks. Globalization using technological advancement must be utilized in the face of pandemics, movement restrictions, and economic recession. International students pay significant tuition fees to study and spend more to access education outside their home countries.

Many HEIs globally have devised online learning platforms to ensure their international markets are not closed, but instructional leaders must know how to maintain quality of teaching and learning even when the only option is through online studies. Also, developing curricula for effective online learning is essential. The challenge posed by the pandemic has increased the demand for quality online education now more than ever.

Pandemic Challenges

In late 2019, a global pandemic that struck the world called coronavirus (COVID-19), greatly affected HEIs and schools at all levels. Many countries all over the world shut down their schools and visionary instructional leaders who had already prepared for such situation by creating online platforms for learning quickly adjusted their curriculum to match the demands of the time. There were a lot of HEIs that lost a whole session or several months of academic activity because of lack of preparedness for the pandemic (Egielewa et al., 2022; Schleicher, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2021). The pandemic had a series of consequences on teaching and learning. A survey investigated 1,134 Nigerian students on their perception on the use of ICT on learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Egielewa et al., 2022). The study reported that students were unsatisfied with E-learning utilized by the several HEIs during lockdown owing to poor internet connectivity and electricity (Egielewa et al., 2022). The conclusion from the findings of the survey was that HEIs students preferred traditional classroom teaching and learning instead of the use of ICT (Egielewa et al., 2022). This is essential for instructional leaders because there is a greater demand to meet the infrastructural needs of using online learning. The pandemic innovated online conferences, workshops, seminars, teaching, and learning using several platforms. Zoom became more popular than ever during the pandemic. Instructional leaders have a herculean task of ensuring that online teaching and learning is appreciated as much as the traditional classroom. Also, methods used are sufficient to meet the purpose of assessment in awarding a degree (Schleicher, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Thus, the need to overcome the challenge of technological advancement in teaching and learning.

Technological Advancement in Teaching and Learning

The use of technology in teaching and learning has come to stay. Pre-COVID-19 era, there was online learning in many HEIs around the world. International students enroll in programs in other countries without necessarily travelling to the physical location of their institutions but study online. Postgraduate degrees are obtained by global students without leaving their home country. This is one of the ways HEIs generate fund in this neoliberalism era. COVID-19 pandemic massively increased the use of online platforms for learning (Bak & Kim, 2015; Schleicher, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Short courses, full undergraduate and postgraduate programs, workshops and conferences were held online in recent times. The instructional leader in the COVID-19 era must see the transition of the teaching and learning in most HEIs will be online. The instructional leader will have to provide training and capacity building to tutors for effective use of online platforms for teaching and learning. The online platforms are also subscription based which requires payment, thus the instructional leader has to make the resources available and accessible for the tutors and learners.

Universities with good websites and their academics are publishing in international journals gets good online presensence and that increases their webometric ranking. The university ranking system utilizes several criteria, but one of the basic one is the technological advancement of universities.

University Ranking

The university ranking system introduced the concept of "world-class" universities (Börjesson, 2017; Börjesson & Lillo Cea, 2021). The history of the global ranking of universities dates back to 2003 when the global ranking of universities was first developed (Börjesson & Lillo Cea, 2021). The foremost global ranking was then referred to as "the Shanghai ranking", while the

other two earlier ranking systems that followed were the Times Higher Education Supplement (THE) and Quacquaelli Symonds (QS) (Börjesson & Lillo Cea, 2021). There was dominance from universities in the United States followed by universities in the United Kingdom (Börjesson & Lillo Cea, 2021). The concept of these ranking systems emanated from the internationalization and marketization of HEIs around the world (Altbach, 2004; Börjesson, 2017; Börjesson & Lillo Cea, 2021; Cheng & Liu, 2008). Prospective international students assess the global ranking, as well as the national ranking of the universities they want to apply to, before submitting their application. Thus, the ranking of universities contribute to students' and their families' decision-making (Altbach, 2004; Börjesson, 2017; Cheng & Liu, 2008). Universities that are ranked top, attract the best students from around the world; thus, this affects their research output but does not necessarily truly or accurately reflect the quality of teaching in the class rooms (Altbach, 2004; Börjesson & Lillo Cea, 2021; Cheng & Liu, 2008). There is a massive quest for HEIs to have their institutions ranked among the best in the world. HEIs with high rankings utilize the opportunity to display a university's ranking in their website to attract attention and international students to their institutions, which is a strong marketing strategy.

