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8-14-2020

## Critical Education: Increasing Student Achievement through Formative Assessments

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Mazumder, S. (2020). Critical Education: Increasing Student Achievement through Formative Assessments. *The Organizational Improvement Plan at Western University*, 149. Retrieved from <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/oip/149>

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**Abstract**

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) supports the use of formative assessment practices within the business department at School X. This organization is a public high school situated in an urban school board in Ontario. Bayside School Board mandates that teachers provide all students with equitable assessment practices and student-centred learning opportunities. Transformational leadership, through a critical lens, will propel a change plan to inform teachers about the oppressive nature of using summative assessments. Through Freire's (2002) concept of critical pedagogy, a case is made to implement more opportunities for using formative assessments, which allow students to feel empowered. Formative assessments can allow students to become critical thinkers and become inspired to change their community. To help diagnose the organization's willingness to change, I use Cawsey et al.'s (2016) change readiness questionnaire in conjunction with a force field analysis. Once a critical organizational analysis is conducted, Duck's (2001) five-stage Change Curve will be used to provide a framework for implementing change. Gentile's (2010) Giving Voice to Values (GVV) leadership approach is used to propel change by empowering teachers and encouraging them to use formative assessment to help empower students. In addition, a campaign to inform the school about critical pedagogy will be the starting step to ignite change in teachers' assessment practices. Teacher collaboration, empowerment, and resource sharing will enable the creation of an educational community that views formative assessments as an optional approach to promote social justice within School X.

*Keywords:* Critical Pedagogy, Formative Assessment, Transformational Leadership, Social Justice, Anti-Oppression

# ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

## **Executive Summary**

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) deals with a public high school in Ontario. The Problem of Practice (PoP) analyzes the use of summative assessments within the business department as tools of oppression. A critical lens is used to identify how to improve assessments and encourage teachers to incorporate the use of formative assessments within classrooms. When analyzing the PoP, I began to realize that summative assessments have oppressive features, do not provide an accurate description of student learning, and disadvantage students.

The business department at School X appears to have failed to reconsider its assessment practices. Course outlines are not updated, and assessment procedures for the culminating activity consist of a traditional pencil and paper summative exam. It was also discovered that teachers within the department do not collaborate when creating assessments, which has led to the use of test banks for the majority of the summative assessments used in the business department.

Chapter 1 begins by describing the organizational context, which includes a visual representation of the organization's structure. In addition, I describe the organization's vision, mission, values, purpose, and goals. Established leadership approaches and a brief history of the organization are provided to determine what changes are recommended. This chapter also discusses the PoP and how it is framed when considering environmental, social, and organizational factors. Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 2002) is used to analyze summative assessment practices for their oppressive qualities and how they perpetuate the status quo. Using the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010), which is the provincial mandated policy regarding assessments, I use critical

## ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

pedagogy to unpack the terms summative and formative assessments. I will provide a lens statement that articulates my position within the organization. This allows me to describe my agency, power, and personal voice within the context of this OIP. To improve assessment practices at School X, Bolman and Deal's (2017) four frames analysis is used to identify factors that may prevent organizational change. In addition to this, the Change Readiness Questionnaire (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2016), School Improvement Plans (SIPs), and the Force Field Analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016) are used to describe School X's readiness for change. These diagnostic tools help to determine the level at which the organization is willing to change and accept my proposals for organizational improvement. My leadership-focused vision for change will use the identified change drivers to propel my change plan and accomplish the envisioned future state of the organization.

Chapter 2 begins by developing a leadership approach to change. Using Gentile's (2010) Giving Voice to Values (GVV) to help propel change, I explain why this approach aligns with transformational leadership (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Leithwood & Sun, 2012) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002; Giroux, 2016). I highlight the concepts of praxis, dialogue, and codification, which were coined by Freire (2002) and show alignment with the GVV leadership approach. These approaches to leading change will capture my particular context for enabling change in relation to my PoP. I use Duck's five-stage Change Curve (2001) as a framework for leading the change process. A critical organizational analysis is applied to the PoP using Nadler and Tushman's (1980) Organizational Congruence Model. The chapter presents possible solutions, and the best solution is chosen based on the use of a PDSA model (Donnelly &

## ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Kirk, 2015). The chosen solution blends using a learning coach and creating an assessment committee.

Chapter 3 deals with the implementation, evaluation, and communication of the change plan. To implement change, I first discuss the recommended competencies for creating critically thinking classrooms (Gini-Newman & Case, 2018). Using these competencies, I describe two goals in relation to Duck's five-stage Change Curve (2001) and discuss key indicators, strategies, proposed timeline, key stakeholders, and resources for teachers. Once the change plan is established, I discuss ways to monitor and evaluate the change plan using the PDSA model (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015) in combination with Guskey's (2002) Professional Development and Teacher Change model. This chapter concludes by proposing the next steps and future considerations for my OIP.

The next steps for the development of my OIP include facilitating the change implementation plan beyond the business department and throughout the school. How can I infuse critical education within other subjects and courses offered at School X? Future considerations include exploring critical pedagogy in student learning to determine its link to improved classroom assessment practices. How can teachers use critical pedagogy to help reconceptualize their roles as learning advocates for their students? Further exploring this teacher-student link will help me gain insight into how to enable mutual learning opportunities. I would like to apply critical pedagogy to teacher development in another future OIP.

# ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

## **Acknowledgments**

The journey to complete this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) signifies many countless hours of personal sacrifice and dedication. I would not have been able to complete this journey without the support of friends, family, advisors, and classmates.

Thank you to Dr. Scott Lowrey for being my advisor and mentor throughout this process. You challenged me to extend my thinking beyond my comfort zone. Your constructive feedback on my assignments was crucial in helping me develop my own voice as a scholar-practitioner.

To my classmates, we did it! Thank you to the “Cohort of Awesome (CoA)” for accepting me to become part of their journey. Your guidance, support, and kindness have made my OIP experience a memorable one. As this academic journey ends, I am confident that our friendships will continue after graduation, and we will all make a significant difference in our chosen fields.

Lastly, to my friends and family, you motivated me throughout my journey. Throughout this entire degree, my family has provided me with the motivation to complete my journey at the doctoral level. Your encouragement and emotional support were vital in helping me complete this intensive program. Thank you to my father, Subrata Mazumder, and mother, Kalyani Mazumder, for teaching me to be humble and challenge myself in whatever endeavours I decide to explore. I would also like to thank my sister, Sahana “Banana” Mazumder, for being my best friend throughout my academic journey. With everyone’s support and guidance, I was able to complete this program with a sense of pride and closure. I dedicate my OIP in memory of my aunt, Suchrita Burman.

**Table of Contents**

Abstract .....	i
Executive Summary .....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	v
Table of Contents .....	vi
List of Tables .....	ix
List of Figures .....	x
Acronyms .....	xi
Glossary of Terms.....	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem.....	1
Organizational Context .....	1
Organizational Structure and History .....	3
Environmental Factors .....	4
Social Factors.....	4
Organizational Culture.....	6
Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals.....	7
Organizational Structure and Leadership Approaches .....	8
Leadership Position and Lens Statement .....	9
Leadership Position.....	9
Summative Assessment and Oppressive Practice.....	10
Lens Statement.....	13
Formative Assessments and Critical Lens .....	14
Leadership Problem of Practice .....	17
Framing the Problem of Practice .....	20
Historical Overview .....	21
Four Frames Analysis .....	22
Internal Data .....	25
External Data .....	26
Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice .....	28
Leadership-Focused Vision for Organizational Change.....	29
Change Drivers .....	31

## ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Organizational Change Readiness .....	32
Change Readiness Questionnaire.....	32
SIP Review .....	34
Force Field Analysis .....	35
Chapter 1 Conclusion.....	37
Chapter 2: Planning and Development .....	38
Leadership Approaches to Change .....	38
GVV Approach and Critical Thinking.....	39
GVV Approach Linked to Transformational Leadership .....	43
Framework for Leading the Change Process .....	46
Critical Organizational Analysis.....	53
Organizational Congruence Model.....	53
What Needs to Change .....	55
Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice .....	62
Solution One: Maintaining the Status Quo.....	63
Solution Two: Appointing a Learning Coach.....	65
Solution Three: Creation of An Assessment Committee.....	67
Recommended Solution.....	70
PDSA Cycle.....	71
Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change .....	73
Leadership Approaches and Ethics.....	74
Leadership Approaches and Anti-Oppression .....	76
Chapter 2 Conclusion.....	78
Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication.....	79
Change Implementation Plan .....	79
Goals, Key Indicators, and Implementation Strategies.....	83
Goal One: Creating Consensus around Formative Assessments .....	84
Goal Two: Infusing Critical Pedagogy within Department Assessments.....	91
Limitations .....	94
Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation .....	95
PDSA Cycle.....	96



## ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Goal One: Creating Organizational Consensus .....	98
Goal Two: Infusing Critical Pedagogy .....	100
Change Process Monitoring.....	100
Change in Classroom Practices.....	104
Change Process Evaluation.....	106
Changes in Learning Outcomes .....	106
Change in Beliefs and Attitudes .....	107
Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and Change Process.....	108
Communication Plan.....	108
Chapter 3 Conclusion.....	116
Next Steps and Future Considerations .....	117
References .....	120
Appendices.....	140
Appendix A: Business Knowledge and Thinking Categories .....	140
Appendix B: K–12 School Effectiveness Framework: A Support for School Improvement and Student Success .....	141
Appendix C: Change Readiness Questionnaire .....	142
Appendix D: An Action Framework for <i>Giving Voice to Values</i> : The To-Do List.	144

# ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

## List of Tables

Table 1 Traditional Sequence of Activities in Student Assessment Cycle .....	11
Table 2 Key Concepts of Paulo Freire .....	40
Table 3 Alignment between GVV and Transformational Leadership .....	44
Table 4 Assessment Purpose, Nature, and Use of Information .....	61
Table 5 Summary Table of Proposed Solutions and Resources Needed .....	69
Table 6 Change Implementation for Goal One .....	81
Table 7 Change Implementation for Goal Two .....	82
Table 8 Recommended Competencies .....	87
Table 9 Oppressive Teaching Practices and Attitudes.....	92
Table 10 Summary Table of PDSA Objectives .....	97
Table 11 Summary of Communication Plan.....	110

**List of Figures**

Figure 1. Organizational Structure of School X. .... 4

Figure 2. Force Field Analysis..... 36

Figure 3. Comparing the Change Curve and Transformational Leadership Dimensions. 48

Figure 4. Organizational Congruence Model..... 54

Figure 5. Summary of Monitoring and Evaluation Process..... 101

# ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

## Acronyms

ACL (Assistant Curriculum Leader)

CL (Curriculum Leader)

ELL (English Language Learners)

EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office)

GVV (Giving Voice to Values)

IL (Instructional Leaders)

IEP (Individualized Education Plan)

JELI (Job Embedded Learning Initiative)

OBEA (Ontario Business Educators' Association)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

OLF (Ontario Leadership Framework)

OCT (Ontario College of Teachers)

OSSLT (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test)

OSSD (Ontario Secondary School Diploma)

OSSTF (Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation)

PD (Professional Development)

PDSA (Plan Do Study Act)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

PTA (Parent-Teacher Association)

SHSM (Specialist High Skills Majors)

SIP (School Improvement Plan)

UPHS (Urban High Priority Schools)

## Glossary of Terms

**Critical Pedagogy:** Critical pedagogy is a concept coined by Paulo Freire in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. According to Freire (2002), “the pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization” (p. 48). Giroux (2016) expanded this definition by stating “critical pedagogy makes clear that schools and other educational spheres cannot be viewed merely as instructional sites, but must be seen as places where culture, power, and knowledge come together to produce particular identities, narratives, and social practices” (p. 4).

**Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO):** A standardized test in Ontario administered to students to measure math and literacy skills.

**English Language Learners (ELL):** English language learners are “students in provincially funded English language schools whose first language is a language other than English, or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used for instruction in Ontario’s schools, and who may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English” (Ministry of Education, 2007).

**Equity:** According to the *Growing Success* document, equity is “a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean that people are treated the same without regard for individual differences” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 146).

**Evaluation:** According to the *Growing Success* document, “Evaluation is based on assessments *of* learning that provide data on student achievement at strategic times

## ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

throughout the grade/subject/course, often at the end of a period of learning” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 147).

**Formative Assessment:** According to the *Growing Success* document, formative assessment is “assessment that takes place during instruction in order to provide direction for improvement for individual students and for adjustment to instructional programs for individual students and for a whole class. The information gathered is used for the specific purpose of helping students improve while they are still gaining knowledge and practising skills” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 147).

**Instructional Leaders (IL):** Secondary teachers employed at central offices. As employees of Bayside School Board (name anonymized for this OIP), instructional leaders help fellow teachers develop classroom teaching practices in their subject specialty.

**Monitoring:** Leaders are expected to monitor a change plan to ensure the preferred solution continues to flourish. According to Cawsey et al. (2016), “the identification of the direction and the initial steps allow an organization to begin the journey. Effective monitoring and management processes allow leaders to make adjustments as they move forward” (p. 89).

**Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD):** Students must earn compulsory and elective credits to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

**Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT):** The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) measures the minimum standard of literacy across all subjects.

## ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

“Successful completion of the literacy test is one of the requirements to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. All students across the province write this test on the same date, usually in late March each year” (EQAQO, 2020).

**Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF):** A teachers’ bargaining unit that represents secondary school teachers in the Bayside School Board (name anonymized for this OIP).

**Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP):** The Organizational Improvement Plan “is a major persuasive research paper that provides evidence-based pathways to address organizational problems and, more broadly, serve the public and/or social good. The OIP capstone is a practical yet theory- and research-informed plan that aims to address and find solutions for a particular problem of practice through leading meaning change to salient problems of practice within in the organization” (Western University, 2019, p.1).

**Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF):** The Ontario Leadership Framework “provides principals, vice-principals, system leaders and aspiring leaders with a clear leadership roadmap representing leading edge research and the best thinking and experience, of successful leaders across Ontario and around the world” (OLF, 2013).

**Ontario College of Teachers (OCT):** This is the professional association that designates teachers their professional licence. “An Ontario teaching certificate is a licence to teach in Ontario” (OCT, 2020).

**Problem of Practice (PoP):** Doctorate candidates identify a change within their organization. According to Pollock (2014) “a problem of practice is a situation that exists

## ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

in one's place of work, such as a school or school board. It revolves around a specific workplace problem. The issue is a problem because values/goals are not, or might not be entirely met" (p. 1).

**School Improvement Plan (SIP):** Each department in the school decides on ways to improve student experience and learning. According to the *Growing Success* document, "this provides a 'road map' that sets out the changes a school needs to make to improve the level of student achievement, and how and when these changes will be made" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 153).

**Social Justice:** According to Theoharis (2007), social justice supports a process built on respect, care, recognition, and empathy. Freire (2002) expanded on this definition by describing people's vocations as constantly "thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity" (p. 40).

**Standardized Test:** According to the *Growing Success* document, a standardized test is a "type of test commonly used to provide valid, reliable, and unbiased information about students' knowledge in various areas. The same questions are used and the same directions are given for each group to whom the test is administered" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 154).

**Summative Assessment:** The *Growing Success* document defines summative assessment as when "evaluation occurs at the end of important segments of student learning. It is



## ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

used to summarize and communicate what students know and can do with respect to curriculum expectations” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 155).

**Urban Priority High Schools (UPHS):** The Urban Priority High Schools (UPHS) initiative “targets high schools in urban priority areas to reach youth in need. The goal is to help these secondary schools develop the necessary supports and resources to meet the needs of their students and communities. Key results will include creating safe schools, increasing student achievement, and building sustainable community partnerships” (Government of Ontario, n.d.).

## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem**

As our eyes grow accustomed to sight, they armor themselves against wonder.

—Leonard Cohen

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) focuses on improving evaluation practices by introducing formative assessments practices and evaluation to teachers within the business department of School X. This chapter begins by describing the organizational context. I will discuss the vision, mission, values, purpose, and goals of the organization. Once this is established, I will examine the organizational structure and discuss established leadership approaches. A brief history of the organization will follow. Chapter 1 will also discuss my leadership position and lens statement. I will articulate my position, agency, power, personal voice, and lens to leadership practice. Viewing this Problem of Practice (PoP) through a critical lens, I will demonstrate how formative assessments can empower marginalized students. I will frame the Problem of Practice (PoP) by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership PoP. I will then discuss the questions that emerge from the PoP and make reference to relevant literature.

### **Organizational Context**

The expectation of a broad knowledge of business concepts prepares students to work within a society that requires critical thinking and creativity skills. The business studies curriculum teaches students to “gain an understanding of business concepts through the study of subjects such as accounting, entrepreneurship, information and communication technology (ICT), international business, marketing, and business leadership” (Ministry of Education and Training, 2006, p. 4). Students are expected to identify connections that “exist between marketing and communications, accounting and mathematics, entrepreneurial studies and technology, international business and world

studies, and management and studies of society and human nature” (Ministry of Education and Training, 2006, p. 3).

As a teacher in the business department of School X, I am expected to produce a final mark for students using a variety of methods. This OIP will use the Ministry of Education’s (2006) definition of assessment, which is “the process of gathering information from a variety of sources (including assignments, demonstrations, projects, performances, and tests) that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject” (p. 13).

Assessment, according to the Ontario Ministry of Education (2006), should be based on four knowledge and skill categories: (1) Knowledge and understanding, (2) Thinking, (3) Communication, and (4) Application. I have included a section of the Ministry of Education Ontario Business Studies Achievement Chart that indicates success criteria for critical thinking in the knowledge and skills categories (Appendix A). This OIP will deal with these learning categories exclusively because they deal with assessing critical thinking in students. My examination of previous course outlines revealed that all teachers had implemented a final exam as the culminating activity. According to Section 11.3(d) of the Education Act, teachers are expected to make outlines of courses of study available for examination to students and parents of the school board (Education Act, 1990). For this reason, I decided to explore how summative exams came to be the preferred method of assessment used by teachers in the business department at School X. How can I use an anti-oppressive and social justice lens to influence teachers who prefer using summative assessments?

### **Organizational Structure and History**

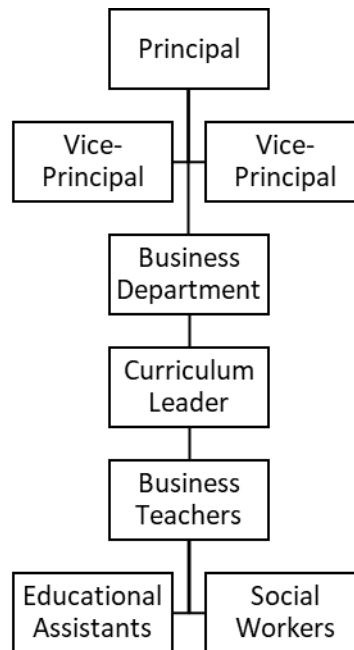
Bayside School Board (anonymized) is in Ontario. Bayside School Board's student population is culturally diverse. The latest statistics reveal that 23% of Bayside School Board students were born outside of Canada, and over 120 languages are spoken by Bayside School Board students and their families (Bayside School Board, 2018).

School X is situated within the eastern region of an urban city and has many newcomers to Canada. The purpose of this OIP will be to persuade business teachers to infuse their teaching practice with formative assessments that are student-centred, which allows for greater critical thinking to take place. "The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication" (Freire, 2002, p. 77). Staff members have not been provided with any training in creating balanced assessments during school-wide professional development days.

School X is a provincial public school consisting of approximately 400 students from grades 9–12. The school first opened in the 1960s and has maintained a reputation for academic excellence while offering experiential learning opportunities. Students who graduate from this school will receive their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), which can be used to enter college and university programs.

The most senior position at School X is the principal. Each subject department within the school is assigned a curriculum leader who helps teachers plan their courses. Curriculum leaders (CL) also facilitate resource sharing among teachers. This structure is hierarchical. It allows for the principal and vice-principals to approve any changes in the

organization. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the organizational structure at School X.



*Figure 1.* Organizational Structure of School X.

In summary, this organizational structure provides provincial public schools with consistency in administrative authority. The next section will discuss environmental, social, and organizational factors.

### **Environmental Factors**

School X comprises 50 teachers ranging in experience from 10–20 years of teaching. They are part of the Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) union, which ensures teachers are staffed according to their board-wide seniority number.

### **Social Factors**

The surrounding community of School X serves students from low- and middle-income families. Many students are newcomers to Canada. Based on historical patterns, teachers must explicitly address communities and students the system has not yet been

able to serve well (e.g., Indigenous students, Black students) and begin to collect information on Islamophobia and anti-Semitism (Bayside School Board, 2017b). For this reason, student equity is a top priority for School X. According to the IEF (Integrated Equity Framework) Interim Report, equity goals ensure procedures are in place at all levels for developing, implementing, and reviewing policies that promote equity and inclusion (Bayside School Board, 2017b).

Through the creation of a PTA (Parent-Teacher Association), School X is attempting to connect with the community and ensure students, parents, and teachers are all contributing to the social environment within the school. To fulfil this goal, schools need to work closely with students and their families as well as our communities to determine what needs to change to make this commitment a reality for all Bayside School Board students (Bayside School Board, 2016). Since the student population is culturally diverse, School X creates course timetables that help students. For example, course sections have been created for ELL (English Language Learners) students that allow them to learn with others who have similar language levels. The Bayside School Board comprises students from various ethnic backgrounds. Students who self-identified as South Asian comprised approximately 25% of the school board's student population, with white students accounting for about 30% (Bayside School Board, 2016). The above statistics demonstrate a diverse school board; therefore, equity will play a major role in my OIP. According to the *Growing Success* document, equity is "a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 146), and this applies to assessments given to students.

### **Organizational Culture**

This section will explain how the provincial government currently frames assessment. I will detail how assessment culture has been shaped. Assessment programs are expected to move beyond the transmission of information to focus on helping students grow and reach their potential (Ministry of Education, n.d.). For this reason, the Ministry of Education approach to assessments aligns with my proposition of using balanced assessments within secondary school courses. I will consider the underfunding of the business department. Due to its lack of resources, School X has received UPHS (Urban High Priority Schools) funding, which enables the school to operate on par with others in more affluent areas of the city.

Summative assessments assume that students come to school without any previously learned knowledge and do not encourage student curiosity. According to Freire (2002), this relationship involves a narrating subject (the teacher) and patient and listening objects (the students). Meaningful learning that encompasses more than just test scores will empower students and lead to curiosity.

