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Removing Barriers and Increasing Access to Advanced Placement

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Abstract

Advanced Placement allows students to demonstrate college readiness while in high school and potentially earn credit or placement toward higher education degrees. However, barriers can prevent students from accessing this advanced coursework and impede student learning, limit university options, and impact career prospects. Shifting teacher mindsets to an access-centered approach offers a viable solution to removing barriers. Leading faculty to change practices in the AP program at Birchwood (a pseudonym) requires reculturing an established culture of curriculum. Three leadership approaches serve this plan: the ethical highlights these problems of access, the authentic serves to build relations with school leaders, department heads, curriculum chairs, and AP faculty, and the instructional guides teachers' curriculum planning, instruction, and assessment. Social Cognitive Theory underpins this change process with its two concepts: triadic reciprocal causation and self-efficacy beliefs. Reculturing requires changing teachers' behaviours and their internal competencies, which change the environment in this reciprocal relationship. Changing self-efficacy beliefs in teachers is achieved through verbal persuasion, vicarious experience, personal mastery, and emotional state. This three-year implementation plan follows a recursive process through the Change Path Model's awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization phases including developing the collective efficacy of an AP leadership team in year one, building AP teacher capacity for change in year two, and changing teacher practices in year three. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks track progress and judge effectiveness. Next steps close out this plan with future considerations including a focus on social justice and equitable access.

Keywords: access, Advanced Placement, reculturing, Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy beliefs

Executive Summary

Advanced Placement allows students to demonstrate college readiness while in high school (College Board, 2022g; Herberg-Davis, 2006; Klopfenstein & Thomas, 2009; Sadler et al., 2010) and potentially earn credit or placement (Burns et al., 2019; College Board, 2022j). Teacher self-efficacy, placement tests, enrollment criteria, and curriculum, instruction, assessment, and evaluation can prevent students from accessing this advanced coursework and impede student learning, limit university options, and impact career prospects (Klopfenstein, 2003). Shifting faculty mindsets to an access-centered approach is critical to removing barriers (College Board, 2022h). This organizational improvement plan concerns the reculturing (Joseph et al., 2011) of the Advanced Placement program at Birchwood (a pseudonym) so that an access-centered vision drives all AP programming decisions.

Chapter 1 explores the problem of practice: that despite efforts to offer a premium educational experience, barriers have emerged and limited student opportunities in the Advanced Placement program. Rooted in Western tradition and ideology (Guttek, 2013), I take a social constructivist approach to learning (Allen, 1994; Lohmeier, 2018; Palincsar, 1998) and employ the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997) lens in viewing this problem. Two aspects of this theory—triadic reciprocal causation and self-efficacy beliefs—inform my thoughts and actions in implementing this OIP. As the AP director, I have professional agency to lead change and consider philosophical, relational, and actionable approaches. The organizational context is explored next, including macro, meso, and micro leadership considerations, along with tensions impacting this organization. Following, I delve into the problem of practice—access to Advanced Placement—from two theoretical frameworks: the structural functional epistemology and the interpretivist epistemology (Capper, 2019). Nadler and Tushman’s (1980) Congruence

Model aids in understanding the organizational context and Lent and Brown's (2019) Social Cognitive Career Theory aids in understanding the individual experience. Three student, faculty, and leadership-oriented questions emerge. Finally, my leadership-focused vision for change completes this problem posing chapter.

Chapter 2 focuses on the planning and development phases of the organizational improvement plan. First, I share my leadership approaches to change as ethical (Ciulla, 2005; Ehrich et al., 2015; Starratt, 1996), authentic (Aviolo & Gardner, 2005; Aviolo et al., 2022; Cameron, 2008; Duingan, 2015; Walumbwa et al., 2008), and instructional (Gupton, 2010; Marzano et al., 2011; Stronge et al., 2008). Then, I consider frameworks for leading the change process and fully explore Deszca's (2019) Change Path Model. Next, I reflect on the organization's readiness for change using two change readiness instruments: Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Readiness Dimensions and Bouckennooghe et al.'s (2009) Climate Dimension questionnaire. Finally, I consider three possible solutions to this problem of practice: increasing AP offerings (Klopfenstein, 2003; College Board, 2022h), supervising AP faculty (Marzano et al., 2011; Stronge and Xu, 2021), and reculturing AP curriculum (Joseph et al., 2011), with this last solution holding the greatest promise. Joseph et al.'s (2011) Cultures of Curriculum framework serves to resolve this problem of practice as the process of reculturing is the process of changing faculty mindsets, and changing mindsets results in changing organizations.

Chapter 3 provides detailed implementation, communication, and monitoring and evaluation plans. First, reculturing is contextualized within the organizational strategy as optimizing existing programs for existing customers (Nagji & Tuff, 2012) and is supported by various change drivers including aligned direction, accepted change vision, and leaders' change related actions (Kirsch et al., 2011; Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). Three priorities are then

proposed: developing collective efficacy in an AP Leadership Team (College Board, 2022h), building teacher capacity through an AP Teaching Team, and changing practice through professional learning, each fulfilling a one-year timeline. Potential implementation issues are considered including accountability and oversight (Marzano et al., 2011), ethic of care violations (Ehrich et al., 2015; Sharratt, 1997), and the knowing-doing gap (DuFour et al., 2005). Cawsey et al.'s (2016) four phase communication plan is proposed in which the AP Leadership Team is awakened to the problem of access; Lavis et al.'s (2003) Knowledge Transfer (KT) strategy is utilized to awaken, mobilize, and accelerate change with AP faculty; and Malik's (2020) Knowledge Mobilization (KMb) framework is leveraged to institutionalize an access-centered vision for AP. Monitoring and evaluation tools are then employed to determine to what extent changes have taken place (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016).

This OIP ends with a consideration of next steps. Implementing an access-centered vision requires three years to reculture deeply established curriculum practices. Once these initial barriers are removed, a sustained institutionalization phase in the following years will focus on KMb in which knowledge users use research to identify and eliminate inequities—a common problem in the AP program—with a heightened awareness of how curriculum instruction, assessment and evaluation can further exclude those frequently marginalized (Hallett & Venegas, 2011; Kolluri, 2020; Makan, 2019; Rodriguez & McGuire, 2019; Ward, 2020; Xu et al., 2021). Making equitable access a guiding principle (College Board, 2022h) is the future evolution of this organizational improvement plan.

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Acronyms

AP	Advanced Placement
APLT	Advanced Placement Leadership Team
BoD	Board of Directors
CAIS	Canadian Accredited Independent Schools
CB	College Board
CPM	Change Path Model
KMb	Knowledge Mobilization
KT	Knowledge Transfer
NAIS	National Association of Independent Schools
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIP	Organizational Improvement Plan
OME	Ontario Ministry of Education
OSS	Ontario Secondary School
OSSD	Ontario Secondary School Diploma
PoP	Problem of Practice
PSAT	Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SIA	Structured Implementation Activities
SLT	Senior Leadership Team

Definitions

Access: In the context of Advanced Placement, the College Board identifies two types: “access for students who are prepared for AP but to whom it is not available, and access for students who need preparation to benefit from AP” (College Board, 2001, p. 8).

Advanced Placement: An advanced curricular program in which students “tackle college-level work while they're still in high school. And through taking AP Exams, students can earn college credit and placement” (College Board, 2023b).

AP Capstone: A diploma program requiring students achieve qualifying scores on six AP exams including two yearlong courses, AP Seminar and AP Research, in which students develop “skills in research, analysis, evidence-based arguments, collaboration, writing, and presenting” (College Board, 2023b).

AP Potential: A tool schools can use to predict student scores “3 or higher on a given AP Exam based on their performance on the PSAT” (College Board, 2022e).

Authentic Leadership: A leadership approach “that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development” (as cited in Aviolo & Gardner, 2005).

Canadian Accredited Independent Schools: An organization of 90+ member schools “all of which commit to undergoing a reflective and collaborative school improvement process, meeting National Standards, and participating in research and professional learning” (Canadian Accredited Independent Schools [CAIS], 2022a).

Capacity Building: In education any “efforts designed to enhance and coordinate human, technical, financial, and other organizational resources directed toward quality implementation of evidence-based, competence-building interventions” (Spoth et al., 2004, p. 32).

Change Drivers: In education, change drivers are any “events, activities, or behaviors that facilitate the implementation of change” (as cited in Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010).

Collaborative Leadership: A school’s leadership approach that “focuses on strategic schoolwide actions directed toward improvement in student learning that are shared among teachers, administrators, and others” (Heck & Hallinger, 2010, p. 228).

Collective Efficacy: A group’s capacity for performance which “affects the sense of mission and purpose of a system, the strength of common commitment to what it seeks to achieve, how well its members work together to produce results, and the group's resiliency in the face of difficulties” (Bandura, 1997, p. 469).

College Board: Responsible for the Advanced Placement Program, the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, and AP Potential, the College Board is “a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity” (College Board, 2023a).

Curriculum as Culture: Any curriculum can be conceptualized as culture because of its “belief systems, values, behaviors, language, artistic expression, the environment in which education takes place, power relationships, and most importantly, the norms that affect our sense about what is right or appropriate” (Joseph, 2011, p. 28).

Distributed Leadership: An approach to leadership in education characterized as “enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the

organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result” (Elmore, 2000, p. 15).

Ethical Leadership: An approach to school leadership characterized as “a social, relational practice concerned with the moral purpose of education” (Ehrich et al., 2015, p. 199).

Ethic of Care: In Starratt’s (1996) Ethical Framework, this ethic approach “refers to a standpoint of regard for the dignity and worth of individuals” (Ehrich et al., 2015, p. 199).

Ethic of Critique: In Starratt’s (1996) Ethical Framework, this ethic approach refers to “a sense of social justice and human rights” (Ehrich et al., 2015, p. 200).

Ethic of Justice: In Starratt’s (1996) Ethical Framework, this ethic approach the “fair and equitable treatment of people” (Ehrich et al., 2015, p. 200).

Equitable Access: In the Advanced Placement context, the College Board defines equitable access as “the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented” (College Board, 2022h, p. 3).

First-Order Change: Organizational change that is characterized by “small, incremental predictable interruptions in normal practice” (Lewis, 2016, p. 307).

Knowledge Mobilization: The deployment of research to policy and practice “concerns individual- and organization-level efforts to increase the use of research findings by education stakeholders such as policymakers, practitioners, and the public” (Malik, 2020, p. 2).

Knowledge Transfer: In organizations, “the process through which one unit (e.g., group, department, or division) is affected by the experience of another [and] manifests itself through changes in the knowledge or performance of the recipient units” (p. 151).

High Performance Cycle: A model to describe the process of human behaviour; specifically, “High performance on tasks that are perceived as meaningful and growth facilitating, plus high external and internal rewards, lead to high job satisfaction. The consequence is a willingness to stay with the organization and accept future challenges” (Latham et al., 2002, p. 203).

Independent School: A school that is “not-for-profit and [...] overseen by an elected Board of Governors” (Canadian Accredited Independent Schools [CAIS], 2022c).

Instructional Leadership: Broadly defined by Blase and Blase (1998) as school leaders that “value a blend of supervision, staff development and curriculum development” (as cited in Southworth, 2002, p. 3).

National Association of Independent Schools: An organization of 2000+ not-for-profit member schools in the United States and abroad that “are self-determining in mission and program and are governed by independent boards” (National Association of Independent Schools [NAIS], 2022a).

Opportunity to Learn: The notion that time, content, and quality of classroom instruction are “inputs and processes within a school context necessary for producing student achievement of intended outcomes” (Elliott & Bartlett, 2016).

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test: The PSAT is an assessment of reading, writing, and math skills administered in grades 8, 9, or 10 used “to understand and track student progress toward college preparedness” (College Board, 2023c).

Private School: A designation assigned by the provincial government to schools that “operate as businesses or non-profit organizations independently of the Ministry of Education and in accordance with the requirements set by the *Education Act*” (Ontario, 2022).

Reculturing: The process of transforming “fundamental beliefs about all aspects of curriculum and pedagogy by profoundly altering persistent regularities of school practice” (Joseph et al., 2011, p. 56).

Second-Order Change: Organizational change characterized by “large transformational or radical changes that depart significantly from previous practice in ways that are somewhat frame-breaking” (Lewis, 2016, p. 312)

Self-Efficacy: The concept of human motivation defined as “a judgment of one’s ability to organize and execute given types of performances” (Bandura, 1997, p. 21).

Social Cognitive Theory: The concept of “human functioning that emphasizes the critical role played by the social environment on motivation, learning, and self-regulation” (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

Social Cognitive Career Theory: A conceptual model that extends on Social Cognitive Theory to include the “dynamic processes and mechanisms through which (a) career and academic interests develop, (b) career-relevant choices are forged and enacted, and (c) performance outcomes are achieved” (Lent et al., 1994, p. 80).

Triadic Reciprocal Causation: A view of the individual in relation to society in which “internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events; behavior; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally” (Bandura, 1997, p. 6).

Chapter 1: Problem Posing

Chapter 1 explores the problem of practice: that is, removing barriers and increasing access to AP. First, my personal leadership and professional agency are positioned along with an overview of Social Cognitive Theory, the lens through which I view this organizational improvement plan. Second, organizational context is provided and includes an exploration of the macro, meso, and micro influences. Next, a thorough exploration of the PoP is conducted, complete with the historical context, current manifestation, and ideal future state. Guiding questions to resolving this problem then lead to a leadership-focused vision for change.

Positionality and Lens Statement

Education has the power to liberate the individual (Freedman, 2003; Gary, 2006) and give them agency of thought and action (Bandura, 1986, 1997). It follows, then, that higher education should increase this opportunity, elevating the power people have over their own circumstances and providing them with possibilities for personal fulfilment, career achievement, and overall life prospects (Lent et al., 1994; Lent & Brown, 2019). As someone passionate about learning, I value the opportunity education offers and I also recognize that learning manifests in complex and diverse ways. As educators, we must remain reflexive and adaptive, continuing to seek out and understand a range of theories of education and apply these in our schools to capture all learners and engage them in the learning process so that they too can find personal fulfillment in education (Hargreaves et al., 2018; Shirley & Hargreaves, 2021).

My teaching and learning are rooted in the Western tradition and I am fascinated by the many theories developed by Western educators as each offers insight into this human phenomenon, helping me to conceptualize my problem of practice better as well as determine a course of action for my organizational improvement plan. Kolb's (2014) four-stage experiential

learning cycle, for instance, is simple, clear, and actionable: begin at any stage and cycle through reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, active experimentation, and concrete experience. The coaching continuum, too, offers a captivating and intuitive framework: learners begin at the unaware stage, progress to the conscious stage, then to action stage, and finally to the refinement stage (Hall & Simeral, 2008). Both these theories illustrate the adaptive nature of learning as progressing, cyclically or linearly, through four easily understood stages. Yet, if we are to understand learning theories across three broadly accepted domains—behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism—then frameworks that can account for the complexity of the human learning experience should offer greater insight for conceptualizing human learning across these domains (Tawfik et al., 2017). Bloom’s domains of learning—cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor—has great staying power with its hierarchal learning levels: remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, and create (Bloom et al., 1956; Dettmer, 2005). Gardner (2008) reminds us that intelligence manifests across a broad swathe of domains: linguistic, mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. And Maslow shows us that we have a pyramidal hierarchy of needs: from the basic (physiological and safety), through the psychological (love and belonging and esteem), to the self-fulfillment (cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence) (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2007). Each of these complex frameworks remains with me as I reflect on my problem of practice and my organizational improvement plan and has influence in my decision-making, whether explicitly or implicitly.

Social Cognitive Theory

The lens through which this OIP is viewed is Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Bandura proposes triadic reciprocal causation comprising the person, the behaviour, and

the environment, each having influence on the others. In the context of this OIP, then, we can say a person's internal competencies (i.e., a faculty member's cognitive, emotional, and physical competencies) can influence their behaviour (i.e., their decisions and actions) and the environment (i.e., the school's classes, policies, and practices). Likewise, a faculty member's behaviour (i.e., their beliefs and actions) can influence their internal competencies and the school environment. Finally, the school environment itself can influence a faculty member's beliefs and actions and their cognitive, social, and physical behaviours. This reciprocal process between these three components—the person, the behaviour, and the environment—is central to this OIP.

