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Addressing Issues of Trust and Power Gap by Empowering Middle Leaders in an Asian International School

David R. Butler
dbutle2@uwo.ca

Abstract

This Organizational Improvement Plan explores trust, leadership, and power at True North Academy (a pseudonym), which is a Canadian-themed international school in Asia. The Problem of Practice (PoP) recognizes a gap between the school's current collaborative practices and its aspirations of becoming a cutting-edge learning organization. Recent events, especially the global pandemic, have highlighted the school's reliance on traditional hierarchies and top-down decision-making. Unpopular decisions made without staff input have damaged teacher trust in the leadership, raised concerns of a staff exodus, and stalled the ongoing improvement of school programs. Within a theoretical framework of social constructivism, a plan is proposed to address the challenges posed by declining trust and a lingering power gap by exploring alternate approaches to decision-making within the senior school. Using a hybrid of Lewin's stage change model and Duck's five-stage change curve, the role of middle leaders will be broadened, empowering them as members of a more robust leadership team and in their interactions with their own followers. The solution described in this OIP is for middle leaders to build capacity by engaging in an ongoing plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycle in which they learn to work together effectively and model distributive leadership practices within their own professional teams. Supporting middle leaders in redefining their own roles will draw upon the principles of adaptive and situational approaches that focus on their individual readiness, capacity, and emotional needs to ensure a positive transition into a more dynamic and inclusive vision of school leadership.

Keywords: distributed leadership, international education, adaptive leadership, situational leadership, Lewin's stage model, Duck's five-stage change curve

Executive Summary

The importance of trust within organizations cannot be understated. Schein (2019) describes trust as followers feeling comfortable about openly sharing their opinions and acting independently to correct problems. Without trust, leaders and followers cannot effectively collaborate or support each other, and the organization suffers as a result (Mascall et al., 2008). This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is intended to provide a vision for re-thinking and revitalizing existing leadership structures by flattening hierarchies and ensuring more inclusive decision-making processes. Specifically, this OIP will address the relationships between power gaps, trust, and organizational capacity in a Canadian-themed international school in Asia.

The first chapter situates the Problem of Practice (PoP) within True North Academy (TNA, a pseudonym), which is an established fee-based international school that serves a diverse local and expatriate community within a competitive educational market. The analysis of this context is followed by a discussion of a leadership-focused vision for change, the drivers of change, and guiding questions that inform the OIP. The school's context is explored using a political, economic, social, and technological (PEST) analysis that focuses on the impact of regional and global pressures. The PoP is then framed using a conceptual framework that explores the elements of distributed leadership within a culture of accountability. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the school's readiness for change.

The PoP is explored using a social constructivist theoretical framework supported through adaptive and situational approaches to leadership. Viewing organizations through a social constructivist lens reveals institutional assumptions and behaviours that were collectively created, understood, and perpetuated by the people engaged in their work (Searle, 2005). Consequently, the status quo can be replaced by new ideas, goals, and behaviours if people can be mobilized into constructing new knowledge together (Barab & Duffy, 2012).

The leadership framework combines adaptive and situational approaches to leadership, both of which require the leader to focus on their followers as individuals. Applying situational leadership invites the leader to assess followers' capabilities and capacities, adjusting interactions with followers accordingly. Adaptive leadership requires the leader to empathize with followers as they adapt to meet challenges posed by changing conditions. If institutional leadership structures are going to change, then people need to change, and these approaches ensure that they are supported and nurtured throughout that process.

Chapter 2 elaborates on these leadership approaches to change, defining leadership distribution as an adaptive challenge and recognizing the differing situational readiness among TNA's middle leaders. Given these needs, a hybrid change model combining complementary elements of Lewin's three-stage change theory (Schein, 2019) and Duck's (2001) five-stage change curve is introduced to organize the process into precise steps. The need for change is then gauged by applying Nadler and Tushman's (1989) Congruence Model to identify key gaps between TNA's current and desired states. The change leader then introduces three potential change plans, assessing the potential boons and challenges of each within the school's unique context, ultimately combining two of those proposals into an integrated solution. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical issues relevant to the culture of the school, its staff, and the wider community.

In Chapter 3, the change improvement plan is described in detail, and organized by Lewin's three steps, which are subdivided to account for Duck's five stages, spread over a period of two school years. The plan will be monitored and evaluated using plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycles and a balanced scorecard for change (BSC) adapted from Kaplan and Norton (1996). Progress will be measured in delineated stages with quantitative growth goals and milestone achievements, with an emphasis on cyclical, continuous improvement

throughout the process. Next, a communication plan is developed to ensure that the information is disseminated, feedback received, and new knowledge is socialized throughout the period of change (Lewis, 2011). Resistance to change is anticipated and will be heard, with the understanding that resistance is also socially constructed, rooted in the perception of loss, and that adapting to cognitive conflict will ultimately improve the plan (Ford et al., 2008).

The OIP concludes by introducing potential next steps to further distribute leadership once the new leadership model has become the new normal. These steps include options such as fostering professional networking, incorporating student voices in operational decisions, or pursuing a broader model of teacher leadership within the school. Ideally, empowering middle leaders will launch the self-perpetuating innovation that is characteristic of dynamic learning organizations (Fullan et al., 2015). This means that further progress will not require an OIP or a change leader, and instead, will arise naturally from perpetual striving for improvement by collaborative leaders with common purpose.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Acronyms

BSC (Balanced Scorecard for Change)

IB (International Baccalaureate)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

PD (Professional Development)

PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act)

PEST (Political, Economic, Social, and Technological)

PLC (Professional Learning Community)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

TNA (True North Academy)

Chapter 1

Inspiring research literature in the field of educational leadership provides aspirational visions of vigorous, agile, and future-ready schools. In these depictions, utopian institutions are characterized by the efforts of highly cohesive staff united in the common goal of ongoing collective professional improvement. Mutual trust, flattened hierarchies, teacher agency, collaborative practice, and successful student outcomes are essential and intertwined (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). Given these factors, a school experiencing low teacher morale, declining trust in the administration, and a persistent power gap will struggle to evolve into an effective and cohesive learning organization. To address these issues, this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) will outline a specific leadership approach and change of plan to foster trust, improve collaboration, and broaden leadership within an international school.

Chapter 1 of this OIP provides a systemic introduction to the Problem of Practice (PoP). This will include a thorough analysis of the organizational context, including the school's mission, demographics, and a widening leadership crisis resulting from recent events. This chapter will also articulate and examine the change in a leader's institutional role, leadership lens, and conceptual framework for approaching the PoP. The PoP that drives this OIP will then be explored, including a description of the leadership-focus vision for change and an evaluation of the school's readiness for change.

Organizational Context

Context is key to understanding the persistence of traditional leadership structures in some international schools, despite the widespread implementation of distributed leadership models elsewhere. Many such schools operate on a small scale, such as a single school without sister institutions or board-level oversight, which answer to non-elected governing boards, or are run for profit by hands-on entrepreneurs. The independent nature of these schools frees them of the external policy requirements that mandate distributed leadership in

other jurisdictions like public school boards (Cambridge, 2013; Wilkinson & Wilkinson, 2013). As Pont et al. (2008) demonstrate, this autonomy from centralized state policy requirements combined with pressures of accountability means that international schools are driven by pragmatism. Therefore, they are more susceptible to flawed or faux distributions of leadership. Lacking external mandates, transformation of these schools thus requires an internally driven vision of leadership that addresses power gaps and inspires administrators and teachers with the organizational, professional, and personal benefits of change.

The Organization

True North Academy (TNA, a pseudonym) is a Canadian international school located in a cosmopolitan Asian city. The school is medium-sized by international school standards, serving over 1,800 students from pre-kindergarten through to grade 12. Clients include both local and expatriate families, though these distinctions become blurred given the prevalence of foreign passports among the local population. It attracts a wealthy and privileged clientele who expect graduates to matriculate into competitive foreign universities. Student turnover occurs as families come and go from the region, but in recent years more than half of the graduating class has attended the school since grade one or earlier. Retention of families has ensured financial stability, even as world events have threatened other international schools throughout the region; however, expatriate and local clients often hold contradictory expectations and priorities for schooling. This pattern, sometimes framed as progressive versus pragmatic, is common among international school communities in the postcolonial world (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Ledger et al., 2014).

The school utilizes the International Baccalaureate (IB) frameworks from grades one through 12, and nearly all students attempt the IB Diploma. Additionally, the school teaches the Ontario curriculum in grades nine through 12, with all graduating students receiving the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Tarc and Mishra Tarc (2015) describe the recent

phenomenon of international schools that formerly identified with British or American identities evolving into more explicitly internationalist institutions by shedding their nationally guided "Anglo-Western" elements (p. 36). The study specifically references the spread of the IB as a causal factor in this change, and TNA's experience validates this theory. Since adopting the IB over a decade ago, its Canadian identity has become tokenistic than programmatic, apart from the Ontario diploma in the senior school.

The faculty consists of experienced teachers, most of whom have Western teaching credentials. Authorization from the Ontario Ministry of Education requires 80% of high school teachers to be certified through the Ontario College of Teachers, resulting in a higher proportion of Canadian-trained teachers in the senior school. While nationally diverse, the faculty is overwhelmingly Western in outlook. Conversely, the school's governors are almost entirely members of the local population with corporate backgrounds. As Dimmock and Walker (2000) note, Eastern cultures hold different assumptions about hierarchy and compliance than Western cultures, and the conflict between these worldviews has become increasingly difficult to reconcile. These cultural fault lines have been tested by significant seismic events in recent years, reflecting both external pressures and internal missteps that have contributed to the PoP.

Vision, Mission, and Strategic Framework

The school's guiding statements were collaboratively developed several years ago through a representative process involving diverse stakeholders within the larger school community. The vision statement emphasizes outcomes such as academic excellence, character development, and community service. The mission statement outlines the approaches that the school utilizes to achieve this vision, specifying inquiry-based learning, creativity and innovation, and international mindedness.

The school's governors recently shared a strategic framework as successor to the former strategic plan (TNA, 2021). This document details the areas that the governors will prioritize in future years in support of the mission and vision. Notably, teacher input was absent from this process and the articulation of these priorities further demonstrates the internal divisions within the community. One example is an overt call for further emphasis on developing the IB programs within the school, with mention of the Ontario curriculum notable in its absence. The document includes an aim to place students at highly ranked universities, a priority of the governors that conflicts with the guidance department encouraging students to emphasize best-fit over name recognition. Howard and Maxwell (2021) demonstrate the same phenomenon in their study of an elite IB school in Taiwan, describing the conflicts between Eastern parents and Western educators over the school's university application philosophy. They conclude that both parties seek to support student success but are divergent on the importance of university branding to achieving that success. This has been an ongoing tension for years, and its inclusion in the framework this year has negatively impacted morale and retention of TNA's Western guidance counsellors. However, this example only constitutes a symptom of deeper divisions within the school. Understanding these divisions requires a more thorough analysis of TNA's organizational context.

PEST Analysis

One approach to exploring the need for an organization to adapt is to analyze the current political, economic, social, and technological (PEST) factors affecting it. Information yielded through the PEST analysis helps the organization to identify existing constraints and to make predictions about future opportunities and challenges should the operational environment change (Leyva et al., 2018). Understanding how external forces act to drive change can also provide a change leader with a mandate to initiate change within their

organization (Deszca et al., 2020). These environmental factors will be critical in addressing the PoP given TNA's vulnerability to the tumultuous external events that have disrupted the region and the world in recent years.

Political

TNA's host country has been plagued by social unrest in recent years, culminating in street violence and attacks on property. Attempts by the government to crush the movement further inflamed resistance and polarized public opinion, including the local families that make up a large proportion of the school's clientele, teaching faculty, and other staff. Despite TNA's official neutral stance, this issue created anxiety as the community was also divided on whether to continue normal operations amidst the threat of street violence. The administration had to balance the stakeholders' fears against the potential financial consequences of a non-mandated school closure. The region's political turmoil accelerated the departure of expatriate families, and student applications for elite boarding schools suddenly surged, raising fiscal concerns at TNA. Since 2020, this pattern has intensified as families and students have left the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The regional political turbulence meant that the school's administrators were constantly reacting to events as they unfolded, distracting them from the important but less urgent goals of elevating the school into a more successful learning organization. In classrooms, teachers expressed increasing discomfort at leading discussions about political issues—even in humanities classes—and local teachers with conflicting perspectives avoided each other. Amidst this turmoil, leaders have focused on sustaining the existing school culture rather than elevate it into something even better.

Economic

TNA operates in a competitive market that sits flush with international and private schools drawing from the same limited pool of students. The expatriate population has declined as families have left due to political upheaval and the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing the ability of remaining clients to push their own agendas through what Machin (2017) calls "the power of buyers" (p. 138). The high degree of substitutability between schools encourages ongoing comparisons of competing schools in terms of expense, perceived achievement, extra-curricular opportunities, etc., lending credibility to threats from parents to withdraw their children.

Many governments worldwide closed schools temporarily in 2020 and 2021 to curb the spread of COVID-19, but Asian governments were more cautious than others in reopening them (Hulshaf & Tapiola, 2021; Lee, 2021). In this country, details about how each school adjusted to the pandemic were widely shared among savvy parents who leveraged these details when demanding changes. An example in 2020 was the partial tuition refund to families after one school caved to parental insistence that they did not deliver full services during the pandemic conditions. Once that school broke ranks, others had no choice but to follow, costing TNA over CAD 2 million, even after having to invest in new premium software for teaching online. Moving forward, ensuring a sustainable financial future remains a priority within the school's strategic plan.

A consequence of this economic reality has been to prioritize fiscal restraint in subsequent school years. This has delayed some key initiatives that were designed to improve the school, such as renovating to create new classroom spaces and expanding the learning support program. Although many employee's salaries were frozen, the governors were wise enough to allow step increases for teachers, avoiding another potential revolt or exodus.

Social

A key social factor is the cultural divide between the governors and the teaching faculty. The board of governors consists of volunteer trustees, most with backgrounds in Asian corporate culture that typically values hierarchy, harmony, a high power-distance, and followers who prefer to be led (Hallinger & Truong, 2016). The governors' style contrasts with the predominantly Western teachers, who expect to act freely and autonomously without interference from above. Another issue is the privileged nature of the clientele: parents pay high fees and are quick to challenge the school's decisions. They include senior executives, corporate lawyers, and local socialites and celebrities, many of whom are used to their requests being met unquestioningly. Western staff coming to the school with different assumptions about power-distance, transparency, collaboration, and autonomy must adjust to the cultural reality.

The school's administrators are caught within this cultural divide. They are overwhelming Western in origin, but many have extensive experience working and leading schools within Asia. Those who are new to the region find themselves working directly with parents and governors and acclimatize quickly. Historically, this has resulted in a leadership structure that is more hierarchical than most Western schools, yet more consultative than local private schools. Major decisions are made by the senior leadership team with little transparency, delegating the challenges of implementation to staff committees to resolve. This approach appears to have evolved from the constant need by leaders to placate the two opposing groups. Governors express frustration as directives are delayed and tempered by administrators seeking to minimize teacher backlash towards unpopular policies. On the other hand, teachers are excluded from direct decision-making, lest they push the school in a different direction than the governors have chartered. Ultimately, it falls on the

administration to restore teacher trust, introduce broader collaboration, and help the faculty to better understand the complexities of the school community.

Technological

TNA promotes itself as a technologically innovative school and was better positioned than most to shift to a remote-learning environment during the pandemic. Despite these advantages, the scale of the shift further exacerbated tensions among stakeholders. The administration was bombarded with feedback from concerned parents who were dissatisfied with the implementation of remote learning and believed that their children's future test scores and university applications were compromised. Simultaneously, the teaching faculty reported feeling overwhelmed by adapting to a completely online platform without sufficient training or clear expectations from the administration. As the pandemic persisted, higher expectations for online learning raised concerns among teachers who were forced out of their professional comfort zones and suffering from excessive screen time (Curti et al., 2020; Svabo et al., 2022). These concerns would be addressed as the organization's capacity grew over time, but the initial suspicion by teachers that the school was placating parents at the cost of teacher wellness damaged their trust in the administration.

These struggles did achieve some positive outcomes for the school. For instance, teachers demonstrated tremendous flexibility as they transitioned back and forth between traditional, online, and hybrid teaching strategies. As with many educators, their collective skill set has grown, and most expect to incorporate more sophisticated online learning tools into their regular practice (Szabó et al., 2022). Apart from the issue of damaged trust, the pandemic experience has demonstrated that TNA's staff have the capability to be agile practitioners who possess the capacity for further growth through organizational change.

TNA has relied on its strong reputation and exemplary student achievement, but controversial responses to complex dilemmas have exposed vulnerabilities such as the internal cultural divide and hierarchical leadership structures. Teacher morale and trust in the administration have declined in response, putting the school's climate and mission at risk. The root of the discontent is not necessarily the decisions themselves, but the manner in which they were reached.

Leadership Position and Lens

Personal Leadership Position

As a change leader at TNA, I am one of three vice principals reporting directly to the senior school principal. In previous years, vice principals were members of the school's senior administrative team but have been excluded from those meetings since August 2019 when a new head of school implemented a more rigid leadership hierarchy. This limits my power and influence to the senior school, which serves students in grades six through 12. Within that subsection, I hold both positional power and relational influence with the faculty.

The actions of leaders are informed by both their personal internal perspectives as well as the school's organizational and external context (Harris et al., 2007). Considering the ethnic and cultural divides within TNA, I am a typical representative of the teaching faculty: anglophone, Caucasian, and Canadian, with prior experience teaching abroad and leading the IB. I am therefore more familiar with the assumptions and expectations of the faculty and expatriate families than with the governors, local staff, and local parents. However, acclimatization over the past six years has brought me new knowledge, understanding, and empathy for the values of Confucian-heritage families. I have come to understand that my identity conveys multiple privileges within this context: in a Canadian school I have the correct passport and licenses; in a postcolonial nation, my whiteness continues to equate status; and my masculinity reinforces my leadership role within a Confucian-heritage society.

This new learning has resulted from my social interactions in what Tarc and Mishra Tarc (2015) refer to as a "transnational space" (p. 37): a place where cultural cross-pollination among students and teachers has a transformational effect on identity and empathy.

Donnelly and Linn (2019) advocate for school leaders to apply metacognitive reflection to challenge themselves to identify their own biases and assumptions, which I strive to do. Walker and Riordan (2010) identify this critical self-awareness as the initial step in building collective capacity within a diverse staff. One starts by identifying their own value-laden assumptions and norms to better understand those of others and find common ground. The hierarchical nature of Asian society has been difficult to navigate. For example, soon after I joined the school, the head of guidance had to explain to me that I had offended a secretary by treating her as equal to the secretary that sits next to her. Although there is no significant difference in their title, pay grade, or even age, I had to understand that one is considered senior to the other, and that I need to exhibit respect for her status. An area where I have made greater progress has been my empathy for the value placed on traditional education by local families. Like the educators encountered by Bach and Christensen (2016) in their study of Singaporean "tiger parenting" (p. 135), I instinctively challenged local parents in their fixation on competitiveness, over-scheduling, and reliance on test scores. Although my belief that these qualities are harmful to students has not changed, I have learned to frame my conversations with parents in a more respectful manner, speaking directly to our shared goals for student success and the nuances of Western university admissions.

Reflections like these have helped me to understand and address challenges in staff morale at TNA, given the diverse nature of its international community and staff. Researchers appear to be in universal agreement regarding the essential role of trust in running effective schools, and this seems to transcend culture (Blasé and Blasé, 1999;

Dalakoura, 2010; Fleming, 2019; Ross et al., 2016). More problematic are the cultural distinctions regarding how trust is achieved, expressed, and maintained. In my own metacognitive reflection, I have become increasingly aware of internal expectations regarding what Walker and Riordan (2010) identify as Western educational priorities, including independence, agency, freedom of action, etc. It is therefore critical for me to guard against assumptions that promoting these values will contribute to trust among all in this Eastern context, where values of deference and collective harmony are ingrained.

