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## Supporting Curriculum Leadership Capacity Development at a Ministry of Education

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## Abstract

The objective of this organizational improvement plan (OIP) is to assist one Canadian ministry of education close the gap between its curriculum leaders' roles and capacities. Tasked with leading curriculum reform projects, they are asking the ministry for help. By further supporting their continued education in the areas of curriculum theory, critical education studies, and social foundations, the organization can help its curriculum leaders deepen their knowledge and strengthen their practice. From a systems thinking perspective, focusing the ministry's collective domain on curriculum leadership capacity development will shift individual and system domains, thereby affecting the education system's instructional capacity and performance. To those ends, the organization can take an amalgamated leadership approach to change and utilize a hybrid change process in the establishment of a curriculum leadership-focused community of practice. This OIP provides valuable information to scholars and practitioners interested in curriculum leadership capacity development by bringing the voices of curriculum leaders working for a ministry of education into a discussion which focuses primarily on the needs of teacher leaders and principals.

*Keywords:* curriculum leadership, capacity development, systems thinking, community of practice

## Executive Summary

Curriculum leadership is a process during which a leader and others decide what, why, and how students should learn (Jefferies, 2000). Curriculum leaders play an important role, one which shapes the education system and society at large; however, many are experiencing difficulty leading teachers in curriculum review and implementation projects (Albashiry et al., 2016; Tapala et al., 2020). They need continuing education which goes beyond leadership perspectives and practices to also examine curriculum theory, critical education studies, and social foundations (Ylimaki, 2012). This organizational improvement plan discusses how one ministry of education can further support its curriculum leaders in the development of their leadership capacity.

Chapter 1 begins with a description of the organization's context and leadership. Influenced by conservative ideology, the ministry maintains a hierarchical organizational structure, traditional hiring processes, standardized curriculum, and common assessments. This chapter then discusses the leadership position and lens of this author, which are characterised by social constructivism and liberalism and which draws from both servant leadership and distributed leadership. Next, it defines the problem of practice with Bolman and Deal's (2017) structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frames. The chapter then lists three guiding questions:

1. What conditions would allow the ministry's curriculum leaders to engage in meaningful leadership capacity development activities?
2. What conditions would enhance interaction between the ministry's curriculum leaders?

3. What conditions would allow the ministry's curriculum leaders to tailor their leadership capacity development activities to their individual and evolving needs?

Chapter 1 goes on to describe a leadership-focused vision for change and list priorities for change and change drivers. It concludes with this author confirming that the ministry is well-positioned for change.

Chapter 2 focuses on planning and developing a change plan. With the goal of moving the ministry toward a state of increased support of curriculum leadership capacity development, this author recommends that the organization take an amalgamated leadership approach to change by utilizing a systems approach to leadership and an adaptive leadership approach. They argue that a systems approach to leadership will help the organization maintain its holistic view, consider all perspectives, and leverage its collaborative professionalism. They also argue that an adaptive leadership approach will help the organization adapt to shifts in its internal and external environments. Next, this author compares three change models for leading the change process and recommends that the ministry frame its change process with both Kotter's (2014) eight-stage change process and Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path model. Then, in order to identify what exactly needs to change, this author cross-analyzes the organization's external and internal environments. They propose that the organization increase its support of curriculum leadership capacity development by aligning its strategy with its work. An evolved strategy would see curriculum leaders developing their leadership capacity in a manner congruent with social constructivism. This chapter concludes with this author recommending that the organization establish a curriculum leadership-focused community of practice and discussing the ethics of leadership as it applies to that change.

In Chapter 3, this author takes inspiration from a systems approach to leadership and an adaptive leadership approach when applying Deszca et al.'s (2020) sequence of wide, predictable steps to the ministry's change process and when using Kotter's (2014) eight stages to identify short-, medium-, and long-term goals. The result is an implementation plan which encompasses the initial establishment of a curriculum leadership-focused community of practice as well as first steps towards tailoring that community to the ministry's ever-changing internal and external environments. The plan is aimed at leveraging current practices and processes, using the Plan-Do-Study-Act inquiry cycle to monitor and evaluate change, and taking from Deszca et al.'s (2020) four communication goals to discuss means by which the ministry can communicate its need for change and change process.

This organizational improvement plan concludes with a series of next steps and future considerations. Those considerations include: (a) forming partnerships with local universities to offer formal learning opportunities to teachers interested in curriculum leadership, (b) referencing specific curriculum leadership knowledge and skill sets in job postings and during interviews, (c) establishing a leadership-focused community of practice for the organization's other middle leaders, (d) sharing new knowledge with curriculum leaders working at other ministries of education, and (e) reinvesting curriculum leaders' learning into their work at their respective schools when they return to the classroom.

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## Acronyms

ALA (Adaptive Leadership Approach)

CL (Curriculum Leadership)

CMEC (Council of Ministers of Education Canada)

CoP (Community of Practice)

DL (Distributed Leadership)

LME (Lilt Ministry of Education)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

SAL (Systems Approach to Leadership)

SC (Social Constructivism)

SL (Servant Leadership)

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

This organizational improvement plan (OIP) investigates a problem of practice (PoP) pertaining to one ministry of education's support of curriculum leadership capacity development. Chapter 1 discusses the organization's context, the leadership position and lens of this author, the forces shaping the PoP, three guiding questions, a leadership-focused vision for change, and the organization's readiness for change. To ensure confidentiality and privacy, the ministry's name and reference data have been anonymized.

### **Organizational Context**

Lilt Ministry of Education (LME) (pseudonym) is located in one of Canada's 13 provinces and territories. As a constitutional monarchy, Canada recognizes the Crown as Head of State. The country's federal government deals with national and international matters (Government of Canada, 2017). Under Section 93 of the 1867 Constitution Act, provincial and territorial governments have jurisdiction over matters related to education (Government of Canada, 2022). Like the federal government and all other provincial and territorial governments, the provincial government under which LME functions has three branches: judicial, legislative, and executive (Government of [Province], 2019a). LME is a sub-system to its province's executive branch and, as such, is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of laws created by the legislative branch as they relate to education (Government of [Province], 2019a).

A conservative government currently leads the province in which LME is located. Conservatism seeks to uphold socially traditional ideas by defending the status quo or, at most, evolving gradually (Guyen, 2019). With regard to education, conservatives tend to support standardized curriculum and performance outcomes (Ylimaki, 2012). As a sub-system to this government, LME is influenced by conservative ideology. It maintains a hierarchical

organizational structure, traditional hiring processes, standardized curriculum, and common assessments.

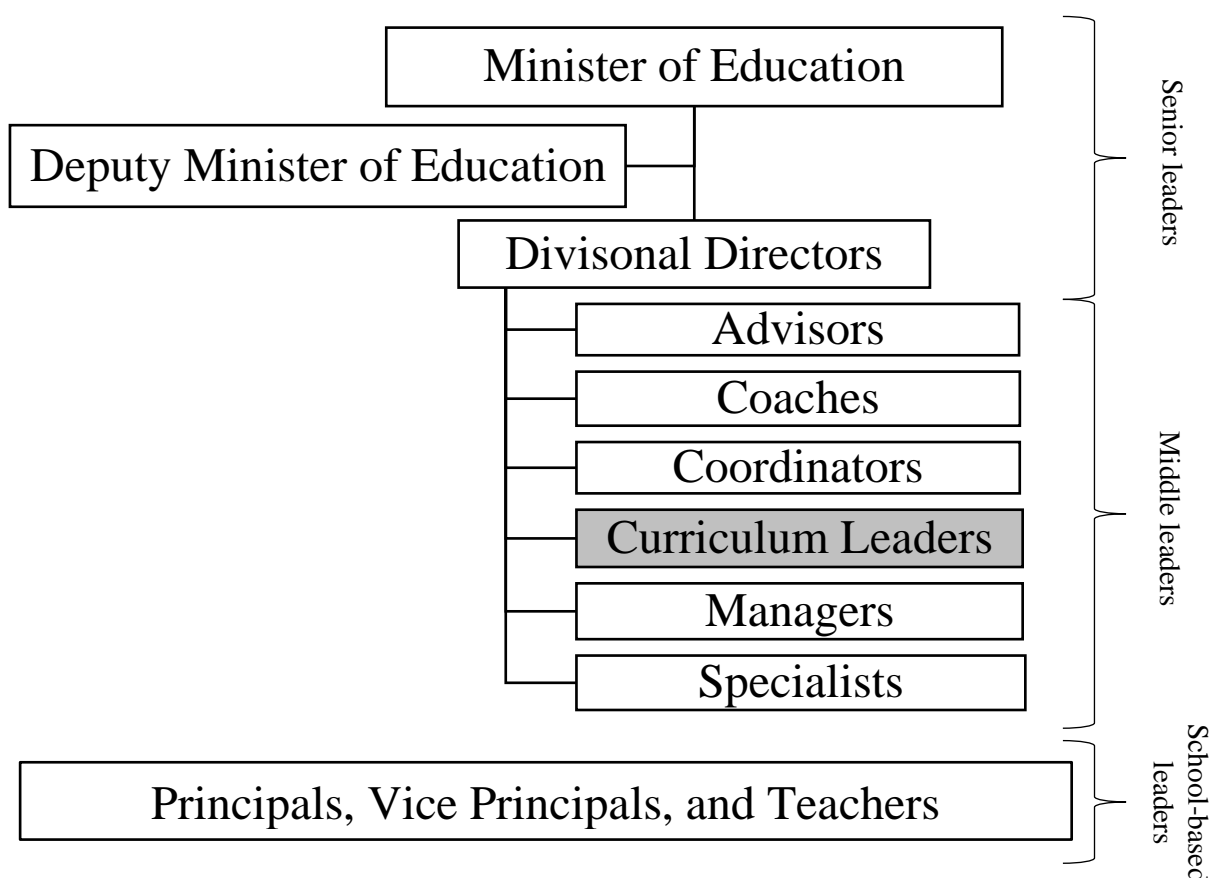
LME currently counts over 200 full-time employees (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2022). Its senior leaders are the province's Minister of Education, its Deputy Minister of Education, and multiple divisional directors (Figure 1). The minister is an elected official and is responsible for the organization's overall leadership (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2015). The Deputy Minister is an appointed official responsible for LME's operation (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2015). Together, the minister and Deputy Minister work with divisional directors (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2020). Divisional directors are public servants and, as such, are long-term, permanent employees. They are responsible for coordinating the work of their respective teams of middle leaders.

The ministry's middle leaders are its advisors, instructional coaches, coordinators, curriculum leaders, managers, and specialists (Figure 1). There is no hierarchy between these leaders, nor is there a hierarchy between their divisions. They are all equally responsible for implementing senior leaders' strategic plans and guiding the education system's school-based leaders (i.e., principals, vice principals, and teachers). School-based leaders are not directly employed by the organization. They work for their respective school boards. In this OIP, the term 'school board' refers to a separate entity that has the power to make decisions under the School Act. This places LME's middle leaders between senior leaders and school-based leaders.



**Figure 1**

*Simplified Organizational Chart Depicting LME's Governance Structure*



Ministries of education develop curriculum statements and let contracts for implementation and development of materials (Jefferies, 2000). According to research, curriculum encompasses more than just teaching practices (Ylimaki, 2012). It involves determining what, why, and how knowledge should be acquired (Jefferies, 2000; Ylimaki, 2012). LME's curriculum statements are founded on psychologist Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. This concept assumes that learning and development occurs when what happens on the individual's intermental plan is internalized in intersubjective processes (Ardichvili, 2001). Key players in the development of said curriculum statements are the ministry's curriculum leaders.

Curriculum leaders are responsible for (a) the development and enactment of educational programs and instructional interactions according to the best interest of students, (b) the support of continuous growth through inquiry, and (c) the examination of self and society (Henderson et al., 2000). Their tasks include: (a) defining and reviewing curricula, (b) guiding school-based leaders in curriculum implementation, (c) promoting internal and external collaborations, and (d) coordinating curriculum development activities (Albashiry et al., 2016). Given the important role they play and the scope of their influence, it is imperative that curriculum leaders have the knowledge and skill needed to guide school-based leaders in curricula reform projects. They need understandings to “examine underlying assumptions beyond policy language and curriculum content decisions” (Ylimaki, 2012, p. 344) and skills to “address complex educational dilemmas stepped in an array of social, cultural, and political contexts” (Ylimaki, 2012, p. 313). Many curriculum leaders are struggling (Albashiry et al., 2016; Tapala et al., 2020). Evidence shows that their biggest barrier is a lack of training and development (Tapala et al., 2020).

As an organization which strives for excellence and values continuous learning (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2015), LME asks its employees to design individual professional learning and development plans. Every academic year, curriculum leaders meet individually with their respective directors to discuss their learning needs and goals as well as the support they will require to achieve said goals. Mid-way through that same year, they meet with their director a second time to list their accomplishments and discuss next steps. This two-step process is repeated every year for as long as the employee is with the organization.

LME currently supports its organizational members’ leadership capacity development by providing funding for professional reading materials and conference attendance. It also promotes

the learning opportunities provided by the province's Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission supports performance excellence and builds capacity by providing leadership and services to human resources in the public sector ([Province] Public Service Commission, n.d.-a). It offers public servants a number of opportunities, all of which support government and ministerial priorities, excellence in public service, and employee learning needs ([Province] Public Service Commission, n.d.-b). For example, it offers courses pertaining to health and well-being, diversity and inclusion, and planning for retirement. Of particular relevance is the fact that the Public Service Commission offers opportunities for LME employees, both permanent and seconded, to further develop their leadership capacity through self-study and coursework ([Province] Public Service Commission, n.d.-b). In this OIP, the term 'capacity' refers to both knowledge sets and skill sets.

Triennially, LME uses a federally designed employee survey to measure its employees' opinions about engagement, leadership, workforce, workplace, workplace well-being, diversity, and inclusion (Government of Canada, 2021). Results from the ministry's last two surveys show mediocre scores for its support of learning and development and low scores for its support of continuous improvement. For an organization which (a) is tasked with providing leadership, (b) values continuous learning, and (c) seeks to create the best possible learning experiences for all children, there lies an opportunity for growth.

This section has described LME's context, structure, responsibilities, and some of its practices. The next section will discuss my leadership position and lens.

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

The following identifies this author's position within LME, their responsibilities and scope of influence, as well as the role they expect to take as the ministry moves towards a more

desirable state. It then discusses this author's lens by describing their philosophical perspective, beliefs, and leadership style.

### **Position**

I work at LME as a literacy specialist. My responsibilities include: (a) advising senior leaders on literacy instruction matters, (b) collaborating with other middle leaders and school-based leaders to implement senior leaders' strategic plans, (c) supporting teachers as they work to further develop their instructional practice, and (d) teaching students who are experiencing difficulty in literacy learning. As a middle leader, I am sandwiched between my organization's senior leaders and the education system's school-based leaders. This means I influence both senior leaders' strategic plans and school-based leaders' implementations of said plans.

My position has helped me understand the ministry as a whole, the symbiotic relationships between its parts, and its reciprocal relationship with the province's education system. For example, I understand that the needs of the education system affect senior leaders' allocation of resources (e.g., fiscal resources) and the professional development (e.g., in-service and materials) middle leaders offer school-based leaders. I also understand that, due to a lack of training and development, curriculum leaders are struggling to lead school-based leaders in curriculum review and implementation projects.

My goal is to help LME move toward a state of increased support of CL capacity development. As a scholar-practitioner, I expect to take on the role of change initiator by creating a sense of urgency through authoring this OIP and sharing it with my director (Kotter, 2014). Subsequently, as an LME employee, I expect to play the role of change implementer. In particular, I expect to participate in the collaborative acts of formulating a strategic vision and developing change initiatives (Kotter, 2014).

## **Lens**

An individual's lens, or philosophical perspective, is the manner in which they view the world (Creswell, 2014). According to Moon and Blackman (2014), a person's lens affects their beliefs and, by extension, their actions. Correspondingly, a researcher's worldview defines what can be known and how it can be known, thereby affecting their research design and methods (Creswell, 2014; Wright et al., 2016).

I acknowledge that I see the world through a social constructivist lens (Appendix A). Social constructivism is based on nominalism and anti-positivism (Creswell, 2014). Nominalism assumes the individual structures their reality; anti-positivism assumes realities are constructed via engagement or action (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). More specifically, social constructivism is founded on the ontological assumption that knowledge is created by the individual and the epistemological assumption that meaning is negotiated by the individual through their interactions with others (Creswell, 2014). Within the field of education, social constructivists work from the belief that (a) the learner needs to be engaged in the practice of creating knowledge; (b) knowledge evolves with experience; (c) the learner needs to interact with others; and (d) a more experienced other can facilitate learning by scaffolding, negotiating meaning, and planning collaborations (Barak, 2017). Indeed, I believe learning is an active process where the individual constructs their own representations of reality by adding new information to prior knowledge (Bandura, 1997; Creswell, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978).

I acknowledge that my belief system is liberal in nature. Liberalism assumes individuals are social beings, society is responsive to the interests of its people, and society is created via the development of human autonomy, accountability, and sociality (Smith & Knight, 1982). As a participant in a democracy which is based on the individual's rights and freedoms and where

there are many different points of view, I value learning, growth, and freedom of expression. Influenced by the works of Dewey, who wrote of liberalism and encouraged problem-solving (Dewey, 2008; Hahn, 1970), I value democracy and inquiry; influenced by the works of Freire, who encouraged oppressed peoples to question traditional practices and transform their worlds (Freire, 1993; Soho et al., 2005), I value critical thinking and empowerment. Indeed, I believe every individual has the right to design their own life, so long as they do not infringe on the right of the next person to do the same.

My beliefs translate into action at LME. As a middle leader, I strive to serve my colleagues, my organization, and the province's education system by encouraging the distribution of power amongst stakeholders. Hence, I define my leadership practice as one which lies at the intersection between servant leadership and distributed leadership. The following further discusses these two leadership styles as they inform my leadership practice.

### ***Servant Leadership***

Servant leadership (SL) was first introduced in 1970 by Robert Greenleaf (Phipps, 2010). According to the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (2016), SL is a process by which leaders share power, put others' needs first, and help people develop and perform to their maximum potential. SL relies on the premise that the individual's potential is linked to the organization's potential. This means that by maximising the individual's potential, the organization is effectively helping its employees as well as itself. SL has therefore been described as a long-term transformational approach (Phipps, 2010). In the context of this OIP, servant leadership is defined in relation to leaders' desire to serve others' learning and development needs through characteristics such as empathy, conceptualization, stewardship and foresight (Greenleaf, 1977).

SL is aimed at learning and development. Servant leaders strive to provide opportunities for others to maximize their potential and the organization to improve its performance (Gandolfi et al., 2017). In other words, servant leaders prioritise the needs of others before the needs of the organization (Phipps, 2010). Placing the needs of individuals before those of the collective is counterintuitive to many (Gandolfi et al., 2017). However, a servant leader can improve direction, build community, and equip others to support collectivity (Spears & Lawrence, 2016). In order to practice this leadership style, individuals need to listen, ask thoughtful questions, and create opportunities for learning from their experiences (Spears, 2010). As a liberal minded middle leader, I seek to serve those with whom I work (i.e., senior leaders, other middle leaders, school-based leaders, and students). More specifically, I seek to support my colleagues on their journey to the outcomes they desire. I therefore listen and pose questions so that I understand them, their objectives, and their chosen path. As the ministry moves towards its more desirable state, I will continue to strive to understand the strengths and circumstances of others and encourage their growth and development.