Another aspect of Social Cognitive Theory is self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) referring to one's beliefs about their ability to complete actions and produce results. Self-efficacy can be enhanced through personal accomplishment or mastery (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1996): for instance, a faculty member can develop self-efficacy beliefs if they have mastered teaching a concept. A second source of self-efficacy is vicarious experience, in which social comparison processes enhance an individual's ability to complete a task because they have witnessed a 'model person' succeeding in this same endeavour (Connor & Norman, 2005; Pajares & Schunk, 2001). Thirdly, self-efficacy beliefs can be enhanced by verbal persuasion by others (Connor & Norman, 2005; Davis, 2022; Stajkovi & Luthans, 1998), as when a school leader reassures a teacher that they can succeed in managing a classroom. A fourth and final source of self-efficacy beliefs is influenced by emotional state (Connor & Norman, 2005; Wood & Bandura, 1989); for instance, a faculty member in a positive mood reinforces self-efficacy.

These two aspects of Social Cognitive Theory, triadic reciprocal causation and self-efficacy, inform my actions as a leader. From my leadership position I see how the faculty, their behaviours, and the school each influences the others. I also witness how personal

accomplishments, such as when an AP teacher masters the content and their students perform well on the exam, reinforce the teacher's self-efficacy beliefs. I see how model faculty who demonstrate mastery of AP teaching influence vicarious experience in the faculty assigned to these same AP classes and who subsequently begin developing self-efficacy beliefs. I observe how verbal persuasion builds self-efficacy beliefs, as when school leadership encourages a faculty member to teach an AP class, reassuring them they can do it, and that faculty member subsequently manages this transition effectively. Finally, I witness how oversight of an AP teacher's practices emotionally arouses them to build self-efficacy under this pressure of observation. Leveraging each of these four self-efficacy factors—personal accomplishment and mastery, vicarious experience by witnessing a model person, verbal persuasion, and emotional state—is central to my actions as the director of AP in resolving this PoP.

This triadic reciprocal causation and these self-efficacy beliefs all heighten the high-performance level of faculty. As Bandura argues, “[a] high sense of personal efficacy in a responsive environment that rewards valued accomplishments fosters aspirations, productive engagement in activities, and a sense of fulfillment. These are the conditions that enable people to exercise substantial control over their lives through self-development” (1997, pp. 20-21). Birchwood (a pseudonym) is a high-performing school with high-performing faculty and high-performing students who are continually rewarded for reinforcing these same high-performance beliefs and behaviours (Latham et al., 2002; Shannon & Bylsma, 2007).

It is from this position that I view education, higher education, and my role as the director of AP. Everyone should have the opportunity to learn (Elliott & Bartlett, 2016) and have agency (Bandura, 1986, 1997) over their personal, career, and life prospects (Lent et al., 1994; Lent &

Brown, 2017). It is the responsibility of school leaders to create an environment that encourages, supports, and fosters personal fulfillment for all its members (Leithwood et al., 2004) while also removing barriers that impede learning, growth, and development (Katz & Dack, 2012).

Professional Agency

As the director of Advanced Placement, I have agency to initiate change and bring about improvements in the AP program. My role encompasses a range of leadership, managerial, and administrative responsibilities including: (1) leading faculty in their delivery and implementation of curriculum; (2) informing, guiding, and recruiting students; (3) marketing the program; (4) managing the preparation of the courses and exams; (5) securing, administering, and overseeing the exams; (6) analyzing participation and performance data; (7) reporting to school leadership; and (8) remaining current in educational theory and practice as they relate to higher education. My sphere of influence is broad, impacting various stakeholders including students, parents, faculty, employees, and school leaders. As lead change agent (Fullan 2002), I lead a team of change initiators (i.e., guidance counsellors and academic team), implementers (i.e., department heads and leadership team), facilitators (i.e., curriculum chairs), and recipients (i.e., AP teachers) (Cawsey et al, 2016). Working collaboratively with change initiators, implementers, facilitators, and recipients, I lead the research and study of this transition zone between high school and higher education and discover how best Advanced Placement can fill this gap. Consulting College Board data and research, attending College Board Forum and the Advanced Placement Annual Conference, consulting AP directors in high schools nationally and internationally, and studying the trends in high school and higher education institutions, I collect a wide range of data for collaborative inquiry with the academic team so that we may situate ourselves in this continuum and plan a course of action for our school's future. Past participation and performance

data for our school is critical to our analysis of our place so that we can make informed, intentional, and collaborative decisions in the development of an action plan. My approaches are research-based, data-driven, intentional, and collaborative.

My educational leadership experiences have been in private education. Independent schools, that is, not-for-profit private schools reporting to a board of directors (Canadian Accredited Independent Schools, 2022c), must offer a unique educational experience to their clientele to justify charging their fees. My professional agency has manifested in meeting the needs of high achieving students through Advanced Placement. Ultimately, I want to attract high achievers from the local and international school communities, support their academic achievement and post-secondary interests, and build upon the school's academic program. Professional experience, educational attainment, and reputation have contributed to my agency. School leadership recognizes that my proposed initiatives align with the school mission, vision, and values, and students, parents, and faculty understand that my motives are the best interests of the students and the school. I have a genuine love of learning and higher education and this permeates my interactions with school stakeholders.

As a reflective practitioner (Blase & Blase, 2004; Gupton, 2010; Smyth, 1993), I periodically consult a variety of instruments to evaluate my leadership knowledge, traits, skills, and behaviours to understand who I am as a leader. I characterize my leadership style with nine specific tenets: striving for excellence, behaving ethically, expanding competencies, embracing change, maximizing influence, building relationships, working collaboratively, recognizing potential, and leading with balance. Having honed these tenets through a wide range of leadership opportunities, they have and continue to serve me in my professional practice. I have had the privilege of working closely with passionate educators, dedicated families, and engaged

students. In all my initiatives, I have demonstrated what it means to be an independent school leader: one who embraces instructional leadership, collaborates professionally with all stakeholders, and recognizes the roles of voice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in education.

Leadership Approaches

Three approaches characterize my leadership style: ethical, authentic, and instructional. Each of these has their individual merit and altogether, these lead me from who I am as an educational leader to resolving my PoP and fulfilling this OIP. These leadership approaches are introduced here in connection with Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (see Appendix A: Table 2) and explored more fully in chapter 2. My ethical leadership approach serves as an overarching philosophical position: I want to do what is ethically appropriate for the students, the faculty, and the school (see Appendix B), revealed through my internal competencies (cognitive and emotional) and behaviours (attitudes, beliefs, and actions). My authentic leadership style serves me in my relationships with all stakeholders: I am genuine in my interactions and relational in my approach to change (see Appendix C), as suggested by my internal competencies (cognitive) and behaviours (decisions and actions). I relate with faculty through my personal accomplishments, verbal persuasion, and emotional state. Finally, as an instructional leader, I am the lead learner and lead change by actively engaging with faculty in developing and monitoring curriculum, instruction, and assessment (see Appendix D: Figure 5). I can leverage my internal competencies (cognitive) and behaviours (decisions and actions) to verbally persuade and emotionally motivate AP faculty to engage with this PoP and fulfill this OIP.

Organizational Context

First established in the early 1900s as an Anglican all-boys boarding school, founders modelled Birchwood on the British education system and defined their purpose to be building

leaders of character to become major contributors to their communities. Appealing to local families in Ontario, Canada, the school thrived and established its legacy of “old boys”. Then, approximately thirty years ago, Birchwood underwent significant structural changes under a transformational leader, becoming a co-educational school admitting an equal balance of girls, opening itself up to international students, and launching an e-learning program which saw all students leveraging learning via laptop devices. Shortly thereafter, the school ended its junior program, eliminating grades 4-6 to specialize in a grade 7-12 program and offer academic level coursework only. These major structural changes transformed the school ethos which is now highly diverse in ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, and socioeconomic status.

As an independent school, Birchwood is funded entirely by tuition fees, donations, and ancillary activities. Without public funding and given the competition from other private schools, Birchwood must distinguish itself as offering a premium educational experience to attract a continuous stream of clientele. A long history of offering a robust academic program, a leadership diploma, experiential learning opportunities, and a breadth of arts, athletics, and services has bolstered the school’s position as one of the leading independent schools in the country. The school continues to attract families who are looking for an outstanding high school experience that will prepare their children for entry to select university programs nationally and internationally. Demand for admission is high and a high demand means the school can be more selective of the mission-appropriate students it admits, with high academic achievement being one of its criteria.

Macro, Meso, and Micro Leadership Considerations

To develop an organizational improvement plan that addresses this organizational context, it is important to consider leadership across the macro, meso, and micro levels. At the

macro level lie the external governing bodies that direct and impact the school, including provincial, national, and international agencies. At the meso level lie the internal leadership bodies that influence daily operations and future school planning, including the senior leadership team and the board of directors. At the micro level lie the individual leaders, including program directors, department heads, and curriculum chairs.

Considering macro level leadership, Birchwood must satisfy many demands outlined by governing organizations. Deemed a private school by the Ministry of Education (Ontario Education Act, 2022), Birchwood must meet a series of standards every two years to pass inspection and be approved to operate (Ontario, 2022). As an independent school, Birchwood seeks accreditation from CAIS to maintain its standing and completes a comprehensive and rigorous year-long inspection process every 5 years (Canadian Accredited Independent Schools, 2022b). Members of the College of Teachers in Ontario must also meet standards of practice and ethical standards for the teaching profession (Ontario College of Teachers, 2022). Finally, for Birchwood to deliver AP courses and exams, the College Board, which regulates Advanced Placement, requires an audit of the school's AP course delivery practices (College Board, 2022b) and exam security procedures (College Board, 2022i). Each of these organizations has direct implications for Birchwood operations.

Appealing to the global marketplace means Birchwood engages with global organizations. This second tier, while less directly impacting daily operations, enhances the school's appeal and further shapes its ethos. Round Square (RS), World Leading Schools Association (WSLA), Global 30 Schools (G30 Schools), Global Education Benchmark Group (GEBG), and Independent Schools Experiential Education Network (ISEEN) each has membership requirements and standards of practice, further impacting Birchwood operations.

Considering meso level leadership, Birchwood follows a hierarchal, top-down, leadership structure consistent with that practiced by leading independent schools nationally and globally (National Association of Independent Schools, 2022b). This leadership structure reflects a Western Eurocentric approach wherein a person with positional power (Cawsey et al., 2016; Northouse, 2019) is responsible for approving decisions, directions, and initiatives. The principal plays a pivotal role working closely with both the BoD and the SLT. The principal reports to an elected BoD, a mandatory requirement for independent schools, which must operate at arm's length developing long term goals and strategic plans for the future success of the school (Canadian Accredited Independent Schools, 2022; DeKuyper, 2003). The principal also works closely with SLT members, each who hold positions of broad responsibility in one specific domain: academics, student life, wellbeing, global education, human resources, information technology, advancement, business operations, facilities, and commercial activities. Both the BoD and the SLT comprise the top two tiers of a five-tier leadership model in effect at Birchwood. At this meso level, the SLT and the BoD wrestle with what constitutes their unique selling proposition, how to reach the global marketplace, and how to optimize tuition fees.

Micro level leadership encompasses three more tiers of this leadership structure. The third tier comprises the largest number of managers and program directors, and cascading down from there are the fourth and fifth tiers, administrators and faculty, depending on the department. The school intends to offer leadership positions to greater than 50% of faculty. This distribution of leadership allows for specialization in each domain, including my own as the director of AP, and reinforces a distributed leadership model, espoused by the SLT. At the micro-level, faculty are concerned with meeting the demands of ministry and AP curricula.

Tensions Impacting the Organizational Context

The greatest economic tension point for the school is optimizing tuition fees. Birchwood recognizes the need to offer a premium program to justify its high tuition fees; in reality, no additional fee increases can be charged (save yearly adjustments for inflation) without a relative increase in program offerings. Recognizing that the school has been charging the maximum amount the market will bear (J. Davies, personal communication, July 5, 2004), the admissions department has been increasing its global reach. Canada remains one of the top destination countries for international students attracting families from China, South Korea, Vietnam, Mexico, and Brazil (Burnett & Wheeler, 2022). Particularly, Birchwood draws high enrollment numbers from these countries as well as Germany and those within the Caribbean Islands and the Middle East (admissions personnel, personal communication, September 23, 2022). Reaching out globally helps sustain this premium educational offering, which increasingly is pricing out local families who in the past would have considered the school; indeed, many alumni report their inability to send their own children given how exponentially more expensive the school is to when they attended. This delicate balance of delivering a premium educational experience at an economically viable cost, that is, “financial sustainability and programmatic sustainability” (Masaoka et al, 2010, p. 3), has direct implications for this OIP as will be seen.

A second tension point relates to the leadership models supported by the school. While the school operates from a hierarchal leadership structure, it also supports a distributed leadership model (Bolden, 2011; Elmore, 2000; Hargreaves & Fink, 2012; Spillane, 2006). There may be a few key personnel in top leadership positions leading the school but there are also a significant number in middle management who hold positions of leadership. At times, middle management struggles with lack of autonomy as invariably these managers need approval from

senior leadership. In addition, school leadership supports a collaborative leadership approach to teaching and learning, recognizing the professionalism and expertise of each faculty member. This tension between the hierarchal leadership structure, the distributed leadership model, and the collaborative leadership approach causes some friction. Faculty all must recognize that these differences in approaches are also welcomed by senior leadership who understand that this type of friction is generative.

A third tension point lies with the expectations of two governing bodies: the Ministry of Education and the College Board. The Ministry of Education mandates that inspected private schools deliver the Ontario Secondary School (OSS) curriculum and the College Board requires that authorized schools complete annual course audits for each AP course. However, these two curricula vary considerably. Some OSS course content aligns with AP course content but most does not and faculty supplement the OSS content with enrichment material to prepare students for the AP exams. OSS pedagogy also differs from AP in curriculum instruction, assessment, and evaluation. OSS offers greater breadth and flexibility while AP courses predominantly gear all instruction strategies and tasks to the final, end-of-year high stakes exam. This tension between delivering Ontario curriculum and preparing for the AP exam is a considerable tension point and one most impacting this PoP.

Focus on Social Justice, Anti-Oppression, and Decolonization

Socially, the demographics have shifted these past couple decades as the school has expanded its reach in the global marketplace. The SLT, BoD, and the faculty all recognize Birchwood's place of privilege and its responsibility to the community (Furman, 2002). A notion that permeates the leadership and board is that a great private school has a great sense of public service (principal, personal communication, July 5, 2022). While efforts were directed to issues

of equity at Birchwood over the past few decades, recent phenomenon in society forced greater attention and priority to addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, anti-oppression, and decolonization within the school community. Being responsive to community (Furman, 2002) has resulted in the development of a diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan complete with objectives and key performance indicators across five broad categories: communication channels, school culture, employee capacity, student capacity, and community partners (inclusivity director, personal communication, September 27, 2022). Programs and services offered, including gender-inclusive boarding, a mutual respect program, mandatory anti-oppression, diversity, equity, and inclusion training for students and faculty, and much revisiting and adoption of curriculum units in decolonization, residential schools, and Indigenous studies has increased awareness and impacted the school community. Of the nine strategic themes across four broad goals moving the school forward—program, culture, people & community, business model & impact—lies one relating to equity and anti-oppression: broadening perspectives and inclusivity. Equity efforts permeate the ethos of the school and exist within the organizational context with the mission of building leaders of character and major contributors to their community (anonymized mission statement). While increasing the heterogeneity of the student body, these initiatives have become central to Birchwood’s efforts to understand and address biases, barriers, and power differentials associated with race, ethnicity, class, and socio-economic status and remain consistent with provincial guidelines for equity and inclusion (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009).

Leadership Problem of Practice

High achievers require a challenging academic program (Purcell & Eckert, 2006; Shannon & Bylsma, 2007) and Advanced Placement fills that need: students complete college-

level coursework and demonstrate their capacity for success while in high school (College Board, 2022g; Herberg-Davis, 2006; Klopfenstein & Thomas, 2009; Sadler et al., 2010).

Designed by consortiums of professors, teachers, and consultants, AP courses offer the potential for students to earn university credit or placement, given their performance (Burns et al., 2019; College Board, 2022j). With forty subjects across seven disciplines (i.e., arts, English, history and social sciences, math and computer science, science, world languages and cultures, and Capstone), the Advanced Placement curriculum has broad appeal for all learners; there is ample variety and no limit to the number of AP exams students complete (see Appendix E: Table 3).

The College Board has long touted four distinct benefits to Advanced Placement: (a) building skills and confidence; (b) getting into college; (c) succeeding in college; and (d) saving time and money (College Board, 2022g). These claims are supported by independent research, which indicates AP is positively associated with attending a 4-year institution, grades earned in college courses, enrollment in college major, first year grade point average, retention to second year, and graduation (as cited in Shaw et al., 2012; Warne, 2017). AP “represents the hallmark program for judging the quality of student learning at the secondary level through the use of recommended course syllabi and standardized exams” (Tassel-Baska, 2001, p. 126). Specifically, regarding admissions decisions, Geiser and Santileces (2004) found that students who attend schools with robust academic programs and who challenge themselves with more rigorous coursework are looked favourably upon by admissions officers. This causal relationship—the high school’s academic distinction and the student’s favourable look—reinforces the rationale for offering AP and continuing to expand its reach at Birchwood.