Role in the Change Process

Since my agency is limited to the senior school, an avenue for targeted change could be the senior school's leadership team. The leadership team is a committee of 20 people consisting of the principal, vice principals, IB coordinators, department heads, and middle school grade level leaders. In recent years, the frequency of team meetings has declined, often only called together on an ad-hoc basis to offer some consultation on issues being made by the more senior leaders. As Fullan et al. (2015) outline, the leadership status quo is a barrier to TNA moving forward as a learning organization. The leadership team as a body, and the middle leaders as individuals, represent untapped potential to improve the school and contribute to its mission. The superficial implementation of middle leadership is insufficient to achieve a sharing of new ideas, a sense of internal accountability, the building of leadership capacity, or a sense of fulfilment among the leaders.

The leadership team includes teachers from both the middle school (about one-third) and the high school (about two-thirds) divisions of the senior school. Overall, this group is significantly more diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation than either the senior school's administration alone or the senior leadership. All are loyal employees and strong educators and leaders within their own areas of subject and pedagogical expertise.

Along with my principal and fellow vice principals, I have positional authority to guide the leadership team, making it an ideal focus for research-based school improvement. TNA's hierarchical model currently extends through the operations of the senior school itself (see Appendix A). Decisions are typically made among the four-member administrative team, and the leadership team does not follow a predictable meeting cycle. Despite this trend, agitation by the vice principals for reversing direction have been welcomed by the principal. A transition to a distributed leadership model requires a paradigm shift by administrators (Ross et al., 2016), and we are ready to redefine our role as promoters of leadership in others. I have the principal's approval to be innovative in leading this change and implementing a more inclusive, collaborative model in which leaders can work and learn in tandem. Revitalization depends on key stakeholders developing a new understanding about the nature of middle leadership and how it could work at TNA.

Social Constructivist Lens

Approaching this challenge using a social constructive perspective encourages nurturing such new understandings. Searle (2005) argues that institutions are essentially a collection of socially-constructed, agreed-upon assumptions and behavioural norms. In this regard, most members of the leadership team have been with the school for several years and have formed a collective understanding about school culture, leadership, and followership. According to Barab and Duffy (2012), school leaders can create conditions for new co-constructed learning to replace the existing assumptions. They dismiss many school cultures as collections of "schooled adults" (p. 40) rather than active communities characterized by professionals who are constantly experimenting with new learning while they are learning it. The focus for leaders is therefore not to direct teachers towards approved practices, but to support them as active change agents. This emphasis on a dynamic learning community with a life of its own is at the heart of Fullan's depiction of learning organizations (1995).

This idea of learning is consistent with the tenets of social constructivist theory. Ontologically, social constructivism is explained by contrasting it against realism: while realists conceive of reality as objectively independent of our understanding, social constructivists believe that aspects of reality are determined by understanding (Hay, 2016). Social constructivists do not deny the existence of objective facts, but rather differentiate between those facts and social ones. Hay (2016) argues that this same approach to understanding how people learn can be applied to institutions: the informal assumptions and behaviours normalized by the actors within them are explainable as a social construct. Institutional facts are socially constructed, not objectively real. Applied to TNA, teacher beliefs that the administration is unwilling to seek their input can be interpreted as ideas that have developed over time and collectively agreed-upon. According to Per Searle's (2005) approach, these institutional ideas should be treated as subjective and relative. This means that TNA's organizational culture has been socially constructed and can therefore be changed with new learning.

Social constructivism also asserts that learning is a social activity in which knowledge is co-created through interactions (Barab & Duffy, 2012). The context in which those interactions, and therefore the learning, take place must influence the knowledge constructed. Relating this to the PoP, an analysis of the eroding level of trust between faculty and the administration cannot take place without considering the cultural, social, and historical factors that have influenced the current reality. In this sense, the value of distributed leadership can be understood using a social constructivist lens. York-Barr and Duke (2004) emphasize the value of interactive participation between teacher leaders and administrators. This results in the generation of new knowledge, better decision-making, and greater ownership and commitment to the school's goals. Any solution to the PoP must thus be

rooted in the construction of new institutional knowledge by the faculty and the administration.

Leadership Problem of Practice

The senior school's leadership team does not hold decision-making power; its influence has typically been restricted to managing departmental tasks and discussing implementation of decisions already made further up the hierarchy. A short-term effect of this problem is an increasing breakdown of trust between the administration and staff over controversial actions. In the short term, teachers are susceptible to low morale, defensiveness, and less collaboration within or between departments (Davies, 2021). Over the longer term, hoarding of power may serve as an obstacle to the school's evolution into a more dynamic and collaborative learning organization, since mutual trust between teachers and school leader is essential to school improvement (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Fullan (2000) explains that such growth requires deep cultural changes and an authentic distribution of power, rather than cosmetic, tokenistic restructuring. Blasé and Blasé (1999) assert that further sharing of power would temper teacher resistance to difficult but necessary decisions. Similarly, Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) found that shared leadership fosters mutual trust and creates the conditions for pedagogical improvement.

Recently, some members of the leadership team have commented that problems are brought to the team after decisions have already been made, implying that their feedback serves to ensure acceptance and implementation of those decisions, rather than to inform decision-making proactively (Youngs, 2009). Other members seem content to distance themselves from controversial decisions, avoiding the collective professional accountability that Fullan et al. (2015) argue comes with the sharing of power within a school community. On the leadership team, the senior school vice principal holds both positional authority and informal influence and can serve as an initiator and facilitator of change. The problem that

needs to be addressed is the impact of a widening power gap between faculty and school administration, leading to declining faculty morale and trust.

On the surface, this PoP may appear straightforward and familiar to school leaders in other contexts, but the underlying cultural divides make this a complex problem. These conflicting perspectives include Eastern and Western views of leadership and followership, in the purpose of internationalist education, and the quasi-nationalist school identity which invites assumptions about how the organization should operate.

<div align="center">**Framing the Problem of Practice**</div>

The Need for Change

Historically, TNA has been a strong organization with dedicated employees making solid progress towards its strategic goals. Under normal circumstances, the reluctance to further distribute leadership would constitute a missed opportunity. These opportunities could be as modest as improving teacher practices (Timperley, 2005) to the creation of ambitious communities of practice characterized by collaborative dialogue and data-informed, experience-grounded decision-making (Hargreaves and Fink, 2008). Fullan et al. (2015) explain that a "system-wide strategy that develops and values leadership capital of all kinds and at all levels is necessary to stimulate and create the conditions for a new professional culture of school and system improvement" (p. 10). Clearly, a gap exists between these aspirational models and the current senior school leadership team.

Unfortunately, recent events have been anything but normal and the challenges have fractured the organization. Teachers have expressed frustration that their departmental leaders had no influence over decisions that impact them all, resulting in increased distrust of administrators by the faculty. Youngs (2009) warns of quisling teacher committees that provide only an illusion of power-sharing while actually reinforcing hierarchical power by

co-opting teachers to rubber-stamp decisions made in a top-down manner. Similarly, Mascall et al. (2008) draws a correlation between inclusive leadership and teacher trust, calling for administrators and teachers to "work together to share leadership in a planned and aligned way, supporting each other in a trustful, collaborative and confident manner" (p. 225). Declining morale and sense of efficacy among teachers threatens the quality of the program, staff retention, and ultimately the school's mission. Restoring trust and closing this gap is therefore of paramount importance.

Recent History

External pressures have revealed the underlying tensions between stakeholders. As social unrest and the pandemic threatened both academic ambitions and individual safety, anxiety rose and tempers flared. Key divisions were further ruptured, such as East-West cultures, the service provider-client relationship, and the leader-follower hierarchy.

The first crisis was the rise in civil violence in the host country, which could erupt without warning, blocking transportation routes and isolating neighbourhoods. When some nearby international schools closed temporarily amidst the street violence, TNA made the controversial decision to keep the school open despite employees' concerns about security. Many complained that the school prioritized tuition above the safety of the community. Thankfully, no one in the community was impacted, and in time, the government directed all schools to close while they took control of the streets. This incident may have been forgotten if not for a similar decision soon after.

The COVID-19 pandemic started spreading across Asia in January 2020, two months before it would impact other continents. TNA's community went into lockdown at the end of the Lunar New Year holiday when both students and teachers were scattered around the world and wary of returning to what was becoming the epicentre of the pandemic. Harris and

Jones (2020) noted that the pandemic put school leaders in an extremely difficult position, forcing them to act swiftly and decisively in unfamiliar conditions with limited data and medical guidance available. As the first wave appeared to relent, teachers were directed to return and reopen the school in early March 2020. Ultimately, that timing proved catastrophic as it coincided with the spread of the virus into Europe and North America. The corresponding panic hit just as teachers loaded their families onto airplanes to report for work as directed, returning to what became a second wave of the virus as Asian students returned from the West. Teacher grumbling prompted senior school administration to survey staff regarding their concerns. Responses included "We have a leadership team that was not included. Teachers have not had a voice in this, which has made it hard to respect decisions being made. This seems to be veering from a collaborative, Canadian approach" (TNA, 2020). Another teacher wrote that "None of these procedures are making me feel safe when other parts of the city are still shutting down. I don't understand this decision. I am very concerned that the school has made this decision for me and I feel that my family is at greater risk" (TNA, 2020). After reopening for only two weeks, the second wave of the virus hit and the country resumed lockdown for another month. The incident proved to be a blunder that cost the trust of many teachers who felt their reluctance to travel had been vindicated.

The teacher comments above highlight the natural outcomes of the East-West cultural divide (Bryant, 2018; Hallinger and Truong, 2016). In response to both civic violence and the pandemic, school leadership acted decisively, making tough choices to keep the organization intact. However, in both scenarios, teachers' fears about employment, safety, and family health skyrocketed beyond typical school disagreements over workload, preparation time, or supervision responsibilities. This result was escalating resistance and significant loss of trust for the administration. Daly (2009) warns that low levels of trust threaten collaboration and innovation by leading to anxiety, rigidity, and reactive decisions.

Fullan et al. (2015) are equally as blunt: "High trust is associated with high performance; high threat is not" (p. 14). The goal is therefore to consider how new leadership structures could ensure that teachers do not feel threatened while the school's standards are maintained. The PoP will therefore be framed by both distributed leadership principles and cultures of accountability.

Distributed Leadership

On a macro level, distributive leadership continues to percolate in global conversations about school leadership. In schools, distributed leadership refers to models that share decision-making power among multiple stakeholders laterally, rather than downward through a rigid hierarchy (Leithwood et. al, 2007). Politically, this approach is advocated by both democratic activists striving for local autonomy as well as globalizing institutions such as the World Bank (Barrera-Osorio, 2009). Even the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, which is usually associated with empowering corporate elites, has called for a greater distribution of leadership within schools, and has also stressed the importance of promoting leadership at all levels (Schleicher, 2015). Critics of neoliberalism caution that these models emphasize structural changes to hierarchies within schools rather than meaningful relinquishing of power. For example, Youngs (2009) describes this approach as an illusion of power-sharing that reinforces positional power by co-opting teachers to rubber-stamp decisions made in a top-down manner. Fullan (2000) also warns schools not to equate simple cosmetic restructuring with the deeper cultural changes needed to unite a staff in authentic collaborative focus.

Yet, the impact of distributed leadership is ultimately determined by its implementation at the meso level within individual schools. Many scholars (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2020; Ross et al., 2016; Rottmann, 2007; Spillane et al., 2001; Timperley, 2005) emphasize the importance of authenticity, meaning that leadership is distributed in daily

practice, not only within tokenistic and impotent committees. According to Hargreaves and Fink (2008), the onus is on school principals to establish collaborative cultures where communities of practice can be harnessed productively. This requires leaders who share power benevolently to create a culture of school improvement characterized by collaborative dialogue and data-informed, experience-grounded decision-making.

Culture of Accountability

Another global phenomenon has been the steady creep of a culture of accountability in education. Formal school leaders are increasingly held personally accountable for the success of their schools, which, according to Barth (2001), is a key obstacle to the sharing of power and distribution of leadership. For fee-based schools, there is constant pressure for the school to outperform its rivals to ensure enrolment. According to Anderson and Herr (2015), this culture of accountability has been fully infiltrated and normalized in school systems, shaping the paradigms through which people define and measure educational success. They attribute a cancerous quality to this spread, which has ultimately hurt some of the most vulnerable students and communities in the USA. Rottmann (2007) agrees, arguing that educational reforms have largely served to reinforce elites and hindered progress towards social justice.

Rather than dismiss the culture of accountability, which continues to be ascendant both politically and economically, wiser leaders can redefine what accountability means to them in micro terms. Scholars like Skrla et al. (2001) explain how performance data can be redefined as evidence of systemic failure, and be used to pressure governors to address root causes of that failure, such as funding, culturally biased curriculum, etc. Fullan at al. (2015) encourage similar data-driven jujitsu, arguing that the neoliberal agenda of school-based management should be used for schools to develop their own *internal* accountability. The emphasis shifts away from macro-based, externally-imposed measures and initiatives towards

a professional community within a school, setting goals appropriate to their mission and context. This circles back to the social construction of knowledge and the need for distributive leadership. According to Fullan et al. (2015), sharing power within school communities brings collective professional accountability. Coherence of vision and system, distribution of power and responsibility, and emphasis on professional growth and capacity-building becomes the keys to synthesizing the traditional and progressive approaches to accountability in schools.

Guiding Questions from the Problem of Practice

Put simply, the lack of trust between teachers and the administration inhibits school improvement (Davies, 2021). Improved transparency and participation in decision-making are key to establishing and maintaining trust in schools (Daly, 2009). The ideal forum for addressing these issues is the upper school leadership team. A broader distribution of influence could provide opportunities to improve teacher-administration trust, model collaboration, and share of diverse ideas about school improvement. Exploring the potential role of middle leaders thus provides an effective starting point and further analysis of the implications of the PoP creates guiding questions that can inform potential solutions.

One challenge to expanding participation is the professional diversity of the large leadership team. The middle leaders on this team fall across a broad spectrum of prior training and experience in leadership. In this context, the term middle leader applies to over a dozen members of the teaching faculty who are in titled leadership positions within the senior school, including IB coordinators, department heads, and grade-specific learning leaders in grades six through eight (Nguyen & Hunter, 2018). They are responsible for leading their areas of expertise, and although their teaching loads differ from each other, all are fundamentally classroom teachers, distinguishing them from administrators (Leithwood, 2016). Giving these leaders a greater role in senior school decisions require them to broaden

their perspectives so that each can better understand how actions can have unintended effects on the organization and its various stakeholders. Some middle leaders already view dilemmas through a whole-school lens, while others cannot see beyond their current lane and will need support and professional development (PD) in this paradigm shift. Another area of key variance between the middle leaders on that team is their perception of their role (Spillane & Healey, 2010). As mentioned above, some of these leaders are eager to play a larger role in the senior school and have felt hobbled by current practices, while other leaders appear reluctant to take on new responsibilities, preferring to focus on the clerical aspects of their position in the status quo. How can the change leader account for the challenge posed by distributing leadership among a group with such diverse experiences, perspectives, and ambitions?

A second challenge will be to ensure that focusing on middle leaders will restore trust among the broader teaching faculty. Considering the hierarchical nature of the school's leadership, implementing a representational model of teacher input is a logical step towards becoming a more dynamic and collaborative institution (Hairon & Goh, 2015). It is reasonable to infer that some staff who are not in leadership positions will continue to feel excluded from participation and lose trust in the administration (Klein et al, 2018). Greater transparency would allow teachers to see the direct impacts by middle leaders, as well as extending collaborative decision-making to the department level (Garcia Torres, 2019). What supports must the change leader provide to assist middle leaders in redefining their roles as more leadership-focused than managerial?

A third challenge is the reality that empowering the leadership team would likely reduce the efficiency of decisions currently made by the smaller administrative team. Ensuring efficiency will require increased frequency of team meetings, creating a potential burden on middle leaders. According to Holloway et al. (2008), middle leaders working in a

distributed leadership model generally feel overworked, so care needs to be taken to ensure that the burdens of expanded leadership are neither unreasonable nor discouraging. How can the change leader ensure that middle leaders see an increase in responsibility as a welcome opportunity rather than an additional burden?

Addressing these guiding questions is necessary in ensuring that the power gap is overcome and middle leaders can become advocates of a new leadership model. The idea that sharing power creates mutual trust between labour and management is intuitive and an assumption underlying literature on distributed leadership. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) take a different tack, asserting that the sharing of leadership and the establishment of professional communities do not necessarily build teachers' trust in their administrators. Instead, these conditions reduce the importance of trust in the principal as a factor in school improvement. As the school becomes more collaborative, trust in the institution becomes less associated with the leader.

A resulting line of inquiry concerns the nature of the decisions which the leadership team should share responsibility. When balancing empowerment against efficiency and external accountability, what is the appropriate scope of direct influence for this committee? Initial areas of responsibility could include visioning, capacity-building, organizational design, and the instructional program. Rottmann (2007) calls for distribution of power to teachers to be as wide, deep, and inclusive as possible, but as Harion and Goh (2015) concluded in their study of distributed leadership in Singapore, accountability ultimately rests with the appointed principal. As a results-orientated independent school, TNA would be the same, forcing the administration to be cautious about what decisions are up for discussion. Context is therefore critical in navigating the "struggle and messiness" inherent in distinguishing between matters that should reside with teachers versus those best left to principals (York-Barr and Duke, 2004, p. 274).

Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

The aim of this analysis is to find solutions that address the related concerns of waning trust and a wide power gap within TNA's senior school. Intervention in these areas of concern will constitute a critical first step in repairing damage and lay the foundation for evolution into a more collaborative school culture. What follows is an exploration of the desired organizational state, an analysis of the gaps between it and the current organizational state, and potential change drivers.

A Vision for Change

TNA's mission to graduate high-achieving students who are rich in character and engaged in local and global issues drives all work done at the school. The new strategic framework (TNA, 2021) seeks to support this mission while also promoting the school's reputation as one of the most innovative and competitive international schools in the region. There are hopes for an expansion of programs, creating new facilities, founding a sister school in the region, and increasing philanthropic donations to the school community.

Critical to this strategic, macro vision for the school's future is the need to ensure that the quality of day-to-day teaching and learning continues to improve so that the school's reputation not only survives the recent period of struggle, but also overcomes it and flourishes further. Inspirational visions of modern, progressive schools are prevalent in educational leadership literature. Fullan (1995) introduces the concept of a learning organization, an institution characterized by collaborative, student-centred teachers taking collective responsibility for school improvement. Similarly, Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) refer to collaborative professionalism, situating collaborative inquiry by teachers within a dynamic, student-centred school culture. The key common elements of these visions are articulated in Fullan et al. (2015), a piece on which both Fullan and Hargreaves collaborated:

The social capital strategy consists of simultaneously building individual and collective efficacy and creating links of lateral accountability that push and pull team members to get better at their practice. Furthermore, effective collaboration nurtures the kind of professional culture needed to create and sustain over time the professional capital of teachers and school leaders across the system ... In these cultures, responsibility for the success of all students is shared among all teachers and schools in a community (p. 8).

This macro vision portrays a dynamic, vigorous learning organization that can fulfil the governors' ambitious plans for the future of the school.

Within that larger context is a meso vision of the senior school in which collaborative decision-making is centred on the leadership team. Collaboration by different department heads in making schoolwide decisions is essential for school improvement (Schein, 2019). This broadening of collaboration is also depicted as cultural, though emphasis on department heads as middle leaders provides a practical, structural pathway to initiating and guiding cultural change. The nurturing of an inclusive, empowered, and energized leadership team within the senior school can be the catalyst that culminates in the larger vision.

Gap Analysis

This aspiration vision for the future of TNA differs from the status quo in three key areas: distribution of power, schoolwide collaborative practice, and collective accountability. As explored in earlier sections of this chapter, decision-making at TNA remains hierarchical, which is a pattern that persists even within the senior school subsection of the organization. Though this wide power gap has roots in cultural practices and historic events, it must be seen as a barrier to the school's further growth (Davies, 2021). Changing the leadership structures within the senior school provides opportunities to repair the recent damage to

teacher morale and trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2009) and more formally cultivate the potential contributions of teacher leaders (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2020).