SL is characterised by a strong human orientation. Servant leaders are said to be focused on “listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community” (Phipps, 2010, p. 152). It is only by actively listening and working as a team that leadership, which is dedicated to the growth and well-being of others, can be achieved (Hackman, 1990). As a social constructivist, I assume the existence of multiple realities. For that reason, I encourage the contemplation of differing ideas. As a middle leader who rejects the idea that there is one definition of knowledge, I strive to listen to all voices and consider all perspectives. As the

ministry moves towards its more desirable state, I will continue to strive for excellence when listening, problem-solving, and communicating.

### *Distributed Leadership*

Distributed leadership (DL) “is primarily concerned with the co-performance of leadership and the reciprocal interdependencies that shape that leadership practice” (Harris, 2013, p. 548). In other words, DL involves the distribution of tasks throughout an organization and that multiple sources of influence exist within that organization (Harris, 2013). This means that DL fosters interaction between multiple leaders, others, and the environment (Spillane, 2006). Successful DL therefore depends upon establishing mutual trust. Studies indicate that mutual trust is essential to the effective distribution of formal and informal leadership practices (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Spillane, 2006; Spillane et al., 2004). Distributed leaders tend to refrain from defining or framing leadership with inflexible borders (Hadfield, 2005). Instead, they see leadership as a fluid and flexible process. Furthermore, interpersonal interactions matter more than leadership role definitions (Goldstein, 2004; Gronn, 2002). This author views DL as the process of leadership activities being shared among those involved in a shared goal, regardless of their formal titles.

I appreciate that inclusiveness and social processes are key aspects of DL (Bolden, 2011; Harris, 2013). Building communities of minds that can consider multiple perspectives of what is real resonates with my anti-positivist lens. Anti-positivism espouses the assumption that people interpret events differently and construct multiple perspectives on the same event (Mack, 2010). As a middle leader, I reject the idea that there is only one way to increase knowledge. I value openness, diversity, inclusiveness, and flexibility. As a social constructivist, I assume learning requires engagement. For that reason, I encourage the distribution of tasks across an organization



so that more individuals are involved in actions that will increase individual and social intelligence. As the ministry moves towards its more desirable state, I will continue to encourage collaboration and co-creation.

This section has described my leadership position at LME and my socio-constructivist lens. The next section will discuss a leadership problem of practice.

### **Leadership Problem of Practice**

The world in which we live is characterised by marginalization attributable to markers of otherness (e.g., race, class, and gender) (Ylimaki, 2012). This author argues that transforming society to a state which knows mutually respectful relationships is the responsibility of all citizens. For example, educators can provide experiences that allow learners to gain a deeper understanding of social relationships and develop habits of mind that allow for social change without creating disorder (Dewey, 2008; Ylimaki, 2012). Of particular relevance to this OIP is the contribution curriculum leaders can make to the processes of realizing “political, social, and educational ends supportive of growth” (Ylimaki, 2012, p. 309). They are in a position to foster social transformation by creating inclusive curricula and practicing inclusive decision-making processes (Ylimaki, 2012).

Curriculum leadership (CL) is a process which involves the sociocultural aspects of educational content decisions pertaining to what is taught, to whom, and by whom (Jefferies, 2000; Ylimaki, 2012). This means that curriculum leaders play an important role, one which shapes the education system and, by extension, society at large. Indeed, curriculum leaders influence school-based leaders’ knowledge, understanding, and practice (Jefferies, 2000). However, curriculum leaders are experiencing difficulty leading teachers in curriculum review and implementation projects (Albashiry et al., 2016; Tapala et al., 2020). They are struggling

with technical aspects related to curriculum development (e.g., phrasing learning outcomes), teacher-related issues (e.g., varying commitment and motivation), and senior management support (e.g., lack of encouragement and follow-up) (Albashiry et al., 2016; Tapala et al., 2020).

Evidence shows that many curriculum leaders assume their role with little or no formal leadership training or leadership experience outside the classroom. Their struggles require urgent attention as the purpose of a ministry of education is to provide leadership to its education system (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). To “meet and respond to the changing needs of our children, teachers, and schools” (Jefferies, 2000, p. 140), curriculum leaders need continuing education which examines “curriculum theory and critical education studies and social foundations as well as leadership perspectives and practices” (Ylimaki, 2012, p. 344). The problem of practice under investigation is therefore how one ministry of education can further support its curriculum leaders as they work to develop their leadership capacity. Evolving its support for CL capacity development will empower curriculum leaders as they lead teachers in the shared responsibility of serving the priority needs of the marginalized.

This OIP will not only inform the ministry as to how it can close the gap between its curriculum leaders’ roles and capacities, but it will also serve other organizations interested in CL capacity development. Leadership capacity development is a topic of interest for many scholars from around the globe and from differing philosophical perspectives. Some promote one-time professional development events, others recommend sequential programs or mentoring processes (Lin & Chen, 2018; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Levy-Gazenfrantz, 2015; Yen & Ng, 2010). Though this author appreciates the different paths available to those interested in developing their leadership capacity, it is important to note that (within the field of education) the collective discussion focuses mainly on the needs of teacher leaders and principals (Jefferies,

2000). The needs of curriculum leaders working at a ministry of education are missing from the discussion. This OIP therefore injects the voices of one ministry's curriculum leaders into the larger discussion on leadership capacity development. Their voices will serve to inform the growing number of scholars and practitioners interested in CL capacity development (Ylimaki, 2012).

This section has identified a gap between the role curriculum leaders' play and their capacity. Toward bridging that gap, the next section will discuss the forces shaping LME's current practices.

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

This author views the world from a social constructivist perspective. As previously stated, social constructivism assumes multiple realities and meaning is negotiated by cross-analyzing differing ideas. Systems thinking aligns well with social constructivism. According to Senge (2020), systems thinking is "a way of seeing and thinking that honours profound interconnectedness" (p. 57). This author therefore uses systems theory to analyze the PoP (Appendix A). They acknowledge the symbiotic relationships between the ministry's individual, collective, and system domains. More specifically, they assume that curriculum leaders' awareness of themselves as leaders, their collaborations and co-creations, and the ministry's overall leadership are inextricably linked. A change in one domain will affect the two others. For example, focusing collaborations and co-creations on CL capacity development can shift individual (i.e., curriculum leader) and system (i.e., ministry) domains.

LME is a system, different from its education system and its parent system (i.e., provincial government). It (a) affects and is affected by its environment, (b) deals with a complex set of interrelationships, (c) regulates by anticipating challenges, and (d) seeks to move

forward on a dynamic path (Ansari, 2004). Whereas systems thinking involves the capacity to understand interconnections so as to achieve a particular purpose, a system is a set of interconnected elements organized in a coherent manner (Meadows, 2008). This author respects the complex interconnectedness within the ministry as well as between the organization and its parent and education systems. They therefore posit that a shift within the organization's leadership will affect the education system's instructional capacity and performance.

To best describe the complexity that is LME, this author uses Bolman and Deal's (2017) four frames to analyze the forces shaping its practices. Those four frames, or perspectives, are: (a) structural, (b) human resources, (c) political, and (d) symbolic. Together they form a powerful tool for gaining clarity and generating questions (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

### **Structural Frame**

Bolman and Deal's (2017) structural frame highlights goals and objectives; increasing efficiency through division of labour, coordination, and control; and addressing productivity issues through restructuring and problem-solving (Bolman & Deal, 2017). With the swearing in of the current conservative government, LME merged a number of its divisions. This restructuring was aimed at: (a) increasing efficiency and communication, (b) providing a more systematic and unified approach to teacher professional development and student achievement, (c) improving the quality of service to teachers, and (d) increasing focus on the front line (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2020). It was at this time that the ministry reaffirmed its commitment to professional collaboration within divisions, between divisions, with its advisory councils, and with other sectors of the provincial government (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019).

## **Human Resources Frame**

The human resources frame views an organization from the perspective of its employees and their relationship with the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Most curriculum leaders are certified teachers on secondment from their school boards. This means that they hold temporary positions with the ministry. Their secondment contracts are for three academic years only. On occasion, LME will renew a temporary employee's contract, inviting them to remain with the organization for a total of six years. Only in very exceptional circumstances does the ministry extend secondment contracts beyond six years. This means that LME's curriculum leader profile is in a perpetual state of change as teachers come from the classroom to replace curriculum leaders whose contracts have ended. Considering the short duration of their contracts, it is advantageous for curriculum leaders to have previous formal leadership training or experience. This is not the case for most.

A lack of leadership training and development can hinder curriculum leaders' abilities to be innovative with resources, attend to competing priorities, manage time and workload, distribute work equitably, communicate with stakeholders, understand the socio-economic challenges the community faces, and incorporate new technologies (Tapala et al., 2020). Ylimaki (2012) concurs, stating that CL requires skills which go beyond management to develop self-awareness and ideological clarity. Indeed, curriculum leaders need to understand the culture and context of their organization as well as its education system and community if they are to (a) raise academic achievement for all students, (b) prepare all students to live as critical citizens, and (c) provide all students with access to rich and engaging curriculum (Albashiry et al., 2016; Ylimaki, 2012).

## **Political Frame**

Bolman and Deal's (2017) political frame pertains to the influences that may have a direct effect on the impact, role, and purpose of the organization. LME's parent-system issues mandates which reflect conservative ideology. For example, a past conservative government implemented provincial, common assessments (Authors, 2018). Though the province's standardized assessment process is currently under review (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2020), students have traditionally been assessed four times over the course of their K-12 education in reading, writing, and mathematics (Government of [Province], 2019b). It is important to note that when in Grade 8 some students also participate in the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program and, when 15-years old, a random sample participate in the Program for International Student Assessment (Authors, 2018).

Common assessments are said to provide valid, reliable, and consistent information about students' learning and are thereby used to inform curriculum adjustments, teacher professional development, and interventions aimed at improving student achievement (Authors, 2018). This means that curriculum leaders are expected to use students' performance outcomes to inform their curricula reform projects (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2018). The challenge they face is knowing how to lead these projects in such a way as to enhance all students' educational experiences. According to Ylimaki (2012), the goal of CL is to create inclusive instructional programs that account for historically and currently marginalizing conditions. To that end, curriculum leaders need to be able to examine and question curriculum discourses (Ylimaki, 2012). Their continued education therefore must focus on social justice and equity, this over and above pedagogical excellence and learning (Ylimaki, 2012).

## **Symbolic Frame**

The symbolic frame aims to align individual goals with organizational objectives and create a sense of purpose or meaning in one's work (Bolman & Deal, 2017). LME is responsible for establishing education-related policy and delivering programs and services to its education system (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). It envisions an education system which supports all children and where all students can thrive, achieve, and succeed (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). The ministry's goal is to develop and deliver quality education to the province's children and youth from birth to and including Grade 12, in both of the country's official languages (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). It values accountability, excellence, learning, and respect (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019).

Learning requires the person to construct their own representation of reality by adding new information to prior knowledge and enhancing its meaning (Bandura, 1997). This means that learning is a process which is both active and constructive (Creswell, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978). Hence, LME develops curriculum statements which are founded on social constructivism, a theory which is based on the belief that individuals create their own knowledge with language and in social contexts (Taber, 2020). The philosophical stance upon which the ministry's curricula are built is important in that it defines curriculum leaders' experiences. They derive meaning from their curriculum statements and strive to facilitate engagement and interaction when working with school-based leaders. This stance also influences the choices they make when designing their own learning paths, and subsequently, when requesting support from the ministry.

This section has described the forces shaping LME's current practices. The next section will identify challenges and corresponding lines of inquiry which emerge from the PoP.

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

Considering the aforementioned problem of practice and the confluence of forces shaping LME's current state, this author poses three questions which will guide their investigation further. These questions relate to curriculum leaders' engagement, interaction, and individual needs.

#### **Challenge 1: Learning Through Engagement**

Curriculum leaders are in a time sensitive situation. They have but three years to accomplish their tasks. They must act strategically if they are to maximise their opportunity to help teachers and, by extension, students. However, evidence shows they are experiencing difficulty using common assessment data to lead teachers in curriculum review and implementation projects to the end of serving all students well. With that in mind, this author poses the question: *What conditions would allow LME's curriculum leaders to engage in meaningful curriculum leadership capacity development activities?*

#### **Challenge 2: Learning Through Interaction**

The ministry confirms that it seeks to serve the needs of its evolving education system and strives to support all students (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). It does so by virtue of its culture of collaborative professionalism. In order to provide equitable and quality education to all students, LME states that dialogue with diverse individuals is vital to understanding the needs of all learners (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). However, evidence shows curriculum leaders are struggling to find and involve curriculum stakeholders (Albashiry et al., 2016). This author therefore poses the question: *What conditions would enhance interaction between LME's curriculum leaders?*



### **Challenge 3: Increasing Individualization**

LME's curriculum statements are based on social constructivism. According to social constructivism, learning is a collaborative process in which individuals gain knowledge through collaborating with knowledgeable others. Curriculum leaders are asking the ministry for support; however, they do not have the benefit of a more experienced other to guide them in accordance with their CL related learning needs. Consequently, this author poses the question: *What conditions would allow LME's curriculum leaders to tailor their leadership capacity development activities to their individual and evolving needs?*

This section has listed three guiding questions. The next section will discuss a leadership-focused vision for change.

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

Curriculum leaders are tasked with leading curriculum reform projects. They are responsible for decisions related to educational content and, by extension, for the impact those decisions have on society's marginalized (i.e., students and families who have been marginalized). Indeed, curriculum leaders play an important role in defining the future; however, many are struggling (Irvine & Brundrett, 2016; Lipscombe et al., 2019; Tapala et al., 2020). Their difficulty is evidence that a gap exists between the role they play and their capacity to fulfill that role.

Though LME's curriculum leaders are teachers with successful classroom experience, many came to their curriculum leader roles without formal leadership training or experience. This author does not suggest that the organization change its practice of inviting classroom teachers to assume the role of curriculum leader. In fact, they support the ministry in that choice. They argue that by working in the classroom, a person can better understand what it means to

guide all learners. This author instead suggests that the ministry increase the support it extends to curriculum leaders so that they can develop their leadership capacity in such a way that they are better equipped to address educational dilemmas steeped in social, cultural, and political contexts (Ylimaki, 2012).

The vision is to increase support of curriculum leadership capacity development. According to Lin and Chen (2018), most curriculum leadership professional development opportunities are short-term and generic in nature. However, if curriculum leaders are to lead the pursuit of new modes of life and social relations (Pinar, 2004), generic leadership training and development activities are not sufficient. They need more tailored guidance. Ylimaki (2012) recommends that curriculum leaders participate in activities where they examine curriculum theory, critical education studies, and social foundations, in addition to leadership perspectives and practices.

The future state will see curriculum leaders engaging in meaningful job-embedded curriculum leadership capacity development activities. It will see more experienced curriculum leaders collaborating with less experienced curriculum leaders; it will see cross-subject and cross-divisional interaction; and it will see open-ended and flexible activities designed to individualize experiences according to curriculum leaders' specific needs and society's evolving needs. From a systems thinking perspective, focusing the organization's collective domain on developing socially just curriculum leaders will shift individual and system domains, thereby affecting the education system's instructional capacity and performance and, by extension, society at large.

## **Priorities for Change**

When planning for LME's change, leaders will need to identify change priorities. This author recommends that they consider the following two priorities: determine curriculum leaders' specific needs and leverage the ministry's professional collaboration.

The first priority for change is the continued self-identification of professional learning outcomes by curriculum leaders at 6-month intervals. The goal is to further support curriculum leaders as they develop their ability to go beyond the practice of teaching to the socio-cultural and political aspects of defining what is taught, to whom, and by whom (Jefferies, 2000; Ylimaki, 2012). Divisional directors and curriculum leaders will therefore need to continue to collaborate on the identification of individual professional learning outcomes and the design of individualized learning plans.

The second priority for change is the leveraging of the organization's professional collaboration so that it further promotes peer support and professional growth. LME has long prioritized collaborative practices (Lil Ministry of Education, 2015). This author recommends that the ministry build on those practices as it moves forward with its change to further support CL capacity development.

## **Change Drivers**

A change driver is a variable that affects the planning and implementation of the change process, as indicated by Whelan-Berry and Somerville (2010). Drivers act as catalysts in bringing about organizational change (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). There are five variables driving LME's change.

The first change driver is the premier's mandate letter. At the beginning of the current provincial government's term in office, the premier issued a mandate letter to LME outlining

priorities to guide the organization forward (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2020). That letter listed priorities, such as:

- Providing a model for inclusion to meet the needs of all students
- Considering the voices of all stakeholders
- Strengthening the learning experiences of children from birth to age three
- Making post-secondary education affordable for more families
- Making entry into, and upgrading within, a trade more accessible
- Providing individuals with the skills to progress through the workforce (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2020)

Since receiving the premier's letter, LME has maintained focus on these priorities. Of particular relevance to this OIP is the need to strengthen the learning experiences of all students. Curriculum leaders' difficulty leading curriculum review projects will ultimately shape students' learning experiences. For that reason, the provincial government's mandate letter will serve in driving the ministry toward a state where it further supports CL capacity development.

The second driver is how organizational members perceive the urgency of change and change vision (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). Change leaders (e.g., senior leaders) and change agents (e.g., divisional directors and curriculum leaders) must value the change and the change vision. Their commitment and participation increase commitment to the change (Ackerman-Anderson & Anderson, 2010). That commitment will propel the organization forward.

Change drivers can help or hinder change. The third driver is organizational members' mindsets, assumptions, and beliefs (Ackerman-Anderson & Anderson, 2010). It is critical for members to examine their mindsets, admit any bias towards change, and be open to evolving

their mindset (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). Through education pertaining to factors affecting the issue and communication, change leaders can encourage a change in mindset (Ackerman-Anderson & Anderson, 2010).

Fourthly, behaviour is a factor driving change. This OIP defines behaviour as the actions of organizational members, specifically their manner of work. In order to shift organizational culture, leaders' behaviour must be both conducive to, and supportive of change (Ackman-Anderson & Anderson, 2010). It is therefore imperative that LME leaders demonstrate a need for change and demonstrate active participation in it (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). Their actions will further propel the ministry's change forward.

A fifth change driver is transparency and open communication. Having open lines of communication will ensure that all members have the opportunity to contribute to the change process. LME will need to communicate the change process and its framework for leading this change. This will allow stakeholders the opportunity to learn about new responsibilities they may acquire, as well as the potential outcomes of these changes (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). This will also allow members to ask questions and discuss concerns throughout the change process (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010).

While this OIP lists several drivers, change leaders should prioritize a subset as a catalyst for change. Prioritized change drivers might include the provincial government's mandate letter and senior leaders' perception of the urgency for change. From a systems thinking perspective, utilizing one change driver will affect others (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). This could have a cumulative effect, thus increasing the momentum of LME's forward motion.