Final exams used within School X consist of standardized questions. In business, students have a maximum of three hours to complete these exams unless they are allotted extra time if they have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). A student who obtains a high grade on the final exam will see an overall increase in their course grade, but does this mean they have learned to think critically? According to Rajagopalan and Gordon (2015), “we should be investing in a system of assessment that serves the purposes of education, not one that measures the effects of education. In other words, we can and should be conducting assessment *for* rather than *of* education” (p. 10). Giroux (2016) warns that

public schools are being turned into factories of rote learning and multiple-choice testing, which does not encourage students to think critically about issues within their communities. This OIP hopes to transform this “test-taking” culture. According to Davies (2007), “with students attaining high standards as the current overriding goal in education, evidence or proof of learning must be far more than test scores if learning and information needs of students and the parents are to be met” (p. 159). Freire, Brookshaw, and Oliveira (2014) argued, “we have the responsibility not to try to mold our students, but to challenge them so that they will participate as subjects in their own formative process” (p. 22). The next section will discuss the current vision, mission, values, and goals of School X.

### **Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals**

School X has adopted the vision, mission, values, purpose, and goals of Bayside School Board. All staff members are expected to abide by these values. The following have been paraphrased to ensure the anonymity of Bayside School Board.

**Vision:** Creating a school that provides students with rich, culturally authentic learning experiences in diverse environments, while student voice is honoured.

**Mission Statement:** Enable students to reach high levels of achievement and well-being. Help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become responsible and contributing members of a sustainable society.

**Value Statement:** To provide a strong public education system and value a shared leadership that builds trust, supports effective practices, and enhances high expectations.

**Goals:** To provide equity of access to learning opportunities and transform student learning.



In alignment with Bayside School Board's goal of transforming student learning, departments have been allotted funds from the UPHS grant to use to increase experiential learning opportunities. Inclusion through learning helps to empower students who are marginalized in the community. The solution is "to transform that structure so that they can become 'beings for themselves'" (Freire, 2002, p. 74). The next section will discuss the organizational structure and leadership approaches used at School X.

### **Organizational Structure and Leadership Approaches**

The organizational structure of School X is hierarchical (See Figure 1). The business department leader receives communication from the administration team and communicates any information to the teachers within the department. Sharing of responsibility is the focus of this distributive leadership (Devos, Tuytens, & Hulpia, 2014; Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2008; Spillane, 2006). "Team members step forward when situations warrant, providing the leadership necessary, and then step back to allow others to lead" (Northouse, 2018, p. 373). The department leader holds monthly meetings to discuss curriculum objectives.

The administration team currently uses a distributive leadership approach (Devos et al., 2014) to managing various subject departments within School X. According to the literature, distributive leadership is viewed at the team level, and a sharing of leadership comes into existence (Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2008; Spillane, 2006). This is the approach preferred by the administration because they can departmentalize subject teachers and delegate responsibilities accordingly: "Educators then interpret together, analyze and reflect on the data to inform decision-making, future actions and change in or confirmation of their practice. This process is often not linear, but iterative as educators

continuously adapt and improve upon it” (Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, 2014, p. 3). This allows the business department leader to focus on guiding other teachers. “The concept of distributed leadership suggests that leadership is not restricted to the principal as the head leader, but that people in positions also have a role in the leadership function (Spillane, 2006). The department leader is expected to be a specialist in the subject of business. Teachers can play a coaching role, in which they provide other teachers with help and advice regarding problems (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In addition, dialogical sharing acknowledges the significance of personal and experiential knowledge in the co-construction of meaning (Heron, 1996).

Department leaders at School X have implemented the same culminating assessment activity, as indicated by past course outlines. “Values, those deeply held beliefs that determine corporate culture, harden into dogma, and questioning them is seen as heresy” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 117).

In summary, the organizational context of School X can be described as consisting of a diverse student population, and the use of summative assessment can be detrimental to student achievement. Through a critical lens, I hope to enact change within the organization. The next section will discuss my leadership position and lens.

### **Leadership Position and Lens Statement**

The next section will discuss my leadership position within the organization. In addition, I will describe the lens through which I view the problem of practice.

### **Leadership Position**

Formative assessments not only provide students with greater opportunities to improve (i.e., prompt feedback) but can also lead to enriched learning environments and

meaningful learning. “We may assess whether [students] remember the key points that [teachers] explained for a subsequent test or quiz, but we should not presume that they have understood in any deep way what these ideas mean” (Gini-Newman & Case 2018, p. 82). The dilemma for educators is that the kind of skills that are easiest to teach and easiest to test are also the skills that are easiest to automate and outsource (Schleicher, 2016). Through a transformational leadership approach (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004), I will inform other teachers about the importance of using balanced assessments. As a teacher, my leadership position is to help each student. Transformational leadership aligns with the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF), in which students are at the centre of all learning objectives (see Figure 2). The OLF’s (2013) core competency of engaging in courageous conversations “relates to challenging current practices and fostering innovation through conversation, which are by-products of critical pedagogy.” I will define the summative assessments in the next section to provide the context of current assessment practices at School X and explain how this is oppressive to students.

### **Summative Assessment and Oppressive Practice**

Summative assessments ask students structured questions in the forms of multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer responses. According to Frey (2014), the defining characteristics of summative assessments include:

- Assessing student learning at the end of a period of instruction.
- Is typically very formal with defined test-taking rules and scoring procedures.
- Its main purpose is to determine grades. (p. 91)

Summative assessments view students as receptacles of information, and learning is measured by how well they can restate facts and knowledge given to them by their

teachers. “This is the ‘banking’ concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” (Freire, 2002, p. 72). From this perspective, students are assumed not to bring prior knowledge and experience into the classroom.

Assessment practices at School X are modelled after a traditional student assessment cycle, which is described by Fung (2017) as the sequence of activities students are preparing for before a final summative exam (see Table 1). The sequence of events described below is traditional in scope.

Table 1

*Traditional Sequence of Activities in Student Assessment Cycle*

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are given instructions and advice about how to approach the assessment.</li> <li>2. Students may undertake developmental, formative assessment to gain some feedback on their progress in this area of learning, before submitting their formally assessed (that is, summative) work.</li> <li>3. Students prepare for their summative assessment, either individually or in collaboration with peers (where the latter is permitted and required).</li> <li>4. Students undertake the assessment (e.g. write the essay; complete the group project; give the presentation; sit the exam).</li> <li>5. Students submit the assessment to the assessors, who are already experts in the field.</li> <li>6. Students await feedback on the assessment.</li> <li>7. Feedback and/or marks are made available.</li> <li>8. Students may or may not access the feedback on their work. Students may or may not assimilate the feedback and actively use it to inform future approaches to learning and assessment.</li> </ol>
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*Note.* Adapted from “Traditional Sequence of Activities in Student Assessment Cycle,” in D. Fung, *Connected Curriculum for Higher Education*. Copyright 2017 by UCL Press.

As Table 1 demonstrates, student feedback is given at the end of the learning cycle. The traditional sequence assumes that the “experts in the field” are teachers. No consideration

is given to a student's prior learning. Teachers feel the need to use testing as preparation for higher learning, but summative assessments are just one tool for getting student grades. Could the increased testing also increase pressure on teachers and schools to chase improved test scores at the expense of well-balanced learning? (Chappuis, Commodore, & Stiggins, 2017).

Students are viewed as passive learners because they are waiting for results in order to gain validation to proceed within the course. They are constantly "waiting" for approval, and this eliminates their participation in the assessment procedure. Formative assessments allow students to receive feedback immediately, rather than having them "wait" as described in Table 1. Formative assessment "involves judgments about the quality of student responses (student work) and using those judgments immediately (midstream in instruction) to guide and improve students' understandings and skills" (Roskos & Neuman, 2012, p. 534).

This linear approach to assessment was modelled after the sequential steps of manufacturing that originated in the industrial revolution, which is obsolete by today's standards. Senge (2012) argued:

School may be the starkest example in modern society of an entire institution modeled after the assembly line. Like any assembly line, the system was organized in discrete stages. Called grades, they segregated children by age (just as an assembly line grouped products according to their stage of completion). Everyone was supposed to move from stage to stage together. (p. 35)

The overuse of summative assessments at School X assumes students should be pushed through grade levels in order to demonstrate knowledge, like a manufactured product.

According to Chappuis, Commodore, and Stiggins (2017), assessment must go beyond tests to include processes that encourage greater student achievement, especially for struggling learners. By limiting students' critical thinking, this form of education can be

“viewed as an exercise of domination which stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression” (Freire, 2002, p. 78).

Ontario’s *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010) states that “Assessment of Learning” is the process of

collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarizing learning at a given point in time, to make judgements about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, and to assign a value to represent that quality. (p. 144)

This gives teachers standardized questions that measure content knowledge of a course.

The next section will describe how viewing the PoP from a critical lens will enable change and improve student achievement.

### **Lens Statement**

The organizational problem will be viewed from a critical lens. This lens allows me to view summative assessments as a form of oppression by suggesting it does not effectively measure student achievement. “Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by the educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression” (Freire, 2002, p. 78). When teachers share a vision of measuring authentic student learning, the vision of change will not be performance-based. A final exam is a product-focused (William, 2011) form of assessment. In problem-posing education,

people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which, and in which, they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. (Freire, 2002, p. 83)

Final exams used within School X consist of standardized questions. In business, students have a maximum of three hours to complete these exams unless they are allotted extra

time if they have an individualized education plan (IEP). From a critical lens, learning is about the process in which members are engaged in the struggle for liberation (Freire, 2002). The culminating activity should use process criteria, which break up the journey from where learners are to where they need to be into smaller steps (William, 2011). The next section will define formative assessment and demonstrate its alignment with critical pedagogy.

### **Formative Assessments and Critical Lens**

According to past course outlines in the business department, all teachers implement a summative exam as the culminating activity. Providing opportunities for rich assessment and examples of formative assessment will subsequently be discussed in greater detail, through a critical lens.

According to Popham (2018), “formative assessment clarifies that when the evidence produced by classroom tests is at hand, this evidence might lead to adjustments in the way teachers are teaching or in the way students are trying to learn” (p. 89). It is the only type of educational testing that is designed to directly affect and accelerate learning (Nicole & Macfarlane-Dick, 2007). Ontario’s *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010) describes this as “Assessment *for* Learning,” which is the ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence about student learning while offering feedback and adjusting instruction to focus student learning. My Problem of Practice (PoP) will view discuss summative assessments through a critical lens and will empower marginalized students through this process. Critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002; Giroux, 2016) provides a transformative environment inside the classroom. In addition, self-assessment can provide teachers with metacognitive probes, which describe ways

teachers assess the extent to which students are aware of effective learning strategies and know when and how they are to be applied (Rajagopalan & Gordon, 2015). Students are currently not involved in the creation of success criteria within courses. According to Davies (2007), “when students are involved in setting criteria, the expected learning to be shown becomes more explicit. The secret of success is no longer secret—available only to those who ‘get it’ without being told” (p. 168). For this reason, students need to become active partners in identifying success criteria when teachers create assessments.

According to Pillay (2017), effective agents of change have a moral purpose, democratic principles, and a clear vision of why they are teachers. For this reason, we cannot undervalue the importance of a teacher’s voice because these values help shape student learning. Although I do not hold a formal leadership position, my voice can still influence others within the organization. This change agency influences leaders, as ideas and propositions filter up the organization hierarchy from the bottom-up as individuals take responsibility and do the right thing (Schein & Schein, 2017). Transformational leadership allows for an organization to develop a shared vision and create a common goal. According to Sun and Leithwood (2012),

involved in the various conceptualizations of developing a shared vision and building goal consensus are the identification, development, and articulation of a shared vision that is appealing and inspiring to staff; achieving goal consensus among staff; motivating staff with challenging but achievable goals; communicating optimism about future goals; and giving staff an overall sense of purpose for their work and monitoring and referring to school goals when staff are making decisions. (p. 428)

Creating a new shared vision within the department requires transformational leadership.

According to Carter et al. (2012), “transformational leaders appear to personalize the change vision and work closely with employees to make it a reality. The mediating



influence of relational quality underscores the importance of social support when working under incremental continuous change conditions” (p. 592). Teachers in the department will need to support each other throughout the change process. According to the OLF (2013), “a collaborative approach is vital because ongoing communication about learning is in place to allow students, educators and parents to monitor and support student learning” (p. 10). This will propagate inclusivity within the organization and in the community. The OLF framework is provided in Appendix B. This is a K–12 School Effectiveness Framework, which supports school improvement and student success. As Appendix B demonstrates, this framework is student-centred.

School X has a culturally diverse student population, and point-based assessments are Eurocentric in nature, which can be viewed as an unfair method of testing for students that come from cultures that value collective learning. The individualistic nature of writing tests can put these students at a disadvantage, which is not equitable. According to Chen and Mathies (2016), “assessment is learner centered and process oriented, which aims to identify areas where teaching and learning can improve, whereas evaluation is judgmental and arrives at a valuation of performance” (p. 85). Student engagement requires that “students are partners in dialogue and discussions to inform programs and activities in the classroom and school that represent the diversity, needs and interests of the student population” (OLF, 2013, p. 10). The early stages of implementing change require information that is grounded in theory and has direct implications in teaching practice. As a change leader in the early stages of disrupting the normalized preference for summative assessments, this OIP is to develop the information they need to assess the situation, develop their views on the need for change, understand how others see that

need, and create awareness and legitimacy around the need for change (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Since I do not have authoritative power, trying to influence change in school policy would be difficult. By using information power, I can influence change through “the flow of facts and data: by creating, framing, redirecting, or distorting information and by controlling who receives the information” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 187). I hope to instil expert knowledge about formative assessments and lead change by informing the department leader.

Experts possess knowledge that is more integrated, in that they combine the introduction of new subject knowledge with students’ prior knowledge; they can relate current lesson content to other subjects in the curriculum; and they make lessons uniquely their own by changing, combining, and adding to the lessons according to their students’ needs and their own teaching goals. (Hattie, 2012, p. 655)

Expert knowledge can be used as a change action tool and empower those involved in the change process. For this reason, assessments need to be student-centred. As teachers, we must adopt new ways of thinking about assessment, giving students meaningful problems (rather than rote memorization of facts and procedures), clear feedback for improvement, and a chance to revise the work to experience and demonstrate deeper understanding (Dweck, 2016).

In summary, my agency as a teacher means the change process will require informing teachers about the empowering qualities of critical pedagogy inherent in formative assessments. The next section will discuss my Problem of Practice.

### **Leadership Problem of Practice**

The Problem of Practice (PoP) addressed by this OIP is business teachers’ lack of knowledge about the oppressive qualities inherent in summative assessments and high-

stakes testing. The reason for the current use of summative high stakes testing is described by Gini-Newman and Case (2018): “an accountability focus and the use of grades and standardized assessments as gatekeepers to higher education have created evaluation-driven regimens” (p. 210). Formative assessments are not utilized to their fullest potential by business teachers at School X. How can I improve the business department’s assessment practices to include formative assessments that can help empower students? Through an anti-oppressive and social justice lens, assessments can be used as tools for student empowerment. My idea of student empowerment is based upon Freire’s (2002) notion that “freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion” (p. 47). Once learning is internally driven, students will begin to feel more empowered.

As a teacher in the business department at School X, my agency within the organization will be that of a change initiator (Cawsey et al., 2016), which frames the vision for the change and provides resources and support for the change initiative. This OIP will help me become an advocate within the business department to ensure assessments are balanced, with both formative and summative qualities. The long-term goal is to have the department leader serve as a change agent while collaborating with teachers within the department. The successful implementation of this OIP will result in teachers developing a culminating assignment that infuses qualities of formative assessments and informs teachers about how this can yield better learning opportunities for students. Informing teachers about the beneficial qualities of formative assessments will help create visible learning (Hattie, 2012), which occurs when learning is a

transparent goal that is appropriately challenging for both students and teachers. Through cooperation, students can become more engaged in learning. To engage students, teachers should include them in the creation and implementation of assessments within the classroom. Social justice is, in this instance, “given by the need to respect and protect the intrinsic moral worth of each and every individual in society regardless of the social position, viewing people as equals” (Cuervo, 2016, p. 80).

According to Dweck (2017), “an assessment at one point in time has little value for understanding someone’s ability, let alone their potential to succeed in the future” (29). This data-driven approach to quantifying student learning is traditional in its scope. We associate high test scores with student achievement, but there is one fatal flaw: no test can capture all that is important for future progress (William, 2011). This rote-learning form of education is linear and does not consider the development of a well-rounded student that can succeed in different modalities of learning. Freire (2002) refuted linear learning because

the task of the dialogical teacher in an interdisciplinary team working on the thematic universe revealed by their investigation is to “re-present” that universe to the people from whom she or he first received it—and “re-present” it not as a lecture, but as a problem. (p. 109)

Since Ontario has moved from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced assessment and evaluation, teachers are expected to evaluate student work with reference to established criteria for four levels of achievement (Ministry of Education, 2010). Teachers must demonstrate a commitment to student achievement through fair and comprehensive assessment methods.

The overuse of summative assessments at School X is harmful to students because it does not give them problem solving skills and creative thinking skills needed in the

workforce. The industrial-age school system fashioned in the image of the assembly line (Senge, 2012) is no longer relevant in a globalized world. Students must demonstrate deeper learning. Ontario's *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010) states:

expectations are designed to help students develop a positive sense of self, use coping and management skills, monitor their own progress, develop and maintain healthy relationships, and use critical and creative thinking processes as they set goals, make decisions, and solve problems. (p. 12)

Teachers prefer giving final exams because these tests provide quantitative data and can be administered quickly, which saves them time. Cuervo (2016) observed that “the performativity culture present in schools becomes an external force that can potentially limit teachers’ freedoms, space and time” (p. 83). Although exams provide a quick method to measure student knowledge, when summative assessments are used in isolation, they fail to develop critical thinking skills. In this banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by teachers, and students are assumed to know nothing (Freire, 2002). My OIP will demonstrate how balanced assessments can lead to greater critical thinking and, therefore, empower students to become problem solvers in other contexts. The next section will discuss ways to frame the PoP using Bolman and Deal’s (2017) four frames analysis.

### **Framing the Problem of Practice**

Ontario teachers are expected to assess students according to the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010). I will first provide a historical overview of the organization before discussing the political, structural, human resource, and cultural/symbolic frames in accord with provincial assessment standards.

## Historical Overview

The following section will provide a comprehensive overview of School X. This will detail the current teacher practices relating to assessments.

**Professional development within the school.** In-house professional development did not focus on assessment or ways to enhance assessment practices. Each department must complete a School Improvement Plan (SIP), which outlines ways to improve student learning and experience that can be implemented within a year. Unfortunately, the current SIP does not include any initiatives to improve student assessment practices.

**Course textbooks and the use of test banks.** Students taking business courses are given textbooks they borrow for the academic year. A teacher resource kit, which includes a test bank, is provided with purchased textbooks. Teachers will often use questions from a test bank to create unit tests and final exams. Because of high teacher turnover in the department, these resource kits can be shared with new incoming teachers and provide them with teaching resources, regardless of whether they have taught business courses in the past. For teachers who arrive to School X to teach business courses for the first time, these resources can be invaluable.

**Distribution of assessment resources.** Teachers are expected to assess their students according to Seven Fundamental Principles outlined by the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010). To ensure teachers provide valid and reliable student assessment, they must use procedures that:

1. are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;
2. provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement; and
3. develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning. (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 6)

According to the list above, assessments should be transparent, provide on-going feedback, and provide the next steps for learning. Teachers and students must work together to establish meaningful learning goals. The Ontario Leadership Framework (2013) emphasizes collaborative learning cultures, which means “enabling schools, school communities and districts to work together and to learn from each other with a central focus on improved teaching quality and student achievement and well-being” (p. 8). Freire (2002) affirmed that “to achieve this goal, the oppressed must confront reality critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality” (p. 52). To achieve collaboration, I will analyze various factors related to the organization in the next section.

#### **Four Frames Analysis**

Bolman and Deal’s (2017) four frames (political, structural, human resources, and cultural/symbolic factors) analysis will be used to consider factors that will help to facilitate or prevent organizational change. According to Cawsey et al. (2016), the four frames analysis allows researchers to analyze “the formal systems and processes that are designed to bring the structure to life and make it possible for the organization to deliver on its strategy and value proposition” (p. 146).

Teachers have had to modify their practice to include more summative assessment practices since 1996 because of the EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) test. This was a standardized test given to elementary students to quantify student achievement in math and literacy. High school students are not eligible to receive their OSSD until they have passed the OSSLT (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test) standardized test in Grade 10. Because of these provincially mandated tests, teachers at School X prefer summative assessment. This provincial political mandate to value test

scores has emphasized teaching for test-taking and limiting the creative, ethical and liberatory potential of education (Giroux, 2016). I will begin the analysis by discussing the structural frame.

**Structural.** The structural frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017) can be used to examine the organizational architecture of School X. In this school, the department leader, who can consult the principal or vice-principal, provides support for teachers in administering class assessments. The *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010) advises teachers on how to report final grades for student report cards. Final exams are addressed by each department, making sure that all business classes have the same final exam across course sections. This procedure is done to help alleviate time and marking for teachers. Although this is the teachers' preferred method, summative assessment assumes that students have innate capacities, and they are conditioned to think in static categories (Dweck, 2017; Schein & Schein, 2017; Senge 2012).

Teachers in the business department are isolated from other subjects, and the department rooms are situated away from other subjects. This makes cross-curricular approaches to teaching and teacher collaboration difficult. This physical isolation from other teachers will inhibit the change of existing mental models within the business department and their attitudes towards summative assessment. Dweck (2017) describes the affinity bias when we tend to feel more comfortable around people we see as like us. As senior teachers have worked alongside each other for many years, they are more likely to form this type of bias.

**Human resources.** The human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017) analyzes people in an organization and how their motivation is matched with the needs of the



organization. A human resource element that may hinder change is the limited number of Instructional Leaders (IL) within the school board. Prior to budget cutbacks, ILs were subject-specific teachers hired by Bayside School Board to assist teachers throughout the city and enhance classroom teaching practices. There is no longer a business specialist IL to help teachers at School X. Teachers no longer have access to “exploration classrooms” provided by ILs in which teachers audit a class facilitated by ILs. Since there are fewer ILs, teachers have fewer opportunities for collaboration, which will hinder the changing of mental models around assessments. In order to change to a growth mindset, a learn-and-help framework is developed when teachers and the administration are willing to collaborate and commit to mutual growth (Dweck, 2017). With fewer ILs to support teacher learning, this will be a human resource factor that will hinder the development of a growth mindset.

