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# Reaching New Heights: A Pathway to Pedagogical Equity for English Language Learners

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## Recommended Citation

**Abstract**

During the past decade, classrooms in Alberta, Canada, have become more culturally and linguistically diverse. Despite having a strong desire to meet the academic needs of their students, most teachers do not have a well-developed understanding of pedagogy specific to teaching English as an additional language. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) presents educators in the Central School District of Alberta (a pseudonym) with a pedagogical framework that promotes the development of more equitable and democratic classrooms for English language learners (ELLs). Sociotransformative constructivism (STC)—a union of social constructivism and critical cross-cultural education—lays the theoretical groundwork for the OIP through its four key tenets: authentic activity, reflexivity, metacognition, and dialogic communication. The STC paradigm demands that educators teach not only for understanding, but for diversity as well. Through collaborative-transformative leadership, school-based teaching staff are invited to grow in their knowledge and skills in the areas of student engagement, culturally responsive practices, adaptive expertise, and oracy instruction. A dialogic change model and adaptive expertise model of professional learning (PL) guide the change implementation process. Students and families are invited to contribute to the pedagogical shift through personal narratives and the sharing of diverse worldviews. The adoption of the proposed framework and its accompanying PL opportunities results in pedagogical practices that elevate ELL voice, status, and academic achievement in the context of a more democratic and culturally affirming school experience.

*Keywords:* English language learners, sociotransformative constructivism, dialogic change model, adaptive expertise, culturally responsive practices, oracy

**Executive Summary**

In the past decade, cultural and linguistic diversity has risen sharply in Alberta schools (Balogun & Maheu, 2018; Ruban, 2017). Despite witnessing rapidly changing student demographics, preservice and active teachers are still primarily White, English-speakers (Everitt, 2022; Ingersoll et al., 2018). White educators often struggle to connect with English language learners (ELLs) on a cultural level, and most do not have the knowledge and skills needed to effectively teach these students in an inclusive classroom setting (Cummins et al., 2012; Samson & Collins, 2012). This OIP provides K–12 teachers and leaders with a framework to address the cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical gaps that negatively impact ELL academic status, achievement, and identity.

Chapter 1 introduces my leadership position in the Central School District of Alberta (CSDA, a pseudonym)—a publicly funded, urban school district. My agency, professional responsibilities, and identity are briefly explored followed by an in-depth look at Rodriguez's (2022) sociotransformative constructivism (STC)—an amalgam of social constructivism and critical cross-cultural education. STC provides the theoretical groundwork for the OIP. This paradigm contributes to a better understanding of how particular teacher dispositions and their related pedagogical practices can create more democratically-oriented classrooms for ELLs (Alshurman, 2015; Gay, 2015; Sant, 2019). From here, the discussion turns to an analysis of the CSDA organization that reveals the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that shape and define its operation. Significant space is dedicated to identifying and framing the problem of practice (PoP) through an exploration of pedagogical equity and inclusion for ELLs. It is at this juncture that STC theory is visually represented alongside the proposed pedagogical framework. Chapter 1 concludes with a discussion of the four pedagogical elements in the conceptual

framework and the questions that will guide the leadership-focused vision for change.

Beginning with an exploration of leadership approaches, Chapter 2 focuses on change planning and development. The two theoretical leadership lenses that are used throughout the OIP are DeWitt's (2017) collaborative leadership and Shields's (2020) transformative leadership. A collaborative-transformative leadership stance aligns closely with STC in its dialogic processes, development of teacher reflexivity, and focus on improving student achievement. Kuenkel's (n.d.) dialogic change model (DCM) is introduced as the framework for implementing the change process. In preparation for implementation, Chapter 2 content draws on Judge and Douglas's (2009) eight dimensions of organizational change capacity as well as Fullan's (2021) human paradigm change drivers to examine the CSDA's readiness for change. Chapter 2 concludes with three potential solutions to address the PoP and the adjudication process that informed the selection process.

The final chapter of the OIP outlines the change implementation, communication, and evaluation processes. It is in Chapter 3 that the theoretical and conceptual frameworks come to life. Kuenkel's (n.d.) DCM, in close alignment with sociotransformative constructivist values, is applied alongside the Adaptive Expertise Model (AEM) of professional learning developed by Le Fevre et al. (2020); a model that is "complex, adaptive, context dependent, culturally located, and driven by effective decision-making" (p. 1). The DCM and AEM, when used concomitantly with a collaborative and transformative knowledge mobilization plan, set the course for a successful and enduring shift in pedagogical practices. The success of the change implementation in addressing the PoP is measured across the core groups (educators, students, and families) using a multiplicity of evaluation tools that reinforce the collaborative, dialogic, and transformative nature of the OIP.

This OIP delivers in its promise of charting a successful pathway to pedagogical equity for ELLs in the CSDA. It is possible for both students and teachers to find success in an organization that has historically been more concerned with the results of culturally biased achievement tests than the educational rights of its student members, and the expressed needs of its teachers and leaders. There is a lingering sense of hope and promise generated by the OIP for the educational outcomes and academic status of ELLs both within the CSDA and beyond.

## Acknowledgements

Three years ago, when I made the decision to jump back into the world of academia, I did not anticipate how much of a life-changing experience it would be. This dissertation is, in many ways, the culmination of my life's work as a teacher and leader in Catholic education. For over 25 years I have been blessed to walk beside the students and teachers in my school division on a shared pathway of learning.

To the brilliant teachers with whom I have shared my professional journey—thank you for your commitment to life-long learning and to the students in your care. We found community in our faith, joy in our friendship, and the fortitude to persevere in the hopes of a better tomorrow.

To the English Language Learners whom I have had the privilege to teach—you have taught me more than you will ever know: patience, kindness, gratitude, and the importance of making your voice heard. Despite the communication and cultural barriers that sometimes get in the way, you showed me that everyone smiles in the same language.

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To my parents who have encouraged me in all my endeavours and who worked hard to provide me with many educational and life opportunities—thank you for all your time, energy, love, and support. I have wanted nothing more than to make you proud.

To my husband, my rock, my love, and my partner in life—thank you for supporting yet another item on my bucket list. I promise to stick to more affordable and less time-consuming projects from now on. I have noticed that you have become quite an excellent cook and domestic

in my absence! I am so grateful for all that you do for me and for our family.

To my children, my most precious gifts—thank you for being such responsible, intelligent, thoughtful, and kind young men. You are, and always will be, my pride and joy. I hope that my work over the past three years has proven that you are never too old to learn. Continue to challenge yourselves, take risks, and follow your dreams.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that I work, learn, and live on Treaty Six territory—the traditional and ancestral territory of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, and Nakota Sioux, and home of the Métis Nation of Alberta Region Four. I acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who have cared for and lived on these lands from time immemorial. I am grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and Indigenous scholars whose wisdom and perspectives have informed and enriched my work: Dr. Cash Ahenakew, Dr. Jo-Ann Archibald, Elder Walter Bonaise, Jo Chondra, and Elder Albert Marshall. May the power of education continue to answer the calls to action and move the needle closer to reconciliation.

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**Acronyms**

| | |
|---|---|
| AEM | Adaptive Expertise Model |
| CSDA | Central School District of Alberta (a pseudonym) |
| DAF | Deliberate Acts of Facilitation |
| DCM | Dialogic Change Model |
| EAL | English as an Additional Language |
| ELL | English Language Learner |
| KMb | Knowledge Mobilization Plan |
| OIP | Organizational Improvement Plan |
| PAT | Provincial Achievement Test |
| PL | Professional Learning |
| PoP | Problem of Practice |
| SIOP | Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol |
| STC | Sociotransformative Constructivism |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats |
| VEAE | Value-Engaged Approach to Evaluation |

**Definitions**

**Andragogy**: "The theory, methods, and activities involved in teaching adult learners" (Cambridge University Press, n.d., para. 1).

**Authentic activity**: Authentic activities have real-world connections that challenge students to generate a variety of products/solutions through collaboration, reflection, multiple perspectives, and on-going assessment (Cholewinski, 2009).

**Best practice**: "A procedure that has been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption" (Merriam-Webster, n.d., para. 1).

**Collective psychological ownership**: "Psychological ownership of a job or organization by an employee is a feeling of having a stake in it as a result of commitment and contribution. [Leaders] who recognize the ways in which psychological ownership may have positive and negative effects can ensure that both employee and organization benefit from enabling employees to increase their effectiveness" (Pickford et al., 2016, p. iii).

**Colourblindness**: "The racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity" (Williams, 2011, para. 1).

**Commodification of knowledge:** "Commodification refers to the reframing of practices, services, and products such that they are packaged according to their economic value" (McKenna, 2022, p. 1284).

**Culturally responsive pedagogy**: "Culturally responsive pedagogy simultaneously develops, along with academic achievement, social consciousness and critique, cultural affirmation, competence, and exchange; community-building and personal connections; individual self-worth

and abilities; and an ethic of caring" (Gay, 2018, p. 52).

**Democratic classroom**: "A democratic approach to education engages students in building a strong classroom community, taking responsibility in cocreating curriculum, and engaging in critical dialogue on issues that impact their lives" (Collins et al., 2019, p. 1).

**Dialogic conversation**: "Dialogic refers to the conveying of the meaning of the content, building on the views of others, clarifying by seeking information through questioning, summarizing information, giving reasons to support views and listening actively and responding appropriately with other individuals" (Nor et al., 2018, p. 2).

**Experiential learning**: "Experiential learning opportunities are grounded in an intentional learning cycle and clearly defined learning outcomes. They engage students actively in creating knowledge and critically reflecting on their experiences, allowing them to understand how to transfer their knowledge and skills to future endeavours" (Experiential Learning Task Force, as cited in University of Guelph Experiential Learning, n.d., para. 1).

**Heritage language**: "The term 'heritage language' is used to identify languages other than the dominant language spoken by students. In Canada, English is the dominant language used in government, business, education, and public communication outside of the province of Québec" (Kelleher, 2010, p. 1).

**Lexile framework**: "The Lexile text measure represents a text's difficulty level on a Lexile scale" (MetaMetrics, 2008, para. 1). "A higher Lexile reader measure represents a higher level of reading ability on the Lexile scale" (MetaMetrics, 2008, para. 2).

**Metacognition**: "Thinking about one's thinking. More precisely, it refers to the processes used to plan, monitor, and assess one's understanding and performance. Metacognition includes a critical awareness of a) one's thinking and learning and b) oneself as a thinker and learner" (Chick,

2013, para. 1).

**Psychological safety**: "A shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking" (Edmondson, 1999, p. 350).

**Reflexivity**: "Becoming aware of how one's own ethnic and cultural background, socioeconomic status, belief systems, values, education, and skills influence what we consider as important to learn" (Rodriguez, 2022, p. 6). "One becomes more aware of how issues of power determine who has access to education and to better opportunities in life, and the role each one of us plays through our actions (or inactions) to maintain the status quo" (Rodriguez, 2022, p. 6).

**STC/sTc**: A theoretical orientation "to link multicultural education and social constructivist theoretical frameworks" (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 589). Rodriguez's acronym for sociotransformative constructivism first appeared in his 1998 publication as STC. It was subsequently changed to sTc in a 2022 publication without explanation. For the purposes of this OIP, the original uppercase acronym is used.

**Story stewardship**: "Honouring the sacred nature of story—the ones we share and the ones we hear—and knowing that we've been entrusted with something valuable or that we have something valuable that we should treat with respect and care" (Brown, 2021, para. 4).

**White privilege**: "Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it" (Calgary Anti-Racism Education, n.d., p. 35).

## Chapter 1: Problem Posing

In the weeks leading up to writing this dissertation, I set out to organize my home office in an effort to create an efficient and inspiring space in which to work. In the process, I came across an old photo of a small quilt that I made years ago with my Grade 4 students to welcome them into a new school year. After reading *The Quilt Story* (Johnston & dePaola, 1996), each student was invited to decorate a square of fabric with their name written in the centre. Afterwards, the squares were laced together to create the quilt which hung on a bulletin board for the duration of the year. What began as a standard first day exercise was, in fact, a celebration of diversity, belonging, and interconnectedness; a joining of life experiences, learning profiles, personalities, languages, and cultures of the children in my care. The little quilt became a tangible manifestation of personal stories and ways of walking in the world.

Educators have the privilege to act as stewards of these stories. They are graced with opportunities to contribute positively to the unique narrative that each child carries within. The personal stories and life rhythms of marginalized students may, however, be completely dissonant to those of the teacher, so much so that personal connection and communicative understanding are severely impacted. How can equitable teaching and learning opportunities occur in the absence of relationship and shared life experiences? What kind of pedagogical weaving is needed to firmly integrate ELLs into the educational fabric of the classroom? This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) seeks to address these and other provocations.

This first chapter of the organizational improvement plan (OIP) delves deeper into the concept of identity through an examination of researcher positionality and the organizational context in which the OIP is situated. The reader is invited to share in a reflexive experience relative to the author's role as an educational leader in the Central School District of Alberta

(CSDA; a pseudonym). Next, the CSDA undergoes a SWOT analysis in relation to the organization's strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats that shape its priorities and reveal its areas for growth. It is within this context that the problem of practice (PoP) is introduced. The chasm that exists between what is, and what should be, provides the creative impetus for the dissertation. Finally, several questions are offered in preparation for a detailed discussion of the leadership-focused vision for change.

To honour and integrate diverse perspectives into this work, legitimizing parallels are drawn between traditional Indigenous worldviews and contemporary organization and leadership theory. This is an act of "(re)membering, (re)cognizing, and (re)generating ancient knowledges and very old pedagogies within contemporary contexts" (Styres, 2017, p. 195). The braiding of Indigenous and contemporary knowledge systems in the OIP should be seen as an act of decolonization and as an acknowledgement of the enduring power of culture and identity in the face of overwhelming adversity.

## Positionality and Lens Statement

An awakening to self-identity and its related fundamental assumptions is needed before individuals can engage in the deeply personal and transformative work at the heart of this OIP (Holmes, 2020). Throughout the research process, I have become acutely aware of my positionality relative to non-White ELL students and colleagues. I have been compelled to leave the comfort and predictability of my racial, cultural, and linguistic circles in an effort to engage more fully and compassionately with my students and peers.

To support the development of an identity statement, I have used the wheel of power and privilege to guide the discussion (see Appendix A). Other than my womanhood, I reside at the centre—the most privileged and powerful part of the wheel. Despite the wheel's prioritization of

men over women, I have never felt disadvantaged by my gender because, as Shapiro and

Stefkovich (2016) suggested, my feminine voice emerges through an empowering ethic of care

positioned within the context of a democratic society. The greatest areas of privilege for me are

language and education. I am bilingual—a native English speaker who is also fluent in French.

Additionally, I have enjoyed the luxury of an uninterrupted, high-quality education. With these

two domains, I can engage at full capacity in the economic, social, political, and educational

systems of my country.

Although religious affiliation is not represented in the wheel of privilege, there is an

advantage connected with Christianity in my community. I identify as a practicing member of

the Roman Catholic Church. The shameful history of residential schools leaves me somewhat

reticent to disclose this part of my identity. Nevertheless, my membership in this faith

community has been advantageous from an employment, educational, and social standpoint.

Despite the Church's past wrongs, I strive to live in service to others and in the belief that all are

equal in the eyes of God. This simple reflexive exercise clearly shows that the majority of CSDA

educators, whose identities are similar to mine, are insiders wherever they go—except with the

ELLs they are expected to teach. In this case, there is precious little overlap between the two

circles of identity.

With pedagogical equity and organizational improvement as the end goals of this OIP, it

is imperative to accurately establish the leadership position vis-à-vis the social, cultural, and

organizational context. Looking past selfhood, my professional agency is as an English as an

additional language (EAL) consultant. This district level position provides support to

administrators, teachers, and other school staff in meeting the academic and social-emotional

needs of ELLs. As a collaborative team of five EAL consultants, there are opportunities to

extend our influence into each of the 96 schools in the CSDA. EAL consultants are uniquely positioned as advocates and advisors for students, families, teachers, and school-based administrators.

The majority of EAL consultant work is focused on providing professional learning (PL) opportunities to school staff, supporting ELL programming and assessment, and acting in an advisory role for ELL funding allocations and policy development at the district level. The EAL consultant requires an in-depth knowledge of curriculum, differentiated instruction, EAL-specific pedagogy, and culturally responsive practices. Flexibility, team building skills, and strong interpersonal communication are needed, especially when staff are struggling to meet the needs of their students. EAL consultants strive to work as supportive allies in an increasingly complex educational environment.

Since entering the teaching profession over 25 years ago, I have been steadfast in my belief in a social constructivist epistemology; one where learning is negotiated through context, collaboration, dialogue, and self-reflection (Graduate Student Instructor Teaching & Resource Center, n.d.; Shay, 2008). As a result of years of teaching and learning alongside diverse learners, this worldview has acquired an additional critical component. A critical perspective encourages educators to question the systems of knowledge and cultural identities that dominate curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices in Alberta schools (Caldera, 2018; McKinley, 2015). It is insufficient to simply be aware of the privileged position of some knowledge and some students over others. Instead, educators are ethically obligated to provide an educational experience that honours and includes diversity. Lincoln et al. (2018), Mertens (2009), and Romm (2015) offered versions of the transformative paradigm—one that makes space for social justice and other ways of knowing. These and other ponderings have prompted a rethinking of a social

constructivist stance in favour of one that acknowledges power differentials in culture, language, and social status.

The worldview that unites effulgently with the focus of this OIP and my agency as an EAL consultant is one of sociotransformative constructivism (STC). Unlike the emancipatory goals of critical pedagogy, I have selected to employ STC as a critically grounded theory that compels the White educator to consider the racial and cultural identities of his or her students. Because the scholarship on critical race theory and Freire's critical pedagogy suggest that their use by White researchers is problematic (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tanksley & Estrada, 2022), I rely instead on a paradigm that encourages White researchers and practitioners to adopt a critical stance to inform their understanding of White privilege and racial intersectionality (Bergerson, 2003; Nebeker, 1998; Theoharis, 2019). STC serves this purpose from the perspectives of professional agency and leadership identity.

STC, originally developed by Rodriguez in 1998 to examine science education practices, combines critical cross-cultural education (a theory of social justice) and social constructivism (a theory of learning). Both theories integrate equity issues, however, the main advantage of a sociotransformative constructivist blend is that it offers specific considerations for instructional practice. Key tenets of this framework include the use of authentic activity, reflexivity, metacognition, and dialogic conversation. I use the image of a ladder on which to position the four elements of STC. The ladder motif has long been used by visual and oral cultures as a symbol of the slow and arduous journey towards personal growth and enlightenment like that proposed in this OIP (Thiel, 2009). It offers a novel vantage point (of the classroom or school context) and, most importantly, it provides much needed access to items that are out of reach (in this context equitable access to educational opportunities for ELLs). Figure 1 plots the four

elements of STC on the ladder rungs to represent the socially constructed knowledge, language, and dispositions needed to reach and teach ELLs in an inclusive classroom. Educators move up and down the metaphorical ladder throughout the school day. If there is a rung (key element) missing, it makes instruction less efficient and less effective.

**Figure 1**

*The STC Metaphorical Ladder*
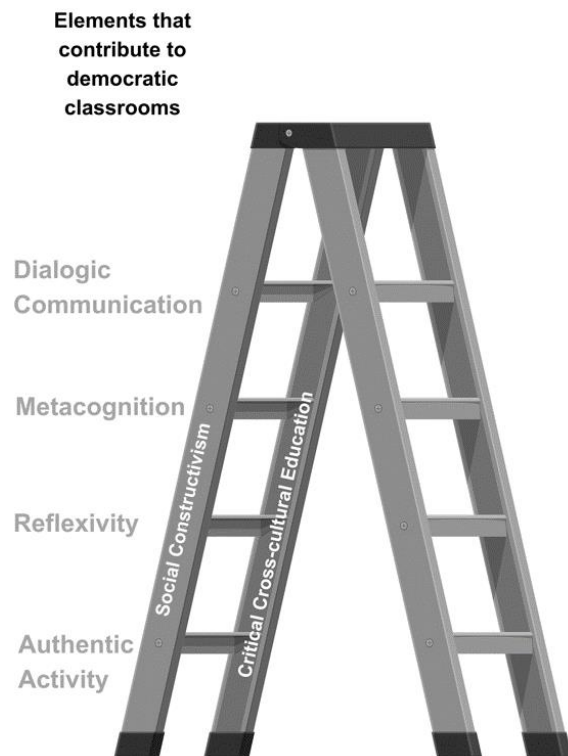


*Note.* The left side of the ladder lists the four key tenets of STC (rungs) and its combined theoretical paradigms (side rails).

With every interaction, both in and out of the democratic classroom, there is potential for new perspectives and a challenging of the status quo. This process of critical reflection can result in profound feelings of personal, professional, and organizational disorientation (Farrell, 2022; Wergin, 2019). Fortunately, professional standards and faith-based mission statements provide a moral compass with which to navigate the implicit personal and organizational narratives that

perpetuate inequality (Davis et al., 2007; Stemler et al., 2011). It is precisely this abandonment of ideals in the face of dissonance that allows educators to make room for more inclusive practices that contribute to a richer and more harmonious understanding of the human family (Fiol & O'Connor, 2017; Starbuck, 2017). It takes time to move through the fog of new knowledge but eventually, clarity returns. Leaning into the discomfort of change is onerous, but our malleable mental schemas are what make change possible (Toh, 2016). Valk et al. (2011) have summarized this thought beautifully: "Humans are meaning makers, and when leaders assist others in making sense of the world through a clearly articulated and coherent worldview, solid action can follow" (p. 61).

## Organizational Context

Prior to articulating and discussing the PoP, it is necessary to describe the organizational context through a SWOT analysis of both the internal and external organizational influences. According to Kotler et al. (2008), a SWOT analysis is an overall evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of an organization. Appendix B provides a summary of the SWOT analysis.