This section has described a leadership-focused vision for change. It also identified priorities for change and change drivers. The next section will discuss the ministry's readiness for change.

### **Organizational Change Readiness**

Deszca et al. (2020) define organizational change readiness as “the degree to which the organization as a whole perceives the need for change and accepts it” (p. 136). Readiness is dependent on a number of factors. These include the past experiences of its members, culture, leadership, structure, communication, reward systems, resources, and alignment with the proposed change (Deszca et al., 2020). Assessing an organization's readiness is part of the first phase of organizational change (Rafferty et al., 2013).

Due to the number and complexity of variables, organizational readiness can be difficult to assess. For that reason, Deszca et al. (2020) have put forth a questionnaire aimed at helping organizations structure their analysis. By way of their questionnaire, Deszca et al. (2020) invite change leaders to contemplate their organization's (a) previous experiences with change, (b) executive support, (c) leadership credibility, (d) openness to change, (e) rewards for change, and (f) measures of accountability. For each of the questionnaire's six dimensions, Deszca et al. (2020) list sets of reflection questions. They invite change leaders to contemplate said questions and allocate a numeric score to each. Scores are tallied for each dimension and compiled to produce one overall score. The overall sum reflects the organization's state of readiness. The higher the sum, the better poised the organization is for change. According to Deszca et al. (2020), overall sums can range from -10 to +50. An overall sum of +10 or below, signals that the organization is not yet ready for change (Deszca et al., 2020). In such cases, Deszca et al. (2020)

recommend that organizations analyze the tallies for each of the six dimensions and identify areas in need of strengthening.

This author used Deszca et al.'s (2020) questionnaire to qualify LME's readiness for change. When answering the tool's proposed assessment questions, they considered anecdotal evidence from the past two decades. The following is organized according to the questionnaire's six dimensions.

The questionnaire's first dimension pertains to its previous change experiences. Though LME has faced challenges with past change projects, it maintains a rather positive outlook. For example, a few years ago the organization relocated its main office. That change of location proved stressful for a number of employees. Those who chose to remain with the organization were forced to travel long distances to get to work, divisional directors had to secure funds to pay for increased travel for those employees, and senior leaders needed to ensure leadership to its education system at a time when its human resource profile was adjusting. LME is now thriving in its new location. The current mood is positive. For having conquered past challenges, LME scores well for previous change experiences.

With regard to LME's executive support, this author recognises that some senior leaders might not support the prioritization of curriculum leaders' capacity development. They might argue that resources should be placed elsewhere. At the same time, this author predicts that other senior leaders will support the proposed change. Many are known to work from a systems perspective, often stating that the ministry's capacity affects the education system's instructional capacity and students' achievement. The ministry therefore scores well for its support from senior leaders.

The questionnaire's third dimension pertains to the credibility of the organization's leadership and change champions. This author expects a number of LME's senior leaders will look favourably on evolving LME's curriculum leadership. These senior leaders are trusted members of the organization. They are known to be good communicators with vision, motivation, and drive. For that reason, the ministry scores as well for its credibility.

With regard to the organization's openness to change, LME listens to its employees and resolves conflict well. Senior leaders are known to scan the ministry's internal environment periodically and deal with conflict openly. However, this author recognises that some middle and senior leaders are locked into past strategies, approaches, and solutions. They seem to work from a functionalist paradigm and support the use of one-time, isolated, inductive leadership training opportunities. For those reasons, LME will be further prepared for its pending change if it were to strengthen its openness to change.

The questionnaire's fifth dimension pertains to rewards for change. This dimension might prove challenging for the ministry. There seems to be a lack of rewards at LME. Though there are celebrations for calendar events (e.g., January 1), there are few rewards or gatherings which highlight achievements or results. LME therefore scores low for rewarding innovation and change. The ministry would be better positioned if it were to implement a reward system.

The questionnaire's final dimension pertains to measures for change and accountability. Triennially, LME uses a federally designed employee satisfaction survey to measure its employees' needs. Annually, it uses its provincial common assessment results to assess its system's needs (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2018). Longitudinal data is analyzed and results are used to update the ministry's strategic plan. That plan outlines how the organization will steward its resources. LME reports its plan and progress to the public in its annual report which is made



available online. The ministry therefore fares well in the measures for change and accountability dimension.

With an overall score of +32, LME is well-positioned for change. Its strength comes from its previous change experiences, executive support, credible leadership, and accountability. The ministry could further strengthen its position by improving its openness and rewards for change. As part of Chapter 3's implementation plan, change leaders have the option of assessing the ministry's readiness for change and improving it if they so choose.

### **Chapter 1 Summary**

For the purpose of helping LME further support CL capacity development, Chapter 1 provided an overview of the ministry's conservative organizational context. It then described the leadership position and lens of this author, which is characterised by social constructivism and liberalism and which draws from both servant leadership and distributed leadership. Next, this chapter defined a PoP, framing it with Bolman and Deal's (2017) structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frames. This author posed three guiding questions and described a leadership-focused vision for change, highlighting priorities for change and change drivers. Finally, this author assessed LME's readiness for change, determining that it was well-positioned for change. Chapter 2 is aimed at planning and developing a change plan.

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

As stated in Chapter 1, this OIP is aimed at determining how LME can increase its support of CL capacity development. To that end, Chapter 2 begins by discussing leadership approaches to change. This author then describes three change models and recommends a framework for leading the ministry's change process. Next, this chapter provides an overview of organizational information and data. Subsequently, this author compares three possible solutions to address the PoP. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethics of leadership as they apply to the organization's change.

### **Leadership Approaches to Change**

This author looks at the PoP from a systems thinking stance. According to Ramosaj and Berisha (2014), systems thinking is a theory which honours complexity and synergism. This author therefore argues that LME is a system made up of many interconnected parts. Considering the symbiotic relationships between the organization's components, increasing its support of CL capacity development will affect curriculum leaders' individual capacities and the ministry's overall leadership. This author recommends that LME increase said support by utilizing both a systems approach to leadership and an adaptive leadership approach. The following discusses both of those approaches.

#### **Systems Approach to Leadership**

The PoP discussed herein is a systemic problem in that it affects the ministry, its education system, and its province's community. A systems approach to leadership (SAL) will help the organization address such a problem. SAL is a holistic approach that enables leaders to optimize an organization (or part of it) in the face of high complexity (Coffey, 2010; Vega, 2015). It aligns with systems thinking in that its goals include optimizing individuals, teams, business

units, and the overall organization, thereby positioning leaders as system designers, builders, and facilitators (Coffey, 2010). Senge et al. (2019) speak of SAL leaders, stating that they foster the conditions wherein collective wisdom contributes to new ways of thinking, acting, and being (Senge et al., 2019). This OIP defines SAL in relation to leaders' determination to give answers to complexity. According to Senge et al. (2019), a leader's determination can appear in three ways: (a) seeing the whole system, (b) hearing the perspectives of others, and (c) shifting from reactive problem-solving to collaborative co-creation.

By looking at the whole system (i.e., LME), change leaders will be able to understand the complexity of the PoP (Senge et al., 2019). They will be thus positioned to consider curriculum leaders' role and needs. They can cross-check that information with the organization's goals, practices, procedures, and allocation of funds. It is important to note that LME is an open system. In this OIP, the term 'open system' refers to a system where an organization is influenced by, and subject to, its external environment (Ramosaj & Berisha, 2014). Thus, LME's change leaders will have to consider not only the ministry's internal environment, but also its relationship to its external environment. Doing so will allow for well-informed decision-making (e.g., when formulating a strategic vision) (Kotter, 2014).

By considering the perspectives of others, change leaders will be able to understand the dynamism of the system. This translates into engaging stakeholders from all levels in reflective conversations and with a sense of moral purpose (Mowat, 2019). According to Senge et al. (2019), the use of reflective conversations, that challenge assumptions and value others' perspectives, fosters creativity and builds trust. The result is a better understanding of the effects of change, as nuanced by organizational members' individual situations. This greater

understanding will help all throughout the change, but especially when developing change initiatives (Kotter, 2014).

By fostering collaborative co-creation, LME will honour equifinality (Senge et al., 2019). Social constructivism rejects the idea that there is only one reality and that there is only one way to understand reality. Collaborative co-creation will allow for continued interaction amongst organizational members and, by extension, the continued sharing of perspectives as change occurs. This will serve to accelerate movement toward the vision and opportunity (Kotter, 2014).

Indeed, a systems approach to leadership can help propel LME's change forward. However, an underlying assumption of SAL is that it is aimed at a one-time change. Considering the dynamism of both the ministry's internal and external environments, a one-time change might not be enough (Ramosaj & Berisha, 2014). In other words, LME will need to make a change by increasing its support of CL, but it will also need to consider subsequent changes to evolve that support as environments shift. This author therefore recommends that the organization consider amalgamating SAL with another leadership approach.

### **Adaptive Leadership Approach**

The PoP discussed herein is an adaptive challenge in that it is complex and will require new modes of working. The adaptive leadership approach (ALA) is well-suited to tackling such problems and achieving progress through adaptive work (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004). ALA aligns with systems thinking in that it emphasizes how individuals can adapt to changing environments and how they can build capacities to meet tough challenges and succeed (Ford, 2010). According to Nelson and Squires (2017), ALA is a polyarchy, with the collective working toward the goal of navigating a technical or adaptive problem. Technical problems are those which can be solved via available expertise; adaptive problems are those which are more complex and cannot be

solved via established rules and procedures (Nelson & Squires, 2017). This OIP defines ALA as an approach aimed at addressing complex problems via shared responsibility and continuous development. They see leaders working for the future success of their organization by sharing resources, ideas, and decisions (Nelson & Squires, 2017).

As an iterative and nonlinear process, ALA leaders share in three essential subjective events: observation, interpretation, and intervention (Heifetz et al., 2009). Heifetz (1994) describes the first event with the metaphor “Get on the balcony” (p. 126). To effectively address the adaptive challenge, one must think holistically and systemically about organizational culture, external collaborations, and implications. A balcony view will serve LME change leaders throughout the change, but especially when formulating a strategic vision (Kotter, 2014). Heifetz et al. (2009) define the second event with the metaphor “Song beneath the words” (p. 34). Observations are unpacked to estimate what is occurring within the organization and with stakeholders (Heifetz et al., 2009). The purpose of this activity is to listen to and interpret people’s behaviour, beliefs, and assumptions that are part of the organization’s culture. This event will serve LME change leaders when communicating with stakeholders. Heifetz et al. (2009) define the third event with the metaphor “On the dance floor” (p. 7). It represents the moment when interventions are conducted. The dance floor will serve LME leaders, especially when accelerating movement, celebrating wins, and learning from experience (Kotter, 2014).

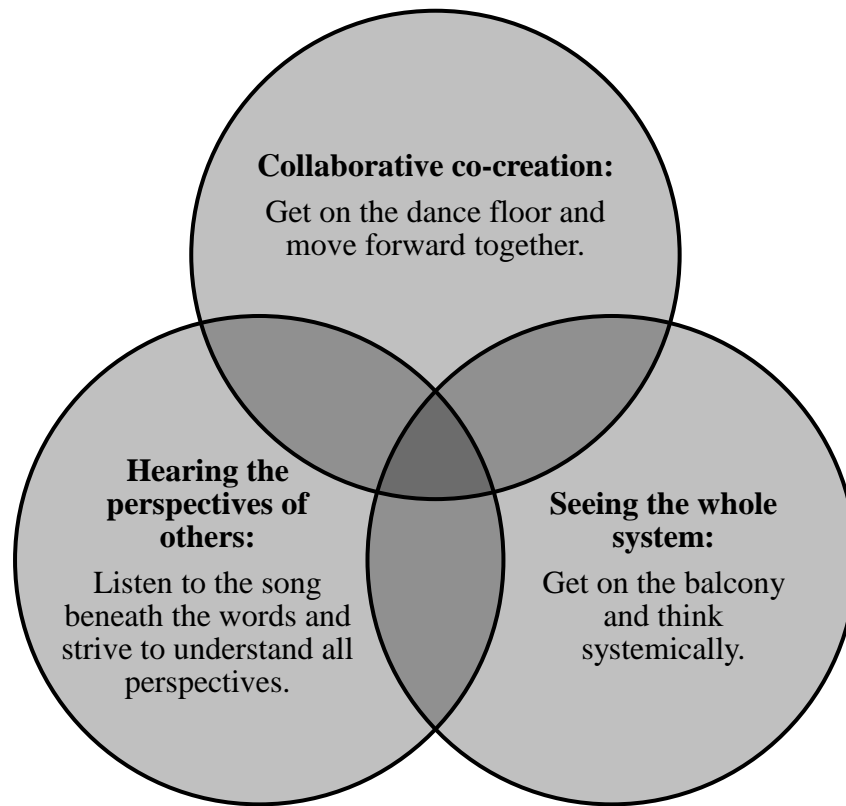
### **Recommended Leadership Approach**

This author recommends that LME take an amalgamated leadership approach to its impending change (Appendix A). SAL and ALA are both based on the assumption that leaders need to look at the big picture, consider all perspectives, and work together to make change happen (Figure 2). SAL will help the ministry maintain its holistic view, consider all

perspectives, and leverage its collaborative professionalism; ALA will help the organization adapt to shifts as it implements change. Considering that the PoP is systemic and its internal and external environments are in a constant state of change, any other type of leadership approach would not serve as well.

## Figure 2

### *Recommended Amalgamated Leadership Approach to Change*



This section has described an amalgamated leadership approach which draws from SAL and ALA. The next section will discuss three models for leading change.

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

Deszca et al. (2020) state that organizational change can be either anticipatory or reactive and either continuous or discontinuous (Deszca et al., 2020). Anticipatory change occurs when

an organization predicts future events and shifts accordingly; reactive change is when the organization must react and/or adapt to shifts in its environment (Deszca et al., 2020; Nadler et al., 1995). Continuous change is gradual; discontinuous change is dramatic and sudden (Deszca et al., 2020). This means that a change which is both reactive and continuous is an “adapting” (Deszca et al., 2020, p. 22) change. Adapting changes are usually relatively minor, made in response to stimuli, intended for middle management, and focused on the task of implementation (Deszca et al., 2020). LME is poised to respond to the evolving needs of its curriculum leaders by increasing, over one academic year, its support of CL capacity development. This author recommends an amalgamated leadership approach to leading LME’s adaptive change. With the goal of recommending a framework for leading that change, the following compares three change models: Lewin’s (1947) theory of change, Kotter’s (2014) change process, and Deszca et al.’s (2020) change path model.

### **Lewin’s Theory of Change**

In 1947, Lewin put forth a change model with three stages: unfreezing, adjusting, and refreezing (Deszca et al., 2020). Unfreezing involves collaboration and consensus about the need for change and the development of new operating procedures (Burnes, 2004; Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Cummings et al., 2016). This can take many forms and therefore requires tailoring according to the situation and/or context (Burke, 2018). Change takes place during the adjusting stage of the process. It is during this second stage that members change behaviours, structures, and procedures (Burnes, 2004; Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Cummings et al., 2016). Examples of such include training or implementing action plans (Burke, 2018). During the refreezing stage, new behaviours, structures, and procedures are used in an ongoing and consistent way (Burke,

2018; Burnes, 2004; Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Cummings et al., 2016; Deszca et al., 2020).

Organizations might implement a reward system or create accountability arrangements.

In view of its simplicity and linear structure, Lewin's (1947) change model may provide a useful approach for LME to increase its support of curriculum leadership capacity development. However, two criticisms caution against its use. First, Lewin's (1947) model does not seem to consider simultaneously occurring or unpredictable factors. Second, it views political factors as obstacles rather than as opportunities for conflict resolution (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

### **Kotter's Change Process**

In 1996, Kotter put forth an eight-stage process aimed at providing those interested in leading change with a path forward. Kotter (2014) later revised the model, placing greater emphasis on acceleration. The first stage of Kotter's (2014) change process pertains to creating a sense of urgency. The biggest mistake leaders make is the failure to instill a sense of urgency within their teams (Kotter, 1996). Having no sense of urgency can result in complacency and maintenance of the status quo (Kotter, 1996; Peleg, 2014). The second stage pertains to building and maintaining a guiding coalition (Deszca et al., 2020). The coalition's purpose is to ensure that all members are involved in the process of change, thereby enabling them to contribute meaningfully and instilling a sense of importance and purpose (Kotter, 1996). The third stage pertains to formulating a strategic vision and developing change initiatives (Deszca et al., 2020). Here, stakeholders design a dream of an aspiring future from which comes implementation plans and steps (Deszca et al., 2020). Kotter's (2014) fourth stage pertains to communicating the vision and the strategy. To achieve this vision and ensure that change is happening, change leaders communicate frequently with all members of the guiding coalition (Kotter, 1996). The fifth stage pertains to accelerating movement toward the vision and the opportunity (Deszca et al., 2020).



As part of this, the organization must ensure that those who are needed for implementation of the change or who are resistant to change, are educated, involved, and on board. The sixth stage pertains to celebrating visible, significant short-term wins (Deszca et al., 2020). The purpose of this is to provide members with a means to see progress, recognize contributions, and encourage ongoing change (Kotter, 1996). The seventh stage pertains to learning from experience (Deszca et al., 2020). As opposed to being satisfied with initial changes, leaders should consider why the changes were effective and set new goals. Kotter's (2014) final stage pertains to institutionalizing strategic changes. In order to remain relevant over time, the changes within the organization must be maintained and become ingrained in the culture.

Kotter's (2014) change process is one of the most well-known models for organizational change (Pfeifer et al., 2005). As per Applebaum et al. (2012), organizations should adhere to the eight stages one at a time, as overlapping could compromise the process. Indeed, Kotter's (2014) highly structured model could prove beneficial to change leaders in that it can help them identify what needs to be done and when it needs doing (Deszca et al., 2020). However, the model does not guarantee success (Applebaum et al., 2012). Research shows that its rigidity does not always align with the complexity of organizational contexts (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). For that reason, it is recommended that organizations interested in implementing Kotter's (2014) process combine it with another similar process (Applebaum et al., 2012).

### **Deszca et al.'s Change Path Model**

Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path model has four steps: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization. The awakening step consists of an analysis of the organization's external and internal environments (Deszca et al., 2020). Leaders gather data from the organization and its stakeholders to understand the dynamics at play. The goal is to

understand the forces fostering and restraining organizational change. They then identify the need for change, articulate the difference between the present stage and the desired stage, and disseminate a powerful vision. During the mobilization step, leaders conduct additional analysis and discussion with stakeholders (Deszca et al., 2020). They compare their understanding with that of others in order to identify what specifically needs to change and further develop their vision for change (Deszca et al., 2020). Mobilization involves understanding what needs to be done, assessing the power at play, and using resources to launch the change. During the acceleration step, the organization plans and implements change (Deszca et al., 2020). During this phase, stakeholders are engaged and empowered and leaders develop and implement a detailed plan of action. Tools are deployed and changes are implemented. By extension, new knowledge, skills, abilities, and ways of thinking are developed. In order to build momentum to accelerate change, organizational members celebrate short-term wins. The institutionalization step is when the organization uses the data it has collected to confirm the transition to its more desired state (Deszca et al., 2020). This step involves evaluating change and identifying what needs to change next.