**Cultural/symbolic.** Finally, the cultural/symbolic frame focuses on how myths and symbols help humans make sense of their chaotic and ambiguous surroundings (Bolman & Deal, 2017). With pressure on students to achieve high scores on standardized tests such as the EQAO and OSSLT, teachers have accepted the culture of overusing summative assessments. This may hinder change because the existing organizational culture has become accepted. According to Kotter (2012), culture can be powerful for three primary reasons:

1. Because individuals are selected and indoctrinated so well.
2. Because the culture exerts itself through the actions of hundreds or thousands of people.
3. Because all of this happens without much conscious intent and thus is difficult to challenge or even discuss. (p. 150)

Teachers are overusing summative assessments because the provincial government has emphasized the importance of standardized tests like the EQAO and OSSLT. From a critical lens, these types of assessments are more focused on numerical scores and less about student learning. Freire (2002) believed “the revolutionary effort to transform these structures radically cannot designate its leaders as its *thinkers* and the oppressed as mere *doers*” (p. 126). According to Gonzalez, Peters, Orange, and Grigsby (2017), educational reform initiatives are now allowing policy-makers to use high-stakes testing accountability to provide the necessary pressure to force change in school districts. For this reason, teachers may feel pressured to use summative assessments. The next section will examine relevant internal and external data that could affect change within the organization. This data was sourced from within the organization.

### **Internal Data**

The principal and vice-principal have taken pride in offering professional development workshops aimed at increasing student equity and well-being to the entire school. In addition, the business department completes a SIP (School Improvement Plan) detailing goals for the department. Schools are expected to publish these SIPs on their school website for parents and community members to read. The most recent SIP related to student achievement states that:

- Teachers want to enhance course offerings to meet the learning levels of all students.
- Teachers need to identify which specific students are not achieving in the population.

The SIP related to student equity states:

- Teachers want to continue advocating for more provincial funding for students of all socio-economic levels.
- To develop experiential learning through authentic tasks and project-based learning.

The expectations, as outlined in the above SIP, should not be stifled by summative assessments. According to Cuervo (2016), “the enactment of socially just practices in classrooms then is constrained by external forces such as the strong pressures on schools by government policies of target -setting performance” (p. 83). Freire (2002) confirmed that “revolutionary praxis must stand opposed to the praxis of the dominant elites, for they are by nature antithetical” (p. 126). The next section will analyze external data in relation to my PoP. I will discuss data points and statistics that are readily available to the public and can be accessed outside the organization. Most statistics in the following section are accessible through the Bayside School Board website.

### **External Data**

According to a 2017 equity report published by Bayside School Board, there is evidence of system discrimination within this diverse school board. The following points from the report have been paraphrased to achieve anonymity:

- More Black students are streamed to the lowest-level academic classes,” such as Applied or Essential programs in secondary school: 48%, versus 19% of White students or 21% of others.
- There has been a growing body of research on poverty and economic and social inequality in the area, and Bayside School Board’s Child and Parent Census

(2011-12) found that nearly half the population served falls in the two lowest income bracket groups.

Student achievement is not inherently fair when considering the above socioeconomic factors. For this reason, formative assessments which encourage students to think critically enable students to change the status quo. According to Giroux (2016),

pedagogy as a critical practice should provide the classroom conditions that enhance the knowledge, skills, and culture of questioning necessary for students to engage in critical dialogue with the past, to question authority and its effects, to struggle with ongoing relations of power, and to prepare themselves for what it means to be critical, active citizens in the interrelated local, national, and global public spheres. (p. 48)

Examination of data regarding standardized test results reveals that those from marginalized communities are at a disadvantage. EQAO achievement data demonstrate gaps as high as 30% between populations on the basis of race and socioeconomic status (Bayside School Board, 2014). In addition, males in lower socioeconomic groupings of Latin American, Middle Eastern, Black, and Indigenous backgrounds are among the populations most impacted by the achievement gap, as evidenced by standardized tests (McKell, 2010). Assessments need to consider these factors and ensure students have an equal chance of success. Summative assessment assumes that students are on the same “playing field” (Bourdieu, 1986), which is not the case. Teachers have the responsibility to try not to mould our students but to challenge them so that they will participate in their own formative process (Freire et al., 2014). This frame of mind is not compatible with summative assessments.

In summary, framing my PoP requires examining different factors as well as internal and external data. Using Bolman and Deal’s (2017) four frames analysis, through

a critical lens, I can enable change within my organization. The next section will discuss guiding questions that have emerged from my PoP.

### **Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice**

My PoP is to inform teachers about balanced assessments and connect formative assessment with anti-oppressive outcomes. Three guiding questions for this problem of practice are:

- What past and current opportunities are available for teachers to engage in professional learning about balanced assessments:
- Are teachers aware of the anti-oppressive effect of formative assessments? Do they know how to access resources related to formative assessments; and
- How can teachers incorporate assessment strategies that develop critical thinking skills? And if they do, are teachers willing to stop using final exams as a culminating activity?

Factors that may contribute to the PoP include the sustainability of the change plan. By incorporating aspects of sustainable leadership (Hargreaves, 2007), I can ensure my change implementation plan is able to flourish. Hargreaves' (2007) interpretation of sustainable leadership is that

it preserves, protects and promotes in education what is itself sustaining as an enrichment of life: the fundamental moral purpose of deep, broad and lifelong learning (rather than superficially tested and narrowly defined literacy and numeracy achievement) for all in commitments to and relationships of abiding care for others. (pp. 224–225)

For this reason, my critical lens will enable change to flourish by informing teachers about assessments that promote life-long learning.

A challenge that emerges from my PoP is the possibility of teachers experiencing change fatigue. I intend to implement my change plan within one academic school year, which may be too fast and cause anxiety in those who are doubtful and cause fatigue (Cawsey et al., 2016). The following section will consider these guiding questions in relation to a leadership-focused vision for organizational change.

### **Leadership-Focused Vision for Organizational Change**

At School X our paraphrased mission statement states: *Helping students acquire the knowledge, skills and values needed to become responsible and contributing members of a sustainable society.* We believe in helping all students regardless of their socioeconomic status and empowering them through education. One way to accomplish this is to change the way teachers view high-stakes testing.

The use of summative assessments contributes to the inequality within the school board. According to Freire (2002), “the more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world” (p. 73). Cuervo (2016) affirmed that “hope can be empowering and transformational. It can become a plan, a road map for betterment of oneself and society’s condition” (p. 166). According to the OLF (2013), “during learning, timely, ongoing, descriptive feedback about student progress is provided based on student actions and co-constructed success criteria” (p. 10). As teachers, we need to stimulate intellectual thoughts within students and discourage rote memorization.

The leadership-focused vision is to empower individual teachers to see the importance of formative assessments. According to Leithwood (2016), “individual

teachers' work has the most influence on student performance, followed by work at department, school, district and such broader organizational levels as provincial or state and national educational systems" (p. 119). Eisenbeiss, Knippenberg, and Boerner (2008) "conclude that organizations are able to facilitate team creativity and innovation by stimulating both support for innovation and climate for excellence" (p. 1444). Creating meaningful dialogue, according to Freire (2002), presupposes equality among participants, where each participant must question what they know, and realize that through dialogue, existing thoughts will change, and new knowledge will be created. According to Leithwood (2016) "well-functioning departments are also powerful centers for improvement work and less dependent on the work of school-level leaders than might be expected, although a supportive school-wide context makes it much more likely that departments will function effectively" (p. 153). A collaborative leadership approach will allow for dialogue and department collaboration, which can lead to great student achievement.

The *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010) encourages teachers to allow students numerous opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge. Teachers should reflect on their assessment practices and consider how balanced assessment can help under-achieving students. Overusing summative tests further perpetuates the banking system of education, which seeks to maintain the status quo (Freire, 2002). Cawsey et al. (2016) highlighted that "maintaining the status quo typically does not sustain or enhance competitive advantage, particularly in troubled organizations" (p. 24). For these reasons, changing assessment practice will have direct

impact on the overall functioning of the organization. Based on the vision, mission, and goals of School X, the change vision for this OIP is to:

- Ensure teachers understand the restrictions of overusing summative testing and how standardized tests parallel the oppressive characteristics of a “banking system” of education; and
- Ensure teachers can recognize and develop a well-balanced assessment that enhances students’ critical thinking skills.

According to the OLF (2013), “A variety of relevant and meaningful assessment data is used by students and educators to continuously monitor learning, to inform instruction and determine next steps” (p. 10). With this knowledge and awareness of how summative assessments are oppressive, teachers can create a classroom environment that encourages students at School X to become active participants in their learning.

### **Change Drivers**

The Change Path Model consists of four steps: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization (Cawsey et al., 2016, pp. 53–55). This model can be used by teachers in the business department because they can “develop an understanding of the dynamics around change and recognize the need to work through the change-management process in a systemic and supportive fashion” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 243). This model aligns with a transformational leadership approach (Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Sun & Leithwood, 2012) because I can “generate an atmosphere in which change is experienced as a naturally occurring condition by creating an organizational climate in which incremental changes are sought out and embraced” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 244). Since my OIP discusses student achievement in relation to



many demographic factors such as cultural diversity and socioeconomic level, transformational leadership will help draw attention to a broader array of school and classroom conditions that may need to be changed if learning is to improve (Leithwood et al., 2004).

The primary change agents within the organization will come from a bottom-up approach. This approach aligns with agency because bottom-up visioning, as “an employee-centric approach, is time-consuming, difficult, and valuable in facilitating the alignment of organizational members’ vision with the overall vision for change” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 122). A transformational leadership approach is committed to the empowerment of individual teachers and teacher teams (Leithwood, Sun, & Pollock, 2017). The next section will determine the readiness of the organization to change.

### **Organizational Change Readiness**

This section will describe School X’s change readiness using two tools: the Change Readiness Questionnaire (Cawsey et al., 2016) and a review of the SIP for student achievement and equity. A force field analysis will summarize external and internal forces that may inhibit and encourage greater use of formative assessments in School X.

#### **Change Readiness Questionnaire**

The Change Readiness Questionnaire (Cawsey et al., 2016) compliments the transformational leadership approach because any person within the organization can complete the questionnaire, and the questions are based on higher-order values that can inspire individuals. “Transformational visions tap into the need for individuals to go beyond themselves, to make a contribution, to do something worthwhile and meaningful,

and to serve a cause greater than themselves” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 113). School X scored a +20 on the questionnaire (see Appendix C), which demonstrates that it is ready to participate in the change process. The lowest-scoring section of the questionnaire was “Previous Change Experiences.” Due to the surplus of teachers in past semesters and high teacher turnover within the department, there seems to be a feeling of apathy when discussing assessments. “Reluctance to change may be a result of lack of information or confusion about multiple and sometimes conflicting sources of information” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 114). The introduction of standardized tests such as the EQAO in 1996 and the OSSLT in 2002 has further emphasized the use of summative assessments. According to Senge (2012), “too often, classrooms, professional development in schools and other organizations, parenting classes, and teacher or school leadership preparation programs focus only on two factors in learning—what is covered and how it is delivered” (p. 27).

This reluctance to change corresponds to question 19 in the “Openness to Change” section, which asks: Does “turf” protection exist in the organization? Staffing in Bayside School Board is accomplished at the central level and based on specific seniority rules. As new teachers enter the business department, they find that existing teachers have created expectations regarding assessments, which have hardened into a fixed mindset (Dweck, 2016).

The areas of strength on the Change Readiness Questionnaire are the Executive Support and Rewards for Change sections. Both my department leader and IL have supported me with internal data to help the development of this OIP. With my daily interactions with department members and other business teachers, I can supplement my quantitative data with qualitative information. My principal is very supportive of my

research initiatives, and I will consult with the business IL about co-facilitating workshops about assessments in the future.

### **SIP Review**

A second tool that can be used for identifying change readiness is to examine the departmental School Improvement Plan (SIP) for equity and student achievement. At the beginning of each school year, all teachers within the department and discuss “where are we going?” as a team. According to Cleveland and Sink (2017), SIPs “include evidence that students are attending schools with positive learning environments. Components of school climate include both non-academic factors (e.g., building upkeep, safety procedures, and processes) and more student-centered factors (e.g., attendance, level of engagement in learning, diversity issues)” (p. 1). Business teachers try to set goals for the year based on curriculum expectations while considering the student population. Recent SIPs show an increase in ELL students and the provision of experiential learning opportunities. In previous years, initiatives sparked by SIPs include the creation of ELL-sensitive course sections and greater field trip opportunities. Analyzing departmental SIPs throughout the year will allow us to determine how teachers aim to increase student achievement. According to the OLF (2013), “as leaders who are committed to equity of outcome, they help to create inclusive and instructionally effective learning environments that increase the likelihood that all students will be successful learners” (p. 7). Consequently, SIPs indicate a high level of organizational change readiness. The next section will discuss how I will use a force field analysis as a tool to gauge organizational change readiness.

**Force Field Analysis**

A Force Field Analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016) was chosen to examine the opposing forces that may inhibit change towards the use of balanced assessments. Figure 2 shows that there are eight driving forces and six opposing forces. According to Cawsey et al. (2016), the balance must be upset by adding new pressures for change, increasing the strength of some or all of the pressures for change, reducing or eliminating the pressures against change, or converting a restraining force into a driving force. This analysis tool provides a helpful visual representation of factors that may promote change and factors that will negate change initiatives. I will analyze both driving and opposing forces before moving to my change implementation plan.

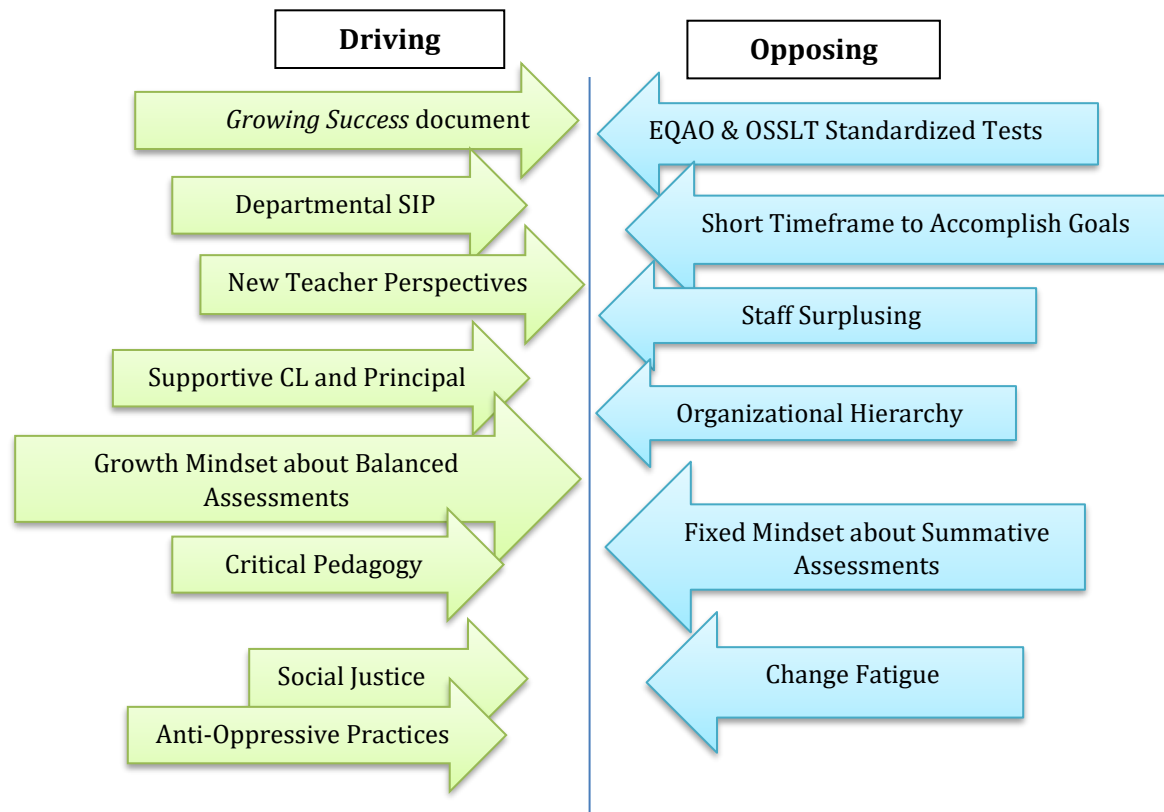


Figure 2. Force Field Analysis. Forces driving and opposing the use of formative and balanced assessments in the School X business department.

The strongest drive force is the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010), which outlines a provincial requirement to provide balanced assessments. Although this document permits teachers to use their professional judgement in assessing students, this OIP will present teachers with a perspective on how summative assessments help perpetuate the cycle of under-achieving students within School X. The opposing forces to teachers changing their assessment practices are standardized tests like the EQAO and OSSLT. The results of these tests are highly publicized and analyzed by the media and school boards within Ontario. For this reason, we may be improving test results at the expense of genuine student learning, and teachers are pressured to spend more time teaching to the test (Gini-Newman & Case, 2018).

This analysis tool has identified a cluster of driving forces. Critical pedagogy, social justice, and anti-oppression qualities are the main drivers of this OIP. The qualities of critical pedagogy should be inherent in the assessment process. Change fatigue is the most dominant opposing force. For this OIP, change fatigue is defined as teachers feeling a constant need to keep up with changes related to knowledge and needs of students, organization of school staff, new teaching practices, and new resources (Orlando, 2014). Another indicator of change fatigue within School X was the reusing of course outlines and summative assessment procedures. The Ministry of Education updates and changes documents, and teachers may feel overwhelmed by having to re-learn new policies relating to assessments. In summary, the force field analysis has indicated that School X is willing to change, and the next chapter will focus on change planning and implementation.

### **Chapter 1 Conclusion**

To change existing practices, teachers need to see how summative assessments can hinder student progress by limiting the opportunities for critical thinking. According to the Organizational Change Readiness analysis, School X is ready for change. Moreover, using internal and external data, I have determined a need for change. Chapter 2 will use frameworks to lead the change process using change theory. Furthermore, an organizational analysis will help determine possible solutions and explain why balanced assessment practices are important at School X.

## **Chapter 2: Planning and Development**

This is a nation that has lost the ability to be self-critical, and that makes a lie out of the freedoms.

—Joni Mitchell

Chapter 2 discusses leadership approaches to change, using a critical lens. In addition, I will establish a theoretical framework and examine challenges faced by teachers in implementing formative assessment. This chapter will use a leadership framework for understanding why change is necessary. I will begin this chapter by discussing Gentile's Giving Voice to Values (GVV) leadership approach. Once this is established, I will use Duck's five-stage Change Curve (2001) to capture the context for leading the change process. The critical organizational analysis section will use Nadler and Tushman's (1989) organizational congruence model to identify the criteria for change. The next section will discuss possible solutions to address the PoP and a preferred solution will be identified. Finally, this chapter will discuss leadership ethics and organizational issues.

### **Leadership Approaches to Change**

Leadership approaches are used to propel change within an organization. Cawsey et al. (2016) argued that "change agent effectiveness was a function of the situation, the vision the person had, and the actions he or she took" (p. 260). This section will use Gentile's Giving Voice to Values (GVV) (2010) leadership approach to help propel change. I have chosen GVV because it provides a values-driven approach to facilitating change and aspires us to achieve our highest aspirations (Gentile, 2010).

Transformational leadership is focused on improving the performance of followers to their fullest potential (Avolio, 2000). McAdie and Leithwood (2007) affirmed that

“school cultures that help teachers to find their work meaningful (e.g., clear and morally inspiring goals) also have a positive influence on teachers’ affective dispositions” (p. 42). Transformational leadership (Avolio, 2000; Leithwood & Sun, 2012) aligns with the GVV approach because transformational leadership accounts for individualized consideration. According to Northouse (2018), the individualized consideration factor is representative of leaders who provide a supportive climate and act as coaches while trying to assist followers in becoming fully actualized. McAdie and Leithwood (2007) echoed that “to be meaningful, some of this professional development should occur at the school level, allow for teacher participation in determining content and encourage teacher-to-teacher interaction” (p. 45). This distributive leadership approach prioritizes building a trusting relationship where communication is streamlined; filters are lowered, and ideas flow between people unfettered by fear (Gregory, 2017). This leadership approach will propel change through teacher collaboration within the business department.

In order to propel change, we will need to communicate my voice by informing others about the value inherent in formative assessments. As a change champion within the business department, I will fight for change under trying circumstances and persevere when others may check out or give up (Cawsey et al., 2016). I will begin by discussing the how the GVV approach aligns with critical pedagogy.

### **GVV Approach and Critical Thinking**

The GVV leadership approach will propel change using three key concepts proposed by Paulo Freire, which can empower those who are marginalized. In the case of my OIP, the marginalized population is the students in School X. According to Gentile



(2013), “to make education for ethics and values compelling and useful for this audience, it becomes important to link it to action—effective, impactful action” (p. 5). The concepts of praxis, dialogue, and codification, as coined by Freire (2002), will be principles used to achieve this new vision. Table 2 provides a summary of these concepts.

Table 2

*Key Concepts of Paulo Freire*

Praxis	People must mobilize together and gain knowledge collectively about their social reality. Freire (2002) emphasized “to struggle for their liberation together with those who show true solidarity, [people] must acquire a critical awareness of oppression through the praxis of this struggle” (p. 51). In summary, praxis is reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (Freire, 2002).
Dialogue	Equitable communication among participants is important for change. According to Freire (2002), “the content of that dialogue can and should vary in accordance with historical conditions and the level at which the oppressed perceive reality” (p. 65).
Codification	The process in which the oppressed identify their circumstances and reflect critically. According to Freire (2002) “since the codifications are the <i>objects</i> which mediate the decoders in their critical analysis, the preparation of these codifications must be guided by certain principles other than the usual ones for making visual aids” (p. 114).

The following sections will describe these concepts in relation to the business curriculum and the GVV leadership approach.

Praxis is used as a tool to mobilize people. Through collective learning, the oppressed can create change. According to Bryan and Kaylor (2008), “collective efficacy starts with trust. Coaches must be intentional about building and maintaining trust so that a safe learning space can exist” (p. 56). We will guide a steering team of teachers interested in changing assessment practices, and they can play an advisory and navigational function for this change project (Cawsey et al., 2016). We will use this

approach to mobilize teachers in the business department to reflect on their assessment practices. Gentile (2015) echoed that “if the school context does not reflect, support, and reinforce a commitment to values-driven action, the course content tends to be trumped by lived realities” (p. 35). The bigger picture is to empower students through formative assessments. Freire (2002) asserted that people will be truly critical if they live the plenitude of the praxis, that is, if their action encompasses a critical reflection which increasingly organizes their thinking and thus leads them to move from a purely naive knowledge of reality to a higher level, one which enables them to perceive the *causes* of reality (p. 131). For this reason, my OIP will encourage teachers to develop a new vision regarding their assessment goals when teaching the business curriculum. According to Gentile (2013),

GVV builds on the expertise and the teaching objectives of the business discipline-based faculty because students are not using the language and the tools of philosophy to create their scripts and action plans, but rather the language and the analytical frameworks of the functional area that is relevant to the issue at hand and the course where it is raised. (p. 8)

To promote this new vision of learning, I will demonstrate how a critical lens through praxis can help empower students and inspire teachers to use assessment relevant to the student’s reality. A key component of distributive leadership is deliberative democracy because it “imposes those same duties and responsibilities on citizens—the responsibility to participate in decision making, to stay informed so as to make the most informed decisions possible, and to work collaboratively with others in a climate of mutual respect” (Fusarelli, 2011, p. 48).