There is evidence of teacher collaboration within the senior school already, but it is mostly limited to teaching teams planning shared courses. Elevating collaborative practices so that they extend across and between different departments in the school requires a significant change to the professional culture of the school (Salumaa, 2007; Samford, 2018). Achieving this major cultural shift requires the leadership of the school's middle leaders, both in their capacity as an empowered leadership team and in their roles as department leaders.

The third gap between future and current organizational states is a sense of shared internal accountability among the teaching faculty. In his description of an idealized learning community, Leithwood (2016) described not only shared values and practices, but also a shared sense of responsibility for school improvement that is distributed across both faculty and the administration. Similarly, Fullan et al. (2015) called for replacing external measures of accountability in schools with internal ones, which entails educators taking on collective personal and professional responsibility for the success of all students. Again, elements of a collaborative spirit and collective ownership of the school's success are visible among the faculty, but are hampered by the suspicion and frustration of the recent past and status quo. As such, change is necessary to bridge these gaps and better position the school for success.

Change Drivers

One of the key internal drivers of change is the retention of strong teachers. International schools are particularly vulnerable to staff turnover, which can impact the concurrency of academic programs and co-curricular activities. The sudden departure of many teachers can also threaten parental confidence in the school's leadership. Because the IB Diploma Programme spans two years, students in grade 12, and their fee-paying parents,

get particularly nervous when a known teacher must be replaced for the second half of a

course. Despite teacher fears and frustrations during the social unrest and pandemic, few

teachers have left TNA in recent years. This could be attributed to job security in a time

when many international schools were forced to downsize, or due to fears of the pandemic

ravaging through Western countries. Regardless, the administration is concerned about a

potential exodus of staff and are seeking incentives to retain teachers. In their study of teacher

retention in international schools, Mancuso et al. (2010) list salary as the primary factor in a

teacher's decision to renew a contract but ranked supportive leaders and the solicitation of

input by leaders as the second and third in importance. Similar results are found in Odland

and Ruzika's (2009) study on teacher turnover in international schools, in which three of the

top five causal factors for teacher retention are related to administrative behaviours:

communication, support, and inclusion of teachers in decision-making. Since all were raised

as staff concerns at TNA, anecdotally and through periodic staff wellness surveys, they must

be addressed. Inquiries like this reveal the school's prevalent paternalistic approach: staff are

invited to comment on their wellness but not propose suggestions about operational matters.

Why ask for faculty input and then fail to act on it?

Another internal change driver is the school's underlying principles. As mentioned

above, the teaching faculty are overwhelmingly Western-educated and bring assumptions

regarding teacher agency and input. These attitudes are reinforced by the school's stated

commitment to the IB mission and values. According to Bryant et al. (2019) the IB's

distinctive features allow middle leaders to leverage their role and enhance their influence.

This also explains why the greatest progress towards distributive leadership in Asian

international schools have been in those affiliated with the IB (Bryant, 2018). Even if TNA is

not yet ready to distribute power at the senior leadership level, initiating such reform at the

senior school level can constitute a thin end of the wedge for grander institutional reform.

Social Justice

At its heart, the PoP spotlights the uneven distribution of power within the school. This situates it neatly within the realm of social justice. Woods (2015) argues that the degree of democracy within schools through distributed leadership is fundamentally linked to its institutional effectiveness in advancing social justice. Brooks et al. (2007) explains how distributive models of leadership provide opportunities for teacher leaders to address issues of equity more formally than through their classroom influence. At TNA, inadequacies caused by hierarchy and an institutional power gap must be addressed so that more voices can be heard and teachers more empowered as stakeholders (Rottman, 2007).

This applies not only to the issue of a power gap between administrators and teachers, but also navigating complex postcolonial issues. Local staff are underrepresented in TNA's senior leadership, which needs addressing (Barnard, 2020; Lopez & Rugano, 2018) but is beyond the agency of the change leader. What can be accomplished is identifying ways to elevate the voices of local teachers within the senior section of the school. This is complex because racialized local teachers are a diverse group, including locally-trained teachers, those who have studied in the West, and others who are descended from emigrants and fully Westernized in training and outlook. This third group is the most likely to seek involvement in the school, but least represent the local population within the school community.

If nurtured, supported, and given opportunities, teachers' distinct voices will increasingly impact planning, cultural cohesion, capacity-building, and internal accountability (Woods, 2015). Clinging to the status quo risks stagnation, teacher loyalty, retention, organizational commitment, work ethic, and performance (Ross et al., 2016).

<h1 style="text-align:center">Organizational Change Readiness</h1>

It is clear that solutions to the PoP must change the professional culture at TNA. Salumaa (2007) suggests applying the Harrison-Handy model as a starting point for gauging a school's change readiness. Figure 1 categorizes organizations into four quadrants (power-oriented, role-oriented, task-oriented, and individuality-oriented) based on their power distribution (high or low centralization) and their degree of standardization (high or low formalization).

Figure 1

Harrison-Handy Model: Four Types of Organizational Culture

High

Power-Oriented	Role-Oriented
• power held by individuals • limited bureaucracy • quick to act	• clear hierarchies • established bureaucracy • slow to act
Individuality-Oriented	Task-Oriented
• independent actors • power comes from expertise • difficult to manage	• power distributed • teams solve problems • highly adaptable

Centralization of Power Distribution

Low   High

Formalization of Standards

Note. Adapted by the author to combine elements from "So You Want to Change Your Organisation? Then First Identify its Culture" by C. Handy, 1976, *Management Learning 7(2)*, p. 68-74, https://doi.org/10.1177/135050767600700202 and *Changes in Organisational Culture in Schools and Readiness of Teachers for Those Changes* by T. Salumaa, 2007, p. 6. Copyright 2007 by the Harvard University Press.

Salumaa (2007) observes that schools operating as learning organizations are task-oriented (low power centralization and high formalization of standards), implying that teams are trusted to make decisions and accomplish quality work. Using this model, TNA's organizational culture best fits in the role-oriented category (high power centralization and high formalization of standards).   The high degree of formalization is an indicator that TNA's faculty are already effective teachers committed to their craft, and the OIP seeks to address the issue of power distribution. Salumaa's (2007) next step is to link the Harrison-Handy category to Rotter's theory of cognitive orientation, which groups individuals by a belief in one's internal locus of control verses those viewing themselves as constrained by external forces. In terms of a micro level of readiness, Salumaa (2007) argues that teachers who believe in an internal locus of control are more willing to participate, contribute, and show initiative, and are therefore better suited to contributing to a dynamic learning organization.

Generally, most of TNA's Western-trained teachers are expatriates that are courageous enough to move overseas and confident enough to sell their labour in the private education market. They are risk takers who trust their abilities and judgement. This contrasts with the minority of faculty recruited locally, whose professional culture is typically based on an external locus of control, exhibited by their values of harmony, hierarchy, and followership (Bryant, 2018**;** Hallinger and Truong, 2016). Using Salumaa (2007)'s metric, TNA is mostly ready for the coming change, though care will need to be taken to support the changing scope of leadership, and to ensure that local teachers support the transition.

Slavin (2005) provides suggestions for leaders implementing cultural change based on their overall readiness. At a macro level, schools can be sorted into three categorizes based on their existing openness to innovative practices. *Seed* schools are characterized by an extraordinary capacity for growth, where new ideas quickly take root and blossom; *brick*

schools are capable of change but require careful, top-down planning to overcome natural resistance; *sand* schools are confident in their existing methods and so hostile to change that any attempts to reform are doomed to fail (Slavin, 2005, p. 269). Slavin argues that change management must account for this. Sharing an exciting new pedagogical technique at a staff meeting may inspire implementation by self-directed teachers at a seed school, but will not have the same effect at a more conservative brick school; on the other hand, mandating implementation of the technique may be necessary in a sand school, but would be seen as heavy-handed interference in an already collaborative seed school. Applying this model, TNA could be situated as a seed school. While teams are limited in scope, they are high-functioning and engage in the planning and assessing of student work. It is reasonable to anticipate support from the staff for the empowerment of middle leaders, most of whom enjoy a high degree of trust with their departmental followers.

Another potential measure of change readiness is a school's experience with program evaluation. Goh et al. (2006) demonstrate that faculty engaged in the formal, reflective processes of program evaluation are more likely to experiment with new methodologies and are thus more open to cultural change. This is true of the macro, meso, and micro levels within a school. Program evaluation is normalized at TNA, where inspections by the Ontario Ministry of Education occur annually and external agencies such as the IB, the Council of International Schools, and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges conduct rigorous, cyclical accreditation reviews. To help schools build capacity, Goh et al. (2006) suggest increasing participation by staff and students in decision-making, encouraging professional experimentation and risk-taking, incentivizing innovation, and creating structures for professional collaboration. Promoting itself as an innovative school, TNA has a history of supporting teachers' experimenting in both pedagogical and assessment

methodologies. All of this suggests that TNA has the potential to improve and is ready for that change.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 has provided a summary of TNA's organizational context as an established, fee-based, Canadian-themed international school operating within Asia. Key elements of the school's identity such as curriculum, clientele, staffing, and governance create cultural friction along differing East-West assumptions and expectations. These challenges have been exacerbated in recent years by the pressure caused by social unrest and the global pandemic, highlighting the persistent institutional power gap, damaging trust in the leadership, and inhibiting organizational growth. The change leader's institutional role was outlined along with a summary of how his perspective is informed by a social constructivist lens.

A leadership PoP was introduced and framed by current analyses of distributed leadership and accountability in education. This informed an aspirational leadership-focused vision for change, an analysis of the gap between it and the status quo, and a proposal to rally the school's middle leaders to bridge that gap. Assessment of TNA's change readiness demonstrated potential institutional capability and capacity for the intended structural and cultural improvements. The next chapter will demonstrate how these concepts can be addressed, as well as the change initiatives being implemented within the OIP.

Chapter 2

Chapter 1 of this OIP introduced the research problem of practice (PoP) of declining trust in the administration by teachers at TNA, an international school whose institutional power gap has become increasingly problematic. The resulting damage to professional relationships threatens morale, collaborative practice, and teacher retention in the short term, and constitutes a barrier to the school's aspirational growth as a dynamic learning organization. This problem is reflected at the meso level in the stagnation of the senior school leadership team, which is an underutilized committee of teacher leaders. This chapter will address leadership practices within the organizational context to identify strategies to address the power gap, restore teacher trust, and establish foundations for future growth.

There are five components to this chapter. The first section synthesizes the leadership approaches that will be utilized by the change leader to address the PoP. The second section provides a framework for leading the change process by discussing relevant organizational change theories and their potential application within the school. That organizational context will then be analyzed critically in the third section, identifying the areas in which change is needed. The fourth section will introduce and interrogate potential solutions to address the PoP. The final section discusses the underlying issues and possible interventions through the lenses of leadership ethics, equity, decolonization, and social justice.

Leadership Approaches to Change

The summary of the organizational context in Chapter 1 presented TNA as a respected institution that has historically been effective in delivering on its mission and providing an outstanding level of education to its clients. The school is staffed with effective educators who are invested in their students' success and teacher leaders that offer untapped potential, albeit with diverse experiences, training, and ambition. Despite this, the lingering issues of trust and power provide an ongoing obstacle to tapping that potential.

As outlined earlier, the change leader has positional power as a vice principal and agency within the senior school. Although Western in training and perspective, I have developed a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the Eastern cultural expectations of his locally recruited colleagues and the wider school community. In practice, I seek to understand TNA's troubles and potential solutions through research, with an emphasis on sustained structural changes, developing capacity within the staff, and building professional relationships characterized by mutual trust. In preparing for organizational change, I look to situational and adaptive approaches to leadership, and can provide guidance on how to understand, support, and guide TNA's educators.

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership is a follower-centred approach through which a leader encourages followers to change. It recognizes that the organization faces challenges, and it is the leader's duty to mobilize followers to confront those challenges (Heifetz et al., 2009). To accomplish this, the leader must identify the kind of adaptations required and engage in the appropriate leadership behaviours to foster that growth (Heifetz et al., 2009). Not all tasks require the same approach. Table 1 shows the three types of challenges as categorized within an adaptive leadership lens. *Technical* problems, which can be clearly defined and solved by experts, do not require significant growth to address (Heifetz et al., 2009). An example of a technical challenge at TNA would be changing the staff supervision schedule in response to afterschool activities resuming. The problem is easy to understand, the needed solution is clear, and the vice principal is capable of adjusting with minimal input from teachers. Some challenges include elements that are both *technical and adaptive*, characterized by a problem that is clearly understood, but requires a solution resulting from new learning (Heifetz et al., 2009). An example of this at TNA was the adoption of expectations for online teaching and learning when the school closed during the pandemic. The problem was clear, but multiple

stakeholders required administrators, teachers, students, and parents to construct new knowledge together to develop guidelines. An *adaptive* challenge is one in which the problem cannot even be fully understood by the followers, requiring new knowledge construction to grapple with the underlying issues and find solutions (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Table 1

Adaptive Leadership: Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges

Type of Challenge	Problem Definition	Solution	Locus of Work
Technical	Clear	Clear	Authority
Technical and Adaptive	Clear	Requires learning	Authority and stakeholders
Adaptive	Requires learning	Requires learning	Stakeholders

Note. From *The Practice of Adaptative Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* by R. A. Heifetz, A. Grashow, and M. Linsky, 2009, p. 16. Copyright 2009 by the Harvard University Press.

Heifetz et al. (2009) advise that the first step in tackling an adaptive challenge is to get on the metaphorical balcony and try to view the organizational system from a bird's eye perspective. Key elements to observe are the formal structures and the informal culture that define organizational activities, rituals, and norms. Both elements overlap and Heifetz et al. argue that organizational problems cannot be addressed by solely focusing on structural changes. People cannot be separated from the problem scenario, so proposed solutions must account for the human dimensions. The leader's role is to mobilize followers to confront organizational challenges, providing support to help them grow as professionals.
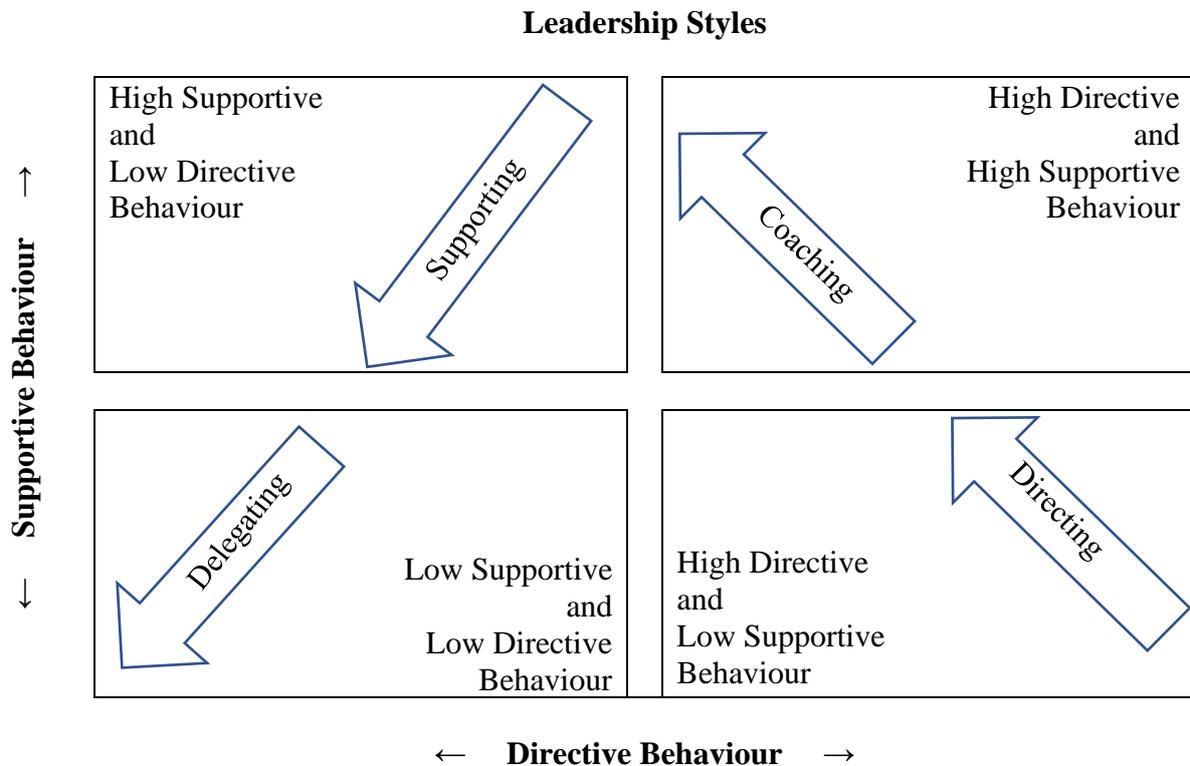
Reconciling a power gap in a school is an adaptive challenge because staff empowerment brings more responsibility and places new pressures on teachers. Taking the human element into account requires the change leader to be sensitive to those people who

will be impacted by these changes, and to support them in their adaptive journey (Muluneh and Gedifew, 2018). Neither the need for change nor the vision for a new model will be obvious to many members of the team, inviting anxiety, conflict, and fear of loss. Extending decision-making responsibility from the principal to the broader team requires a significant paradigm-shift by all involved, ensuring that the vision, rationale, and potential obstacles are understood (Muluneh and Gedifew, 2018). The change leader must frame the dilemmas and call on emerging leaders to grow into their new roles, but sustained change will only come from genuine collaboration, rethinking, and the social construction of new knowledge.

Situational Leadership

Another approach to leadership that complements adaptive leadership is the situational leadership approach (Schreuder et al., 2013; Yeakey, 2002). Developed by Hershey and Blanchard in the 1960s, the situational approach advises leaders to differentiate their expectations, directions, and interactions with followers depending on follower readiness (Cairns et al., 1998). The gauges that determine follower readiness are the degree that they need support and direction from the leader. Followers who are self-motivated and self-reliant would have different needs that a follower requiring constant direction and ongoing support from the leader to complete their duties. Figure 2 shows the different leadership styles associated with the degrees of readiness.

Collectively, the senior school's middle leaders will be starting the change journey in the *coaching* quadrant of the situational model, with the change leader employing high directive and high supportive approaches to initiate growth. In time, the goal is for the needs of that team to shift into the *supporting* quadrant, where direction from the administration becomes less necessary, and, eventually, the *delegating* quadrant, where actualized leaders operate with limited direct support from above. Without an agile change leader adjusting their approach situationally, the effort could backfire and fail to regain teachers' trust.

Figure 2

Situational Leadership Model

Leadership Styles

High Supportive and Low Directive Behaviour	High Directive and High Supportive Behaviour
Supporting	Coaching
Delegating	Directing
Low Supportive and Low Directive Behaviour	High Directive and Low Supportive Behaviour

Supportive Behaviour ↑ ↓

← **Directive Behaviour** →

Note. Adapted from *Leadership: Theory and Practice 8th ed.* by P. G. Northouse, p. 96. Copyright 2019 by Sage.

Similar to adaptive leadership, the situational leadership approach keeps the focus on the individual members of the leadership team itself, recognizing the diversity of experiences, aspirations, and readiness for change among them. This is critical for the staff of TNA, who earned their teaching credentials in over a dozen jurisdictions, have worked all over the world, and come to the school with their own preconceptions about international education. In a relevant study, Fleming (2019) suggests using a situational approach to guide middle leaders toward reaching their full potential. The work of the leader is to help team members grow into their roles as individuals by fostering an atmosphere of trust and support. The inherent diversity among TNA's teachers makes the restoration of trust particularly challenging. This dilemma invites a situational approach for bringing more voices into

leadership conversations by redesigning leadership roles. Some of these emerging leaders will require direction or coaching, while others will only need room to manoeuvre. Adaptive leadership explains that each will experience different struggles as their roles are grown and redefined, and situational leadership will allow the change leader to customize support to meet those individual needs. According to Fleming (2019), the goal of this process is to achieve a state of interdependence, in which members with different strengths contribute to the benefit of the whole team. In time, the leadership style will hopefully shift into a supporting role that is characterized by facilitation instead of direction, as the capacity of middle leaders grow and they become more responsible for operational decision-making.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

Nadler and Tushman (1989) advise that an effective starting point for understanding change is to consider its scope and timing. Scope is a measure of the extent to which changes will focus on individual components within an organization rather than the whole institution; they term these categories as "incremental" and "strategic" (p. 196), respectively. The timing of change distinguishes between changes made in response to external events that have already occurred versus those that are made in anticipation of such events, which they term as "reactive" and "anticipatory" (p.196). These four categories of influence serve as the axes on a model illustrating four types of change (see Figure 3).