The change path model is a roadmap which change leaders can follow to ensure operations, control, and measures are in place (Deszca et al., 2020). It is both linear and flexible. Indeed, the change path can be adapted to local contexts. However, it lacks the detail and prescription of Kotter's (2014) model.

### **Recommended Framework**

Though the simplicity of Lewin's (1947) process allows for ease of use and flexibility, it may not be detailed enough for LME's change process (Table 1). This author predicts that some change leaders will encounter resistance to change. They could find that Lewin's (1947) model

lacks the guidance they need to address that resistance. Furthermore, Lewin's (1947) refreezing stage could prove problematic in that it could cause confusion. Some might think that the ministry is moving toward a more desirable state, which once attained, will remain static in subsequent years (Deszca et al., 2020). However, the organization's curriculum leader profile is constantly changing. Hence, the organization's support of CL capacity development will need tailoring accordingly. Kezar (2014) states that adaptive changes require a multi-change theory approach. For these reasons, Lewin's (1947) model could hinder LME's change process or limit the flexibility of the organization's future state.

Kotter's (2014) model provides a clear step-by-step process which focuses on managerial tasks. It will serve LME well, especially when change leaders are designing an action plan. Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path model is similar to Kotter's (2014) change process in that it provides a sequence of actionable steps, but it brings the flexibility that is lacking in Kotter's (2014) process. By drawing from both models and blending Kotter's (2014) prescription with Deszca et al.'s (2020) process, LME can respond to the needs of those (e.g., change leaders) who seek detailed guidance as well as those who seek flexibility (e.g., change implementers). In other words, the concurrent use of Kotter's (2014) and Deszca et al.'s (2020) models will provide change leaders with a granular picture of the steps required for successful change implementation and change implementers with a simplified view of the change process (Appendix A).

**Table 1**

*Comparing Three Change Models*

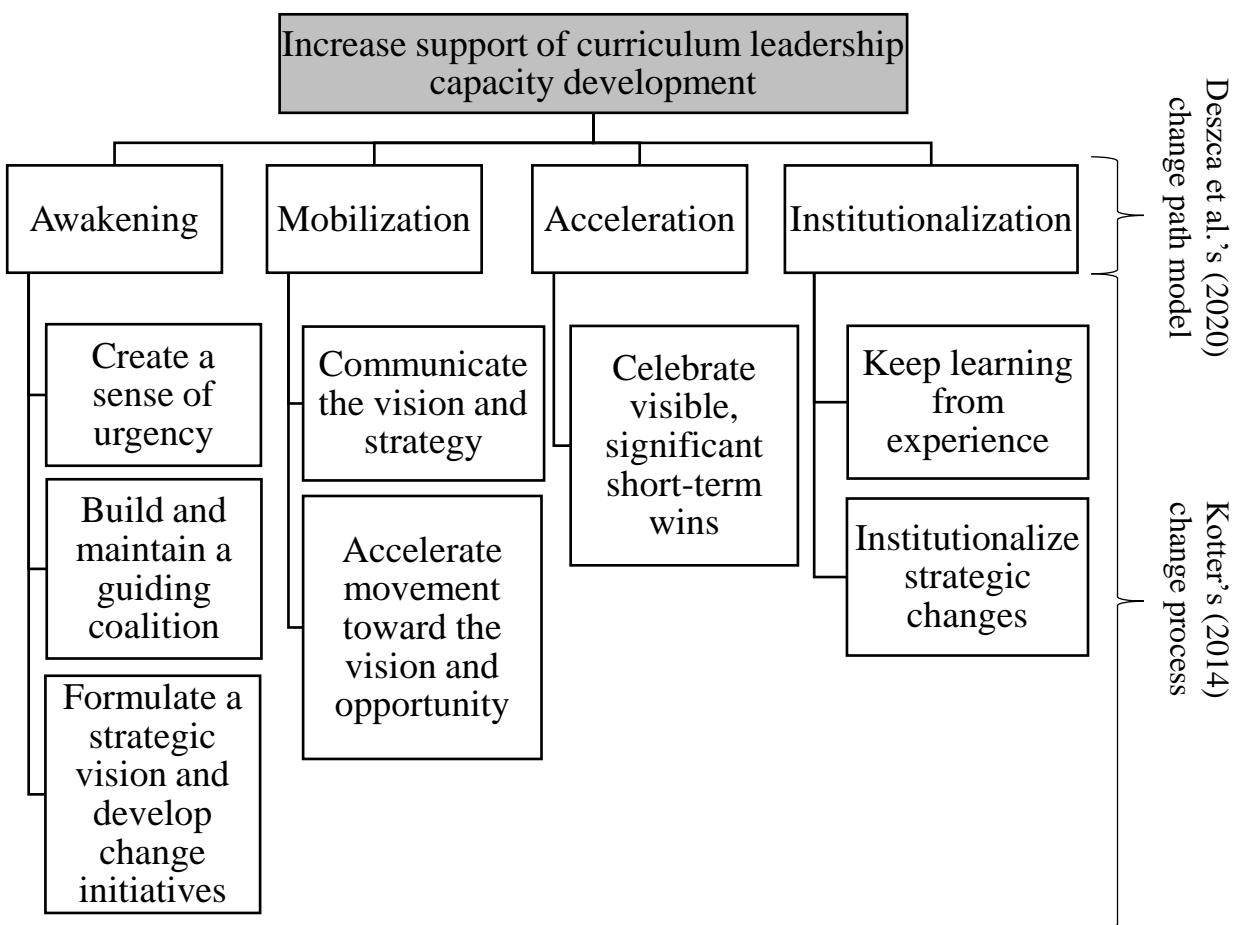
	<b>Lewin's (1947) model of change</b>	<b>Kotter's (2014) change process</b>	<b>Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path</b>
Description	Three stages to structure change process.	Eight stages to encourage new behaviours for	Four steps to organize how to change.

		organizational change.	
Benefits	Stages allow for ease of use and flexibility.	Detailed list serves as a checklist of actionable steps.	Model is flexible to local contexts.
Drawbacks	Oversimplified process which lacks mechanism for ongoing change.	Model is inflexible to local contexts.	Model lacks guidance for change initiators, leaders, and early adopters.

Kotter's (2014) eight stages and Deszca et al.'s (2020) four steps fit together well (Figure 3). This author recommends that LME align Kotter's (2014) creating a sense of urgency, building and maintaining a guiding coalition, and formulating a strategic vision and developing change initiatives stages with Deszca et al.'s (2020) awakening step. They suggest aligning Kotter's (2014) communicating the vision and strategy and accelerating movement toward the vision and opportunity stages with Deszca et al.'s (2020) mobilization step. They propose that the ministry align Kotter's (2014) celebrating visible, significant short-term wins stage with Deszca et al.'s (2020) acceleration step. Finally, they endorse aligning Kotter's (2014) learning from experience and institutionalizing strategic changes stages with Deszca et al.'s (2020) institutionalization step.

**Figure 3**

*Recommended Hybrid Framework for Leading LME's Change Process*



This recommended hybrid change process aligns with the amalgamated leadership approach to change discussed in Chapter 2's first section. More specifically, it provides LME with clear and flexible steps to addressing a systemic and complex problem. For example, change leaders will start by thinking systemically during Deszca et al.'s (2020) awakening step; they will consider all perspectives during Deszca et al.'s (2020) awakening and mobilization steps; and they will move toward their vision during Deszca et al.'s (2020) mobilization, awakening, and institutionalization steps.

This section has described a framework for leading LME's change. The next section will discuss this author's critical organizational analysis.

### **Critical Organizational Analysis**

Organizational change is when an organization plans and implements alterations to its internal components to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness (Deszca et al., 2020). In order for leaders to identify specific areas in need of change, Deszca et al. (2020) recommend that they first conduct a critical organizational analysis. There are many different analysis tools aimed at guiding organizations through the task of cross-analyzing the components of their external and internal environments (Burke, 2018; Deszca et al., 2020). Nadler and Tushman (1989) have put forth one such tool called the Congruence Model (Deszca et al., 2020). In line with systems thinking, their model is based on an open-systems perspective. It has four major components: Inputs, Strategy, Transformational Process, and Outputs (Burke, 2018; Nadler & Tushman, 1989). Research confirms that cross-analyzing these components can help an organization identify specific areas in need of improvement (Burke, 2018; Deszca et al., 2020). To identify exactly where LME can make its change, the following (a) identifies its inputs and outputs, (b) describes its components, and (c) discusses congruence between the three (i.e., inputs, outputs, and components). Appendix B summarizes the key ideas.

#### **Inputs**

An organization's inputs are relatively fixed (Burke, 2018). They include its external environment, resources, and history (Burke, 2018; Deszca et al., 2020).

#### ***Environment***

Environmental inputs include political, economic, social, and technological forces.

**Political Forces.** As previously stated, LME functions under its parent system, a conservative provincial government. A recent report from one of the government's councils recommended that the province continue investing in its educational sector. One of the numerous actions recommended by that council, related to education, is an analysis of the current curriculum and its implementation (Government of [Province], 2021).

**Economic Forces.** LME is a public agency and, as such, is publicly funded. The provincial government allocates a portion of its budget to its ministry of education. Fluctuations in the province's revenue can result in changes to the ministry's funding. This means that the ministry's funding is subject to the strength of its province's economy. Recently, the province has seen a decrease in its revenue. Though the ministry's budget has not been affected by this decrease, senior leaders continue to strive to maximise funds.

**Social Forces.** LME's province is seeing an increase in its general population and ethnic heterogeneity ([Province] Statistics Bureau, 2020). As a sub-system of the province's government, the ministry is influenced by the needs of the province's evolving community. In turn, the ministry influences that community by way of its curriculum decisions (Ylimaki, 2012). It is therefore operating in an open system with an increasingly diverse and ever-changing population. The ministry confirms that it seeks to serve the needs of its evolving education system and strives to support all students (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019).

**Technological Forces.** LME's parent-system is striving to be a more digital government (Government of [Province], 2022). In other words, it is working to improve the means by which it delivers services to its population by utilizing new technologies. As a sub-system to the provincial government, the ministry functions in a context which seeks to utilize digital means to communicate and interact. This means that the government has provided LME employees with

the hardware, software, and virtual space required for online, in-person, or hybrid collaborations and co-creations.

### ***Resources***

LME accesses leadership expertise primarily through journals, periodicals, books, videos, conferences, and webcasts. Their content is created by experts who work for other organizations, most of which are located outside the province. The ministry is therefore operating in a context where leadership expertise is gleaned from a variety of sources, all of which are outside the organization.

### ***History***

As a sub-system to the provincial government, LME practices traditional hiring processes. Senior leaders identify the qualifications each position requires. In most cases, qualifications are stated in terms of traditional models of formal education (e.g., degree or diploma) and relevant work experiences (Government of [Province], 2015a). Two or three panelists interview applicants and ask for references (Government of [Province], 2015b).

### ***Strategy***

Organizational strategy can be defined as patterns in an organization's decision making over time (Deszca et al., 2020). LME's strategy supports CL capacity development in two ways. It allocates funds for professional reading materials or conference attendance and it promotes the services of the Public Service Commission which offers learning opportunities such as self-directed study and leadership courses and programs. The following discusses both types of support.

LME allocates funds for employee initiated, self-directed study. This means that employees can request funding for the purchase of professional reading materials or conference



attendance fees. The employee is responsible for researching available resources (e.g., books) and opportunities (e.g., conferences). They can request assistance with the acts of purchasing said learning resources and planning said opportunities; however, if they choose to do that work themselves, they must seek approval before making their purchase or reservation.

Like LME, the Public Service Commission offers the ministry's permanent and seconded employees the opportunity to participate in self-directed study. However, it also offers leadership courses and programs ([Province] Public Service Commission, n.d.-b). Leadership courses are short, lasting one to three half-day sessions each. They touch upon subjects such as diversity and inclusion, retirement planning, and leadership and management. Those which focus on leadership speak to coaching skills and conflict management. Courses are offered in English and are general in scope. As for the Public Service Commission's two programs, they are longer in length. Its first program offers four day-long sessions at intervals over the course of a four-month period. Sessions focus on helping participants increase their self-awareness, lead others, build relationships, and focus on results. Its second program asks that participants attend one to two sessions per month over the course of a two-year period. There is an individual learning component to the program which asks participants to complete five hours of independent study per month. As with courses, sessions are offered in English and are not specific to CL.

### **Transformational Process**

The transformational process encompasses four interactive components (Burke, 2018). They are: work, formal organization, informal organization, and people (Deszca et al., 2020).

#### ***Work***

An organization's work encompasses the tasks, duties, and functions that are carried out by its people (Deszca et al., 2020). LME is responsible for providing curricula statements,

learning materials, and implementation support to those educators working in its system (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). Curriculum leaders are tasked with ensuring that the curriculum's purpose is well defined, shared, and understood (Albashiry et al., 2016). More specifically, they provide support and structure for curriculum work, promote collaboration with curriculum stakeholders, and coordinate curriculum development activities (Albashiry et al., 2016). Their curriculum statements repose on the tenets of social constructivism. According to Creswell (2014), social constructivism assumes meaning is subjective and formed via interaction with others. This means that LME's work is built on the assumption that learning and development require engagement and interaction.

### ***Formal Organization***

Formal organization is defined by the ways in which the enterprise manages the work of its people (Deszca et al., 2020). LME counts multiple divisions (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2020). Each division has its own set of responsibilities. For example, its early learning division ensures that children receive quality experiences in their early years (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). Another example is its French division, which provides leadership and support in the development of French language curricula (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). The ministry has good collaboration within divisions (e.g., literacy specialists and literacy coaches work together regularly); however, cross-divisional interaction is not common practice.

### ***Informal organization***

Informal organization pertains to the relationships between the people working at the organization (Deszca et al., 2020). In LME's case, divisional directors oversee the work of their respective teams (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2019). Directors are responsible for sharing the organization's strategic plan with their middle leaders (e.g., curriculum leaders) and discussing

how the latter are to implement said plan. Directors are also responsible for seeing that middle leaders (e.g., curriculum leaders) design individual professional learning plans.

### ***People***

An organization's people are those who use its systems and structures to perform its tasks (Deszca et al., 2020). LME counts over 200 employees (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2022). Senior leaders form a minority (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2022). They are public servants with permanent contracts. Middle leaders form the organization's majority. Approximately one quarter of that majority are curriculum leaders (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2022). They are teachers on secondment from their classroom with temporary contracts. Upon completing their secondment contracts, they return to the classroom and are replaced by another seconded teacher. For that reason, LME's collective human profile sees curriculum leaders starting and ending their respective 3-year contracts at different times. This means that the ministry's social intelligence is in a constant state of flux.

### **Outputs**

An organization's outputs are the services and products it provides to meet mission-related goals (Deszca et al., 2020). Feedback can be obtained from the organization's system, unit, and individuals.

### ***System***

LME serves the province's education system. Annually, it uses its provincial common assessments to assess the needs of its education system (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2018). Data is compiled and analyzed. Results from the past decade show a decrease in students' literacy achievement scores (Government of [Province], 2019b).

### ***Unit***

Triennially, LME uses a federally-designed employee survey to measure its employees' opinions about engagement, leadership, workforce, workplace, workplace well-being, diversity, and inclusion (Government of Canada, 2021). Senior leaders are responsible for sharing survey results with all middle leaders. This usually occurs during one of the ministry's triannual organization-wide meetings. Results from the organization's last two surveys show mediocre scores for its support of learning and development.

### ***Individual***

The ministry uses employee survey results to produce not only an organizational profile, but also divisional profiles. Curriculum leaders work in two of the organization's divisions. Because of their number, they form a majority in these divisions. Results from their two divisions' last two surveys show low scores for the ministry's support of continuous improvement.

### **Recommended Change**

LME's outputs show that there is a need to increase support for CL capacity development. As inputs are out of the organization's control, this author focuses their analysis on cross-examining its internal components. Curriculum leaders work to maintain and/or advance the organization's curricula statements. These statements are based on social constructivism, a philosophical perspective which assumes nominalism and anti-positivism. The ministry's formal and informal organization align with social constructivism as they allow for intra-divisional collaborations and collaborations between senior and middle leaders respectively. This author does not recommend that the ministry alter its practice of offering secondment contracts to classroom teachers. Instead, they recommend that the ministry increase congruency between its

strategy and their work. The organization currently supports its curriculum leaders' capacity development by providing funding for professional reading materials and conference attendance and by promoting the Public Service Commission's courses and programs. This means that expertise is sought outside the organization and gleaned from one-time, standardized means. That strategy would be better aligned with social constructivism if it were to evolve to include individualized (i.e., in accordance with individual curriculum leaders' needs) and contextualised (i.e., on-the-job real-world activities) opportunities for CL capacity development.

According to Albashiry et al. (2016), CL is a fluid and flexible process of finding common purpose, building teams, structuring operations, and coordinating complex activities. This author includes the responsibility of the curriculum leader to foster mutually respectful relationships between and within LME's education system and larger community in their definition of CL. Evidence shows that curriculum leaders are struggling and they need support (Irvine & Brundrett, 2016; Lipscombe et al., 2019; Tapala et al., 2020). They need to participate in continuing education which examines "curriculum theory and critical education studies and social foundations as well as leadership perspectives and practices" (Ylimaki, 2012, p. 344). This author therefore recommends that curriculum leaders collaborate and co-create in the enhancement of their individual CL capacities.

This section has identified what specifically needs to change. The next section will discuss three possible solutions to the PoP.

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

Curriculum leadership continuing education must be conducted at an intellectual depth, providing opportunity to examine curriculum theory, critical education studies, social foundations, and leadership perspectives and practices (Ylimaki, 2012). While training can be

helpful, workshops tend to be general in scope and lack contextualization. The ministry might consider activities which are more tailored to the specific and important role curriculum leaders play within the organization, the province's education system, and the community at large.

In chapter 1, this author posed three questions. They are:

1. What conditions would allow LME's curriculum leaders to engage in meaningful leadership capacity development activities?
2. What conditions would enhance interaction between LME's curriculum leaders?
3. What conditions would allow LME's curriculum leaders to tailor their leadership capacity development activities to their individual and evolving needs?

These inquiry questions served to guide this author in their identification of possible solutions to address the PoP. The following three solutions were shortlisted for their alignment with social constructivism: (a) CL web-based courses, (b) CL coaching program, and (c) CL focused community of practice.

### **Solution 1: Curriculum Leadership Web-based Courses**

The Public Service Commission currently offers leadership courses which are generic in scope ([Province] Public Service Commission, n.d.-b). Due to a global pandemic, many of their courses are now offered online ([Province] Public Service Commission, n.d.-b). Evolving the ministry's strategy to include in-house, web-based courses specifically targeting CL is a first possible solution (Table 2). The organization could draw from available resources (e.g., periodicals) to design courses tailored to the specific tasks of guiding teachers in curriculum work, promoting collaboration with curriculum stakeholders, and coordinating curriculum development activities (Albashiry et al., 2016). Once developed, curriculum leaders could select the courses which best suit their individual learning objectives. The facilitator could connect

with curriculum leaders to discuss theory and practice, tailoring interactions according to their needs. Learning experiences would be mediated by online tools, such as emails, discussion boards, chat rooms, and remote learning opportunities (Branzburg & Kennedy, 2001).