Dialogue is an effective communication tool to help achieve a collective vision among teachers regarding formative assessments. Gentile (2015) believed that “students

[should] move right into a sort of action laboratory, a safe space to solve problems, and work together to craft believable, feasible strategies for action” (pp. 37–38). Dialogue can help enable change through teacher collaboration and encourage constant communication and resource sharing within the department. In addition, I will explain the importance of including the student voice when designing formative assessments. Leithwood and Mascall (2008) agreed that “the basic conditions influencing collective capacity are evident in the growing understandings of learning as being situated and social” (p. 538). Gentile (2017) effectively proved that “the GVV focus on action helps provide students with the competence and the confidence born of skill-building, prescribing, peer coaching, and rehearsal, to actually enact their values” (p. 475). Collaboration among teachers is an important component of creating change, and this approach can be modelled to students in the classroom.

Codification is how we make meaning out of our reality. According to Freire (2002), “codifications are not slogans; they are cognizable objects, challenges towards which the critical reflection of the decoders should be directed (p. 115). The GVV leadership approach “is consistent with a behavioral ethics approach as it invites students to consider when and why they, and their peers, act on their values (or not) and to consider the factors that enable or disable them from doing so” (Gentile, 2017, p. 476). For this reason, my OIP will inform teachers about how formative assessments can be used allow students to be critical thinkers. Teachers can also view their role as helping students become activists in their communities. The next section will link the GVV approach to transformational leadership.

**GVV Approach Linked to Transformational Leadership**

Gentile's GVV (2010) consists of three main components, which include (a) clarification and articulation of one's values (b) post-decision-making analysis and an implementation plan and (c) the practice of speaking one's values and receiving feedback. According to Bass (1985, p. 20), transformational leaders motivate followers by (a) raising followers' level of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals, (b) getting followers to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and (c) moving followers to address higher-level needs.

Table 3 provides a comparison of the GVV approach and transformational leadership. As the table demonstrates, there are common threads between the GVV and transformational leadership approaches. Articulating one's values (Gentile, 2010) aligns with raising the importance of idealized goals (Bass, 1985). This will be an important step to propel the mindset of teachers because I will need to demonstrate how formative assessments allow students to become critical thinkers.

Table 3

*Alignment between GVV and Transformational Leadership*

<b>Giving Voice to Values (GVV) Approach (Gentile)</b>	<b>Transformational Leadership (Bass)</b>
(a) clarification and articulation of one’s values	(a) raising followers’ level of consciousness about the importance and value of specified/idealized goals
(b) post-decision-making analysis and implementation plan	(b) getting followers to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the team or organization
(c) the practice of speaking one’s values and receiving feedback	(c) moving followers to address higher-level needs

The GVV approach views students as individuals who “become better equipped to act ethically. Agents not only know the right course of action based on their own self-exploration, but they have also practiced doing what they believe is right on a personal basis” (Moen, 2017, p. 31). Table 3 demonstrates that learning goes beyond performance scores, and propelling change forward requires teachers to feel inspired to offer formative assessments that can empower students. Freire (2002) acknowledged that the solution lies in synthesis: the leaders must on the one hand identify with the people’s demand . . . while on the other they must pose the meaning of that very demand as a problem” (p. 183).

Gentile’s GVV approach provides me with a checklist of items that can propel change. There are seven items that I will use to help emphasize the importance of summative assessments. Appendix D provides details of each item in this checklist. I will highlight the two of these items that will accomplish the goals of my OIP: Values and Voice.

According to Gentile (2010), cultivating strength within an organization requires that leaders know and appeal to a short list of widely shared values, like honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, and compassion. I feel strongly that the overuse of summative assessments keeps students from achieving their full potential. According to Harlen and Crick (2002), teachers who emphasize the transmission of knowledge favour students who prefer to learn this way, while disadvantaging those who prefer more creative experiences. “Because we are [we] are not limited to the natural (biological) sphere but participate in the creative dimension as well, men can intervene in reality in order to change it” (Freire, 2013, p. 4). For this reason, the GVV approach will be used to communicate my value of using balanced assessments as a tool to empower students by raising other teachers’ level of consciousness regarding the equalizing power of summative assessments for marginalized students. The important thing is to help people help themselves and to place them in continuous confrontation with their problems (Freire, 2013).

According to Gentile (2010), it is vital that I define my personal and professional purpose explicitly and broadly before values conflict arises. In order to change the status quo, learning should not be quantified. According to Freire (2002), “education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression” (p. 78). My professional purpose will be to inform teachers about the structural barriers created by summative assessments and improve staff capacity through principles of social justice. According to Theoharis (2007), social justice in schools requires “increas[ing] staff capacity by addressing issues of race, providing ongoing staff

development focused on building equity, developing staff investment in social justice, hiring and supervising for justice, and empowering staff” (p. 235). Transformational leaders create change through inspiration: “In practice, leaders use symbols and emotional appeals to focus group members’ efforts to achieve more than they would in their own self-interest” (Northouse, 2018, p. 171). Gentile’s GVV approach to change provides tools to establish a new vision regarding the use of formative assessments and infusing critical pedagogy in current assessment practices.

According to Theoharis (2007), “to enact the resistance necessary to advance social justice for marginalized students, preparation programs need to pass on to students a broader, more relevant knowledge and skill base” (p. 250). For this reason, my chosen leadership approach to change will enable teachers to internalize the importance of using balanced assessments and understand their teaching practice as a tool for empowering students. In summary, using GVV and transformational leadership approaches, I will be able to achieve a new vision regarding the use of formative assessments within the business department. The next section will examine frameworks that will lead the change process.

### **Framework for Leading the Change Process**

This OIP is grounded in a transformational leadership approach (Bass, 1985; Leithwood & Sun, 2012) and framed through a critical orientation to student learning (Freire, 2013; Freire, 2002). As a teacher within the business department at School X, I suggest a distributed leadership framework since teachers can take on leadership behaviours to influence the department and maximize team effectiveness (Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, & Bergman, 2012). The business department is stronger as a

collective team. Transformational leaders can propel others to greater success when they have quality relationships based on trust, loyalty, and mutual respect (Notgrass, 2014). This OIP, when considering a critical lens, will empower teachers to be proactive in planning formative assessments into their course outlines and understand the empowering effects of these assessments, through constant dialogue with students. According to Freire (1997), “one of the roles of democratic leadership is precisely overcoming authoritarian systems and creating the conditions for decision making of a dialogic nature” (p. 61). My philosophy of education is through the lens of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002; Giroux, 2016), which views education as a tool to empower those who are marginalized.

Educational work at its best represents a response to questions and issues posed by the tensions and contradictions of the broader society; it is an attempt to understand and intervene in specific problems that emanate from those sites that people concretely inhabit and in which they actually live out their lives and everyday existence. (Giroux, 2011, p. 79)

Educators have the important role of making sure their students become critical thinkers to solve problems within their communities.






The chosen framework to lead change is Duck’s five-stage Change Curve (Cawsey et al., 2016). I have adapted this framework to meet the needs of this OIP (see Figure 3). I believe the Change Curve is best suited for my agency because it deals with creating change by inspiring others. According to Duck (2001),

changing an organization is inherently and inescapably an emotional human process. When I say emotional, I’m not talking about fleeting moods or surface feelings. I’m talking about the major states of emotional beings: fear, curiosity, exhaustion, loyalty, paranoia, depression, optimism, rage, revelation, delight, and love. (pp. 9–10)

For these reasons, I believe Duck’s (2001) five-stage Change Curve complements my critical lens approach. In the following sections, I will compare this framework to



transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is the foundational theory used to propel my OIP. In Figure 3, each stage of the five-step Change Curve is directly related to a dimension of transformational leadership.

<b>Comparing the Change Curve and Transformational Leadership Dimensions</b>	
Duck's Stages of Change (2001)	Transformational Leadership Dimensions (Sun & Leithwood, 2012)
Stage 1: Stagnation 	- Developing a shared vision and building goal consensus
Stage 2: Preparation 	- Providing intellectual stimulation
Stage 3: Implementation 	- Providing individualized support - Modelling behaviour
Stage 4: Determination 	- Holding high performance expectations
Stage 5: Fruition 	- Building collaborative structures - Strengthening school culture

*Figure 3.* Comparing the Change Curve and Transformational Leadership Dimensions.

Stage 1 (stagnation) requires transformational leaders to develop a shared vision and build consensus. Sun and Leithwood (2012) endorsed that staff be “involved in the various conceptualizations of developing a shared vision and building goal consensus are the identification, development, and articulation of a shared vision that is appealing and inspiring to staff” (p. 428). Education should focus on creating dialogue between teachers and students. Stagnation “occurs when people have their heads in the sand and have an insufficient sense of threat or challenge from the external world” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 51). Duck (2001) agreed that “getting people to recognize Stagnation becomes more difficult when a workforce that is in denial is coupled with a group of leaders who are loath to declare the bad news” (p. 59). Summative assessments can be oppressive to students. According to Giroux (2011), “dominant public pedagogy, with its narrow and

imposed schemes of classification and limited modes of identification, uses the educational force of the culture to negate the basic conditions for critical agency” (p. 134). In addition, the thought patterns regarding summative assessments have not changed and have resulted in teachers developing a fixed mindset. According to Dweck (2016), school cultures often promote a fixed mindset.

By standardizing the assessment procedure, people can be categorized efficiently and trained for certain types of work. This led to tests with traditional multiple-choice questions and measured intelligence based on a pre-determined scale. These types of testing were popularized in the United States. Designed for intelligence classification of recruits in the First World War, different kinds of intelligence tests were created to offer suggestions for proper military placement (Chomsky & Robichaud, 2014). Students should no longer be placed into categories based on the expectations of society. This does not cultivate critical and creative thinking. A partnership between student and teacher is required to help stimulate critical thinking. Dialogue is a key component in critical pedagogy, and it inspires students to question the status quo. From a critical lens, since

dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person’s “depositing” ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be “consumed” by the discussants. (Freire, 2002, p. 89)

Through dialogue between teachers and students, we can empower students in their learning.

Stages 2 (Preparation) and 3 (Implementation) are next in Duck’s (2001) five-stage Change Curve. These stages align with transformational leadership because according to Duck (2001), “a healthy dissatisfaction with the status quo and a genuine

appetite for change must be generated within the workforce; appropriate expectations of what will happen and what can be accomplished must be set” (p. 93). This stage requires that students get intellectual stimulation and modelling behaviour. I need to inform teachers about how formative assessments can empower others. According to Hattie (2012), visible teaching and learning occur when there is deliberate practise aimed at attaining mastery of the goal, while feedback is given and engages people (teacher, students, peers) in the act of learning. This feedback process is inclusive and provides students with the opportunity to cultivate their learning according to the needs of their community. According to Freire (2013), “this habit of submission led men to adapt and adjust to their circumstances, instead of seeking to integrate themselves with reality” (p. 21). Expressing this paradigm switch is the crux of my OIP, and transformational leadership can help facilitate this. According to Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, and Sassenberg (2014), transformational leaders can promote achievement in followers’ mastery goals. During this stage, transformational leaders should provide intellectual stimulation. According to Sun and Leithwood (2012), teachers “involved in the various conceptualizations of this practice are leaders challenging staff’s assumptions; stimulating and encouraging their creativity” (pp. 428–429). Freire (2002) agreed that “investigation—the first moment of action as cultural synthesis—establishes a climate of creativity which will tend to develop in the subsequent stages of action” (p. 181). According to Dweck (2017), a growth mindset is the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts and that everyone can change or grow through application and experience. Change will be propelled by allowing teachers to create their own assessments incorporating formative qualities.

Stages 4 (Determination) and 5 (Fruition) will focus on how to introduce new change initiatives to assessment within my department. During these stages, the transformational dimensions to utilize are building collaborative structures and strengthening school culture. Sun and Leithwood (2012) believe “this practice entails leaders ensuring that staff have adequate involvement in decisions about programs and instruction, establishing working conditions that facilitate staff collaboration for planning and professional growth, and distributing leadership broadly among staff” (p. 429). Teachers have the choice to include assignments and, using their professional judgement, decide on the ratio of summative to formative assessments they include in their classes: “Teachers will weigh all evidence of student achievement in light of these considerations and will use their professional judgement to determine the student’s report card grade” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 39). Assessments are important and change will occur as teachers realize the impact of critical thinking on students. Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) supported that “this form of trust includes a belief or expectation on the part of most teachers that their colleagues, students, and parents support the schools’ goals for student learning and will reliably work toward achieving those goals” (p. 677). Figure 3 summarizes the alignment between specific Transformational leadership behaviours at each of Duck’s (2001) five stages.

Transformational leadership can have positive impacts on followers when followers identify with or find meaning in their work (Mohammed, Fernando, & Caputi, 2013). According to the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010),

the teacher will consider the evidence for all the tests/exams and assignments for evaluation that the student has completed or submitted, the number of tests/exams or assignments for evaluation that were not completed or submitted, and the

evidence of achievement that is available for each overall expectation for a subject in a particular grade or course. (p. 39)

Teachers can balance their assessment practices by incorporating more formative assessments.

Through a transformational leadership approach, I will inform teachers about the importance of their using formative assessments as a method to empower students.

Teachers are vital in cultivating student curiosity, and their efforts in the classroom have important implications. According to Mohammad, Fernando, & Caputi (2010),

“supervisors who develop specific missions, goals and identities for organizations are able to influence subordinates’ perceptions to perceive work as meaningful” (p. 538). The determination and fruition stages can lead change by describing how summative assessment can empower students. According to Freire (2002), “the important thing, from the point of view of libertarian education, is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades” (p. 12). Therefore, the chosen framework for change, will help teachers re-frame their current thinking regarding the use of summative assessment and convince them to infuse properties of formative assessments into their business courses.

In summary, the frameworks for leading change will be incremental, starting at the department level. Duck’s (2001) five-stage Change Curve will ensure teachers are invested in my proposed organizational change, understanding how critical pedagogy, applied through formative assessments, can be used to empower students. The next section will describe a critical organizational analysis.

### **Critical Organizational Analysis**

Organizational change is a complex process and therefore knowing what to change is important. According to Cawsey et al. (2016), change leaders require the “ability to analyze the organization’s external environment and see implications for action in the organization is a central change skill” (p. 68). Several different frameworks can be used to facilitate change. Cawsey et al. (2016) discussed Sterman’s systems dynamic model, Quinn’s competing values model, Greiner’s model of organizational growth, and Stacey’s complexity theory. I believe Nadler and Tushman’s (1980) congruence model is best suited for my OIP. According to Nadler and Tushman (1980), this “model puts its greatest emphasis on the transformation process and specifically reflects the critical system property of interdependence” (p. 39).

### **Organizational Congruence Model**

Nadler and Tushman’s (1980) organizational congruence model encompasses all aspects of an organization, such as the work, people, formal organization, and informal organization. This congruence model “specifically links environmental input factors to the organization’s components and outputs. As well, it provides a useful classification of internal organizational components and shows the interaction among them” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 68). Nadler and Tushman (1980) echoed that “an open system is one that interacts with its environment; it is more than just a set of interrelated elements” (p. 37). Figure 4 depicts the components of the congruence model.

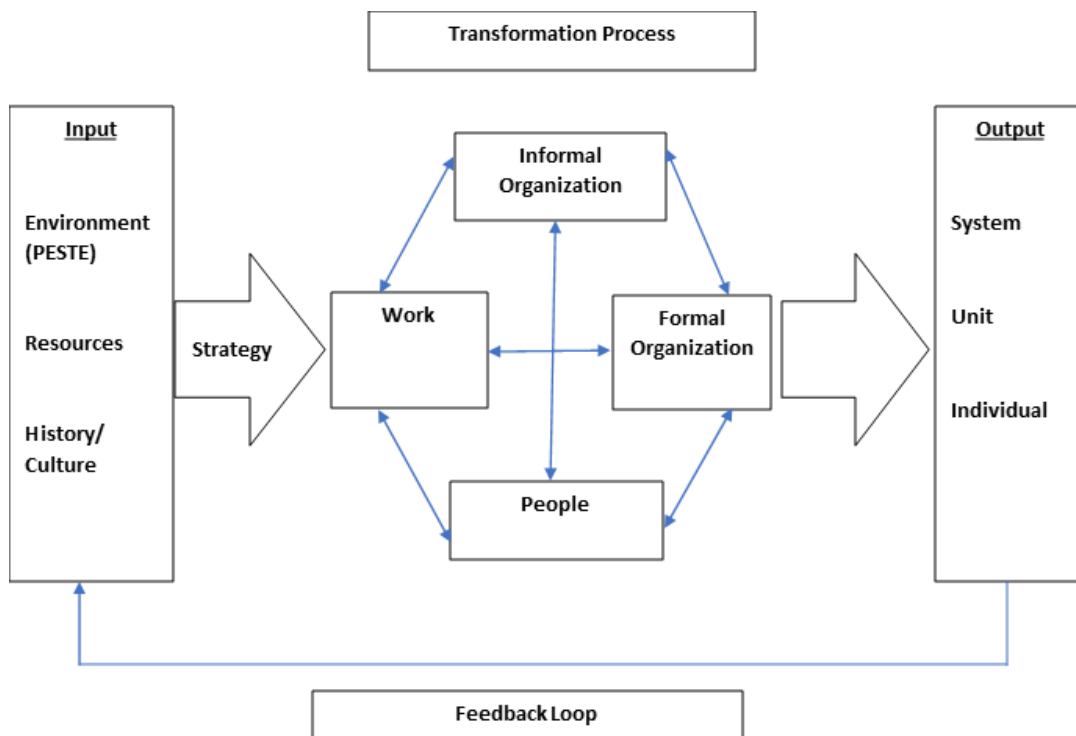


Figure 4. Organizational Congruence Model. Adapted from “A Model for Diagnosing Organizational Behavior,” by D. A. Nadler and M. L. Tushman, 1980, *Organizational Dynamics*, 9(2), 35–51. Copyright 1980 by Organizational Dynamics.

The congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980) is an open system. Cawsey et al. (2016) claimed that the “open systems perspective considers the organization as a set of complex interdependent parts that interacts with the external environment to obtain resources and to transform the resources into outputs” (p. 90). From a critical lens, this approach looks at all variables outside the organization and makes meaning from this. Freire and Freire (1997) supported “consciousness about the world, which implies consciousness about myself in the world, with it and with others, which also implies our ability to realize the world, to understand it, is not limited to a rationalistic experience” (p. 94). As described above, emphasis is placed upon questioning external factors and making meaning out of reality. The next section will discuss various components of this model.

### What Needs to Change

**Inputs.** According to Nadler and Tushman (1980), environmental factors, resources, and organizational culture/history influence change within an organization. I will analyze the economic factors, political factors, social factors, and organization culture as the main factors that apply to my problem of practice.

*Economic/Political factors driving change.* To understand the PoP, I will discuss summative assessments from a political and economic perspective. “In a traditional assessment paradigm, the teacher is perceived as the active agent in the process, determining goals and criteria for successful achievement, delivering instruction, and evaluating student achievement at the end of a period of learning” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 30). According to the OECD (2003),

globalisation and modernisation are creating an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. To make sense of and function well in this world, individuals need, for example, to master changing technologies and to make sense of large amounts of available information. They also face collective challenges as societies—such as balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability, and prosperity with social equity. (p. 4)

The Canadian workforce is dependent on students to enter the workforce after their postsecondary studies. According to Reid, Gibson, Colasante, and Bazinet (2019), nearly 180,000 postsecondary graduates of 2012, aged 15 to 64, entered the labour market after graduation and were still in the labour market five years later. For this reason, problem-solving and critical thinking skills are what employers will want from prospective employees.

Teachers will be the ones to help encourage these skills using formative assessments. According to Freire (2013) “the critical transitive consciousness is characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems, by the situation of causal



principles for magical explanations; by testing of one's 'findings' and by openness to revision" (p. 14). Creating life-long learners will help Canada's economy because there is an economic trend of students continuing their education in Canada. According to Reid et al. (2019), of the 346,200 graduates of the 2012 class, 94,570 returned to school full-time at some point in the five years after graduation. For this reason, students need to develop life-long learning skills and assessments in high school.

*Social factors driving the need for change.* Employers are expecting secondary and post-secondary students to be problem-solvers. According to Giroux (2011), "we cannot separate what teachers do from the economic and political conditions that shape their work, that is, their academic labor" (p. 171). The Ontario curriculum expects students to learn how to use business concepts that will enable social change within their community. According to the Ministry of Education (2006),

learning activities in business studies courses should be inclusive in nature, reflecting diverse points of view and experiences. They should enable students to become more sensitive to the experiences and perceptions of others, to value and show respect for diversity in the school and in the wider society, and to make responsible and equitable decisions in their personal and business relationships. (p. 24)

The demand for critical thinkers and socially minded citizens can be harnessed through effective teaching and formative assessments. The overuse of summative assessments within classrooms is counter to what the Ministry of Education expects in the assessment of student work. Traditional pencil and paper tests do not effectively teach a classroom of thirty or more students. According to Hattie & Yates (2014) "the recitation method comes with many built-in problems that involve teachers in cost-benefit dilemmas. All too often, the nature of the interaction can become that of a single teacher interacting with a relatively small subgroup of students from within the class" (p. 47). For this reason, a

critical pedagogical approach will help drive change, and the curriculum expects students to enhance these skills and become change agents upon graduation from high school. According to the Ministry of Ontario (2006) “the critical thinking and research skills acquired in business studies courses will enable students to recognize bias and stereotyping in text and images, as well as discriminatory attitudes that create barriers to productive relationships in business and trade” (p. 24).

*Organizational culture.* When considering cultural factors, teachers are shifting towards learner-centred pedagogies as part of a larger change towards expecting higher levels of educational attainment, in contrast to systems a century ago (OECD, 2018). The current professional learning opportunities provided to teachers include referring to the *Growing Success* document and allowing teachers to join the OSSLT assessment committee voluntarily. In terms of teachers learning about balanced assessments, the administration expects teachers to use their professional judgement when trying to create balanced assessments. There two centrally provided professional development days within the school year, and assessment development has not been offered. Encouraging teachers to use balanced assessments and build on their comprehensive knowledge will support them to empower students to meet their fullest potential. To encourage student learning, teachers must view assessments as a method to empower students. Freire and Freire (1997) affirmed that “without the curiosity that makes us beings in permanent availability for questioning—be the questioning well-constructed or poorly founded, it does not matter—there would be no . . . concrete expression of our possibility of knowing” (p. 94). Starratt (2005) affirmed that “the leader must insist that teachers connect the curriculum’s academic subjects to the human journey of their learners as they

seek to know and own themselves” (p. 131). The business department’s preference for summative exams is outdated and streams students into categories. Being categorized according to scores and labelled “smart” by the teacher does not teach students the importance of collaborative learning. According to Au and Gourd (2013) “high stakes standardized tests are based on assumptions that raise serious questions about their efficacy in ending educational inequality” (p. 16). Competition through test scores does not take place on an even playing field. The competition grounds favours some, while others are disadvantaged. According to Au and Gourd (2013) “much like our current system of economics, the system of high-stakes standardized testing cannot function if everyone is a ‘winner’; this point is particularly important when it comes to the discourse of race and class issues surrounding current education reform and the hyper-reliance on high-stakes testing” (p. 16).