### Internal Influences: Weaknesses and Strengths

The CSDA is a large, urban school district with a culturally and linguistically diverse population. Like most educational organizations, it is a complex, dynamic, multilevel adaptive system (Glatter, 2006) where goal achievement and operational efficiency depend on the knowledge, participation and perspectives of many groups and individuals (Norqvist & Ärlestig, 2021; Weiner et al., 2020). The CSDA adheres to a traditional top-down organizational structure. Communication generally flows downward from senior leadership to department leaders, then to school-based administrators, followed by teachers, and finally to families and the wider

community. The frequency and modes of communication vary greatly between departments and schools. In recent years, there has been a consolidation of departments in response to budgetary constraints. This has resulted in greater communicative distance between those with decision-making power and staff who are engaged in face-to-face student interactions.

Like many educators across the country, principals and teachers in the CSDA express concerns about the workload and accountability that rests on the shoulders of school-based staff (Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Kim, 2019; Malatest et al., 2015). Many believe that upper-level decision makers are out of touch with the day-to-day challenges of schools and, as a result, do not feel adequately supported in their work (Pollock et al., 2014). Despite the monumental challenges that educators face—such as large class sizes, limited substitute teacher availability, and post-COVID learning loss—the professionals in the CSDA persevere, for the sake of the students, in their commitment to the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018b, 2020) and the *Leadership Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018a).

As is expected from all Alberta school districts, a 3-year plan for continuous growth outlines local priorities and their alignment with provincial mandates. Provincial accountability and declining student performance on Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) and Diploma Exams have generated a need for improved pedagogical practices in the CSDA. In its attempt to improve student performance, the CSDA has seen a proliferation of pedagogical and emerging technology initiatives. Despite extensive PL opportunities, copious amounts of data collection, and the completion of annual satisfaction surveys, the extent to which these initiatives have improved teaching and learning for ELLs is not readily apparent. ELL performance and inclusivity measures remain absent from the 3-year plan for continuous growth. To complicate

matters further, EAL programming is no longer recognized as a distinct program within the CSDA. Instead, it is amalgamated with the areas of curriculum and assessment.

In addition to the information generated from PATs, elementary schools are required to submit struggling reader data to the district for monitoring. ELLs have been erroneously included in this struggling reader category. Although many ELLs have typically developing literacy skills, they do not have sufficient language acquisition to express comprehension of grade level text. Pull-out literacy intervention for a beginner ELL offers little value. It is akin to asking a child to run before they can crawl. Teachers and administrators struggle with this kind of district-led categorization of ELLs and intuitively use more qualitative descriptions to celebrate language acquisition and student belonging in the academic environment. These, however, are not formally recognized or sanctioned by the CSDA or the Ministry of Education.

Most ELLs in the CSDA attend inclusive classrooms in their home catchment area and the district's commitment to inclusive education and social justice is enshrined in its mission statement, core values, and revisiting of administrative policies and procedures. Although inclusive in the broad sense of welcoming in-boundary students into the community school, pedagogical practices in the CSDA are rarely, if ever, considered in conversations about equity. There is a significant disconnect between what is perceived as inclusionary "best" practices and what transpires as equitable pedagogy for ELLs. Because of implicit bias, many educators reveal deficit-based mindsets towards ELL learning and achievement. ELLs are unable to work to their potential in an unsupportive and unwelcoming classroom environment (Tung, 2013; Yaeger et al., 2022).

Despite having many areas for growth, the CSDA has been a model for other school districts in how newly arrived ELLs are welcomed. The Welcome Centre [pseudonym] provides

intake and assessment services so that newcomers can be easily registered and assessed prior to arriving at their community school. Intercultural staff who work in the centre speak languages other than English that are highly represented in the district. They can communicate important information to families and support them with settlement services. Families are comforted knowing that they have a cultural and language contact who can answer their questions and help them negotiate a new culture and school system.

Beyond the forward-thinking Welcome Centre, there has been a developing awareness in recent years of the whiteness of the CSDA as it relates to inclusion, administrative procedures, and race relations. In response to several highly publicized racial incidents involving district staff, an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism committee was formed to begin the difficult work of addressing systemic bias, colour blindness, and the disruption of narratives that perpetuate inequity and power imbalances in schools and classrooms. With equity as a guiding principle of pedagogical planning, practice, and the distribution of resources, the peripheral position of ELLs can be reassigned to one that is more inclusive, socially just, and aligned with the CSDA's mission of providing high quality education for all.

**External Influences: Opportunities and Threats**

Canada's peaceful and welcoming reputation makes it a highly sought after destination for those seeking refuge from war, poverty, or persecution. Canada welcomes approximately 300,000 new immigrants annually which is one of the highest rates per capita of any country (Ruban, 2017; Statista Research Department, 2022a). Over time, Canada's population has become a beautiful, albeit imperfect, tapestry of cultures. And with more than 200 languages spoken from coast to coast, including 60 Indigenous languages (EduCanada, 2022), Canada is one of the most diverse countries in the world (World Population Review, 2022).

Canadian schools, like other public institutions, are a microcosm of this diversity (Bećirović & Bešlija, 2018). The CSDA, like most districts across the province, has experienced unprecedented changes in enrolment demographics because of the availability of jobs, the affordability of housing, and the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program (Da Costa, 2022; Raymond, 2023; Statista Research Department, 2022b). The petroleum producers in northern Alberta and the beef processing facility in the southern town of Brooks employ thousands of immigrants from around the globe (Alberta Advantage Immigration Program, 2022; Brooks Newell Region, n.d.; Singer, 2023). Schools that used to have a predominantly White, Canadian-born, English-speaking population are in the midst of a transposition where the majority of students are now foreign-born ELLs (L. Harris, 2016; The Homestretch, 2018; Kindleman, 2020).

As far back as 2012, the Government of Alberta formally acknowledged this shifting demographic in a public document entitled A Transformation in Progress (Workforce Planning and Development Branch, 2012). Using the data generated by the Student Population Project and Teacher Forecasting Model, the document suggests continued growth in the number of ELLs in Alberta schools and a growing demand for teachers to teach them (Balogun & Maheu, 2018). Despite an average enrolment increase of 8% per year, Alberta ELLs remain an underfunded and under-served demographic (Di Cintio, 2015). With less than 20% of ELLs achieving advanced English proficiency after 5 years ([CSDA] Student Services, 2021), teachers are emphatically failing these students in terms of language instruction, academic engagement, and culturally responsive practices. University teacher education programs have been equally slow in responding to demographic trends (Samson & Collins, 2012). A significant shift is required in teacher knowledge and pedagogy to maximize ELL learning and well-being in the context of a

democratic classroom; one that is built on trusting relationships, an openness to diverse perspectives, and a high degree of student voice and agency (Alshurman, 2015; Gay, 2015; Morrison, 2008; Sant, 2019).

Unlike the marked demographic changes in schools, the Ministry of Education in the province of Alberta has, since 1971, stagnated under the political influence of a Conservative government with only a short, 4-year reprieve between 2015 and 2019 when the New Democrats came to power. Among the neoliberal principles that guide the United Conservative Party is a commitment to the creation of wealth, low levels of taxation, debt reduction, and the deregulation of private business (United Conservative Association, 2020). Gobby (2016) exposed the infiltration of neoliberalist ideology into noneconomic domains such as education; a place where "the social democratic discourses of equality have been challenged for legitimacy by the discourses of standards, quality, choice, and competition" (p. 90). Canadian right-wing organizations such as the Fraser Institute have sought to promote the value of choice for those who can buy a better education by ranking individual schools based on the percentage of ELLs enrolled and their notoriously poor performance on standardized tests (Erum, 2023; Fraser Institute, n.d.). This labelling of underperforming schools and the commodification of knowledge has had a deleterious impact at all levels of education in Canada (Harris & Jones, 2022; Hursh, 2001; Schwartzman, 2013). The purpose of education is increasingly viewed through an economic lens; one where students are seen as human capital and whose primary, long-term purpose is to contribute to economic productivity.

Students are increasingly segregated based on their socioeconomic status which is inextricably linked to their family's' employability in a province where the language of business, government, and power is English. Students who are positioned favourably in the realm of

language economics are English speakers. These students have fluency in the dominant language— a vital contributor to positive life outcomes (Holborow, 2018). As the democratic underpinnings of a publicly funded education system are eroded by the partial funding of private schools, ELLs and others on the fringes of society are in dire need of agency and allyship to access quality education as a basic human right (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2008). School districts, like the CSDA, must take up the challenge of recognizing and dismantling the neo-liberal narratives and pedagogical practices that perpetuate injustice, inequity, and a narrow definition of success (Winton & Pollock, 2016).

## Leadership Problem of Practice

As mentioned in the previous section, an emerging challenge for the CSDA is a delayed and ineffective pedagogical response to a significant increase in the number of ELLs in inclusive classrooms. ELLs with limited English language proficiency encounter cultural and linguistic barriers in school, and digital poverty at home (Ayre, 2020; Guo, 2021). They remain socially isolated and unable to fully engage in academic tasks (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2019; Queen Street Group, 2022). This results in an ever-increasing opportunity and empowerment gap between ELLs and their English-speaking counterparts (Shah, 2019; Shields, 2020). Current research indicates that individual student factors such as low socioeconomic status, displacement trauma, and limited formal schooling further contribute to marginalization in school (Khalifa et al., 2016; Riley, 2014). Student engagement is also hindered by a largely homogenous faculty of White, Canadian-born, English speakers who are unable to relate to their students' cultural backgrounds and ways of knowing (Everitt, 2022; Ingersoll et al., 2018; Mueller & Nickel, 2019; Ryan et al., 2022; Vangool, 2020; Villegas, 2018).

Despite having a strong desire to meet the academic needs of their students, most teachers do not have a well-developed understanding of EAL-specific pedagogy (Samson & Collins, 2012). In the absence of compulsory university coursework in multicultural education, differentiated instruction, and language acquisition, the majority of CSDA teachers are unable to proceed confidently and effectively in their classrooms (Flockton & Cunningham, 2021; Toohey & Smythe 2022). EAL consultants are frequently called upon to support school staff in meeting the academic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of ELLs. But with a limited number of consultants to serve a growing number of ELLs in a growing number of schools, it is difficult to establish the most effective and equitable way to support these students (Cummins et al., 2012; Kushkiev, 2019).

Although all ELLs require an Alberta English as a Second Language Proficiency Benchmark (New LearnAlberta, n.d.-b), the assessment is not standardized and requires more knowledge of linguistics than most teachers have. In the absence of a tool that measures listening and speaking proficiency, teachers rely solely on their powers of observation and gut instinct to complete the assessment. Because scoring is subjective and criteria misunderstood, the results are often perceived as unreliable (Chapelle & Voss, 2021; Winke, 2011). It comes as no surprise that teachers rarely use the benchmark to inform instruction.

Without a valid and unbiased language assessment tool, most teachers struggle to adapt lesson content to meet the needs of their students (Wolf et al., 2008). In the most infelicitous of circumstances, overwhelmed and overworked teachers make limited attempts to engage ELLs in the lesson, hoping instead that students learn language and content through osmosis (Bartos & Banks, 2015). It is precisely in this kind of environment that deficit mindsets flourish, and poor academic outcomes become self-fulfilling prophecies. Given the gap in collective efficacy, the

PoP under investigation is how to address the lack of pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions among educators that adversely impacts the language acquisition, engagement, and belonging of ELLs in inclusive classrooms.

In response to the PoP, I build on the ladder motif to show how STC theory translates into practice. In this conceptualization, each key tenet translates into pedagogical practices that dismantle existing biases and power structures to create more democratic classrooms. Collectively, the pedagogical rungs raise the status and voice of ELLs. If any of the practices are absent, curriculum access and academic achievement are impaired (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**

*Alignment of STC Tenets With the Proposed Pedagogical Framework*
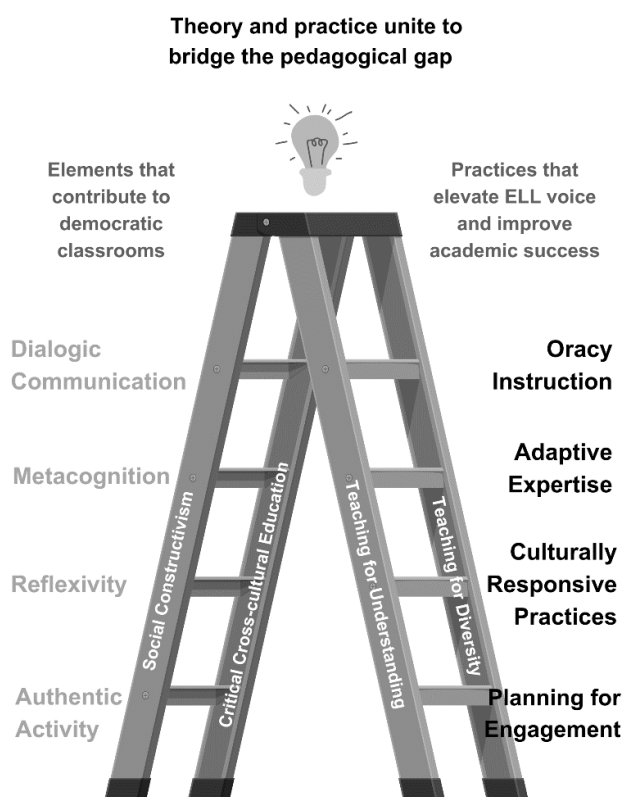


*Note.* The complete conceptual ladder shows how the key tenets are executed in the pedagogy of democratic classrooms.

Through my agency and leadership as an EAL consultant, CSDA educators are guided in transforming classrooms into more democratic spaces where students experience equitable academic opportunity through classroom engagement, culturally responsive practices, adaptive expertise, and the centering of student voice (Caldera, 2018; Morrison, 2008). The proposed conceptual framework moves educators upwards from an entrenched state of inertia towards a more expansive vantage point from which to view EAL teaching and learning in their classrooms.

## Framing the Problem of Practice

Early in the 20th century, Dewey, an American educational reformer, argued that schools are a microcosm of society and therefore should engage students in democratic conversations and community building (as cited in Rousmaniere, 2013). Over 100 years later, scholars continue to advocate for a democratic framework in academic environments that embraces the collective wellbeing of its members (Collins et al., 2019; Coulombe et al., 2020; Senge, 2012; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014). Despite being beautiful reflections of cultural and linguistic diversity, classrooms across the country mirror a pullulating social inequity that is woven into the fabric of an imperfect education system (Chmielewski, 2019; Crouch et al., 2021). To make matters worse, a divisive political climate has resulted in a sharp rise in police-reported hate crimes and a new wave of discrimination (Moreau, 2022). Now more than ever, educational institutions are called upon to take firm action against exclusionary policies and practices that perpetuate intolerance, injustice, and inequity. Using the four pedagogical foci of intentional planning for student engagement, culturally responsive practices, adaptive expertise, and oracy instruction, teachers move from passive teaching to participatory teaching (Navarro et al., 2020). These four

elements require deliberate consideration if educators are to create democratic classrooms with greater pedagogical equity.

Numerous studies link positive teacher-student relationships to democratic classrooms; places where student voice and identity are acknowledged and respected (Chang & Hall, 2022; Coristine et al., 2022; McKay & Macomber, 2021). Educators who share the same language and cultural background as the children in their class find connection immediately. The teacher-student bond is more difficult to establish, however, with students who do not speak the teacher's language and who arrive at school with a markedly different life story. How will these students learn, interact, succeed, and belong when their cultural, emotional, and academic needs cannot be communicated and understood? In these instances, teachers must leave the comfort of their identities and routinized pedagogical practices to embark on a journey of discovery into the lives of their students. In this sociotransformative constructivist scenario, they teach for both diversity *and* understanding.

Beginning at the bottom of the ladder, STC theory emerges from the teacher's understanding and use of authentic activities. Through thoughtful planning and a deep knowledge of student stories, teachers effectively adapt a Eurocentric curriculum into content informed by student background knowledge. Inclusive engagement encourages the development of worldview literacies (Valk et al., 2020); a process of "dialogical encounter with difference . . . that brings the pupil to a greater understanding of the diversity and dynamism of worldviews and of themselves as social actors therein" (Shaw, 2022, p. 3). In this kind of democratic classroom, student perspectives are valued, the Eurocentric focus of curriculum content is challenged, and educators engage participatory instructional practices that enable all ELLs to make connections with other ways of knowing (Cummins et al., 2012).

While deepening their understanding of diverse perspectives, students and teachers begin to position their identities in relation to others. This reflexivity (Finlay, 1998; Rodriguez, 2022), in combination with intersectionality, takes into account the overlapping identities between individuals and how each is advantaged (privileged) or disadvantaged (oppressed) because of systemic inequities (Crenshaw, 1989; Jones, 2010). With English as the language of instruction in the majority of CSDA classrooms, ELLs and their families are linguistically marginalized at school and in the greater community (Langman, 2017). For many ELLs, the process of finding one's voice in English results in a loss of the student's heritage language and a further disintegration of culture and identity (L.-A. Nguyen, 2022). In the STC classroom, teachers need to be acutely aware of the voices that are amplified versus those that are muted or silenced and respond to inequity with appropriate pedagogical and cultural understanding.

The third ladder rung is assigned to the development of metacognitive strategies. Despite the wealth of evidence that promotes the use and development of metacognitive strategies (Perry et al., 2019), the pedagogically-siloed classroom and frenetic pace of the school day act as barriers to mindful reflection. By offering educators time and a supportive space in which to critique the effectiveness of their teaching, teachers develop adaptive expertise and can, in turn, stimulate a similar development in their students (Kozulin, 2021; Stewart et al., 2007). Both students and teachers require time and guidance to work at a metacognitive level. Knowing that the most successful way to develop metacognition is through accountable talk, structured interactions, and problem-solving scenarios (Perry et al., 2019; Zepeda et al., 2019), the democratic nature of the sociotransformative constructivist classroom offers an effective alternative to current practices.

On the top ladder rung, dialogic communication refers to how individuals "honour the sacred nature of story—the ones we share and the ones we hear—and knowing that we [have] been entrusted with something valuable" (Brown, 2021, p. 264). Despite being the most widespread method of communication (Foley, 2019), oral traditions are generally less visible in formal educational environments. For ELLs, however, oral storytelling is a priority for the following reasons: 1) ELLs can engage in the lesson regardless of their reading or writing skills; 2) dialogic communication makes space for children's stories and honours their life experiences and cultural backgrounds; and 3) developing oracy positively impacts the development of reading and writing skills and self-confidence (Maureen et al., 2020; Vaahtoranta et al., 2019). Increased student engagement emerges from dialogic conversations where the inclusive learning community (which includes the teacher) exhibits an openness to other perspectives.

On a positive note, oral communication is included in the new Alberta English Language Arts and Literature curriculum (New LearnAlberta, n.d.-a). The acknowledgement of listening skills and oral traditions is an excellent—if not surprising—inclusion in a document critiqued for its whitewashing of content and historical perspectives. What is lacking, however, is a framework for oracy instruction and a rationale supported by current research from the field (Coultas, 2015; Dragomir & Niculescu, 2022). With competing professional obligations, and without recommended resources and clear outcomes, teachers are less likely to independently seek out pedagogical supports thus contributing to their pedagogical inertia (Bušljeta, 2013; Herbst & Herbst, 2007). The adoption of an empirically-validated oracy framework will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Although much of the scholarship on STC is credited to Rodriguez (2022), I would be remiss to ignore the parallels between STC and Indigenous research practices such as the

braiding framework proposed by Ahenakew, Indigenous scholar and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Peoples' Wellbeing. Ahenakew (2019) described braiding as a much-needed response to a contemporary context characterized by "intolerance, volatility, social polarization, fragmentation, and the rise of populism" (p. 25). In his conceptualization of a braided journey, knowledge is a human construct which is both united and divided by our experiences. This entanglement with each other is achieved through respectful engagement, courageous conversations, and what Ahenakew termed a disposition of vulnerability. Ahenakew echoed the sociotransformative constructivist need to create safe environments where students can draw from oral traditions to exchange cultural knowledge, art, and story stewardship. This is particularly important for many ELLs who are themselves colonized and displaced Indigenous peoples in their homeland. In this sense, there is a sense of unity in persecution between Canada's Indigenous people and the Indigenous ELLs colonized in their home countries around the world. Both the STC and braiding frameworks seek to elevate the collective well-being, deepen educator reflexivity, and offer alternative definitions of knowledge and success that challenge traditional power structures.

**Guiding Questions**

Having established a clear link between the STC theoretical framework and the pedagogical practice framework needed to effect transformative change, it is possible to pursue four lines of inquiry that emerge from the PoP. The leadership-focused vision for change finds purpose and direction in the guiding questions and, consequently, corrective pathways towards the proposed pedagogical framework. The four questions are listed below and are followed by a discussion of their associated pedagogical strategies:

1. How do educators leverage student background knowledge to maximize learning and engagement?

2. How can implicit and explicit bias be addressed in order to move ELLs from a marginalized position to an inclusive one?

3. How and when can CSDA educators and students engage in metacognitive processes that promote professional growth and student learning?

4. How is dialogic communication promoted and developed in the context of democratic classrooms?

**Question 1: Leveraging Student Background Knowledge Through Intentional Planning for Engagement**

There has been a plethora of research that outlines the most successful planning, instructional, and assessment practices for ELLs (Haworth, 2009). Despite being able to recite the benefits of differentiated instruction and experiential learning—a methodology in which educators engage students through experience and reflection—most CSDA teachers continue to revert to a more traditional instructional style; one where students are passive recipients of information with limited opportunity for critical thinking. In these instances, students are generally disengaged and dysregulated (Horne, 2021; Yeh & Mitric, 2019). ELLs struggle to access curriculum content and show limited motivation to learn (Balwant, 2018; Wijayanti et al., 2022). What elements are needed in a lesson plan to make curriculum content comprehensible and engaging for ELLs? This question requires teachers to reevaluate their planning and pedagogy in the hopes of creating more inclusive, engaging, and democratic practices (Brennan et al., 2022; Felix, 2021; Sonnemann & Joiner, 2022).