Thus, the role of instructional leaders in this neoliberal era is more than just teaching and learning effectively, but participating in activities that will position their institution to be ranked among the best in their nation and then globally to attract attention and international students (Bak & Kim, 2015; Hurt, 2012). The presence of international students and research outputs are among the criteria utilized by these systems to rank HEIs around the world. Branding of the universities, provision of facilities for cutting-edge research, capacity building of graduate students and tutors on research, programs and activities that provides comfort for students, especially international students are among the strategies that the instructional leader must utilize to be ranked (Altbach,

2004; Barron, 2017; Börjesson, 2017; Börjesson & Lillo Cea, 2021; Cheng and Liu, 2008). The myriads of challenges discussed so far are not insurmountable. Several post-secondary institutions are matching the challenges through effective instructional leadership character traits and skills.

The Character Traits of Effective Instructional Leaders in the Neoliberalism Era

What do people look for in their leaders? This is a common question posed to 100,000 academics and workers from various spheres of the profession in different countries to assess the character traits of leadership that will attract willing followership not because of the position the leader occupied (Posner, 2018). The most valuable resources a leader can have to excel are individuals who speak truthfully and are committed to supporting the leader's visions and leadership goals (Avolio et al., 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2012, 2019; Northouse, 2022). A leader might possess all the technical skills but without the character to attract willing followership, they may struggle to find people to work with.In these contemporary times, there is a higher demand for collaboration in different areas of life: leadership, teaching and learning, research, and even at work. The common saying that the word “TEAM” means “Together Everyone Accomplishes More” is still true and valid in instructional leadership. Some “positional or title-based” leaders become lone rangers as soon as they leave their position because people were not actually following them because of their character traits but because of their position. There is a case study of a top university vice-chancellor whose teachers and students celebrated the completion of her tenure by designing a mock obituary poster and pasting them around the university campus due to several allegations of corruption, tribalism, and dishonesty in leadership (Adeyemi, 2021). This case went viral and became a news headline in daily newspapers. The leader may not have been pronounced guilty in any court, but the protest demonstrated the serious breakdown in their relationship with her followers.

The question in the study is still re-echoed, what do people look for in the leaders they will follow willingly without compulsion? Several characteristics listed received votes, reflecting the uniqueness of individuals and their preferences. However, some traits were more important to the respondents which receive more votes than others across the various industries and countries. It was only four of these traits received the majority of the votes scoring more than 60% across the globe (Posner, 2018). Hence, the consistency of these four characteristics across various disciplines, countries, genders, and educational levels indicates that what people seek in their leader is fundamental and enduring (Kouzes & Posner, 2019; Posner, 2018). The four traits listed, which people look for when following someone willingly, are that they must believe the individual is honest, competent, inspiring, and forward-looking (Kouzes & Posner, 2019; Posner, 2018).

"Honesty" – described as being truthful, integrity, trustworthy, character, and ethical received 84% votes, competent (capable, proficient, effective, gets the job done, professional) scored 66%; inspiring (uplifting, enthusiastic, energetic, humorous, cheerful, optimistic, positive about the future), received similar votes as "competent"; 66% and "forward-looking" (visionary, foresighted, concerned about the future, has a sense of direction) scored 62% of the votes (Kouzes & Posner, 2019; Posner, 2018). All the other character traits scored less than 60% of the votes (Kouzes & Posner, 2019; Posner, 2018). However, they are important. Such characteristics were collaboration, intelligence, innovation, and maturity among others (Kouzes & Posner, 2019; Posner, 2018).

The five practices of exemplary leadership and the characteristics of admired leaders discussed earlier in this article (challenge the process, model the way, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, and encourage the heart) are complementary to the character traits of a leader (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, 2019). When both the character traits and the five practices of a leader

are executed effectively, leaders will not only achieve excellent results but also fulfill the hopes of their followers. This underscores that instructional leadership entails establishing effective relationships with people and followers, not only fostering a positive working environment but also delivering outstanding results for students. Therefore, it is recognized that credibility, embedded in the five effective leadership practices such as modeling the way, forms the foundation of leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2019).

The Instructional Leadership Skills in the Neoliberal Era

Skills refer to the knowledge and capacity that empowers an individual to perform a task well (Cobuild, 2021). Univeristy leaders around the world do not necessarily go through leadership training prior to their leadership position. Some leaders get to the position of leadership through election and/or political appointment. Thus, there are inexperienced leaders who are learning on the job. Some have been mentored by other leaders before, but most of them did not receive any formal leadership training for leading post-secondary institutions. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge that leadership skills are more necessary now than ever. For an instructional leader to succeed in leadership, they must acquire these skills to effectively lead HEIs in this neoliberal era. This corroborated with findings on research among senior leaders in Chilean universities which reported that the senior leaders such as the directors never had any formal training or certification on leadership but rather were schooled in engineering, social sciences, or technology, hence underscoring their lack of preparedness for leadership (Kri et al., 2021). This is not an isolated case. In Nigeria, the vice-chancellors are elected by the senate members and ratified by the president through the minister of education while the vice-chancellors of state universities are appointed by the governor. Highlighting political influence on university leadership. There is no

recourse to formal leadership training but the popularity of a candidate and his/her political connections.