Using these criteria, the type of change needed at TNA is best situated in the *tuning* quadrant. The scope of change is incremental, targeting the individuals within the system, such as teachers and administrators, rather than a complete strategic overhaul of the school. Although recent external events have revealed vulnerabilities, the proposed changes are anticipatory, and intended to be forward-looking rather than a response to new conditions. TNA continues to retain and recruit outstanding educators, the school continues to have a waiting list of student applicants, and its graduates continue to shine within traditional

accountability metrics. The Titanic has not yet hit the iceberg, but in TNA's competitive

education market, a school that is standing still is falling behind. It is therefore critical that

the organization resolves the current discontent, restore a common vision for the school's

mission, and resume its journey towards being a true learning organization.

Figure 3

Nadler and Tushman's Types of Organizational Change

	Incremental	**Strategic**
Anticipatory	Tuning	Reorientation
Reactive	Adaptation	Re-creation

Note. From "Organizational Frame Bending: Principles for Managing Reorientation" by D.

Nadler and M. Tushman, 1989, *Academy of Management Executive, 3*(3), p. 196. Copyright

1989 by the Academy of Management.

While the number of participants involved in the change process is limited, it is

reasonable to expect that those involved may face a high degree of discomfort and anxiety

while engaged in the process of distributing leadership. While some teachers may criticize

how decisions are made within the status quo, others may experience a degree of insecurity

when they realize that that participation in the decision-making process brings ownership of

those decisions. Middle leaders struggling to resolve dilemmas may feel displaced and

separated from their colleagues since it is always easier to criticize the umpire from the

stands. It is therefore important to apply frameworks for leading change that explicitly

account for supporting participants over an extended period of change (Duck, 1993). Chosen

models should also be designed to facilitate several steps or surges in growth as participants

become more comfortable with new knowledge and skills, allowing their paradigms to shift

(Hairon & Goh, 2014; Nguyen & Hunter, 2018). To achieve both these ends, this OIP will combine Lewin's stage theory and Duck's five-stage change curve.

Lewin's Stage Theory of Change

As interpreted by Schein & Schein (2016), Lewin's stage theory of change characterizes effective organizational change as occurring in a simple three-step process, like a chocolatier creating intricately shaped designs. The artisan begins by melting disks of chocolate, and then pours the liquid into moulds where they are left to harden into their new shape. Skill and precision are required to temper the chocolate into the correct temperature and to fill the moulds correctly, lest the chocolate becomes brittle, burnt, or broken.

Lewin calls the first step in this process *unfreezing*. Like the small melting disks, the organization's structures, beliefs, and assumptions perpetuating the status quo become disrupted and fluid. Some stakeholders may see this as a destructive act and feel uncertain about their role, particularly if they do not understand the end goal. The second step in Lewin's model, called *change*, sees that ambiguity addressed as new structures and beliefs are introduced, like the mould receiving the liquid chocolate. Key to this stage is recognizing that the mere implementation of new methods does not guarantee their success. Mishandling change could create a mess, as if the chocolatier removed the mould too soon, only to see the failed shape dissolved into liquid chocolate again. This emphasizes the importance of the third step, popularly called *refreezing*—Lewin himself never wrote the term (Cummings et al., 2015)—as stakeholders change their patterns of behaviour over time until the new ways cease to feel new. For TNA, it is not enough for the leadership structures to be melted, but the existing ideas about leadership need to be moulded into something new.

Lewin's three-step model assumes that change can be planned and led in a rational manner (Robbins et al., 2016). This provides a straightforward process that is easy for all

participants to understand, forming a cycle with a familiar beginning, middle, and end, like the school year itself. While this simplicity is a strength of the model, it also leaves it vulnerable to critiques from scholars who reject such rationalistic assumptions. For example, Lewin's model has been associated with criticisms of bureaucratic, inflexible, and hierarchical organizations whose reliance on top-down change management limits their innovation and agility (Burnes, 2004). Another criticism of the model predicts that the *change* stage following the *unfreezing* would collapse into power struggles between stakeholders rather than rational discourse or consensus building (Burnes, 2004). A third criticism argues that Lewin's model is too simplistic and fails to account for the dynamic, complex nature of organizational change. Some critics argue that the model overlooks the human element of change, such as social dynamics between individuals and groups that are expected to ultimately *refreeze* as expected. Burnes (2004) points out that impacted personnel must feel safe from loss or embarrassment to adapt routines to the desired state.

Given these concerns, Lewin's model seems best suited for conditions in which change can be anticipatory rather than born in crisis (Robbins, et al., 2016). Since change at TNA is characterized as *tuning* per Nadler and Tushman's model, Lewin's stages can provide a starting point. To address the concerns about the human element of change, Lewin's three steps will be incorporated into Duck's five-stage change curve.

Duck's Five-Stage Change Curve

Like Lewin, Duck (2001) presents organizational change as a series of phases that are essentially predictable and manageable in a macro sense, even if more ambiguous and complex at a micro level. Unlike Lewin, Duck's stages are defined by the perspective of the followers, rather than the change leader, accounting for the impact of changes on followers' emotional resilience. This is not a rejection of the role of change leaders, but rather a lens through which they can view the change process and implement a more human-centred and

successful strategy. Since individuals process and respond to change differently, leaders can predict their followers to respond emotionally, whether positively or negatively. This unpredictability leads Duck to characterize change as a monster that can consume a leader who is not sufficiently prepared (2001). TNA's teachers are already suspicious of the administration's motives, so initiating change recklessly could backfire and spawn Duck's change monster in the form of further staff anger. Careful, intentional planning that understands and empathizes with followers thus provides the best chance of success.

Duck's model features five stages, presented as a curve in which followers' sense of emotional security dips in response to change, and then ultimately recovers as the new becomes familiar. The first stage, *stagnation*, represents the realization that the status quo is flawed or insufficient. This awareness can come from a crisis or by leaders calling attention to the state of affairs. This leads to the second stage, *preparation*, in which change is announced and leaders initiate preparations for that change. This stage is particularly critical as the ultimate success of the initiative depends on both effective planning and the followers coming to terms with the reality of the coming changes. The launching of those plans defines the third stage, *implementation*, during which the work of changing structures, practices, and habits occur. The fourth stage, *determination*, is when the success of changes is most vulnerable. It represents the inevitable fatigue that takes place when followers struggle with the new, become frustrated, and perhaps even abandon the project. Effective personal leadership is necessary to guide people through and into the final stage, *fruition*, in which the benefits of change become apparent and accepted.

The strength of Duck's model is its emphasis on the impact of change on the people who are experiencing it. Ford et al. (2008) interrogate the concept of resistance to change and the nature of scholarly literature to laud change leaders using determinist language. Too often, the perspectives of change leaders become narrow and self-serving to the point where

their actions unintentionally fuel resistance to their own schemes. As change leaders plow ahead despite resistance, they self-sabotage through miscommunication, failing to address legitimate concerns, and breaking trust with the people they need most (Ford et al., 2008). It is therefore imperative that TNA's change leader, who must operate within an environment where trust has already been damaged, listen actively and build bridges with resistors.

Fusing Lewin and Duck

For the changes needed at TNA, Lewin's stages articulate the model for breaking up the status quo and carefully constructing new structures and behaviours through unfreezing and freezing. Adding the supportive elements of Duck's curve refocuses the change planning on the participants as humans, requiring proactive measures to both support them and to earn their support in return. Figure 4 shows how these models can be fused together. The natural overlap between the two models allows for this fused model to be applied simultaneously at all junctures of the process, with Duck providing additional nuance and guidance by further subdividing Lewin's *unfreezing* and *change* stages.

Figure 4

A Fusion of Lewin's Stages of Change and Duck's Five-Stage Change Curve
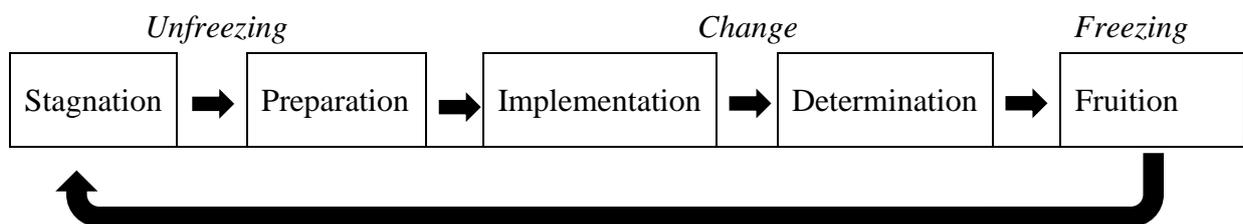
Note. Adapted by the author to combine elements from *Management* (11th ed.) by S. P. Robbins, M. Coulter, E. Leach, & M. Kilfoil, 2016, p, 141 and *The Change Monster: The Human Forces That Fuel or Foil Corporate Transformation and Change* (1st ed.) by J. Duck, 2001, p. 18. Copyright 2001 by Crown Business.

At the micro level, layering Duck's emphasis on emotional support within Lewin's model encourages an adaptive leader to provide guidance and support to personnel as they change their practices, recognizing that this process can produce discomfort, fear, anxiety, and even resistance. These same principles apply when working with the leadership team as a body. At this meso level, support must be provided to the middle leaders as a collective body rather than as individuals, ensuring that the group receives collective support and encouragement as they develop new synergy. At the school or macro level, the emphasis of the fused model shifts from support for middle leaders to support for the broader teaching faculty whose relationships with both administration and the middle leaders will be redefined by the new distribution of leadership.

While some middle leaders may celebrate an extension of their influence, others may recoil at an increase in responsibility and workload. Others may be reluctant to align themselves with the administration in the eyes of their teacher colleagues. Duck's model, framed in adaptive and situational approaches, encourages the change leader to focus on the individual needs of each middle leader. Anticipating Duck's change monster focuses preparation on empathy and support, avoiding pressure, impatience, and accountability.

Critical Organizational Analysis

As explored in Chapter 1 of this OIP, TNA's current reality falls short of its own strategic goals and future development as an aspirational learning organization. Before the PoP can be addressed, this gap must be analyzed to determine specifically what aspects of the organization will need to change. This approach is consistent with the identified framework for leading the change process. Grappling with the gaps and identifying issues constitute the first step in our process, *stagnation*, which can also be seen as the beginnings of *unfreezing*. Both Lewin and Duck agree that change can be planned even without the mandate of an

external crisis (Schein & Schein, 2016; Duck, 2001). This means the catalyst for change can be the visions of what the school could be.

Nadler and Tushman's Organizational Congruence Model

Nadler and Tushman (1989) argue that effective change is rooted in "diagnostic thinking" (p. 198), meaning that the change leader has invested time in understanding the impact of environmental factors, identified the critical success factors, and completed a systemic analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses. Nadler and Tushman's congruence model provides a framework for structuring organizational analysis (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Nadler and Tushman's Organizational Congruence Model
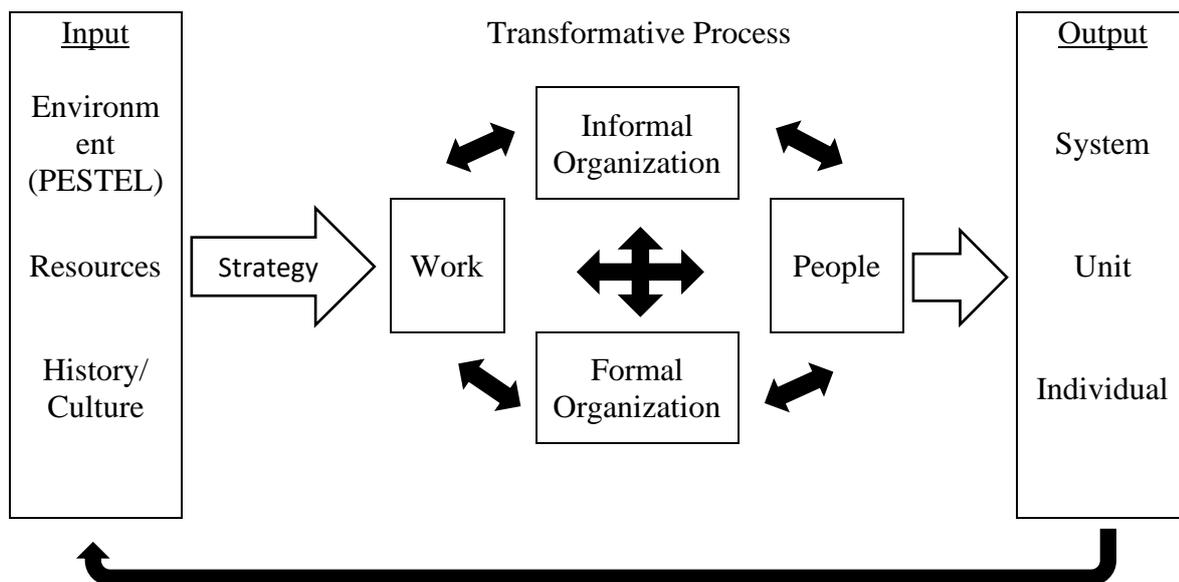
Note. From "Organizational Frame Bending: Principles for Managing Reorientation" by D. Nadler and M. Tushman, 1989, *Academy of Management Executive, 3*(3), p. 194-204. Copyright 1989 by the Academy of Management.

This analysis explores key aspects of the organization discretely, seeking evidence of interdependence, balance, and consistency between the elements (Bond & Hajjar, 2013). Measuring this congruence identifies potential gaps, which become the focus of

organizational improvement. According to Russo and Harrison (2005), Nadler and

Tushman's model invites a richer analysis by exploring four interacting areas of influence,

rather than a more simplistic and limited comparison of goals versus actions.

The model begins with an exploration of *inputs*, specifically the environmental

factors, resources, and organizational history and culture that have defined the status quo.

TNA's input factors were outlined within the organizational context in Chapter 1. These

included cultural division between East and West, the competitive local market among

international schools, and the declining level of trust between teachers and administrators in

response to recent events. The next phase in the model, called *strategy*, is the approach by

the change leader to elevate the organization beyond the constraints of current conditions.

Adaptive and situational leadership will inform this strategy, while the concrete elements will

come out of the analysis that follows. *Strategy* leads into the four components of the model

in which the transformative process can occur. The first is *work*; the actual tasks and duties

in which the followers engage. The second is the *formal organization*, which comprises the

bureaucratic structures, systems and hierarchies delineated within the organization. The third

element is the *informal organization*; the cultural beliefs and practices which persist and

influence behaviours even though they are not official policy. The fourth component is the

people themselves, accounting for the knowledge, skill, and experience they bring in order to

fulfil their duties. The model culminates in the outputs, which represent the desired state that

the change leader is aspiring towards. As outlined in the leadership vision for change in

Chapter 1, the outputs for TNA in the context of this OIP are the elements of progressive

educational visions of agile, collaborative, learning organizations.

Nadler and Tushman (1989) charge change leaders to thoroughly dissect the

congruence between these factors, the current environment, and the desired outcomes. They

warn of a tendency of organizations to borrow policies from each other without sufficiently

diagnosing their own unique organizational needs. A successful innovation by one company that grounded changes in rigorous diagnostic work should not be simply adopted by a competitor reflexively since their organizational conditions will be different. For instance, an aquarium owner who introduces a new species into their tank without first assessing compatibility with the existing habitat risks either the death of the new addition or even the destruction of existing species. Therefore, to determine what changes are needed at TNA, a critical analysis of the organization will be conducted focusing on the four elements of the transformational process within this model.

Work

In a school context, the *work* is essentially planning, teaching, and assessment, with the output of student learning. All decisions in a school should centre on promoting this output. As schools have evolved into more sophisticated institutions, new tasks have also been added, such as guidance counselling, co-curricular activities, or food services, but these are enhancements to support student experiences and are not ends in themselves.

At TNA, the principal is the instructional leader, but like in other secondary schools, the discipline-specific knowledge, pedagogies, assessment strategies, and material needs are so diverse that others are more expert regarding the work. The overarching philosophies and methodologies, rooted in the Ontario curriculum, the IB framework, and current perceptions of good practices, manifest themselves differently within discrete subjects.   Individual teachers have considerable freedom to deliver the prescribed curriculum in a manner that suits their strengths and their students' needs. Most teach in relative isolation behind closed doors and rarely watch each other teach. Teachers with common courses co-develop similar unit plans and common summative tasks, which are assessed using moderated marking to ensure consistency between classes.

While these practices do fulfil a minimal requirement for teacher collaboration, there is clearly a gap between them and the desired output state. For example, Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) describe how school leaders foster improved learning outcomes for students by creating structures through which teachers observe classes and provide feedback, lead Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) among their peers, and analyze data in teams to inform instruction. Goh et al. (2006) suggest that structures for professional collaboration among teachers is key to leading program evaluation and building organizational learning capacity. For TNA's senior school, the lack of such collaborative structures is a problem worth exploring when potential solutions are suggested in the next section.

Formal Organization

Within TNA, the senior school's *formal organization* is laid out in a hierarchical manner (see Appendix A). Teacher leaders, such as IB coordinators, department heads, and grade level leaders have formal titles and designated areas of responsibility. These leaders receive stipends and leaders of larger teams also receive additional planning time during the school day. These leaders are also members of the senior school leadership team and are supposed to contribute to decision-making for the entire senior school.

On the surface, these formal structures appear congruent with the stated outputs, but positions are ill-defined and often tokenistic in practice. Most of the department heads are not guided by a documented job description and rely on custom and instinct in navigating their authority and agency. This vagueness limits their ability to motivate, innovate, and grow as leaders in their own right. Similarly, no written description exists for the collective role of the leadership team. Without a clear purpose, mandate, or operating protocols, the group rarely has opportunity to exceed a purely consultative role. This constitutes a gap between the status quo and the desired outputs. Rottmann (2007) argues that only fully

empowered teacher leaders can overcome persistent stagnation in schools and bring about meaningful change. She explains that their roles must evolve beyond managerial tasks and problem solving into advocates for change and resisters of systemic inequities. Similarly, Harris and Jones (2017) identify a correlation between the effectiveness of middle leaders and the extent to which they have autonomy to engage with teachers in supportive and innovative ways. The lack of positional authority among teacher leaders at TNA therefore represents another gap that should be addressed by proposed solutions.

Informal Organization

A consequence of TNA's hierarchical structure has been the recent erosion of the *informal organization*. Since most teachers are expatriates living far away from friends and family, many of their social circles consist of fellow work colleagues, which often includes going for drinks, hiking, and even taking family vacations together in groups. This dynamic is common among expatriate teachers in international schools, such as those interviewed by Ledger et al. (2014), who described how work and social life were completely intertwined. It is logical that these conditions would encourage solidarity among the faculty as they endured the recent stresses of social unrest, pandemic anxiety, the shift to remote learning, and limits on recreational travel or visits home. Department heads, though holding middle management positions, strongly identify with their department colleagues and are quick to advocate for them. In this sense, the *informal organization* makes it harder for them to support the administration since they tend to rely on the friendship of those they lead (Ledger et al., 2014; Nguyen & Hunter, 2018).

The recent external crises created dilemmas that divided the community, eliminating possibilities for an administrative win-win solution. Dissatisfaction with the decisions implemented by the administration, and lack of consultation with teachers, has damaged staff morale and reduced trust between stakeholders. Schein (2019) emphasizes the need for

reliable communication and trust that runs in both directions. Trust means that all "feel psychologically safe to speak up when things are not working and to exercise leadership when they see a new and better way of getting something done" (Schein, 2019, p. 55). This feeling is currently missing from the informal culture at TNA and requires a solution.

People

The calibre of *people* at TNA appears to be the most congruent of the four elements of the transformative process. Historically, the school has been able to rely on its reputation to attract strong candidates and be selective in its hiring. Qualities that are prioritized in recruitment are subject expertise, collegiality, and commitment to building positive relationships with young people. Staff turnover has been low in recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when teachers were reluctant to gamble on securing alternative employment. High retention should therefore not be interpreted as evidence of high morale or trust in the school's leadership.