Specific teachers at Birchwood eager to see their students learn and perform well on these university equivalent exams, modify their subjects, adding expectations from the equivalent first-

year courses and increasing the level of rigour of their content and assessments. These AP level courses are distinctly different from non-AP courses and reinforce a level of autonomy for AP teachers, giving them greater control to independently plan curriculum, implementation, assessment, and evaluation. Because there was no school-wide consistent and systematic approach to AP implementation when the program was first adopted and changes did not take place uniformly across all subjects or consistently with each teacher, this process resulted in discrepancies between AP teacher practices. These inconsistencies are problematic as they invariably benefit some students and disadvantage others, as will be explored in the next section. Limited leadership, vision, strategy, accountability, and oversight have created and exacerbated problems of access to college-level instruction: not all students have this opportunity to learn AP.

Framing The Problem of Practice

Many students apply to Birchwood because of its reputation for offering a highly successful AP program (College Board, 2022d, 2022f). International students are drawn to Canadian schools as an entry point to US universities (Cao, 2022; Hunt et al., 2022) and differentiating themselves from the competition by engaging in as many AP courses as can be managed is a goal for many students (admissions officer, personal communication, July 5, 2022). A feedback loop ensues: faculty meet the needs of high achievers by delivering robust AP courses; more students participate and perform better on AP exams; the school's reputation increases as a premier AP school; and more students globally apply for admission. This virtuous circle has strengthened the demand, the demographic, and the enrollment outlooks (Hunt et al., 2021) for Birchwood. Yet, over these past couple decades the AP program has grown haphazardly since its inception, based on teacher and department interest, and a few leadership-supported initiatives. This organic growth has created barriers and restricted access to AP for

some students. Students are in positions of vulnerability with limited agency as compared with faculty in positions of authority, this differential in power benefiting faculty. If, for instance, a student expresses interest in an AP course but the faculty determines the student is not capable of managing the rigour, the student has little recourse but to accept that decision. This teacher-student dynamic invariably puts students at a disadvantage, the latter who may feel that their teachers “do not value them, their education, or their school experiences” (Legette, 2020).

Historical Overview of the Problem of Practice

In the early 2000s, Birchwood launched its first AP courses to help students position themselves for entry to prestigious universities in the United States. Over the next decade and a half, the program grew in number of students participating and number of courses offered until a steady state emerged in which approximately 120 students annually were writing a combined 250 AP exams in 22 AP subjects with 74% of students achieving a qualifying score (3, 4, or 5 on a 5-point scale). At this time, all Canadian universities were granting credit and placement to incoming high school students, yet students continued to believe this to be an entry program for US schools alone. About seven years ago, another great surge took place. The school was ripe with AP participation and performance potential: many more students could have been engaging in AP and many could have been performing far better than they were. Given leadership-supported initiatives, the AP program was transformed, such that, annually, for the past few years, approximately 200 students have been writing over 600 AP exams in 32 subjects with 86% of students achieving a qualifying score (College Board, 2022f). This high level of participation and performance has increased the breadth of student admission to prestigious university programs and built the school’s reputation as a leading AP school in Canada.

Yet, there is evidence that the school's AP program has flaws which ultimately impact the needs of students who demonstrate college readiness but experience barriers to college-level instruction. Barriers to access manifest in multiple ways: (a) placement tests restrict access to those who perform well on these non-evidence-based tools; (b) enrollment criteria restrict access to those who meet these subjectively constructed criteria; (c) coursework restricts access to those willing to grind through the higher expectations; (d) evaluation methods restrict access to those willing to achieve a lower mark in exchange for completing the AP course and exam; (e) teachers assigned AP courses who lack experience, expertise, or desire to teach AP restrict access to those students willing to accept they may not receive the required support; and (f) course misalignment restricts access to those students willing to supplement their own learning through alternate methods (see Appendix F: Table 4).

The effects of these barriers are numerous: (a) rigorous placement tests result in fewer students engaging with AP and those who do not pass may feel a sense of rejection as they are socialized to believe themselves incapable of learning at the AP level; (b) rigorous selection criteria, similarly, precludes that students do not have the capacity for AP, rejection may ensue, and students are socialized as non-AP students; (c) rigorous coursework reduces university prospects for students who are unwilling to devote the abundant time necessary to succeed in the overly academic courses; (d) rigorous evaluation methods result in some students dropping out of the courses for fear of the impact their academic performance has on university admissions; (e) job-match discrepancies result in disadvantaging students interested in the subject matter and the university prospects it offers; and (f) course-match discrepancies force students to find alternative methods to learn the material of personal or career interest, including seeking out tutors, night-classes, online courses, or self-studying the content. These effects are concerning.

Students feel a sense of rejection and are socialized to believe they are incapable of AP success. They do not fulfill their academic potential. They miss out on the opportunity to distinguish themselves in the admissions process to prestigious universities. They overtax their academic day through alternative learning methods. And they lose economic and professional advantages that a more rigorous undergraduate diploma would bring. This problem ultimately impacts students' social-emotional learning, engagement, and achievement.

The envisioned future state would be one in which the AP program at Birchwood provides all interested, motivated, and capable students with access to college-level instruction free of these barriers. If (a) placement tests and (b) selection criteria are to be used to gain entry to specific AP courses, then research-informed, evidence-based tools must be used in place of those developed in-house. In addition, given Birchwood is mandated by the government to deliver the Ontario curriculum, all Advanced Placement (c) curriculum planning and instruction as well as (d) assessment and evaluation must be considered enrichment material and students rewarded for this additional learning and performance rather than penalized for it. Also, if there are (e) job-match discrepancies then faculty must be offered professional learning or reassigned. Finally, if there are (f) course-match discrepancies, then appropriate courses must be offered.

Theoretical Framework

Advanced Placement is “functional for society” (Lesnoff, 1969, p. 324) as it helps high achievers distinguish themselves and transition effectively to higher education and simplifies the application process for university admissions officers (Finn & Scanlan, 2019; Lacy, 2010); this efficiency and effectiveness is characteristic of the structural functional epistemology (Capper, 2019). In addition, Advanced Placement is a highly regulated and highly objective program (Burrell & Morgan, 1979): students are tested by standardized exams and judged using a 5-point

scale, with points 3, 4, and 5 potentially resulting in credit or placement on the corresponding first-year university course (College Board, 2022a). The College Board has strict exam security and testing protocol (College Board, 2022i); these rules, policies, and procedures are characteristic of structural functionalism (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Capper, 2019).

Whereas structural functionalists are concerned with how organizations operate, interpretivists are concerned with how people experience those organizations (Capper, 2019). As this PoP investigates the access barriers to Advanced Placement, I look at the individual's experiences within this "existing social order" (Capper, 1993, p. 12; Capper, 2019, Burrell & Morgan, 1982). Birchwood markets itself nationally and globally as a high-performing academic school, appealing to students who want to pursue college-level coursework in high school; it has established goals, strategies to reach those goals, and desire to increase efficiency and enhance performance; all suggestive of the structural functional epistemology (Bolman & Deal, 2017). As my PoP and OIP relate to the student experience, the interpretivist epistemology offers insight.

Nadler and Tushman's (1980) Congruence Model serves to understand how the organization operates. The model comprises inputs (environment, resources, history/culture), strategy, the transformation process (tasks, people, formal organization, and informal organization) and outputs (system, unit, individual). The authors suggest an organization performs best when its four fundamental elements are in congruence and when they are aligned with the organization's strategy and the external environmental realities (Cawsey et al., 2016). Applying this framework to the current PoP, it is clear there is a lack of congruency in the organization. Birchwood admits (inputs) academically capable students but lacks a clear plan (strategy) to address their AP needs. The transformational process, too, reflects a problem. The tasks reveal discrepancies in addressing the needs of all learners: students are not clearly

identified for their AP potential, AP course admittance is subjective, and standards of practice in instruction and assessment are inconsistent across AP courses. The formal organization, too, reveals discrepancies: reporting relationships suggest more autonomy in teacher practice and less directorial oversight and supervision. Human resource management systems require a review of recruitment and selection, performance management, and training and development for AP faculty (Cawsey et al., 2016). The informal organization also suggests a problem of congruency as policies and procedures may exist but are also interpreted by some faculty to serve particular interests. Finally, the people within this transformational process reveal a job-match discrepancy (Burke, 2016) for some AP teachers whose attitude, knowledge, skills, and abilities do not match their assigned roles (see Appendix G: Figure 6).

While Nadler and Tushman's (1980) Congruence Model aids in identifying the problem within the organizational context, Lent et al.'s (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory helps me to understand the problem from the user experience perspective.

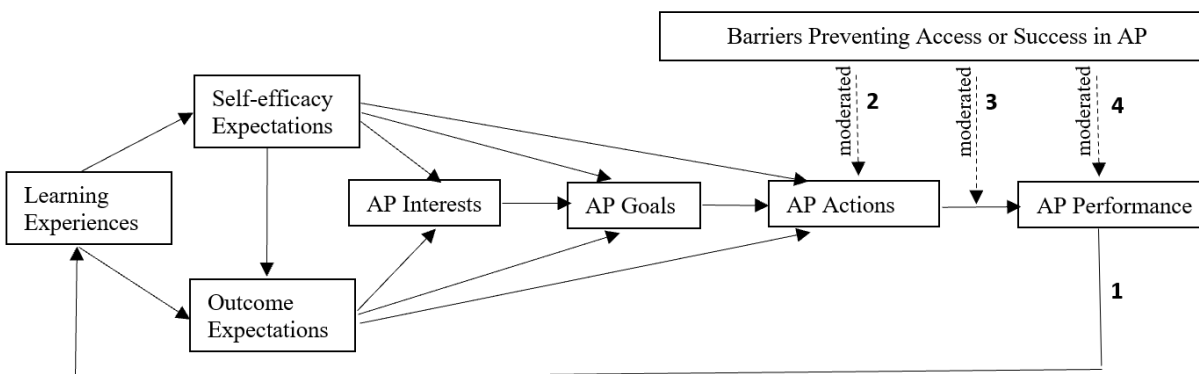
Social Cognitive Career Theory

Bandura (1986; 1997) explored SCT examining human agency in career development. Lent et al. (1994) and Lent and Brown (2019) furthered this notion, tackling three specific elements of career development: forming career-relevant interests, selecting academic and career choices, and performing and persisting in education and career pursuits. The authors show how self-efficacy, expected outcomes, and goals contribute to a student's success as they progress along a causal sequence at different rates of intensity and focus: some set challenging goals, are supported by others, and meet with success, reinforcing this same behaviour. Students with greater self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) have greater potential for success (Lent et al., 1994; Lent & Brown, 2019). Their outcome expectations, that is, "imagined consequences of performing

particular behaviors” have a positive effect on their career behavior (Lent et al., 1994, p. 83).

Finally, the authors recognize that goals play a significant part in self-regulatory behavior. These three elements, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals, all converge and result in success for students.

Applying this model to the Birchwood context offers insight into how students experience the Advanced Placement program. Some students progress successfully through this model: they have positive learning experiences that reinforce their self-efficacy and outcome expectations, they have AP interests, AP goals, and take action by enrolling in AP courses, and they perform successfully on AP exams which reinforces their learning experiences and the cycle begins again (see point 1 in Figure 1). However, many students experience barriers along this career path. Initially, they progress well: they have positive learning experiences and high levels of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. They have AP interests, AP goals and take action by signing up for AP courses. However, the (a) placement test or the (b) selection criteria interrupt this process; these barriers moderate the process (see point 2 in Figure 1) and students do not continue along the AP career path. Other students continue along this career trajectory succeeding in passing the placement or selection process but then are interrupted by (c) rigorous expectations or (d) rigorous assessments and evaluations; these barriers moderate the process (see point 3 in Figure 1) and students withdraw from AP choosing the less rigorous non-AP course. Yet, other students progress along this career trajectory: they have self-efficacy expectations, outcome expectations, AP interests, and AP choice goals. However, (e) faculty who lack experience, expertise, or resist teaching AP and (f) course offerings which do not align with student needs interrupt this process; these barriers moderate the process (see point 4 in Figure 1) and students do not succeed in preparing effectively for AP.

Figure 1*Social Cognitive Career Theory and Problem of Practice*

Note. This figure illustrates the various paths students take along their AP trajectory. Adapted from Lent and Brown (2019).

Guiding Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice

Nadler and Tushman's (1980) Congruence Model and Lent et al.'s (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory highlighted a clear problem in how some students experience AP. The Congruence Model clarified that capable students are admitted (input), that there is no clear plan to meet their AP needs (strategy), that the actions taken by faculty (tasks) do not always serve students, that the culture of AP teachers (informal structure) is of great autonomy, that there are job-match discrepancies (people), and that there is a lack of oversight and supervision of AP faculty (formal organization). The Social Cognitive Career Theory clarified that students have positive learning experiences and self-efficacy and outcome expectations and AP interest but that their AP career interests are then impeded (moderated) at intervals along this trajectory. These barriers thwart their progress forcing a change in their AP goals, which AP courses they pursue, if they do so, and how they perform on AP exams, if they perform on AP exams.

Intentionally or unintentionally, faculty created barriers for students in an effort to deliver a premium academic program. Recognizing that AP exams are equivalent to the final exams of

first-year university courses in the respective subject, faculty anticipate how students will perform on these exams and make judgement calls about their ability to handle this rigorous exam by creating placement tests and developing selection criteria commensurate with their own interpretations of student potential. Then delivering and evaluating at a level commensurate with those perceptions. Access, then, is granted to students who fit this profile of the AP student. Yet, there is no clear metric used by teachers to determine AP student qualities, resulting in unfairly biasing some students. Serving students means providing them with opportunities to “progress at a developmentally appropriate pace” (Kanevsky, 2011). If metrics used are inadequate, then better metrics for identifying AP students are needed. If curriculum practices are too rigorous, then more accessible coursework and evaluations are needed. If faculty engagement and course offerings are not aligned, then better alignment is required. The first question, then, is: How can barriers be removed and access be increased?

Faculty initiatives have been supported over the years as teachers and departments proposed offering AP courses and leadership supported their interest. As Advanced Placement courses and exams go above and beyond the Ontario Secondary School (OSS) curriculum, school leadership has allowed faculty a lot of freedom in their AP practices. For instance, there has been no supervision or oversight of these AP courses: faculty are not supervised on their planning and preparing of lessons and units, materials and resource, and special needs of these students (Marzano et al., 2011). Faculty isolated within their own AP subjects and with greater amounts of autonomy develop their own AP practices, indeed their own ideologies about how to teach AP. The second question, then, is: How can faculty engage in this process of barrier removal and access improvement?

Birchwood markets itself as offering a premium educational experience, in this case, Advanced Placement. Families enrolling in the school are buying into this program. It is the school's responsibility, then, to provide this opportunity to learn AP. Students should have the opportunity to enroll in AP courses (Elliott & Bartlett, 2016; Lam, 2021; Malsky, 2021). If students experience barriers to accessing AP, then they are not getting this premium educational experience. School leadership, then, must engage in this process of removing barriers and providing access either directly by changing school policies or by influencing faculty to change their practices. The third question, then, is: How can leadership support faculty and improve learning opportunities for students?

Leadership Focused Vision for Change

All students should have the opportunity to learn Advanced Placement free of any barriers, barriers which impede students and prevent them from fulfilling their academic potential. If Birchwood is driven by the mission to deliver a premium educational experience and the vision of leading the greatest independent school in the country (principal, personal communication, September 20, 2022), then my role as lead change agent for Advanced Placement must be to ensure the AP program meets these two goals. Currently, Birchwood is the leading AP school in Canada, in terms of AP participation and performance (College Board, 2022d, 2022f); yet it has access to learning AP issues. Only by identifying these barriers and dismantling them will the school fully resolve this problem of access and succeed in its mission.

Vision for Change

Birchwood must modify, model, and maintain a high-quality AP program by adopting an access-centered vision for Advanced Placement (College Board, 2022h). This vision for change has various objectives:

1. That multi-faceted, evidence-informed tools be used to determine AP subject enrollment;
2. That goal-oriented, motivated, and capable students be supported in their AP interests;
3. That a general continuity in curriculum planning, instruction, assessment, and evaluation be maintained across all AP subjects;
4. That faculty assigned AP teaching roles be motivated, hold subject-specific degrees, and engage in ongoing professional learning in their AP subjects; and
5. That AP courses offered be of a high standard, reflect student needs and interests, and be taught by subject experts.