### ***Required Resources***

In order to develop and offer CL courses, LME will need to secure funds for CL expertise. More specifically, the ministry will need to ensure that it has access to a variety of learning materials (e.g., videos, articles, and books) and has the human capital (e.g., instructors) to design and facilitate its CL courses. The ministry can then utilize its Web-based video conferencing tools to offer said courses. This would allow the facilitator to maintain contact with curriculum leaders and for them to connect with each other.

### ***Benefits***

Web-based CL courses would bridge the gap between curriculum leaders' roles and capacities, thus solving the problem of practice. They would allow curriculum leaders to engage in reflective activities as they contemplate new information and construct new meanings. Moreover, online tools have the potential to be highly interactive, since they provide numerous opportunities for participants to reflect on topics, issues, or challenges. As curriculum leaders would not be required to participate in the same activities or at the same time, it allows for differentiation.

### ***Drawbacks***

Web-based courses present four challenges. Firstly, CL coursework does not guarantee that participants will engage in real-work tasks. Secondly, this solution does not ensure that participants will collaborate with others or engage in inquiry-based learning activities. Thirdly, with more curriculum leaders working from home, courses might be difficult to implement as a

result of inadequate internet connectivity in multiple areas across the province. Though the province is working on improving internet connections, many communities are experiencing slow or interrupted service (Government of [Province], 2022). A consequence of this challenge could be inconsistencies in the timing of online meetings and video conference access. Such unpredictable delivery may negatively affect implementation. Finally, this solution does not allow for ongoing learning. For change to last and be sustainable, coursework will need to be followed by another support (e.g., mentoring) (Fullan, 2002).

### **Solution 2: Curriculum Leadership Coaching Program**

LME has employed learning coaches for almost two decades. It has therefore already established a culture conducive to coaching. Coaching is defined as “a form of professional development with a person who willingly engages in reflection and learning” (Aguilar, 2019, p. 23). Socrates (as cited in Fielden, 2005) “believed that individuals learn best when they have ownership of a situation and take some form of personal responsibility for the outcome” (p. 2). Introducing coaching for curriculum leaders could be a way to support their capacity development (Table 2). LME would hire and train CL coaches. It would then pair them with curriculum leaders. Coaches and curriculum leaders would carve out time in their respective schedules so that coaches could provide curriculum leaders with guidance, encouragement, direction, and support. If coaches worked with multiple curriculum leaders simultaneously, the former could inspire the latter to come together and debate ideas.

### ***Required Resources***

In order to establish a coaching program, LME will need fiscal and human resources. More specifically, the ministry will need to secure the funds needed to pay for additional coaches. If expertise is found outside the province, coaches could utilize web-based tools (e.g.,



email and chat rooms) to connect with their curriculum leaders. As previously stated, the ministry is already equipped for video conferencing and document sharing.

### ***Benefits***

A coaching program would address LME's problem of practice. It would see curriculum leaders communicating with their coach, and possibly, with each other. Together they could consider organizational decisions and ideas. As support is offered on an individual basis, coaching allows for differentiation. Additionally, coaching contributes to ongoing skill and knowledge development. This would improve individual CL and may lead to an increase in the organization's overall leadership and improved change outcomes (Aguilar, 2019).

### ***Drawbacks***

Although coaching could provide many valuable benefits and help create organizational change, it could be difficult to maintain consistency. Additionally, there is some uncertainty surrounding whether remote coaching would result in sustainable change. A further limitation is the short duration of curriculum leaders' 3-year contracts, which may not provide sufficient coaching time. Finally, this solution is limited to the expertise and experience of the coach.

### **Solution 3: Curriculum Leadership-Focused Community of Practice**

Communities of practice (CoPs) are groups of individuals within a professional environment who come together to share experiences and expertise related to a particular profession or topic (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). CoPs can be used to facilitate collaboration, not just in classrooms where students conduct research and collaborate to share information (Brown, 1997), but also among adults. CoPs have three essential elements: a set of issues, a group of people who care about those issues, and a common interest in finding ways to address the issues in a community-centered way (Van Note Chism et al., 2002; Wenger & Snyder, 2000). In other

words, meaning is created through an inquiry cycle where participants identify a problem, discuss it, and collaborate on its solution (Militello & Rallis, 2009). Lees and Meyer (2011) seem to concur, arguing that case-based, observation-based, or problem-based learning enhances creativity and the alignment between conceptual problems and real-world problems. A CL focused CoP would see senior leaders facilitating the coming together of curriculum leaders together for the purpose of finding effective means by which they might address the priority needs of the province's marginalized students and families (Table 2).

### ***Required Resources***

In order to establish a CL focused CoP, LME will need to secure fiscal and human resources. More specifically, the ministry will need to ensure that it has access to a variety of learning materials (e.g., videos, articles, and books). It will also need to secure commitment from those employees (e.g., divisional directors) positioned to set up the CoP and to monitor its functioning. Considering that many curriculum leaders are now working from home, they will require web-based tools (e.g., email, discussion boards, video conferencing software, and shared drives).

### ***Benefits***

A CL focused CoP would address the PoP. It would see curriculum leaders sharing expertise and practices within the scope of their roles and reflecting on the learning that collectively occurs within the group as they provide leadership to the province's education system. As a result, participants would gain professional skills, transfer best practices, and solve problems more quickly (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). This solution would also provide the ministry with a means of individualizing its support (according to the needs of participants) by establishing multiple communities.

The cost-effectiveness and efficiency of a virtual component lies in the ability for participants to engage in the CoP from different locations (Reilly et al., 2012). Though online communities demonstrate evidence of improvement (Reilly et al., 2012), Moule (2006) found that a lack of relationships was a barrier to engagement. A blended program of online and face-to-face meetings will help LME negate such issues (Cowan, 2012).

### ***Drawbacks***

A CL focused CoP would require time to coordinate, facilitate, participate, maintain, and assess. Results from LME's federally designed employee survey show low scores for reasonable workloads. Though this author argues that curriculum leaders might find that their participation saves them time, in that they would be better equipped to fulfill their roles as leaders; if work demands increase, participants may lack the time needed for the CoP to function effectively.

### **Recommended Solution**

Though all three solutions align with social constructivism and require similar resources (e.g., learning materials), the establishment of a CL focused CoP presents the most advantageous path forward (Table 2). Embedding a CL focused CoP into curriculum leaders' work would leverage their social intelligence by providing them with a framework to come together for the purposes of sharing expertise and experiences and problem-solving challenges.

**Table 2**

*Comparing Three Possible Solutions*

	<b>CL web-based courses</b>	<b>CL coaching program</b>	<b>CL focused CoP</b>
Description	Courses aimed at helping curriculum leaders learn how to guide teachers in curriculum work, promote collaboration, and coordinate	Coaches provide guidance, encouragement, direction, and support to new curriculum leaders.	Participants come together to participate in an inquiry cycle where they share experiences and expertise related to their CL work.

	<b>CL web-based courses</b>	<b>CL coaching program</b>	<b>CL focused CoP</b>
	curriculum development activities.		
Resources	Funds Learning materials Human resources Online tools	Funds Learning materials Human resources Online tools	Funds Learning materials Human resources Online tools
Benefits	Allows for reflective activities Potential to be interactive Allows for differentiation	Allows for differentiation Allows for ongoing skill and knowledge development	Aligns closely with social constructivism Allows for ongoing skill and knowledge development Allows for individualization Cost-effective and efficient
Drawbacks	Does not guarantee real-work tasks Does not guarantee collaboration or inquiry-based learning Uncertainty surrounding implementation Does not allow for ongoing learning	Difficult to maintain consistency Uncertainty surrounding sustainable change Requires time Learning is limited to the coach's expertise and experience	Requires time

A CoP involves “sharing of cultural practices while reflecting collective learning” (Wenger, 2000, p. 229). This definition fits well with the social constructivist conditions of engagement and interaction. Adding a CoP to LME’s strategy will increase its congruence with curriculum leaders’ work.

Wesley and Buysse (2001) indicate that it is best to approach establishing a CoP by introducing it to a group of professionals who already meet, by incorporating it into a professional development program, by offering incentives for communities who sustain their efforts over time, and by sharing ideas with the larger population of professionals. LME’s CL focused CoP will see curriculum leaders coming together to the end of building capacity. The fact that LME already has a professional development program in place, means that there is a

culture of learning already established. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the ministry might consider implementing a reward system to improve its readiness for change. Additionally, it might consider how it will share new knowledge gleaned from the CoP with other leaders, further propelling the organization forward.

### *Inquiry Cycle*

This author recommends that LME utilize a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) inquiry cycle when implementing the proposed solution. As described by Reed and Card (2016), the PDSA cycle involves planning to test changes, executing the tests, learning from the tests, and cultivating new knowledge for the next cycle. Congruent with social cognition theories, the PDSA cycle is a trial and learning methodology with four phases (Langley et al., 2009). The cycle's first phase is its planning period. It is during this period that change leaders identify desired outcomes and assign implementation tasks (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). As a second phase, change participants carry out those implementation tasks and change managers collect data (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). During the model's third phase, change leaders analyze the collected data and observed results (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). As a fourth phase, the organization acts on that analysis by either adopting, adapting, or abandoning the change (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). These four phases are rotated first to last and then repeated as many times as desired, with previous cycles informing subsequent cycles (Reed & Card, 2016). LME will potentially move through multiple PDSA cycles as it establishes and maintains its CL focused CoP. The following summarizes the ministry's first cycle, the period during which the organization establishes its program. Subsequent cycles will inform the organization as to how to best maintain its CoP over time.

**Plan.** Change leaders will (a) build awareness about curriculum leaders' functions, tasks, and challenges; (b) identify and secure early adopters; and (c) design a change vision. This involves aligning change agents around a particular vision, creating connections during structured meetings, and building trust among members before launching into larger networks (Kubiak & Bertam, 2010). According to George et al. (2019), scaling up this phase is possible once there is enough evidence to warrant expansion.

**Do.** Change leaders (e.g., senior leaders) will secure resources and communicate with all organizational members about the change and change process. As change recipients, curriculum leaders will identify learning objectives and share those objectives with the change team. Curriculum leaders will also meet with fellow CoP participants to begin their collaborative work. As they work together, CoP participants will identify and discuss barriers to applying research to their practice.

**Study.** Change leaders (e.g., senior leaders) will (a) invite curriculum leaders to update their individual learning plans, (b) gather curriculum leaders' second set of self-selected learning objectives, (c) invite curriculum leaders to describe their learning and progress, and (d) analyze that data.

**Act.** During this phase, the information collected is analyzed to determine what changes need to be made in the future. The aim is to learn from this first cycle so that subsequent cycles can serve to maintain LME's CL focused CoP over time, tailoring it to the evolving needs of its ever-changing seconded employee profile and its education system's needs.

This section has described three possible solutions and highlighted this author's recommendation. The next section will discuss the ethics of leadership as it applies to the organization's change.

### **Leadership Ethics in Organizational Change**

Ethics is “a study of the underlying beliefs, assumptions, principles, and values that support a moral (in accordance with standards of right conduct) way of life” (Starratt, 2004, p. 5). In the field of education, ethically focused leaders call others to go beyond self-interest and strive for a higher good (Starratt, 2005). They invite others to a transformed sense of citizenship where concern for all is suffused with caring and compassion. Ultimately, they look for teaching and learning opportunities which make the world a better place (Starratt, 2005).

As LME moves toward its more desirable state, inevitably it will encounter tensions attributable to competing values (Bolman & Deal, 2017). For example, some might not understand the challenges of marginalized students and families or the influence curriculum leaders have on society. They might therefore resist change or argue that it is not a priority. Another example lies with developing a vision. Change leaders could have difficulty identifying boundaries such as the scope of their change (Deszca et al., 2020). Starratt’s (2005) discussion of leadership ethics could serve the ministry as it attempts to address such challenges.

According to Starratt (2005), institutional leadership ethics should entail three fundamental perspectives, namely, ethics of care, justice, and critique. In ethics of care, relationships are based on mutual respect, esteem and loyalty; in ethics of justice, balance between serving the common good and individual rights must be preserved; and in ethics of critique, social arrangements must be in harmony with the human rights of all citizens (Starratt, 2005). Starratt (2005) states that these perspectives reinforce each other to form a holistic approach to forming an ethical climate.

As part of the ethic of care, the human relationship is at the heart of the leader’s focus, and all voices are valued (Beck, 1992; Noddings, 1984; Shapiro & Gross, 2013). In the context

of this OIP, the ethics of care is demonstrated by this author and change initiator. This author has a genuine concern for curriculum leaders' challenges. That concern demonstrates a respect for their value and importance in shaping the province's education system and society at large.

Regarding the aforementioned resistance to change, the implementation plan proposed in Chapter 3 starts with building awareness of the gap that exists between their roles and capacities. Increased understanding of curriculum leaders' role and influence could alleviate resistance.

The ethic of justice also looks at people, but from a wider stance (Ehrich et al., 2015). In the context of this OIP, the ethics of justice is demonstrated by how curriculum leaders are treated as change agents. The ministry will give them multiple and flexible opportunities to participate in the change process. This will ensure that every curriculum leader has access to the CL focused CoP and, by extension, will be able to develop their leadership capacity in a manner congruent with social constructivism. In regard to the challenge of identifying boundaries, the proposed implementation plan was designed in such a way as to include all curriculum leaders. Future considerations could include a CoP for the ministry's other middle leaders (e.g., specialists).

In the context of this OIP, the ethics of critique is demonstrated by the ministry communicating with all organizational members about the change and change process. Change leaders will communicate with members so that they understand how the change will occur and how it will impact their practice. As indicated in the communication plan outlined in Chapter 3, this author recommends that the organization utilize multidirectional communication. Research confirms that communication, when frequent and flowing in different directions, can reduce resistance to change (Daneci-Patrau, 2011; Deszca et al., 2020).



## Chapter 2 Summary

With the goal of moving LME toward a state of increased support of CL capacity development, this author recommended that the ministry take an amalgamated leadership approach to change by utilizing both SAL and ALA. They then compared three change models for leading the change process and recommended a hybrid framework based on Kotter's (2014) change process and Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path. This chapter discussed the organization's external and internal environments and identified an opportunity for growth by increasing congruency between its strategy and work. This author considered possible solutions and recommended that LME evolve its strategy to include a CL focused CoP. Finally, they discussed the ethics of leadership as it applies to the ministry's impending change. Chapter 3 puts forth implementation, monitoring, and communication plans, all designed to support the organization with its change.

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

This author seeks to help LME bridge the gap between the role curriculum leaders play and their leadership capacity. Chapter 3 outlines a plan to further support leadership capacity development by incorporating a CL focused CoP into the organization's strategy. More specifically, this chapter describes an implementation plan which leverages current practices and processes, outlines a plan for LME to monitor and evaluate its change, and discusses means by which the ministry can communicate the need for change and change process.

#### **Change Implementation Plan**

The implementation plan described herein fits with the amalgamated leadership approach discussed in Chapter 2. It takes both a systems approach to leadership (SAL) and an adaptive leadership approach (ALA). SAL calls for a system builder, a person whose job is to optimize the system in order to facilitate change (Coffey, 2010). That person needs to see the entire system, hear all perspectives, and promote collaborative co-creation (Senge et al., 2019). This implementation plan starts with this author. They have taken a systems thinking perspective, considered all stakeholders, and put forth a plan which leverages the ministry's collaborative professionalism. Going forward, the Deputy Minister might consider the proposed change and oversee the implementation of this plan, relying on their systemic view and key stakeholders. According to Senge et al. (2019), it is imperative that they rely on collective wisdom, creating the future with people who have the right expertise (Senge et al., 2019). In this case, the Deputy Minister could rely upon divisional directors and curriculum leaders to share their wisdom and co-create the future (Kotter, 2014). Together, they could form a guiding coalition (Kotter, 2014), herein referred to as LME's change team. ALA relies on observation, interpretation, and intervention (Heifetz et al., 2009). In this respect, the proposed plan is an iterative process rather

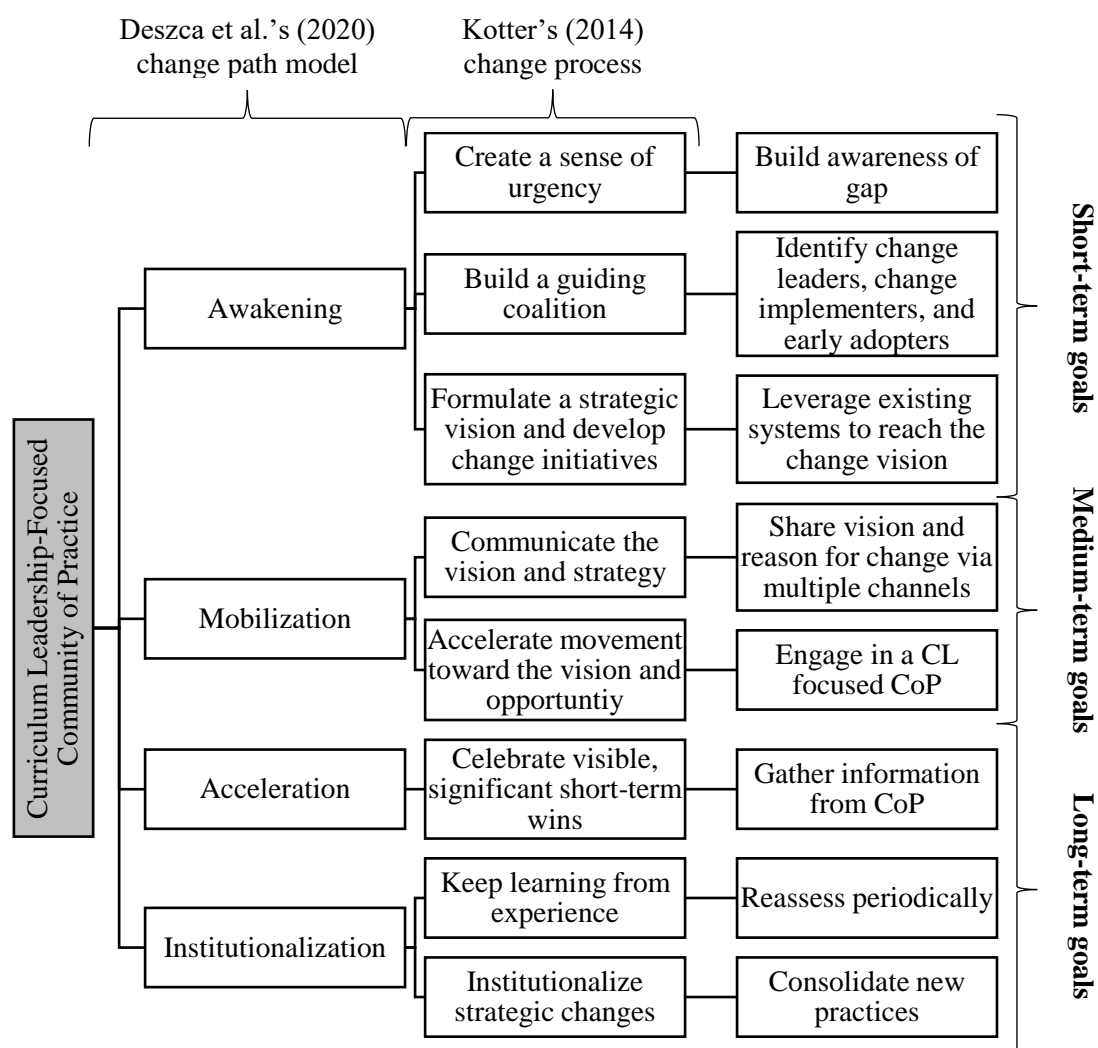
than an event (Kotter, 2014). It provides a path forward while remaining malleable to the needs of stakeholders. In fact, it has participatory events (e.g., feedback) which allow for all perspectives and individual experiences (e.g., updates to reflect input). Furthermore, the implementation plan utilizes a hybrid framework for leading the change process which draws from Kotter's (2014) change process and Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path. Both models assume observation and interpretation (e.g., the change process recommends that organizations learn from experience) as well as intervention (e.g., the change path recommends reaching out to engage and empower).

Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path and Kotter's (2014) change process fit together well (Figure 4). Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path is an easy-to-understand roadmap with four steps. Their awakening step recommends identifying a need for change, spreading awareness, and developing a vision (Deszca et al., 2020). Their mobilization step suggests communicating and moving the change forward (Deszca et al., 2020). Their acceleration step encourages the celebration of small wins (Deszca et al., 2020). Finally, their institutionalization step promotes tracking change periodically and deploying new structures, systems, processes, knowledge, skills, and abilities as needed (Deszca et al., 2020). Kotter's (2014) change process is a more detailed list of instructions with eight stages. Their first stages (i.e., create a sense of urgency, build a guiding coalition, and formulate a strategic vision and develop change initiatives) align with Deszca et al.'s (2020) awakening step. Kotter's (2014) next two stages (i.e., communicate the vision and strategy and accelerate movement toward the vision and opportunity) align with Deszca et al.'s (2020) mobilization step. Their sixth stage (i.e., celebrate visible, significant short-term wins) aligns with Deszca et al.'s (2020) acceleration step. Finally, Kotter's (2014) last

two stages (i.e., keep learning from experience and institutionalized strategic changes) align with Deszca et al.'s (2020) institutionalization step.

#### Figure 4

*Linking LME's Change, Hybrid Change Process, and Goals*



The implementation plan takes inspiration from Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path by adopting its sequence of wide, predictable steps and from Kotter's (2014) change process in the identification of short-, medium-, and long-term goals.

### **Short-, Medium-, and Long-Term Goals**

LME's short-term goals include: building awareness of the gap; identifying change leaders, change implementers, and early adopters; and leveraging existing systems to reach the change vision (Figure 4). Their common thread pertains to preparing for the establishment of a CoP as a means to increase support of CL capacity development. The ministry's medium-term goals include: sharing the vision and reason for change via multiple channels and engaging in a CL focused CoP. Their common thread pertains to increasing the organization's CL capacity. The organization's long-term goals include: gathering information from its CL focused CoP; reassessing periodically; and consolidating new practices. Their common thread pertains to the continued tailoring the CL focused CoP over time according to internal and external environments (e.g., curriculum leaders' individual needs and student outcomes).

The following discusses short-, medium-, and long-term goals in relation to expected completion dates, responsible parties (i.e., stakeholders), implementation tasks, and required resources. For ease of communication, the discussion is organized in accordance with Deszca et al.'s (2020) four-step sequence.

### **Implementation Steps**

The recommended change implementation plan encompasses the initial establishment of a CL focused CoP as well as first steps towards tailoring that CoP to LME's ever-changing internal and external environments. Though the ministry will need to make additional changes in subsequent years, the following four steps are expected to stretch over one academic year only. In order to respect that timeline, the plan is flexible to allow change leaders to make adjustments (e.g., striving for multiple goals simultaneously) as needed.

### *Step 1: Awakening*

The change plan commenced upon the issuing of the provincial government's initial mandate letter. That letter outlined priorities and goals which continue to guide the work of the organization. Of the priorities identified in that mandate letter, those which concern this implementation plan include: providing a voice to all stakeholders and ensuring the needs of all students are met (Lilt Ministry of Education, 2020). This author seeks to inform LME as to how it can better position itself to build that framework. The following actions, just like the actions listed in subsequent steps, include the voices of multiple stakeholders. Table 3 lists the actions intended for a change initiator, one change leader, and a change team. The change initiator is this author. The change leader is a divisional director, more specifically they are this author's supervisor. The change team consists of LME's divisional directors, curriculum leaders, and this author.

**Table 3**

#### *LME's Awakening Step*

<b>Short-term goals</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Implementation tasks</b>	<b>Required resources</b>
Build awareness of gap	August	Change initiator	Meet with divisional director to discuss LME's outputs, benefits of acting on problem, and costs of not acting on problem	Time Anecdotal evidence Government employee survey results Review of relevant literature
Identify change leaders, change implementers, and early adopters	September	Change leader	Communicate problem to Deputy Minister and request approval to establish a CL focused CoP Invite divisional directors and a random sample of curriculum leaders	Time

Short-term goals	Timeline	Stakeholders	Implementation tasks	Required resources
Leverage existing systems to reach the change vision	October and November	Change team	to form a change team Create a meeting schedule Compose an aim statement Identify objectives Conduct a readiness for change assessment Design an action plan and responsibility chart according to existing practices and procedures Prepare learning objectives survey	Time Readiness-for-change questionnaire Project management software Electronic survey software Electronic space/tools for collaborative work

In Chapter 2, this author discussed LME's inputs, strategy, transformational process, and outputs. Subsequently, they recommended the evolution of the ministry's strategy to include a CL focused CoP and designed implementation, monitoring, and communication plans. The next action lies with sharing this OIP with one divisional director, thus beginning a four-month period from the first of August to the end of November. In order to build awareness of the gap, this author and change initiator will require time to meet with their director, anecdotal evidence, employee survey results, and relevant literature.

Upon discussing the PoP with the Deputy Minister and gaining approval to establish a CoP, the change leader (i.e., divisional director) will invite other divisional directors and curriculum leader volunteers to join together and form a change team. To identify other change leaders, change implementers, and early adopters, the change leader (i.e., divisional director) will require time. The amalgamated leadership approach is based on collaborative work. For that reason, this author recommends that change team members meet regularly to plan, problem-

solve, innovate, build support, and communicate. Their first objectives will see them planning for the establishment of a CL focused CoP. These actions align with social constructivism upon which the ministry's work is based.

The change team will utilize Deszca et al.'s (2020) readiness questionnaire to assess the organization's readiness for change. Data from that assessment will inform the change team of gaps in the ministry's practices and determine readiness for the change plan (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2014). The change team will need to consider if the organization needs to improve its readiness with preliminary changes. Subsequently, the change team will co-construct a detailed action plan and responsibility chart. It is essential that all individual roles and responsibilities are defined. In determining who does what, decisions will be made based on the specific actions and tasks at hand, not "by where one sits in the hierarchy" (Timperley, 2005, p. 396). Next, the change team will design a learning objective survey. Curriculum leaders are already required to identify their individual learning objectives and list their needs (e.g., funding for professional reading material). This survey, which is described in more depth in the next section, will ask that they share that information with the change team anonymously. In order to leverage existing systems and reach change, the change team will require time, Deszca et al.'s (2020) readiness-for-change questionnaire, project management software (e.g., Monday), electronic survey software (e.g., SurveyMonkey), and electronic space and tools (e.g., Microsoft Office) for collaborative work.

### ***Step 2: Mobilization***

As noted in Table 4, the mobilization step includes several significant actions (Deszca et al., 2020). These actions would take place over a six-month period from the beginning of December to the end of May. Table 4 lists the actions intended for change leaders, a change



team, and change recipients. The change leaders are LME senior leaders (i.e., the Deputy Minister and divisional directors). The change team will, as mentioned in the awakening step, consist of divisional directors, curriculum leaders, and this author. The change recipients are the ministry's curriculum leaders, as participants of the CL focused CoP.

**Table 4**

*LME's Mobilization Step*

<b>Medium-term goals</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Implementation tasks</b>	<b>Required resources</b>
Share vision and reason for change via multiple channels	December	Change leaders and change team	Improve readiness for change Communicate PoP, new strategy, and change plan to LME employees Invite and record employees' questions and comments Update plan to reflect input from employees	Time Email software Data management software Project management software
Engage CL focused CoP	January through May	Change team and change recipients	Identify individual learning objectives Conduct learning objectives survey Design CoP Identify and purchase resources Operationalize CoP Assess progress	Time LME's employee learning and development plan Electronic survey software Electronic space and tools for collaborative work Fiscal resources Relevant literature Project management software

In the previous step, the change team utilized a readiness questionnaire to determine the state of readiness for change. The change team will now, if needed, implement preliminary actions to improve the organization's readiness. Using video conferencing tools, senior leaders will meet with all employees to communicate the need for change "along with the vision for the

change” (Conzemius & O’Neill, 2014, p. 54). The amalgamated leadership approach is based on inclusiveness. For that reason, this author recommends that senior leaders share said information with all LME employees, to establish a shared understanding and support of the change. Senior leaders will clarify any ambiguities and record employees’ suggestions and comments. Should they notice a need to modify the change team’s action plan, that can be accomplished at this time. To share the vision and reason for change, change leaders and change team members will require time, email software (e.g., Microsoft Outlook), data management software (e.g., Google Cloud Platform), and project management software (e.g., Monday).

Curriculum leaders are required to identify their learning objectives every academic year. The change team will conduct its learning objectives survey and analyze the data collected. Survey data will define curriculum leaders’ learning objectives and assist with the design of the CoP (e.g., activities, subject matter, materials, and frequency of meetings). Facilitated by senior leaders, curriculum leaders will then operationalize their CoP. Their participation will be embedded into their work so that they may explore strategies, implement those strategies in real time and in real-work activities, and measure success in terms of impact on student learning. It is important to note that, while their participation in the CL focused CoP is mandatory, curriculum leaders will still have the option to participate in either or both of the other learning opportunities offered and promoted by the ministry (i.e., self-study, courses, and programs).

Hall and Nussbaum-Beach (2011) state that CoP are systems of collective critical inquiry and reflection. Wenger (1998) defines a CoP as a regularly interacting group of people who have shared concerns and a drive for improvement. Studies confirm that a CoP contains three essential features: a set of issues, members who are concerned about those issues, and a desire to resolve those issues in an effective manner within the community (Van Note Chism et al., 2002; Wenger

& Snyder, 2000). LME's CoP will allow for learning-focused discussion and collaborative inquiry. Participants will (a) come together at regular times, (b) identify common learning goals, and (c) connect research to practice. Indeed, they will share expertise (i.e., research) and experiences (i.e., practice), which will allow everyone to better understand processes, come up with innovative ideas, and identify solutions as barriers arise. By considering different perspectives, participants will enhance their knowledge and skills. It is important to note that the CoP will undoubtedly move through what Loyarte and Hernaez (2011) call a 'lifecycle'. The first stage of that cycle pertains to participants' determination to converge. Once together, members define their community. Fahey (2011) suggests they establish and follow protocols, to ensure that their processes are focused and productive. Members then maintain relationships. Finally, they consider their journey.

The ministry's support of CL capacity development will translate into increased knowledge and skill for those who work with school-based leaders. This will have a positive impact on instructional practice and student outcomes (Lambert, 1998; Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 1999). To engage a CoP, change team members and change recipients will require time, electronic survey software (e.g., SurveyMonkey), electronic space and tools (e.g., Microsoft Office), fiscal resources, relevant literature, and project management software (e.g., Monday).

### ***Step 3: Acceleration***

By this third step, LME has established its CL focused CoP. It will now further tailor that CoP to the evolving needs of society at large and of its ever-changing curriculum leader profile. As noted in Table 5, this step is expected to take approximately one month. Table 5 lists the actions intended for change recipients and a change team. The change recipients are the

ministry's curriculum leaders, as participants of the CL focused CoP. The change team will consist of divisional directors, curriculum leaders, and this author.

**Table 5**

*LME's Acceleration Step*

<b>Long-term goals</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Implementation tasks</b>	<b>Required resources</b>
Gather information from CoP	June	Change recipients and change team	Implement CL learning into practice Prepare participant survey Conduct participant survey Update design of CoP to reflect input from participants Assess progress	Time Electronic survey software Email software Project management software

This step sees CoP participants developing new knowledge, skills, abilities, and ways of thinking (Deszca et al., 2020) and the change team preparing a participant survey. In other words, curriculum leaders will implement their learning into their CL practice and the change team will create a survey to collect feedback from CoP participants about their experiences. The next section, which outlines a monitoring and evaluation plan, describes that survey in more detail. In order to collect and share data, change team members will require time, electronic survey software (e.g., SurveyMonkey), email software (e.g., Microsoft Office), and project management software (e.g., Monday). Data will serve to inform the change team as to how it can further tailor the CoP.

***Step 4: Institutionalization***

LME's desired change is now fully realized. LME has effectively evolved its strategy by establishing a CL focused CoP. It now seeks to maintain that CoP over time. As outlined in Table 6, the ministry will see its change team monitoring and adapting the CoP on a regular and

ongoing basis. Table 6 lists the actions intended for senior leaders (i.e., divisional directors), change recipients (i.e., curriculum leaders/CoP participants), and a change team (i.e., divisional directors, curriculum leaders, and this author). Going forward, the change team will be known as the CoP Managerial Committee.

**Table 6**

*LME's Institutionalization Step*

<b>Ongoing long-term goals</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Implementation tasks</b>	<b>Required resources</b>
Reassess periodically	Reoccurring on a monthly basis	Senior leaders and change recipients	Continue with biannual meetings to update individual learning objectives	Time LME's employee learning and development plan Learning objectives survey
Consolidate new practices	Reoccurring on a biannual basis	Change team/CoP Managerial Committee and change recipients	Continue with common assessments Continue with surveys Make required adaptations as needed Evaluate progress Continue with CoP	Common assessment results Relevant literature Time Electronic survey software Triannual employee survey Electronic space and tools for collaborative work

Curriculum leaders will continue to identify individual learning objectives and share them with the change team. To do so, they will require time, LME's employee learning and development form, and the learning objectives survey. The change team, now known as the CoP Managerial Committee, will continue administering surveys and adapting the CoP to the changing needs of its participants as they relate to LME's external environment (i.e., students' needs). The amalgamated leadership approach is based on a systemic view. This author therefore recommends that the committee consider, not only curriculum leaders' capacity, but also their

collective capacity and the ministry's overall capacity. To accomplish their tasks, the committee will require access to relevant literature, time, electronic survey software (e.g., Survey Monkey), and electronic space and tools (e.g., Microsoft Office) for collaborative work.

### **Limitations**

It is important to note that a lack of internet connectivity may affect LME's ability to fully execute the change process, thus limiting the success of this implementation plan. A global pandemic has forced the ministry's parent-system (i.e., the provincial government) to restrict in-person meetings and to ask that employees work from home. Though many use their personal cell phones for work purposes, communication now occurs mainly via the Internet. Employees use video conferencing to meet and shared drives to co-construct. This comes with challenges as parts of the province continue to experience limited cellular and internet connectivity. As noted in Chapter 1, curriculum leaders are usually temporary employees on three-year contracts. Every September new curriculum leaders take over for those who return to the classroom. If cellular or internet issues cause delays and the establishment of the CL focused CoP stretches over a second year, this could hinder the process and jeopardize the change. Though subsequent years will see additional changes as the Managerial Committee tailors the CoP to the needs of its new group, a change in CoP participants mid-establishment will affect the change trajectory in that it will require returning to earlier action steps (e.g., when change leaders and change team members share the vision and reason for change during LME's mobilization step). To address this challenge, it is imperative that the change team design a flexible action plan which allows for asynchronous collaborations.

A second limitation pertains to shifts in LME's external environment. As discussed in Chapter 1, the ministry's budget is contingent on the strength of the province's economy.

Recently, a global pandemic negatively affected that economy, and consequently, the government's revenue. Should this translate into a smaller budget for LME, it could be more difficult to convince senior leaders to allocate funds to the proposed change. To address this challenge, it is imperative that change leaders consider how this plan leverages tools (e.g., video conferencing software) and expertise (e.g., literature) already available to organizational members.

This section has described a change implementation plan. The next section will discuss means by which LME can monitor and evaluate its change process.

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

Monitoring and evaluation are complementary processes (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2015; Rossi et al., 2018). Monitoring is “the planned, continuous and systematic collection and analysis of program information able to provide management and key stakeholders with an indication of the extent of progress in implementation, and in relation to program performance against stated objectives and expectations” (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2015, p. 12). Performance indicators can be used to track change implementation, including activities, processes, outputs, and initial outcomes (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2015). Within this OIP, monitoring refers to the process of assessing the progress made towards the goals outlined in the change plan. Because they provide valuable information, Deszca et al. (2020) recommend that change agents incorporate measurement and control processes throughout their change implementation plan. This author has therefore dispersed monitoring tasks throughout the implementation year. Evaluation is the “planned, periodic, and systematic determination of the quality and value of a program, with summative judgment as to the achievement of a program's goals and objectives” (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2015, p. 12). Learning and evaluating are closely related because evaluating involves

forming judgements based on synthesis of data acquired during monitoring (Patton, 2011).