The faculty could therefore be characterized as knowledgeable, experienced, confident, and passionate. They enjoy working with each other and collaborate within the norms detailed above. Fullan et al. (2015) identify "creating conditions for *social learning*" (p. 6, emphasis in original), in which people with common shared commitment to a moral purpose come together, as the first step towards building a culture of collective accountability in schools. Within the teaching faculty, TNA has already been effective in bringing such people together and is ready for the second step: cultivating a schoolwide developmental or growth approach. Further leadership is needed to move forward in this process, especially given the East-West cultural divisions that fracture the school community.

The above critical organizational analysis demonstrates a lack of congruence between the existing practices and beliefs and TNA's ambitions. Proposed solutions must address the

need for enhanced collaborative *work*, the power gap within the *formal organization*, the slide into an adversarial culture in the *informal organization*, and the rich potential of the *people* that make up the organization.

Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

This section will explore three potential solutions to address the gaps explored above. Each solution includes research-based action steps that aim to change existing structures and behaviours at TNA into ones more conducive to the school's aspirational future state. Samford (2018) identifies time, resources, and trust as necessary features to create a culture of support in schools. Therefore, potential solutions will be weighed against the resource cost, which includes time, human, fiscal, technological, etc. A comparison of the three possible solutions will serve to identify a single solution for further elaboration in Chapter 3. This section will conclude with a proposed inquiry cycle to guide the change process.

Solution One: Empower the Senior School Leadership Team

One solution to the PoP is to increase the scope and authority of the leadership team to create authentic opportunities to share their voices in leadership decisions. The benefits of empowering the team include innovation, representational equity, co-ownership of initiatives, and staff retention (Sterrett, 2014; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The team comprises the senior school administration and teacher leaders. Since each demonstrates a capacity for further growth; little needs to be done to reposition staff from the onset, although as the change process continues, some may opt to withdraw. The change process does not necessarily mean changing who is in the room, but rather increasing their agency, influence, and capacity.

In its current state, the team suffers from its size—approximately 20 members—and lack of clarity of purpose. Since their role does not typically involve making decisions, the members tend to advocate for their own departmental needs rather than deferring to what

might be best for the school as a whole. The team does not follow typical organizational formalities such as predictable meeting schedules, keeping of minutes, or established methods for achieving consensus.

What Needs to Change?

Increasing the leadership team's influence means changing the work they do as a group. York-Barr and Duke (2004) call for schools to provide opportunities for teacher leaders to participate in decision-making, but how far can this idea be pushed? Some members of the team will likely be enthusiastic for more influence, while others will be wary of additional responsibility. Many will feel anxious at not knowing what change will bring. It is therefore critical to develop a shared vision of purpose for the team (Nguyen & Hunter, 2018) and a tone that emphasizes continuous growth as an unanswered series of questions or a journey in which one never really arrives (Samford, 2018). Nguyen and Hunter (2018) suggest that it is natural for emerging teacher leaders to feel uncertain about their role, status, and work, limiting their push-back in the initial steps of the change process; in time, however, teacher leaders will become more vocal as they learn more and seek to negotiate their new roles and responsibilities. Samford (2018) explores the conditions required for this leadership to flourish, highlighting the need for principals to shield emerging leaders from bureaucratic, external accountability, instead emphasizing valuing leaders' opinions, being sensitive to their expanding workloads, and embracing democratic values.

Going further, the teacher leaders would go through a more transformative process to sustain change over the long term (Samford, 2018). Klein et al. (2018) advise that middle leadership is essentially relationship based, so an adaptive change leader needs to focus on nurturing relationships with each member of the team while also encouraging the forming of lateral relationships between team members. York-Barr and Duke (2004) emphasize the need for high levels of trust within the group, and Samford (2018) advises change agents to

account for the lengthy time period needed for trust to form. Ensuring a democratic approach to the team is key to establishing trust and ensuring that every opinion is valued (Samford, 2018). It can be anticipated that, as middle leaders, these teachers will sometimes feel awkwardly caught between their own pedagogical beliefs and initiatives set by the group (Samford, 2018). According to Sterrett (2014), change leaders must be explicit in reinforcing that the group will ultimately learn from each other in an ongoing manner.

Empowering the leadership team allows the school to reopen channels of informal reflective feedback, which York-Barr and Duke (2004) identify as a key step in building trust within an organization.

What Resources and Supports are Needed?

An initial step suggested by Sterrett (2014) is to develop a collaborative schedule which ensures that all team members can be available to meet at appointed times without compromising their other pedagogical responsibilities. This means that time becomes an important resource cost for this solution from the onset.

A solution that focuses on *people* must emphasize the building of self-confidence and mutual trust among members of the leadership team. A starting point would be to lead the members in collaborating to agree on the group's operating norms. In early discussions, application of discussion protocols can be applied to encourage active listening and ensure balanced participation by all members of the team. The change leader can seek opportunities to apply the principles of cognitive coaching to encourage constructive conflict in a respectful, non-threatening, and supportive environment. Encouragement could come as praise for teachers who dissent from the majority opinion or identify potential compromises.

Overwhelmingly, scholars (Bryant, 2019; Dalakoura, 2010; Klein et al., 2018; Leithwood, 2007; Samford, 2018; Sterrett, 2014; York-Barr & Duke, 2004) assert that

emerging teacher leaders require PD to achieve their full potential. The change leader should seek opportunities to arrange formal PD in which the leadership team could participate together, increasing their sense of cohesion.

Solution Two: Foster Greater Department-Level Leadership

A second proposed solution to the PoP is to regain the trust of the faculty by building greater leadership capacity among teacher leaders in the roles of department heads, grade level leaders, etc. According to Leithwood (2016), department heads in secondary schools are best placed to impact student learning, given the complexity of subject content and subject-specific pedagogies. Similarly, Harris and Jones (2017) identify a correlation between the effectiveness of middle leaders and the extent to which they have autonomy to engage with teachers in supportive and innovative ways. As with solution one, these positions already exist at TNA so the emphasis is not on redesigning structures but further promoting the agency of middle leaders to be change leaders for their own curricular teams.

Leithwood (2016) indicates that many stakeholders are resistant to empowering department heads, including teachers intimidated by classroom observations, teacher unions, principals hoarding their own power, and department heads preferring collegial relationships. A consequence of the existing power gap inherent in TNA's hierarchical structure is that teacher leaders in this tier are far more aligned with their departmental colleagues than with each other or the higher tiers. As detailed in the analysis of the informal organization, these ties are rooted in subject-specific camaraderie, familiarity from teaching in the same parts of the building, co-planning of shared courses, and often social friendships outside of school.

What Needs to Change?

As Klein et al. (2018) argue, teacher leaders serve as a bridge between different subgroups of the school and, when empowered, can use their influence for the betterment of

the school. They also warn, however, that schools can suffer from tension when leadership

selection processes are not deemed to be democratic or transparent (2018). It is therefore

incumbent on the change leader to guide and support teacher leaders and build them up

within the school community. Sterrett (2014) suggests including teacher leaders on

classroom walkthroughs to enhance their visibility and reinforce their status as bona fide

leaders of the school.

Solutions centring on the *Informal Organization* include modelling exercises in which

the administration demonstrates trust in teacher leaders, behaviours that they could then apply

within their own teams using a train-the-trainer approach. The administration could promote

their visibility by leading them through low-stakes classroom walkthroughs and guide them

in providing helpful, supportive feedback by starting with capable teachers. In time, they can

be encouraged to attempt these independently. The administration should take advantage of

opportunities to publicly celebrate the efforts, impacts, and achievements of the leadership

team on the whole senior school.

What Resources and Supports are Needed?

Resources will need to be dedicated to supporting these leaders in their growth, both

in terms of time and possibly external PD. Klein et al. (2018) caution that insufficiently

defined roles can result in feelings of isolation by teacher leaders who cease to feel at home

in either the main or departmental office. Similarly, Harris and Jones (2017) argue that

middle leaders are positioned to receive pressure from both above and below and require

unique supports and development to reach their potential

These leaders could form a PLC in which the change leader provides them with

research selections to inspire dreams and dialogues about what their roles could be. They

should be encouraged to reflect on both their roles as leaders of subgroups as well as how to

expand their role as leaders of the entire senior school. Berg (2018) provides a practical toolset for developing teacher leader role descriptions, which could serve to help transition the group from researching possibilities to articulating precise responsibilities.

Solution Three: Broaden Decision-Making Participation Across the Teaching Faculty

Another solution of the PoP could involve distributing leadership more widely and organically throughout the senior school faculty. Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) reject traditional bureaucratic, hierarchical models that position individuals into different limited functions and subordinate relations to one another. These approaches would be replaced with a culture of leadership that is widely diffused, not defined by formal roles or positions, and which is based on teachers' expertise and interests. Muijs and Harris (2006) call this model *teacher leadership*, which is different from the empowerment of middle leaders as expressed elsewhere in this OIP. Teacher leadership implies different power relations within schools in which distinctions between followers and leaders are blurred. The tasks of leadership in the school, such as scheduling and budgeting, are shared more widely, creating opportunities for all teachers to become leaders at various times (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Sterrett, 2014).

Members of TNA's staff who felt most frustrated at their exclusion from the decision-making process would welcome opportunities for direct involvement in future decisions. This improvement to morale would have other benefits as well. Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) assert that as teachers become increasingly involved in setting the direction and purpose for the school, they feel more responsible for their work. Organic forms of professional leadership develop in connection with systemic organizational change, turning the teachers themselves into change agents.

What to Change

This proposed solution constitutes a more radical change to daily operations at TNA than solutions one or two. It requires redesigning the work, workplaces, roles, and responsibilities of all teachers, redefining the role of the teacher into one where all teachers engage in decision-making, curriculum building, peer coaching, and continual redesign of teaching and schooling (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995).

One area requiring change is the nature of faculty meetings. Muijs and Harris (2006) describe regular meetings as an important structure for promoting broader teacher leadership. According to Sterrett (2014), such meetings must be collaborative, with two-way dialogue the expected norm. Frequent direct consultation with teachers with multiple perspectives can build consensus about what is working and what needs fixing.

Another initiative would be the promotion of collaborative social learning by the faculty as a whole. In building a culture of teacher leadership, the principal should continually strive to facilitate adult learning, collaboration, and reflection through teacher-led PLCs (Sterrett, 2014). Similarly, the normalization of teacher peer observation can bring teachers out of their silos and provide opportunities for them to learn from each other, building collective capacity in the school.

Teachers need to emerge from their silos of teaching. Peer observation provides a continual, collaborative new perspective. Ensuring that observations are non-evaluative, collaborative, and reflective builds trust among teachers and encourages them to view their own practices from a new perspective (Sterrett, 2014).

What Resources and Supports are Needed?

According to Danielson (2007), school administration must lead this transformation by creating a culture that honours teachers who step outside their traditional roles and take on

leadership projects, particularly informal leaders. This makes sense for TNA, whose teachers may complain about a lack of input but may be reluctant to take on additional responsibilities. Muijs and Harris (2006) agree, advising principals to take positive steps to actively encourage teachers to take on projects individually or as part of a team.

Even more so than in previously proposed solutions, this approach requires investment in schoolwide PD. Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) describe the process as complicated and intellectual challenging, requiring teachers to redefine their style of work. Similarly, Nguyen and Hunter (2018) suggest that considerable learning is required to build a future teaching force that assumes leadership naturally as part of a more professional conception of teaching work; an endeavour that Sterrett (2014) argues would be well supported through cognitive coaching.

Comparing Potential Solutions

All three proposed solutions seek to address the problem of declining teacher trust and a widening power gap at TNA. Table 2 presents the three proposed solutions within the context of Nadler and Tushman's (1989) transformative process categories.

TNA aspires to be a dynamic, collaborative environment; an outcome that is most consistent with solution three, but which also represents a greater shift from current practices. One concern is the potential incongruence of a radical democratization with Eastern cultural expectations about hierarchy, harmony, and followership, as detailed in Chapter 1. Danielson (2007) warns that not all schools welcome of the emergence of informal teacher leaders. The outcomes associated with solution three are perhaps considered as long term, with immediate changes instead targeting key personnel who will work to change structures from within rather than scrap them outright. Both solutions one and two allow for this, with the *formal organization* looking identical on paper, even if the *work* and the *people* within the hierarchy

evolve. This may better suit the Asian context, with its inherent culture of accountability, in which ultimate responsibility rests with the principal (Muijs & Harris, 2006).

Table 2

Comparison of Possible Solutions

Areas of Focus	Solution 1: Empower the Leadership Team	Solution 2: Empower Departmental Leadership	Solution 3: Empower the Entire Faculty
Work	Moderate change from status quo for middle leaders' tasks, little change for rest of staff	Minimal change in the work, more efficient implementation of new initiatives	Radical change, with new expectations and responsibilities for teachers
Formal Organization	Minimal change as core structure still in place, but with greater participation within it	Minimal change as current leadership positions remain, but with more freedom to act	Radical change as hierarchy is flattened and positional authority is redefined
Informal Organization	Moderate change as middle leaders develop a wider, whole-school perspective	Moderate change as influence of middle leaders grows	Radical change as relationships between teachers evolve through new partnerships and exchanges
People	Moderate change for middle leaders growing into their new role on the team, little change for others in the short term	Moderate change for departmental leaders adjusting to greater authority, little change for others in the short term	Significant paradigm shift for faculty as a whole and changing expectations when recruiting new staff to suit new workplace

Another consideration is the impact of each solution on the school culture. The Upper School Staff Survey (TNA, 2020) includes calls for greater teacher involvement in decision-making, consistent with solution three, as well as concerns that middle leaders were not consulted on decisions, as per solution one. However, these two solutions differ greatly in the scale of their impact, particularly on the *informal organization*. In terms of informal relationships among staff, middle leaders, and administrators, solution one would serve to strengthen those relationships using positional leadership roles. As the influence of the leadership team grows, teachers would see a natural conduit for sharing ideas,

recommendations, and concerns. As the team achieves consensus on controversial decisions, teacher leaders would be better able to advocate for these decisions should other teachers question or challenge them. Solution three also promises stronger, more professional teacher relationships and collaboration, but only after a potentially long and rocky transformative process. Nguyen and Hunter (2018) suggest that teacher work norms can sometimes inhibit teacher-led school reform. Strong egalitarian norms are often present among teachers and can enable strong bonds of trust among them; however, they can also consolidate resistance to teacher leaders (Nguyen and Hunter, 2018). Danielson (2007) calls this phenomenon "tall poppy syndrome" (p. 19), in which those who raise their heads risk being cut down to size by their peers, discouraging teachers from taking on formal or informal leadership roles.

Chosen Solution

Although solution three offers the most dramatic changes, its ambition makes it the least tenable given the organizational context. Instead, the proposed solution of this OIP is a blend of solutions one and two. These two goals have the advantage of developing capacity within the same group of people, since the department leaders targeted in solution two are also members of the leadership team being enhanced in solution one. This maximizes opportunities for the construction of new learning as the collaborating teachers learn together (Barab & Duffy, 2012). This limits the scale of PD and individual support by the change leader to a group of 20 middle leaders, which is more manageable given the personal attention implicit in adaptive leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009). The result can be a train-the-trainer approach, as per solution two, where modelling of effective leadership practices would aim to have a trickle-down effect when these leaders work with their own teams. The inherent diversity among the middle leaders thus serves to address the social issues of diversity, equity, and representation in school leadership, albeit in a representative form

rather than direct participation by all teachers. If the change leader successful addresses the PoP, perhaps solution three can be revisited at a later date and build upon the OIP's success.

PDSA Inquiry Cycle

While this hybrid solution is limited in scope given the size of TNA as a whole, it nonetheless represents systemic change through empowerment of its employees. For this scenario, Cleary (1995) advocates for the use of a plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle to formalize the processes of data collection, analysis, and problem-solving about the ongoing progress of the solution in practice. Using this structure is advantageous because its outcomes not only include potential solutions to the problems, but also an increased sense of ownership of that solution by the participants (Cleary, 1995). Monitoring of the progress of elements of the solution would thus become a collaborative process among the middle leaders, extending their ownership of the process (Cleary, 1995). The solution will ultimately take the form of a series of staggered steps towards the growth goals. Each step would be approached within the blended model of Lewin and Duck, whose *determination* stage is a natural fit for implementing PDSA. Duck (1993) characterizes the determination stage as a challenging phase in which the reality of change becomes clear, including challenges and potential losses. Pausing to analyze the available data and reflect on what can be learned from it allows for fixes to ensure that the change reaches the *fruition* stage (Dooley, 1997).

Change in the Context of Equity, Ethics, Social Justice, and Decolonization

The daily dilemmas and dynamic moral issues confronted by principals characterize educational leadership as fundamentally moral (Wood & Hilton, 2012). Schools are inherently complex and leaders are required to be agile and efficient in their decision-making to avoid being buried in accumulated minutiae. When under that pressure, it is understandable that even well-intentioned administrators inspired by Fullan's (2003) moral imperative struggle to ground their decisions in ethics (Wood & Hilton, 2012). There are

days when running a school feels like playing whack-a-mole, reacting instinctively and pounding down problems as they emerge, knowing that others will pop up immediately. A moral leader must therefore slow down, go to the balcony, and take time to situate problems within an ethical paradigm and reflect before acting.

Paradigms help leaders to examine their own instinctive biases and behaviours and to consider alternate approaches to resolve dilemmas (Wood & Hilton, 2012). Figure 6 shows five such ethical paradigms that can be utilized in developing a more holistic and thoughtful practice. Each of these will be explored by making connections to TNA's context by approaching them through the lenses of social justice, equity, and decolonization.

Figure 6

Ethical Paradigms

Note. From "Five Ethical Paradigms for Community College Leaders" by J. L. Wood and A. A. Hilton, 2012, *Community College Review 40*(3), p. 198. Copyright 2012 by Sage,

Ethic of Justice

The ethic of justice encompasses issues related to rules, fairness, equity, and justice (Wood & Hilton, 2012). Institutions rely on norms of behaviour, many of which are written into formal policies and codes of conduct. Applying the ethic of justice might mean applying a consistent consequence to two students who are fighting, even though one is the son of a school governor or denying an exception to policy for a vocally supportive teacher lest one appear to be playing favourites.

In terms of the PoP, many teachers lost trust in the administration because they believed they were treated unfairly by their employer. External crises represented a departure from normal operations, and suddenly the rules seemed to change. However, since those changes were implemented in a top-down manner without transparency or consultation, people felt hurt. The proposed solution to the PoP aims to address this ethical concern by flattening hierarchies and creating structures for representative teacher input in senior school decisions. It is a fundamental democratic principal that rules are considered fairer if the people who must follow them had a voice in their creation.

Ethic of Critique

The ethic of critique acts as a counterweight to the ethic of justice in that it challenges moral problems caused by the ethic of justice (Wood & Hilton, 2012). Justice advocates for impartiality but can ultimately be blind to the weight of power, privilege, and inequity that permeate society. A student in violation of the uniform policy may live alone due to affluent neglect, and a local language teacher may request to be excused from mandatory advisory duties because of their discomfort teaching sexual education in English.

TNA's current problems are clearly related to power inequities within the organization; however, the PoP is framed in terms of positional power within the organization

rather than other forms of disadvantaged identity. This does not deny the existence of other power disparities, but rather focuses specifically on the key issue of declining trust between the administration and teachers.

Although the proposed solution is not driven by gender inequities, empowering middle leaders would nonetheless have this affect because of the predominance of women in middle leadership positions. The same is true from a queer perspective, given that none of the administrators are openly non-CIS but members of the leadership team are. That said, this is mere serendipity and a natural consequence of spreading power across a wider group.

The waters become murkier when considering inequities in terms of race. On one hand, there are no ethnic Asian administrators, so further empowering the Asian middle leaders is desirable; on the other hand, as Bryant (2018) points out, these same leaders are less culturally inclined to challenge the administration or rock the boat. Pollock and Murakami (2014) suggest that culturally-informed leaders can bridge these pitfalls by adapting policies to local cultural values rather than trying to implement them wholesale.