Leadership Considerations

Macro, meso, and micro level leadership must all be taken into consideration to resolve this PoP. Macro level leadership comprises the College Board responsible for developing AP courses, policies, and opportunities for AP engagement. College Board program developments to increase access are remote and distant external forces. These must be adopted by Birchwood meso and micro leadership for any significant impact and improvement. At the meso level, the SLT of Birchwood, which is responsible for approving all programs and initiatives, must understand and support initiatives to redress the problems of access. These change leaders have the greatest influence and impact on all school matters. Other meso level actors responsible for supporting these initiatives include change initiators (i.e., guidance counsellors and the academic team), change implementors (i.e., department heads and curriculum director), and change facilitators (i.e., curriculum chairs) (Cawsey et al., 2016). Each of these actors has varying levels of leadership and an increasingly smaller sphere of influence yet must have a clear understanding of the problems of access and, within their capacity, influence change. At the micro level appear the AP teachers, the change recipients, who have accepted the direction from their managers and

must implement initiatives supported by all prior managers. At this micro level, each AP teacher's subject has peculiarities that make it different from that of others. Capacity building with each AP subject teacher will increase the collective efficacy of the whole AP program. As the lead change agent, I am responsible for leading all actors at the meso and micro levels.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on problem posing. First, I began positioning myself as a social constructivist, a reflective practitioner, and an authentic, ethical, and instructional leader. Then, I introduced the lens through which I will be viewing this OIP: Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory and then explored the organizational context, offered macro, meso, and micro leadership considerations, and tensions impacting this organizational context. Next, I delved into the PoP—access to AP—from two theoretical frameworks: the structural functional epistemology for the AP program itself and the interpretivist epistemology for the user experience. Nadler and Tushman's (1980) Congruence Model aided in understanding the organizational context and Lent et al.'s (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory aided in understanding the individual experience. Three guiding questions emerged from this problem: a student-oriented question, a faculty-oriented question, and a leadership-oriented question. Finally, my leadership-focused vision for change, complete with a vision for addressing the problem of access, change priorities, and leadership considerations completed this problem posing chapter.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Chapter 2 focuses on the planning and development phases of the OIP. First, I share my leadership approaches to change as ethical, authentic, and instructional. Then, I consider frameworks for leading the change process and fully explore Deszca (2019) Change Path Model. Next, I reflect on the organization's readiness for change using two change readiness instruments, Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Readiness Dimensions and Bouckenooghe et al.'s (2009) Climate Dimension Tools. Finally, I consider three possible solutions to this PoP: increasing AP offerings, supervising AP faculty, and reculturing AP curriculum. A reflection on change drivers completes this planning and development phase of this OIP.

Leadership Approaches to Change

Three leadership styles characterize my leadership approach to change: ethical, authentic, and instructional. My ethical leadership approach serves as an overarching philosophical position: I want to do what is ethically right for the students, the faculty, and the school. My authentic leadership serves me in the development of my relationships with all stakeholders: I am genuine in my interactions and relational in my approach to change. Finally, as an instructional leader, I am the lead learner and lead change by actively engaging with faculty in developing and monitoring curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Authentic leadership appeals most to me as authentic leaders are self-aware (Aviolo et al., 2022; Datta, 2015), something I continually strive to accomplish in my interactions with stakeholders. I want to know how I present myself to others and how they perceive me. Building trust requires mutual respect, honesty, and transparency (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011) and being authentic means revealing who I truly am in my words, emotions, responses, and actions. Authentic leaders are trustworthy because they are transparent, which increases followership

(Aviolo et al., 2004; Clapp-Smith et al., 2009) and job performance (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011). They are genuine and exhibit traits of confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience (Northouse, 2019; Seligman, 2002, 2012). In addressing this PoP, I will exhibit authenticity in thoughts, behaviours, and actions.

Being an authentic leader also means practicing ethical leadership behaviours. Authentic leaders have high standards for moral and ethical behaviour. Ciulla's (2005) notion of leaders doing "the right thing, the right way and for the right reason" (p. 331) pervades my thoughts in my decision-making. As an experienced and reflective leader, I take greater care to ensure my practices and my behaviours align with my authentic leadership style and that these demonstrate ethical behaviour reflecting Branson's (2014) notion that "Leaders must be able to come to know how their self-concept and self-esteem influences their motives, values, beliefs, and emotions, thereby impacting on their ethical leadership behaviour" (p. 199). As Duignan (2014) notes, high ethical standards are characteristic of an internalized moral perspective and that authentic leaders are "infused with integrity, moral purpose and ethics" (p. 166). I have a strong sense of moral purpose in my actions and reflect Covey's (1992) principle-centered leadership approach. Three specific ethical leadership styles rise above in my actions: virtue, justice, and duty (Northouse, 2021); I do what is right, I do what benefits all people, and I do what a good person would do. In this OIP, expressing virtue ethics means identifying the nuances in this problem and addressing them. Exhibiting justice ethics means ensuring the program benefits the greatest number of students, and that students are treated fairly. Showing duty ethics means fulfilling responsibilities and adhering to organizational policy. The ethical leadership framework helps me to conceptualize ethics as: *ethic of care*, a regard for the dignity and worth of the individual, *ethic of justice*, fair and equitable treatment of people, and *ethic of critique*, challenging policies and

practices that create inequalities and injustices (Ehrich et al., 2015; Starratt, 1996). Viewing this PoP through these three ethical leadership perspectives helps me to conceptualize why access barriers are problematic and informs me how to approach removing them. As Ehrich et al. (2015) observe, “effective, ethical school leadership becomes imperative in a context of increasing performance-driven accountability” (p. 197).

Where greatest action is taken is in my approach to change through instructional leadership: I must be actively engaged in multiple tasks that impact the day-to-day activities of teaching and learning. Marzano et al. (2005) address the knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and the involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment as two leader responsibilities of the instructional leader: the former is the acquisition and cultivation of knowledge and the latter is oriented toward action. Gupton (2010) identifies four elements to the instructional leadership lens: focusing on learners and learning, creating a climate for learning, communicating high expectations for learning, and looking for indicators of effective teaching and learning. Finally, Stronge et al (2008) identify 5 goals for instructional leadership: building and sustaining a school vision, sharing leadership, leading a learning community, using data to make instructional decisions, and monitoring curriculum and instruction. In resolving this PoP, I will need to actively engage with AP faculty across each of these elements.

Birchwood has long practiced the notion of school for community (Furman, 2016), and continues to promote this in its purpose statement: educating and enabling students to become leaders of character and major contributors to their local, national, and international communities (anonymized purpose statement). These notions of school for community and leaders of character are ones I internalize as an educational leader and in my role as AP director. As an ethical, authentic, and instructional leader, I can have impact on the school and improve student

learning and student achievement. This PoP identifies deficits in the AP program, ones that could exacerbate inequities if not addressed. Currently, many students face barriers to accessing these college-level courses. To an ethical leader, this suggests a social justice problem in which some students are prevented from accessing these opportunities to learn. The right thing to do is discover and dismantle these barriers and close the opportunity gap (Malsky, 2021) so that all students have access and educational equity (Campbell, 2021). Permeating my thinking are Glaze's (2021) words: "good principals today are human rights advocates and they're never selective of the human beings for whom they will advocate" (Education Scotland, 1:34). To an authentic leader, this suggests a need to leverage internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational skills to build teacher capacity for recognizing inequities, identifying barriers, and dismantling them. To an instructional leader, this suggests a need to revisit curriculum, instruction, assessment, and evaluation with each AP teacher and ensure that all efforts are directed at improving the learning opportunities for all students.

My role as lead change agent is to ensure students have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. A school that attracts high academic achievers must be prepared to deliver a robust, challenging academic program that provides these students with the opportunity to stretch their learning, meet with academic success, and distinguish themselves in the university application process. My role is to foster and protect this learning opportunity.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

Choosing a framework for leading change requires ensuring the framework aligns with the school's leadership practices, its organizational context, my personal leadership approach, and this organizational improvement plan. As an independent school, Birchwood has great autonomy in how it operates. The principal is the ultimate authority and leads the school as an

entrepreneur would, set on delivering a distinct top-tier, first-rate product to the public. The principal is highly driven, process-oriented, dynamic, and charismatic, frequently delivering motivational speeches, quoting famous business texts, and citing entrepreneurial approaches; characteristic of the transformational leader (Anderson, 2017; Burns, 2003; Stewart, 2006). Working collaboratively with the SLT, the BoD, and external consultants, the principal is performance-oriented and expects results-based change, pursuing research-backed performance indicators of the top performing independent schools in North America (Bassett & Mitchell, 2006; see Baker et al, 2015).

Leading an independent school, the principal, SLT, and BoD recognize that to offer a premium educational experience requires a very formal, systematic process, with considerable checks and balances, and quality control to ensure that first-rate, innovative product. This leadership and organizational approach suggest a framework for leading change that is linear, systematic, and hierarchal in nature and Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change process is the kind of linear model aligning with how change is conducted by this leadership team. Led by the principal, the team establishes a sense of urgency, creates a guiding coalition, develops a vision and a strategy, communicates that vision, empowers employees, generates short term wins, consolidates gains and produces more change, and anchors these new approaches. It is under this leadership that I identify a framework for leading change that fulfills my OIP and aligns with my principal's approach to leading organizational change; yet Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change process does not fulfil this OIP. This model suggests sweeping transformational changes (Northouse, 2019) whereas the changes I pursue are continuous, incremental changes (Cawsey et al., 2016; Burke, 2016).

Burke-Litwin's (1992) Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change has two dimensions: the transformational factors and the transactional factors. The former relates to the external environment, the mission and strategy, the organizational culture, the individual and organizational performance, and leadership. These factors are the domain of the transformational leader who looks outward to the external environmental forces, assessing the economic and demographic outlooks, considering the school's affordability and demand, consulting with governance and leadership, building a philanthropic strategy, and developing a strategic position in the global marketplace (Hunt et al., 2022). The other dimension is the transactional, which comprises multiple internal system factors: the structure, the management practices, the systems (policies and procedures), the work unit climate, task requirements and individual skills/abilities, motivation, individual needs and values, and individual and organizational performance (Burke, 2016; Burke & Litwin, 1992). Whereas a transformational leader could overhaul a whole system and their changes would be sweeping, a transactional leader under this model focuses on continuous improvement and quality, and their changes are evolutionary (Burke, 2018). Cawsey et al. (2016) refer to these adjustments as *tuning*, characterized by incremental change, internal alignment, focusing individual components or subsystems, the realm of middle-management, and implementation being the major task; right where my organization improvement plan resides.

The Change Path Model

Whereas my principal leads organizational change as a transformational leader using a model commensurate with Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change model or Burke-Litwin's (1992) Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change, I find these approaches to align more with the transformational leader. My sphere of influence is limited, more contained, and within the organization as compared to my principal's. Where models often fail is in addressing "the

emotional and social aspects related to the human side of change which involves motivating and engaging those affected by change to adapt to a new normal” (Arthur-Mensah & Zimmerman, 2017, p. 2). It is for this reason that as an authentic, ethical, and instructional leader I find Cawsey et al.’s (2016) Change Path Model to be more fitting my leadership style and this OIP; its four broad phases—awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization—allow me as lead change agent of the AP program to have direct impact on the change process as I work closely with internal faculty to tune the AP program, making incremental changes, seeking internal alignment, and focusing on the individual components (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Awakening

The first step in the CPM is characterized by identifying a need for change, determining a gap between the present state and the envisioned state, developing a vision for change, and managing the readiness for change (Deszca, 2019). As an independent school, Birchwood is always studying the education landscape to bring innovative approaches to delivering a premium educational experience so that it can continue to attract a highly affluent clientele. Currently, the need for change at Birchwood is evident, given what the external factors indicate and what the school’s internal factors suggest. As lead change agent for the AP program, I consult trends in education locally, nationally, and internationally and recognize that education bodies are addressing similar issues of access, learning, and wellbeing: in Ontario the directors of education address learning, wellbeing, and identity (Hargreaves et al., 2018), in the US, CB speaks of access (College Board, 2001), in North America, NAIS addresses wellbeing and identity (Hunt et al., 2021), and globally, the OECD speaks of wellbeing and identity (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2022). Issues of access, learning, wellbeing, and identity pervade the current education landscape.

As an ethical leader, I am compelled to address this opportunity to learn gap with a sense of social justice leadership, especially for students often marginalized yet show AP potential (Casimiro, 2018; Cartegna & Slater, 2022; Marshall & Olivia, 2017; Phillips & Lane, 2021; Wang, 2018). Developing a vision for change that addresses this access gap, revealing the current state and the envisioned future state, one in which all students have access to Advanced Placement free of any barriers that restrict access is top of mind. As an authentic leader, I develop a compelling argument that considers all internal and external stakeholders and disseminate that vision for change (Cawsey et al., 2016). At Birchwood, those key internal stakeholders that need buy-in for this new, envisioned state comprise the faculty and school leadership. Their capacities are various: guidance counsellors, AP teachers, department heads, curriculum chairs, assistant heads, principal, and faculty.

Mobilization

Mobilization comprises the next step in the CPM. My role as lead change agent is critical in this step as I must leverage my personality, knowledge, skills, and abilities to bring about this envisioned change, make sense of how this envisioned change fits with formal systems and structures, assess power and cultural dynamics, and communicate and manage change recipients (Cawsey et al., 2016). Leveraging my relational skills as an authentic leader, I can assemble a coalition (Kotter, 2012) of key change initiators, including guidance counsellors and the academic team, and share current research and external and internal data. Leading discussions from an ethical leadership approach, I can share concerns regarding access barriers, and clarify the problem to this team. Together, we can assess power and the cultural dynamics at play (Lewis, 2016) to determine a course of action and communication plan and process that will be accepted. Change initiators can then share this plan with change implementers (i.e., department

heads and leadership team) for feedback and amendments. Following amendments, approval, and an accepted change vision (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010), change implementers can guide change facilitators (i.e., curriculum chairs) to facilitate the change plan for recipients (i.e., AP teachers), which may require professional learning support for capacity building. Key change mobilization requires this shared vision and collective efficacy.

Acceleration

The acceleration step is characterized by engaging and empowering others, building momentum, managing the transition, and celebrating achieved milestones. As the AP director, I continually lead meetings with change initiators (the academic team and guidance counsellors) systematically engaging in the discussion and reinforcing the rationale for leading the change, using various tools including stakeholder maps (Cawsey et al, 2016), AP Potential reports (College Board, 2022e), and AP participation and performance results (College Board, 2022f). Building momentum means engaging directly with this team and all other stakeholders including the faculty, AP teachers, curriculum chairs, department heads, assistant heads, admissions personnel, and the principal. Recruiting professional support and consulting with supervising organizations all comprise this acceleration step. For me as an instructional leader, this step is all about gaining traction, building momentum, and moving the organization forward through direct fulfilment of each initiative in the OIP.

Institutionalization

The final step of this four-step process is, essentially, the step at which point the complete organizational improvement plan has been fulfilled and becomes a fixture in the institution. Regarding this PoP, this step implies that an ongoing protocol exists for determining whether the AP access gap has closed. Continually “deploying new structures, systems, processes and

knowledge, skills, and abilities” (Cawsey, et al., 2016, p. 55) ensures that barriers do not impede equity of access to Advanced Placement. My agency, my leadership, my positional authority (Cawsey et al, 2016) are critical to the institutionalization of this OIP, without which the sustainability of this OIP is highly tenuous, given the nature of Birchwood which innovates rapidly to keep fresh and continually attract a steady stream of new international and affluent clientele. As an ethical leader, I will need to maintain a constant vigilance over any changes that may impact the AP program so that barriers to access are not created. As an authentic and instructional leader, I will continue to work closely with AP faculty to support changes that increase access and remove barriers for all students.

Directional Flow

Cawsey et al. (2016) note that despite this CPM as presenting linearly, one step after the other, they agree much non-linear flow takes place amongst these steps and that the ultimate trajectory is from awakening, through mobilization, to acceleration, and ending with institutionalization. How an organization progresses through this first-order change (Bartunek & Moch, 1987; Burke, 2016; Joseph, 2011; Marzano et al., 2005) is through fits and spurts along this continuum. As lead change agent, I appreciate how I may make progress on some initiatives with some personnel or departments while not with others. I also recognize how some initiatives take a few steps forward, but then are halted by a stakeholder with positional power (Cawsey et al, 2016), and the initiative dies, or must be re-envisioned (and reawakened) in a new image. Given the nature of the AP program at Birchwood, there are many actors whose buy-in is required. Awakening is the most critical step in this process, one which I will continue to return to throughout the mobilization and acceleration steps, and even after institutionalization.