Effective pedagogy requires teachers to have expert professional repertoires to support the pursuit of the nuanced learning of content and ambitious transversal competencies (OECD, 2018). To lead organizational change, teachers need to be aware of how embedding critical pedagogy within student assessments can empower students. Teachers are required to work with students in achieving success criteria, as outlined in the business curriculum. According to Freire (2002) “the more educators and the people investigate the people’s thinking, and are thus jointly educated, they continue to investigate” (p. 109). Through the formative approach, both teachers and students can learn how to create change that impacts their lives, particularly when the knowledge students seek is related to their community and their sense of reality.

**Outputs.** The next components of the Organization Congruence Model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980) are the four elements of the transformation process. These include work, the formal/informal organization, and people, which simultaneously integrate to create outputs.

**Work.** These are the tasks that are performed by members within the organization. According to Cawsey et al. (2016) “tasks may be nested in teams, requiring coordination and integration, or be separated and independent from one another” (p. 70). For teachers within the department, this work component is to ensure all students received balanced assessment, which enables them to become empowered through critical pedagogy. This will be emphasized through the alignment of critical pedagogy and assessment standards prescribed by the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010). According to the Ministry of Education (2010) “the use of assessment to improve student learning and to help students become independent learners requires teachers and students to acknowledge and enact a fundamental shift in how they perceive their roles in the learning process” (p. 30).

The work within the department is to identify ways to create a balanced culminating assessment for student using the principles of critical pedagogy. The culminating activity needs to be a comprehensive assignment that includes assessments *for* and *as* learning. Using their professional judgement, teachers will use information gathered from diagnostic and formative assessments to provide students with a meaning achievement level. According to Ramazan and Hanifi (2018), “if teachers strongly believe that their students can learn, students tend to demonstrate higher performance levels” (p. 554). Table 4 outlines the assessments required by Ontario teachers.

According to the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010), assessment as learning focuses on the explicit fostering of students' capacity over time to be their own best assessors. Freire (2002) affirmed that "freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion" (p. 47). In my OIP, this will propel change because this policy requirement will support the use of new formative assessments teachers invent or discover.

I would also like to highlight from Table 4 that assessment as learning occurs through ongoing instruction and modelling from teachers themselves. Sun and Leithwood (2012) suggested that "this practice includes leaders demonstrating through their behaviors that they expect a high level of professionalism from staff, hold high expectations for students, and expect staff to be effective innovators (p. 429). Theoharis (2007) argued that "marginalized students do not receive the education they deserve unless purposeful steps are taken to change schools on their behalf with both equity and justice consciously in mind" (p. 250). Formative assessments allow students to seek out knowledge based on the guidance of teachers, more so than summative assessments.

Table 4

*Assessment Purpose, Nature, and Use of Information*

<b>Purpose of Classroom Assessment</b>	<b>Nature of Assessment</b>	<b>Use of Information</b>
<p><b>Assessment for Learning</b></p> <p>Assessment <i>for</i> learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there.</p>	<p><b>Diagnostic assessment:</b></p> <p>Occurs before instruction begins so teachers can determine students' readiness to learn new knowledge and skills, as well as obtain information about their interests and learning preferences.</p>	<p><b>The information gathered:</b></p> <p>Is used by teachers and students to determine what students already know and can do with respect to the knowledge and skills identified in the overall and specific expectations, so teachers can plan instruction and assessment that are differentiated and personalized and work with students to set appropriate learning goals.</p>
	<p><b>Formative assessment:</b></p> <p>Occurs frequently and in an ongoing manner during instruction, while students are still gaining knowledge and practising skills.</p>	<p><b>The information gathered:</b></p> <p>Is used by teachers to monitor students' progress towards achieving the overall and specific expectations, so that teachers can provide timely and specific descriptive feedback to students, scaffold next steps, and differentiate instruction and assessment in response to student needs.</p>
<p><b>Assessment as learning</b></p> <p>Assessment <i>as</i> learning focuses on the explicit fostering of students' capacity over time to be their own best assessors, but teachers need to start by presenting and modelling external, structured opportunities for students to assess themselves.</p>	<p><b>Formative assessment:</b></p> <p>Occurs frequently and in an ongoing manner during instruction, with support, modelling, and guidance from the teacher</p>	<p><b>The information gathered:</b></p> <p>Is used by students to provide feedback to other students (peer assessment), monitor their own progress towards achieving their learning goals (self-assessment), make adjustments in their learning approaches, reflect on their learning, and set individual goals for learning.</p>

*Note:* Adapted from "The Purposes of Assessment, the Nature of Assessment for Different Purposes, and the Uses of Assessment Information," in *Growing Success*, by the Ministry of Education, 2010,

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growSuccess.pdf>.

My OIP will inspire teachers to work towards balanced assessments that students can use purposefully to inspire curiosity and lifelong learning habits. “The assessment for the purpose of improving learning and helping students become independent learners requires a culture in which student and teacher learn together in a collaborative relationship, each playing an active role in setting learning goals, developing success criteria, giving and receiving feedback, monitoring progress, and adjusting learning strategies” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 30). For this reason, critical pedagogy, implemented through formative assessments, provides students with a richer learning experience. According to Freire (2002) “the more educators and the people investigate the people’s thinking, and are jointly educated, the more they continue to investigate” (p.109).

In summary, a critical organizational analysis is used to diagnose changes. The Congruence Model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980) provided me with the opportunity to analyze different organization components through a critical lens. The next section will use these findings and present possible solutions to address my PoP.

### **Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice**

As discussed in my previous chapter, my OIP focuses on finding a balance between the use of summative and formative assessment within the business department at School X. I have identified three possible solutions:

- (1) Maintaining the status quo;
- (2) Appointing a learning coach who specializes in student assessments; and
- (3) Creation of an assessment committee.

In addition, I have constructed a summary table of my proposed solutions and the various resources required. Table 5 provides a summary of the proposed solutions. Some resource needs do not apply to my OIP; therefore, they have been marked as not applicable (N/A) within the table. The following section will provide more detail about each proposed solution.

### **Solution One: Maintaining the Status Quo**

Although teachers can offer students a formative assessment, many choose not to do so because of the existing organizational culture that favours the use of summative assessments. Although teachers are not obligated to give a written exam as the final assessment type, many choose to do so. It is important to analyze the status quo, which has strengths and weaknesses.

**Resources needed.** The maintenance of the status quo at School X requires the resources outlined below.

***Financial and technological resources.*** The business department would require funds to purchase new textbooks since many of the questions used in the final exam are based on the content of the textbook. The current textbooks are outdated, and the updated, revised textbooks would be required. Recent textbooks would have to be purchased from board-approved publishers in order to receive the corresponding question banks that would be used on final exams. Teachers could generate summative assessments electronically by using educational software. Funding for new textbooks would be at the discretion of the department, although this is unlikely due to department budget restraints.

***Human resources.*** Maintaining the status quo would require the same number of teachers within the department. Depending on yearly staffing needs, the number of



teachers designated within the business department is determined on the number of business course sections students enrol in. For this reason, each teacher must promote their subject to students and encourage them to take business studies courses throughout their academic career. Because of staffing requirements from the union (OSSTF), teachers with the most seniority will remain, while those with lower seniority may get moved to another school within the Bayside School Board. For this reason, the number of staff within a department is determined by the staffing needs of Bayside School Board.

*Benefits and disadvantages.* Keeping the status quo has strengths and weaknesses. The strength of the current assessment practice is that it provides consistency across the numerous course sections within the business studies department. A 30% final summative exam allows quantitative consistency for measuring student achievement. Using similar exams across course sections saves time because teachers do not have to write multiple exams.

The disadvantage is that students are unable to receive meaningful feedback since most of the questions are marked either correct or incorrect. According to Furman and Gruenwald (2004), academic achievement is overemphasized to the detriment of other benefits of schooling. In addition, students have no time to follow up with teachers since exams are administered at the end of the semester. School X allots one day (Exam Return Day) in which students get their exams and final marks from their teachers. According to Xiao (2017) “this ‘exam culture’ is indicative of classroom assessments used as preparation for external exams” (Xiao, 2017, p. 297).

**Solution Two: Appointing a Learning Coach**

This solution requires the creation of an additional position within the school to support teachers. School X can employ a “Learning Coach,” who could act as additional support for teachers in helping them create balanced assessments within their courses. This solution focuses on developing people. Leithwood and Sun (2012) proposed various definitions of providing individualized support, including leaders listening and attending to individuals’ opinions and needs, acting as mentors or coaches to staff members, treating staff as individuals with unique needs and capacities, and supporting their professional development (p. 400). A teacher could act as a liaison between classroom teachers and the administration. They could coach teachers through various assessment strategies and provide additional support for lesson planning that incorporates formative assessments. “School-based learning coaches serve as members of their school’s learning support team and facilitate job-embedded and ongoing professional development for teachers. The learning coach advocates for, facilitates, and supports improved instructional practices with teachers” (Alberta Education, 2011).

**Resources needed.** Appointing a learning coach at School X requires the resources outlined below.

**Financial resources.** Additional funds would be required to staff another teacher within School X. Although a learning coach would not have classroom duties, he/she would be expected to collaborate and co-plan with subject-specific teachers. This role would be considered a curriculum leader role within School Board Y, which would require a leadership stipend in addition to the yearly salary. This is outlined in the most recent teachers’ collective bargaining agreement contract.

***Time resources.*** The human resources for this solution require teachers to meet with their learning coach throughout the year. Learning coach meetings could be held during department meetings or on school-wide professional development days. Teachers could also collaborate with learning coaches during their preparation period if required. The time to meet and discuss assessment strategies with the learning coach would be dependent on how much time classroom teachers were willing to commit to the process.

***Technological resources.*** There are no anticipated technological resources needed for this solution. The coaching process requires meeting in person. Learning coaches can also audit classes in person to observe teachers in action.

***Benefits and disadvantages.*** Having additional teacher support is generally a positive. According to Popovich and Fisher (2016), research indicates that there has been improvement in the quality of education through the implementation of PDI (Professional Development Initiatives). Learning coaches can provide new insights into how teachers can improve assessment methods. Bayside School Board hires secondary teachers and centrally assigns them to the needs of the city. Learning coaches overlook a specifically assigned region of the city and provide teachers with specialized subject support. The main disadvantage is the extra financial resources needed to staff a learning coach within the school. This may remove a classroom teaching position. Therefore, the school administration must weigh the importance of classroom teachers and support teachers. I will present my implementation plan to the administration team and suggest that School X apply for the assistance of a centrally assigned learning coach to provide professional development for teachers regarding formative assessments.

**Solution Three: Creation of An Assessment Committee**

Having perspectives from different subject teachers can provide new insight into classroom assessment practices, and teachers can share strategies with one another.

Adaptive leadership is about helping others to explore and change their values (Northouse, 2018). The assessment committee can independently examine student achievement scores, critique current assessment practices, and propose solutions that are staff driven.

**Resources needed.** This solution requires time and human resource of staff. Financial and technological needs are not expected due to this initiative happening within School X.

**Financial resources.** No financial resources are needed to support a staff-created committee. There may be costs associated with getting time-release from classroom instruction in order to participate in committee duties. Time-release may not be possible due to budget restraints within School X since it would require hiring supply teachers to cover committee members' classes. This is usually not provided for the existing staff committees at School X, but the administration could implement this option if the committee established time constraints or due dates.

**Time resources.** The time resources required for this solution are in addition to regular classroom teaching. This significant time commitment from teachers may be required after classroom hours or could be implemented during school-wide professional development days. Staff would require dedicated time to analyze current assessment strategies and identify gaps before arriving at a proposed solution. Once consensus is reached regarding what a balanced assessment format entails for the culminating task,

additional time would be required by each department to make the chosen method subject-specific. As the change initiator, I would require time during monthly department meetings. Staff meetings are 60 minutes in length; therefore, I would require between 15 and 20 minutes to explain the anti-oppressive features of formative assessments.

***Human resources.*** In addition to the large time commitment, human resource requirements would be significant. The adaptive leadership approach requires personal investment from each teacher on the committee. For this reason, in-depth discussion among all members and reaching a final assessment method may take numerous meetings throughout the academic year. The administration could also be represented on this committee to ensure discussions or any findings are communicated to students, parents, and community members.

***Technological resources.*** No technological resources would be needed for the formation of an assessment committee. Members may decide to use technology to organize meetings, make presentations, or access information through online databases. This technology already exists within the school and individual subject departments.

***Benefits and disadvantages.*** The creation of an assessment committee has many benefits. This committee could provide a forum in which teachers can recognize gaps in the current assessments being used and discover if imbalances in assessment are occurring through the overuse of summative assessments. Students would benefit from this committee because it could yield new ways to assess student learning and determine what specific assessment changes are needed for student success. The disadvantage to this solution is the excessive time required to create a committee and having meaningful dialogue between members. The next section will consider all the items. Table 5 proposes

a recommended solution. I will justify this recommended solution using the critical lens of Paulo Freire.

Table 5

*Summary Table of Proposed Solutions and Resources Needed*

<b>Resource Needs</b>	<i>Solutions</i>		
	<b>Maintain Status Quo</b>	<b>Mentoring through a Learning Coach</b>	<b>Creation of Assessment Committee</b>
<i>Time</i>	Not Applicable	- Dependent upon teachers' availability within school	- Hours required outside of department meetings
<i>Human</i>	- Subject to number of business course sections in school  - Staffing needs of school and OSSTF regulations	- Creation of a new role within the school  -Leadership role for teachers	- Teachers, administration, parents and community members
<i>Financial</i>	- Updated textbooks  - Money allocated within department scarce	- Leadership stipend (approximately \$2000) according to the collective bargaining agreement	- Voluntary Enrolment
<i>Information</i>	N/A	N/A	- Print materials for creating posters
<i>Technology</i>	- Electronic test bank for summative questions	- None required  - Teachers can audit a classroom of coach and learn how they use formative assessments	- Informational website to describe critical pedagogy  - Cloud drive to share resources
<i>Advantages/ Disadvantages</i>	- Saves time for teachers  - Students do not receive meaningful feedback  - Late in the semester	- Gain new insight into assessment practice  - On call coverage will have to be provided for auditing class	- Have multiple perspectives on assessment practices

**Recommended Solution**

In order to ensure students receive balanced assessment in their courses and provide teachers with the necessary support to implement these strategies, solutions two and three will be combined. Supports that will be available include an administration team willing to be consultants for staff initiatives. In addition, I can contact learning coaches who are centrally assigned within the Bayside School Board to help with mobilizing resources related to formative assessments. As literature and research evolve, teachers will be slower to adapt to formative assessment if they are not informed about the latest developments in this field. For this reason, I can keep School X informed about changing curricular expectations regarding assessments (Ministry of Education, 2010) while learning coaches work with teachers at the ground level in the classroom. Research by Avalos-Bevan and Bascope (2017) demonstrated:

In many ways the notion of collaboration is central to the teaching profession, ranging from beginning teacher requests for specific assistance, the sounding out of teaching ideas among colleagues, and the provision of tips for dealing with student issues to cross-disciplinary project planning and full engagement in school-based communities of practice. (p. 12)

This makes use of teachers' existing knowledge and experience to form their own committees and discover solutions meaningful to their specific subjects. According to Freire (2005), we need "an education which [will] lead men to take a new stance towards problems . . . one oriented towards research instead of repeating irrelevant principles" (p. 32). Harris (2011) supported "collaborative practice . . . where teachers work together to develop effective instructional practices and where there is a deep commitment to improving the practice of others as well as their own" (p. 628). By combining these solutions, perspectives from the board level and the school level can be incorporated into

instructional practices, which will ensure student assessments remain balanced.

According to Bryan and Kaylor (2018), “committing to a close examination of teaching practices and the impact of those practices on student learning is an indicator that the team is embracing collective efficacy because it is taking responsibility for student learning” (p. 59). I will evaluate this solution below using the PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) cycle.

### **PDSA Cycle**

This solution follows the PDSA model (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015), which asks three questions to guide change: (1) What are we trying to accomplish? (2) How will we know that a change is an improvement? (3) What changes can we make that will result in improvement?

To answer the PDSA question “What are we trying to accomplish?” my proposed solution is to create a collaborative community of teachers, which can be modelled within classrooms. Gini-Newman and Case (2018) endorsed an “approach [of treating] existing practices as platforms to build upon. In our shoulder-to-shoulder work with teachers, we have noticed that encouraging them to revise existing lesson plans leads to small, but not insignificant, changes to their practice” (p. 249). A collaborative community will lead to greater opportunities to share formative assessments within the business department.

Freire (2002) commented: “at the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know” (p. 90). Research by Avalos-Bevan and Bascopé (2017) indicated that “achieving educational results is essentially a collective process in which teachers and students engage, though strongly relying on teacher collegial endeavours” (p. 12). Harris



(2011) agreed that “improving professional practice necessitates working with colleagues on real issues of teaching and learning that makes a difference to learners” (p. 634).

Creating the above conditions will not only improve the quality of formative assessments but also create a collaborative environment among teachers.

To answer the PDSA question “How will we know that a change is an improvement?” the proposed solution will re-visit past student grades to measure if student achievement has changed. After implementing opportunities for formative assessment within classrooms, I will determine if course averages have increased, decreased, or stayed the same. Student achievement will act as a tool of measurement while keeping in mind that student empowerment through formative assessments is the main goal. Through formative assessments, students and teachers can collaborate to improve student achievement. Freire (2002) endorsed that “for the truly humanist educator and the authentic revolutionary, the object of action is the reality to be transformed by them together with other people—not other men and women themselves” (p. 94).

Lastly, to answer the question “What changes can we make that will result in improvement?” as suggested in the solution above, I can inform teachers about the empowering effect of using formative assessments to help students. According to Gini-Newman and Case (2018), “preparing students for a complex world is not a matter of getting more students to score in the upper percentiles on standardized tests” (p. 18).

Freire (2002) agreed:

To achieve critical consciousness of the facts that it is necessary to be the “owner of one’s own labor,” that labor “constitutes part of the human person,” and that “a human being can neither be sold nor can he sell himself” is to go a step beyond the deception of palliative solutions. (p. 183)

Teachers will find ways to use formative assessments to enrich learning, and this can be an indicator of organizational change that propels change away from the use of summative assessments. Gini-Newman and Case (2018) believe that “this failure is not an indictment of the practice of student choice per se, but of our lack of success at empowering students to make responsible and effective choices about their educational needs and at awakening students to potentially fruitful interests” (p. 20).

The solutions proposed above are changes School X can make to help teachers increase the quality of their teaching practice using formative assessments. The next section will discuss leadership ethics and organizational change.

### **Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change**

This section will discuss the ethical implication of the chosen leadership approaches and ethical considerations required by the organization. This OIP was constructed through a critical and cultural lens, which will have ethical implications for organizational improvement. As a teacher, my agency guides my OIP. For this reason, I have used an action research approach in order to remain ethical in my interpretation of data. According to Zenzi (1998), “action research involves practitioners studying their own professional practice and framing their own questions. Their research has the immediate goal to assess, develop or improve their practice” (p. 13). Freire (2002) affirmed that teachers “do not come to *teach* or to *transmit* or to *give* anything, but rather to learn, with the people, about the people’s world” (p. 180). For these reasons, I need to consider ethical considerations and challenges when applying the leadership approach in the change process.

Informing teachers about the importance of having balanced assessments will also help students by providing them with a variety of assessments in which they can succeed, rather than just a final exam at the end of their course. Building culture requires a large outreach, as described by the cultural lens. According to Schein (2004), “culture only arises when those individual assumptions lead to shared experiences that solve the group’s problems of external survival and internal integration” (p. 225). Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1992) argued that teachers “consider the central purpose of transformational leadership to be the enhancement of the individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement” (p. 7). I will further demonstrate the connection between this leadership approach and ethics in the next section.

### **Leadership Approaches and Ethics**

Transformational leadership was chosen for this study because it is compatible with broad trends of teacher empowerment, multiple stakeholder participation in school decisions, and reduced support for top-down change theories (Northouse, 2018). Empowering teachers to challenge their existing beliefs about summative assessments is a key component of this OIP, where change is implemented from the bottom up. According to Capper and Young (2014) “the field needs more examples of how leaders work with their colleagues and communities to collaboratively build inclusive communities and hold one another responsible for strong student and community outcomes (p. 163). Teachers will drive change using an assessment committee and learning coaches. As indicated in the solution section, collective effort is required to enable changes in assessment

methods. According to Capper and Young (2014), “public school educators for social justice are expected to reach and teach students of all differences—they do not have the option of choosing which student differences they will succeed with and which students of difference they will ignore in doing so” (p. 163). Moreover, Stefkovich and Begley (2007) highlighted that

the underlying assumption here is that if the individual student is treated with fairness, justice, and caring, then a strong message is sent to all students that they will also be treated with similar justice and caring and that they should treat others similarly. (p. 212)

This has ethical implications because the use of balanced assessments within schools should have a wide outreach in affecting teachers and their students.

The ethical approach known as utilitarianism states that we should behave so as to create the greatest good for the greatest number (Northouse, 2018). This ethical approach complements the critical lens, whereby true liberation occurs through the masses. If the reality of oppression gets transformed, pedagogy of the oppressed ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of liberation (Freire, 2002). Hattie (2012) echoed that teachers demonstrate a love of content and an ethical, caring stance when teaching others. The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) further highlights the ethical standard of teaching as “to promote public trust and confidence in the teaching profession” (2020).

As a teacher, my agency requires me to make ethical decisions when teaching students. The OCT standards of practice must guide organizational change within my OIP. According to the OCT’s ethical standard of respect, organization change must “honour human dignity, emotional wellness and cognitive development.” The next section will connect leadership approaches with anti-oppression dimensions.