**Question 2: Eliminating Bias Through the Development of Reflexivity and Culturally Responsive Practices**

Although there is greater racial and linguistic diversity among teachers today than there has been in the past, most Canadian educators are White (Gordon, 2018). A quick glance at senior leadership profiles in the CSDA shows that there is progressively less diversity in the journey up the chain of command (Castro et al., 2018; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2020). The lens of most CSDA staff is one of White privilege; individuals who have never experienced discrimination and who, for the most part, have shared language and cultural experiences (McIntosh, 2020). How and when are educators given the opportunity to reflect on their positionality vis-à-vis their students and colleagues? What does teaching for diversity look and sound like? There is a need for more exposure to global perspectives that draw teachers and students out of their cultural, linguistic, and experiential spheres thereby allowing them to adopt a more globally competent and empathetic approach to classroom interactions (Programme for International Student Assessment, n.d.). Reflexivity contributes to an awareness and acceptance of multiple perspectives thereby improving psychological safety and belonging within classrooms and schools (Peña-Pincheira & De Costa, 2020).

There are many opportunities throughout the school day to interject conversations about diversity, inclusion, and different worldviews (Valk et al. 2020). Teachers practicing STC require a wide array of culturally responsive practices that can be integrated into every lesson, every day. Conversations about diversity and inclusion should be started early. Research indicates that infants as young as 6 months of age recognize racial differences and children between two and four internalize racial bias (Lingras, 2021; Winkler, 2009). Students who develop a strong sense of identity and belonging in inclusive school settings are more likely to

see themselves as academically worthy and academically capable (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). Supporting students in their learning requires the teacher to have insight into different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Students require classrooms where culturally responsive practices abound; a place where divergent thinking and learning can be demonstrated without fear of criticism, humiliation, or rejection. Just as students are expected to integrate new learning into existing schema, so too are teachers in a sociotransformative constructivist classroom.

**Question 3: Dedicated PL Opportunities to Engage Metacognitive Processes That Promote Adaptive Expertise**

Educators, like students, require engagement in metacognitive practices that support critical reflection (Goh, 2014). With student learning as the primary purpose of education, teachers and leaders must be able to gauge the effectiveness of their pedagogical practices. The inclusion of metacognition as a required disposition prompts teachers-as-students to revisit pedagogical practices that may have become routinized (Hiver et al., 2021). The metacognitive practitioner must ask the question, "Does my pedagogy contribute to student learning, or does it meet my need for control and predictability?" Metacognition makes individuals accountable for their actions and cultivates the type of responsiveness needed to make rapid instructional decisions for diverse learners in an inclusive classroom (Griffith et al., 2016; Le Fevre et al., 2020). This ability to critically assess and adjust one's practice is referred to as adaptive expertise.

**Question 4: Promoting Dialogic Communication Through Explicit Oracy Instruction**

To gain confidence and the ability to communicate, students must first be provided with explicit and scaffolded language instruction along with multiple opportunities in which to speak

and be heard. Oracy, referred to by some as the literacy of the spoken word (DeBotton, 2016), is paired with dialogic conversation on the conceptual ladder. There has been a resurgence in academic research in recent years that demonstrates a need for oracy skills at all levels of education (Qiu et al., 2021). Based largely in the United Kingdom, several organizations including The Oracy Network, Voice 21, and Oxford Education (2021) have contributed to the Speak for Change Inquiry to raise the status and priority of oracy and communication as a fundamental human right (McLeod, 2018; Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2021). Key findings point to a need for intentionally planned oracy education in curriculum and practice (see Appendix C for the proposed oracy framework). This further strengthens the argument for planned student engagement. The benefits of oracy education are observable in academic achievement, the amplification of student voice, and improvements in personal and societal outcomes (Ewers, 2021; B. Hill, 2021; Voice 21, 2019). A teacher who explicitly models and teaches active listening and oracy skills supports the development of a mindful communicative presence in self and in others (Becker, 2016; McNaughton et al., 2007).

## Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

Successful leadership is grounded in a firm understanding of organizational structure and its internal systems and relationships. Organizational metaphors can be used as tools to better understand the complexity of the interactions between operational layers, communication pathways, and collaborative relationships (Boleman & Deal, 2017). Drawing from the interconnectedness in STC theory and Ahenakew's (2019) braiding imagery, the metaphor used in this dissertation is the organization-as-a-system defined by its context, structure, purpose, and synergistic relationships. Based on Senge's (2006) model of a learning organization, Bui and Baruch (2010) describe systems thinking as the ability to see things "in interconnected

relationships within the whole system and the link with outside organizations" (p. 220). This metaphorical conceptualization influences how the leadership-focused vision for change unfolds vis-à-vis the PoP.

After conducting the preliminary gap analysis, several key areas emerge that require the change leader's attention:

- a lack of EAL-specific pedagogical knowledge and skills;

- a low instructional and fiscal priority given to ELLs at the district level;

- the absence of data that provides information about ELL language proficiency;

- the absence of transformative andragogical learning opportunities;

- a disconnect between senior leadership priorities and school-based administrator concerns;

- the primacy of teacher voice, bias, and a single, dominant narrative;

- limited opportunities for in-school collaboration; and

- a disconnect in teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their pedagogical practices versus what is observed, measured, and reported.

This analysis provides further justification for change at all levels of the CSDA and the urgent need for an appropriately robust leadership response. Clearly, successful organizational change is not something that can be accomplished through the efforts of one person. Although a more formal examination of the leadership approach to change is completed at the beginning of the next chapter, it is clear that the future vision— situated in a context of systemness— requires an interconnected and collaborative approach. In the words of Wheatley (2021), "Experiences of true collaboration are always identical, no matter your age or cultural background. We feel connected, energized, empowered, inspired, creative, and purposeful" (p. 1).

In preparation for a significant organizational shift in practice it is important to ensure that the change leader's priorities are cohesive with the short-term and long-term goals of the organization. From a hierarchical perspective, change in the CSDA is needed at the macro level (the CSDA organization), the meso level (the school), the micro level (teachers and leaders), and the submicro level (attitudes and beliefs). At the macro level, the CSDA's plan for continuous growth finds cohesion with the priority areas of: 1) student success, 2) an alignment with the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018b, 2020) and *Leadership Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018a), 3) engagement in PL that enhances expertise and competency, and 4) the implementation of an equity, diversity, and inclusion strategic plan. Leadership goals and actions take into consideration established accountability measures, documentation, data collection, and evaluation across the various levels of the CSDA organization.

Focusing next on the meso level, work should be undertaken in schools with high ELL populations. Administrators who lead a diverse school community with many ELLs are more likely to value the potential knowledge and skills that the OIP is promising. Schools are eager to pilot new projects when they are relevant, transformative, and when there is good support in both human and financial resources (Baker et al., 2016; Patton et al., 2015). Principals expect a plan that includes a detailed timeline, costs the school might incur, and their role in keeping staff on track and accountable. As midmanagement, they are instrumental in communicating information to senior leadership and the greater school community. Relevance, motivation and readiness to engage in the change project are important considerations in planning and development.

At the micro level are teachers, students and, to a lesser extent, families. Teachers and students are more vigorously engaged in the change process. Teachers enact the proposed pedagogical shifts in their classrooms which, in turn, generate higher quality and more agentic

responses from students (Kivunja, 2014; Levesque-Bristol et al., 2019). Through an intense exploration of the four named areas of focus—planning for engagement, adaptive expertise, culturally responsive practices, and oracy instruction—teachers and students walk hand-in-hand towards a more equitable and democratic classroom experience. By cultivating reciprocal knowledge sharing between teachers and students, each group becomes increasingly agentic in the language of teaching, the language of learning, and the language of human possibility (Sokol et al., 2015). This empowerment drives the transformative changes sought in this OIP.

On a deeper submicro level, teachers and administrators have the opportunity to examine their personal beliefs and positioning along the equity continuum (Centre for Urban Schooling, 2011; Cunliffe, 2009). Providing concrete examples of classroom inequity as seen through the eyes of students is a powerful commentary on the dire need for a shift in practice and mindset. It is necessary to reiterate the importance of dialogic communication and intercultural communicative competence that is woven throughout this OIP. Learning to teach for diversity requires teachers to listen for equity in their classrooms and to grow a listening culture in schools and staffrooms (Safir, 2017; Taylor, 2007). In this way, educators move forward with purpose and are empowered as change agents in learning environments and in society (Fullan, 1993; Mezirow, 2003; Van der Heijden et al., 2015).

## Chapter Summary

With the change leader's positionality established and the SWOT analysis complete, the CSDA's PoP—the lack of educator skills and knowledge in meeting the academic and cultural needs of ELLs—is on a pathway to conciliation. The conceptual framework provides a new and exciting vision for the CSDA organization; a place where ELLs find their rightful place and space in an equitable academic environment. Key tenets of the STC paradigm are aligned with

the pedagogical practices of strategic planning for student engagement, cultural responsiveness, adaptive expertise, and oracy instruction. The guiding questions propel the leadership-focused vision for change forward. Figure 3 offers the reader a visual representation of the gap in pedagogy and mindset between the current state and the future vision.

**Figure 3**

*Bridging the Gap Between Present and Future States*

Present practices and observations:

- Teaching the content
- Inadequate planning
- Serendipitous student engagement
- Passive teaching
- A single, dominant narrative
- Autopilot teaching routines
- The primacy of teacher voice

Oppressive and biased pedagogy hinders ELL access to curriculum content and academic opportunity.

Future practices and observations:

- Teaching the student
- Strategic, intentional planning
- Active student engagement and agency
- Participatory teaching
- The expression of diverse worldviews
- Adaptive teacher expertise
- The elevation of student voice and agency

Transformative educator pedagogy results in full academic engagement for ELLs and more promising life outcomes.

*Note.* The cultivation of democratic classrooms requires a departure from the status quo towards a more transformative and equitable pedagogy.

**Chapter 2: Planning and Development**

With Chapter 1 of the OIP focused on identifying and contextualizing the PoP, Chapter 2 further expounds on why change is needed in the CSDA organization. Beginning with the establishment of a leadership approach to change, chapter content explores a framework for leading change, the CSDA's readiness for change, as well as potential strategies and solutions to address the PoP. Ethical leadership, decolonizing measures, and equity actions feature prominently at every point throughout the planning, development, and implementation phases of the change plan.

**Leadership Approach to Change**

"Leadership exists when people are no longer victims of circumstances but participate in creating new circumstances" (Jaworski, 2011, p. 3)

With a sociotransformative constructivist view of teaching and learning, and a PoP focused on the development of equitable pedagogical practices that advance ELL language acquisition and academic achievement, a blended leadership approach to change is needed. Just as STC draws from both social constructivism and critical cross-cultural education theory, a leadership approach that combines both collaborative leadership theory and transformative leadership theory is best suited for leading change in the CSDA. It is through a blended change leadership approach that the necessary shifts in dispositions and pedagogy will take place. The following discussion begins with an overview of the key tenets of each leadership theory followed by their application within the context of the organization. With equity at the core of the OIP, these selected leadership approaches contribute positively to that end.

**Collaborative Leadership**

In response to an increasingly complex and rapidly changing society (Hallinger & Heck, 2010), DeWitt (2017) offered a model of leadership which combines the strengths of both instructional and transformational leadership theories. He drew inspiration from Hattie's (2008) visible learning research which offered a quantitative account of the top influences on student learning. In DeWitt's collaborative leadership framework, emphasis is placed on stakeholder engagement in the co-construction of goals, the shared delivery of PL, the importance of reflection, and the privileging of student voice. In this way, leadership assumes a more horizontal quality as it belongs to the group, not to the individual. It is precisely this aspect of shared agency and the flattening of the vertical power structure that pushes collaborative leadership beyond what other shared leadership theories, like distributed leadership, can offer (Youngs, 2017).

Collaborative leadership theory embodies many of the same qualities as the sociotransformative constructivist classroom. The pairing of STC theory and collaborative leadership theory reinforces the democratic principles of learning engagement whether it be students in the classroom or teachers gathering in communities of practice (Liu et al., 2021). Students and teachers bring their own areas of strength to the table. They are given opportunities to lead because of their expertise and insight into a topic. Capitalizing on diverse representations of knowledge through collaborator engagement improves collective efficacy and offers greater opportunities for learning and understanding (Donohoo et al., 2018). In this way, new definitions of leadership emerge that disrupt traditional power structures and the corresponding valuing of some knowledge sources over others (Goddard et al., 2017; Moolenaar et al., 2012). Like the elements of the STC classroom, collaborative leadership requires dialogic conversation and

frequent opportunities to engage in metacognitive thinking to assess one's success with the application of new learning.

What is noticeably absent from DeWitt's (2017) and other collaborative leadership models, however, is a commitment to social justice and equity work in education. In his attempt to promote the equalization of power through shared leadership, DeWitt failed to acknowledge broader social inequities that play out on a smaller scale in schools and classrooms. In his list of 10 critical issues plaguing education (DeWitt, 2017, p. 9), there is no mention of marginalized students, language and cultural barriers, educator bias, Eurocentric curriculum, the privileging of some voices over others, or systemic structures that perpetuate educational inequity. He further revealed his colour blindness by asserting that "all stakeholders are equal" (DeWitt, 2017, p. 161). DeWitt has not acknowledged the many ways that implicit and explicit biases operate in school settings. The absence of reflexivity in collaborative leadership theory can, however, be resolved by pairing it with a critically grounded leadership theory.

**Transformative Leadership**

With democratic classrooms as the solution for those seeking to have their voices heard, collaborative leadership is paired with a more equity-focused leadership such as that proposed by Shields. Shields's (2020) transformative leadership theory "begins with questions of justice and democracy" (p. 3). A transformative leader acknowledges power differentials and social structures that privilege some individuals over others. Shields's vision of transformative leadership has two main goals: (a) improved learner achievement in educational contexts, and (b) the promise of an improved coexistence with others in the context of a democratic society. Shields (2020) and her predecessor, Glenn (2007), promote democratic student engagement in the co-construction of knowledge through dialogue and deep listening. Transformative

leadership theory offers a tight connection with each rung of the teaching practices ladder in

Figure 2 and provides balance on the teaching for diversity arm of the STC paradigm. A trifecta

of principles results from the combination of collaborative leadership, transformative leadership,

and STC theory. Figure 4 supports the reader's understanding of this connectedness.

**Figure 4**

*Alignment of Collaborative and Transformative Leadership Paradigms With STC*



COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

STC THEORY

Social constructivism

Teaching for understanding

Increased performance through shared voice

Professional learning; family engagement

Inspiring assessment-capable learning

Collective teacher efficacy; risk-taking

Instructional leadership

Student-centered leadership

Inclusive, supportive school environment

Dialogic conversation

Metacognition

Reflexivity

Authentic activity

Education is key for social justice

Safe, inclusive, trusting, respectful environments

Critical cross-cultural education

Teaching for diversity

Addresses opportunity gap

Listening to understand; parent involvement

Changing mindsets; understanding bias

Development of the reflexive practitioner

Student engagement with culturally responsive pedagogy

Focus on student equity, inclusion, social justice

Building organizational trust

*Note.* The middle section unites both leadership paradigms in STC theory with a focus on social

justice, inclusion, and equity.

A combined collaborative-transformative leadership approach is congruent with the

agency of an EAL consultant in the CSDA. Consultants as life-long learners and instructional

leaders are required to remain abreast of current pedagogical research and integrate theory into

practice. The EAL consultant role includes providing leadership to schools in the delivery of programs and services mandated by Alberta Education that focus on teaching and learning. These supports vary depending on each school's co-constructed growth plan and the expertise of school staff. The collaborative leadership focus on teaching and learning lends itself to the data-driven adoption of pedagogical practices that promote academic achievement for ELLs. By interjecting transformative leadership practices that focus on equity and social justice, EAL consultants further the CSDA's mandate of creating more inclusive and socially just educational environments for all students. In addition to having a focus on collective teacher efficacy, EAL consultants integrate equity work through the development of reflexive practitioners who can lean into the unsettling discomfort of change in an effort to make continuous improvement the norm (Cunliffe, 2004; Deszca et al., 2020).

To address the discomfort of change, Fullan (2007) reminded educators of the implementation dip that plagues all change process. This drop in performance as individuals try to integrate new skills into practice is not a sign of failure, but rather an opportunity for leaders to redistribute supports, reiterate the shared vision and mission, and provide motivation to persevere (Fullan, 2008). Jäppinen (2017) and Shields (2020) also pointed out that tension and conflict occur during the change process as followers struggle to find a new way to move through the educational world. In these situations, the collaborative-transformative leader does not act alone. Instead, the leader invites collaboration in shared sense-making activities. Cultivating trusting relationships with staff members is critical in shepherding them outside of their pedagogical comfort zone (Adams, 2020; Gregory, 2017). Everyone is invited to lead and find common ground for the benefit of students. Collective action is needed to create caring, high-performing, and equitable schools (Hargreaves, 2019).

**Framework for Leading the Change Process**

Adopting a framework for change can be a daunting process given the number of purportedly successful and data-validated models available. The collaborative-transformative leader must be able to work within a change model that helps to reliably analyze, diagnose, and propel change forward within the context of the organization (DeWitt, 2017; Park, 2018; Shields, 2020). The judicious selection of a change framework brings leadership empowerment to the planning and development process. Recalling the brief discussion in Chapter 1 of organizations-as-systems, the selected change framework must correspond with the CSDA's internal communication structures, the network of team member relationships, and the hierarchy of decision-making power within and between various levels. Additionally, an effective change framework for the CSDA should be aligned with the organization's mission and vision and include an integrated feedback mechanism to ensure frequent opportunities to measure success. Most importantly, the chosen framework must be coherent with the change leader's agency and the depth of change sought.

In their 1987 publication, Bartunek and Moch asserted that successful change plans can be categorized into first-order, second-order, or third-order changes. At the most basic level, first order (tuning) changes build on existing, commonly held understandings (schemata) and practices. Second-order (adapting) changes look to replace existing schemata with new ones in response to small dips in performance. Third-order change reorients people across the organization in the planned implementation of new standards derived from a new organizational reality. With an understanding of change order and the theoretical and pedagogical priorities put forth in Figures 1 and 2, this OIP is seeking to make first-, second-, and third-order changes in the following areas:

- First-order change as the expansion of student engagement and dedicated instructional time for metacognitive development—practices that are valued and employed to various degrees in classrooms throughout the school district.

- Second-order change as the incorporation of an oracy framework to stimulate dialogic communication; the implementation is in response to a gap in teaching practices and the absence of a framework for oracy instruction.

- Third-order change as the development of educator reflexivity and the cocreation of democratic classrooms; a critical response to the changing demographic reality of CSDA classrooms and unconscious teacher complicity in perpetuating oppressive and inequitable pedagogical practices.

Considering the critical theoretical grounding of the STC worldview, the complexity and changeability of organizational systems, the blending of leadership theories, and the order of change required, Kuenkel's (n.d.) dialogic change model (DCM) is best-suited to effect these three orders of change in the CSDA.

The DCM (see Figure 5) is founded on the critically-oriented scholarship of Buber, Freire, Gadamer, Habermas, and Bakhtin (Anderson et al., 2004). Drawing from organizational change theory and systems theory, the DCM provides collaborative-transformative leaders with a carefully structured and researched process that supports dialogue and cooperation in the change planning and implementation process (Kuenkel et al., 2020). The DCM is divided into four phases: exploring and engaging, building and formalizing, implementing and evaluating, and sustaining and expanding impact. It includes critical and transformative leadership practices that contribute to equity outcomes (Kuenkel et al., 2020). I selected the DCM because of the

specificity of its structure, its applicability to educational contexts, and its cohesion with the

theoretical underpinnings of this OIP.

**Figure 5**

*Phases of the Dialogic Change Model*
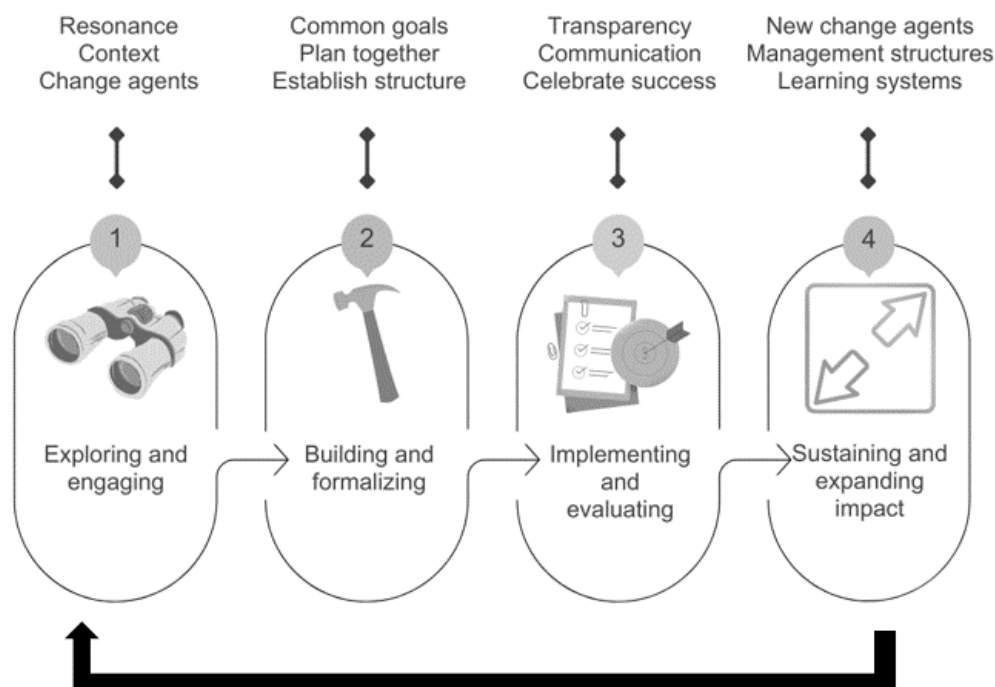


*Note.* Adapted from *The Dialogic Change Model*, by Collective Leadership Institute, n.d.