Organizational Change Readiness

As an independent school, Birchwood is funded entirely by tuition fees, donations, and ancillary activities. As such, it must continue to evaluate its unique selling proposition, what school leaders have branded a premium educational experience, to ensure it attracts a steady stream of clientele. With a desire to lead the best independent school in the country, school leaders are continually looking at ways to innovate and plan for a sustainable future (Orem et al., 2020). Being in this state of continual renewal means the school is always poised for change, ready to respond to the shifts of the marketplace (Bryant et al., 2020) and innovate ways to attract and retain families in this changing competitive landscape: “adaptive challenges call for adaptive leadership” (Ertel & Solomon, 2014, p. 10). Whereas decades past, Birchwood used to engage a cross-section of school community members to develop and implement five-year strategic plans, this longer-term process was recently reduced to three-year plans and now simply to annual strategic “refreshes”. Projecting beyond one year has become a challenge, given how fast and frequent the marketplace shifts.

Rather than following the previous longer-term strategic planning process, Birchwood has shifted to thinking about progress and innovation around four broad goals—program, culture, people and community, and business model and impact—with nine strategy themes, two of which directly relate to this OIP: enhancing academic offerings and broadening perspectives and inclusivity (anonymized strategy overview). These goals and strategy themes operate as a filter for all initiatives under consideration, and there are many currently in varying stages of progress. Birchwood is a vibrant and dynamic school. The principal recognizes the delicate situation Birchwood is in as it needs to keep pace with the changing educational landscape for independent schools while also adhering to traditional school practices, policies, and values. The

principal balances “the timing, pacing, and dosage of change” with regard to the seven stakeholders: students, parents, past parents, faculty, administration, alumni, and board members (principal, personal interview, June 15, 2019). If the timing is not right, if the pacing is too fast or too slow, or if the dosage is too much or too little, then one or more of those stakeholders will be impacted in a way that negatively taints the initiative (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Smollan & Sayers, 2009). Disappointing too many stakeholders has a detrimental effect on the initiatives and on the image of the school or the school leader.

Leading a highly successful independent school also requires the principal, the SLT, and the BoD to be aware of the major trends facing independent schools locally, nationally, and internationally. The annual *Trendbook* produced by NAIS offers evidence-based research from across North American independent schools for school leaders to watch for including economic outlook, demographic outlook, demand outlook, enrollment outlook, international student outlook, philanthropy outlook, governance and leadership outlook, workforce outlook, equity and justice outlook, and the learning and teaching outlook (Hunt et al., 2022). In addition, North American independent school leaders consult with each other to understand how they will resolve issues of mutual concern. This tendency to keep abreast of the marketplace forces and to respond accordingly in a quick and judicious manner reinforces how poised for change Birchwood is. There is a sense of hyper-awareness, a need to understand all trends in independent schools, and a determination to address these trends.

Economically, affording independent schools is becoming more challenging for families due to rising costs of housing and travel (Corbett, 2022). The cost of running an independent school has climbed considerably making philanthropy a growing need to supplement tuition fees (Rowe & Taylor, 2022). Attrition rates in North American independent schools have climbed,

especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Mitchell, 2022). A decline in students of colour is concerning (Corbett & Torres, 2022), as is a loss of international student applicants (Burnett & Suci Wheeler, 2022). Diversity of teacher race and ethnicity is an ongoing concern for independent schools (Blackwell & Torres, 2022). Pedagogical practices, too, must continually ensure that independent schools satisfy their unique selling proposition as “parents seek independent schools to help their children secure admission at highly selective colleges” (Bernate et al, 2022, p. 138). These, amongst others, are ongoing concerns for independent school principals, boards of directors, and SLTs.

Two Change Readiness Tools

Cawsey et al. (2016) identify eight dimensions related to organizational readiness for change: trustworthy leadership, trusting followers, capable champions, involved middle management, innovative culture, accountable culture, effective communications, and systems thinking. As I reflect on the school’s current principal and SLT members, I observe that, in general, faculty believe this school leadership is trustworthy and faculty behaviours are as trusting followers. School leaders present as capable champions and effective communicators. A sense of innovation and accountability permeates the culture of the organization. Also, middle managers link senior managers with the rest of the school. Finally, an overall systems thinking approach is evident as school leaders “focus on root causes and recognize interdependencies within and outside the organization’s boundaries” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 108). Birchwood exhibits each of these readiness for change dimensions. Cawsey et al. (2016) share a readiness-for-change questionnaire with thirty-six questions across six dimensions: previous change experiences, executive support, credible leadership and change champions, openness to change, rewards for change, and measures for change and accountability. Providing this questionnaire to

a cross-section of faculty and school leaders with specific consideration for this OIP would serve as an overall indicator of the school's readiness for change with respect to the AP program. I took this readiness questionnaire and found that Birchwood scored high on readiness across all dimensions (see Appendix H: Table 5).

Bouckenooghe et al.'s (2009) organizational change readiness questionnaire, too, informs Birchwood's readiness for change. The authors of this questionnaire pose climate dimensions across three broad categories: internal context, process, and readiness for change. The internal context comprises trust in leadership, politicking, and cohesion; the process context comprises participation, support by supervisors, quality of change communication, and attitude of top management toward change; and, finally, the readiness for change context comprises emotional, cognitive, and intentional readiness for change dimensions. Surveying faculty using this tool would result in an overall indication of where the organization is ready for change and where it is not. For simplification, I have adapted this questionnaire allowing participants to record their responses using a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix I: Table 6) proven an effective tool for analyzing opinions and attitudes (Allen & Seaman, 2007; Joshi et al., 2015). Considering each of these dimensions myself, I would rate Birchwood's readiness for change as "strongly agree" for each of these dimensions. For instance, regarding the internal context dimension, staff members have a high level of trust in leadership, there is a low degree of politicking for leadership positions, and there is a perception of togetherness amongst the faculty. As to the process dimension, faculty are highly involved in decision-making and the change process, they feel supported by their supervisors, and they are communicated with frequently and effectively. As to the readiness for change dimension, change is constant at the school and faculty are emotionally, cognitively, and intentionally ready for change (see Appendix I: Table 6).

Change Readiness

Birchwood is poised for change, as evidenced by the school culture, its four broad goals and nine strategy themes, and as indicated in the survey results of the two organizational change readiness tools. Birchwood is ready for change and ready specifically for change with the AP program as it currently manifests as it aligns with two of Birchwood's strategy themes: enhance academic offerings and broaden perspectives and inclusivity (anonymized). Organizational actors including the principal, the SLT, department heads, curriculum chairs, and AP teachers will all recognize that this OIP aligns with the school's goals and strategy themes, is responsive to the community, is responding to the marketplace demands, and, above all, is in the best interests of the students it serves.

Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

Possible solutions to this problem must address the change vision: that Birchwood modify, model, and maintain a high-quality AP program by adopting an access-centered vision for Advanced Placement. The solution must support goal-oriented, motivated, and capable students in their AP interests. Tools used to determine AP course enrollment must be multi-faceted and evidence-informed. Curriculum planning, instruction, assessment and evaluation must be consistent across all AP subjects. Faculty teaching AP courses must be motivated, engaged, and hold subject-specific degrees. Courses must be of a high academic standard and reflect student needs and interests. Three viable research-informed solutions present themselves. The first is to increase AP course offerings, which increases access for students to engage in subjects of particular interest and skill. The second is to provide effective supervision over current AP faculty, which removes barriers to accessing AP learning. The third is to reculture the curricular orientation of AP faculty, which increases access and removes barriers.

Possible Solution #1 – Increase Advanced Placement Offerings

The transition zone between high school and higher education is a tenuous situation for students eager to differentiate themselves in the university application process. Students understand the College Board's (2022h) messaging that "Taking AP courses demonstrates to college admissions officers that students have sought the most challenging curriculum available to them" (p. 3). Students recognize how AP courses strengthen the chances of university admission (see Santoli, 2002, for more details). In fact, many colleges and universities "advise their candidates that they must take the most difficult course of study available at their high schools to have a chance of earning admission" (Kretchmar & Farmer, 2013). Many colleges and universities award extra points for AP courses taken and some even penalize if students do not pursue the AP option if it is available (Santoli, 2002). Birchwood provides universities with a profile of its academic and AP course offerings. Admissions officers from prestigious universities consult this profile when judging student applications and question why students did not take the AP equivalent since it was available (guidance counsellor, personal interview, October 25, 2022). This need for competitive advantage over other applicants has increased the levels of both participation and performance on AP exams and helped many students transition effectively to university (Klugman, 2015).

Expanding AP course offerings would increase access and appeal to a broader spectrum of students (Roegman & Hatch, 2016). Currently, Birchwood offers 20 AP subjects in formal AP courses in grades 11 and 12. However, these courses are restrictive. AP Precalculus and AP Environmental Science, alternatives to the more rigorous AP Calculus and pure science AP subjects, would appeal to students that can manage this level of rigour, over the other more challenging courses. For students US bound, these alternative math and science AP courses

provide students with the AP exposure necessary for admission to selective programs (guidance counsellor, personal communication, October 25, 2022). In addition, AP Environmental Science and AP Computer Science Principles are project-based learning courses which would appeal to students who prefer this method of learning and align with the most dominant pedagogical practice used by independent schools (Bernate et al., 2022). As well, AP Microeconomics would appeal to students bound for the entrepreneurial and business sectors. Finally, expanding access to AP by increasing course offerings in the arts and world languages, too, would see a relative increase in engagement (currently, only 1 of 5 arts and 2 of 8 world language AP courses are offered) and attract learners interested in these subjects. Intentionally adding AP courses serves as a gateway for expanding access to rigorous coursework (College Board, 2022h), delivers on the school's value proposition, and supports goal-oriented, motivated, and capable students.

Qualifying scores on AP exams have already been explored. However, research indicates that students who earn scores of 1 or 2 are more likely to enroll in a four-year university program as compared to their non-AP counterparts, and many will pursue further AP exams and perform better, and that students scoring 2 are well-prepared to succeed in first-year coursework (College Board, 2021, pp. 1-2). Indeed, there is “an emerging consensus in the scholarly literature that even attempting an AP class increases a student's academic trajectory” (Bavis et al., 2015).

Required Resources

Professional learning would be the most significant resource required as faculty who currently do not teach AP subjects would need training to deliver this course work. This training would come from external professional AP instructors with years of experience teaching and training faculty. Tied closely to this resource are the financial resources needed to train teachers. Time away from school or travel to locations where courses are taught are additional needed

resources. Finally, implementation time is an essential resource. This initiative might last three years as courses are launched, teachers adapt to new practices, and students shift their choices of AP courses. While other resources may play into this solution, professional development, financial resources, and time are the three largest.

Leadership and Social Cognitive Theory Connections

Increasing AP course offerings would, effectively, change the school environment: many more subjects would be offered and many more faculty would be teaching these subjects. From an instructional leadership approach, I can leverage two self-efficacy strategies, verbal persuasion and emotional state, to engage these new AP teachers and elicit beliefs, behaviours, and actions, that support student engagement with AP. By supporting their professional development, faculty's internal competencies will increase (i.e., their cognitive and emotional competencies as AP teachers). Any new hires, too, would develop these competencies as they vicariously experience success under the guidance of experienced, model AP teachers, as they effective practices, goals, and institutional memory (Joseph et al., 2011; Semel & Sadovnik, 2008). Considering triadic reciprocal causation, then, each of the three nodes, environment, behaviours, and internal competencies, will have been influenced. This solution is very promising and would have the desired effect of increasing access given the broader appeal of AP course offerings and the newly trained AP faculty.

While I value how effective this strategy is in increasing access, removal of barriers is not fully addressed. One major obstacle to resolve is ensuring that increasing offerings does not simply replicate the same pattern of inequities already exhibited. Scholars continue to caution of the side effects of increasing AP course offerings as they can inadvertently increase racial inequities rather than resolve them (Kolluri, 2018; Rodriguez & McGuire, 2019). From an ethical

leadership approach, I consider it a violation of an ethic of justice if more harm is done than good and would need to collaborate closely with the director of inclusivity and other school leaders to ensure these inequities were not exacerbated.

Possible Solution #2 – Provide Effective Supervision of AP Faculty

Birchwood’s AP program grew from a desire by individual teachers to offer a premium academic program for capable students eager to attend prestigious universities in the US. After 20 years, Birchwood now offers a robust AP program in which approximately 40% of students engage in at least one of 20 AP subjects, and many students use their AP performance for admission to universities locally and globally. Having always been considered a program that enriches the student experience at the school and not the core of academic programming (that being the Ontario Secondary School curriculum), teachers have not been held accountable for their curriculum planning, implementation, assessment, and evaluation as they pertain to AP. This has resulted in a wide range of practices across all 30 plus AP teachers: some predominantly teach and assess AP expectations only, some teach and assess both AP and OSS, some predominantly teach and assess OSS, and some only teach OSS. Teaching practices and assessment design, too, vary accordingly.

Providing effective supervision of AP faculty would resolve this PoP. Marzano et al. (2011) define the purpose of supervision to be “the enhancement of teachers’ pedagogical skills, with the ultimate goal of enhancing student achievement” (p. 2). Stronge and Xu (2021) argue that a robust teacher evaluation system will improve teacher effectiveness and result in higher student performance (p. 112). AP teachers have been left to practice their own pedagogy in their subjects, resulting in a broad spectrum of practices that, while supporting some students, have

hindered other highly capable students. Effective supervision offers quality assurance that teachers measure up to the standards set (Hall & Simeral, 2008).

Scrutinizing individual teacher practices as they relate to the current problem would manifest variously. The practice of teachers independently judging a student's capacity for AP success would be managed. Applying narrow enrollment criteria diminishes the effectiveness of the AP program (Klopfenstein, 2003). Examining and regulating (a) placement tests and (b) selection criteria with the support of the academic team would ensure a more consistent and collaborative approach to determining qualifying students and, invariably, result in increased access. Standards-based, research-informed practices in instruction and assessment and grading improves student engagement and student learning (Marzano 2001, 2006). Overseeing, managing, and standardizing (c) curriculum planning and implementation and (d) assessment and evaluation practices according to an agreed upon set of practices determined by the academic team and supported by school leadership would improvement opportunities for students. The practice of (e) assigning teachers to AP subjects for which they are lacking interest, experience, qualifications, or simply resisting teaching the subject matter is detrimental for students. In addition to students not getting exposure to AP coursework and college-level instruction, Klopfenstein (2003) notes, "A diluted AP curriculum can be injurious to the extent that it gives students unrealistic expectations about the level of effort that is required for success in college" (p. 43). Instructional supervision would amount to either supporting professional development for these faculty or reassigning them.

Required Resources

Effective supervision and oversight of AP practices requires school leadership to shift practices in observation and evaluation of faculty. Rethinking supervision will require time and

effort to determine observational criteria and protocol (Marzano et al., 2011). Changing AP enrollment, instruction, and assessment practices will take considerable time as faculty break from established patterns and shift to new ways of thinking and doing. Professional development may be required for many faculty eager to continue teaching within the field. While other resources may play into this solution as well, time and human are the greatest resources required as the shift in practices calls for a change in cultural practices and policies.

Leadership and Social Cognitive Theory Connections

Providing effective supervision would certainly improve the opportunity to learn for many students as faculty would be more careful in their judgements of students and more diligent in their curriculum planning, implementation, assessment, and evaluation. From an instructional leadership approach, I would engage the academic team to determine teacher evaluation criteria and the proposed process to follow. Self-efficacy strategies of greatest impact would be verbal persuasion and emotional state. Faculty evaluations often result in heightened anxiety (emotional state) which may move faculty to change practices (Connor & Norman, 2005). I would work directly with AP teachers using verbal persuasion to support their shift to new practices in instruction and assessment. I would also engage expert and experienced faculty who can serve as model AP teachers to guide teachers through this change process. As an authentic leader, my work would be relational—building trust and developing rapport—with my colleagues, so they can value the needed change. Engaging with department heads and human resources to ensure faculty are supported with the necessary professional development, or reassignment as needed, would be a way of expressing my ethical concerns, that is, serving student needs. Considering triadic reciprocal causation, my beliefs, actions, and decisions

(behaviours) would influence the policies and practices (environment). Changing the environment will have a direct impact on faculty emotion and cognition (internal competencies).