Ethic of Care

Similar to the ethic of critique, the ethic of care acts as a balance to the ethic of justice by emphasizing people over principles (Wood & Hilton, 2012) and promoting compassion. A primary concern for leaders is how their decisions might inadvertently hurt others, prompting them to broaden their understanding of the social and cultural realities of the community they serve. A policy may require the principal to inform parents of a student's misbehaviour, but should this be followed up on if the child would suffer corporal punishment at home? A teacher undergoing chemotherapy may have exceeded their sick days, but steps can be taken to discretely cover missed lessons.

Compassion is central to this OIP, which is why the change leader was drawn to an adaptive leadership approach and Duck's five-stage change curve as a model. The transformational effect of expanding the roles of middle leaders ultimately leads to the leaders themselves changing. Nguyen and Hunter (2018) suggest it is natural that emerging teacher leaders feel uncertain about their role, status, and work. Their position exposes them to pressures from above and below (Harris & Jones, 2017) and can result in feelings of isolation, feeling out-of-place in both the main and departmental offices (Klein et al., 2018). This puts an ethical burden upon the change leader to nurture and support middle leaders as they adapt (Ross et al., 2016).

One approach to this burden is emphasizing compassion, which Avramchuk et al. (2013) argue is an important competency for leading organizational change, highlighting empathy, caring, and responding to the needs of followers as key elements. Seigel et al. (2019) elaborate on specific skills associated with compassion, such as listening to achieve mutual empathy and understanding, reflection to increase collective capacity, nurturing resilience to overcome stress, and safeguarding time for followers to take breaks from demanding and challenging work to re-energize. Furthermore, a study by Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Viera-Armas (2019) suggests that modelling of compassionate behaviours by leaders creates an ethical climate within an organization. In the context of the proposed organizational improvement plan, compassionate behaviours in support of emerging middle leaders will hopefully trickle down to their interactions with their own followers.

Ethic of the Profession

The ethic of the profession centres on the guiding values, assumptions, and behavioural norms associated within a given profession (Wood and Hilton, 2012). As system leaders, school principals represent their school and affiliated organizations when they speak

or act and are generally held to a higher social standard. Missteps could damage the reputation of the institution and even the teaching profession itself.

The diversity inherent within TNA's heterogenous teaching faculty means that no common set of professional values were previously inculcated into their training. Since the school is accredited through various local, national and international agencies such as the local education ministry, Ontario, the International Baccalaureate, the Council of International Schools, and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, teachers must navigate multiple codes of conduct in their professional practice. As new teachers are inducted into TNA, the school consolidates professional expectations into a manageable set of school values which are embedded in the school's foundational statements and the faculty handbook. Most prominent are core values such as commitment to the holistic student development, international mindedness, inquiry-based teaching and learning and collaborative practice.

Professional expectations are even more elevated at TNA because it is situated within a Confucian-heritage culture that venerates teachers, especially older ones (Hallinger & Truong, 2016). As explored in earlier section, the school's cultural divide has highlighted the conflicting assumptions about professional values among different stakeholder groups and even within such groups, such as between local and expatriate families. This OIP seeks to help break the cycle through more inclusive and transparent decision-making. According to Samford (2018), ongoing collaboration within the leadership team can foster further awareness and empathy regarding the differing assumptions about professional ethics across the school community. Since the organization's current state is rooted in dilemmas caused by such conflicting assumptions, hopefully, the proposed solution will help to achieve the desired state and avoid such mishaps in the future.

Ethic of Community

The ethic of community challenges leaders to situate moral dilemmas by considering what is best for the local community (Wood & Hilton, 2012). Ethical decisions would be those that improve conditions for people in a manner that is respectful to the culture and which enhances relationships between the institution and the larger community.

Although highly relevant to TNA's context, unpacking this ethic within the context of decolonization proves rather complex. Debates rage about the role of international schools in perpetuating colonial attitudes and imbalances (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Tupas, 2019), especially those associated with other national systems such as TNA. However, interrogating the existence of TNA as an institution or its role in attracting local clients aspiring to upward social mobility are beyond the scope of this OIP. Applying an anti-colonial lens to the PoP and the proposed solution is more relevant but also problematic.

TNA's current leadership could be labelled as colonialist in the sense that nearly all the senior leaders are expatriates from Western nations, including the four senior school administrators (Barnard, 2020). While this imbalance could be addressed by changing hiring practices, the proposed solution offers some progress towards giving members of the local population a greater voice in the running of the school, since they are far better represented among the middle leaders. Further distributing power among the leadership team and increasing their prestige among their own followers would thus constitute progress towards undermining the persistence of colonial leadership (Lopez & Rugano, 2018.

On the other hand, an anti-colonialist analysis could characterize the principle of distributed leadership itself as a Western practice being transplanted into an Asian setting. Dimmock and Walker (2000) caution against this form of policy-borrowing, arguing that imported administrated reforms, framed with Western assumptions, ultimately disappoint

when they ignore indigenous cultural values, practices, and needs. So, does the proposed solution undermine colonialism or further perpetuate it? Given these contradictions, the change manager prefers to trust in a more inclusive approach, even if it appears avant-garde to the more conservative people in the school community.

Like other schools, TNA and its leader should hold themselves accountable to morale practices. Recent events have damaged relationships but the focus should be on doing better as the organization moves forward. Now is the time to engage with the dilemmas of equity, social justice, and decolonization. Hopefully this OIP, created in the spirit of compassion, will represent a break from old patterns.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 explored why the status quo at TNA is problematic and discussed research-based tools for leading change. Adaptive leadership and situational leadership were introduced as the leadership approaches to change for this OIP. These approaches will be situated within a framework for leading the change process based on a hybrid of Lewin's unfreezing model and Duck's five-stage change curve. A critical organizational analysis applied Nadler and Tushman's congruence model to the four aspects of organizational change where the change leader can exude influence, including the *work*, *formal organization*, *informal organization*, and *people*. Based on that analysis, three possible solutions to the PoP were examined. Ultimately, the third solution was considered too ambitious for a school that needs to learn to walk before it can run. The other two solutions, both of which emphasize capacity-building within middle leaders, can be combined into a single solution. These ideas were then explored through the lens of ethics, equity, decolonization, and social justice to ensure that the proposed changes can be implemented in a caring matter that will support the stakeholders most impacted. The next chapter will outline how the solution to the PoP will be implemented, monitored, and communicated to the stakeholders.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 provides an action plan for addressing the research PoP of declining trust

by teachers in the school's administration at TNA by distributing leadership to middle

leaders. The first part of this chapter outlines the change plan introduced at the end of

Chapter 2. The plan will build capacity in middle leaders by co-constructing new leadership

identities, establishing collaborative norms, and achieving cohesion through ongoing

engagement in operational decision-making at the senior school level. As previously

discussed, this constitutes a hybrid solution to the PoP that emphasizes the leadership team's

holistic agency and each member's individual departmental leadership. The second part of

the chapter summarizes how progress towards the plan's goals will be monitored and

evaluated. Emphasis will be placed on data collection through surveys to measure evolving

attitudes towards leadership within TNA, as well as collecting essential artifacts and

acknowledging fundamental milestones of progress. Kaplan and Norton's (2001) balanced

scorecard for change provides a tool for integrating the key factors of empowerment,

collaboration, and trust into a single dashboard. The third section of this chapter lays out the

role of communication during each stage of the plan. This includes using formal and

informal interactions to communicate the need for change, engage stakeholders in dialogues,

and enrol them in the change process (Cohen, 2005). Finally, this OIP concludes with an

exploration of how the important work of this change plan might create momentum and lead

to further enhancements of TNA's leadership structure.

Change Implementation Plan

This change implementation plan not only seeks to create new decision-making

processes, it also looks to lead the senior school's professional community to adopt a

redefinition of middle leadership roles. Hay (2016) emphasizes how institutional attitudes

are socially constructed and rooted in informal assumptions and behaviours that have become

normalized by actors over time. As per the proposed solution introduced in Chapter 2, this OIP anticipates that the construction of a new, distributed leadership reality will happen over an ongoing period of fits and starts, with different actors developing new understandings at their own pace. Milcetich (2018) uses the metaphor of a greenhouse to illustrate this idea, describing a professional environment in which emerging leaders have the agency to take risks, explore, and innovate in their own time. Since social constructivism fundamentally links the creation of new knowledge to the activity that spawned it (Barab and Duffy, 2012), this process can hopefully be accelerated through increased opportunities for collaboration.

A key driver of this plan is the need to build leadership capacity within the middle leaders serving on the leadership team. Dalakoura (2010) characterizes this as a collective process dependent on a schoolwide culture of leadership development. This culture must be rooted in an organization's values, promote leadership development strategically and systemically, and reward leadership behaviours at all levels (Dalakoura, 2010). Additionally, the organizational culture must be centred on collective inquiry (Samford, 2018), encourage ongoing professional reflection (Seigle et al., 2019), and provide support and PD to emerging leaders (Harris & Jones, 2017). As detailed in prior chapters of the OIP, TNA demonstrates organizational readiness for a cultural shift. This plan will be organized in terms of short-, medium-, and long-term stages, each of which fusing Lewin's three-stage change model and Duck's five-stage change curve, within the timelines outlined in Appendix A.

Leadership Focus: Adaptive Leadership and Situational Leadership

The goal of this change implementation plan is to improve the school by distributing leadership and empowering the school's middle leaders. The intention is not only to strengthen the structures within the institution but also to build leadership capacity within key personnel. Adaptive leadership outlines an effective approach for leading this change,

showing how to bridge formal organizational structures and informal work culture by focusing on the actors operating within them (Heifetz et al., 2009). The growing responsibilities of the redefined middle leadership role will change working conditions and therefore require adaptation to the new professional environment. Advocating for an adaptive approach, Muluneh and Gedifew (2018) advise that change leaders anticipate potential obstacles and adaptive challenges and insert opportunities for participants to craft collaborative solutions. Heifetz et al. (2009) define adaptive change as inherently complex, existing where both technical and adaptive dilemmas intersect. Normalizing new behaviours, habits, and attitudes is therefore an ongoing process. For this reason, Bernstein and Linsky (2016) emphasize the cyclical nature of adaptive change. Progress is not linear; it circles back and repeats. Each loop of the circle should raise new awareness and empathy, spurring further innovation and change, which creates new avenues for improvement. The confidence, efficiency, and synergy of the team should grow with each lap as the problems tackled increase in scope and complexity. From the balcony, the change leader sees not a single surge forward but a series of overlapping loops steadily progressing towards the goal.

During these cycles, progress may appear slow and messy, as one might expect for any significant cultural shift. At a deeper level, the individual actors, including the administration, middle leaders, and teachers, will be stretching their capacities as new collaborative habits evolve. Adaptive leadership's emphasis on supporting people through this change process intersects neatly with situational leadership (Schreuder et al., 2013; Yeakey, 2002). A situational approach not only recognizes inherent diversity in the ability and commitment of staff, it also leverages those different strengths within interdependent teams. According to Fleming (2019), these teams also follow a cyclical pattern of growth in which group dynamics evolve and align. Along with identifying the key strengths of team members, the change leader must also identify their individual needs and ensure that support

is provided. The work of the leader is to help team members grow into their roles by fostering an atmosphere of trust and support. However, the diversity of people, needs, and dilemmas requires strategic leaders who can be a servant leader one moment, then transformational the next, leading von Krogh et al. (2012) to describe the need for a situational approach as seemingly "inevitable" (p. 247). In TNA's organizational context, where teacher trust in the administration is problematic, gauging the micro readiness of individual middle leaders is as critical as understanding the meta readiness of the school.

Stage One: Unfreezing

The initial phase of Lewin's three-stage model, *unfreezing*, is characterized as critically questioning the effectiveness of the status quo (Schein, 2010; Deszca et al., 2020). In Duck's five-stage change curve, this corelates with the *stagnation* and *preparation* phases in which the need for change is identified and announced and initial planning occurs. For TNA, unfreezing will take place during the six months of the first school year. Three key actions will include investigating opportunities to (1) expand the mandate of the senior school's leadership team as a decision-making body, (2) further cultivate departmental leadership by the members of that team, and (3) identify potential barriers to these initiatives. Duck (2001) emphasizes the importance of this stage in establishing a common coherent vision among stakeholders—in this case the middle leaders themselves—in order to confirm the need for change and to generate enthusiasm for their future roles.

What Will Be Done?

Unfreezing will begin with professional learning to help the existing leadership team recognize the inadequacies of the existing leadership model as well as the need to revitalize the team. This will begin with a frank conversation led by the administration about our own dissatisfaction with top-down decision-making within the senior school and the desire to collaborate with middle leaders in creating something better. At this point of the unfreezing,

it is critical to create a safe environment by modelling self-reflection and soliciting feedback to establish a culture of shared ownership (Berg, 2018; Hussain et al., 2018). TNA principals will do this by establishing a collaborative and co-constructive process, modelling vulnerability and uncertainty about the future, and inviting open criticism of the status quo from the middle leaders. With the tone set, the group can then participate in a visioning exercise. The change leader will provide journal excerpts regarding alternative models, leading from the middle, and the potential of dynamic learning organizations. The team will utilize subsequent meetings to draft common role descriptions, which Berg (2018) argues is an essential early step when implementing distributed leadership. A key decision facing the team will be determining which decisions fall under its purview. Common understanding and agreement regarding what kind of matters will be decided in committee and which lie beyond is essential (Berg, 2018; Timperley, 2005; York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Youngs, 2009). The creation of these foundational documents for the leadership team will constitute the climax of the unfreezing and set the stage for a period of ongoing experimentation as the administration and middle leaders put the new knowledge into practice.

What Will Be the Impact?

As described in previous chapters, trust has been lost between the administration and teachers. The middle leaders will likely be surprised to hear the principal openly rejecting the existing top-down approach. The impact of this bold announcement will likely differ among the middle leaders (Duck, 2001). Ford et al. (2008) present organizational change from the recipient's perspective, framing it as a potential broken agreement or violation of a mutually understood and expected pattern of cooperation. Given the school culture, some middle leaders will respond with enthusiasm, while others can be expected to demonstrate scepticism or even concern. Some will be eager to leap into the unknown, some will prefer to cling to the old paradigm, and some will want to wait and see. The study of teacher leaders' complex

relationships by Klein et al. (2018) indicates that these experiences are fundamentally personal to those emerging leaders.

Drafting role descriptions is intended to co-construct new knowledge about potential alternatives structures and methods. The dissonance resulting from new ideas should reveal the *stagnation* of the status quo and provide *preparation* for the larger-scale changes to come.

Measuring success over the course of the change implementation plan relies on survey data centred on the plan's goals, such as (1) middle leaders' self-efficacy, (2) middle leaders feeling supported by the administration, and (3) other teachers' recognition of middle leaders' status within the school. It is therefore important to collect baseline data regarding the perceptions of these criteria at the beginning through a staff questionnaire (see sample in Appendix B). Progress will also be measured by the milestone achievements, demonstrating a shift in real power through the creation of new policies and procedures.

What are the Challenges?

The initial challenge will be to implement change in an environment where trust has already been compromised. Throughout the process, it is essential that staff feel heard and validated. The change leader must allow others to openly examine and critique his thinking and process, include divergent thinkers in the process so that all sides are represented, admit errors, and adjust to unexpected outcomes (Samford, 2018). Feedback must flow in both directions so that all feel heard. When disagreement erupts between team members, it is critical to remind all that conflict is inevitable as new roles are negotiated and should be welcomed within the bounds of the group's operating norms (Nguyen & Hunrer, 2018).

One challenge that can be anticipated in the unfreezing stage will be the increased time commitment required from all members of the leadership team (Holloway et al., 2009). The investigative process underlying the formation of a new common vision will require

more meetings. Since the leadership team has not historically met regularly, frontloading meetings during this early phase is potentially burdensome to all (Timperley, 2005). An adaptive leader must account for this impact. At TNA, the change leader can provide lesson coverage through supply teachers so that meetings can run during normal school hours. Some may be unwilling to miss key lessons so the change leader will have to be flexible.

Another challenge will be ensuring that the group is able to achieve consensus through the visioning exercises (Hairon & Goh, 2015). The leadership team's recent experiences have largely consisted of providing feedback on initiatives developed by others, usually anecdotally. Collating and wordsmithing diverse, complex ideas into straightforward job descriptions will be a difficult process. To streamline it, the change leader plans to collect initial input from the larger group and then form smaller subcommittees to blend those ideas into concise, coherent documents.

Perhaps the most significant challenge will be ensuring that dual job descriptions include schoolwide macro tasks, not just department-centred micro responsibilities (Spillane et al., 2001). Even the middle leaders most open to change may struggle to see beyond their familiar managerial duties and imagine a more robust schoolwide mandate. They will need to widen the lens of their perspective to panoramic proportions in developing a schoolwide point of view. This will require patience, support, and nudging from the change leader, especially early in the process. The most significant growth will occur in the second phase as the middle leaders actively engage with the new processes and partnerships.

Stage Two: Change

The goal of this stage is to build capacity among the middle leaders. Chronologically, this will occur in the second half of the first year of the change improvement plan. Lewin titles this stage of the process as the *change* state, which is comparable to Duck's

implementation stage. The members of the leadership team will implement their expanded

roles, tackling dilemmas as a team and expanding their influence at the department level.

New knowledge will be created as the members learn to work through dissonance towards

consensus and compromise. Professional growth is both collective and individual as the

members of the team continually refine their interpretations of their roles and develop whole

school perspectives. This stage includes Duck's period of *determination*, when employees

may become frustrated by new methods or slow progress and feel tempted to abandon the

change initiative. Applying the principles of situational and adaptive leadership, the change

leader must help the group focus on the vision. Timperley (2005) observes that leadership is

about the relationships between people who are situated in a cultural, historical, and

institutional setting. The experience of leadership is impacted by followers as much as

leaders and turnover is inevitable. At TNA, the new model may not be a good fit for all, and

some members can be expected to step aside and vacate seats for other emergent leaders.

Beyond the team, the leadership conversation extends into the larger teaching faculty as the

efforts of the middle leaders are promoted and celebrated.

What Will Be Done?

The business of change will be situated in the ongoing conversations, negotiations,

and resolutions of collective decision-making within the leadership team. Early in this stage

the group will identify several common agreements to guide their future interactions.

Grounded in the common vision, these operating norms will specify professional behaviours

that will foster mutual productivity and collegiality (Berg, 2018). These norms will be

particularly important as the team tackles increasingly complex dilemmas and emotions run

hot. Some agreements that would represent significant change from the status quo could

include regular scheduled meetings, opportunities for all members to add to agendas, and a

rotation of middle leaders acting as meeting chair, a position hitherto held by the principal.

Formal meeting protocols will be implemented to guide team interactions. Although many find such structures awkward at first, protocols will be key to maximizing participation among all members of the group and ensuring that all voices are heard, including the non-Western leaders who tend to be reluctant speakers (National School Reform Faculty, 2022). In time, as the group becomes more comfortable and familiar, behaviours embedded in the protocols will become increasingly habitual and routine, reducing the reliance on formality. This will be a long, difficult stage in which each new dilemma can constitute a small change cycle that may test the abilities of the team members to work together.

What Will Be the Impact?

The impact of this implementation will be seen in the effectiveness of the leadership team, the growing confidence of the middle leaders, and greater cohesion between the administration and teaching faculty. From this collaboration will grow a greater sense of shared responsibility for school improvement across the middle leadership, raising the sense of internal accountability (Fullan et al., 2015; Leithwood, 2016).

Public acknowledgement of the efforts of the middle leaders during this period will raise the prestige of both the leaders and their roles. The administration and department heads will engage in classroom walkthroughs together and provide feedback to teachers. This will increase the self-efficacy of the middle leaders, increasing their job satisfaction and thus helping to retain them as employees (Ross et al., 2016). The growth of middle leaders' influence over departmental followers, combined with their increased sense of shared responsibility, places them in a strong position to endorse reforms and serve as a buffer that moderates potential resistance (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2020).

Most significantly, the quality of policies being set should strengthen as a wider, more diverse body of professionals authentically engage in schoolwide decision-making.

What are the Challenges?