In this contemporary time, when excellent visionary leadership is essential for HEIs around the world, some of the basic skills required by a leader include teambuilding and team-working, networking, *strategic planning, understanding the institutional culture*, *attachment to institutional values*, ability to build trust, confident risk-taking, personal and interpersonal skills, *communication skills*, *self-organization, management* capacity, conflict management skills, *decision-making*, *visioning*, and *communication* skills (Contreras et al., 2018; Franken et al., 2015; Kri et al., 2021; Webber & Scott, 2008). It is highly recommended that HEIs leaders should be trained in university organization procedures, leading and managing staff, budgetary, conflict management, team working, leading change, effective communication, collaboration, entrepreneurship, time management, and networking (Contreras et al., 2018; Franken et al., 2015; Kri et al., 2021; Webber & Scott, 2008).

Leadership skills have been categorized by (Kri et al., 2021) into affective-related skills and cognitive capacities. Affective-related skills refer to those capacities or skills which impact emotions and organizational culture while cognitive capacities refer to those capacities and skills which need understanding, cognition, critical thinking, and/or identifying relationships and complexities (Kri et al., 2021). The affective-related skills outlined by (Kri et al., 2021) were key leadership skills and capacities in their review of literature on the expected capacities of leaders in Latin America and Non-Latin America. The Latin American countries include leadership studies from Chile, Argentina, Cuba, Columbia, Venezuela, Mexico, and Latin America (studies that drew upon all 20 countries). While the Non-Latin American countries – encompass Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, the United Kingdom, United States, South Africa, Sweden (and other

countries which were not considered part of the West, and are not part of Latin America – i.e., India, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia) (Kri et al., 2021). These skills and capacities are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The skills and capacities in Figure 1 and 2 are all applicable in the neoliberal era in the leadership of HEIs. Although it is difficult to possess all the skills in one individual, working as a team will harness these skills and capacities from team members in a leadership team that will effectively lead post-secondary institutions and provide instructional leadership in the neoliberal era.