**Leadership Approaches and Anti-Oppression**

The ethical commitments of the organization are to the students of School X. Stefkovich and Begley (2007) emphasized that “ethics are highly relevant to school leadership as rubrics, benchmarks, socially justified standards of practice, and templates for moral action” (p. 209). As a public school, the mandate is to provide quality education to all students within the community. As Capper and Young (2014) suggested, “public school educators for social justice are expected to reach and teach students of all differences—they do not have the option of choosing which student differences they will succeed with and which students of difference they will ignore in doing so” (p. 163). This social justice approach to leadership aligns with the transformational approach because it allows teachers to view their practice as improving the surrounding community. According to Ryan (2010), “social justice initiatives routinely face opposition from the various constituents of systems that resist such efforts in ways that other initiatives do not” (p. 374). Increasing student achievement using balanced assessments will help to empower students by allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge.

Although inequalities in the education system mimic those in society, teachers can help perpetuate change. Ryan (2015) argued that “inequalities extend to our institutions. Education is no exception. Rather than reducing race, class and other inequalities over the years, educational institutions continue to perpetuate them” (p. 88). Formative assessments have been shown to “be effective in promoting student learning across a wide range of educational settings (disciplinary areas, types of outcomes, levels)” (Yorke, 2003, p. 428). This outreach is important because, as a public service, education should give all students the opportunity to realize their full potential while empowering students

to be active learners in their environment. According to Capper and Young (2014), it is “essential that those in positions to frame, fund, and implement new learning environments understand the power of inclusion/integration” (p. 163). The OCT (2020) supports integration through professional practice, in which teachers “model respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice, confidentiality, freedom, democracy and the environment.” The organizational plan must meet these ethical requirements, which reflect my agency as a teacher in School X. Hattie (2012) concluded that students are never “owned” by a teacher, but by the school. A collective approach to assessments is an anti-oppressive approach to organizational change.

Balanced assessments will make learning more inclusive to marginalized students. Social justice leaders have an “agreed upon understanding of what inclusion/integration means [and this should] be the central, visible, unambiguous anchoring feature of all scholarship, policies, and practices aimed toward eliminating educational inequities” (Capper & Young, 2014, p. 162). Education should be accessible, and critical education occurs through a collaborative process between teachers and students. According to Freire (2002), “authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication” (p. 77). For this reason, teachers and students will learn co-exist within the educational institution and experience the learning process together. Theoharis (2007) agreed that “developing supportive networks provided opportunities to share ideas, emotional support, encouragement, and assistance in problem solving” (p. 244).

In summary, approaches to ethics and anti-oppression are guided by collaboration among teachers and students while respecting the standards of practice outlined by the

OCT. My approach to leadership ethics revolves around an anti-oppressive lens, which enables opportunities for teachers and students.

### **Chapter 2 Conclusion**

Chapter 2 consists of the planning and development of my OIP. This chapter discussed leadership approaches to change using the GVV model and transformational leadership. Educator and research scholar Mary Gentile decided to develop a program for business students to support the development of confidence and skills that would allow people to speak and act their values when faced with a situation that runs counter to their principles (Cawsey et al., 2016). I then discussed the framework for leading the change process, making sure there was alignment between Duck's (2001) five-stage Change Curve and transformational leadership.

This chapter compared the existing mindset regarding summative assessments and the future vision of a balanced assessment method using formative assessments, as described in critical organizational analysis. Three possible solutions were offered to help support a change in assessment practice and transformational leadership as the overarching framework within the organization. My proposed solution is a combination of using a centrally assigned learning coach and creating a voluntary assessment committee within School X. I then discussed possible solutions to address the PoP and evaluated my selection using the PDSA cycle. Lastly, I outlined ethical considerations that will ensure all stakeholders within the organization stay loyal to the students they serve. The next chapter (Chapter 3) will focus on change implementation, evaluation, and communication.

### **Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication**

Courageous convictions will drag the dream into existence.

—Neil Peart

Within my OIP, change refers to a planned alteration of organizational components to improve the effectiveness of the organization (Cawsey et al., 2016). As discussed in Chapter 2, transformational leadership (Avolio, 2000; Bass, 1985; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Leithwood, Sun, & Pollock, 2017) will be utilized to make formative assessments more prevalent within classroom practice. In addition, I will revisit the concepts of Duck's five-stage Change Curve (2001) and Gentiles' Giving Voice to Values (2010) while providing a change implementation plan. I will then discuss the monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure organizational change continues to flourish once implemented. Once a change process is identified, I will then outline a plan to communicate the need for change and change process. Chapter 3 will conclude with the next steps and future considerations.

#### **Change Implementation Plan**

Implementing change requires that leaders find concepts and techniques to facilitate the internal alignment of systems, processes, and people (Cawsey et al., 2016). This describes my role within the business department of School X since my agency dictates a micro change management approach. According to Kang (2015), this includes "people's adaptation to change, reducing resistance to change, and communicating with all affected people" (p. 29). Informing teachers about how critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002; Freire, Brookshaw, & Oliveria, 2014; Freire & Freire, 1997; Freire & Freire, 2013) will provide the foundation for changing assessment practices.



As discussed in Chapter 2, the preferred solutions for change include submitting a proposal for the creation of an assessment committee in conjunction with the use of a centrally assigned learning coach. This will allow teachers the opportunity to learn, share, and build expertise together (Lanich, 2009, p. 8). Implementing change will occur strategically at the department level (micro-level) in order to facilitate macro-level changes within School X in the future. According to Duck (2001), an effective strategy must be sound and the commitment to the end goal, unflinching. Through the lens of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002), formative assessments can be the tool to empower students and create visible learning (Hattie, 2012) opportunities.

To summarize the change implementation plan, Table 6 outlines how goal one will be carried out at the departmental level. Table 7 outlines how goal two will be accomplished within the department. These tables outline the five stages of Duck's Change Curve (2001) and provide goals/priorities, key indicators, timeline, a spectrum of stakeholders, and resources for teachers that will enable change. This section will also provide strategies to help mitigate any resistance to change that some stakeholders may exhibit through each stage of Duck's Change Curve (2001). According to Pillai and Williams (2004), "transformational leadership was related to perceptions of unit performance and commitment through self-efficacy and cohesiveness" (p. 154). The department will cycle through Duck's Change Curve (2001) during the 2020/2021 academic year with a specific timeframe aligned with each stage of the Change Curve (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6

*Change Implementation for Goal One*

Goals & Priorities	Key Indicators	Strategies through Five Stage Change Curve	Timeline	Key Stakeholders (Spectrum of Levels)	Resources for Teachers
<p>#1</p> <p><b>Creating Consensus around Formative Assessments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building upon teachers existing knowledge regarding use of formative assessments</li> <li>- Providing teaching strategies to provide constant feedback to students after submission of assignments</li> <li>- Creating collaborative and supportive teaching environment between student and teacher</li> <li>- Enable students to provide course feedback at the conclusion of course (i.e. online surveys)</li> <li>- Providing opportunities for department teachers to reflect on use of formative assessments and debrief regularly</li> </ul>	<p><u>Stagnation &amp; Preparation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inform teachers about current assessment practices</li> <li>- Discuss oppressive functions of summative assessments</li> <li>- Introduce components of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002)</li> </ul>	<p><u>First Semester</u></p> <p>September – November</p> <p>2020-2021</p> <p>(Department – Wide initiative)</p>	<p><u>Micro-level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual/Self</li> <li>- Students</li> <li>- Department Teachers</li> <li>- Assistant Curriculum Leaders (ACL)</li> <li>- Curriculum Leaders (CL)</li> <li>- Parents</li> </ul> <p><u>Macro-level</u></p>	<p><u>Human</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Release time for teachers to attend workshops and PD Sessions (JELI Days)</li> <li>- Creation of assessment committee</li> <li>- Creation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC)</li> </ul> <p><u>Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Incorporate formative assessments into SIP (School Improvement Plans)</li> <li>- Experiential Learning opportunities for students</li> <li>- Creating a shared database of formative assessments or critical thinking teaching strategies</li> </ul>
		<p><u>Implementation &amp; Determination</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Steps to creating “thinking classrooms” (Gini-Newman &amp; Case, 2018)</li> <li>- Create template for critical questions for assessments</li> <li>- Have experienced teachers act as peer mentors to incoming teachers</li> <li>- Schedule collaboration meeting among teachers in department</li> </ul>	<p><u>Second Semester</u></p> <p>December – February</p> <p>2020-2021</p> <p>(Department-Wide Initiative)</p>		
		<p><u>Fruition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updating course outlines within department/school</li> <li>- Create experiential classroom for teachers to audit</li> </ul>	<p><u>End of Term</u></p> <p>March – May</p> <p>2021-2022</p> <p>(Department - Wide Initiative)</p>		

Table 7

*Change Implementation for Goal Two*

Goals & Priorities	Key Indicators	Strategies through Five Stage Change Curve	Timeline	Key Stakeholders (Spectrum of Levels)	Resources for Teachers
<p><b>#2</b></p> <p><b>Infusing Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 2002) within Department Assessments</b></p>	<p>- Transitioning from summative exam format to a culminating activity</p> <p>- Updating course outlines within the business department</p>	<p><u>Stagnation &amp; Preparation</u></p> <p>- examine past course outlines</p> <p>- Inform teachers about oppressive qualities of summative assessments</p> <p>- Discuss the “banking concept of education” (Freire, 2002)</p>	<p><u>First Semester</u></p> <p>September – December</p> <p>2020-2021</p> <p>(Department Wide)</p>	<p><u>Micro-level</u></p> <p>↑ Individual/Self</p> <p>- Department</p> <p>-Curriculum Leaders (ACL)</p> <p>↓ <u>Macro-level</u></p>	<p><u>Human</u></p> <p>-Collaborative sharing of formative assessments</p> <p>-Creation of a Google cloud sharing drive of formative assessments</p>
		<p><u>Implementation &amp; Determination</u></p> <p>- Discuss components of Thinking Classroom (Gini-Newman &amp; Case, 2018)</p>	<p><u>Second Semester</u></p> <p>December – February</p> <p>2020-2021</p> <p>(Department Wide)</p>		<p><u>Information</u></p> <p>- Provide strategies for incorporating visible learning (Hattie, 2012) strategies into classrooms</p>
		<p><u>Fruition</u></p> <p>- Measure Student achievement in classroom assignments</p> <p>- Compare EQAO and OSSLT test scores from previous years</p> <p>- Self-directed PD sessions for teachers to reflect on implementing formative assessments.</p>	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>- Apply for UPHS funding for department</p> <p>- Apply for OBEA (Ontario Business Educators Association) conference and grants</p> <p>- Apply for SHSM (Specialists High School Majors) program for business</p>		

### **Goals, Key Indicators, and Implementation Strategies**

To help change the assessment culture in School X's business department, the main goals, as indicated by Table 6 and Table 7, are to create consensus on the use of formative assessments and infuse aspects of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002). Various strategies will be aligned with each stage of the Change Curve process. Strategies include informing teachers about the oppressive functions of summative assessments, communicating the drawbacks of the "banking concept of education" (Freire, 2002), and creating "visible learning" (Hattie, 2012) within the classroom. Once these theoretical foundations have been established, I can begin to assemble an assessment committee to solidify these changes within the organization. This assessment committee will meet once a month and consist of different subject teachers. This differs from regular PD days at School X in which departments are segregated and do not interact with other departments. The assessment committee will provide regular collaboration through the sharing of resources on Google Drive and brainstorming of ways to improve assessments. Distributed leadership involves the sharing of influence by team members, and team members can step forward when situations warrant, providing knowledge expertise when necessary (Northouse, 2018). In addition, the assessment committee will differ from department meetings because teachers from subjects outside of the business department will discuss ways to balance and improve student assessments. This volunteer assessment committee will consist of various stakeholders (i.e., department teachers, administration, parents, and learning coaches), ensuring that "teachers meet regularly for the purpose of studying and discussing student achievement data, lesson design, lesson analysis, best practice research, and peer coaching" (Lanich, 2009, p. 8). Joining the assessment

committee will be voluntary. A learning coach will also be utilized to supplement the work of the assessment committee. Learning coaches are centrally assigned within Bayside School Board and help teachers when needed.

### **Goal One: Creating Consensus around Formative Assessments**

The first goal is to inform teachers about the benefits of using formative assessments and to educate them about how critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002) can promote social justice for students. According Pillai and Williams (2004),

using the strategies of visioning, setting high performance expectations for the group and participation in group goal setting, transformational leaders may be successful in motivating [assessment committee] members to remain attracted to the group, make personal sacrifices and work towards a common goal. (p. 147)

The key indicators to enable this change include building upon the existing knowledge of teachers and formative assessments while promoting a collaborative environment between teachers and students (Table 6). Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) reported that in “schools with a high degree of teacher professionalism, teachers are clearly committed to their students and engaged in the teaching process. They take their work seriously and go beyond minimum expectations in order to meet the unique, individual needs of students” (p. 73). When Freire (2002) coined the term conscientization, he believed that critical awareness was developed through reflection and action. Barbuto (2005) found that “intrinsic process motivation correlated with transformational behaviors, indicating that leaders motivated by fun at work are more likely to self-report an ideology consistent with transformational and charismatic leadership” (p. 37). For this reason, the foundation of goal one is to motivate teachers and inspire them as people who can empower marginalized students. Freire (2005) agreed that “the special contribution of

the educator to the birth of the new society would have to be a critical education which could help to form critical attitudes” (p. 29).

The above aligns with Duck’s *stagnation* and *preparation* stages because teachers will understand how summative assessment can be oppressive. An organization at the stagnation stage “has no sense of direction; rather it seems to be wandering aimlessly with little sense of purpose” (Duck, 2001, p. 40). For this reason, change at this stage of the process must be radical, in which the more “radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can better transform it (Freire, 2002, p. 39). Summative assessments can suppress student learning because, according to Hattie (2012), students so often see the mark as the “end” of the learning.

Critical pedagogy allows students to analyze the relationships that exist in their reality. According to Freire, Brookshaw, and Oliveria (2014), “relationships that start to become established between the *we* and *objective reality* opened up a host of question marks, and those questions led to a search, the intent to comprehend the world and to comprehend our position within it” (p. 8). This important piece of communicating how critical pedagogy can transform student lives for the better is a crucial step within the stagnation stage because a wise leadership team spends time previewing the factors that will determine the magnitude of the change (Duck, 2001). Freire (2005) endorsed teachers who create a “new education [that offers] man the means to resist the ‘uprooting’ tendencies of our industrial civilization which accompany its capacity to improve living standards” (p. 31). Starratt (2005) endorsed “leaders [who] want to transform the school from an organization of rules, regulations, and roles into an intentional self-governing community” (p. 130). For these reasons, this stage in the change process will motivate

teachers to implement formative assessments and empower them through critical thinking.

During the *implementation* and *determination* stages, teaching practices will be reinforced with knowledge about ways to create thinking classrooms (Gini-Newman & Case, 2018). To demonstrate that the organization can succeed, the implementation stage requires that I focus on a single objective that will involve teachers within the department (Duck, 2001). Meaningful education must have practical applications. According to Freire et al. (2014), the “educatee learns only when he learns the object and not when he receives the description of the object and commits it to memory by rote” (p. 64). Critical education (Freire, 2002; Freire et al., 2014) is the process of transforming the aesthetic, ethical, and political domains while building knowledge. These are the key indicators for creating anti-oppressive assessments for students. Learning implies that students should become more knowledgeable, not only of the objects they wish to transform, but also of why they should transform, and the outcome to be achieved by transforming it (Freire et al., 2014).

Thinking classrooms require the development of 21<sup>st</sup>-century competencies (Gini-Newman & Case, 2018). These competencies are grouped into students demonstrating their ability to think, communicate, and act (see Table 8). According to Freire (1993), for a “coherent progressive educator, it is not possible to minimize, and dismiss the ‘knowledge from lived experiences,’ that students bring to school. The progressive educator’s knowledge rests in making it comprehensible so that the rupture established by the more exact knowledge, knowledge of a scientific nature, establishes vis-à-vis the students’ knowledge” (p. 24). The use of an assessment committee and consultation with

a centrally assigned learning coach will ensure that a “cycle of improvement is used to align decisions about curriculum, assessment, and instruction with student learning goals” (Bryan & Kaylor, 2018, p. 59). The assessment committee will set long-term goals for creating balanced assessments that incorporate the concepts of critical pedagogy.

Table 8

*Recommended Competencies*

Think	Communicate	Act
Explore and generate ideas, assess evidence, and draw conclusions.  - critical thinking - problem solving - creativity and innovation - collaborative thinking	Access, interpret, assess, and represent oral, written, and visual messages and ideas.  - traditional literacies (reading, writing, listening, speaking) - media literacy - digital literacy - financial literacy	Consider oneself and others, weigh options, and develop and implement plans for acting responsibly and effectively.  - global citizenship - environmental stewardship - social responsibility and cooperation - personal responsibility - entrepreneurship

*Note.* Recommended Competencies. Adapted from G. Gini-Newman and R. Case, 2018, *Creating Thinking Classrooms: Leading Educational Change for This Century*. Copyright 2018 by Sage.

Thinking as a core competency (Table 8) includes critical thinking and collaborative thinking (Gini-Newman & Case, 2018). Therefore, during the *implementation* and *determination* stages, we will ensure that students can express their thoughts by implementing an end-of-semester survey that will be completed online.

To help progress the assessment expectations, teachers, and students must learn together within a collaborative environment. Freire (2002) coined the term “praxis” to demonstrate that people must act together within their environment and critically reflect on their reality. According to Freire (2002), “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human



beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 72). Student surveys will be implemented at the conclusion of the second semester, which is February 2021.

According to Leithwood and Sun (2012), transformational leaders “build consensus among staff about the importance of common purpose and more specific goals, motivate staff with these challenging, but achievable goals, and communicate optimism about achieving these goals” (p. 400). Before collaborating with students, teachers need to develop shared values among themselves and accept the importance of critical pedagogy.

The *fruition* stage consists of continual listening to and communicating with the organization (Duck, 2001). For this reason, teachers in the business department will begin to update their course outlines by May 2022 and constantly undergo professional development. Through the creation of an assessment committee, teachers will be able to continually learn about the importance of formative assessments. According to Freire et al. (2014), “the educator needs to use certain procedures through which to approach, for better or worse, and with more or less rigor, the object that he is teaching, and in so teaching, he relearns and reacquaints himself with what he already knew” (p. 62). Through transformational leadership, an assessment committee can help stimulate intellectual stimulation: “Leaders enacting this set of practices challenge the staff’s assumptions, stimulate and encourage their creativity, and provide information to staff members to help them evaluate their practices, refine them, and carry out their tasks more effectively” (Leithwood & Sun, 2012, p. 400). The process of teachers sharing formative assessments and discussing ways of incorporating critical pedagogy in their business courses will translate into meaningful student learning, which involves creating learning opportunities in which students question their reality and construct their

own objective meanings. According to Freire et al. (2014), “in this way, [a teacher’s] task of teaching is a task that, while he teaches, he remembers, relearns, reunderstands, and thus enables his pupils to gain understanding. While the pupils therefore seek to understand, the educators are reunderstanding the object they are teaching” (p. 62).

In addition to the creation of an assessment committee, teachers have the option to share their teaching practice related to formative assessments through the use of experiential classrooms that other teachers may audit. The Bayside School Board allows teachers to register through an online process to have other teachers audit their classes regarding a specific area of student learning. I plan to open up my class for other teachers to audit. According to Bass (1999), “the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration. It elevates the follower’s level of maturity and ideals as well as concerns for achievement, self-actualization, and the well-being of others, the organization, and society” (p. 11). Starratt (2005) affirmed that “the leader must insist that teachers connect the curriculum’s academic subjects to the human journey of their learners as they seek to know and own themselves” (p. 131). This constant learning and exchanging of ideas are important because “while the pupils therefore seek to understand, the educators are re-understanding the object they are teaching” (Freire et al., 2014, p. 62). A shared drive online will also be used to keep formative assessments accessible to all teachers in the business department. Through a shared online, cloud drive (Google Drive or Dropbox), I can influence teachers are able to implement formative assessments in their classes.

In summary, the approach to organizational change using Duck's five-stage Change Curve (2001) should align with the ideals of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002) because the outcome of organizational change will directly impact student learning.

**Key stakeholders and resources for teachers.** To progress change within the business department at School X, I will need to consider the impacts on keys stakeholders involved with the organization. As Tables 6 and 7 indicate, people involved in the change process lie along a spectrum from micro-level to macro-level stakeholders. According to Bell (2016), "leaders must conceptualize and concretize a vision through the construct of optimal organizational relationships and the systems that govern those relationships in a way that defines the inclusive space where conversations that stimulate learning can take place" (p. 338). As my agency dictates, priority to communicate with the Curriculum Leader (CL) followed by the ACL (Assistant Curriculum Leader) is vital. Accomplishing this will lead change from the bottom up. According to Smith (2003), "mid-level managers, in contrast to senior leadership, may be more in touch with the working environment of front-line employees and, therefore, better positioned to manage change efforts" (p. 252). My agency at the micro-level dictates constant communication with middle-level managers (CLs and ACLs); therefore, this OIP will re-frame the image of formative assessments as a tool to empower students.

According to Freire & Freire (2013), "the important thing is to help men (and nations) help themselves, to place them consciously critical confrontation with their problems, to make them the agents of their own recuperation" (p. 12). Starratt (2005) affirmed that in "transformational ethics, the educational leader calls students and teachers to reach beyond self-interest for a higher ideal—something heroic" (p. 130).

According to Harris (2013), “distributed leadership encompasses both the formal and the informal forms of leadership practice within its framing, analysis and interpretation” (p. 548). Through the creation of an assessment committee, providing teachers the opportunity to audit experiential classes, providing JELI days for professional development and communication about how to implement formative assessment will be at the forefront of organizational change. According to Smith (2003), “communication throughout the project is critical to developing and maintains stakeholder support. . . . The sponsor needs to communicate his or her support for the change and progress should be track and publicized” (p. 252). Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, and Thomas (2006) argued that “the broader community’s attitudes to schooling can affect teachers’ motivation and belief that what they are doing is worthwhile” (p. 246).

In summary, to create consensus around formative assessment, stakeholders must be informed about the anti-oppressive qualities inherent in critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002). In addition, transformational leadership (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Bass, 1985) can provide a collaborative approach to facilitate change within the business department.

### **Goal Two: Infusing Critical Pedagogy within Department Assessments**

The priority of the second goal is to inform department teachers about the anti-oppressive functions of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002). Table 8 highlights the key indicators of this goal, which include transitioning from a summative exam format to a culminating assignment and updating course outlines within the department.

During the *stagnation* and *preparation* stages, I will examine past course outlines and detail how summative assessments perpetuate the “banking concept of education” (Freire, 2002). According to Ford and Ford (2009), if a leader suppresses dialogue,

opportunities to gain buy-in are missed. Freire (2002) argued that projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. Consequently, teachers will be informed about the core factors of the banking concept of education. Summative assessments have oppressive consequences for students, and teachers will be informed about these during this stage. Table 9 summarizes the teaching practices and attitudes that lead to oppression. There are ten oppressive teaching practices that contribute to the “banking concept” of education. The premise that teachers “deposit” information into students assumes that students are passive learners.