The primary challenge during this second phase concerns establishing coherence, namely the group's acceptance of common values, expectations, operating norms, and routines to ensure that the work is done (Elmore, 2008; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2020; Schleicher, 2015). Each member draws on their professional knowledge, experience, and priorities to build "creative tension" in their team (Senge, 1990, p. 8). As Dufour (2011) explains, ensuring that this is engaged openly, fairly, productively, and consistently requires both structure and focus within the team so that consensus can be achieved amidst the myriad voices and opinions.

It can also be anticipated that middle leaders will feel increasing demands on their time. Even as leadership meetings become more efficient, the need to meet will not diminish. As they increasingly implement distributed models of leadership within their own departments, they will likely find it harder to maintain equilibrium. At TNA, the heads of large departments currently teach a reduced load of classes, but the staffing pattern may need further adjustment in recognition of their contribution.

Stage Three: Refreezing

Stage three of the plan represents the long-term stage that begins in year two of the change improvement plan. Although not yet routine, the new decision-making processes and collaborative patterns will be more familiar than in the previous year. During this stage, the structures and practices of distributed leadership become institutionalized, ensuring long-term changes in behaviour and practice. The operating norms become habitual and refreeze into the school culture. Support for new middle leaders becomes self-perpetuating as members of the leadership team experience collective responsibility.

What Will Be the Impact?

The impact of leading from the middle will be to bring the school close to the desired future state described in Chapter 2. An empowered and collaborative leadership team achieves relevance in the organization by ensuring transparency and inclusivity in decision-making and ultimately providing better leadership for the school. Stronger departmental leadership brings improvements in teaching and learning by fostering further collaboration across the school. Broadening participation improves trust between the faculty and administration, positioning the school as a true learning organization (Fullan et al., 2015).

What are the Challenges?

Although this OIP is intended to address the PoP of restoring teacher trust by distributing leadership, the reality is that not all stakeholders will accept the new model with equal support. Even some of the middle leaders themselves will be comfortable with the status quo and reluctant to change the system (Ford et al., 2008). Inertia, history, and culture all become constraints to adopting a new leadership culture in the school (Burke, 2018). However, these challenges are themselves social constructs that have developed over time and can be undone through the collaborative experiences described above. These initiatives themselves will not guarantee success. Creating a new school culture that cultivates leadership and encourages more voices, and more diverse ones, in decision-making will require ongoing support, monitoring, evaluation and intervention by the change leader.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the change plan requires ongoing monitoring and evaluation to determine its effectiveness and identify opportunities to revisit and revise the plan. The measurement strategy itself can serve to frame the need for change, define expected outcomes, and encourage course corrections throughout the process (Deszca, 2020). Cultures of accountability emphasize efficiency, transparency, and performance, and these can be

important measures of the success of the change improvement plan. That said, over-reliance on these factors can invite bureaucracy, perpetuate conformity, and distract from more vital work (Storey, 2002). Given the change plan's emphasis on empowerment, collaboration, and trust, it is important to incorporate these factors into the array of success criteria. The balanced scorecard for change (BSC) provides a tool that integrates multiple criteria, avoiding potential problems associated with single-measure approaches and providing a dashboard where a bigger picture can be understood through a single report (Storey, 2002).

Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard for Change

Kaplan and Norton (1996) introduced the BSC to assist businesses in articulating growth goals beyond traditional financial targets, shining a spotlight on other factors such as customer satisfaction, internal processes, and learning and growth among employees. The BSC presents change targets as being balanced, integrated, and aligned across these perspectives (Deszca et al., 2020). It provides a snapshot view that is easy to interpret and can therefore be shared among members of a changing organization.

Kaplan and Norton (2001) suggest that non-profit organizations change labels on the model to highlight *mission* as being equally important to the financial perspective and encourage users to reconfigure the model to suit their organizational needs. The BSC has since been utilized in a variety of non-profit contexts, including healthcare, tertiary education, and K-12 schools (Pereira & Melão, 2012; Rompho, 2020; Storey, 2002; Yüksel & Coşkun, 2012). Common practice outside the corporate sector is to customize the BSC by renaming the four categories based on the organization's context.

A Balanced Scorecard for Change at TNA

Monitoring and evaluating the initiative at TNA will include collected quantitative data which reveals the perception of those impacted by the further distribution of leadership

in the senior school, completion of milestones, and the collection of key artifacts, such as

procedure and policy documents, within designated time frames. As shown in Appendix D,

specific goals are organized using an adapted BSC for this proposed change model,

substituting "Customer Perspective" for "Stakeholder Perspective," as in Yüksel and Coşkun

(2012), and replacing "Financial Perspective" with "Resource Sustainability Perspective," as

in Rompho (2020). The arrangement of the four perspectives has also been adjusted to

emphasize the school's perception of the distribution of leadership.

Stakeholder Perspective

Equally important to the distribution of leadership is the perception among the school

community that the school's middle leaders have an expanded and authentic role in decision-

making. Progress in this quadrant of the BSC relies on survey data collected from the entire

staff regarding their views about the roles of middle leaders, replicating a practice found in

studies of distributed leadership in schools (Garcia Torres, 2019; Heck & Hallinger, 2009;

Hulpia et al., 2009; Ladd, 2011). The lack of relevant pre-existing data requires a baseline

survey with periodic follow-ups to measure change over time. Response options include a

four-point Likert scale of *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree* (consistent

with the baseline survey in Appendix B) with the percentage of *Strongly Agree* and *Agree*

results being the measure of success. By eliciting a numerical response, Likert scales will

allow for categorization of data and quantifications of progress over time.

1)   **Increase perception of teacher leader empowerment by 25% from the baseline**
        within one year.

                Survey questions to measure this effect can be adapted from previous studies,

        such as: (1) are teachers centrally involved in decision-making about educational

        issues (Ladd, 2011); (2) does the leadership team provide effective leadership at this

school (Ladd, 2011); or (3) do teachers have opportunities to take initiatives to improve school processes and outcomes (Hairon & Goh, 2015)?

2)   **Increase perception that teachers participate in senior school decision-making by 25% from the baseline within one year.**

     Survey questions to measure this effect can be adapted from previous studies, such as: (1) does the leadership team make collaborative decisions focusing on educational improvement (Heck & Hallinger, 2009); (2) does the faculty have an effective process for making group decisions and solving problems (Ladd, 2011); (3) are staff engaged in key schoolwide decisions (Hairon & Goh, 2015); and (4) does the school provide staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions (Garcia Torres, 2019)?

3)   **Increase perception that teachers are trusted by the administration by 25% from the baseline within one year.**

     Survey questions to measure this effect can be adapted from previous studies, such as: (1) are teachers trusted to make sound decisions about instruction (Ladd, 2011); (2) are teachers encouraged to make decisions within the scope of their work (Hairon & Goh, 2015); and (3) does the school have a collaborative culture characterized by mutual support (Garcia Torres, 2019)?

4)   **Increase perception that the administration and teachers have a common vision by 10% from the baseline in one year and by 25% within two years.**

Survey questions to measure this effect can be adapted from previous studies, such as: (1) does the faculty and administration have a shared vision (Ladd, 2011); (2) does the leadership team support the school vision (Hulpia et al., 2009); and (3) does the leadership team support your goals for the goal (Hulpia et al., 2009)?

The purpose of the data is to gauge the extent to which the broadening of middle leaders' roles is recognized by their followers. Positive results will indicate recognition that power is being shared, while a lack of improvement will indicate a need to better promote and celebrate the impact that middle leaders are having.

Learning and Growth Perspective

The implementation plan's emphasis on capacity-building among teacher leaders needs to be tracked. The plan includes the adoption of PLCs within the leadership team as well as external PD to build confidence and skills. Effectiveness of this professional learning will be gauged formally through survey data and informally through ad-hoc conversations to ensure that these opportunities are relevant, useful, and impacting our practices as leaders.

Some targets consist of milestones to be achieved within specified deadlines, indicating that the group has passed a key threshold:

1. **Facilitation of PLCs to shift from the administration to the teacher leaders within six months**.

    In the early stages of the plan, the administrators on the team will model PLC leadership and take responsibility for setting the agenda. The stated goal will be for the administration to share this role with teachers on the team via a rotation in which they share responsibility and ownership of the collective learning.

2. **Team to set its own PD goals and agenda within two years.**

    Similar to above, the administration's expertise will guide the group's PD needs in the early stages of the process. In time, as the team becomes more aware of its own strengths and deficits, this responsibility should shift to the group, who will then chart their own course in terms of professional growth based on the group's own collective priorities and broader schoolwide initiatives.

Quantitative data will be collected by a different survey to be completed solely by the teacher leaders reflecting on their perception of their own leadership, a practice utilized in Heck and Hallinger's 2009 study, using the same four-point Likert scale. Rather than track growth over time, the target will be consensus among the members of the leadership team in that they are being supported as emerging leaders.

3. **An increase in the members of the leadership team selecting "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they feel supported as leaders by the administration within six months of the baseline.**

    Failure to achieve this task will constitute a red flag that there is a problem with the implementation plan, necessitating a review of the action steps and further consultation with the teacher leaders to ascertain why they do not feel supported and how that support can be provided (Sterrett, 2014; Torres, 2019).

4. **An increase in the members of the leadership team selecting "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that PD has increased their confidence as leaders within one year.**

    Similar to the above, a perception that the first year's PD efforts were unhelpful should be cause to revisit the implementation plan to make necessary improvements (Klein et al., 2018; Samford, 2018). Since some will implement new knowledge more quickly than others, leadership team meetings can be used to highlight such implementation. This can include guiding questions for communal sharing as part of a check-in process or quick presentations to highlight innovators at faculty meetings.

Internal Processes

Similar to measurement of learning and growth, the measuring of improved internal leadership processes will include both the completion of key tasks as well as quantitative data from surveys of the teacher leaders.

1. **Leadership team to meet on a monthly basis.**

    At present, this group meets on an occasional basis, usually once every two months. In order to highlight the group's importance and authority, they will be calendared to meet on a set monthly basis. As the group grows in confidence, there may be requests to revisit the implementation plan and increase the frequency further (Berg, 2018). More ad hoc meetings can be scheduled as required.

2. **Leadership team to articulate their own operating norms and job descriptions within six months.**

    An immediate task is for the group to agree to its own set of operational norms, which are intended to guide how they interact with one another. The next, larger step is to craft a consistent, generic job description that encapsulates their roles as leaders of their own teams and as members of the central leadership team (Berg, 2018; Torres, 2019). No such job description currently exists within the senior school, and the initial PLC work will explore options of how distributed leadership is implemented in other systems. TNA nneds a methodology for appraising department heads, and the new agreed-upon role descriptions can be linked to the existing teaching appraisal tools.

3. **Team members to rotate facilitation of meetings within two years.**

    A key indication of system coherence within the senior school will be the principal's willingness to step back from facilitating these meetings and instead turn the running of them over to the members themselves, following an ongoing rotation (Berg, 2018). Preparation meetings by the change leader or other administrators prior to leadership team meetings can ensure that facilitators are prepared and can confidently lead their session. This will build their sense of self-efficacy and trust that the administration is supportive of their leadership.

4. **An increase in the members of the leadership team selecting "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they have a voice in school decisions within one year of the baseline.**

    Similar to the survey data from the previous section, a response that any group member did not feel that they had a voice in school decision-making after one year of developing these processes would be a cause for alarm and re-evaluation of the implementation plan. Realistically, not all members are innovators who are quick to try new ideas (Hall & Hord, 2006). Tracking individual progress, even of those who may not immediately feel that their voice is heard, will allow each middle leader their own trajectory while still being held accountable to make and embed small changes.

5. **An increase in the members of the leadership team selecting "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that the team communicates openly and honestly with each other within one year of the baseline.**

    Effective, authentic collaboration relies on both trust and open communication (Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Samford, 2018). It is imperative that the action steps are successful in defining leadership team meetings as a place which invites critical thought, constructive disagreement, and a diversity of perspectives.

Resource Perspective

Despite some initial training costs, the implementation plan is intended to be cost-neutral in the medium to long term. The data to be tracked in this regard would thus not rely on survey data but financial benchmarks relative to the baseline during implementation.

1. **Increased stipends for teacher leaders by 25% as an incentive for retaining quality personnel within six months.**

    Generally, retaining current staff is more cost-effective than hiring new staff; this is especially true in an international context due to additional fees relating to the

recruitment process, immigration procedures, and settlement of new staff (Hardman, 2001). Beyond the financial incentive for retention, other factors include the time needed for new staff to acclimatize and potential disruption to existing programs (Hardman, 2001; Mancuso et al., 2010). An increase in the stipend paid to middle leaders (which has not changed in TNA for several years) would serve as an additional incentive for key personnel to remain. Also, while some will see the expansion of their role as an incentive, others will likely view the increased responsibility as a burden. Since potential resentment can be anticipated, it is better to be proactive and offer the incentive outright.

2. **Team members' individual PD related to building leadership capacity to replace curricular PD (fiscally neutral).**

Currently, all teachers at TNA are eligible to receive funding for PD on an annual basis. The bulk of this funding goes towards ongoing training offered by the International Baccalaureate (IB), followed by other non-IB, subject-specific PD. While it is important for department heads to keep up to date with their subject specialization, many would benefit more from opportunities to supplement their roles as leaders in the school. Further investment in this training need not be an additional financial burden to the school if these leaders can be encouraged to use their existing funding accordingly.

3. **Plan for 10% reduction in departmental budgets in the Middle School as duplication is identified through inter-departmental collaboration within one year.**

The school's recently-adopted middle-school model intentionally blends different subjects together in the pursuit of a more interdisciplinary approach. While the curriculum has moved forward, however, the funding model is still based on departmental silos. As departmental leaders become more collaborative in their approach and assume a greater sense of ownership of school affairs, opportunities should arise to reduce waste, particularly in those areas of new overlap within the middle grades' budgets.

An adapted BSC presents a clear visual summary of the measures for monitoring the school change process and evaluating its eventual success. Though no baseline data currently exists, the mood in the building suggests that there is room for growth in terms of how the teachers, teacher leaders, and senior administration gauge the influence of the leadership team. Failing to meet targets constitutes a red alert and provides an opportunity for intervention or adjustment of the plan. Emphasis on quantitative measures is consistent with the need to hold the administration accountable for pursuing these reforms as well as for ease of tracking and interpreting. Taken together, this model of approach should set up the Senior School Leadership Team for a successful future.

Planning to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

Communication is not a step in the change process; rather, it is an ongoing process that must continue and shift over time as followers become more aware and commit to the new vision (Cohen, 2005). The communication plan permeates all three stages of Lewin's three-stage change model (Deszca et al., 2020; Schein, 2010), as shown in Table 3. Communicating the need for change is situated within *unfreezing*, engaging in dialogue with stakeholders during *change*, and enrolling the organization into the change effort when *refreezing* (Cohen, 2005).

According to Hall and Hord (2006), change itself is a process of communication. New ideas are introduced and spread naturally through existing communication networks within a social system. The extent to which the new ideas are embraced or adopted is related to the scale of communication taking place: the more the idea is communicated and heard, the more likely it will take hold. The purpose of the communication plan is not only to promote the change plan among stakeholders but also to prepare them with the necessary training to engage in adaptive work (Muluneh & Gedifew, 2018).

Table 3

Communication Within the Change Model

Unfreezing (*Stagnation & Preparation*)	**Change** (*Implementation & Determination*)	**Refreezing** (*Fruition*)
Communicating the need for change	Two-way dialogue with stakeholders	Enrolling the organization into the change effort

Note. Adapted by the author to combine elements from *Management (11th ed.)* by S. P. Robbins, M. Coulter, E. Leach, & M. Kilfoil, 2016, p, 141, *The Change Monster: The Human Forces That Fuel or Foil Corporate Transformation and Change* (1st ed.) by J. Duck, 2001, p. 18, Copyright Crown Business, and *The Heart of Change Field Guide: Tools and Tactics for Leading Change in Your Organization* by D. Cohen, p. 45, Copyright Harvard Business School Press.

Framing Communication

This change improvement plan is framed in an adaptive approach which recognizes that success is incumbent upon ensuring that the vision, rationale, and potential obstacles are understood by the members of the organization (Muleneh & Gedifew, 2018). From a situational leadership perspective, Goodman and Truss (2004) advise the change leader to select both the appropriate method for communicating change as well as the ideal content for that messaging. The method refers to the timing of the communication as well as the media utilized. The nature of the people within the system also matters. Staff characterized as *innovators* may be quick to apply new ideas but they do not impact others as much as the *opinion leaders* who often hold informal power in an organization (Hall & Hord, 2006). Situationally, communication can also be delivered both formally and informally. Formal communication is delivered through official channels and framed in the language of policies and procedures, allowing the change leader to set the course and tone of the message;

informal communication takes the form of spontaneous interactions situated in day-by-day work and allows the change leader to gauge support, hear concerns, and implement situational strategies to nurture buy-in (Lewis, 2011). It is therefore vital to ensure that the need for change is repeated often and by those people who will have the greatest impact.

Strategies for Effective Communication

Lewis (2011) identifies information dissemination, soliciting input, and socialization as critical elements of communication during change. These three processes, which permeate all stages of the communication plan, are intended to foster the mutual trust, cohesion, and collaboration needed for success in this adaptive challenge.

Information Dissemination

Throughout the process, the change leader must ensure that necessary information reaches the relevant stakeholders. This serves to facilitate understanding of the change goals, establish common terminology, and reduce the uncertainty and anxiety that are inherent in change (Lewis, 2011). Repeated messaging is necessary to saturate organic networks of communication and ensure diffusion of messaging throughout the organization (Hall & Hord, 2006); however, Cohen (2005) warns of the potential dangers of information overload and creeping inconsistency as messages evolve over time. Further caution must be taken to ensure that the flow of information from the change leader does not supersede or discourage the two-way communication that is ultimately more critical for the plan's success.

Strategy. At TNA, information regarding the implementation of distributed leadership will be centred on the existing formal structures of the senior school leadership team. These include formal presentations during those meetings as well as published agendas and minutes. This approach is necessary to establish transparency in the process so that the middle leaders feel secure in participating without fear of retribution and provides

opportunities for all participants to question and clarify. These meetings will serve as opportunities to reinforce the message about distributing leadership and to highlight team progress and growth.

Soliciting Input

Soliciting input from middle leaders is key to identifying misunderstandings, regulating distress, and understanding any resistance to the change (Goodman & Truss, 2004; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2020; Lewis, 2011). Although their engagement in the sharing of ideas is hardwired into the plan itself, opportunities for feedback cycles, confidential consultations, and reflection of the process will reinforce their confidence in their personal involvement in the school's leadership. Input and feedback ensure the organic nature of the change plan, allowing it to evolve in response to changing external or internal realities. This two-way dialogue must necessarily run throughout the entire change process.

Strategy. Unlike information dissemination, input solicitation will occur through both formal and informal channels of communication. As discussed above, survey data will be collected to quantify the middle leaders' morale, self-efficacy, and trust in the process, and will ultimately be shared with the team members. These formal opportunities will be counterbalanced by the ongoing opportunities for informal conversations throughout the process. Both adaptive and situational leadership approaches seek to foster trusting relationships by meeting the needs of followers. The same moments that allow the change leader to support, advise, and provide resources to middle leaders are also opportunities to identify and solicit ongoing input on the process.

Socialization

A danger inherent in organizational change is the potential feeling of stakeholder dislocation, in that their job has changed so much they no longer fit (Lewis, 2011). Many

even feel a sense of betrayal, that previous promises by the organization have been abandoned (Duck, 2001; Ford et. al., 2008; Lewis, 2011). A communication goal to combat these feelings must seek to create a sense of investiture within the new reality. This can take the form of redefining the context of the change and encouraging the stakeholders to view themselves differently (Lewis, 2011).

Strategy. Potential feelings of divestiture by current middle leaders is a concern at TNA; however, the communication plan can easily incorporate opportunities to contextualize changing middle leadership roles as an expansion of their current influence and status within the school. The very process of distributing leadership is an expression of the administration's trust in the middle leaders' capabilities and capacity for further growth. Nguyen and Hunter (2018) argue that trust must go both ways, which is challenging in schools with traditional hierarchies because administrators are taking a risk by sharing their influence with teacher leaders. Both formal and informal communication will present the changes as an expression of increased socialization that is consistent with the school's values.