(https://www.collectiveleadership.de/blog/article/the-dialogic-change-model/).

The dialogic practices of voice, listen, respect, and suspend (Garrett, 2012; Kuenkel, n.d.)

are tightly aligned with the key features of STC and the relational and reciprocal nature of

Indigenous worldviews. The DCM offers the leader a starting point with followers "that balances

the ancient human knowledge of dialogue and collective intelligence with results-oriented

process design and communication architecture" (Collective Leadership Institute, n.d., para. 2).

Although the elements of dialogic communication are applied herein to a professional context,

the flexibility and simplicity of voice-listen-respect-suspend can be easily used with students at

all levels of learning (Isaacs, 2018). As educators engage in their own learning processes, they develop the capacity to lead others similarly.

Beginning with the exploring and engaging phase, the leader is focused on creating resonance for change, helping collaborators to understand the context of change, and building trust among group members. Educators engage in reflection to identify and acknowledge their positionality within the school context. In the second phase, that of building and formalizing, collaborators formalize their commitment to the change process through positive and psychologically safe contributions to role development, project/activity planning, and timelines. Educators affirm their agency by voicing a personal commitment to equity. Next, the implementing and evaluating phase sees the implementation of planned activities and coaching feedback to check for learning and goal attainment as established in Phase 2. Educators commit to cultivating systems-thinker character traits (curiosity, respect, compassion, awareness, vision, courgage, patience, flexibility) and look for ways to decenter Whiteness in persepctive and pedagogy. Finally, the sustaining and expanding impact phase is intended to identify successes or determine if further work is needed. A review may suggest the inclusion of additional collaborators and processes to enact deeper school transformation. This phase is characterized by innovation, adjustment, creativity, and shared celebrations of success. The leader provides on-going opportunities for staff to engage in metacognitive practices that help them to acquire the necessary knowledge for student engagement and the dismantling of existing power structures through culturally responsive practices.

## Organizational Change Readiness

Prior to launching into a major shift in practice, it is critical to gauge participant readiness. High readiness is positively correlated to the success and sustainability of the desired

change (Lynch et al., 2019; Weiner, 2009). A variety of tools are available to change leaders to evaluate organizational readiness. This OIP incorporates Judge and Douglas's (2009) organizational change capacity categories due to their suitability to educational contexts and their explicit incorporation of systems thinking. Judge and Douglas's empirical research produced a 32-item survey divided among eight dimensions of organizational change capacity. The high coefficient values of the eight dimensions are most closely linked to transformative change (Yasir et al, 2016). These dimensions are: (a) trustworthy leadership, (b) trusting followers, (c) capable champions, (d) involved midmanagement, (e) innovative culture, (f) accountable culture, (g) effective communication, and (h) systems thinking. These, in turn, can be grouped into three categories: human capabilities (dimensions 1 through 4), informal organizational culture (dimensions 5 and 6), and formal organizational systems/processes (dimensions 7 and 8). Although an examination of all 32 items of the organizational change capacity scale is not feasible in the scope of this OIP, the broader eight dimensions are applied to the PoP to determine the CSDA's change readiness.

**Trustworthy Leadership and Trusting Followers**

Building individual and organizational trust takes significant time and actionable effort. The loss of trust, however, can deal a swift and crushing blow to organizational performance, reputation, and employee wellbeing (Dworkin & Tobe, 2014). Trust is required within and between all levels of an organization (Burke et al., 2007). The CSDA, for its part, articulates the importance of fostering trusting and effective relationships in the descriptors used to identify and evaluate successful leadership. To further support the development of this foundational leadership trait, new leaders are paired with more experienced ones who can provide guidance and insight into challenging leader-follower relationships. From an organizational improvement

perspective, the success of change leaders is dependent on their relational strengths, their style of leadership (in this case, collaborative-transformative leadership), their lived experience, and their trustworthiness in word and action (Branson & Marra, 2019).

A trustworthy CSDA consultant engages in collaborative transformation by exhibiting moral courage in the face of resistance. Resistance from educators is an expected response whenever a change in pedagogical practice is implemented (Hargreaves, 2005). Teacher characteristics such as years of teaching, personality-type, and past experiences can make some individuals more resistant to change than others (Snyder, 2017). A skillful leader can identify individual personality traits within change recipients that may overtly or covertly sabotage change efforts. Rather than believe that followers are resistant towards a perspective, a collaborative-transformative leader acknowledges the team's strong psychological ownership and personal commitment to the school community (Pickford et al., 2016; Snyder, 2017). In this notably sociotransformative constructivist view of learning, follower questions and challenges are acknowledged "as a sense-making process through which change agents and recipients can learn, grow, and improve" (Snyder, 2017, p. 3). In this way, followers become more trusting of both the leader and the change process.

**Capable Champions and Involved Midmanagement**

Alberta's Top Employers is an annual competition, started in 2006, that recognizes the top 75 organizations in which to work in the province. The CSDA has repeatedly earned a top spot due to its cross-country hiring practices, the long-term service of employees, its excellent employee health benefits, flexible work options, the availability of in-house training, and employee charitable involvement (Canada's Top 100 Employers, 2023). From a capable champions perspective, the CSDA is perfectly positioned to engage staff in longer-term change

initiatives due to the dedication of staff to the organization and the no-cost PL opportunities that are made available to all employee groups. From my perspective as a long-term employee and EAL consultant, there is tremendous human potential and dedication in the CSDA organization.

Middle managers in the CSDA context are the site-based administrative teams and district-level consultants. The work of an EAL consultant spans the information gap between individual school sites and senior district leadership. CSDA administrators recognize the growing need for EAL pedagogy in their schools and make frequent requests for on-going EAL consultant support. The frequency and nature of school-specific and district-wide delivery of PL from EAL consultants is formally documented in the provincial *Annual Education Results Report* (see for example Government of Alberta, n.d.). The quantitative and qualitative data in this report provides evidence of the need for targeted ELL supports.

## Innovative Culture and Accountable Culture

Throughout the years, the CSDA has emerged as a leader in educational practices and program design. Its history and standing among provincial school districts make the CSDA a prime environment for innovation. Organizations with innovative cultures create trust-based environments that encourage employees to share ideas, develop new collaborative relationships, challenge the status quo to improve performance, and possess a leadership structure characterized by an appropriate balance of autonomy and control (Rodrigues & Veloso, 2013; M. Yu et al., 2018). This balance requires the manager to relinquish some control so that employees can experience both direction and autonomy (Ishak, 2017; Morgan, 2006; Stevenson et al., 2015). This is perhaps the primary area of concern impacting the CSDA's change readiness.

The CSDA has thousands of full-time and part-time employees which means there are numerous administrators, managers, team leads, and department heads. Each of these individuals

assumes a position on the control continuum with excessive supervision (micromanaging) on one end, and laissez-faire leadership on the other. Because of the wide-ranging leadership styles, all change planning needs to be flexible and accommodating of differing control positionalities and personalities. Before any change implementation process begins, the change leader must tailor the sales pitch to individual school teams and adjust the time dedicated to the co-construction of goals and procedures accordingly. More about knowledge mobilization will be discussed in Chapter 3.

As far as accountability measures are concerned, schools are responsible for submitting reports of student demographics (number of ELLs and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit), reading levels, Alberta ESL Proficiency Benchmarks, and how ELL funding is used to support students. The interpretation of ELL achievement data and the use of earmarked funding remain points of contention. There is insufficient knowledge at the senior leadership level about language acquisition and literacy development. This knowledge gap results in the misdiagnosis of ELLs as struggling learners instead of English learners and they are targeted for interventions that may not be appropriate given their level of English proficiency. As far as funding is concerned, ELL allocations are generally absorbed into the school budget without specific consideration of how ELLs in the school will be supported. These two areas of ELL achievement reporting and funding accountability should be flagged as potential barriers to organizational change readiness.

**Effective Communication and Systems Thinking (Systemness)**

The CSDA, like all organizations, requires on-going work around effective communication to ensure a smooth operation and positive work culture. Effective communication is central to the accurate and timely disbursement of information vertically and horizontally within the CSDA as well as to the families and community members external to the

organization. Messaging is sometimes contradictory to the reality experienced by staff which undermines the credibility of top-level leadership. The collaborative-transformative change leader must master and model respectful, reliable, and inclusive communication at all levels to close the trust gap and create a psychologically safe climate where critical thinking and risk-taking thrive (Lewis, 2011; Vokić et al., 2021). In keeping with the dialogic principles of the DCM, leaders elevate voice, listening, respect, and the suspension of judgment. Using Kuenkel's (n.d.) DCM to lead the change process naturally lends itself to effective communication strategies and processes. To quote Kotter (1996), "Without credible communication, and a lot of it, employee hearts and minds are never captured" (p. 4).

The final dimension of an organization's change readiness is centered in system thinking or systemness (Fullan, 2021). Norqvist and Ärlestig (2021) offered a reminder that student academic success depends on many people within the school and school district. Teachers are most influential in the classroom (Leithwood et al., 2019) and they look to administrators for support. Administrators, in turn, look to educational consultants for instructional leadership. Leaders at all levels need to be attuned to the changes that manifest both internally and externally to the CSDA organization.

Currently, the greatest challenge for the CSDA organization is a tendency for senior leadership to be out of touch with the day-to-day operations of schools. This lack of insight into the priorities of school communities often leaves students and educators without the right supports. Furthermore, decisions that have a profound impact on school-based staff are often made without consultation with those directly impacted. With "initiativitis"—the cause of workload pressures "in a culture of compliance" (Katz et al., 2018, p. 13)—and the generation of new projects as the habitual response to weak student performance, a more cohesive and system-

wide response to the PoP is needed. As a result of these observations, organizational readiness from a leadership perspective must include a discussion of change drivers that contribute to organizational coherence; "a shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work in the minds and actions individually and especially collectively" (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, pp. 1–2).

**The Human Paradigm for Organizational Coherence**

In his 2021 publication, Fullan positioned the right drivers (the human paradigm) against the wrong drivers (the bloodless paradigm) to compare and contrast what is needed to achieve organizational success (see Appendix D). For this OIP, the human paradigm change drivers of well-being and learning, social intelligence, equality investments, and systemness are discussed in relation to each of the four components of the leadership-focused vision for change: (a) planning for student engagement, (b) the development of educator reflexivity, (c) the development of adaptive expertise, and (d) the incorporation of an oracy framework.

*Well-Being and Learning*

Based on the neuroscience and psychology of learning, Fullan (2021) advanced his argument that learning cannot occur in the absence of wellbeing. In his considered opinion, "wellbeing *is* learning" (Fullan, 2021, p. 14). From the perspective of ELLs, well-being in CSDA classrooms is reliant on the teacher's ability to engage students in learning that is culturally responsive, builds on student life experiences, and is linguistically appropriate. In this way, it is the teacher who makes pedagogical, environmental, and culturally responsive accommodations instead of placing responsibility on the student to fit in (Felton et al., 2013). This prioritization of well-being contributes to the inclusive engagement of all students and centres learning in a culture built on empathy, student agency, and asset-based mindsets (Mehta & Datnow, 2020).

Trust and psychological safety must permeate all interactions and spaces to work through

complex issues like the changes proposed in this OIP (Triplett & Loh, 2016). Basic needs like

food, personal safety, love, and belonging, must be met before learning can occur (Lubelfeld et

al., 2021).

### *Social Intelligence*

Brown (2012), renowned professor, author, TED Talk speaker, and podcast host has

made a name for herself through her research on human vulnerability and belonging. She has

emphasized in her messaging that people are hardwired to connect with others; "it's what gives

purpose and meaning to life, and without it, there is suffering" (p. 5). Fullan (2021) concurred

with Brown by stating that we work against this innate desire for connection when the focus is

on the individual instead of the collective. As stated in Chapter 1, STC's reflexivity and

Ahenakew's (2019) braiding paradigm echo this critical need to develop social intelligence,

connectivity, collaboration, and systems thinking if we are to propel change forward and effect

systemic change. The collaborative leader's social intelligence positively impacts teacher

creativity and their ability to respond to change in a dynamic educational environment (Katou et

al., 2021; Tai & Kareem, 2018). Frequent opportunities for social interaction and dialogic

conversation propel deep learning and deep change forward (Fullan, 2021; Luckin, 2018).

### *Equality Investments*

Of all change drivers in the human paradigm, equality investment is the most contentious.

Fullan's (2021) stance of "deficits are essential under certain circumstances" (p. 30) is unrealistic

in the context of provincial funding formulas (Alberta Education, 2022). The CSDA, like every

school district, is chronically underfunded (Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario, 2015;

Parker et al., 2020). Knowing this, school districts must find innovative ways to maximize the

impact of budgets. Groups with high social intelligence and a strong sense of wellbeing find it easier to identify marginalized groups, such as ELLs, and make more equitable financial decisions. Funding earmarked for ELLs should drive the CSDA's commitment to pedagogical equity through policy, priorities, and fiscal accountability. Although the equality investment driver centers the conversation in social justice, it is unclear why Fullan (2021) chose the term *equality* over *equity* as the latter offers a better fit with financial redistribution. Regardless, the point to be made is that increased financial supports for those who need it most generate greater return to society in the long term (Herman, 2013).

### *Systemness*

The fourth driver for successful reform in the CSDA is systemness. The depth of systemness within an organization is characterized by the following key attributes: goal orientation, functionality, communication, feedback, intelligence, and resilience (Dori et al., 2020; Fullan, 2021). If there is systemness, the responsibility for change happens at, and between, all levels of the organization— the individual (submicro), the classroom (micro), the school (meso), and the district (macro). Systemness is prioritized in every aspect of the organizational improvement plan from the leadership approach to change, the selected change model (DCM), the change readiness criteria, the human paradigm change drivers, as well as the knowledge mobilization plan and evaluation processes outlined in Chapter 3. Appendix E embeds the leadership-focused vision for change within the human paradigm change drivers. It is through this complex combination of connected autonomy that the following solutions for the PoP have been crafted. A collaborative-transformative leadership approach to change is woven throughout.

**Professional Learning Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice**

With the discussion of leadership theories, change readiness, and change drivers complete, a selection of potential solutions is presented to address the gap in teacher efficacy, knowledge, and skill that negatively impact the language acquisition, engagement, and success of ELLs in inclusive classrooms. The primary responsibility of an EAL consultant in the CSDA is to provide PL to individuals and schools. As a result, each of the proposed solutions explores a different model of PL. Drawing from Kennedy's (2014) categories for continuous professional development, each solution presents a format for PL that seeks to build capacity in educators and have enduring impact on classroom practice and student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Karas & Faez, 2021). This enduring impact, or learning transfer, is the primary objective of teaching regardless of learner age or the level of education (Foley et al., 2013; Furman & Sibthorp, 2013; Hung, 2013).

With a firm grasp of the collaborative-transformative leadership approach to change and a deepening sense of the CSDA's change readiness, the following section presents three potential solutions to address the PoP. The three scenarios presented herein are in keeping with the agency of an EAL consultant in a publicly funded school district. These proposed models of PL are evaluated relative to Fullan's (2021) scholarship in educational reform, his conceptualization of systemness, and his collaborative professional engagements with other educational leaders, such as DeWitt (2017), whose collaborative leadership model is used extensively in this OIP. The solutions differ in their purpose, delivery, level of collaboration, consultant engagement, and professional autonomy and agency. The PL model options are as follows: (1) the coaching model, (2) the SOIP-cascade model (Echevarria et al., 2016), and (3) the adaptive expertise model (AEM; Le Fevre et al., 2020). Each solution is assessed for its alignment with the human

paradigm change drivers. The eight criteria used in the selection process are: (a) the PL contributes to student wellbeing and learning, (b) the PL develops social intelligence and the potential for collaborative inquiry, (c) the PL supports equity investments and a commitment to serve ELLs, (d) the PL contributes to systemness and coherence, (e) the PL design is transformative in content, pedagogy, attitude, and agency, (f) the PL potential to develop cultural reflexivity, (g) the potential to observe PL impact on practice, and (h) the potential for collaborative-transformative leadership. Appendix F summarizes the solution adjudication process based on a low, moderate, or high degree of criteria correlation.

**Solution 1: The Coaching Model**

The coaching model of PL goes beyond information dissemination, or what Kennedy (2014) calls "transmission". It also seeks to bring about shifts in practice. Solution 1 attempts to engage individual CSDA teachers in coaching relationships with the EAL consultant. In a review of the literature on teacher collaboration, Vangrieken et al. (2015) explicated that coaching works best when there is depth and focus to conversations about pedagogical practices. These can be crafted by the EAL consultant and used in debriefing conversations after a coaching session. Information discussed between teachers and the EAL consultant is shared with administrators for future planning.

Administrators are generally supportive of individual coaching time as it does not interfere with staff meeting agendas or come at an additional cost to the school. A schedule for classroom observation and individualized coaching can be crafted collaboratively between the EAL consultant and administrators. Rather than viewing coaching sessions as additional work and responsibility, participants are encouraged to share resources and plan collaboratively with critical friends with the goal of replacing ineffective or missing strategies with more efficient and

impactful options (Bryant et al., 2017; Ronfeldt et al., 2015). These pedagogical shifts improve teaching quality without sacrificing personal time, autonomy of practice, or teacher creativity (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).

Initially, there may be a pervading distrust of administrator-selected individual consultation and coaching. Coaching could be seen as covert professional evaluation (Garver, 2020; Skedsmo & Huber, 2018) or a surreptitious questioning of professional competence. The consultant-as-change-leader may be perceived as stepping into the school community as the Hollywood teacher-hero sent to save low-achieving students from the those who are failing them (Bulman, 2002; Dalton, 2006). As a result of this insight, the EAL consultant must assume a compassionate position and develop a deep knowledge of student demographics and staff profiles. Because the EAL consultant has one-on-one and face-to-face contact with staff members, initial teacher discomfort can be more easily overcome. The combination of familiarity and psychological safety generates more openness to classroom visits and mentorship. This allows for quicker school progress and immediate feedback for the teacher. The potential for EAL consultant support increases as relationships and trust grow.

The challenge that accompanies school engagement in a PL initiative such as coaching is that some of the school communities and teachers who would benefit most are not among those who express interest in participating. Additionally, annual shifts in administrative placements raise the possibility that a newly appointed principal at the school may not identify with the same priorities thereby impacting the continuation of coaching initiatives. Finally, the number of participating staff members would have to be capped as in-class coaching is restricted by consultant availability and school hours of operation.

**Solution 2: The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol–Cascade Model**

The sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) is a framework that supports teachers in planning and delivering effective instruction for ELLs. The SIOP model was developed during a 7-year research project (1996–2003) for the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence to make curriculum content more comprehensible for ELLs and to develop language proficiency (Echevarria et al., 2016). This is the most extensively researched and promoted EAL-specific framework the educational market has to offer. The framework consists of eight components: lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, review, and assessment.

SIOP-trained EAL consultants plan and deliver the PL. To participate in the PL opportunity, schools apply to send teachers to the multi-day workshop and follow-up sessions. Principals identify staff members who they believe require improvement or invite interested teachers to put their names forward. Candidates are selected based on the number of ELLs in the school, prior school participation, student achievement results, individual years of teaching experience, and an expressed administrative commitment to use the trainee to disseminate SIOP strategies at the school site. This one-to-many dissemination is what Kennedy (2014) terms a transmissive-cascade model of PL.

This cascade model is used regularly in the CSDA across all content areas. Despite having the potential to train hundreds of teachers and administrators, the cascade model has not proven effective in raising student achievement in the district. The absence of pre- and post-data collection reflects an untracked expenditure of time, money, and effort. Through many

conversations and observations, there are several reasons that cast doubt on the success of a SIOP transmissive-cascade model of PL:

- Administrators do not always follow through with the dissemination of information by PL participants at the school.

- Teachers who attend sessions as the sole representative from their school do not have the benefit and support of a colleague with whom new teaching and learning can be discussed. Teachers may be hesitant to step into the discomfort of a new pedagogy alone.

- Engaging in reflection and metacognitive practices is a personal choice and not a requirement.

- Some of the SIOP structure is not intuitive and underestimates the amount of time required to prepare and deliver SIOP-ized lessons and gather resources for engagement activities.

- Accompanying textbooks for training are costly and content is aligned with American Common Core standards and student demographics instead of locally mandated curriculums and contexts.

Given the age of the research, the costs incurred to deliver the sessions, and the untracked impact on student achievement, a SIOP transmissive-cascade model of PL raises concerns about its effectiveness to generate transformative change. The adoption of a new solution to the EAL PL dilemma, like that proposed in Solution 3, may be more advantageous for the CSDA organization in the long term.

**Solution 3: The Adaptive Expertise Model**

The CSDA, like all school authorities in the province of Alberta, conducts an annual regression analysis of student testing results. Student achievement on the Canadian Cognitive

Abilities Test is compared with student achievement on the Grade 6 and Grade 9 PATs to determine if CSDA students are working to their full potential. Regardless of the presence of culturally-biased test content, the level of language proficiency required to complete the assessment, or individual student circumstances, Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test and PAT data are used to identify schools that are underperforming. With the increased prioritization of student achievement in the CSDA, there is more attention directed towards underachieving schools with high ELL populations. These schools are under intense pressure from senior leadership to improve student achievement. School administrators look more closely at targeted PL opportunities to raise achievement results. A school-wide concern requires greater staff accountability and a more focused and comprehensive PL action plan. The AEM of PL (Le Fevre et al., 2020) supports both.