While I value how effective this strategy is in removing barriers and increasing access to AP courses for students, I am also cognizant of the potential this strategy has for changing the culture of the school. Where teachers saw purpose and often had great autonomy in how they practiced (Pink, 2011), now they would be scrutinized for their actions; rather than alignment or coherence with school policy, they may resist this change (Ehrich et al., 2015). School leadership recognizes how autonomy leads to job satisfaction in this high-performance culture and increases “a willingness to stay with the organization and accept future challenges” (Latham et al., 2002, p. 203) (see Appendix J: Figure 7 for more details). A sense of micromanagement may become a growing concern (Reeves, 2006). Care to ensure that this greater sense of oversight and supervision does not shift the school culture away from its current collaborative nature and increase the chances of it becoming fragmented or toxic is a real concern (Deal & Kennedy, 1999; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

Possible Solution #3 – Reculture AP Curriculum with Faculty

As the AP program grew haphazardly out of teacher and department interest and a few leadership-supported initiatives, this lack of intentional design has resulted in no consistent, systematic way AP presents at the school. Approaches to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and evaluation vary across AP subjects and departments, standards of practice vary from one teacher to the next within and across departments, and impressions that teachers have of what makes an AP student vary. These factors and more have contributed to an Advanced Placement culture of curriculum (see Appendix K for more details) that is complex: norms, beliefs, and habits are inconsistent, ununiform.

A third solution, then, involves changing the mindset of faculty and developing a consistent, unified, shared understanding of AP within the school. Faculty lacking a shared understanding can lead to very divergent values, attitudes, and beliefs. Reculturing offers a viable solution to this problem. Miller (2007) reminds us that “When teachers move to reculture their schools, they begin to change the conditions of their work [and] make some fundamental shifts” including: from individualism to professional community, from control to accountability, and from classroom to whole school focus (pp. 250-252). Having AP faculty go through this process of reculturing will shift the focus away from the lone teacher, in control of their own subject, and isolated within their own classroom, to recognizing that they are within a professional community, accountable, with a whole school focus. Reculturing is a form of renewal (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Joseph, 2011).

Reculturing curriculum is the process in which educators “recognize, challenge, and then profoundly change commonly held assumptions, values, norms, and practices” (Joseph, 2011, p. 55). Questioning why things are done the way they are done is critical to organizational change (Cawsey, et al., 2016). Joseph (2011) offers a framework (see Appendix L: Table 7) to study curriculum as culture and through this process change practice. Adapted to reflect AP curriculum (see Table 1), this framework provides faculty with a structured approach to reflecting on the way AP currently manifests and “question explicit practice, underlying beliefs about teaching and learning, [and] implications of curriculum work” (p. 30). Through structured professional development sessions, faculty work through these twelve focus areas to guide their discussions. For example, in the quote focus area, statements are shared that synthesize major beliefs about AP, as in this one: “Birchwood punishes high achievers”. Using this as a prompt, faculty then engage in a discussion about the impressions students, parents, and faculty have of the AP

program at the school. Assumptions like AP teachers mark harder than non-AP teachers and students get higher marks in OSSD courses for doing less rigorous work than their AP counterparts are legitimate impressions students and parents express. Others include AP classes are smaller, move at a faster pace, and require more planning, higher levels of education, and of expertise. These impressions of the AP culture are then extrapolated into themes.

Table 1

Advanced Placement as a Culture of Curriculum Framework

#	Focus	Associated Questions
1	Quote	What statements synthesize major beliefs about AP?
2	Impressions	What depictions of AP capture important themes and assumptions?
3	History	What are the forces, events, and ideas that influence this AP culture?
4	Context	What is the environment of the AP classroom? How is instruction organized?
5	Dilemmas	What challenges do AP teachers face when implementing AP curriculum?
6	Critique	What problems are inherent in AP curriculum for students?
7	Vision	What is the ultimate purpose for offering AP?
8	Students	What are students' AP needs, competencies, motives, and interests?
9	Teachers	What are the roles of AP teachers? How should they facilitate AP learning?
10	Content	What constitutes AP subject matter? How is the subject matter organized?
11	Planning	Who plans AP curriculum? Who has the power to make decisions?
12	Evaluation	How should AP students be assessed? How is AP curriculum evaluated?

Note. Adapted from Joseph et al. (2011), this table guides faculty as they question the nature of the Advanced Placement program as a culture of curriculum.

For instance, (1) the tension between AP and OSSD curricula; (2) the inequity of course requirements; (3) the benefits of AP over OSSD; (4) the faculty-centered approach to instruction, assessment, and evaluation; and (5) the perceptions teachers and students have of each other. These quotes, impressions, and themes then initiate deeper faculty discussions. Continuing along this sequence of asking questions in specific focus areas centers the discussion on key aspects of curriculum. Reculturing is about changing faculty mindsets. Reculturing AP curriculum becomes a systematic reconsideration of our vision for AP education, for our consideration of student needs, and for our roles as AP teachers. Along the way as we reflect on each dimension, collectively we invariably identify barriers to access; we begin rethinking what we currently do, consider what we should do, and take action to reform the AP program. For this solution to be successful, faculty must be guided to discover how their current practices create barriers.

Required Resources

Professional learning, human resources, and time are the most important for the successful fulfilment of this solution. Dedicating the necessary time for professional growth opportunities where faculty can dedicate serious focus to thinking through each of these questions and working collaboratively with peers to develop a shared understanding takes time. Deliberate and intentional meetings, research, engaging in analysis of data, reflecting, revisioning, and the like are the slow process of reculturing. Reculturing takes time “before people move from new insights to new behaviour” (Geijsel et al., 2007).

Leadership and Social Cognitive Theory Connections

Reculturing AP curriculum would increase access for students as faculty would begin rethinking and revising their practices. From an ethical leadership approach, I would ensure faculty have a thorough understanding of the way the AP program currently manifests, complete

with all evident barriers. As an instructional leader, I would engage faculty to consider how their practices support students but also marginalize others. I would support department heads and curriculum chairs in their verbal persuasion of AP faculty in shifting the direction to a more access-centered approach. Building trust and developing rapport with my colleagues would be of great importance in modeling a collaborative approach to teaching and learning. Considering triadic reciprocal causation, my beliefs, actions, and decisions (behaviours) would influence faculty emotion and cognition (internal competencies) and change the academic environment.

Recommended Solution – Reculture AP Curriculum with Faculty

All three possible solutions resolve the PoP and increase access for students; however, the degree of effectiveness of each solution differs. Increasing AP course offerings holds great promise as there will be many more opportunities for students to engage in courses of particular interest or those that serve as gateways for college majors or those appealing to particular learning styles. Yet there are concerns about how much is too much. Kretchmar and Farmer (2013) observe that as a way of boosting their admissions profile “students can feel intense pressure to take more Advanced Placement [and] engage in the practice of extreme programming—taking 10, 15 and sometimes as many as 20 college-level courses” (p. 29). This phenomenon is manifesting at Birchwood for some students. Indeed, involution, the intense comparison competition taking place, wherein students attempt to outdo each other in academic performance is causing significant concern about the mental health effects (Yi et al., 2022). While this first solution offers great promise for students currently not accessing AP, it may increase the pressure some students place on themselves to also take these additional AP courses. While additional courses would certainly support many students who currently do not have access, the concern for students oversubscribing to AP outweighs the benefits of increasing

offerings. Limiting the number of new AP course offerings to control for this potential side effect may be necessary.

Effective supervision of AP faculty, too, holds great promise. Ensuring consistency in how faculty plan, implement, assess, and evaluate AP curriculum would increase opportunities to access this university-level curriculum. Practices of raising the level of rigour in course content and assessment so high that only a few students can achieve it would be changed to be more accessible to students. Effective supervision results in an increase in student achievement (Glanz et al., 2007; Marzano et al., 2005). This solution presents as more viable as compared with increasing AP course offerings as the concern for involution and student mental health is less. Yet, increased accountability and oversight may be perceived by AP faculty as too much “looking over the shoulder” (Beddoe & Davys, 2016, p. 30). Birchwood hires high-performing faculty who enjoy the challenges of a demanding job for which they have high-levels of control and autonomy, and for which they receive performative rewards and satisfaction (Latham et al., 2002). Moderating this autonomy with situational constraints, like oversight and supervision, may have the adverse response, disengaging faculty from teaching AP.

Reculturing faculty about the AP program offers the most viable solution: it causes the least disruption to the status quo, is less control-oriented than effective supervision, and does not increase the possibility of greater mental health issues for students. Reculturing is recalibrating. Birchwood chose AP as a curriculum many years ago to distinguish itself and deliver on its unique selling proposition: a premium educational experience. This “chosen curricular culture must be held up to scrutiny. Individuals must recurrently engage in critique. Scrutiny means a constant examination of visions and practice and the articulation of the relations between them” (Joseph, 2011, p. 69). This reculturing process aligns with Birchwood’s espoused collaborative

school culture (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). Collaboratively, faculty share educational values, focus on improving professional practice, increasing student engagement, and improving opportunities for students. School leaders challenge “ineffective teaching practices while at the same time encouraging teachers’ individual development” (Guernert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 51). Finally, reculturing offers the least expensive approach to change as few resources will be required. Financial resources will not be dedicated to professional development for teacher training in new courses or new practices. Rather, professional learning time will be dedicated to faculty as they reculture their understanding of AP (see Appendix M: Table 8 for more detail).

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the planning and development phase of the organizational improvement plan. First, I began by characterizing my leadership approaches to change as being ethical, authentic, and instructional. Then, I considered multiple frameworks for leading the change process, including Kotter’s (2012) eight-stage change model and Burke-Litwin’s (1992) Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change, and determined that Cawsey et al.’s (2016) Change Path Model served this OIP best. Next, I reflected on the organization’s readiness for change using two instruments: Cawsey et al.’s (2016) Change Readiness questionnaire and Bouckennooghe et al.’s (2009) Climate Dimensions questionnaire, both which revealed a high readiness for change. Finally, I considered three possible solutions to this PoP: increasing AP offerings, effective supervision of AP faculty, and reculturing AP curriculum, with this last solution holding the greatest promise, in this planning and development phase of this organizational improvement plan.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation

Chapter 3 provides a detailed implementation plan, complete with a plan to communicate the need for change and the change process, as well as identify a change process for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation. This chapter ends with a consideration for next steps and the future of the organizational improvement plan.

Change Implementation Plan

This section explores the alignment of this change implementation plan with the organization's overall context and strategy giving consideration for managing the transition and change. Three priorities are explored: developing collective efficacy in a leadership team, building teacher capacity through an AP teaching team, and changing curriculum planning and evaluation practices. Potential implementation issues round out this section.

Change Plan Alignment with Organizational Context and Strategy

Birchwood is currently undergoing major changes that will transform its ethos while continuing to deliver on its unique selling proposition. To conceptualize their vision for change, the principal and BoD apply Nagji and Tuff's (2012) Innovation Ambition Matrix which includes three distinct areas: core (i.e., optimizing existing programs), adjacent (i.e., expanding from the existing business into new business), and transformational (i.e., developing breakthroughs and inventing things) (see Appendix N: Figure 8). With dozens of initiatives underway across four goals—including academics—and nine strategy themes—including enhancing academic offerings and student wellbeing—Birchwood is poised for transformation. My OIP sits squarely within these goals, strategy themes, and the innovation core. Bridging the gap between high school and higher education, the AP program is an integral part of the school's

value proposition: to offer a premium educational experience. Removing barriers to access, this academic program “optimizes existing programs for existing customers” (Nagji & Tuff, 2012).

Managing the Transition and Change Drivers

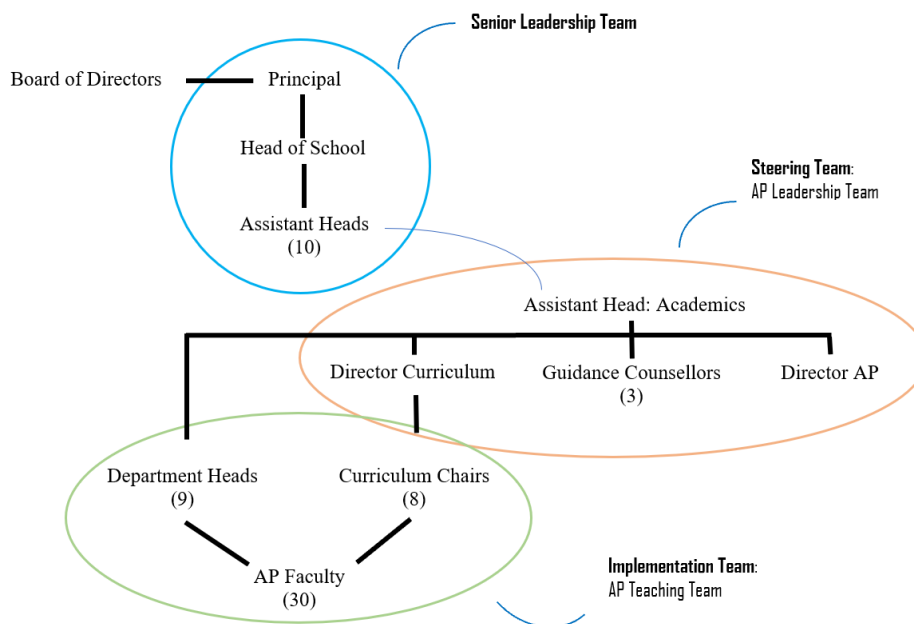
Managing the transition is best accomplished when the OIP has aligned direction (Kirsch et al., 2011) with the school’s goals and is an accepted change vision (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). As an independent school that values the hierarchal power structures with authority centralized in a key player in top-leadership position, this OIP must be supported by top leadership. Change leadership (Kirsch et al., 2011) and leaders’ change related actions (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010) must continually reinforce the alignment of this OIP with the school’s goals, strategy themes, and innovation core. It is only through top leadership’s beliefs and actions that work roles (Kirsch et al., 2011) and change related employee participation (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010) will take place. For change to stick, it must be accepted. That this OIP is concerned with increasing access and removing barriers to college-level instruction for all students, this OIP has aligned direction and is an accepted change vision.

In addition to the principal, SLT support is needed for faculty to recognize this OIP is sanctioned and a necessary school goal. For change to be accepted and implemented by change recipients, attaining school goals requires shared efforts (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Stronge & Xu, 2021). For change to stick, change initiators, implementers, and facilitators must all be involved so that change recipients recognize this as a school-wide initiative supported and led by their managers (Cawsey et al, 2016). In the CPM, Deszca (2019) proposes having two change teams: a steering team responsible for providing guidance and support and an implementation team responsible for implementing the changes (p. 7). Here, the steering team, comprising non-AP personnel in leadership and managerial roles, will steer this OIP from a more objective,

school-wide programming perspective offering guidance and support to the implementation team. The implementation team, comprising all the AP teachers (change recipients), curriculum coordinators (change implementers), and department heads (change facilitators) will engage this OIP from a more subjective, course-specific perspective offering insights and feedback to the steering team. Figure 2 depicts the relationship between the steering and implementation teams in the larger context of school's organizational structure. This collaborative approach in which the steering and implementation teams work collectively to resolve the problem of access is consistent with Birchwood practices. Managing change is easily accomplished when faculty feel valued for their contributions, appreciated for their efforts, and involved in decision-making, hallmarks of a collaborative school culture (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015).

Figure 2

Modified Organizational Chart with Steering and Implementation Teams



Note. This modified organizational chart shows the relationships between the SLT, the steering team, and the implementation team.

Priorities and Implementation Timeline

Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Path Model with its four stages—awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization—serves to address and resolve this PoP. This first stage comprises identifying the need for change, articulating the gap, making the case for change, and managing key stakeholders' readiness for change (Deszca, 2019). In this context, the AP Leadership Team will awaken the change process by acknowledging that not all students are served in the AP program, identifying the barriers to access that exist, and managing faculty's readiness for change. The anticipated outcome is that this steering team develops a unified understanding of the role AP plays at the school, so that change can be mobilized successfully with AP faculty. The collective efficacy of this AP Leadership Team, then, is the first priority in reculturing the AP program.

Reculturing requires the buy-in and input of all stakeholders who will be directly or indirectly impacted by this change (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Joseph et al, 2011). Because teachers tend to be siloed in their own specific subjects (Pearson, 2015) and do not always have a larger school-wide view, AP teachers may struggle to see, first, the impact of their practices on individual students and, second, the impact of their practices collectively on all students. This structural isolation prevents the kind of social interaction that can serve to initiate cultural change (Heckman, 1993; Joseph et al., 2011). As this program evolved through faculty interest, teachers will be personally invested in their way of doing things and may struggle with what may be perceived as imposed change. Thus, the second priority becomes AP teacher capacity building for success (Hall & Simeral, 2008). Engaging faculty in a collaborative process of discovery and shared decision-making is necessary to ensuring a successful reculturing of the AP program.