Ensuring clear, planned communication throughout the change process is critical to its success (Duck, 2003). The communication plan for this OIP seeks to articulate the purpose, nature, and targets of that messaging for each stage.

Communication During the Unfreezing Stage

The first stage of the change implementation plan, *unfreezing*, represents the members of the organization recognizing that the status quo is insufficient. It is therefore critical that the purpose and urgency of change is effectively communicated to activate the change and encourage support from the stakeholders (Deszca et al., 2020). It will be key to reinforce the message to middle leaders that the administration is recognizing the failings of the current structure, not the actors within it. Cohen (2005) advises that there needs to be a compelling

story that provides context for the change, focuses on immediate next steps, and avoids jargon. Therefore, communication of the change plan will focus on developing a new vision to expand the middle leaders' current roles while building further leadership capacity.

Stagnation

Initial communication needs to come from the senior school principal at a leadership team meeting. Since trust in the administration is at a low in the school, the administration must demonstrate vulnerability and articulate a desire to better distribute leadership. The middle leaders would not dare suggest this as they are too afraid of appearing rebellious, while a vice principal speaking out would appear divisive. Therefore, the principal, who is enthusiastic for the change, must present himself as the initial driver of that change (Berg, 2018; Samford, 2018; Sterrett, 2014). The need for change would be presented as the hitherto untapped potential benefits of more thoroughly involving the broader and more diverse collection of middle leaders in schoolwide decision-making. Cohen argues that communicating the need for change must focus of the four questions "why, why now, what, and how" (2005, p. 47). The principal's call for change addresses the first three questions and constitutes Duck's (2001) *stagnation* stage of the hybrid model.

Preparation

The *preparation* stage needs to move the team forward by communicating about how the group will work together. Fleming (2019) cautions that group members may appear awkward, self-conscious, or embarrassed at first, with more conflict ensuing as they become familiar with each other, which is why the immediate next step is to develop agreed-upon operating norms. The role of the change leader will be to communicate the importance of these agreements to ensure effective collaboration and two-communication as the group moves into the more difficult stages of change.

Communication During the Change Stage

As the *unfreezing* stage transitions into *change*, the communication plan shifts from focusing on the need for change to engaging in the change itself. This takes the form of continuous dialogue among stakeholders, including ongoing opportunities for formal and informal feedback from those stakeholders. This stage represents that longest and most daunting part of the change implementation plan and maintaining dialogue can be challenging. Messaging can become unwieldy because of the diverse nature of the audience, information, and communication tools being used, wherein the flow of information is potentially chaotic and multidirectional (Cohen, 2005). Open dialogue has the benefit of reducing anxiety, inviting suggestions for further enhancements, and improving efficiency (Goodman & Truss, 2004). The Audience Prioritization Matrix in Appendix E summarizes the need to prioritize the audience using a matrix consistent with a situational approach. It demonstrates the interplay between stakeholder confidence in their role in the change process and the degree of two-way communication to achieving buy-in for the changes.

For this change improvement plan, it is advantageous that the change leader at TNA is situated to have direct access to the members of the leadership team, creating natural opportunities for dialogue and feedback. An important communication strategy during the change phase is to maintain a "cascading process" (Cohen, 2005.p. 49) in which communication is not only timely and appropriate, but also delivered by a person close to the stakeholder, such as an immediate line manager. This ensures that the key ideas are meaningful and put into context by the right person, making it easier for middle leaders to process the message, internalize it, and then share it among their own followers.

Implementation

The existing hierarchical structures at TNA may be the only leadership models familiar to some middle leaders. Therefore, alternative visions, models, and ideas need to be

communicated to the team in a PLC context as part of the *implementation* phase, as indicated in the change improvement plan. However, it is incumbent upon the change leader to reinforce the message that the middle leaders themselves are invited to chart the leadership team's future direction. York-Barr and Duke (2004) prioritize the conversations within the team about the purpose and expectations for the new model. Richer and better-informed conversations will lead to a higher quality of new knowledge constructed by the team.

Determination

Communication during the remaining half of the change phase, *determination*, seeks to maintain morale and commitment, win over resisters, and implement changes in response to ongoing feedback. (Ford et al., 2008). Organizations are dynamic and the communication effort needs to evolve to keep up with shifts in the organization (Burke, 2018). Just as all members of the leadership team begin the change process with different skills, experiences, and views, these differences will persist even if common ground is created through a shared vision and agreed-to behavioural norms. It can be anticipated that some middle leaders will be active supports, some will resist change, and others will reserve judgement.

While maintaining commitment among supports is vital, the more challenging task is to engage with resistors to change. As Youngs (2009) observes, a critical approach to resistance may indicate a discrepancy in the distribution of power within a school. Resistance to change might be framed as a failure by the change leader to recognize their own agenda as essentially political. Similarly, Ford et al. (2008) advises caution in framing different opinions as resistance because the term can be self-serving by imposing negativity on those who do not share the change leader's vision. They further suggest that resistance can be inadvertently created by the change agent in response to their actions, rather than a pre-existing condition that is exposed by the change process. Ultimately, resistance to change needs to be framed as a positive contribution to the process.

The change leader's role is to shepherd professional relationships throughout the change process, ensuring that open dialogue can occur and that the roots of resistant behaviours are addressed justly. While the change leader will often have to be visible and vocal in maintaining morale (Cohen, 2005), there will be times when it is more prudent to step back and create space for latent leadership potential to emerge (Youngs, 2009).

Communication During the Freezing Stage

A sufficient degree of acceptance and buy-in by stakeholders into new procedures and behaviours is evidence that the communication plan is working. During the final stage of the process, fusion between Lewin's *refreezing* and Duck's *fruition* stages, the communication plan's emphasis shifts from promoting the changes to celebrating their successful entrenchment. Signs that communication has been successful include a shared understanding of the organization's purpose, a shared vision of a desirable future, and appreciation for the rationale behind the change, minimal resistance to the change, and sufficient trust in the change leader for individuals to commit to the change (Cohen, 2005).

Fruition

Cohen uses the term *enrolling* to describe the increasing levels of understanding and commitment to the new vision that is achieved by gradual involvement in the process (2005). Enrolment relies on communication to be clear, continuous, and responsive to the stakeholders' needs. Table 4 provides a tool for measuring engagement throughout the change process, allowing the change leader to gauge progress and eventual success. For TNA, achieving the desired organizational state requires evolving first to the *accountability* stage in which all accept commit to achieving the goals and then to *ownership*, in which they feel free to act and innovate to ensure ongoing success and growth. Using this tool, the current and desired enrolment of different stakeholder groups can be gauged and gaps in that

progress identified. Where a gap exists between the current and desired state, an intervention

can be designed to achieve the desired progress (Cohen, 2005).

Table 4

Engaging the Stakeholders: The Enrolment Process

	Awareness	Understanding	Collaboration	Commitment	Advocacy
Definition	Stakeholders are aware of and understand change purpose and progress	Stakeholders have a sound understanding of the benefits and implications of the change for them	Stakeholders support the change, believe it is worthwhile, and would act if prompted	Stakeholders proactively communicate and take action required in support of the change	Stakeholders take initiatives to improve and sustain the performance
Strategy	Kept informed	Participating in project	Given meaningful roles	Given accountability	Given ownership

Note. From *The Heart of Change Field Guide: Tools and Tactics for Leading Change in Your Organization* by D. Cohen, 2005, p. 46. Copyright Harvard Business School Press.

For TNA, the presence of multiple channels of communication and consultation

within the school will be evidence that a more coherent and cohesive system has been

achieved. These include the system-wide communication of priorities and developments,

invitations for staff to offer input and advice, and a confidence among middle leaders that

they are drivers of improvement rather than just implementors (Fullan et al., 2015). The

fruition of the change plan will be a celebration of the journey that the leadership team

undertook together. According to the initial timeline, this celebration will occur before June

of year two, with opportunities to adjust in response to tweaks to the plan along the way.

This celebration is intended to bring closure to the change initiative and indicate that

distributed leadership has become institutionalized.

The communication plan aligns its strategies with Lewin's three-stage change model,

with those stages further explored in the context of Duck's five-stage change curve, aligning

with the same steps in the change improvement plan and monitoring process. From the

beginning, a situational approach to communication allows the change leader to identify the ideal timings and methods for engaging participants throughout the process (Cohen, 2005). Communication can be a blend of formal and informal, and oral and written, to cast a wide net and maximize diffusion of the key messaging. This ensures that the group collectively achieves an understanding of the need for change, constructs a vision for a stronger leadership model, and develops strategies and procedures to work together effectively (Berg, 2018; Hairon & Goh, 2015; Ladd, 2011). Designing and implementing a distributed leadership model contains adaptive challenges that cannot be achieved solely through the administration's authority or expertise, but requires mobilizing the creativity, knowledge, and networks brought to the table by the school's middle leaders.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

Professional relationships are at the heart of this OIP. Its most fundamental goal has been to reverse the trend of declining trust by the teaching faculty for the school's senior leadership. Although this trend was accelerated by external forces such as the global pandemic, root problems have been longstanding practices that entrench top-down leadership structures and restrict power. A lack of trust has therefore been a symptom, and the change plan seeks to address the underlying cause. Ideally, the senior school will develop a collaborative culture, with empowered middle leaders at its core, within two years.

Hopefully this project will generate momentum in the distribution of leadership and further position the school as a learning organization, as described by Fullan et al. (2015). Some of those characteristics, which could grow directly out of this change plan, are student participation, professional networking, and teacher leadership.

Student Participation

A potential next step for further school improvement through a distribution of leadership could be the inclusion of more student participation in decision-making in the senior school. TNA takes pride in the leadership shown by its students, but rarely provides forums for formal consultation. Leithwood (2016) connects the distributed leadership of teachers to the idea of students having a significant voice in the life of the school. This could take the form of students providing input on selected relevant issues such as the student code of conduct, food services, etc., as well the educational program itself (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). In a sense, student representatives could have the opportunity to represent another form of middle leadership, thereby better connecting the administration to the student body. Hargreaves and Shirley (2020) promote this model, arguing that leading from the middle does not refer to position or tier, but getting closer to the point of contact between teaching and learning: "Sometimes the middle is the students, sometimes the middle is the teacher. It depends on where learning is happening, or where the learning is" (p. 102).

Professional Networking

A further extension of the work of this project would be fostering and encouraging professional networking among teachers, both within the school and in connection with others. In TNA's senior school, it is common for teachers to maintain connections with other IB teachers of the same subject, although they rarely venture beyond these curricular silos. Connecting different educational nodes into a richer network is a logical extension of the collaboration encouraged in this OIP. York-Barr and Duke (2004) emphasize the importance of educators expanding their awareness of what is happening in other teachers' classrooms, which for TNA would take the form of better understanding the teaching and learning in other disciplines, and vertical teaming to better appreciate how one's curriculum fits into a larger educational journey. Moving beyond the school, networking would mean improving

teacher capacity through connections with other schools, other school districts, and relevant industry experts (Harris & Jones, 2017; Leithwood, 2017). Fullan et al. (2015) describe how such networks should not be geared for meeting external accountability, but for allowing professionals to learn from each other and develop community-based improvement strategies. As an international school in a robust educational market, there would be rich opportunities for TNA to connect with other international and local institutions, including other schools, universities, and local industries. The new collaborative culture encouraged in this OIP would position TNA's middle leaders to exercise leadership and initiative in encouraging their teams to seek out and create these opportunities.

Teacher Leadership

In Chapter 2 of this OIP, the encouragement of a broader model of teacher leadership was explored as a potential solution to the PoP. Ultimately, this strategy was considered unviable as it constituted too ambitious a leap for TNA, given the schools existing leadership structures and Eastern cultural expectations. Nevertheless, the new structures that empower middle leaders should also ignite the further cultivation of leadership within TNA's departments and teaching teams. Distributed leadership itself can build internal capacity for development of new leaders (Fullan, 2001; Harris, 2017; Nguyen & Hunter 2018). Ideally, this process would become self-perpetuating. As networks expand, teachers can recognize each other's expertise regarding innovative practices and are more likely to learn from each other. (Nguyen & Hunter, 2018). To sustain such a model, while administrators need to be supportive of teacher leadership, they are not in charge of it in the classic sense (Nguyen & Hunter, 2018; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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This OIP emerged from a problem of growing distrust in the school's leadership based on the difficult choices they faced during unprecedented external crises. However, the

decline in morale and increased resistance by teachers are ultimately a symptom of a power gap sustained by persistent hierarchies. To address the concern, this OIP proposes taking steps to pilot a more thorough and authentic distributed leadership model in the senior school by empowering middle leaders. In other words, the proposed solution to lost trust is to respond by offering trust in return. Trust in the potential of middle leaders to grow as leaders, trust that more voices will be more effective than fewer, and trust that professionals who are invested stakeholders are capable of taking responsibility for leading the school with wisdom. Doing so would change the culture of the school, not by revising its foundational values, but by better modeling and living them.

Underlying this research-based proposal is the fundamental belief that schools are social institutions whose policies, practices, and programs are socially constructed collectively. Conceiving a better approach to sharing power and making decisions is possible through new knowledge generated by the actors who are invested in TNA. That lived experience constitutes an adaptive challenge, one best guided through empathy and support for those emerging leaders who will ultimately assume ownership of this process.

An organization which is not improving is falling behind. The families that choose to send their children to TNA have a multitude of alternative options available, and as the world staggers out of the doldrums of the COVID-19 pandemic, the teaching faculty will see new opportunities to relocate. The challenges the school faces must be reframed as mandates for change and opportunities for TNA to emerge from the pandemic stronger than when it went in. The key is to electrify the faculty with renewed drive, commitment, and curiosity, and to give them room to flourish.

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Appendix A

Leadership Hierarchy in True North Academy's Senior School

```
                    ┌─────────────┐
                    │  Principal  │
                    └─────────────┘
                          ↓
                  ┌────────────────┐
                  │ Vice Principals │
                  └────────────────┘
                          ↓
                 ┌──────────────────┐
                 │  IB Coordinators  │
                 └──────────────────┘
         ↙                 ↓                  ↘
┌──────────────────┐              ┌───────────────────────────┐
│ Department Heads │              │ Grade 6–8 Learning Leaders │
└──────────────────┘              └───────────────────────────┘
         ↓                                   ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                      Teaching Faculty                        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
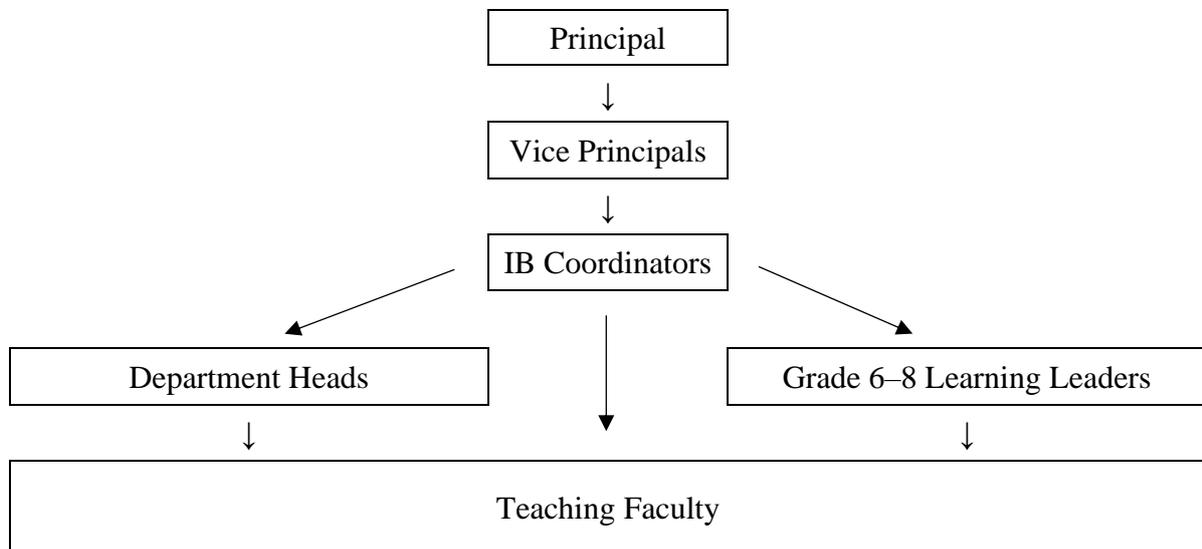
Note. Adapted from *True North Academy Faculty Staff Handbook*, 2021. Unpublished.

Appendix B

Change Implementation Plan

Lewin's Three-Stage Change Model	Duck's Five-Stage Change Curve	Actions	Challenges	Timeline
Unfreezing	**Stagnation**	Share goals with middle leaders Develop operating behaviour norms	Increased time commitment	First term of year one
	Preparation	Explore ideas and models of distributed leadership as a PLC Develop new vision collaboratively Draft role descriptions Initial professional development	Increased time commitment Achieving consensus among a diverse group Fostering a macro perspective among middle leaders	Second term of year one
Change	**Implementation**	Both the administration and middle leaders raise issues for discussion Leadership team experiments with collaborative meeting protocols Department heads apply similar approaches in their own leadership Ongoing professional development	Ongoing time commitment Establishing coherence among a wider group of leaders	Year two
	Determination	Scope of dilemmas discussed grow in depth and breadth Rotating chairing of leadership team meetings Ongoing professional development	Ongoing time commitment Sustaining the new normal during difficult times	
Refreezing	**Fruition**	New leadership model becomes institutionalized and self-perpetuating More inclusive and transparent decision-making builds trust Increased leadership capacity improves teaching, learning, and strategic planning	Adaptive challenges of individuals resisting change, including reluctant middle leaders East–West cultural gap persists Fiscal reality of a tuition-based model remains a constraint for school improvement	By the end of year two

Note. This table describes the connection between Lewin's three-stage change model and

Duck's five-stage change curve and the elements of the change plan described in this OIP.

Appendix C

Initial Leadership Team Survey

TNA Senior School Leadership Team Survey

The purpose of this survey is to collect baseline data regarding the Senior School Leadership Team's perception of their role and influence.

1. As a leader, I have opportunities to contribute to important Senior School decisions.

   ☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly Disagree

2. I believe that the administration trusts me to lead my department / grade level / program.

   ☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly Disagree

3. The administration and teachers have a common vision for the school.

   ☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly Disagree

4. I feel confident in my role as a leader.

   ☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. As a leader, I have opportunities to set professional development initiatives for my teams.

   ☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly Disagree

6. I receive professional development to support my growth as a leader.

   ☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly Disagree

Appendix D

Balanced Scorecard for Change for True North Academy

Stakeholders

To achieve our change vision, how should we appear to our stakeholders?

- Middle leader empowerment
- Teacher participation in decisions
- Teachers feel trusted by the administration
- Common vision for the school

Learning and Growth

To achieve our change vision, how will we sustain our ability to change and improve?

- Facilitation of PLCs by middle leaders
- Middle leaders feel supported as leaders by the administration
- PD to increase middle leader confidence in role
- Team sets own PD goals and agendas

Vision for Change

The leadership team will demonstrate a coherence of vision and system, a distribution of power and responsibility, and an emphasis on professional growth and capacity-building.

Internal Processes

To achieve our change vision, in what internal processes do we need to excel?

- Leadership team meets on monthly basis
- Leadership team articulates own operating norms and job descriptions
- Leadership team feels they communicate openly and honestly with each other
- Team members rotate facilitation of meetings

Resources

To ensure financial sustainability for this change, how should we appear to our senior leadership and governors?

- Increased stipends for middle leaders
- PD related to building leadership capacity replaces curricular PD (fiscally neutral)
- Reduction in departmental budgets as duplication is identified through inter-departmental collaboration

Note. Adapted from "Using the Balanced Scorecard as a Strategic Management System" by

R. Kaplan and S. Norton, 1996, Harvard Business Review, p. 76.

Appendix E

Audience Prioritization Matrix

Note. Adapted from *The Heart of Change Field Guide: Tools and Tactics for Leading Change in Your Organization* by D. Cohen, 2005, p. 50. Copyright Harvard Business School Press.