First conceptualized in 1986, Hatano and Inagaki found a correlation between efficiency and innovation. Some educational practitioners, also referred to as "routine experts", are highly efficient but weak in innovation. In other words, they have procedural knowledge but a superficial understanding that cannot be applied to novel problems. Others who are innovative but lack efficiency are labeled "frustrated novices". Building on Hatano and Inagaki's scholarship, LeFevre and her colleagues (2020) sought to develop a model of PL that would move beyond content transmission into more innovative practices that permit educators to adapt to changing contexts and nurture collaborative professional inquiry. The underlying principle is that teachers and instructional leaders (administrators and consultants) are responsible for student success by cultivating the personal qualities, dispositions, responsiveness, relationships, professional practices, knowledge, and metacognitive processes required to respond to

pedagogical challenges with skill, accuracy, and impact. The AEM unites efficiency and innovation to create teachers who are adaptive experts (Le Fevre et al., 2020).

LeFevre et al. (2020) asserted that sustained educational reform continues to fail because teachers and instructional leaders are unable to critically assess, discuss, and revise the effectiveness of their pedagogy. In the AEM, teachers and instructional leaders are compelled to continually question their practices to ensure their contribution to an improved educational experience. They are tasked with growing their own adaptive expertise *and* that of others. Collaboration is inherent throughout the model. The AEM considers the complexity of teaching, learning, and leading and provides instructional leaders with a comprehensive PL framework. Le Fevre et al. (2020) recognized that the approach to PL and teaching should be "complex, adaptive, context depending, culturally located, and driven by effective decision-making" (p. 1). Unlike the first two proposed PL solutions, the AEM seeks transformative changes, not only for students, but for teachers-as-learners and leaders-as-learners (Le Fevre et al., 2020). This departure from content transmission to transformative learning is a significant step towards greater teacher-leader expertise and learning transfer throughout the organization (Brown, 2006). For this reason, the AEM of PL (Le Fevre et al., 2020) is the selected solution to address the PoP in this OIP.

AEM creators use the metaphor of a tree to outline and explain the elements of the AEM (see Appendix G). The roots represent personal qualities and dispositions of PL facilitators and leaders. These include adopting an evaluative inquiry stance; being metacognitive; valuing and using deep conceptual knowledge; being agentic; being aware of cultural positioning; and bringing a systemic focus. These roots/dispositions anchor the entire PL process and enable more responsive, in-the-moment decision making. The trunk joins the personal qualities and

dispositions to what Le Fevre et al. (2020) called a core of responsiveness. Responsiveness comes out of strong relationships and a concern for on-going student progress, well-being, and equity.

The three branches— purpose and focus, knowledge and inquiry, and effective learning processes— contain leaves that represent deliberate acts of facilitation (DAF). Table 1 outlines the DAF for each branch of the AEM tree. Effective learning processes are developed through coaching cycles that are congruent with DeWitt's (2017) model of collaborative leadership. In this way, all three branches of the AEM can be addressed with intention. Of particular interest are the DAF located on Branch 3. The CSDA is missing the mark for ELL academic achievement because too much emphasis has been placed on the knowledge DAF (Branch 2) at the expense of shared purpose, vision, motivation, co-constructed learning, and the discovery of self. Impactful and sustained pedagogical shifts require a firm and coherent foundational approach to PL and collaborative leadership.

One of the most appealing features of the AEM is the accompanying resource guide entitled *Leading Powerful Professional Learning: Responding to Complexity With Adaptive Expertise* (Le Fevre et al., 2020). In addition to guiding questions, discussion frames, and case studies, there are online resources to support whole-staff delivery of content, collaborative inquiry, and discussion. This resource is readily available at a reasonable cost and can be used by anyone wanting to lead transformative PL. Although PL content for this OIP is restricted to EAL knowledge and pedagogy, the AEM can be used for all content areas. Making the resource available to staff at all levels of the district supports coherence in language, coherence in process, the shared valuing of leadership dispositions, and an emphasis on developing a culture of collaboration. The AEM provides a balanced approach to all contexts of PL by pushing beyond a

basic transmission of knowledge to the development of 21st century professional dispositions that value relationship and collaboration as pathways to student wellbeing, learning, and positive future outcomes.

**Table 1**

*The AEM Branches and Leaves and the Leadership-focused Vision for Change*

| Branches | Related DAF |
|---|---|
| 1)Purpose and focus (Educator reflexivity, democratic classrooms) | DAF 1. Clarifying purpose |
| | DAF 2. Focusing on valued student outcomes |
| | DAF 3. Building coherence |
| | DAF 4. Creating commitment and taking action |
| 2)Knowledge and inquiry (Oracy framework, culturally responsive practices, planning for engagement) | DAF 5. Deepening knowledge |
| | DAF 6. Using evidence critically |
| | DAF 7. Using focused and deep collaborative inquiry |
| 3)Effective learning processes (Collaborative inquiry, adaptive expertise) | DAF 8. Surfacing and engaging theories and beliefs |
| | DAF 9. Navigating perceptions of risk |
| | DAF 10. Developing self-regulation |
| | DAF 11. Providing appropriate support and challenge |
| | DAF 12. Co-constructing learning |

*Note*. DAF = deliberate acts of facilitation.

## Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 establishes collaborative-transformative leadership as the EAL consultant's approach to change. The CSDA demonstrates strong change readiness through the presence of trustworthy leadership and followers, capable champions and school-based administrators, and an innovative and accountable culture embedded with effective communication and developing systems thinking. With the help of Fullan's (2021) human paradigm change drivers, the task of choosing an effective solution has been made easier. Kuenkel's (n.d.) DCM, when used in

conjunction with the AEM of PL (Le Fevre et al., 2020), provides an anticipatory guide for the

change implementation, communication, and evaluation plans in Chapter 3.

## Chapter 3: Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation

The third and final chapter seeks to outline how organizational change is implemented, communicated, and evaluated. It is here that the leadership-focused vision for change becomes tangible. As a reminder to the reader, Chapter 1 presented the following leadership-focused vision for change: the expansion of ELL engagement through strategic lesson planning; the development of educator and student reflexivity and culturally responsive practices; the cultivation of metacognition for critical thinking and adaptive expertise; and the cocreation of democratic classrooms through dialogic communication and oracy instruction.

To ensure a successful shift towards these desired pedagogical practices and outcomes, Kuenkel's (n.d.) DCM, introduced in Chapter 2, provides the guiding framework for the change implementation process. The DCM's structure is coherent with STC tenets and supports the behaviours that are expected in a collaborative-transformative leadership approach (Kuenkel et al., 2020). Key elements of the AEM of PL (Le Fevre et al., 2020) are intertwined with the phases of the DCM (see Figure 6) to create a solid change implementation plan permeated with collaboration, clarity of communication, and multiple opportunities for process monitoring and evaluation.

**Figure 6**

*Alignment of the DCM Phases and AEM Tree*
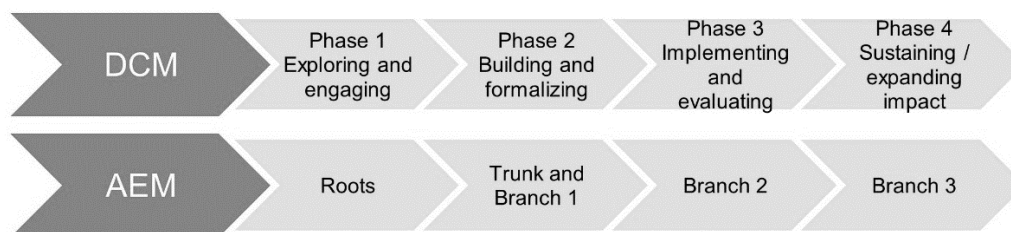


*Note.* The PL focus areas of the AEM tree are evident in the dialogue of the DCM phases.

## Change Implementation With the DCM

### Phase 1: Exploring and Engaging

The first task at hand in Phase 1 is determining which schools will be selected for intensive support. Currently, there is no official prioritization of schools for consultant support. Most often EAL consultants respond reactively to school requests when low achievement scores draw attention from senior leadership, when there are racial incidents, or when ELLs experience behavioural challenges. A more thoughtful prioritized support plan like the one proposed here will better meet the needs of the most marginalized and at-risk ELLs in the district.

Due to staff numbers, consultant availability, and allocated PL time, the number of schools targeted for support in the first year of intervention is restricted to 25 which equates to five schools per consultant. The schools are selected based on student immigration status (e.g., refugee vs. child of a skilled foreign worker), student socioeconomic status, academic histories (e.g., limited formal schooling or interrupted schooling), achievement data, and student background information (e.g., displacement or vicarious trauma). Phase 1 of the DCM (Kuenkel, n.d.) correlates to the AEM's (Le Fevre et al., 2020) roots section (educator personal qualities and dispositions). The pace of the initial investigation is determined by the number of participating staff, students, and families from the 25 selected schools.

During the genesis of the change implementation plan, the EAL consultant as the collaborative-transformative leader and facilitator creates communication pathways through relationship building and an examination of personal and professional dispositions. In addition to building trust among collaborators (staff, students, and families) is the need to create resonance for the leadership-focused vision. Conversations at this stage are characterized as informal and are intended to shed light on perspectives that may not have been previously considered. With

most conversations occurring in a one-to-one or small-group setting, there is a greater likelihood for cultural and psychological safety for those who may be hesitant to voice concerns in public (Bowman et al., 2022; McGough, 1997; Yates & Hirsh, 2022). Furthermore, existing power differentials that hinder open conversations, like those in administrator-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher-family relationships, are overcome through EAL consultant facilitation. These dialogic and transformative exchanges serve to expose potential obstacles to collaborative inquiry, coherence building, and change fidelity.

Teacher, family, and student narratives, when positioned alongside CSDA and provincially generated data, add credibility to the need for change. Student and family contributions are often overlooked and undervalued as change drivers (Winthrop et al., 2021; Wood et al., 2017). Ishimaru et al. (2019) expounded on the benefits of developing the transformative agency of nondominant families in equity initiatives. Translators and intercultural liaisons can facilitate conversations with ELL families in this phase of the process, not only because of the positive impact that family engagement has on student achievement (Povey et al., 2016; Willis et al., 2021), but also as a means of countering colonizing narratives (Ishimaru, 2018)) and reversing the dehumanization of families (Yull et al., 2018). Marginalized voices must be sought out and given the place and space to be heard (DeWitt, 2017; McKenzie & Toia, 2022). Student accounts of unwelcoming, frustrating, and lonely educational experiences add an emotional dimension to the calls to action (Hall, 2017; Mitra, 2018). In this way, the implementation plan makes room for the gift of multiple perspectives and ways of knowing through the "two-eyed seeing" principle shared by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall (as cited in Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 331); a dialogic experience, like that found in a sociotransformative constructivist classroom, that combines Indigenous and Western knowledge for the benefit of all.

Although families and students are included in the exploring and engaging phase as valued

opinion holders, they are not included as direct participants in the AEM PL cycles.

The amount of importance given to the exploring and engaging phase should not be

underestimated. Kuenkel (n.d.) reminded DCM users that the most common mistakes made in

Phase 1 are insufficient context analysis, insufficient commitment from participants due to a lack

of supporting data for change and, most importantly, an emotional and ethical disconnect

between the current state and the bigger organizational picture. As explained in the AEM,

personal dispositions of curiosity and open-mindedness can, and should, be cultivated if

pedagogical equity is to escape the grip of the status quo.

**Phase 2: Building and Formalizing**

Phase 2 corresponds with the trunk (relationships and improvement orientation) and the

purpose and focus branch of the AEM tree. Participants respond to the calls for change by

cultivating deeper working relationships. In this phase, the focus is on clarifying common goals

and resources, creating commitment, taking action, and building coherence. A coherent vision

within and among participants and schools contributes positively to systemness and the

development of a shared language of content, pedagogy, process, and success (Century et al.,

2010; Grossman & Dean, 2019). As would be expected in a collaborative-transformative

leadership venture, the formal change plan is established with both short-term (weekly) and long-

term (monthly) goals, and participant expectations are decided through mutual agreement. The

goals and expectations vary between schools based on the context analyses completed in Phase

1. Consideration is given to the attainability of cocreated goals by keeping school and classroom

demographics in mind. If goals are perceived as too complex, out of reach, or irrelevant, change

participants may lose motivation and momentum (Lamb & Wyatt, 2019; Martin et al., 2019; Stein et al., 2016).

The time allocated to building and formaliz*ing* includes a summary of the informal qualitative data and anonymized narratives generated in Phase 1. Informed by evidence, Phase 2 requires all members of the educator group to generate a personal growth plan specific to the requirements of the pedagogical shift that is developed through the coaching cycles in Phase 3. There is comfort in the shared cognitive dissonance that is experienced when undergoing a significant shift in practice (McKimmie, 2015). Educators are brought together in collaborative-transformative leadership to reframe the work culture away from the metaphorical silo (K. Brown, 2006; Hartwell et al., 2017; Pearson, 2015; Trust et al., 2017) to a collective raising of the status of ELLs in inclusive school communities.

Cocreating is infused into every aspect of the building and formalizing phase. Tasks include creating schedules for whole-staff PL; planning individual consultations; the introduction and use of the dialogic communication principles of authentic voice, active listening, respect, and the suspension of judgement (Garrett, 2012); and previewing the collaborative coaching and feedback measures to be used in Phase 3. The pacing of content knowledge acquisition is collectively decided in relation to the guiding questions and pedagogical practices identified in Chapter 1. This emphasis on collaborator input and affective commitment results in a high degree of process safety (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Kuenkel et al., 2020), professional responsibility, and the potential for longer-lasting pedagogical shifts (D. Nguyen & Ng, 2020).

Another area of focus that is formalized in Phase 2 is the curation of information as it pertains to the change plan and PL topics. The most accessible location for project information is a shared drive or website. A digital library provides the potential for living, dynamic documents

that can be continuously updated. Unlimited access to digital resources is used to focus deeper learning and collaborative inquiry. More importantly, the shared drive, site, or app offers a space where teachers and administrators can ask questions, document progress, celebrate success, and seek support in the face of challenge. When the building and formalizing phase is done well, it contributes to a "functional collaboration ecosystem" (Kuenkel et al., 2020, p. 74) where mistakes are welcomed as a healthy sign of learning for both teachers and students alike (Ackah-Jnr, 2022; Eva, 2017; Mason, 2023).

Like Phase 1, the key to success in Phase 2 is to resist the urge to rush the process of cocreating group goals and bolstering individually defined commitments. Kuenkel et al. (2020) also advised DCM users not to become entrapped in the minutiae of change management. It is a time for collaborators to develop the broader dispositions needed to engage in transformative learning. Staff members are empowered through engagement in reflexive and metacognitive processes. Systemness is generated through insight into the bigger picture and in cultivating scholar-practitioner mindsets for deep collaborative enquiry. More detailed strategic directions and tasks unfold in Phase 3 as collaborators move into the implementing and evaluating phase.

**Phase 3: Implementing and Evaluating**

In Phase 3, human and physical resources are in place and the progress timeline for short- and long-term goals is visible in the school environment. These goals are intentionally made available to students, families, and the greater educational community to showcase the important work that staff are undertaking. With the permeation of technology into every aspect of modern-day life, many organizations rely heavily on social media platforms to increase dialogic engagement (Capriotti et al., 2020; Men et al., 2018). Innovations and learning celebrations are tracked and communicated widely through platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and district

websites. Skillfully leveraging social media to showcase the work of school staff deepens the community's faith in the effectiveness of PL initiatives and retains family engagement, albeit at a distance.

Phase 3 is also where deep transformative learning occurs. Content knowledge addressed in Phase 3 includes: student oracy development through the incorporation of the Voice 21 (2019) framework (see Appendix C); the use of metacognitive strategies to enhance student critical thinking and educator adaptive expertise; the identification and growth of culturally responsive practices; and strategic lesson planning for content comprehension and student engagement. The EAL consultant as collaborative-transformative leader guides staff into the realm of deep inquiry. Educators engage in professional reading and PL as directed by the EAL consultant. They are invited to engage in critical reflection and evaluate the applicability of PL content to their burgeoning pedagogical transformation. Here, participants are engaged in a "generative dance" (Lampert, 2012, p. 361) to integrate new learning in ways that enhance their teaching (see also Cook & Brown, 1999).

During the implementing and evaluating phase, coaching cycles are continuously engaged and permitted to unfold at various speeds depending on the content and time required for feedback. Grade-partner and cross-grade work groups, along with administrative and EAL consultant guidance, provide the necessary emotional and professional support to negotiate classroom implementation challenges. This format of coaching and collaborative inquiry is imbued with emotional presence (Stenbom et al., 2016). A variety of feedback protocols, like those discussed later in this chapter, are utilized to lead learning conversations (Lasky et al., 2009), conduct self-assessments, and to help the school team grow in the "ongoing spirit of

critical friendship" (Katz et al., 2018, p. 128) and "the desire for oneself and others to thrive and prosper in ever-complex situations" (Fullan & Edwards, 2022, p. 13).

To ensure the successful implementation of new pedagogical processes, there is a continued emphasis on clear and regular communication. Individual and group check-ins occur weekly, and successes are celebrated on an on-going basis. Strengthening the group commitment is central to all conversations and decision-making throughout Phase 3. Progress updates are communicated internally and externally through a variety of platforms such as staff meetings, emails, shared drives, newsletters, social media, and demonstrations of learning. More formal reports are added to school growth plans and data is collected to fulfill provincial accountability measures and conduct future project evaluation (Government of Alberta, n.d.).

Most of the day-to-day celebrations of learning that take place in CSDA classrooms are not formally reported because of their qualitative and sometimes undervalued nature. This includes observable student progress resulting from new pedagogical practices. Examples of teacher narratives may be similar to the following: an ELL who speaks for the first time; the student who learns how to use Google Translate to complete a math test; the child who brings injera bread for the teacher and non-Ethiopian students to try; or the teacher learning to say "hello" and "welcome" in Ukrainian to reassure new student refugees. Each of these seemingly insignificant happenings honours the sacred stories and dialogical experiences that are generated in a democratic, sociotransformative constructivist classroom. This is the learning and leading of spirit work to which Battiste (2008) and Fullan (2021) have spoken; a rehumanizing approach to children, to teaching, and to the immeasurable value of story.

At this point, it is important to note that the DCM is not linear (Kuenkel, n.d.). Rather, it is a highly iterative process. Sometimes small-scale implementation reveals gaps in

communication, participation, or process. This is understandable given the complexity of school environments, the diversity of students, and the different rates of learning among staff members. The EAL consultant as change leader is required to monitor and adjust the pace of implementation, the need to recruit additional voices into the group, and individual accountability. Some knowledge acquisition and skills take more time to process and integrate than others. In this case, evaluation timelines are adjusted while maintaining the integrity and momentum of the process. It is an opportunity to address questions as they arise, include new evidence into the direction of the change implementation plan, and evaluate the need for additional resources. Heading into Phase 4, collaborative work partnerships or groups can be shifted to offer participants access to a broader range of collective knowledge, personal dispositions, and professional insight.

**Phase 4: Sustaining and Expanding Impact**

Once the end of the implementation cycle has been reached, the change-maker community is invited to celebrate its success. The EAL consultant and school administrators acknowledge the learning, engagement, collaboration, and contributions of the change influencers and makers. During Phase 4, educators share the pedagogical innovations that have emerged in the implementation cycle. One of the key outcomes of collaborative-transformative leadership is the sharing of power and the reciprocity of relationships. There are invitations to team teach projects and activities that demonstrate the application of new learning and competencies. Educators are invited to update professional growth plans to formally acknowledge their success and transformative thinking.

In Phase 4, change makers engage in behaviours that align most closely with the effective learning processes branch of the AEM. DAF 10, entitled developing self-regulation, refers to an

individual's capacity to self-monitor and sustain learning and continuous change. According to

Le Fevre et al. (2020), members of the teaching community strive to grow others' capacity "to

monitor, reflect, and make adjustments to their cognition and emotional responses and their

ability to act strategically" (p. 103). Some of the suggestions offered for fostering self-

monitoring include the modelling of curiosity, metacognition, and think-alouds; all of which are

equally important in the teaching of students. As teachers develop their critical adaptive capacity,

they are in a better position to help students develop theirs. In contrast to a toxic and competitive

culture, the change-maker community is drawn together for the betterment of students (Kirabo &

Bruegmann, 2009; White et al., 2012).

Regardless of whether change is being implemented at an individual, classroom, school,

or district level, the leader-facilitator remains focused on the four Cs: commitment,

communication, connections, and creativity (Ball, n.d.). Appendix H provides a clarifying and

more detailed representation of the integrated AEM and DCM timeline. With the change

implementation plan established, the discussion shifts to knowledge mobilization (KMb) and

how the research evidence for this OIP can be shared in ways that are meaningful for CSDA

staff, students, and families.

## Plan to Communicate the Need for Change

With the change implementation framework in place, it is necessary to establish a KMb

plan to build awareness of the need for change within and beyond the CSDA organization. The

KMb plan seeks to make academic research accessible to non-academic audiences such as the

teachers and administrators for whom this OIP is crafted (Phipps et al., 2016). The KMb plan

speaks to the different functions of knowledge sharing, the flow of knowledge, the variety of

partnerships that emerge from the process, and the level of systemness of the mobilization.