Table 9

*Oppressive Teaching Practices and Attitudes*

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Oppressive Teaching Practices and Attitudes Described</b>
1.	The teacher teaches and the students are taught
2.	The teacher knows everything, and the student knows nothing
3.	The teacher thinks and the students are thought about
4.	The teacher thinks and the students listen – meekly
5.	The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined
6.	The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply
7.	The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher
8.	The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it
9.	The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of students
10.	The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects

*Note.* Adapted from P. Freire, 2002, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, with an introduction by Donaldo Macedo. Copyright 2002 by Continuum.

Once these attitudes have been demonstrated within summative assessments, teachers understand the importance of using formative assessments. Gaubatz and Ensminger (2017) supported the use of “people-focused leadership behavior of providing

professional development in subtle ways to increase teacher dissatisfaction with the status quo; as teachers learned more, they were able to see ways in which changes could benefit their students” (p. 154). A student-centred approach to assessment is vital. Freire (2002) echoed that “the capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students’ creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor see it transformed” (p. 73). Bringing awareness of the deficiencies of current assessment practices will help to implement the change plan.

During the *implementation* and *determination* stages, teachers will be informed about “making teaching visible to the student, which is the core attitude of lifelong learning or self-regulation, and of the love of learning that we so want students to value” (Hattie, 2012, p. 43). The oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through praxis and commit to its transformation (Freire, 2002). According to Hattie (2012), learning self-regulation, or meta-cognitive skills, is one of the ultimate goals of all learning, which can lead to lifelong learning. This learning approach emphasizes student empowerment and aligns with critical pedagogy. According to Freire et al. (2014),

there is no education without knowledge, and knowledge occurs through the educator’s act of teaching and the educatee’s act of learning. But the educatee learns only when he learns the object and not when he receives the description of the object and commits it to memory by rote. (p. 64)

Through a critical lens, teachers can shift the focus of their assessments in a formative direction.

During the *fruition* stage, we can compare past student achievement scores in business courses. We can also compare OSSLT and EQAO tests from previous years to

see if my plan has made a direct impact on student learning. In addition, teachers can incorporate formative assessment on self-directed PD days.

**Key stakeholders and resources for teachers.** Implementing change will be offered at the department level and consist of informing teachers about how to create a thinking class (Gini-Newman & Case, 2018). Zenzi (1998) suggested that “action researchers need to discuss with their constituencies the role of classroom inquiry in their professional lives” (p. 17). This approach will allow me to have the most outreach because I can present this information at future PD meetings and PLC days.

### **Limitations**

The first limitation for this change implementation is the difficulty in measuring teacher “buy-in” when presented with information relating to critical pedagogy. To help mitigate this, I will reinforce the use of formative assessments using the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010), as it is the main resource that teachers consult regarding assessments. The second limitation is measuring the impact of student empowerment through formative assessments. When applied to classroom practice, educational philosophy can be hard to measure quantitatively. For this reason, student surveys will be introduced at the conclusion of each course, so we may have data points to help progress the use of formative assessments.

In summary, change implementation will be a two-fold process requiring me to create consensus around formative assessments and infuse critical pedagogy within classroom practices.

### **Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation**

This section will discuss the importance of monitoring and evaluating the change process within the organization. According to Cawsey et al. (2016), “the identification of the direction and the initial steps allow an organization to begin the journey. Effective monitoring and management processes allow leaders to make adjustments as they move forward” (p. 89). I will need to identify operational problems and monitor my change implementation plan (Duck, 2001). Cawsey et al. (2016) propose assessing progress at specified intervals and evaluating the change initiative’s impact. Selected tools will help to measure, track and gauge the process of change. Cawsey et al. (2016) recommended that organizations use a systematic evaluation of past decisions, practices, and behaviours. Evaluating the change process will help in the alignment of the organization’s culture and vision (Cawsey et al., 2016). From a critical lens, monitoring change requires teachers to feel empowered because “to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects” (Freire, 2002, p. 85). For this reason, “measurement and control systems incorporated into change initiatives can clarify expected outcomes and enhance accountability” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 340).

This section will focus on developing a diagnostic control system to help “change agents understand critical performance variables and milestones and modify their approach to encourage desired behaviors and outcomes while discouraging dysfunctional ones” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 350). I will describe my PDSA (Plan-Do-Stay-Act) model in relation to the goals proposed by my OIP. Changing beliefs regarding formative assessments will play a large role in monitoring the change process. According to Guskey (2002), “these improvements typically result from changes teachers have made in their



classroom practices—a new instructional approach, the use of new materials or curricula, or simply a modification in teaching procedures or classroom format” (p. 383). Through this process, I will be using interactive controls that obtain feedback regarding the success of change initiative relative to the environmental factors (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 351). In addition, I will use Guskey’s Model of Teacher Change (Guskey, 2002) to guide me through the monitoring and evaluation process. This model will allow teachers to learn about assessment practices through collaboration and sharing of resources. In Guskey’s (2002) model, “professional development programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students” (p. 381). Figure 5 summarizes the tools I intend to use during each stage of Guskey’s Model of Teacher Change (2002). I will first describe my PDSA model and then describe the tools I intend to use during the change process monitoring and evaluation process.

### **PDSA Cycle**

Actualizing the change implementation plan will require chronological steps. For this reason, I will use a PDSA (Plan-Do-Stay-Act) cycle to help facilitate change within the organization. According to Donnelly and Kirk (2015), the PDSA cycle “tells us that small incremental changes within a complex system are more likely to be effective in producing overall effective outcomes. It is possible to enter an almost constant cycle of small changes” (p. 280). This model will help identify key objectives required before monitoring change.

Table 10 provides a summary of my model and how I plan to achieve the goals as defined by my OIP. The two goals that will be evaluated by the PDSA Cycle are creating

consensus around formative assessment use and infusing critical pedagogy within business course assessments. Leaders, in spite of their fundamental and indispensable role, do not own the people and have no right to steer people blindly towards their salvation (Freire, 2002). Through these incremental changes, my OIP will help students and inform teachers of empowering assessment practices. According to Freire (2002), “without this faith in people, dialogue is a farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation” (p. 91).

Table 10

*Summary Table of PDSA Objectives*

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plan</b>	<b>Do</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Act</b>
<b>Goal #1:</b> Creating consensus around Formative Assessments	- Create information sessions for formative assessments	- Create a culture of collaboration within department	- Look for evidence to suggest downfalls of overusing summative assessment and the empowering effects of formative assessments	- How have department teachers adapted formative assessments within their classrooms?
<b>Goal #2:</b> Infusing Critical Pedagogy within Department Assessments	- Help create course outlines, and infuse classroom teaching practices with critical pedagogy	- Incorporate critical pedagogy into department SIPs	- Provide teachers with concrete examples of visible learning (Hattie, 2012)	- How does critical pedagogy infused assessments help student achievement?

Both goals mentioned above will require cooperation and collective efficacy within the business department. According to Ramazan and Hanifi (2018), “with changing conditions, it can sometimes be difficult to live a good quality life, and people then have to find a wide range of solutions to their problems. This requires individuals to be more bound to common goals” (p. 554). Freire (2002) agreed that “leaders must

believe in the potentialities of the people, whom they cannot treat as mere objects of their own actions; they must believe that the people are capable of participating in the pursuit of liberation” (p. 169). Change will be propelled as new attitudes about formative assessments are provided.

### **Goal One: Creating Organizational Consensus**

The first goal deals with increasing the use of formative assessments within the business department of School X. Donnelly and Kirk (2015) describe the importance of having an aimed statement during the *plan* stage, which outlines what I am trying to achieve. Building confidence around the use of formative assessment can be achieved using collaborative practices in department meetings and PLCs. Stewart (2008) reported that “instead of empowering select individuals, the organization becomes empowered as a collective unit” (p. 19). Freire (2002) echoed that, “founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence” (p. 91). According to Cawsey et al. (2016), “there is a need to think with others in a reflective way to see change happen. To do this, an individual needs to understand what the group thinks and why. The group then needs to identify its shared assumptions, seek information, and develop a mutual understanding of the current reality” (p. 267). I plan to share information about formative assessments to fellow teachers and encourage them to reflect on how they currently use (or do not use) formative assessments.

In addition, I will create more opportunities for collaboration within the department, where teachers can share their assessment ideas. By doing this, I can create opportunities for transformational innovation (Mertler, 2017). This approach aligns with

my agency as a teacher because, through this mutual learning opportunity, I can have the greatest outreach to those in my department. Mertler (2017) believes that “the true benefit of engaging in this process of transformational innovation is that it empowers educators at all levels to design, implement, and evaluate innovations at a grassroots level, and to learn and grow from engaging in this type of professional experience” (p. 53). For this reason, collaboration among teachers will provide a practical form of professional development regarding the use of formative assessments.

According to Donnelly and Kirk (2015), *study* is about analyzing your data and the process itself. I will provide teachers with evidence about the oppressive qualities of summative assessments. For example:

The way schools organize learning within uniform time blocks—daily, weekly, and semester schedules—is an example of how a one-size-fits-all learning schedule benefits the quick student and leaves the slower student struggling to stay up with the class, seldom enjoying a clear enough understanding of the material to move with confidence to the next unit. One teacher fits all 20 students; one textbook fits all; one assessment system fits all. (Starratt, 2008, p. 129)

I can present these findings through a critical lens by analyzing student feedback surveys and teacher surveys. This step of the PDSA model is to emphasize the importance of critical thinking within the classroom. Freire (2002) believed that “a deepened consciousness of their situation leads people to apprehend that situation as a historical reality susceptible of transformation” (p. 85).

The final step of the PDSA model includes the ability to act, in which I have to consider what measures and procedures are in place to ensure that whatever solution or solutions I have realized remain effective (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). After providing information about formative assessment using PLCs and departmental staff meetings, I will determine how successful teachers are at implementing formative assessments within

their classrooms. This will be assessed through teacher feedback surveys once my change implementation plan has been fulfilled. Cawsey et al. (2016) mentioned, “if change teams can be developed that are self-regulating or self-managed, change can often be facilitated because teams leverage the change leader’s reach” (p. 280). For this reason, I will follow up with department teachers after the change implementation plan.

### **Goal Two: Infusing Critical Pedagogy**

Infusing critical pedagogy within classroom assessment is a major goal of my OIP. Throughout each stage, I will communicate the importance of critical pedagogy. For example, Cawsey et al. (2016) propose that “change communication needs to be two-way, as change leaders need to be open to learning as much from exchanges as followers” (p. 242). For this reason, I will communicate the importance of critical pedagogy through a monthly resource email or newsletter to remind department teachers. A balance will be struck between teacher assessment planning and student empowerment. Freire (2002) explained that “to divide the oppressed, an ideology of oppression is indispensable. In contrast, achieving their unity requires a form of cultural action through which they come to know the why and how of their adhesion to reality—it requires de-ideologizing” (p. 173). The next section will outline monitoring the change process.

### **Change Process Monitoring**

Organizational change requires that I monitor the change process at different stages (Cawsey et al., 2016). As outlined in Figure 5, monitoring can be accomplished through staff development and classroom practices. Monitoring staff development will occur through teacher engagement, sharing of formative assessment resources, and using Stages of Concern (SoC).

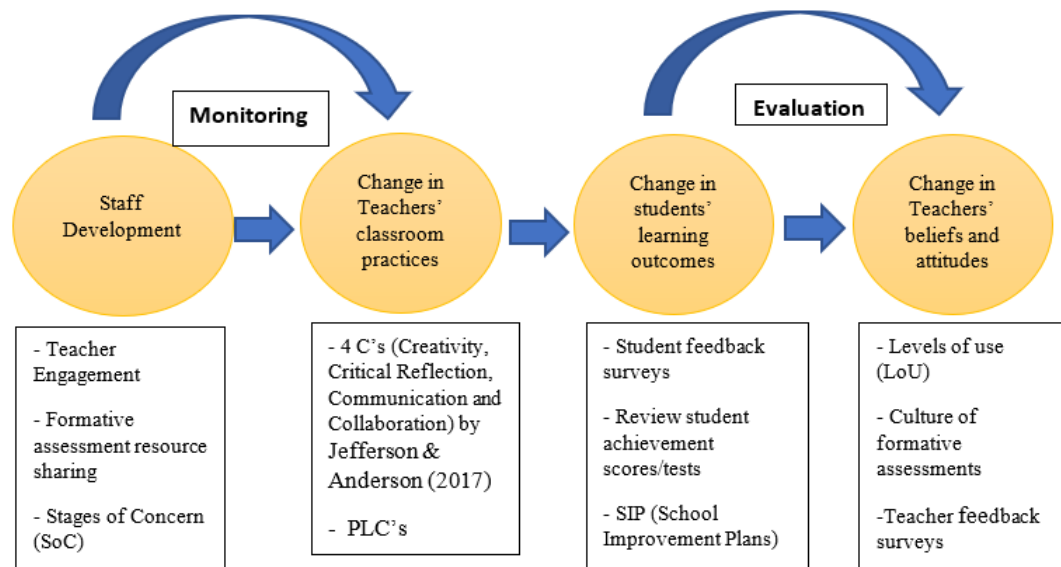


Figure 5. Summary of Monitoring and Evaluation Process. Adapted from “Professional Development and Teacher Change,” by T. Guskey, *Teachers and Teaching*, 8(3), 381–391. Copyright 2002. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>

According to Guskey (2002), “what attracts teachers to professional development, therefore, is their belief that it will expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth, and enhance their effectiveness with students” (p. 382). Therefore, I will monitor teacher engagement, teacher collaboration, and the sharing of formative assessments within the department. As Jefferson and Anderson (2017) suggested, “we all need to work to change the outmoded structures of schools and replace them with new ways of doing school that are a ‘fit’ for the times” (p. 9). Teachers must implement a “radical pedagogy that should “never make any concessions to the trickeries of neoliberal ‘pragmatism,’ which reduces the educational practice to the technical-scientific training of learners, *training* rather than *educating*” (Freire, 2004, p. 19). In addition, the teacher change model “is predicated on the idea that change is primarily an experientially based learning process for teachers. Practices that are found to work—that is, those that teachers find useful in helping students attain desired learning outcomes—are retained and

repeated” (Guskey, 2002, p. 384). Creating a dialogue between teachers will play a key role in assessment development. According to Ramazan and Hanifi (2018), “teachers’ beliefs regarding planning and implementing activities to increase student achievement at school can enable them to make more effort to improve student learning” (p. 554). For this reason, all teachers within the department should engage in co-constructing effective formative assessments.

**Staff development.** Monitoring staff development is an important stage of the change implementation process because “teacher commitment was found to develop primarily after implementation took place” (Guskey, 2002, p. 385). Monitoring teacher engagement is important because “communication with people is more effective when people perceive that the change agent is similar to theirs, such as values, education, and beliefs” (Kang, 2015, p. 30). Engagement will be monitored through surveys to ensure teachers use formative assessments using a critical paradigm. According to Dudar, Scott, and Scott (2017), “educators and leaders are frequently blamed when a change fails with the assumption that teachers are resistant to change, unwilling to engage with anything new or different, or cannot change” (p. 48). Consequently, teachers must engage with critical pedagogy within the classroom and frame this type of student learning as promoting social justice. According to Starratt (2008), all teachers should “insist that students take away from their learning important life lessons that will shape how they look upon the natural, cultural, and social worlds, and appreciate the human adventure more deeply because of their studies” (p. 128). Freire (2002) stated that “the starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people” (p. 96).

Overusing summative assessments exposes “the official curriculum’s complicity with neocolonial domination and exploitation [and] we know that failing to prepare students in the mastery of this curriculum only sets them up for academic failure and its related social consequences” (Trifonas, 2003, p. 34).

Creating a sharing platform within the department will allow teachers to share existing formative assessments. I will create a shared “cloud drive” that can be accessed online using the Google platform. This formative assessment bank will provide teachers with greater opportunities to improve and update their assessments. According to Freire (2004),

our presence in the world, which implies choice and decision, is not a neutral presence. The ability to observe, to compare, and to evaluate, in order to choose, through deciding, how one is to intervene in the life of the city and thus exercise one’s citizenship, arises then as a fundamental competency. (p. 7)

In this situation, monitoring the sharing of assessment resources will reduce the isolation of teaching and engage in activities that provide intellectual stimulation, both of which can be a welcome relief within a teacher’s day (Dudar et al., 2017, p. 49). In addition, it will help by improving the design and performance of a program during its implementation and allow me to make overall judgements of the quality and importance of formative assessments (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016).

The tool to measure staff development will be Hall and Hord’s (2006) Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM). The stages of concern (SoC) dimension utilized within the CBAM model can be monitored through a survey at the end of each academic semester. The SoC dimension examines how individuals are reacting to the change and what concerns they have (Dudar et al., 2017). A survey will allow me to monitor how engaged teachers are in their use of formative assessments through resource sharing.



According to Markiewicz and Patrick (2016), “using the results generated by monitoring and evaluation to inform decisions such as on program design, resource allocation, program direction, and program continuation” (p. 5) can help with future decision-making. Through an anonymous online questionnaire, teachers can voice their concerns regarding the use of formative assessments and provide suggestions for improvement.

### **Change in Classroom Practices**

According to Markiewicz and Patrick (2016), “the monitoring and evaluation framework does not ‘institutionalize’ performance indicators, baselines, and targets as the sole measures employed but rather uses them judiciously alongside other measures” (p. 8). My agency within the organization is to help teachers incorporate more formative assessments in their daily teaching practice. This approach is important because “only teacher-student interactions generate maximum identity investment on the part of students, together with maximum cognitive engagement, are likely to be effective in promoting achievement” (Trifonas, 2013, p. 51).

By using Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), I can monitor how well teachers collaborate in creating critical thinking classrooms. PLCs are scheduled monthly in School X. According to Dufour, Dufour, and Eaker (2008), a professional learning community requires “educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve” (p. 14). My agency as a teacher dictates that these PLCs are structured around classroom practice. Mertler (2017) promoted the idea that “professional learning is literally ‘embedded’ within the scope and actual setting of an individual’s classroom or school provides the potential for a much greater degree of professional

growth” (p. 33). For this reason, PLCs will occur at the departmental level to ensure adequate monitoring.

The purpose of facilitating PLCs is to ensure department teachers can reflect on improving assessments for future course offerings. I will monitor the “4 Cs” described by Jefferson and Anderson (2017): creativity, critical reflection, communication, and collaboration. By monitoring these core learning components, I can ensure critical pedagogy is embedded in formative assessments. Creativity is “to imagine and problem-solve with possibilities by exploring the usual and unexpected. It is not to fear failure, to learn from mistakes and to know there is a creative solution to everything.” (Jefferson & Anderson, 2017, p. 34). Creativity can empower students, and PLCs will provide teachers with opportunities to share ideas about how to incorporate this dimension into their formative assessments. Students are required to express their creativity through assessment because “well-behaved children with their heads down, are submissive and can do nothing” (Freire, 2004, p. 10). In addition, monitoring the use of critical reflection within the classroom will enable me to monitor the integration of formative assessments within the department. According to Jefferson and Anderson (2017), “critical reflection is for all voices to question, elaborate and explain ideas. To develop critical reflection, learners must have a meta-awareness of its capacity and challenges” (p. 34). Robinson and Aronica (2015) argued that “creative work in any domain involves increasing control of the knowledge, concepts and practices that have shaped that domain and a deepening understanding of the traditions and achievements in which it is based” (p. 103).

Communication and collaboration among teachers will be monitored through the use of PLCs. Jefferson and Anderson (2017) described communication as about

empowering and respecting all voices as authentic. This is an important aspect in the development of formative assessment because teachers need to monitor how much they involve their students in the creation of assessments. According to Freire (2002), the teacher “is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow” (p. 80). PLCs will allow teachers to monitor how the implementation of formative assessments is progressing. In a PLC, “collaboration is no more or no less important than the shared vision, commitments, and goals. They must go hand-in-hand; one must support the others, and vice versa” (Jefferson & Anderson, 2017, p. 36). The next section will discuss ways to evaluate the change process.

### **Change Process Evaluation**

According to the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010), evaluation is the process of judging quality based on established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality. Cawsey et al. (2016) agreed that organizations require systematic evaluations of past decisions, practices, and behaviours.

### **Changes in Learning Outcomes**

Formative assessments are the most meaningful when they are student-centred. Robinson and Aronica (2015) stated: “young children have a ready appetite to explore whatever draws their interests. When their curiosity is engaged, they will learn from themselves, from each other, and from any source they can lay their hands on” (p. 135). For this reason, to evaluate the quality of formative assessments used, a student feedback survey will be emailed to students at the end of each semester. I will also monitor student

achievement through test scores from the EQAO and OSSTL tests, which are published by the provincial government. Student feedback will empower students because they can express what they expect in achieving their learning goals. Freire (2004) argued for student autonomy by emphasizing that “only unfinished beings, but ones that also come to know themselves as unfinished, can create the very history where they socially make and remake themselves” (p. 106).

SIPs will act as a tool to evaluate students learning outcomes. Since these are completed within the business department every year, teachers can determine what formative assessment approaches are working and evaluate future assessment goals for the next school year. As Robinson and Aronica (2015) have suggested, “we are all social beings. We live in the company of others” (p. 138). SIPs will allow teachers to collaborate and evaluate the goals set out in the previous year relating to formative assessments used in the class.

### **Change in Beliefs and Attitudes**

Lastly, my OIP will evaluate changes in teacher beliefs and attitudes regarding the use of formative assessments. I will demonstrate the importance of critical pedagogy in formative assessments and communicate the importance of empowering students through assessments. Cawsey et al. (2016) argued that “actions that created reasons for hope and reinforced the development and strengthening of new cultural beliefs ensured that the organization would continue its journey in a positive direction and wouldn’t regress to old patterns” (p. 117). Freire (2002) believed in the importance of changing the dominant practice because “even revolution, which transforms a concrete situation of oppression by establishing the process of liberation, must confront this phenomenon” (p. 46). For this

reason, the creation of a department culture that values the uses of formative assessments will be evaluated.

To evaluate the prevalence of formative assessments, I will consider Levels of Use (LoU), which is a dimension of the CBAM model. According to Dudar et al. (2017), “LoU address what participants are actually doing or not doing to change or to adopt an innovation” (p. 56). Using teacher feedback surveys, I will evaluate how teachers are implementing formative assessments within their classes. The shift in beliefs about assessments can be evaluated by teachers reporting and sharing their formative assessments within the department. According to Ramazan and Hanifi (2018), “teachers’ sharing their beliefs of competence at school shapes other teachers’ self-efficacy perceptions. In this way, teachers can model others’ successful experiences” (p. 560). Teacher feedback surveys will allow teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing formative assessments within their classrooms. The tools mentioned above will enable me to monitor and evaluate the change process. The following section will discuss how to communicate the change plan within the business department.