This OIP will be implemented over a three-year period. In the first year, the AP Leadership Team will progress through the awakening, mobilization, and acceleration phases of the CPM as they develop collective efficacy and prepare to steer the implementation team through the change process. Steered by the AP Leadership Team in the second year, the AP Teaching Team will progress through the awakening, mobilization, and acceleration phases as they build capacity to make change. In the third year, both teams will enter the institutionalization phase as they collectively and collaboratively remove barriers.

Priority A: Developing Collective Efficacy in an AP Leadership Team

Building an AP Leadership Team (College Board, 2022h) of key change leaders, initiators, and influencers is necessary to guide the reculturing process. The immediate short-term goal will be to assemble a coalition of support to engage in cultural change that will aid in achieving the envisioned future state (Deszca, 2019). Comprising school leaders from across various departments with shared leadership raises the credibility of this team (Bergman et al., 2012), increasing the followership of the faculty (Northouse, 2019). Reporting to the SLT, members will include the assistant head of academics, the director of curriculum and research, the director of external academic programs, and the guidance counsellors for Canadian, United States, and United Kingdom universities. Each of these personnel will bring to the team a perspective that enriches the collective group's understanding. Guidance counsellors have a nuanced understanding of university entrance requirements and the role AP plays in admissions, the director of curriculum and research's role is to position AP within the existing curriculum, and the assistant head of academics supports and approves any changes to programs. The purpose of this group will be to set priorities, determine goals, and set clear expectations for how this reculturing process will unfold.

In the mobilization phase, the AP Leadership Team will assess the formal and informal systems and processes and determine the existing beliefs and norms (Deszca, 2019). As AP director, I have access to the past five years' AP participation and performance data through the College Board website and will collate data to share with this team. In addition, I will collect data from the school's information management system including AP subject offerings, student demographics, enrolment, persistence to completion, and performance within the subject. For this mobilization phase to be effective, the AP Leadership Team will require a full year's academic cycle to have a comprehensive overview of each phase of the AP process. Of critical importance are the individual discussions students have with guidance counsellors, regarding their decisions to enroll in or drop out of AP courses and AP exams as these qualitative data points build a more comprehensive picture of the AP program. As a team, we will meet frequently to collectively analyze this data looking for patterns and trends to understand fully how the AP program currently manifests. From an ethical leadership approach, I will draw attention to specific cases in which students were denied access to AP courses. These cases will provoke discussion amongst the team who will wrestle with understanding the value of AP, the role of the AP teacher, what constitutes AP instruction and assessment, and the like. For this team to effectively steer the implementation team, its members must have a unified, coherent, and consistent interpretation (Joseph et al, 2011). This shared understanding will increase the collective efficacy of this team and simplify supporting the implementation team (Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005; Stronge et al., 2008). This first year will end with the acceleration phase in which this steering team will determine the composition of the implementation team, develop an implementation plan, and create a communication plan.

Priority B: Building Teacher Capacity through an AP Teaching Team

The second priority for successful fulfillment of this OIP is the creation of an AP Teaching Team comprising curriculum chairs, department heads, and AP teaching faculty. The purpose of this priority is to develop a collaborative learning community focused on professional development, teaching, learning, and assessment (Joseph et al., 2011, p. 58). This coalition will work collaboratively through structured meetings in the Fall, Winter, and Spring of the second year of this implementation plan to investigate AP program through Joseph et al.'s (2011) Cultures of Curriculum framework (see Table 1). Active participation opportunities throughout this year's implementation will ensure long-term engagement (Bayar, 2014). In the Fall meeting, faculty will engage in sensemaking and concept mapping (Kumar, 2013). The purpose of this meeting will be to awaken faculty to the problems of access. Leading this meeting as the representative of the steering team and from an ethical leadership approach, I will present various case studies wherein access barriers manifested as a way of provoking thought and reflection. These case studies will stimulate thought and prime faculty for deeper discussions. Seated at round tables in mixed-department groupings, faculty will collaborate on the culture of AP at the school. In these face-to-face, two-sided discussions, faculty will be prompted to answer the questions: (1) What statements synthesize major beliefs about AP?; (2) What depictions of AP capture important themes and assumptions?; and (3) What are the forces, events, and ideas that influence this AP culture? (see Table 1). Recording these responses on chart paper under the respective headings—quotes, impressions, and history—faculty will map their responses and then use these to develop a list of common themes emerging from the collaboration. Observations and insights will be shared in the final stage of this meeting as chart paper is taped along walls and faculty circulate the room.

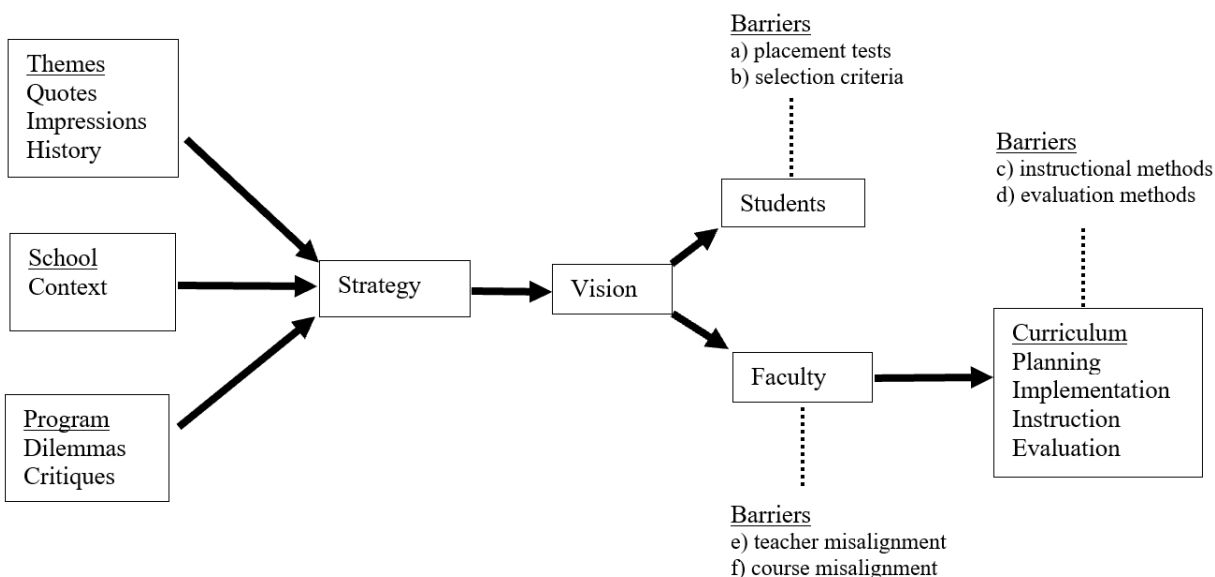
This first meeting ends with departments regrouping and assigned the task of considering three additional questions in preparation for the Winter faculty session: (4) What is the environment of the AP classroom?; (5) What challenges do AP teachers face when implementing AP curriculum?; and (6) What problems are inherent in AP curriculum for students? Relating to the context, dilemmas, and critique foci (see Table 1), these three questions steer the AP Teaching Team from the awakening phase to the mobilization phase as they begin to consider the formal and informal systems and processes of the AP program (Deszca, 2019)

The Winter session will comprise Think/Pair/Share sessions in which faculty will communicate their insights regarding the context, dilemmas, and critique of AP curriculum unique to their department. For instance, the context of the AP Studio Art classroom will differ significantly from the AP Chemistry lab. Likewise, the dilemmas faced by the AP US History teachers will differ greatly from those of the AP Statistics teachers. Similarly, the problems AP Calculus students face will differ from AP Human Geography students. The purpose of this session will be to build teacher capacity through a collaborative professional learning opportunity in which faculty engage cross-departmentally to develop a broader understanding of the AP context, dilemmas, and critiques across all subjects. In these face-to-face, two-sided discussions, faculty will collaborate first within their department groupings and then rotate through two more mixed-department groupings. A comprehensive report of the nuances of each subject and department will be generated for further analysis and reflection in preparation for the final session of this second year. As an authentic leader, I will continue to build relational trust by remaining open and objective and not interrupting or interpreting contributions. As an instructional leader, I will continue to lead this learning community by sharing leadership and supporting a focus on learners and learning (Gupton, 2010; Strong et al. 2008).

Having explored the themes of the AP curriculum (quotes, impressions, and history), the AP school (context), and the AP program (dilemmas and critiques), faculty will be prepared to think more critically and strategically about an access-centered vision for Advanced Placement. The Spring session will manifest as face-to-face, two-sided conversations in department groupings in which the department head, the curriculum chair, and the AP teacher collaboratively discuss five broad topics: students, teachers, content, planning, and evaluation. This meeting is meant to be generative. In this acceleration phase, the AP Leadership Team steer the AP Teaching Team to develop new knowledge, skills, abilities, and ways of thinking (Cawsey et al., 2016). Faculty will engage in collaborative discussions on the following prompts:

Figure 3

Model for Investigating the Cultures of AP Curriculum



Note. The above model is the application of Joseph et al.'s (2011) Cultures of Curriculum framework to the Birchwood school context.

(8) What are students' AP needs, competencies, motives, and interests?; (9) What are the roles of the AP teachers? How should they facilitate AP learning?; (10) What constitutes AP subject

matter? How is the subject matter organized?; (11) Who plans AP curriculum? Who has the power to make decisions?; and (12) How should AP students be assessed? How is AP curriculum evaluated? (see Table 1). Facilitating this discussion will be each of the AP Leadership Team members who each join one department grouping to observe, to listen, and to continually steer the focus on an access-centered approach to AP. Throughout the discussion, specific barriers to access will be interrogated (see Figure 3). The outcome of this year's three sessions will be for faculty to have a full awakening to the problem of access, for faculty to be mobilized as key stakeholders in the resolution to the problem, and for faculty to begin implementing changes to their practice.

Priority C: Changing Practice through Professional Learning

In year three of this OIP, this implementation team will engage in a full-scale re-envisioning of AP practices. Multiple resources will be consulted as AP faculty work to resolve these barriers. Structured implementation activities will focus on creating necessary skill-building opportunities (Lewis, 2019, pp. 156-157) through department meeting break-out sessions, internal professional learning communities (Blase & Blase, 2004; Blase et al., 2010) with AP teachers from within and without the department, external professional development at College Board events, AP Summer Institutes, and networking with AP faculty in other schools (College Board, 2022h). Participation and involvement from AP teachers to identify resources they require to shift their practices will be supported by the AP Leadership Team. In this institutionalization phase of the CPM, new structures, systems, and processes are developed and deployed to transform the school (Cawsey et al., 2016). Continuing to build relational trust and develop rapport with individual faculty will be critical to ensuring the change is fully adopted (Deszca, 2019). Continuing to engage faculty in one-on-one, face-to-face discussions about

achieving an access-centered focus from an ethical leadership approach and supporting faculty needs as they progress toward that goal from an instructional leadership approach, are key actions of the institutionalization phase (Deszca, 2019).

The focus of this priority is the deliberate targeting of barriers to access and their subsequent removal. Regarding (a) placement tests and (b) selection criteria, faculty will engage in researching tools used by other educational institutions to identify AP potential (Miles, 2020; Speroni, 2011; Suldo et al., 2018). Departments will engage in determining which tools best serve the students, understanding the importance of evidence-informed decision-making. Scrutiny over the tools' reduced equity bias is critical to ensure that those often marginalized due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and socio-economic status are not further harmed by these tools. Regarding (c) curriculum instruction and (d) assessment and evaluation, faculty will engage in professional learning communities, consulting other AP educators nationally and internationally to learn best practices and adopt them at Birchwood. A high sensitivity to how curriculum instruction, assessment and evaluation can further exacerbate inequities must be maintained as faculty engage in this learning given how frequently marginalized students are further excluded by AP programs (Hallett & Venegas, 2011; Kolluri, 2020; Makan, 2019; Ward, 2020; Xu et al., 2021). Faculty must understand that adopting more culturally responsive pedagogy and practices may mitigate some of these barriers (Khalifa et al., 2016; Maguire, 2017). Regarding (e) job-match alignment, faculty interested in building their subject expertise will be supported in professional development opportunities by the human resource department. Given the abundant focus on reculturing AP, it is hoped faculty more interested in pursuing non-AP subjects will request reassignment or be reassigned accordingly to improve conditions for students (Klopfentstein, 2003). Knowledge of subject matter, fairness, ability to maintain student

interest, organization of lessons, and skill at explaining problems are characteristics of an effective AP teacher (Sadler, 2010, p. 56). Likewise, where (f) course-match discrepancies exist, AP faculty may recognize the importance of shifting the focus from OSS curriculum alone to AP enrichment.

Potential Implementation Issues

The greatest potential implementation issues will be from faculty used to having full autonomy in their classroom, practicing freely without accountability or supervision (Marzano et al., 2011). Some may question the need for change, express opposition, or refuse to cooperate (Lewis, 2019). A graduated approach to change will be needed in which small wins are made throughout the change implementation process. Engaging faculty collaboratively throughout the implementation process from a professional learning community perspective will ensure a more successful transition. From an ethical leadership approach, awakening these faculty to the problem through an ethic of care (Ehrich et al., 2015; Sharratt, 1997) may take months before the culture change plan gains traction (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Building relational skills and getting faculty on board (Northouse, 2019) will be of paramount importance. Working collaboratively as an instructional leader, with each AP teacher, curriculum chair, and department head to recognize barriers to access, identify ways to eliminate them, and increase access may ease potential resistance.

The knowing-doing gap (DuFour et al., 2005), also referred to as the implementation gap (Reeves, 2007), offers great insight into additional potential implementation issues for this OIP. Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) list ten possible barriers which may pose a challenge to this OIP. The first, “substituting a decision for an action” is a very real threat as the SLT may agree with the decisions of the AP Leadership Team but then action is not taken for various reasons (for

instance, too many other initiatives taking precedence). To combat this threat, it is critical to ensure all proposed solutions are aligned with the school's larger goals, strategy themes, and innovation core and that the proposals are easily actionable. A second knowing-doing barrier, internal competition from other programs, is a likely barrier as programs attract students who want to achieve all that is available but realistically students do not have the capacity to meet the expectations of all programs (for instance, travelling competitive athletic teams, school musical programs, and student leadership positions). Complexity as a third knowing-doing barrier to action is a real threat to access. The Ontario Ministry of Education mandates that high schools deliver approved Ontario Secondary School curriculum, with planning, assessment, and evaluation guided by *Growing Success* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Advanced Placement, on the other hand, is administered by the College Board, a United States organization and 90% of AP exams are written by US citizens (College Board, 2022d). While this AP curriculum aligns closely with the Common Core in the US education system, it is less aligned with the OSS curriculum, complicating planning, assessment, and evaluation.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

The successful implementation of an organizational improvement plan requires an effective communication plan. Cawsey et al. (2016) identify four phases of a communication plan: (a) the prechange approval phase in which change agents convince school leaders and others that change is needed; (b) the creating the need for change phase in which communication plans explain the need, provide rationale, reassure faculty, and clarify change steps; (c) the midstream change phase in which the communication plan informs faculty of the progress made, obtains feedback on attitudes and issues, challenges misconceptions, and clarifies new roles, structures, and systems; and (d) the confirming/celebrating phase in which communication plans

inform employees of successes, celebrate change, and prepare for the next change (p. 321).

While communication is ongoing throughout the OIP's implementation, deliberate steps to address each of these phases thoroughly will result in a more successful fulfilment. This section will focus on the first three phases of the communication plan, their alignment with the CPM, and Lavis et al.'s (2003) research Knowledge Transfer strategy and Malik's (2020) Knowledge Mobilization framework.

Phase 1: Prechange Phase

In this initial phase, I will communicate my observations of the barriers to access with key stakeholders in top management (Cawsey, et al., 2016), including my direct supervisor, the assistant head of academics, and the director of curriculum and research, as well as guidance counsellors who are instrumental in shaping curriculum offerings and overseeing student engagement and wellbeing. This phase requires collaboration with key stakeholders in positions of authority responsible for academics and whose large spheres of influence will ensure greater likelihood of the OIP being implemented effectively and accurately. Identified above as the AP Leadership Team, this coalition of key stakeholders with shared interests serves as the steering team (Deszca, 2019) who determine what message will be transferred and who the target audience of the research knowledge will be (Lavis et al, 2003).