In keeping with the sociotransformative constructivist worldview, KMb in the context of this OIP seeks to counter academic capitalism (Jessop, 2018; Ross, 2009) by bringing people together through dialogic information sharing, the cocreation of meaning, and applied innovation so that evidence-backed best practices can be enacted in the shared goal of pedagogical equity in the CSDA (Anderson & McLachlan, 2016). Viewing the KMb process through a critical and reflexive lens invites social justice into the research agenda (Pain, 2014; Pickerill, 2014). Attention is paid to how knowledge is shared and used to strengthen practice, to cultivate collaborative relationships within and beyond the school, to inform policy, and stimulate organizational reform. The outline of this KMb plan is a synthesis of the transformative KMb strategies expounded by Anderson and McLachlan (2016) and the coproduced pathway to impact from Phipps et al. (2016). The coproduced and transformative approach to KMb satisfies the demands of a collaborative-transformative leadership lens.

**KMb Timeline**

With phase one of the change plan cycle beginning immediately in the fall, the KMb plan needs to be launched after spring break of the current year when schools are drafting PL plans for the upcoming school year. It is during this 3-month period, from April to June, when the EAL consultants, informed by district enrolment and assessment data, identify 25 schools with a high percentage of beginner ELLs. By this point, the school administration staffing cycle is complete and KMb can begin through communication with current or incoming administrators and teaching staff. Details of the OIP are formally communicated in meetings with the superintendent and plans are made to include project details in the annual accountability report to the Board of Trustees.

**The Language Layering of Research**

When communicating the main messages of the KMb plan, consideration is given to the accessibility, comprehensibility, and relevance for non-academic participants. KMb provides research-backed solutions that help bridge the gap between the PoP (the lack of EAL-specific pedagogical knowledge and skills) and the desired transformations outlined in Figure 3 at the end of Chapter 1. With a focus on research and academic content, topic specific terminology (e.g., reflexivity, oracy, differentiated instruction, engagement, and democratic classrooms) is clearly explained and visually supported through high-impact, low-lexile infographics. This is especially important when ELL families are engaged in the KMb process. Language is free from educational jargon and an effort is made to translate information, when possible, into additional heritage languages. In addition to providing clarity, the provision of information in languages other than English serves to demonstrate the school's commitment to inclusive family engagement.

**Communicating Research Benefits**

Teachers as primary knowledge consumers and creators are willing to engage with new knowledge when it is shared by a leader who: (a) understands the complexity of their work environment (context), (b) facilitates the cocreation of meaning and knowledge, and (c) invites innovation in the application of new knowledge (Salter & Tett, 2022). The introduction of new pedagogical practices and assessment tools requires promotion and validation through a review of the literature, empirical data, and implementation supports and resources. As teachers become more engaged in the work and begin to contribute to knowledge production, there is a growing capacity to interact with academic literature and engage in the kind of critical, metacognitive thinking required for transformative change (Firth, 2016).

The messaging of solution-supporting evidence is particularly relevant to all educators who struggle to meet the academic and cultural needs of their students. Beyond the impact that research-backed practices have on teaching and learning in schools with high ELL populations, there is a broader need to examine and address issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusivity throughout the CSDA organization and in its relationships with the greater community. All employees require knowledge of culturally responsive practices, bias awareness, power, privilege, anti-racism, and anti-oppression to address systemic inequities in education. The current level of knowledge among educators, support staff, and leadership is insufficient to produce a shift in attitudes and practice. Without this specific KMb focus, CSDA policies and pedagogical practices will continue to marginalize ELLs. The OIP research serves to generate awareness of pedagogical inequity in CSDA and offers evidence-based solutions that engage all opinion holders and hold all decision-makers accountable to the organization's mission of providing equitable quality education for all. Although the short-term goal is to target low-achieving schools with high ELL enrolment, the long-term goal is to expand the PL framework into all CSDA schools to maximize organizational coherence and to engender collective efficacy and equity in EAL-specific pedagogy.

**Building Bridges With Project Partners**

Lavis et al. (2003) supported the belief that the most effective way to mobilize research knowledge is through interactive engagement. In coherence with the STC epistemology woven throughout the dissertation, primary knowledge mobilizers (teachers and administrators) are included throughout the KMb plan not only as end-users of knowledge, but also as cocreators and innovators of knowledge (Maurer et al., 2021). This scholarly and humanistic approach aligns with Fullan's (2021) human paradigm change drivers thereby permitting knowledge to be

collectively held and generated through critical reflection and dialogic communication. The reciprocity of knowledge sharing between the EAL consultant and the collective of knowledge users dismantles the power structures seen through the traditional lens of the independent expert and the unknowing masses. In this way, knowledge becomes community property (Shulman, 1993) and greater emphasis is placed on conversational scholarship for the greater good (Werder et al., 2010).

To ensure that the knowledge and evidence generated from the OIP is inclusive of all voices, external project partners are also invited to engage in dialogue. This strategy of building bridges is paralleled in the first phase of the change implementation plan and includes families, caregivers, students, and community partners such as religious leaders, Elders, Catholic Social Services, and the Boys and Girls Clubs. These individuals and groups are joined in advocacy and are valued for their professional contributions, cultural perspectives, and other ways of knowing. Networked KMb results in a coordinated, wraparound approach to student care that improves learning and potential life outcomes (Hill, 2020; Yu et al., 2020).

**Transmedia Dissemination**

CSDA staff members, students, and families consume research information and data in different formats and for different purposes (Scolari, 2009; Willis & Exley, 2018). An interactive transmedia approach to KMb "involves telling stories across multiple media" to engage diverse audiences (Anderson & McLachlan, 2016, p. 308). These include pamphlets, implementation guides, websites, satisfaction surveys, achievement reports, checklists, videos, weekly e-newsletters, and social media like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Families can easily follow school social media accounts or engage in person during demonstrations of learning and other school-sponsored events.

Digital content curation is increasingly used in educational organizations to improve access to current information, data, and resources that align with strategic plans, department services, and district initiatives (Curry et al., 2010; Timperley, 2018). Because of the familiarity of district staff with the digital platforms in use, no additional instruction is required to locate and use curated information such as learning module slide decks, PL session recordings, pedagogical resources such as websites, Google Docs, lesson planning templates, assessment rubrics, professional articles, links to podcasts, videos, and the like. In turn, school staff engage students in KMb through digital representations (e.g., Flipgrid, Jamboard, PicCollage, and Screen Castify), in-person celebrations, and learning portfolios.

KMb is, at its core, a social process (Cooper & Levin, 2010). Collaboration with CSDA emerging technology consultants is beneficial in translating and brokering knowledge to participating schools and dispersing it more broadly throughout the district and community. School and district websites provide progress updates as well as registration information for district-sponsored learning opportunities intended to supplement developing knowledge and skill sets. Beyond the preference that collaborative-transformative leadership has for dialogic, humanistic, in-person communication, virtual meetings can help to overcome attendance and language barriers (Hernandez & Leung, 2004; Jurgens et al., 2022). Care is taken to ensure that information flows freely between the researcher/change leader and the knowledge coproducers regardless of whether communication occurs in person or virtually.

**Uptake and Implementation**

During the uptake phase of the KMb pathway, the research information and rationale shared during the dissemination phase is considered in relation to its potential for pedagogical improvement. Procedural information, multiformat resources, session content, and the PL model

are reviewed with school staff. Educators have an opportunity in the uptake phase to provide

feedback and offer suggestions that support the implementation process. This integrative style of

negotiation offers knowledge consumers and coproducers an additional opportunity to ask

questions prior to the implementation phase. At this juncture, the EAL consultant as researcher

and project lead can re-evaluate the presence of new concerns or barriers.

After the uptake process is complete, educators move into the implementation phase of

KMb. The highly anticipated PoP solution framework is set in motion, in its completed form, in

the real-world context of classrooms and schools. Sustained researcher engagement throughout

the KMb process generates transformative momentum towards short- and long-term

implementation goals. Some of the benefits of the implementation process in the CSDA include

the expansion of evidence-based practices into all areas of the curriculum. These practices

support not only ELLs, but all those who require differentiated instruction, the development of

academic language, improved lesson engagement, and belonging in the classroom (Maurer et al.,

2021; van Geel et al., 2019).

Throughout the uptake and implementation phases there are multiple opportunities to

celebrate success with the educators who are living out the research and the ELLs who are

benefitting from it. These celebrations of learning may take place through one-to-one

conversations or be shared collectively as a class, staff, and school. External partners, senior

leadership, and the Board of Trustees are invited to share in the journey through the same

transmedia tools previously discussed.

**Transformative Impact and Innovation**

Transformative educational research seeks to create space and time for deep reflexive

praxis; an educational practice that is "reflective, self-consciously moral and political, and

oriented towards making positive educational and societal change" (Mahon, 2020, p. 15). In this way, educators learn to valorize other ways of knowing and walking in the world. It is through sustained leader-guided practices that pedagogical mindsets and beliefs are permanently shifted. New knowledge and skills, such as those acquired through the AEM of PL, have the potential to expand their reach beyond the initial eight schools. Evidence of KMb reveals the effectiveness of the OIP to address the PoP. It is hoped that this success and the implementation of the AEM of PL introduced in this OIP will inform future PL and accountability practices in CSDA.

The communicated status of ELLs in the CSDA is further elevated through explicit mention in the district strategic plan. The increased awareness of EAL-specific pedagogical practices, along with the innovative practices emerging from schools, generates a review of administrative procedures pertaining to ELL program placement, assessment, funding, student discipline, family engagement, and the frequency and content of equity, diversity, and inclusion training for all staff. As beneficiaries and coproducers of knowledge, students are invited to engage in decision-making processes at the school and district level where their diverse ways of knowing are acknowledged and valorized.

**Evaluation of the KMb Plan**

The final element for discussion in the KMb plan is formative and summative assessment. Formative evaluations occur throughout the uptake and implementation phases of the KMb plan using both conversational and written feedback mechanisms. More formalized summative data collection and documentation takes place at the end of each phase. Feedback and evaluation tools, as well as plenary conversation formats and prompts, are explored in the final section of Chapter 3. A visual representation of the KMb plan can be found in Appendix I along with timeline information and feedback loops.

## Change Process Monitoring and Transformative Evaluation

"If evaluation is viewed as critical praxis, then learning and change become the focus" (Springett, 2001, p. 148)

Moving into the final section of Chapter 3, the discussion focuses on change process monitoring and evaluation. Like Le Fevre et al. (2020), Christie and Alkin (2008) used a tree metaphor to create a visual representation of the different theoretical perspectives on evaluation. The tree comprises a trunk grounded in social accountability, fiscal control, and social inquiry which grows into three main branches: evaluation use, evaluation methods, and evaluation values. Each of these branches, and the theorists associated with them, have emerged from a particular theoretical paradigm. The valuing branch includes theorists whose work is most closely connected to the constructivist worldview. This branch is insufficient, however, to address all tenets of STC upon which this OIP is founded. To this end, I propose an extension to the constructivist branch to incorporate more critically based, transformative practices into the evaluation process.

Greene's (2005) three-part Value-Engaged Approach to Evaluation (VEAE) and Mertens's (2019) inclusive-transformative belief system are most closely aligned with the epistemological and ontological assumptions of the STC paradigm. The resulting combination of Greene (2005) and Mertens's (2019) thinking is a collaborative, transformative, and inclusive evaluation process guided by social justice goals. Multistakeholder input provides a more complete, accurate, and democratic narrative of the program under evaluation. Critically oriented research from Patton (2017) and Safir and Dugan (2021) further informs the use of evaluation tools that destabilize colonial narratives through culturally responsive practices, researcher reflexivity, and the "harmonization with much older knowledge systems" (Davidson et al., 2018,

p. 15); a place where continuous evaluator and collaborator engagement moves project evaluation towards greater organizational equity and social justice (Mertens, 2010; Pasque & Alexander, 2023).

According to Greene (2005), the evaluator must have an in-depth knowledge of the context, the people, and the issues to be addressed, as well as a prioritization of evaluation content and criteria. In the VEAE, there is a particular emphasis on these preparatory aspects so that evaluation can be included throughout the change implementation plan. Greene's three-part model and Merten's (2019) transformative evaluation design guide both formative and summative change process evaluation. The various elements of the evaluation cycles are aligned with the phases of Kuenkel's (n.d.) DCM (see Appendix J). Additionally, Appendix K provides an overview of the timeline alignment between the KMb plan, the DCM, the AEM, and the VEAE.

**Part 1: Preparatory Components**

*Understanding the Organizational Context and Change Plan: DCM Phase 1*

The first component of the VEAE process stresses the importance of understanding the contextual factors that influence the change management process. Chapter 1 dedicates space for a complete analysis of the CSDA organization and Chapter 2 more closely considers the context of each of the participating school communities. School context influences not only the focus of evaluation practices but also the way in which each participating group (staff, students, and families) engages in the process. Multiple perspectives ensure that the formative and summative evaluation processes are tightly connected to participant concerns and project objectives.

*Collaboratively Deciding on What Should Be Assessed or Evaluated: Phase 1 DCM*

With a clear understanding of contextual factors and participant perspectives vis-à-vis the PoP, the change leader-evaluator engages participants in a discussion about which project goals require evaluation. In addition to the summative data generated from an assessment *of* learning, the adoption of an assessment *for* learning approach provides on-going feedback to project participants and the evaluator throughout each change implementation cycle. Mertens (2010) supported this cyclical model where collaborators are engaged throughout the process and whose story data shapes project direction and subsequent evaluation processes. The transformative lens addresses systemic bias by equalizing power structures in how success, and the successful, are defined. There is an opportunity for the evaluator, staff, students, and families to collaborate, plan, self-assess, and be assessed with the common vision in mind (Covey, 2020). The potential for gathering quantitative and qualitative data is significant, if not overwhelming. Because the change implementation plan timeline incorporates three complete evaluative cycles per year over the course of 3 years, many areas for evaluation can be dispersed over time.

*Identifying Key Evaluation Questions: Phase 2 DCM*

Greene (2005) believed that the purpose of a VEAE is to evaluate a program based on the experiences of all participants which includes historically marginalized groups such as CSDA's ELLs and their families. The inclusivity of the process underscores two key commitments of the VEAE to evaluation. Greene identified these as a "commitment to learning in and through evaluation . . . and a commitment to engaging with difference and diversity" (2005, p. 34). The VEAE is structured with one overall question as well as several subquestions that reflect a range of participant priorities. For the purposes of this OIP, Table 2 outlines question samples that could be used in the first cycle of the change implementation plan. It should be noted that the

overall question seeks to respond broadly to the PoP whereas the subquestions are more

reflective of participant areas of prioritization. Some of the questions remain the same

throughout the course of the project year whereas others are replaced with questions that emerge

from the work completed during Phases 2 and 3 of the change implementation plan and the

uptake stage of the KMb plan. The same timelines and question structure are repeated in Years 2

and 3 of the project.

**Table 2**

*Overall OIP Evaluation Question and Potential Subquestions*

| Cycle | Time frame | Potential subquestions |
|-------|-----------|------------------------|
| Cycle 1: Formative evaluation | September to December | • How well are ELL academic needs being met in inclusive classrooms in School X? <br> • How prepared are teachers to implement the OIP pedagogical framework in School X classrooms? <br> • How do ELL families perceive the quality of education available to their children at School X? <br> • To what extent are ELLs at School X expected to meaningfully engage with curriculum content? |
| Cycle 2: Formative evaluation | January to March | Repeat or replace Cycle 1 questions. |
| Cycle 3: Formative evaluation | April to June | Repeat or replace Cycle 2 questions. |
| Cycle 3: Summative evaluation | June | Consolidated report using postintervention data obtained from assessment tools. |
| Years 2 and 3 | September to June | Repeat the process and add metaevaluation measures to support the validity of assessed outcomes. |

*Note*. The overall question was, "In what ways does the OIP pedagogical framework meet staff

professional needs and the educational needs of the ELLs in School X? And in what ways does

the OIP framework support CSDA's mission of providing equitable educational opportunities?"

*Establishing Criteria for Judging Program Quality: Phase 2 DCM*

  The questions established in the previous section require the development of response criteria. It is at this juncture that Patton's (2017) principles of evaluation and Safir and Dugan's (2021) street data approach to student assessment come into play. All three scholars have promoted an evaluation process that is participatory, dialogic, reflective, and change oriented. Criteria are cocreated through dialogic communication with educators, students, and families to "engage and reflect the multiplicity of cherished values and ideals in the context at hand" (Greene, 2005, p. 35). Their critical and transformative perspectives challenge traditionally oppressive definitions of success in favour of a more humanizing and qualitative approach. Just as students are invited to co-contribute criteria for self-evaluation and classroom evaluation, teachers and families are also asked to contribute to the evaluation process.

  In relation to the proposed pedagogical framework of Figure 2, teachers generate criteria based on their metacognitive epiphanies. Families and community partners generate criteria based on the concerns and hopes expressed during Phase 1 engagement interviews. Patton (2017) stated that different approaches to evaluation embed "varying assumptions, values, premises, priorities, sense-making processes, and principles" (pp. 49–50). To this end, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected. As McKown (2019) and Panayiotou et al. (2019) have noted, qualitative reporting satisfies the teachers' desire to report on student social-emotional learning alongside traditional quantitative data collection from provincially- and district-mandated assessments (Alberta Education, 2018b, 2020). The tools that are used to gather and interpret data on the collectively identified areas of evaluation reflect innovation and contribute to the inclusive, culturally responsive, and equity focus of the OIP. The selected tools focus on transformative evaluation through on-going collaborator engagement and critical reflection. The

rationale behind the use of these tools is also provided (see Appendix L for a summary). Table 3

offers examples of what teacher- and family-generated evaluation criteria look like for Cycle 1 of

the change implementation plan. The evaluator-leader continues to embrace a collaborative and

transformative leadership stance throughout the evaluation design and collection process.

**Table 3**

*Sample VEAE Criteria for Phase 2, Cycle 1 of the Change Implementation Plan*

| Stakeholder | Criteria |
|---|---|
| Teachers | The proposed pedagogical framework aligns closely with district priorities, provincial curriculum outcomes, and teaching quality standards. |
| | The proposed pedagogical framework includes diverse and user-friendly resources for school staff. |
| | The proposed pedagogical framework has a positive impact on student oral language proficiency. |
| | The proposed pedagogical framework has a positive impact on reported levels of student achievement. |
| | I feel supported in my learning and practice. |
| Families | My child's teacher understands the needs of ELLs and is committed to my child's success. |
| | I am included in conversations about my child's learning and progress. |
| | I know who to talk to if I have questions or need help. |
| | I receive regular updates on my child's learning and behaviour in school. |
| | My child is happy going to school and enjoys learning. |
| Students | I am getting better at speaking in English. |
| | I am participating more in class. |
| | My teacher gives me the help I need to do well in school. |
| | I feel like I belong in my classroom and school. |
| | My teacher and classmates enjoy listening to me when I share stories about my life and my culture. |

*Note.* This phase, building and formalizing, runs from September to December.

**Part 2: Evaluation Design and Process**

*Evaluation Design: Phase 3 DCM*

Beginning with school staff, there is an assessment tool for each of the four developing areas of pedagogy: intentional planning for engagement, culturally responsive practices, adaptive expertise, and oracy instruction. As individuals and as a team, educators use the Voice 21 (2019) oracy benchmarks that accompany the oracy framework suggested for this OIP. The oracy benchmarks are constructed around five main criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of oracy instruction, to support teachers in setting goals for classroom oracy provision, to stimulate dialogue about pedagogical practices, and to guide strategic planning and improvement (Voice 21, 2019). The 17-item Adaptive Expertise Measurement Framework (Carbonell et al., 2016) and the Culturally Responsive Teaching Survey (Rhondes, 2017) are self-measurement tools. The evaluator provides additional feedback on student engagement using the tiered system of intervention (Hofkens & Ruzek, 2019). The final pedagogical evaluation tool is the SIOP model (Echevarria et al., 2018) lesson planning checklist. This can be used jointly by the teacher and the evaluator to ensure lesson plans include intentional language accommodations and adaptations for student engagement.

The next group of tools engages students in the project evaluation process. Although misused and oppressive in nature, students in Grades 6 and 9 are required to complete PATs along with the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test. Although these types of culturally-biased assessments go against the values promoted in this OIP, they are nonetheless a requirement for all Alberta school districts and track achievement over time. On a more positive note, EAL consultants have successfully petitioned the exclusion of beginner ELLs in these tests not only for obvious linguistic reasons, but also due to the ethnocentricity of content and the negative

impact that test exposure may have on a newcomer student's well-being (Erum, 2023). Alberta Language proficiency benchmarks are another mandatory evaluation completed annually by the homeroom teacher; however, as previously noted, the accuracy, utility, and validity of this tool to guide pedagogical practice remains questionable.

In contrast to the above-mentioned dehumanizing assessments, Safir and Dugan (2021) have stressed the importance of data gathering tools that are generated through a pedagogy of voice. According to the authors, a pedagogy of voice draws critical pedagogy and culturally responsive education together. Teachers who reject a pedagogy of compliance in favour of a pedagogy of voice do not define student success by their achievement test scores. Instead, all students are seen as capable contributors and are encouraged to develop personal agency through rich dialogue and authentic learning experiences in the context of a democratic classroom. Safir and Dugan (2021) pointed to the need to offer alternatives to traditional paper-pencil assessments to demonstrate mastery. When students can successfully demonstrate their learning preferences and metacognitive skills in nontraditional formats, their voice and place in the academic environment is secured (Safir & Dugan, 2021). To counter the neoliberal importance placed on traditional achievement test data, CSDA students are invited to participate in project evaluation using the Screencastify Google Chrome extension (https://www.screencastify.com/). Screencastify breaks from a traditional paper-pencil format to include a more affective and storied approach to documenting learning. Older students with more developed literacy can be offered the Student Engagement Instrument for self-assessment (Carter et al., 2012).