### **Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and Change Process**

#### **Communication Plan**

My OIP consists of a communication plan that aligns with Duck’s (2001) five-stage Change Curve. Cawsey et al. (2016) argued that “communication programs need to explain the issues and provide a clear, compelling rationale for the change. If a strong and credible sense of urgency and enthusiasm for the initiative isn’t conveyed, the initiative will not move forward” (p. 321). In designing a communication plan, I will ensure that a critical pedagogical approach is included in my plan. The focus of my communication

plan is to demonstrate how formative assessments infused with critical pedagogy can help empower students, create opportunities for social justice, and lead to better indicators of student achievement. According to Cummins (2003), “only teacher-student interactions that generate maximum identity investment on the part of students. Together with maximum cognitive engagement, are likely to be effective in promoting achievement” (p. 51). To ensure teachers are collaborating, “change communication needs to be two-way, as change leaders need to be open to learning as much from exchanges as followers” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 242).

I will communicate the importance of using formative assessments that encourage critical thinking within students. Hattie (2012) argued that formative evaluation can be used to understand how students are learning and ensure assessments in the class are appropriate to the desired level of conceptual learning. Table 11 summarizes what I intend to accomplish during each change stage. In addition, I will provide a timeline at each stage to ensure I communicate change in a timely manner.

Table 11

*Summary of Communication Plan*

<b>Stagnation</b>  - Assessment & Critical Pedagogy Awareness	<b>Preparation &amp; Implementation</b>  - Teacher Involvement & Mobilization of resources  - Horizontal communication with Assisted Curriculum Leader (ACL) and Curriculum Leaders (CL)	<b>Determination &amp; Fruition</b>  - Communicate Formative Assessment and Social Justice through redesign of course outlines
<b>Artifacts:</b>  -Informational Poster -Informational Website	<b>Artifacts:</b>  - Become an advocate at staff meetings - Share formative assessments within department - Student Surveys - Teacher Surveys	<b>Artifacts:</b>  - Create report formative assessment used using teacher feedback surveys
September 2020 – November 2020	November 2020 – March 2021	March 2021 – June 2021

**Communication at the stagnation stage.** As described above in Table 11, when communicating during the *stagnation* stage, I will emphasize using formative assessments in conjunction with critical pedagogy. In doing so, I will further communicate how this can empower students at School X. After consulting with teachers, I will create informational artifacts in the form of an informational poster and website describing critical pedagogy. According to Clark (2012), formative assessments should be viewed as a complex and dynamic process, tailored for the turbulent and unpredictable nature of learning. Freire (2002) effectively explained, “as they do this, they begin to see how they themselves acted while actually experiencing the situation they are now analyzing, and thus reach a ‘perception of their previous perception’” (p. 115). Heide, Von Platen, Simonsson, and Falkheimer (2018) acknowledged that “scholars as well as

professional communicators need to pay closer attention to coworkers' communication and how organizational strategic communication essentially relies upon all members' communication activities and capability" (p. 464).

As a teacher in the business department, my agency requires me to address the PoP through partnering with colleagues. For this reason, change approaches used with teachers must parallel class practices. Collaborative learning is an approach that will be used in PLCs and can be implemented in the classroom as well. According to Chen (2016), collaborative learning is an instructional method where a group of people work together to achieve common objectives. Communicating change among teachers within the department is crucial, and this approach allows for reciprocity among teachers. Freire (2004) presented an effective interpretation of this by stating that in order to adapt "to objective reality, human beings prepare to transform it" (p. 106).

After receiving teacher feedback surveys, I will arrange a time during PLCs to discuss strategies used for implementing formative assessments and, through a collaborative learning environment, teachers will be able to share their experiences. According to Jeong and Hmelo-Silver, (2016), collaboration, by definition, means that partners work toward a shared goal and co-construct something new. PLCs will allow teachers to enhance their dialogue regarding how to use formative assessments and "their transformation (development) occurs in their own existential time, never outside it" (Freire, 2002, p. 161). In staff meetings, I will be able to communicate the change implementation plan and have teachers collaborate in creating formative assessments. According to Dudar et al. (2017) "harnessing the power of teachers to learn from each other, to focus on student learning in a collective effort, and to reflect about their



individual and collective influence over student learning” (p. 64) will lead to changed teaching behaviours.

Klein (1996) presented ample evidence that face-to-face communication is a “two-way give and take that encourages involvement in the process. It also clarifies ambiguities and increases the probability that the sender and the receiver are connecting appropriately” (p. 34). Cawsey et al.’s (2016) interpretation of communication proved that “messages should raise awareness of the need for change, set out the vision for the change, and provide access to thought-provoking information and images that support the initiative” (p. 315). I will communicate change by discussing the importance of formative assessments at department meetings and when discussing SIPs. Heide et al. (2018) affirmed: “we understand communication as a perspective or lens that can help researchers to understand organizational processes and actions” (p. 456). The artifacts I intend to use to help communicate change during this stage will be informational posters and websites. I will begin distributing these materials from September 2020 to November 2020.

**Communication at the preparation and implementation stage.** This stage requires communication that increases teacher involvement in the creation of formative assessments and mobilizing assessment resources. Communication at this stage will focus on empowering teachers and allowing them to collaborate in creating new formative assessments from past experiences. I will communicate the importance of teachers making their students think critically using formative assessments. To this end, I will use Armenakis and Harris’s (2002) communication domain of personal valence. Changes that are to be implemented need to reveal that there is some added value to the members of

the change target (Armenkis & Harris, 2002). Using student feedback, teachers see how students feel about the use of formative assessment and further improve upon their instruction practices. Communicating the positive effects of formative assessments will help to mitigate resistance to change.

As my agency dictates, I must acknowledge the experiences of teachers within the department. With a combined total of over 40 years of teaching within School X, it is important that teachers share their experiences. According to Dudar et al. (2017) “through teachers’ choices they can motivate students to engage with learning, create positive learning opportunities that can expand students’ discipline and general skills, reinforce students’ perceptions of fair and useful assessments, and foster a passion for learning” (p. 60). PLCs will allow department teachers to cooperate and discover ways to implement formative assessment. Through the sharing of experiences, I can communicate the change plan through cooperation within the business department. According to Freire (2002), “cooperation, as a characteristic of dialogical action—which occurs only among subjects (who may, however, have diverse levels of function and thus responsibility)—can only be achieved through communication” (p. 168). Using learning coaches and PLCs, teachers will be able to share their experiences with formative assessments and communicate ways to improve assessments within the department.

I will communicate change to the department CLs and ACLs. Armenkis and Harris (2002) presented the interpretation that “self-discovery, when combined with the symbolic meaning of organizational leaders demonstrating their confidence in the wisdom of employees (through participation), can produce a genuine feeling of a partnership” (p. 172). The artifacts I intend to use to communicate the need for change

will be my physical presence at department meetings as an advocate of critical pedagogy. I will also begin to compile and share existing formative assessments for teachers to use. This communication plan will take place from November 2020 to March 2021.

**Communication at the determination and fruition stages.** Finally, during the determination and fruition stages, communication will encourage business teachers to update course outlines to include greater formative assessment opportunities for students. As a classroom teacher, my agency requires direct involvement with students. In order to communicate change with teachers in my department, I will communicate change using experiential classrooms, in which I will invite teachers to audit classes I teach. Dudar et al. (2017) demonstrated “the effectiveness of collegial support structures; hence distributed leadership in the form of facilitators, coaches, and mentors’ yields gains in teacher change and consequential student achievement” (p. 66). Guthrie (2012) confirmed that “leadership educators have the opportunity to guide students from merely participating in activities to making meaning of their experiences. In this reflective process, students can better understand themselves and their role in the leadership process” (p. 59). An experiential approach to learning through the auditing of classes will help teachers become engaged in discovering ways to implement formative assessments within the classroom.

According to Freire (2002), “instead of following predetermined plans, leaders and people, mutually identified, together create the guidelines of their action” (p. 181). I will communicate how formative assessments empower students through PLCs and analyzing the results of student feedback surveys. Clark (2012) argued that “the whole point of collecting evidence of learning is to then use it diagnostically to ascertain

students' existing knowledge and then plan next steps for individual learning progressions" (p. 34). For this reason, PLCs will focus on updating course outlines to include formative assessments that embed critical thinking questions. Freire's (2002) interpretation of student empowerment is relevant to formative assessment because "new perception and knowledge are systematically continued with the inauguration of the educational plan, which transforms the untested feasibility into testing action, as potential consciousness supersedes real consciousness" (p. 115). PLCs will allow me to focus on specific details of implementing formative assessment in a collaborative environment.

During this stage, the change process moves from an abstraction with theoretical outcomes to reality with very practical outcomes (Klein, 1996). Through teacher collaboration within PLCs, I can communicate the change plan via the mutual sharing of ideas regarding formative assessments. During these collaborative sessions, I will stress the importance of efficacy. Armenkis and Harris (2002) emphasized that "if individuals do not have the confidence to embrace a new way of operating, then an organizational change will be difficult, at best" (p. 177). Using the results from the teacher feedback surveys, I will generate a report to gauge how teachers feel about implementing formative assessments within their classes.

In order to ensure my change plan is accomplished in a timely manner, I will complete it within the academic school year. In developing this timeline, I used a critical path method (Cawsey et al., 2016). According to Cawsey et al. (2016), "critical path methods ask planners to identify when the project should be completed and to work backward from that point, scheduling all tasks that will require time, effort and resources"

(p. 312). The next section will discuss conclusions, the next steps, and future considerations for my OIP.

### **Chapter 3 Conclusion**

This OIP was written to assist the business department at School X to improve assessment practices. As Freire (2002) explained, “manipulation, like the conquest whose objectives it serves, attempts to anesthetize the people so they will not think” (p. 149). The overarching theme that resonates throughout my OIP is to empower those who do not have a voice and use formative assessments as a tool to help students. To help facilitate this change, my OIP discussed the following: (1) how summative assessments can be oppressive to the student population within School X; (2) implementing formative assessment practices through the lens of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002); and (3) implementing change using Duck’s (2001) five-stage Change Curve.

In addition, a detailed communication plan was outlined to ensure changes are carried out within a reasonable time frame. As my agency dictates, this OIP deals with communicating and implementing change at the micro-level, but to help my change plan flourish, I will need to facilitate a change plan for all departments within School X. This will be the next objective of my OIP cycle of change. Cawsey et al. (2016) suggested that “when considering your communication plan and use of influence strategies, think about who you are communicating with and never underestimate the importance of the reputation (including their competence and trustworthiness) of those who are the face and voice of the change initiative” (p. 324). From a critical lens, my change plan must be able to empower others and inspire teachers to see their classroom assessment practices as a tool to perpetuate learners who can change their surrounding communities. For this

reason, a transformational leadership framework (Leithwood & Sun, 2012) is used because it suggests that “in the case of school leaders, an unrelenting demand to focus on improving the achievement of all students makes contemporary school leaders’ attention to instructional quality the highest priority for their work” (p. 440). Three next steps will be described below.

### **Next Steps and Future Considerations**

In the process of writing this OIP, some guiding questions emerged from my PoP in Chapter 1. These guiding questions were: (a) Are teachers aware of the anti-oppressive effects of formative assessments?; (b) What past and current opportunities are available for teachers to engage in professional learning about balanced assessments? As indicated in my change implementation plan in Chapter 2, my approach was a two-fold process to address these questions. By informing teachers about the oppressive effects of summative assessments, I can help inspire change through a student-centric approach.

The next step for my OIP is to facilitate my change implementation plan beyond the business department and throughout the entire school. I would like to present the findings from feedback surveys from students and teachers to my school’s administration team and propose that PD opportunities be provided to all staff at School X. Duck’s (2002) analysis of organizational change explains “when a company comes through a transition successfully, the entire organization benefits in renewed pride, confidence, and a sense of control” (p. 273). Implementing my change plan school-wide will see the use of formative assessment flourish well into the future. Although the *Growing Success* document (Ministry of Education, 2010) has been instrumental in clarifying the

assessment procedures in Ontario, I hope to implement my change plan at the school level and help inspire change at the policy level.

The final step, as a classroom teacher, is to see firsthand how daily interactions with students can make a difference in student achievement. Consequently, improving assessment and becoming an advocate of critical learning is another next step for my OIP. Heide et al. (2018) emphasized that researchers “adopt a more reflexive and critical approach to core concepts such as strategy, communication, and organization, and embrace the fact that organizational life is messy and nonrational” (p. 406). I would like to expand the reach of my change implementation plan beyond the business classroom. What does formative assessment look like in other subjects such as math, science, English, and physical education? How can I influence critical pedagogy in other subjects, outside my own area of expertise, which is business? My hypothesis is to give teachers the tools to become adaptive learners with the help of formative assessments, which can be applied across all subjects. Hattie (2012) believes that teachers are adaptive learning experts who know where students are on the continuum from novice to capable to proficient and who can create a classroom climate to attain specific learning goals. I would like to use concepts from my OIP in other courses.

For future consideration, I would like to explore how critical pedagogy in student learning is linked with teacher classroom practice. In constructing this OIP, I have discovered a common thread between improving critical thinking in students and improving the teaching profession. How can teachers take critical pedagogy to help reconceptualize their roles as learning advocators for their students? Freire (2002) explored how “the fear of freedom is greater still in professionals who have not yet

discovered for themselves the invasive nature of their action, and who are told that their action is dehumanizing” (p. 156). How can critical pedagogy be used in empowering teachers and students? Hattie (2012) highlighted that teacher and student adaptive experts see themselves as evaluators fundamentally engaged as thinkers and problem-solvers.

I would like this teacher-student link to lead to mutual learning opportunities. Critical pedagogy applied to teacher development has the potential for exploration in another future OIP. Without recognizing and acting upon the barriers students face, we will not be able to inspire change. Freire and Freire (1997) believed that “the world, in order to be, must be in the process of being” (p. 32). A future consideration for my OIP is to look at critical pedagogy and identify any effects on student motivation. Intrinsically motivated learning could be the root of student empowerment, which could prevent the status quo from being perpetuated.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Business Knowledge and Thinking Categories

Categories	50–59% (Level 1)	60–69% (Level 2)	70–79% (Level 3)	80–100% (Level 4)
<b>Knowledge &amp; Understanding:</b> <i>Subject-specific content in each course and the comprehension of its meaning and significance</i>				
<p>Knowledge of content (e.g., facts, terms, definitions, procedures)</p> <p>Understanding of content (e.g., concepts, principles, theories)</p>	<p>Demonstrates limited knowledge of content</p> <p>Demonstrates limited understanding of content</p>	<p>Demonstrates some knowledge of content</p> <p>Demonstrates some understanding of content</p>	<p>Demonstrates considerable knowledge of content</p> <p>Demonstrates considerable understanding of content</p>	<p>Demonstrates thorough knowledge of content</p> <p>Demonstrates thorough understanding of content</p>
<b>Thinking:</b> <i>The use of critical and creative thinking skills and/or processes</i>				
<p>Use of planning skills (e.g., focusing research, gathering information, selecting strategies, organizing a project)</p> <p>Use of critical/creative thinking processes (e.g., evaluation of business situations, problem solving, decision making, detecting bias, research)</p>	<p>Uses planning skills with limited effectiveness</p> <p>Uses critical/creative thinking processes with limited effectiveness</p>	<p>Uses planning skills with some effectiveness</p> <p>Uses critical/creative thinking processes with some effectiveness</p>	<p>Uses planning skills with considerable effectiveness</p> <p>Uses critical/creative thinking processes with considerable effectiveness</p>	<p>Uses planning skills with a high degree of effectiveness</p> <p>Uses critical/creative thinking processes with a high degree of effectiveness</p>

*Note.* Adapted from the Ministry of Education Ontario Business Studies Achievement Chart, *Business Studies: The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12*, Ministry of Education and Training, 2006. Copyright 2006, Ministry of Education and Training.

**Appendix B: K–12 School Effectiveness Framework: A Support for School Improvement and Student Success**



*Note.* Adapted from “K–12 School Effectiveness Framework: A Support for School Improvement and Student Success,” Ontario Leadership Framework, 2013. Retrieved January 12, 2020, from <https://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/en/resources/ontario-leadership-framework-olf>

**Appendix C: Change Readiness Questionnaire**

<b>Readiness Dimensions</b>	<b>Readiness Score</b>	<b>Section Total</b>
<b>Previous Change Experiences</b>		
<b>TOTAL = +2</b>		
1. Has the organization had generally positive experiences with change?	If yes, score +1	+1
2. Has the organization had recent failure experiences with change?	Score -1	0
3. What is the mood of the organization: upbeat and positive?	Score +1	+1
4. What is the mood of the organization: negative and cynical?	Score -2	0
5. Does the organization appear to be resting on its laurels?	Score - 1	-1
<b>Executive Support</b>		
<b>TOTAL = +2</b>		
6. Are senior managers directly involved in sponsoring the change?	Score +2	+2
7. Is there a clear picture of the future?	Score +1	0
8. Is executive success dependent on the change occurring?	Score +1	0
9. Has management ever demonstrated a lack of support?	Score -1	0
<b>Credible Leadership and Change Champions</b>		
<b>TOTAL = +6</b>		
10. Are senior leaders in the organization trusted?	Score +1	+1
11. Are senior leaders able to credibly show others how to achieve collective goals?	Score +1	+1
12. Is the organization able to attract and retain capable and respected change champions?	Score +2	0
13. Are middle managers able to effectively link senior managers with the rest of the organization?	Score +2	+2
14. Are Senior leaders likely to view the proposed change as generally appropriate for the organization?	Score +2	+2
15. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by the senior leaders?	Score +2	0
<b>Openness to Change</b>		
<b>TOTAL = +8</b>		
16. Does the organization have scanning mechanisms to monitor the environment?	Score +1	0
17. Is there a culture of scanning and paying attention to those scans?	Score +1	0
18. Does the organization have the ability to focus on root causes and recognize interdependencies both inside and outside the organization's boundaries?	Score +1	+1
19. Does "turf" protection exist in the organization?	Score -1	-1
20. Are the senior managers hidebound or locked into the use of past strategies, approaches, and solutions?	Score -1	0

21. Are employees able to constructively voice their concerns or support?	Score +1	+1
22. Is conflict dealt with openly, with a focus on resolution?	Score +1	+1
23. Is conflict suppressed and smoothed over?	Score -1	-1
24. Does the organization have a culture that is innovative and encourages innovative activities?	Score +1	0
25. Does the organization have communications channels that work effectively in all directions?	Score +1	+1
26. Will the proposed change be viewed as generally appropriate for the organization by those not in senior leadership roles?	Score +2	+2
27. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by those not in senior leadership roles?	Score +2	+2
28. Do those who will be affected believe they have the energy needed to undertake change?	Score +2	0
29. Do those who will be affected believe there will be access to sufficient resources to support the change?	Score +2	+2
<b>Rewards for Change</b>		<b>TOTALS = +1</b>
30. Does the reward system value innovation and change?	Score +1	+1
31. Does the reward system focus exclusively on short-term results?	Score -1	0
32. Are people censured for attempting change and failing?	Score -1	0
<b>Measures for Change and Accountability</b>		<b>TOTALS = +1</b>
33. Are there good measures available for assessing the need for change and tracking progress?	Score +1	0
34. Does the organization attend to the data that it collects?	Score +1	0
35. Does the organization measure and evaluate customer satisfaction?	Score +1	0
36. Is the organization able to carefully steward resources and successfully meet predetermined deadlines?	Score +1	+1
<b>OVERALL TOTAL = +20</b>		
The scores can range from -10 to +35		
The purpose of this tool is to raise awareness concerning readiness for change and is not meant to be used as a research tool.		
If the organization scores below 10, it is not likely ready for change and change will be difficult.		
The higher the score, the more ready the organization is for change. Use the scores to focus your attention on areas that need strengthening in order to improve readiness.		
Change is never “simple,” but when organizational factors supportive of change are in place, the task of the change agent is manageable.		

*Note.* Adapted from *Organizational Change: An Action-Oriented Toolkit* (3rd ed.), by T. F. Cawsey, G. Deszca, & C. Ingols, C., 2016. Copyright 2016 by Sage.



## Appendix D: An Action Framework for *Giving Voice to Values*: The To-Do List



UVA-OB-1110  
*Giving Voice to Values*  
 Rev. Sept. 2, 2016

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### An Action Framework for *Giving Voice to Values*: The To-Do List<sup>1</sup>

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*Giving Voice to Values* is about learning how to act on your values effectively—not about wondering whether you could.

#### Values

Know and appeal to a short list of widely shared values: for example, honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, and compassion.<sup>2</sup> In other words, don't assume too little—or too much—commonality with the viewpoints of others.

#### Choice

Believe you have a choice about voicing values by examining your own track record. Know what has enabled and disabled you in the past, so you can work with and around these factors. And recognize, respect, and appeal to the capacity for choice in others.

#### Normality

Expect values conflicts so that you can approach them calmly and competently. Overreaction can limit your choices unnecessarily.

#### Purpose

Define your personal and professional purposes explicitly and broadly before conflicts arise. What is the impact you most want to have? Similarly, appeal to a sense of purpose in others.

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<sup>1</sup> This material is part of the *Giving Voice to Values* (GVV) curriculum. The Yale School of Management was the founding partner, along with the Aspen Institute, which also served as the incubator for GVV. From 2009 to 2015, GVV was hosted and supported by Babson College.

<sup>2</sup> Rushworth M. Kidder, *Moral Courage: Taking Action When Your Values Are Put to the Test* (New York: William Morrow, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2005), 47.

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This field-based case was prepared by Mary Gentile, Professor of Practice. Names and other situational details have been disguised. It was written as a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation. Copyright © 2010 by Mary Gentile. All rights reserved. To order free copies, send an e-mail to [sales@dardenbusinesspublishing.com](mailto:sales@dardenbusinesspublishing.com). No part of this publication may be altered without permission.

**Self-Knowledge, Self-Image, and Alignment**

Generate a “self-story” about voicing and acting on your values that is consistent with who you are and that builds on your strengths. There are many ways to align your unique strengths and style with your values. If you view yourself as a “pragmatist,” for example, find a way to view voicing your values as pragmatic.

**Voice**

Practice voicing your values in front of respected peers, using the style of expression with which you are most skillful and which is most appropriate to the situation, and inviting coaching and feedback. You are more likely to say those words that you have pre-scripted for yourself and already heard yourself express.

**Reasons and Rationalizations**

Anticipate the typical rationalizations given for ethically questionable behavior and identify counterarguments. These rationalizations are predictable and vulnerable to reasoned responses.