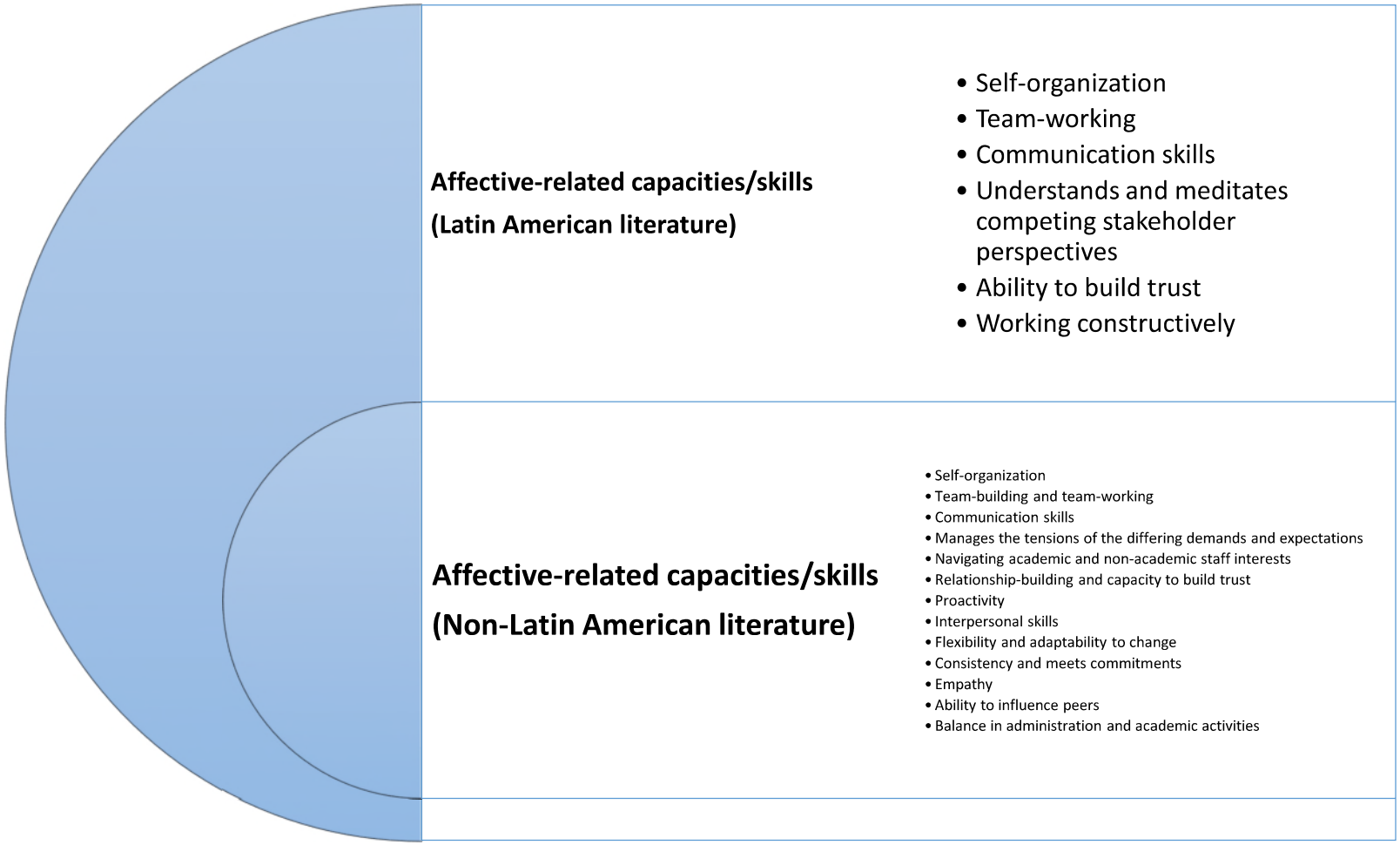
Conclusion and Future Research

This literature review focuses on the leadership challenges encountered in instructional leadership during the era of neoliberalism. The dominance of neoliberal economic policies in education today exposes deficiencies in leadership, prompting aspiring leaders in post-secondary institutions to undergo leadership preparation prior to assuming leadership positions.

It is essential to examine the readiness of leaders in post-secondary institutions and the current obstacles they face, as well as how they address these challenges. An important research question is the level of preparedness among individuals aspiring to lead Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Faculty members also play a crucial role in investigating the background of leaders and identifying the essential skills they perceive as necessary for effective leadership in HEIs. A comprehensive exploration of these findings will enhance the abilities of HEIs leaders to acquire additional skills that enable them to navigate the demands of the neoliberal era.

Figure 1:
Cognitive Leadership Skills and Capacities noted Latin American & Non-Latin American Literatures (Kri et al., 2021).

Figure 2:
Affective-Related Leadership Skills and Capacities noted Latin American & Non-Latin American Literatures (Kri et al., 2021).



Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

The writing of this manuscript was made possible by the scholarship funding to the first author by the Killam Doctoral Award and the funding awarded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) (Insight Grant File Number: 435-2021-0411)

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Biography

Aloysius Nwabugo Maduforo, (**PhD, RDN**). Aloysius holds a PhD in Human Nutrition. He is a Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist (RDN) in Nigeria who has had work experience in the hospital, community, and academic settings. He is currently a PhD student in the Leadership specialization at Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Aloysius was a lecturer at the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Aloysius's research interest is in leadership, policy, and governance in the health and educational sectors, diet-related non-communicable diseases, community nutrition and dietetics, maternal and child nutrition, food consumption studies, and food composition. Aloysius has held several leadership positions during his academic career.

***Corresponding Author:** aloysius.maduforo@ucalgary.ca

***ORCID:** https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7290-5632

Dr Shelleyann Scott (PhD) is a Professor, and Chair of the Leadership, Policy & Governance specialization, University of Calgary, Canada. Shelley is the coordinator of the doctoral programs in Leadership (Senior Leadership & Post-secondary Leadership programs – EdD & PhD). She is currently President of the *Canadian Society for Studies in Education* (CSSE). She has international experience as an educator, leader, and professional developer working across 15 countries. Her research is multi-sector and includes: leadership, leadership development, professional development, assessment, and teaching and learning. Her leadership roles include: school district curriculum leadership, university chair of department, associate dean, director, and program designer and coordinator roles.

Email: sscott@ucalgary.ca

Dr. Donald Scott (PhD) is an Associate Professor in the Leadership, Policy & Governance specialization in the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Canada. He is an experienced university instructor teaching within the areas of post-secondary teaching and learning, professional development of teachers and faculty, school and university leadership development, and mixed methods research approaches. Dr. Scott has been a Science teacher and school/district leader, professional developer, and consultant to the Western Australian

government in relation to their ICT implementation strategies for schools. Dr. Scott's doctoral research was in university teaching and learning within technology-mediated learning environments with implications for academic development and institutional leadership.

Email: descott@ucalgary.ca