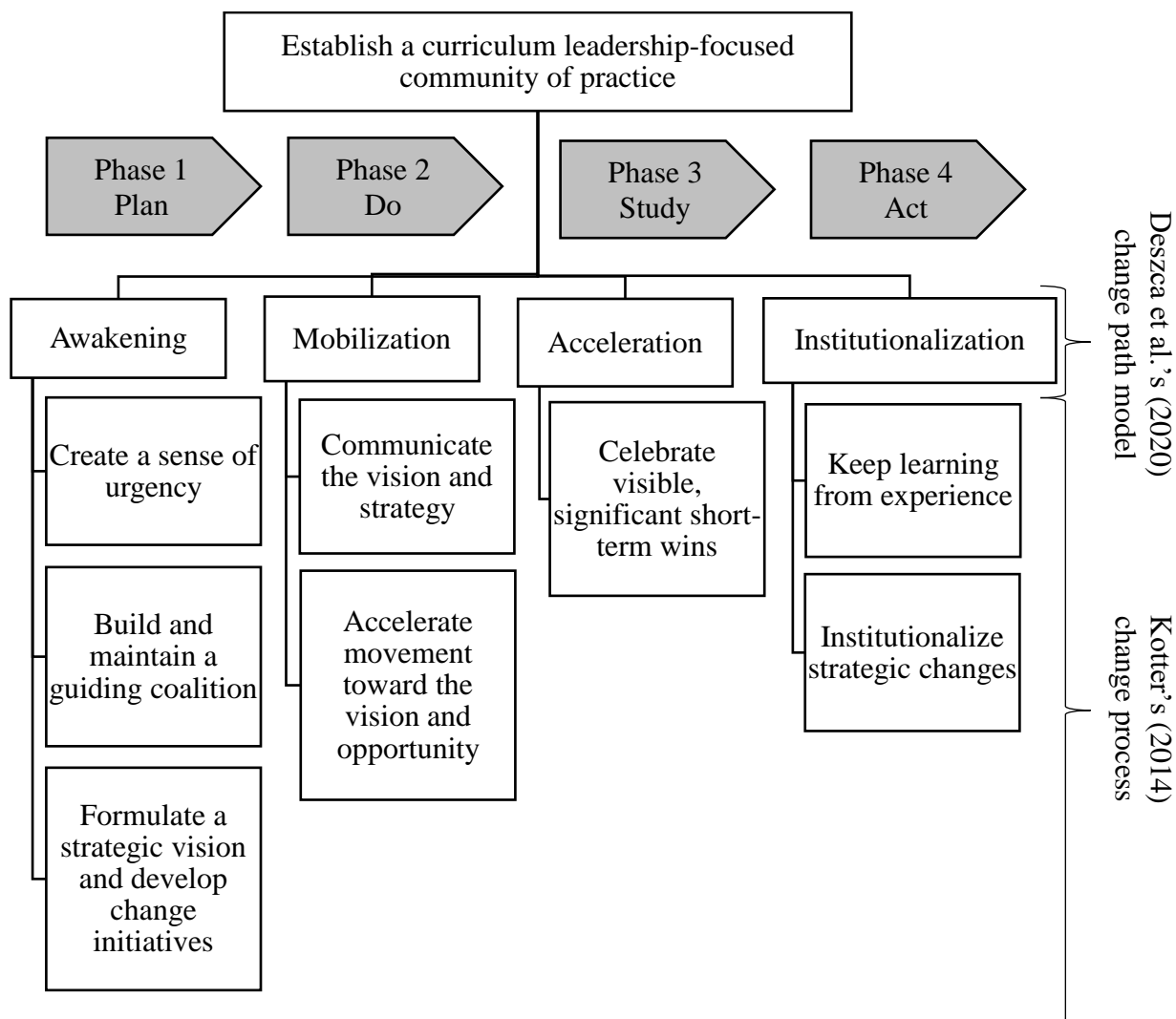
Within this OIP, evaluation refers to a review of the change outcomes, comparing pre and post change states. This author has therefore placed evaluation tasks at the end of the implementation year.

In order to ensure the successful implementation of a CL focused CoP, this author recommends that LME consider an ongoing monitoring and evaluation schema based on an iterative framework (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015; Markiewicz & Patrick, 2015). The following plan was designed around the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) inquiry cycle. Taylor et al. (2014) state that the PDSA cycle provides a framework for evaluating and monitoring quality improvement and change systems. Figure 5 connects LME's first cycle with the recommended hybrid change framework.



**Figure 5**

*Connecting One PDSA Cycle to the Hybrid Change Process*



This author recommends that LME's monitoring and evaluation plan focus on the following implementation actions:

- Conduct a readiness for change assessment
- Design an action plan and responsibility chart
- Communicate PoP, new strategy, and change plan to LME employees
- Design CoP

- Update design of CoP to reflect input from participants
- Make required adaptations as needed

In order to (a) assure that the change initiative is well-assessed, (b) determine how to keep track of the change process, and (c) evaluate implementation progress, this author expects to collaborate with other members of the organization's change team on many of the monitoring and evaluating tasks listed in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*LME's Monitoring and Evaluating Plan*

<b>Phases</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Monitoring and evaluating tasks</b>	<b>Monitoring and evaluating tools</b>
Plan	Change team	Measure organizational readiness Assess impact of existing practices and procedures on change project	Readiness-for-change questionnaire Strategy map
Do	Change leaders and change team	Measure awareness of change and implementation plan Assess curriculum leaders' needs Assess progress of short-term goals in relation to timeline	Email software (open rate) Data management software LME's employee learning and development plan and curriculum leader survey Project management software
Study	Change team	Assess CoP participants' experiences Assess progress of medium-term goals in relation to timeline	Participant survey Project management software
Act	Senior leaders and change team	Reassess curriculum leaders' needs Reassess CoP participants' experiences Evaluate progress in relation to desired state	LME's employee learning and development plan and curriculum leader survey Participant survey Triennial employee survey Common assessment results

**Phase 1: Plan**

During the first phase of the PDSA, organizations conceptualise a desired change (Deming, 1993). Change initiators and leaders identify an objective and the means they expect to

employ in the attainment of that objective (Moen, n.d.). This phase aligns with the first step in Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path. As previously stated, LME's awakening step will run from the first of August to the end of November and is aimed at (a) building awareness of the gap; (b) identifying change leaders, change implementers, and early adopters; and (c) leveraging existing systems to reach the change vision.

In order to plan effectively, the ministry will need to measure organizational readiness for change. Change leaders will utilize Deszca et al.'s (2020) readiness-for-change questionnaire to consider their organization's (a) previous experiences with change, (b) executive support, (c) leadership credibility, (d) openness to change, (e) rewards for change, and (f) measures of accountability. Should they determine that LME's readiness needs improving, change agents will need to consider what exactly is promoting and inhibiting change (Deszca et al., 2020).

Visual representations of end states and action paths may prove useful when complex changes are being pursued (Deszca et al., 2020). This author therefore recommends that the organization utilize a strategy map to assess the impact of existing practices and procedures on its change project (Deszca et al., 2020). Sharing that map with all stakeholders aligns with the inclusive nature of the amalgamated leadership approach. Furthermore, it will help everyone see the whole system, grasp the significance of the change, and understand how actions in one area will affect outcomes in another (Deszca et al., 2020). In addition, the map can be used to structure and test assumptions set out by change agents regarding what they feel needs to be accomplished and aligned in order to accomplish the desired goals (Deszca et al., 2020). To create a strategy map, organizations start with their goals and objectives for the change and then establish the objectives, initiatives, and paths that will lead to meeting those goals within their

organization (Deszca et al., 2020). When developing their strategy map, the change team could use Web-based software (e.g., MindMeister) and ask:

- What do we want to accomplish?
- How do we plan to accomplish this? (Deszca et al., 2020)

## **Phase 2: Do**

During the cycle's second phase, the organization carries out its change (Moen, n.d.). It is during this period that it communicates its vision and accelerates movement towards that vision. The organization must do so while simultaneously documenting pertinent information (e.g., successes and problems) over a period of time so that patterns can be identified (Moen, n.d.). This author sees this phase aligning with the second step in Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path. As previously stated, LME's mobilization step will run from the first of December to the end of May and is aimed at sharing the vision and reason for change via multiple channels and engaging in a CoP.

This author recommends that LME establish a common understanding and encourage engagement. Senior leaders can share the implementation plan with all organizational members during meetings and with emails. Change team members can assess employees' awareness and curriculum leaders' needs. More specifically, members can record and organize employees' comments and questions with one of the many data management software programs available online (e.g., Google Cloud Platform). They can also monitor the open rate of mass email messages.

This author also recommends that change team members survey curriculum leaders to assess their learning needs. Every year, all employees are required to complete a learning and development form. That form asks that they list their past years' accomplishments, this year's

goals, their required support, and the steps they expect to take to accomplish their goals. The change team can invite curriculum leaders to anonymously share their learning and development goals via an online survey software of their choosing (e.g., SurveyMonkey). For example, they might ask curriculum leaders to list (a) their individual learning and development goals (i.e., specific knowledge and skill sets); (b) the means by which they plan to attain their goals (e.g., professional reading and conferences); and (c) the supports they require to accomplish said goals (e.g., time, expertise, and fiscal resources). Gathered data will inform the change team as to what specific knowledge and skills participants need to acquire. If curriculum leaders identify multiple objectives, the change team can plan for two or more communities.

It is important to note that during this second phase, change team members can consider cross-checking their plan and short-term accomplishments. To do so, they can use the aforementioned strategy map and one of the many project management software programs available online (e.g., Monday). If need be, they can make adjustments before commencing the next phase.

### **Phase 3: Study**

During the third phase of the cycle, the organization analyzes the data it collected during the “Do” phase (Moen, n.d.). Congruent with the collaborative nature of the amalgamated leadership approach, change team members will work together in the identification of patterns, drawing conclusions from those patterns, and cross-checking its learning against its original objective. Donnelly and Kirk (2015) suggest that organizations structure their analysis with questions such as:

- Do the outcomes closely resemble what was envisioned?
- Did everything work out as planned?

- What are the lessons that can be learned?

This phase aligns with Deszca et al.'s (2020) third step. LME's acceleration step will begin on June 1 and run through July 1. It is aimed at collecting information from the CoP.

This author recommends that LME develop and employ a participant survey to assess CoP participants' experiences and learning. This means that change agents would capture participants' attitudes, opinions, and thoughts at this point (i.e., after the establishment of the CoP) and then track their attitudes over time after subsequent changes (Deszca et al., 2020). To collect data from CoP participants, they can use the same online survey software as before (e.g., SurveyMonkey). Considering that a CoP is most effective when participants focus on issues that are central to their roles (Wenger, 1998), the change team might consider asking questions such as:

- How did your participation help you further develop your understanding of CL?
- How did your participation help you further develop your CL skills?
- How did your participation impact your work with school-based leaders?

The change team members will use the data collected to prepare for the fourth phase of the PDSA cycle (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). As in the Do phase, members can cross-check their plan and medium-term accomplishments by way of their chosen project management software (i.e., Monday). They can make any needed adjustments before the next phase.

#### **Phase 4: Act**

During this fourth phase, the organization acts on what it has learned (Moen, n.d.). More specifically, the organization considers which of its measures and procedures will maintain the change and allow it to evolve in tandem with employee's needs, the organization's culture, and its external environment (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). This author sees this phase aligning with the

fourth step of Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path. As previously stated, LME's institutionalization step will run from the beginning of July onward and is aimed at reassessing periodically and consolidating new practices.

This author recommends that LME consolidate gains, produce more change, and anchor new approaches. This means that LME will need to determine to what degree it has achieved its overall change process goals. According to Markiewicz and Patrick (2015), evaluation tools can be effective in evaluating the quality, value, and ability of a program to produce outcomes aligned with the program goals. After the change initiative has been completed, lessons learned from multiple sources of feedback can be used to update the measurement strategies and tactics (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2015). This author therefore recommends that LME use its curriculum leaders' survey, participants' survey, triennial employee survey, and common assessment results to determine the impact on the ministry's CL and its outputs (Appendix B).

This chapter has already described the curriculum leaders' survey and participants' survey. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the triennial employee survey is a federally designed survey which measures how satisfied employees are with their engagement, leadership, workforce, workplace, workplace well-being, diversity, and inclusion (Government of Canada, 2021). Also mentioned in Chapter 1, the province's common assessments assess all students in reading, writing, and mathematics (Government of [Province], 2019b). By analyzing data collected from these four sources and by cross-checking that data with that from pre-change years (e.g., common assessment results from years past) and with the change team's strategy map, change leaders can identify gains, deploy new knowledge and skill, and consider subsequent changes.

Many organizations run through the PDSA cycle multiple times (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). In the ministry's case, it is highly probable that change leaders determine if subsequent

iterations would be helpful in the move towards tailoring the CoP to the evolving needs of its internal and external environments. This author speaks more to that in the Next Steps and Future Considerations section of this OIP.

This section has described a four-phase monitoring and evaluating plan. The next section will discuss means by which LME can communicate its need for change and change process.

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

Communication can influence the success of an organization's change (Bel et al., 2018). It allows people to be aware of, understand, and participate in the change process (Bel et al., 2018). Moreover, communication affects how well changes are implemented and the commitment of organizational members (Deszca et al., 2020). In this section, this author outlines the communication methods LME can use to implement its change plan. The purpose is twofold. The following is aimed at assisting stakeholders understand the implications of the change on their practice and providing updates on what will occur throughout the process (Deszca et al., 2020).

A communication plan's effectiveness depends on its alignment with the organization's leadership approach (Bel et al., 2018; Jones, 2008). As previously mentioned, this author recommends that LME evolve its strategy to include a CL focused CoP by combining a systems approach to leadership with an adaptive leadership approach. SAL advocates that "sustainable development of any 'whole system' requires developing all (...) layers in a coordinated way. It means that as well as improving aspects of the organization's functioning, there also needs to be a corresponding development in the way leaders interact with the organization" (Coffey, 2010, pp. 25-26). According to Senge et al. (2019), systems leaders communicate by bringing together differing perspectives, understanding the perspectives of others, listening, asking questions, and



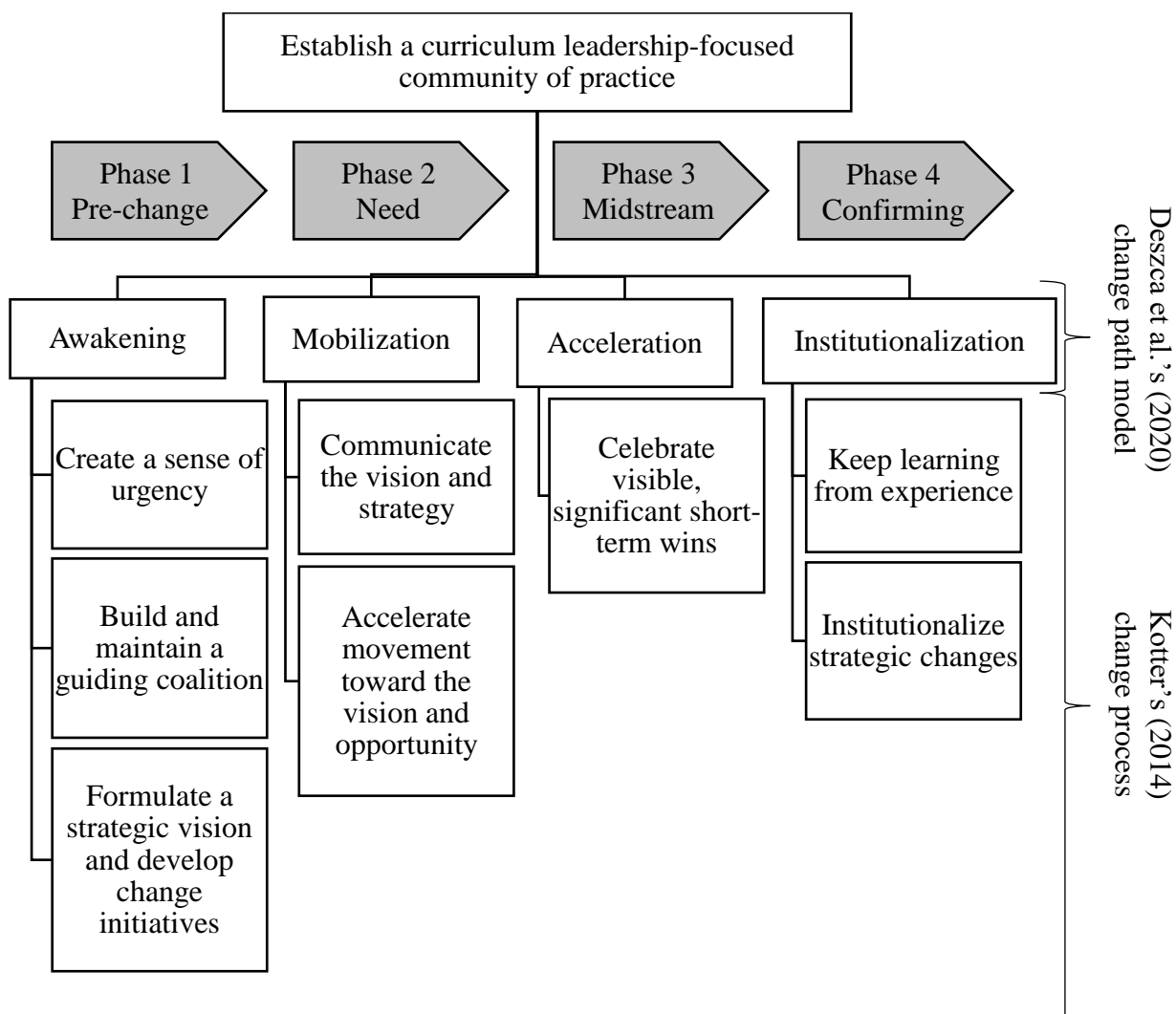
embodying a commitment to learning. The following communication plan allows for interaction. It has senior leaders and change team members working to ensure that people are brought together and that an atmosphere where people can ask questions and consider multiple perspectives is established (Coffey, 2010). ALA is based on interpretation and flexibility. Observations are unpacked to estimate what is occurring within the organization and with stakeholders (Heifetz et al., 2009). This author therefore sees LME change leaders defining the organization's initial vision, but staying open to adjustment as needs evolve (Lewis, 2019). In order for LME to ensure its approach remains adaptable, it is imperative that the organization's strategy allows for continuous and focused communication. Change agents must communicate clear, timely, and candid messages. Considering LME's context, change leaders might consider: ongoing widespread communication with a diverse population of stakeholders; direct communication with stakeholders representing themselves; collective (e.g., staff meetings) as well as individual (e.g., face-to-face meetings) communication; and both structured and open communication (Lewis, 2019).

Deszca et al. (2020) recommend that organizations focus on four goals when designing a communication plan: (a) infusing the need for change throughout the organization, (b) enabling individuals to understand how they will be impacted by the change, (c) communicating structural and job changes that will affect practices and procedures, and (d) ensuring all stakeholders are kept informed of progress. Deszca et al. (2020) continue on to suggest a four-phase approach to tackling said goals (Figure 6). Their first phase, the pre-change approval phase, involves change initiators communicating with senior leaders to convince them change is needed (Deszca et al., 2020). Their second phase, the developing the need for change phase, sees change leaders explaining the need for change, providing rationale, reassuring employees, clarifying steps in the

process, and generating a sense of urgency (Deszca et al., 2020). Their third phase, the midstream change and milestone communication phase, involves change agents informing people of progress, obtaining and listening to feedback, addressing misconceptions, clarifying organizational roles and systems, and continuing to nurture support (Deszca et al., 2020). Their fourth phase, the confirming and celebrating the change phase, sees change agents informing employees of the success, celebrating the change, capturing learning from the change process, and preparing your organization for its next changes (Deszca et al., 2020).

**Figure 6**

*Connecting LME's Communication Plan to the Hybrid Change Process*



As a member of the organization's change team, this author expects to participate in all four phases of LME's communication plan. They will promote the use of multiple forms of communication throughout the plan to ensure all stakeholders are informed of the change process.