The third collaborator group is the parent/caregiver community. As a means of gathering their evaluation perspective, the leader-evaluator offers families the Road Map Family Survey designed by The Equitable Parent-School Collaboration Research Project (2015). This survey is

easily translated into home languages and its evaluation covers key domains such as family–

educator trust, culturally responsive climate, and areas of engagement. Although the survey was

developed in an American educational context, modifications are easily made to make it more

relevant to Canadian educational settings. For families with limited first-language literacy, the

*Most Significant Change Technique* (Dart & Davies, 2003) is used instead. Comments and

replies to social media posts can also reflect project impact and influence future directions.

### *Evaluation Process and Data Collection: Phase 3 DCM*

As is apparent from the preceding discussion, the evaluation process for this OIP is one

that is grounded in consistent evaluator and collaborator investiture from start to finish.

Evaluation tools are used for preintervention assessment, formative assessment, and

postintervention (summative) assessment. Given the numerous PL cycles and the projected 3-

year project timeline, the evaluator-leader can model adaptive expertise in determining whether

the selected evaluation tools are effective in providing the right kind data. Regardless of the need

to replace, remove, or add a tool, the evaluation process retains its collaborative, dialogic,

inclusive, transformative, and equity-focused character.

### Part 3: Metaevaluation

Metaevaluation relates to Phase 4 of the DCM (Kuenkel, n.d.). Stufflebeam (2001), a

founding theorist on the positivist branch of evaluation, defined metaevaluation as

> the process of delineating, obtaining, and applying description information and
>
> judgmental information about an evaluation's utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy
>
> and its systematic nature, competence, integrity/honesty, respectfulness, and social
>
> responsibility to guide the evaluation and publicly report its strengths and weaknesses. (p.
>
> 183)

In essence, Stufflebeam advocated the use of independent, external evaluators to the project to publicly substantiate or reject impact results with the purpose of promoting sustainable organizational improvement and accountability. Although the scope of this OIP is restricted to the CSDA organization, any attempt to generalize the findings for novel applications would require the engagement of additional qualified evaluators to collect and analyze the quantitative and qualitative data. Metaevaluation is not included in Year 1 of the OIP. Its use in Years 2 and 3 is decided based on the CSDA's commitment to the OIP and the direction of PL in the district.

## Chapter Summary

The combination of frameworks utilized in Chapter 3 speaks to the complexity of organizational change. Chapter 3 provides a clear and concise account of how the PoP can be resolved by layering the DCM implementation phases with the AEM of PL. The success of this framework is reliant on the collaborative-transformative leadership approach to engage collaborators in effective KMb and evaluation practices. The scholarship of Anderson and McLachlan (2016), Phipps et al. (2016), Greene (2005), Mertens (2019), Patton (2017), and Safir and Dugan (2021) guide the kind of expertise and transformative practices expected of teachers in the CSDA. The KMb and evaluation measures proposed in Chapter 3 retain the qualities reflected in an OIP grounded in STC theory with a focus on equity, democratic classrooms, and decolonizing narratives. Appendix M provides a summary of the OIP conceptual framework.

## Next Steps and Future Considerations

With the OIP complete, it is possible to visualize a pathway towards pedagogical equity for ELLs in the CSDA. The problematic lack of teacher pedagogical knowledge, skills, and attitudes, that adversely impacts the language acquisition, engagement, and belonging of ELLs in inclusive classrooms can, in fact, be resolved through collaborative-transformative leadership

and the three orders of change embedded in a conceptual framework built on STC theory and evidence-informed pedagogical practices.

The pedagogical framework of this OIP makes visible the understated reciprocity between teacher and student. This reciprocity emerges through the language of a democratic classroom; one imbued with care, collaboration, passion, and possibility. So many of the students and families for whom this OIP is crafted have fled the most violent, impoverished, and appalling circumstances in search of a safer and more fulfilling life. Although it is true that educators do not have control over a student's life circumstances, they are inextricably bound by an ethical and professional obligation to do everything in their power to reach, teach, and hold space for all learners during the caring hours of the school day.

The cultivation of democratic classrooms is a preliminary step in ensuring equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for all students regardless of their professed identities. Although ELLs are the named beneficiaries of the proposed shift in educator knowledge, skills, and attitudes, the pedagogical practices named in this OIP benefit all manner of student diversity. The concept of inclusion in this OIP is not only a product of the conceptual framework, but a goal to which all educational organizations should strive. The goal of inclusive and equitable quality education is, indeed, a requirement for all societies that dare to call themselves democratic (Antoninis et al., 2020). The CSDA and other Alberta school districts cannot, and should not, wait for the Ministry of Education to provide direction for equity practices in schools. Equity is needed now.

It is important to note that pedagogical equity for ELLs is more than just a celebration of diversity; it is the honouring of student voice, the stewardship of story, and the dismantling of traditional organizational structures that restrict the education of linguistically diverse students. It

is about moving from a deficit-based mindset towards a strengths-based mindset (Ferlazzo, 2020; Hammond, 2020; Mesler et al., 2021). The complexity of a pedagogical shift requires all educators to be assiduous, agile, and authentic as they collectively push onward and upward to reach new professional heights (Zepeda et al., 2019). Despite the limitations of this OIP to fully address broader issues of systemic bias, systemic racism, and a Euro-centric curriculum, the wide-spread adoption of the proposed pedagogical framework can contribute significantly to educational parity in the CSDA and other school division grappling with similar challenges. It is hoped that this preliminary shift in practice engenders further equity-focused conversations that seek to improve both student and educator success, strengthen community ties, and increase district accountability.

It is no accident that the classroom quilt activity mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation is so widely used to build community. Although I did not appreciate the true profundity of this simple welcoming ritual at the time, the classroom quilt was, and still is, a powerful reminder that all people are undeniably united through the social fabric of humanity. Education, like the crafting of a quilt, is an act of love; a gift of connection, belonging, and the possibility of a better future. For this reason, all educators are called upon to live more fully in their vocation; a life lived in service to others, and with others, through the beautiful diversity of the human experience.

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  https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000300
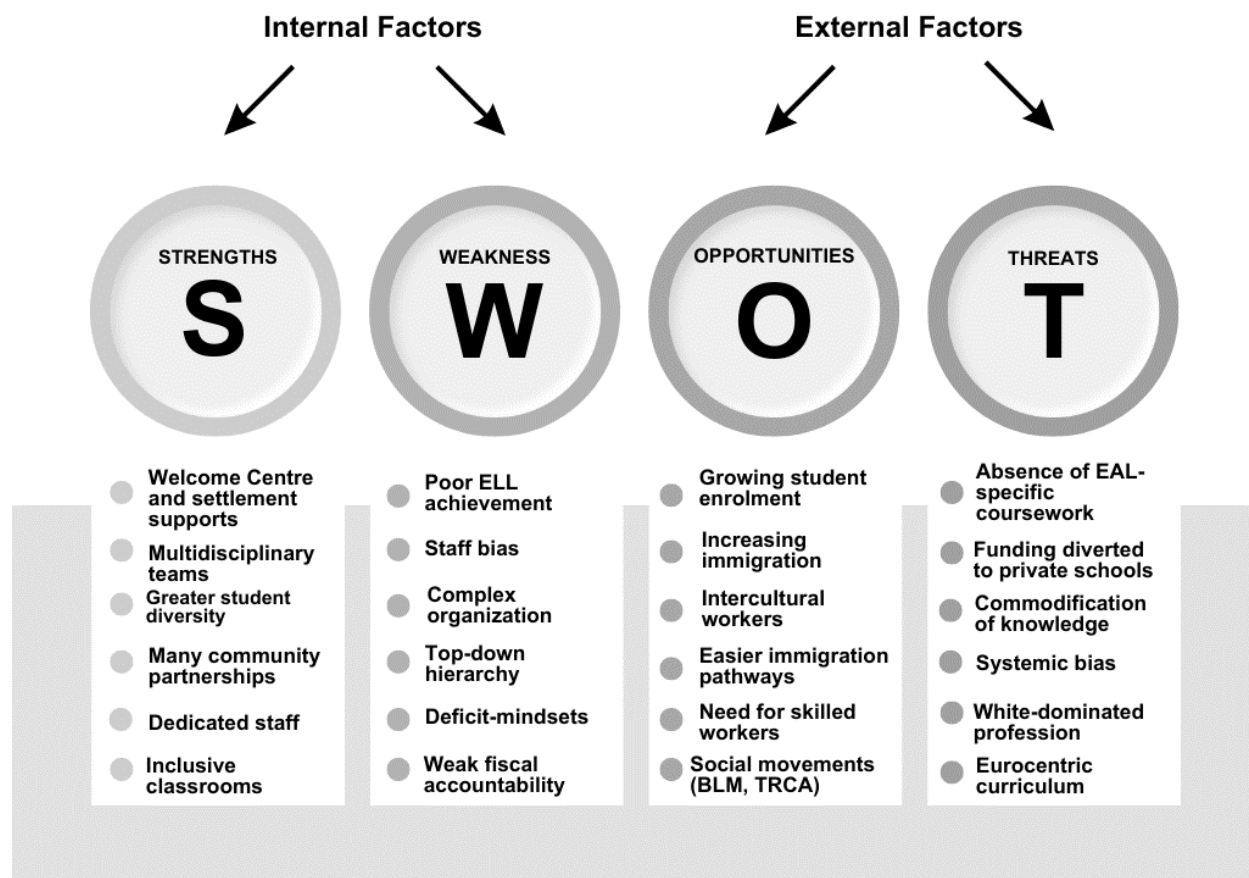
**Appendix A**

**The Wheel of Power and Privilege**
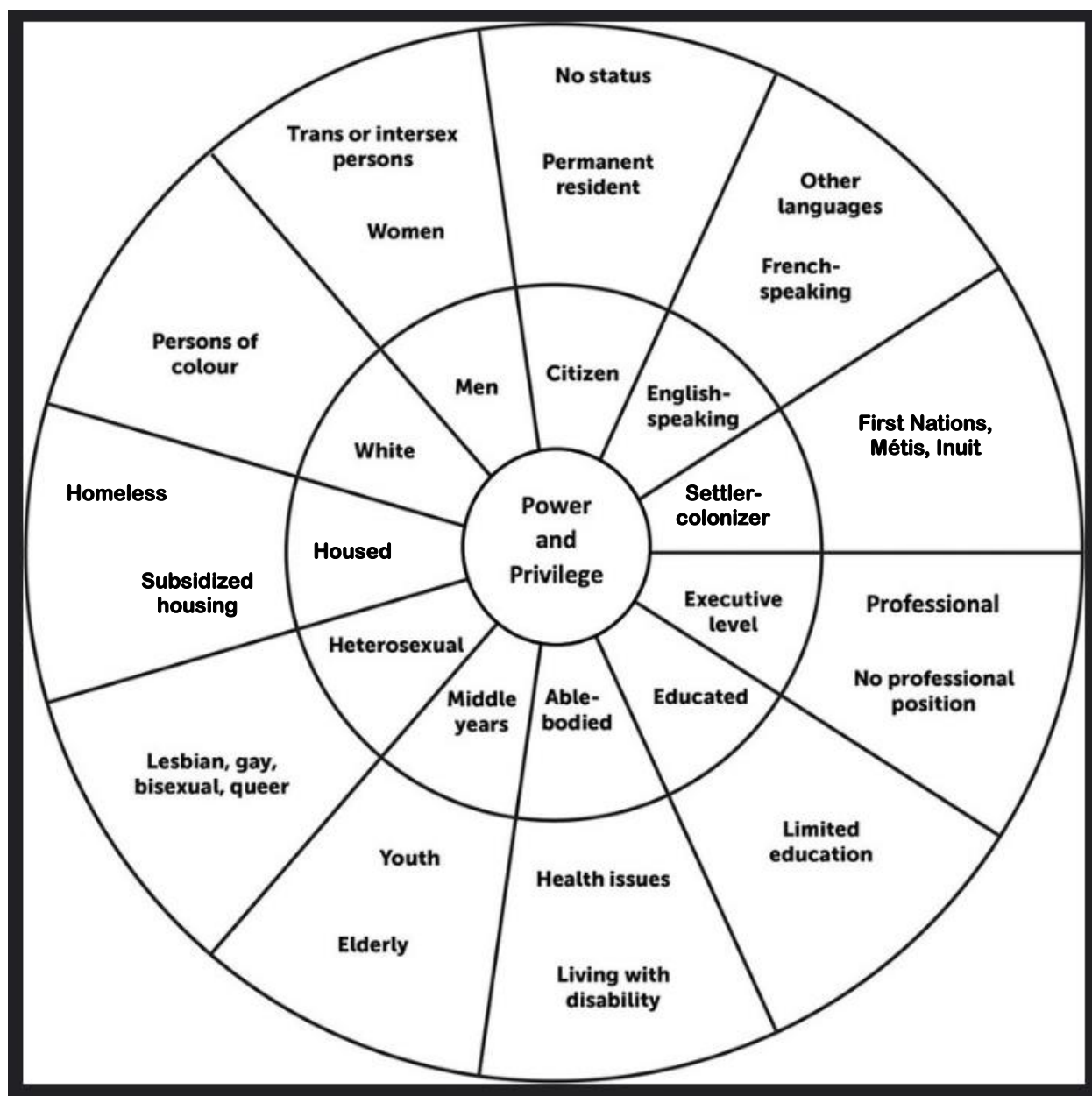


*Note.* Adapted from Cababa, S. (2023). [*The power wheel shows your proximity to power and privilege*]. [Figure]. Flickr.  https://www.flickr.com/photos/rosenfeldmedia/52597381998

**Appendix B**

**SWOT Analysis Summary**

Internal Factors                    External Factors

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESS | OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S** | **W** | **O** | **T** |

| | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Welcome Centre and settlement supports | Poor ELL achievement | Growing student enrolment | Absence of EAL-specific coursework |
| Multidisciplinary teams | Staff bias | Increasing immigration | Funding diverted to private schools |
| Greater student diversity | Complex organization | Intercultural workers | Commodification of knowledge |
| Many community partnerships | Top-down hierarchy | Easier immigration pathways | Systemic bias |
| Dedicated staff | Deficit-mindsets | Need for skilled workers | White-dominated profession |
| Inclusive classrooms | Weak fiscal accountability | Social movements (BLM, TRCA) | Eurocentric curriculum |

**Appendix C**

**Voice 21 Oracy Framework**
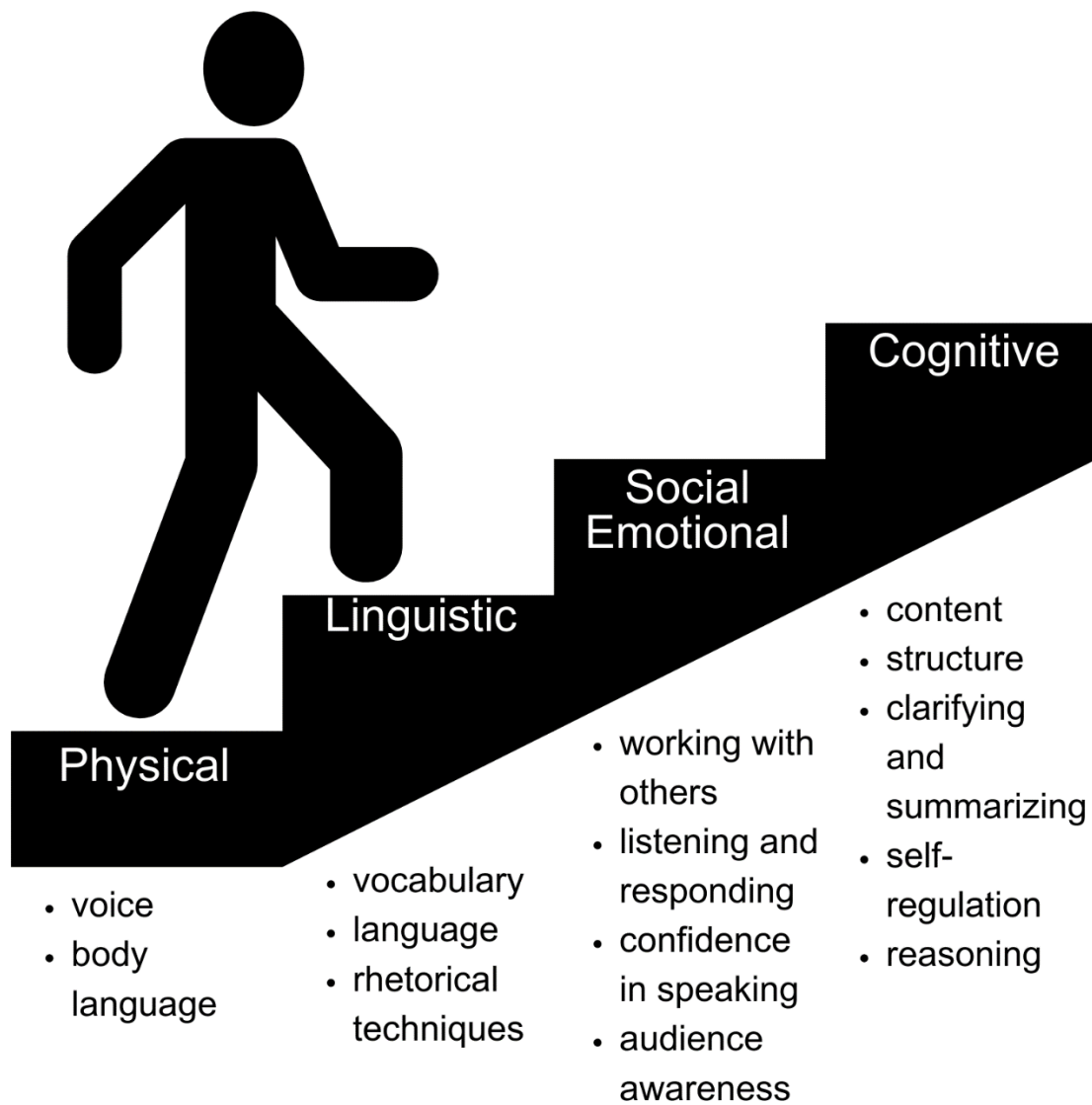


*Note.* Adapted from *Oracy Framework*, by Voice 21. https://voice21.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/The-Oracy-Framework-2021.pdf
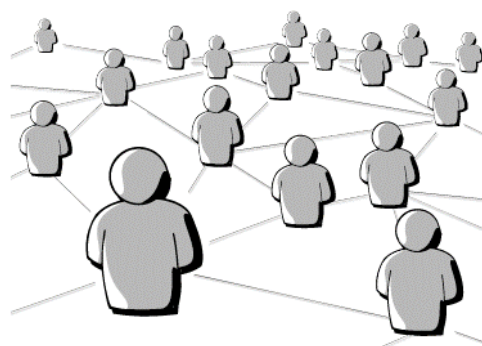
**Appendix D**

**The Right Drivers for the Right Solution: The Bloodless Paradigm Versus the Human**

**Paradigm**



**The Bloodless Paradigm**

Academics Obsession
Machine Intelligence
Austerity
Fragmentation

**The Human Paradigm**

Wellbeing and Learning
Social Intelligence
Equality Investments
Systemness

*Note.* Adapted from Fullan, M. (2021). *The right drivers for whole system success*, February