Daneci-Patrau (2011) distinguishes between two forms of communication: formal and informal. Formal communication is understood in this OIP as the combined acts of planning and sharing information about the change process. Formal communication is beneficial to leaders because it facilitates the distribution of information in a uniform manner. This means that all employees receive the same information at the same time (Daneci-Patrau, 2011). Though formal communication has its place, it tends to be one-directional in that it does not inspire discourse. A plan which relies on formal communication only does not allow for feedback or questions. According to research, this may increase anxiety and resistance to change (Daneci-Patrau, 2011; Deszca et al., 2020). Informal communication is understood in this OIP as any form of information exchange between members of the organization without using a systematic or planned process. Graham et al. (1991) point out that informal communication includes nonverbal communication (e.g., facial expressions and gestures). Just like formal communication, informal communication has its place. It allows for two-way communication so that questions can be asked, feedback can be given, and concerns can be expressed (Graham et al., 1991; Spaho, 2012).

This author recommends that LME utilize both formal and informal communication and ensure information is flowing in different directions. Several studies have found that multidirectional communication can reduce resistance to change (Daneci-Patrau, 2011; Deszca et al., 2020). This stance assumes multiple communications, which aligns with ALA's

recommendation to ensure continuous, widespread communication. The communication plan (Table 8) therefore includes downward, upward and horizontal communication. When assigned leaders communicate with those under their management or supervision, it is referred to as downward communication. LME's downward communication occurs when senior leaders communicate procedures and provide directives to middle leaders. Downward communication will be particularly useful during the ministry's need for change, midstream change, and confirming the change phases. When information is transferred from employees to their leaders, it is called upward communication. LME will benefit from upward communication in that it can help change agents understand how employees and the system are impacted (Deszca et al., 2020; Spaho, 2012). Upward communication will be especially needed during the ministry's pre-change approval phase. When organizational members work together on implementation tasks, it is referred to as horizontal communication. Horizontal communication assumes that multiple players are coming together to ask questions, listen, and learn from the experience. This aligns with SAL's tenets of inclusiveness and collaboration. Horizontal communication is a necessary component to LME's communication plan, especially to its midstream change and confirmation phases.

**Table 8**

*LME's Communication Plan*

<b>Phases</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Communication tasks</b>	<b>Communication channels</b>
Pre-change approval	Change initiator, change leader, and change team	Present current status and need for change (formal communication) Describe the value of systems and adaptive leadership (formal communication) Outline how communication will occur throughout the	Face-to-face meetings with divisional director, Deputy Minister, and other directors Electronic space/tools for collaborative work between change team members

<b>Phases</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Communication tasks</b>	<b>Communication channels</b>
		change process (informal communication)	
Need for change	Change leaders and change team	Disseminate the research and evidence upon which the implementation plan is based (formal communication) Introduce change team and offer suggestions as to how additional LME employees can become involved (formal communication) Summarize and share input from employees (formal and informal communication)	Face-to-face meetings with LME employees Electronic messages to LME employees Mobile conversations between change team members or online drives and tools
Midstream change	Change team and CoP participants	Report on progress towards goals and team recognition (formal communication) Establish and participate in CL focused CoP (formal and informal communication)	Face-to-face meetings with LME employees Electronic messages to LME employees and CoP participants Face-to-face meetings between CoP participants
Confirming the change	Change leaders	Internal and external communication regarding successes observed throughout the implementation and next steps (formal communication)	Written reports available to public online

Table 8 lists the communication tasks LME will need to consider and recommends possible communication channels, for all four phases of its communication plan. The choice of communication channel should be considered carefully. A poorly chosen communication channel may result in the message not being received. Whenever communicating with stakeholders, it seems wise to use a variety of channels as one channel may not provide a wide enough reach. This author recommends four types of channels. The four ways to communicate

are: (a) face-to-face (either in person or through video conferencing software), where people can show emotions, tone, and facial expressions; (b) mobile, for private or more complex messages; (c) electronic, for email and/or the Internet; and (d) written, for an announcement or document that can be provided without requiring feedback (Williams, 2019). The following describes the communication tasks outlined in Table 8.

### **Phase 1: Pre-change Approval**

This pre-change approval phase parallels Deszca et al.'s (2020) awakening step and Kotter's (2014) stages of creating a guiding coalition, formulating a strategic vision, and developing change initiatives. This phase will see the change initiator meeting with one divisional director to present current outcomes and the ministry's need for change. Together they will discuss the value of SAL and ALA and plan for the divisional director's meeting with the Deputy Minister. The one-on-one format will allow for open discourse, an important component to SAL. The divisional director will present the Deputy Minister with all the aforementioned information pertaining to current outcomes, need for change, and recommended amalgamated approach. Again, the one-to-one format will allow the Deputy Minister the opportunity to ask questions and the director to clarify any ambiguities. With the Deputy Minister's permission, the director will build a guiding coalition. The director will invite other directors to a meeting to discuss the change and change process. The goal here is to create a guiding coalition. That coalition, also referred to as the change team, will review this communication plan and confirm how communication will occur throughout the change process. The change team is expected to communicate horizontally via electronic software (e.g., Microsoft Word, OneDrive, and Teams). While the aforementioned face-to-face meetings will occur once at a mutually agreed upon time, the change team will see ongoing communication.

## **Phase 2: Need for Change**

The need for change phase parallels Deszca et al.'s (2020) mobilization step and Kotter's (2014) stages of communicating the vision and strategy and accelerating movement with the vision and opportunity. This phase will see change leaders presenting the research and evidence utilized in the development of LME's implementation plan to all employees during an organization-wide staff meeting. These leaders can also introduce the change team and invite those staff members who are interested in being involved in the change process to join the team. Change team members will oversee the recording of organizational members' questions and comments. This phase will also see change team members ensuring redundancy by reiterating senior leaders' messages and staff members' feedback in electronic messages (i.e., Microsoft Outlook). Change team members might need to collaborate on composing said messages in sub teams, thus utilizing mobile communication channels if they deem them more efficient than co-composing in an online space with electronic tools (e.g., Microsoft Office). Like in the pre-change phase, some of these communication tasks will be one-time events while others will stretch over time. This author sees senior leaders organizing and facilitating one staff meeting and change team members participating in ongoing communication via email, mobile phone, and Web-based tools.

## **Phase 3: Midstream Change**

The midstream change phase runs parallel to Deszca et al.'s (2020) acceleration step and Kotter's (2014) stage of celebrating visible, significant short-term wins. This phase will see change team members organizing and facilitating face-to-face staff meetings and composing and sending emails to LME employees, to report on progress and highlight short-term wins. LME's acceleration step is its most lengthy step, stretching over five consecutive months. The change

team should hold short (e.g., 30 minute) monthly meetings and sending biweekly emails. Such on-going communication aligns with ALA in that it is continuous and widespread.

It is during LME's awakening step that the CL focused CoP is established. Change team members will ensure that CoP participants are provided with information pertaining to the components and lifecycle of a CoP. The three components of a CoP are a shared domain of interest, a collaborative community, and the sharing and reuse of information (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This CoP will see its participants partaking "in real world situations, workplace projects, and learning events" (Kimble et al., 2008, p. 301). The lifecycle of a CoP usually follows a path with four stages: (a) the potential stage, when people converge; (b) the coalescing stage, when a community is defined; (c) the dispersion stage, when participants maintain ongoing relationships; and (d) the memorable stage, when people together remember their journey (Loyarte & Hernaez, 2011). LME's CL focused CoP will meet no less than monthly. Between meetings, they will stay connected with emails (to share reminders of meeting dates and times) and shared drives (to share learning resources).

#### **Phase 4: Confirming the Change**

The confirming change phase follows Deszca et al.'s (2020) institutionalization step and Kotter's (2014) keep learning from experience and institutionalize strategic changes stages. This phase will see change leaders (i.e., Deputy Minister and divisional directors) collaborating with the Minister of Education on the sharing of successes noted throughout the change plan and next steps. They will analyze the data collected from the ministry's first iteration of the PDSA cycle and cross-check that data with the change team's strategy map. They can disseminate their findings and future plans internally and externally via the organization's annual report which is made available to all on the ministry's website.



### **Chapter 3 Summary**

LME is poised to further support leadership capacity development by incorporating a CL focused CoP into its strategy. Chapter 3 described an implementation plan aimed at the establishment of such a CoP. The plan is based on SAL and ALA and it draws from both Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path and Kotter's (2014) change process. This chapter also outlined a monitoring and evaluating plan which was designed around the Plan-Do-Study-Act inquiry cycle. Finally, this chapter put forth a communication plan which aligns with Deszca et al.'s (2020) four communication goals and allows for multidirectional formal and informal communications. This OIP concludes with a discussion on next steps and future considerations.

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

After submitting this OIP to Western University, this author plans to provide their divisional director with a copy. Said director has supported this research from its beginning. Ever since, they have asked for regular updates as to how this research project was going. As a middle leader working at LME, this author is expected to participate in biannual one-on-one meetings with said director. The purpose of these meetings is to update this author's individual learning plan and evaluate their work. It was during these meetings that this author and their director briefly discussed the research project. Each time, the director reaffirmed their commitment to reading the completed OIP and considering its content, hence starting the ball rolling for the implementation plan described herein.

Once the ministry has established its CL focused CoP, it will then need to take steps toward maintaining it over time. As curriculum leaders' individual secondments come to an end and they return to the classroom, other teachers replace them. This means that LME will need to tailor its established CoP according to the needs of its perpetually changing seconded employee profile and its external environment. Maintaining the ministry's CoP over time will therefore involve subsequent changes and additional iterations of the PDSA cycle.

As the ministry maintains its CoP, it might also consider five future projects which, once established, would run parallel to its CL focused CoP. The first consideration pertains to CL training. LME might consider forming partnerships with local universities to offer formal learning opportunities to those teachers interested in CL so that they can acquire the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill such an important role. These university courses would not replace LME's CL focused CoP, as knowledge and skill sets will need updating and refining, but they will provide a more empowered place from which CoP participants would start. The second

consideration builds on the first. It pertains to the ministry's curriculum leader hiring practices. This author recommends that the ministry reference specific CL knowledge and skill sets in job postings and then design interview questions with said sets in mind. The third consideration pertains to additional CoPs. The ministry might consider establishing a CoP for its other middle leaders (e.g., specialists). They too play an important role in leading the province's education system and could benefit from such a learning experience. A fourth consideration pertains to knowledge mobility. Curriculum leaders could share their learning with those working at other ministries of education via the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC). This council is an intergovernmental body which serves, among other things, as "a mechanism through which to undertake activities, projects, and initiatives in areas of mutual interest" (Council of Ministers of Education Canada, n.d.). Finally, LME might consider how curriculum leaders can reinvest their learning into their work at their respective schools when they return to the classroom. Their expertise could extend the help they offered to school-based leaders while at the ministry and complement the work of their successor.

Should LME decide to undertake one or more of these future projects, it seems appropriate to highlight the importance of continuing to look to research for guidance. This author recommends referring to research when (a) selecting a leadership approach which aligns with the organization's context and desired change, (b) designing a comprehensive action plan, (c) assessing organizational readiness, (d) outlining a monitoring and evaluation plan, and (e) communicating clearly and frequently with all stakeholders. Furthermore, this author recommends that leaders implementing change in other organizations consider cross-examining research-based frameworks. As discussed in Chapter 2, Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path and

Kotter's (2014) change process complement each other well. Utilizing both congruently provides change leaders with detailed guidance and the organization with a flexible path forward.

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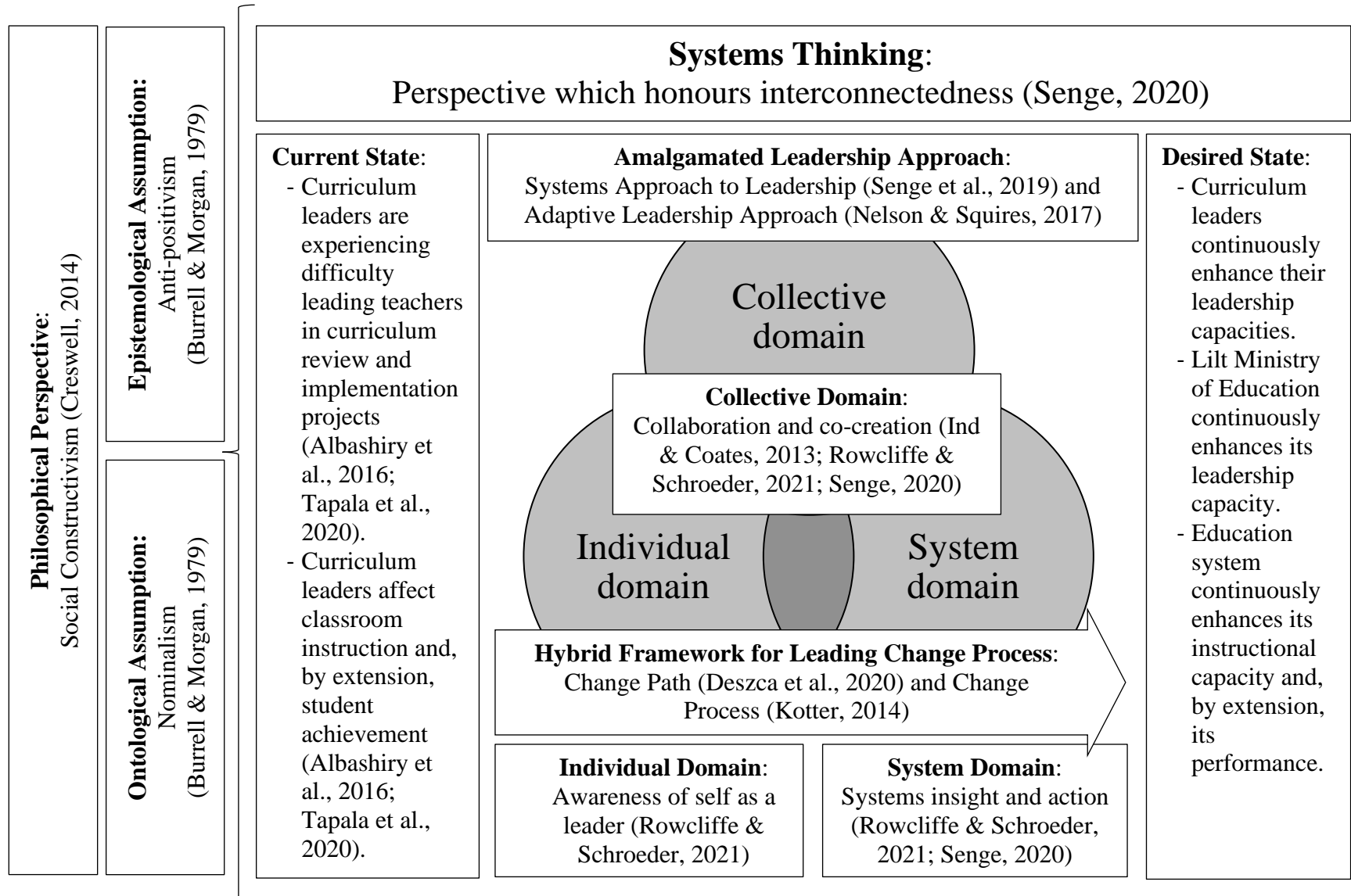
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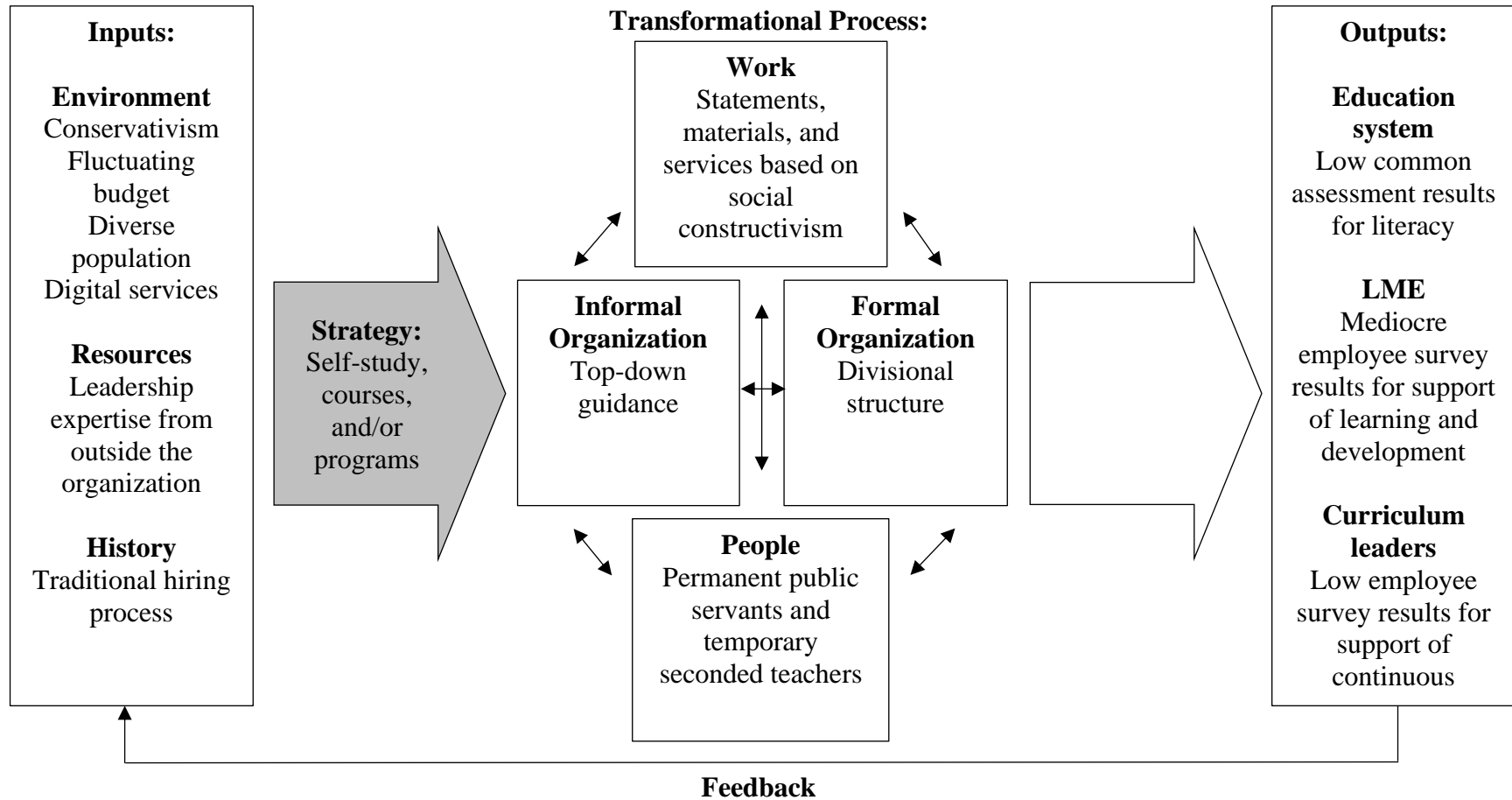
Appendix A

Linking Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks



**Appendix B**

**LME's Current External and Internal Environments in Relation to Outputs**



*Note.* Adapted from Nadler, D. A. & Tushman, M. L. (1989). Organizational frame bending: Principles for managing reorientation.

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