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**Appendix E**

**The Leadership-focused Vision for Change Supported by the Human Paradigm**
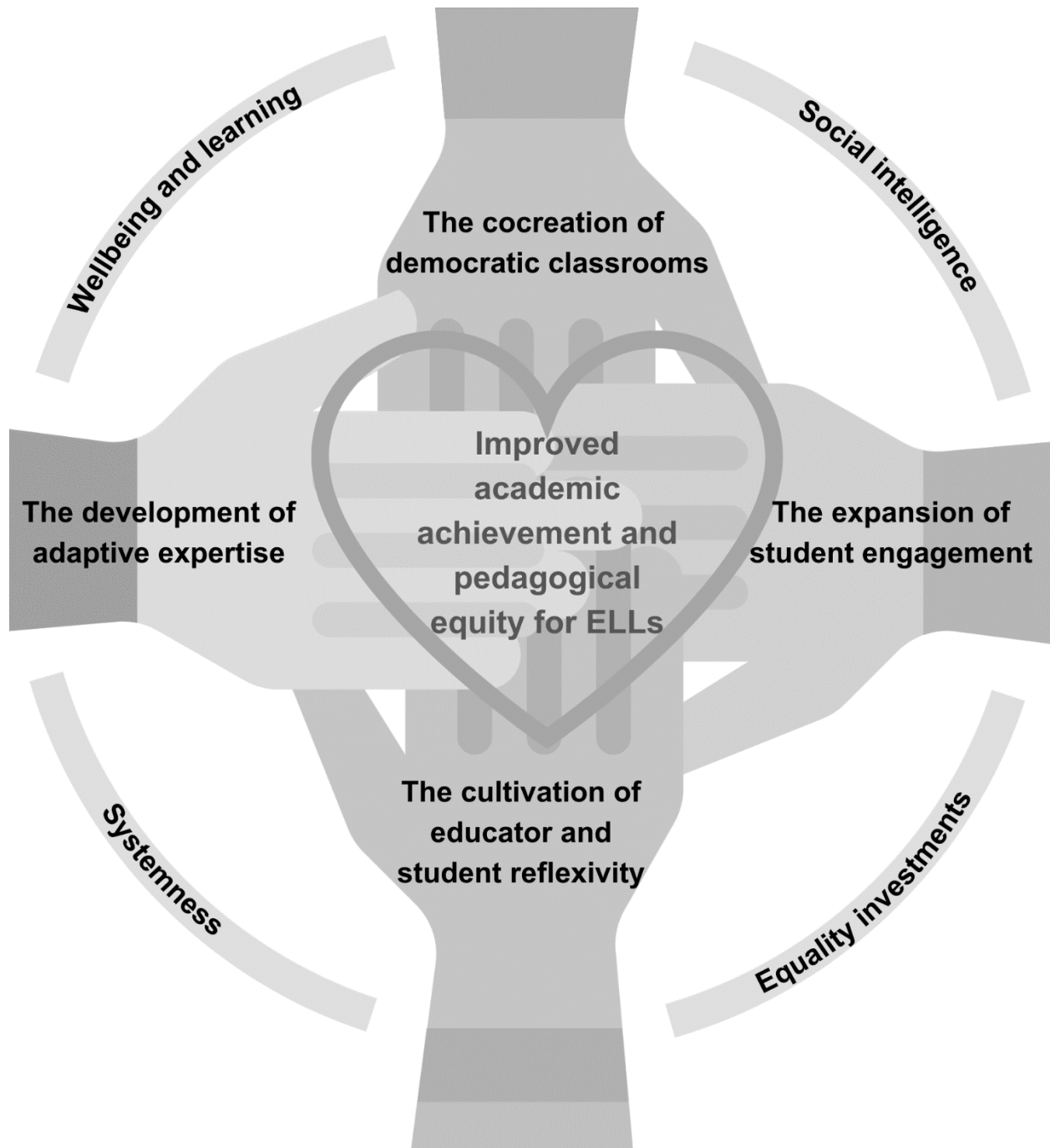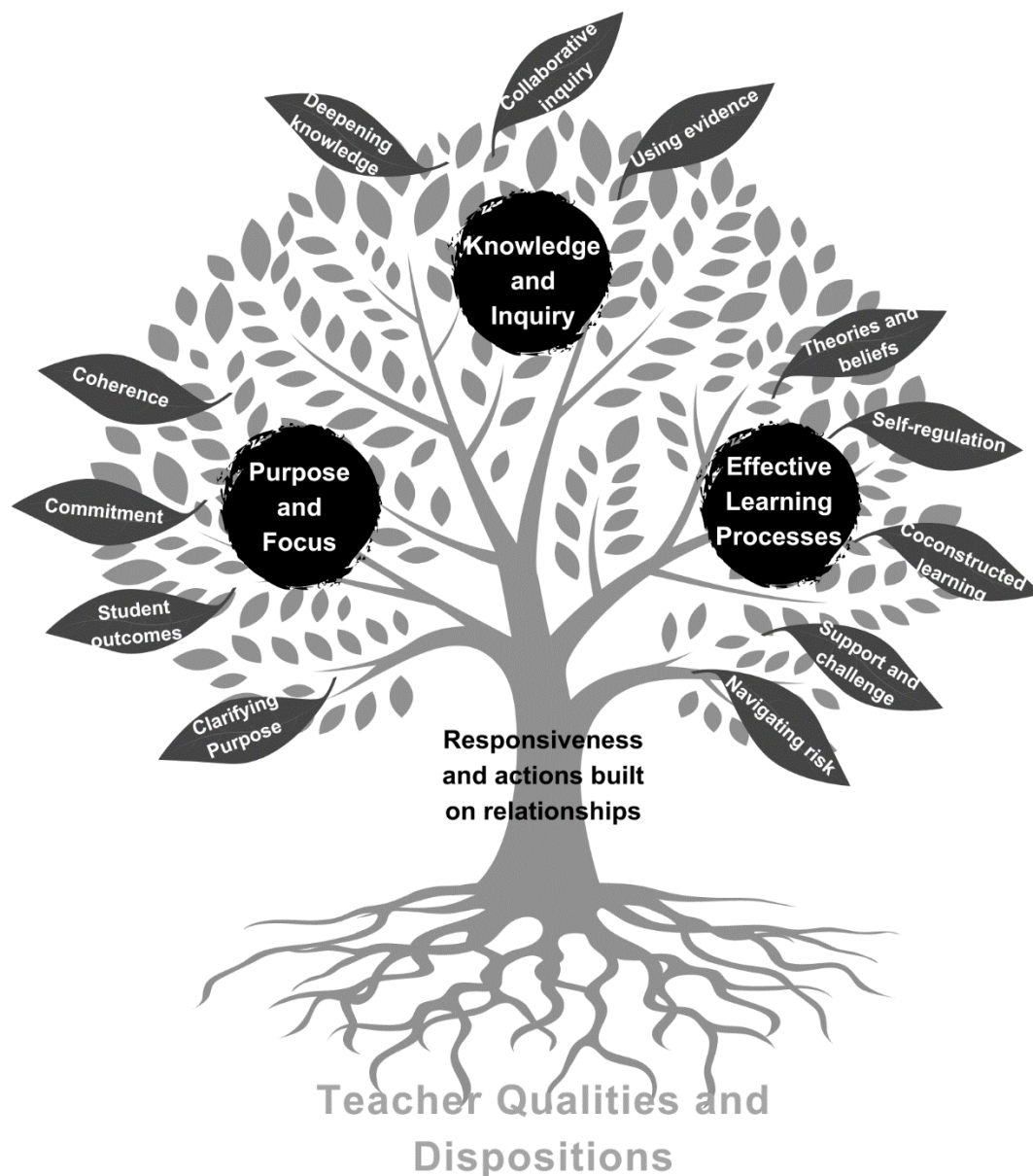
**Appendix F**

**Integrated Professional Learning Solution Criteria Comparison**

| | Solution 1 The Coaching Model | Solution 2 The SIOP-Cascade Model | Solution 3 The Adaptive Expertise Model |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PL Contributes to Student Wellbeing & Learning** | Moderate | Low | High |
| **Develops Social Intelligence and the Potential for Collaborative Inquiry** | Low | Moderate | High |
| **Equity Investments & Commitment to Serve ELLs** | Low | Moderate | High |
| **Systemness and Coherence** | Micro-Teacher Meso-School | Micro-Teacher Meso-School | Micro-Teacher Meso-School Macro-District |
| **Professional Learning Design** | Malleable (Content, Pedagogy) | Malleable (Content, Pedagogy, Attitude) | Transformative (Content, Pedagogy, Attitude, Agency) |
| **Potential to Develop Reflexivity and Democratic Classrooms** | Low | Moderate-High | High |
| **Potential to Observe PL Impact on Practice** | High | Low | Moderate |
| **Potential for Collaborative-transformative Leadership Practices** | Moderate | Low | High |

*Note.* The first four criteria relate to Fullan's (2021) human paradigm. The final four criteria

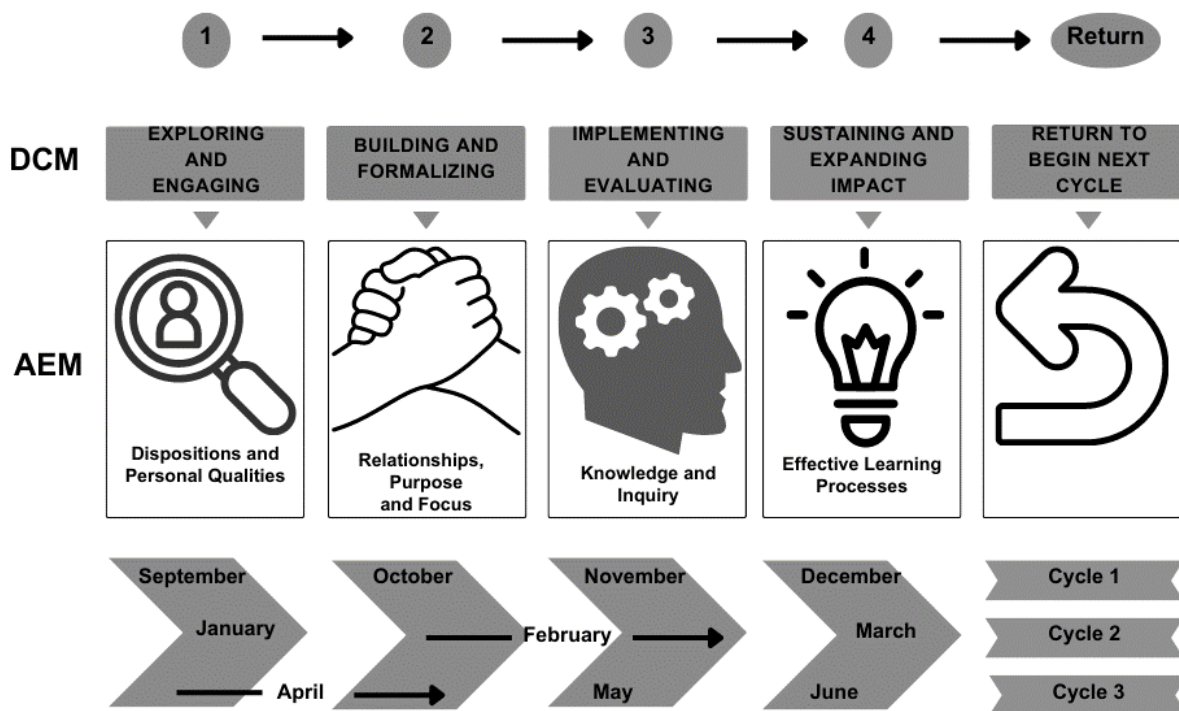relate to PL content and a collaborative-transformative leadership approach.

Appendix G

The Adaptive Expertise Conceptual Model



*Note.* Adapted from *Leading Powerful Professional Learning: Responding to Complexity With Adaptive Expertise*, by D. Le Fevre, H. Timperley, K. Twyford, and F. Ell, 2020, p. 3.

**Appendix H**

**Alignment of the DCM, the AEM, and the Implementation Timeline**

| | 1 → | 2 → | 3 → | 4 → | Return |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**DCM**

| EXPLORING AND ENGAGING | BUILDING AND FORMALIZING | IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING | SUSTAINING AND EXPANDING IMPACT | RETURN TO BEGIN NEXT CYCLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**AEM**

| Dispositions and Personal Qualities | Relationships, Purpose and Focus | Knowledge and Inquiry | Effective Learning Processes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| September / January / April | October / February | November / May | December / March / June | Cycle 1 / Cycle 2 / Cycle 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

*Note*. There is a progressive deepening of knowledge, inquiry, reflexivity, and adaptive expertise from one implementation cycle to the next.

**Appendix I**

**The CSDA KMb Plan**
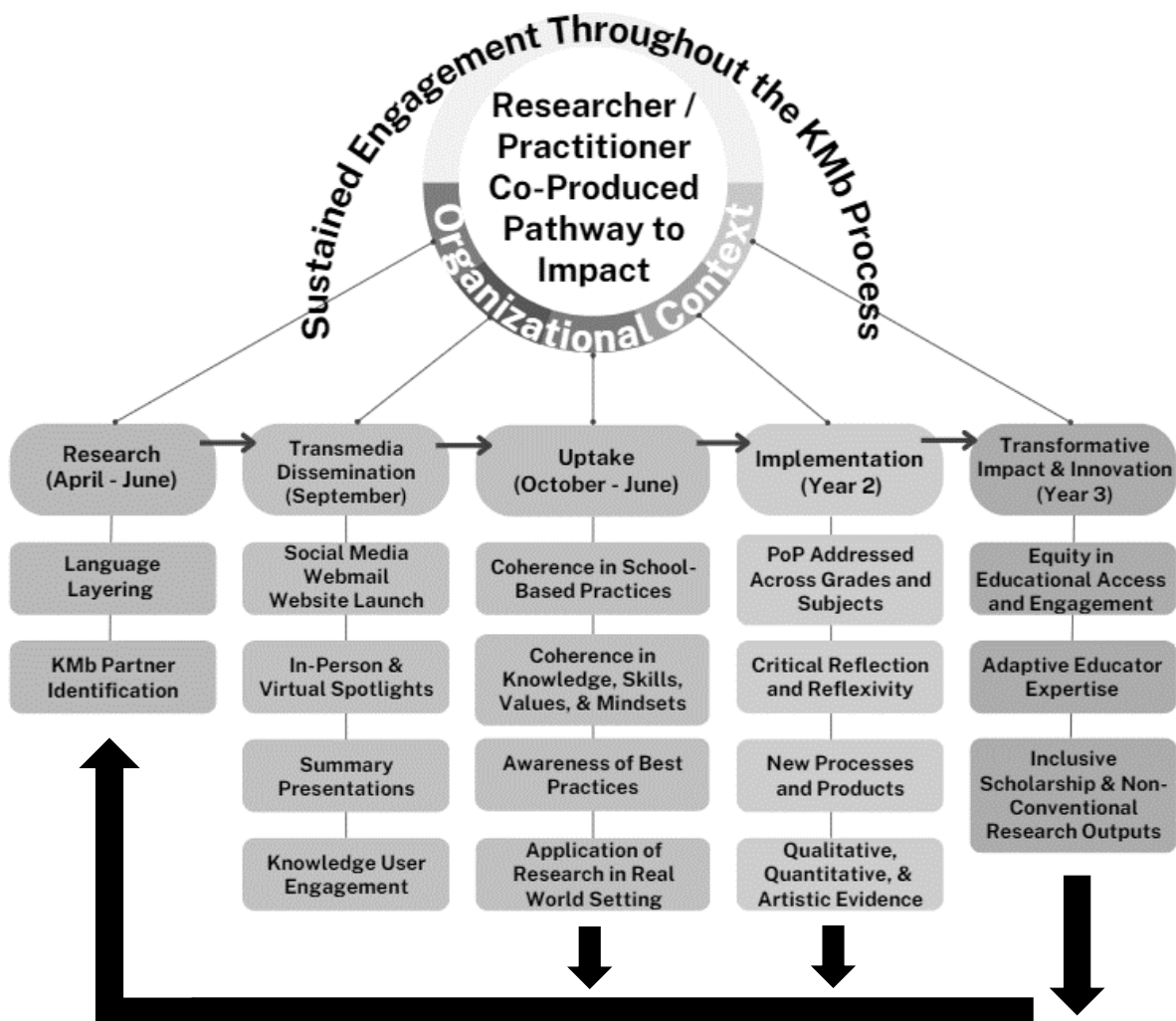


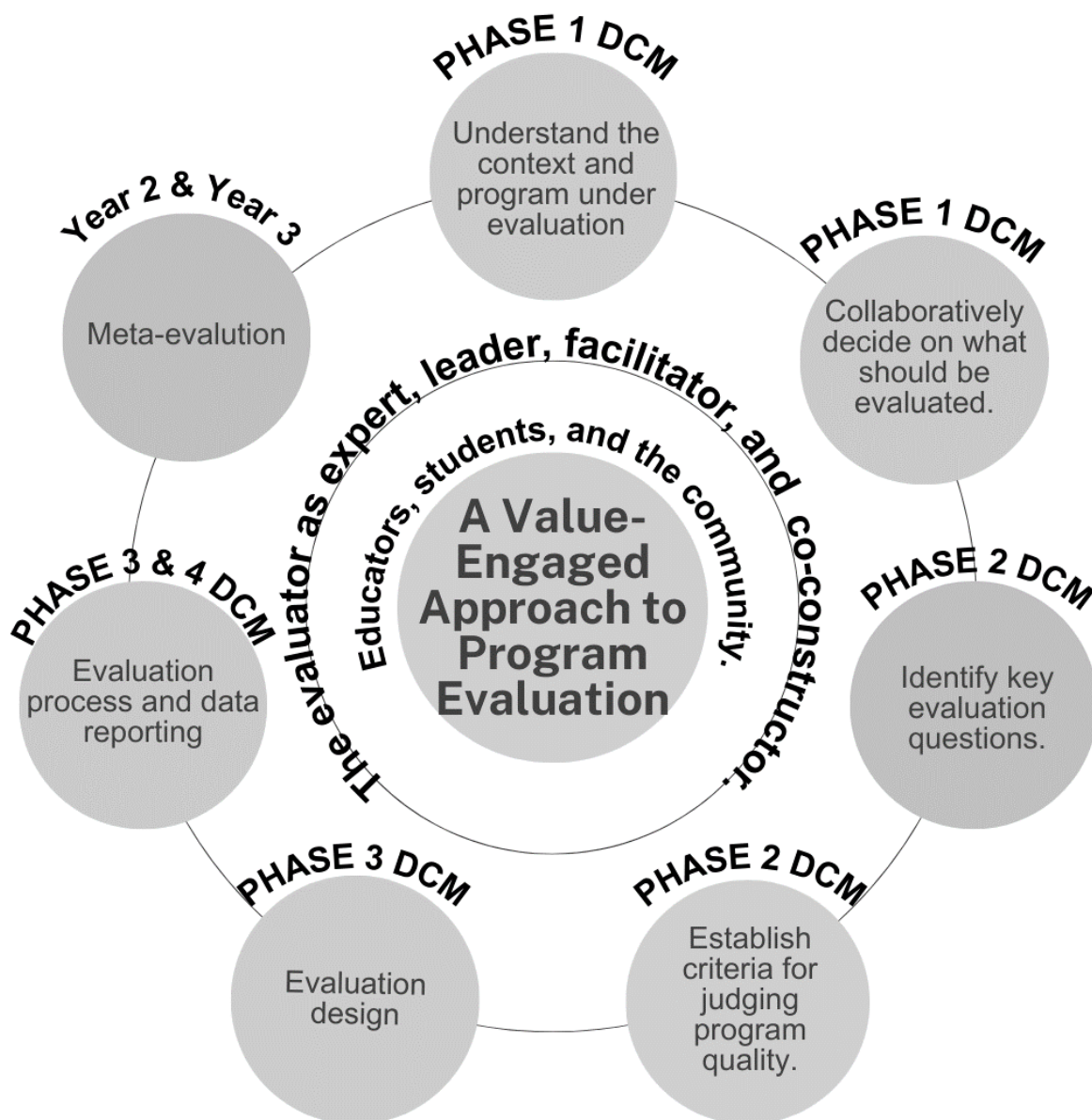*Note*. New questions, observation, and novel outcomes arise from authentic educational contexts during the uptake, implementation, and innovation stages. These contributions are cycled back to the beginning of the KMb cycle for additional inquiry and critique.

**Appendix J**

**Alignment of VEAE With the DCM Phases**

# Appendix K

## Timeline Alignment of the DCM, the AEM, the KMb Plan, and the VEAE

| | DCM | AEM | KMb | VEAE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Spring** | Research sharing and establishing partnerships | | | |
| **September** | **Phase 1** Exploring / Engaging | **Cycle 1** Roots and Trunk | Transmedia dissemination | **Part 1A** Evaluands Questions Criteria |
| **October** | **Phase 2** Building / Formalizing | Trunk and Branch 1 | Uptake | |
| **November** | **Phase 3** Implementing / Evaluating | Branch 2 | | **Part 2A** Formative Evaluation |
| **December** | **Phase 4** Sustaining / Expanding | Branch 3 | | |
| **January** | **Phase 1** | **Cycle 2** Roots and Trunk | | **Part 1B** Evaluands Questions Criteria |
| **February** | **Phase 2** | Trunk and Branch 1 | | **Part 2B** |
| | **Phase 3** | Branch 2 | | Formative Evaluation |
| **March** | **Phase 4** | Branch 3 | | |
| **April** | **Phase 1** | **Cycle 3** Roots and Trunk | | **Part 1C** Evaluands Questions Criteria |
| | **Phase 2** | Branch 1 | | |
| **May** | **Phase 3** | Branch 2 | | |
| **June** | **Phase 4** | Branch 3 | | **Part 2 C** Summative Evaluation |
| **Year 2** | Implementation | Positive impact data returns the project to Cycle 1 with expansion | | **Part 3A** Metaevaluation |
| **Year 3** | Transformative impact | Positive impact data returns the project to Cycle 1 with expansion | | **Part 3B** Metaevaluation |

**Appendix L**

**Summary Chart of Evaluation Tools, Their Users, and the Data Collected**

| Data Contributor | Name of Tool | What the Tool Measures | Source | Administration Dates |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher / School | The Oracy Benchmarks —Voice 21 | Self-assessments that measure the quality of oracy education provided by teachers and schools. | (Voice 21, 2019, p. 23-26) | November / June |
| Teacher | 17-Item Adaptive Expertise Measurement Framework | A self-assessment designed to measure adaptive expertise | (Carbonell et al., 2016, p. 175) | November / June |
| Teacher / Evaluator | The Culturally Responsive Teaching Survey | A 17-item survey of culturally responsive teaching practices. | (Rhodes, 2017, p. 52) | November / February / June |
| Teacher / Evaluator | The SIOP Model Lesson Planning Checklist | The integration of eight lesson plan components that help make content comprehensible for ELLs | (Echevarria et al., 2018) | Monthly from October to May |
| Student | Provincial Achievement Test and Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test | Regression analysis is completed to determine student achievement versus cognitive potential. | Alberta Ministry of Education, CSDA Department of District Monitoring | June |
| Student | Alberta ESL Proficiency Benchmarks (Speaking strand) | Language proficiency assessment developed in Alberta | (Alberta Education, 2011) | June |
| Student | Student Engagement Instrument | 33 questions covering 6 domains, 5-point rating scale | (Carter et al., 2012) | November / February / June |

| Data Contributor | Name of Tool | What the Tool Measures | Source | Administration Dates |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student | Screencastify—Screen recording tool (Google Chrome extension) | Permits students to share learning/thinking through audio/video recording | (https://www.screencastify.com/) | Monthly from October to May |
| Evaluator | Tiered System of Intervention | Various levels of student engagement (Tier 1, 2, 3) | (Hofkens & Ruzek, 2019, p. 321) | |
| Family | Road Map Family Engagement Survey (Translate as needed) | Equitable collaboration between families, communities, and schools. | (The Equitable Parent-School Collaboration Research Project, 2015) | September / June |
| Family | The 'Most Significant Change' Technique | Monitors/evaluates change projects | (Dart & Davies, 2003) | September / June |

**Appendix M**

**Summary of the OIP Conceptual Framework**