This phase, constituting awakening to the problem in the CPM (Deszca, 2019), is the most critical communication phase and constitutes collecting baseline data needed for monitoring and evaluation of the change implementation (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). In this prechange phase, I will be awakening key stakeholders to the need for change by repeatedly sharing various quantitative and qualitative data and findings (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019) in structured face-to-face meetings at intervals throughout the first few months of the school year

(Lewis, 2019) showing how these barriers restrict access and adversely affect students. Because my data is thorough, detailed, reliable, and valid my colleagues will trust that I have the best interests of students in mind (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). From an authentic leadership approach, I will be building relational trust with my colleagues who will accept my observations and analysis as trustworthy and reliable (Datta, 2015). Strengthening our collective efficacy, we will conduct further investigations to develop a more system-wide understanding of the access barriers manifesting. Case studies serve as a valuable tool for making assertions about why teachers act as they do and for explaining the influence of their environment on their actions (Stecher & Borko, 2002, p. 565). Detailed case studies showcasing students currently facing barriers and the ethics violated serve to communicate and awaken the AP Leadership Team to this problem and the need for mobilization of the implementation plan.

Phase 2: Developing the Need for Change Phase

Developing the need for change comprises building a compelling argument for change by explaining the issues and providing a detailed set of steps (Cawsey et al., 2016). The objective of this phase is to co-create, with positional authority stakeholders, a communication plan to explain to faculty the need for change, provide a rationale, reassure faculty, and clarify the steps in the change process (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 321). The AP Leadership Team will serve as the messengers, transferring the research knowledge to the change facilitators, implementers, and recipients (i.e., the department heads, curriculum chairs, and AP faculty, respectively) identified above as the AP Teaching Team. Some of these messages will be delivered by members of the AP Leadership Team to their constituent groups during structured meetings in Fall of the second year. Structured implementation activities serve to communicate change (Lewis, 2019; Lewis & Seibold, 1993). During these meetings, change is announced, explanations are provided, and the

process outlined. Some of these messages will be difficult to hear and will require one-on-one, face-to-face discussions with specific faculty, and repeated on multiple occasions until the message is retained. These difficult conversations (Le Roux & Mdunge, 2012; Stone et al., 2010) will acclimate key stakeholders to the needed change. As lead change agent, my need to build trusting relationships with key stakeholders and demonstrate an ethic of care for students will mitigate these difficult conversations. Understanding the key principles in communicating change (see Appendix O for more details) and bases of power (see Appendix P for more details) will help in preparing for more effective conversations.

This phase aligns closely with the mobilization phase of the CPM. Given that initial discussions with key stakeholders have taken place, that the message the school espouses an access-centered vision has been delivered, and that the need for a general continuity in policy and practice for all AP classes (College Board, 2022h) has been established, the readiness for change is set. The second priority, building teacher capacity, then becomes the focus with its structured meetings in the Fall, Winter, and Spring.

In addition, documents to support this communication plan add credence to the OIP and can be consulted frequently for clarity, insight, or interpretation. A detailed, written communication plan in an organized framework serves as an effective Knowledge Transfer strategy. Lavis et al. (2003) offer a five-tiered structure for research KT: (1) what should be transferred (the message); (2) who should receive this (the target audience); (3) who should deliver this (the messenger); (4) how should it be delivered (the knowledge-transfer process and supporting communications infrastructure); and (5) what effect should it have (evaluation)? (p. 222). A KT strategy that details each of these components legitimizes the communication plan further. This written document (see Appendix Q: Figure 9) will be addressed repeatedly during

department meetings and disseminated through multiple channels. This messaging and media redundancy is necessary when so much is demanded of a faculty member's attention.

Phase 3: Midstream Change Phase

While phase 2 was about Knowledge Transfer (KT) from the AP Leadership Team to AP faculty, a one-directional, top-down leadership approach, Phase 3 is about Knowledge Mobilization (KMb) in which knowledge users, use research to make decisions about programs, practices, and behaviours (University of Ottawa, 2022, p. 2), a multi-directional collaborative leadership approach. In this midstream change phase, the AP Teaching Team engages in research production and research use, including knowledge synthesis and co-creation (p. 2). Aligning with the institutionalization phase of the CPM, the AP Teaching Team institutionalizes an access-centered vision for AP curriculum. Supported by the AP Leadership Team, AP faculty engage in research, specifically interrogating access barriers and resolving how to remove them. Malik's (2020) framework provides structure and focus to this KMb, wherein faculty keep five factors and questions top of mind: Why is the school engaging in KMb? (Purpose) What knowledge is being produced? (Evidence Production) Who is the school seeking to engage through KMb efforts? (Target Audience) How are faculty engaging in KMb? (Strategy) and What are the implications of these efforts? (Impact and Challenge) (pp. 5-6). Strategy is critical. AP faculty will engage with and in a wide variety of products, events, networks, and media (see Table 6) in research production and research use. My role will be supporting AP faculty by building relational trust with key stakeholders within the school and with leaders in external organizations, bringing knowledge users together. As an instructional leader, I will engage in KMb strategies and SIAs guiding AP faculty as they change their curricular practices.

Influencing others in the change process requires various change strategies (Cawsey et al., 2016). The AP Leadership Team's influence strategies are characterized as "education and communication [that is] helping others develop an understanding of the change initiative, what is required of them, and why it is important" (p. 324). However, the influence strategies of the AP Teaching Team comprise participation and involvement as well as facilitation and support (Cawsey et al., 2016). The participative process of engaging others to bring their ideas and co-create change is empowering. A normative behaviour in flattened organizations, this collaborative process increases the likelihood of the change being accepted and implemented (Cawsey et al., 2016). In addition, bringing in other support in the form of external professionals or resources to aid in the understanding of the need for change helps to further mobilize and accelerate change. Communication is facilitated through a variety of mediums. The most effective, and therefore most frequently employed, is one-on-one, face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders. Valuing the individual's time, authority, and expertise to communicate the need for change, to listen to the stakeholder's concerns, to answer their questions, correct information, and solicit insights, is a far more productive two-sided communication method (Lewis, 2019, p. 161) and will have more positive repercussions for the change's implementation.

The goal of this KMb is the institutionalization of an access-centered approach to AP. Engaging in KMb builds capacity as faculty study products like AP score reports, research data, policy briefs, success stories, case studies, and fact sheets, and keep abreast of media like press releases, newspaper and magazine articles, blogs, tweets, the AP Daily channel. Participating in events like conferences, workshops, forums, PLCs, institutes, and panels and joining listservs, forums, and councils all increase faculty capacity (see Appendix R: Figure 10). Bandura (1986, 1997) reminds us that internal competencies, behaviours, and environment all influence each

through triadic reciprocal causation. Thus, if a faculty member's internal competencies (cognition) increase through these KMb activities as they discover how to build an access-centered program and their behaviours (actions, beliefs, and decisions) change as they recognize how barriers impede access, the environment (culture, policies, and practices) changes through the application of this research production. Bandura (1986, 1997) also reminds us that self-efficacy beliefs can be enhanced through personal accomplishment or mastery, vicarious experience by witnessing a model comparison, verbal persuasion by others, and a person's emotional state. KMb activities increase self-efficacy beliefs. As faculty engage in panels, workshops, and conferences, their emotional state is aroused and their self-efficacy beliefs increased. Likewise, the influence of social comparison results in increased self-efficacy, as faculty imagine accomplishing a task through vicarious experience. My influence as an instructional leader also increases self-efficacy beliefs as I verbally persuade faculty.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

The first year of this OIP involves developing the collective efficacy of the AP LT, that is, the steering team, which comprises key stakeholders who all have a vested interest in removing barriers and increasing access to Advanced Placement. Year two comprises building capacity of the AP faculty, that is, the implementation team, who must first become aware of the problem of access and then be guided to adopt an access-centered approach to AP, the mobilization and acceleration phases of the CPM. Year three, the institutionalization phase, sees AP faculty engaging in research use and research development as they implement new practices. Monitoring and evaluation, then, takes two forms: the first is in the successful reculturing process of AP faculty during year two and the second is in the successful elimination of barriers to AP access for students in year three.

Monitoring and Evaluation Tools

Monitoring is the planned, continuous and systematic collection and analysis of program information indicating the extent of the progress and implementation in relation to program performance (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016, p. 12). Before an implementation plan can be launched, monitored, and evaluated, clear, accurate, reliable evidence must be collected, which can then be analyzed, and from which conclusions can be drawn (Kusek & Rist, 2004). High-performing schools insist on data to inform decisions (Blase et al., 2010). Multiple tools can be used to monitor this implementation plan including participation and performance data, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, visual records, and questionnaires (Adams, 2015; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). These tools serve first to set a baseline of current practices (Creswell, 2014; Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016) so that a fulsome picture is identified. Monitoring change, then, comprises these same tools as well as observations and case studies.

Monitoring and Reculturing Process

The five-question monitoring framework (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016) offers an instructive approach by which to track faculty engagement. Following each capacity building activity in year two, the steering team can monitor faculty engagement according to the five domains using surveys, structured interviews, and focus groups. (1) Appropriateness: To what extent are AP faculty participating in this change process? Are they engaged, participative, and collaborative? (2) Effectiveness: To what extent are activities beneficial in drawing faculty attention to the barriers? Do faculty recognize how they intentionally or unwittingly created barriers to access? (3) Efficiency: Is faculty time valued, protected, and honoured? Is the professional learning process respected with consideration for the time needed to absorb these new concepts? (4) Impact: To what extent is there a shift in faculty attitudes, behaviours, and

beliefs about barriers to access? Do faculty discover what could be done to improve conditions for students? (5) Sustainability: Is there evidence of ongoing benefits to faculty? Does this professional learning carry over into improving practice? (p. 127). Collaborating on feedback provided in surveys, structured interviews, and focus groups throughout the implementation process will help the AP Leadership Team adjust plans accordingly.

Evaluation of the Reculturing Solution

Evaluation is the periodic and systematic determination of the quality and value of a program, with judgment as to the achievement of a program's goals and objectives (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016, p. 12). Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) offer the five-question evaluation framework, adapted for this OIP, that can be used by the AP Leadership Team to judge and evaluate whether the goals of this implementation plan were achieved. Following the full implementation of the OIP in year 3, the AP Leadership Team can ask these fundamental questions during structured focus sessions. (1) Appropriateness: To what extent was the design of the reculturing process suitable in meeting the needs of the students? (2) Effectiveness: To what degree was the reculturing process implemented as intended? To what degree was the reculturing process able to achieve its stated objectives? To what degree can reculturing be assessed as being of value to students and faculty? To what degree can the reculturing process be assessed as being of good quality? (3) Efficiency: To what extent was the reculturing process implemented in an efficient manner? Was the change process cost-effective regarding the time invested by the AP Leadership Team and the AP Teaching Team? (4) Impact: What results, expected and unexpected, and direct and indirect, were produced by the reculturing process? To what extent was there an increase in AP access? (5) Sustainability: To what degree was there an indication of ongoing benefits attributable to the program? (pp. 158-9).

Change Outcomes, Indicators, Baselines, and Targets

Knowledge Mobilization activities in the institutionalization phase in year three have AP faculty engaging in research use and research development to remove barriers. Regarding (a) placement tests, the change outcome is the implementation of evidence-informed tools, which will result in increased validity and reliability. At commencement, baseline data reveals 70% of AP Potential students pass and gain entry to these restrictive classes. Evidence-informed tools will decrease subjective decision-making resulting in an increase in retention of AP Potential students. Regarding (b) selection criteria, the change outcomes include multi-faceted, evidence-informed tools and increased personnel to represent the broader diversity of stakeholders. The impact will be increased validity and reliability in the selection process. At commencement, baseline practices suggest subject decision-making with the few stakeholders. Higher validity and satisfaction in the tools and process are targets following change implementation. Regarding (c) course content and (d) evaluation methods, the desired change outcome is instruction and assessment reflecting OSS curriculum predominantly and AP secondarily. The success indicators include increased retention in AP courses, decreased complaints about marks, and decreased course drops. Baseline data at commencement suggests 70% retention rates in AP courses, multiple complaints regarding the level of rigour, and 15% AP course drops, whereas the targets following the implementation strategies will result in higher retention rates, fewer complaints, and fewer course drops. Regarding (e) job-match alignment, the desired change outcome is an increase in teacher engagement and capacity. Following KMB tasks which include professional learning, success indicators include an increase in AP faculty and in AP faculty engagement. Whereas baseline data show 80% engagement rates, targets are to exceed 90%. Finally, regarding (f) course-match alignment, the change outcome is to have AP courses offered align

with student self-study interest. Success indicators include AP course launches by interested and qualified faculty. Where baseline data reveals 25% of AP subject exams are self-studied by students, the target will be 10% or less (see Appendix M: Table 9).

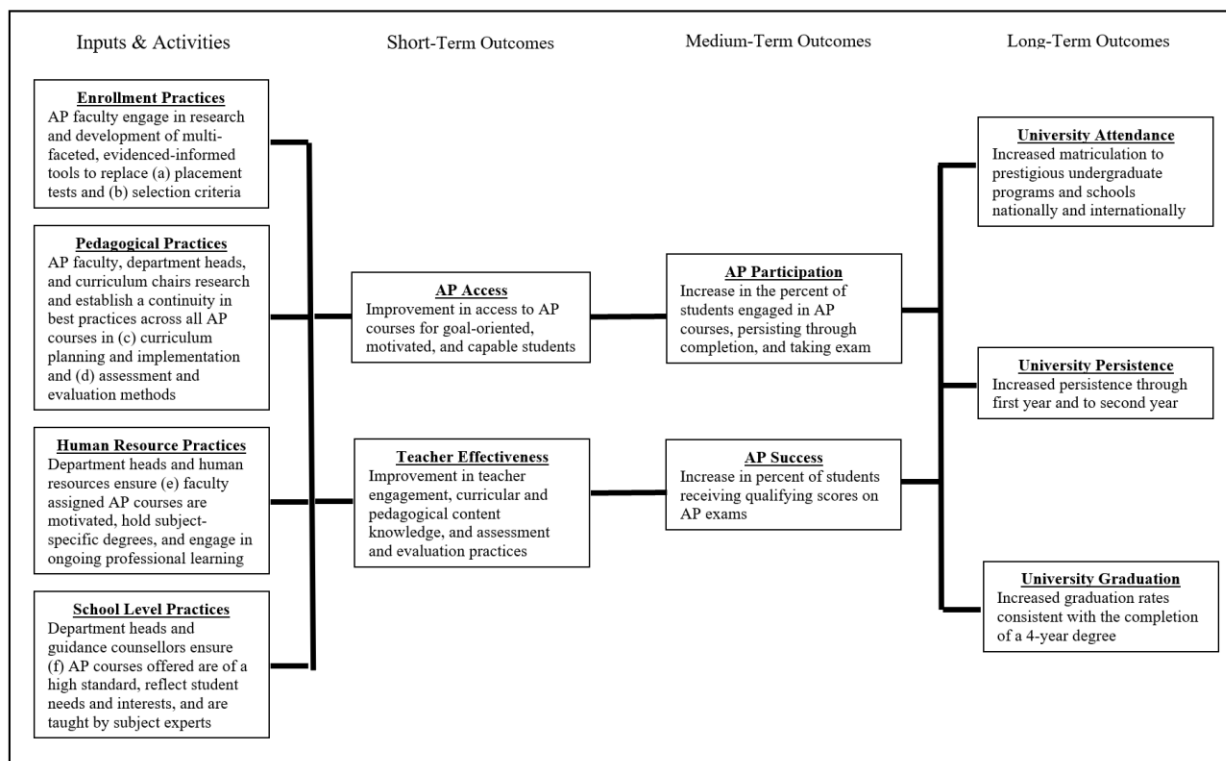
Logic Model of the Successful Organization Implementation Plan

The institutionalization phase of the CPM in year three sees AP faculty engaging in research use and research development and the implementation of these as new policies and practices. A logic model depicting the short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes of this KMB follows (see Figure 4). Regarding enrollment practices, AP faculty engage in research and development of multi-faceted, evidenced-informed tools to replace (a) placement tests and (b) selection criteria. Regarding pedagogical practices, AP faculty, department heads, and curriculum chairs research and establish a continuity in best practices across all AP courses in (c) curriculum planning and implementation and (d) assessment and evaluation methods. Regarding human resource practices, department heads and human resources ensure (e) faculty assigned AP courses are motivated, hold subject-specific degrees, and engage in ongoing professional learning. Regarding school level practices, department heads and guidance counsellors ensure (f) AP courses offered are of a high standard, reflect student needs and interests, and are taught by subject experts. The short-term outcomes of the institutionalization of these inputs and activities is teacher effectiveness, that is, improvement in teacher engagement, curricular and pedagogical content knowledge, and assessment and evaluation practices and AP access, that is, improvement in access to AP courses for goal-oriented, motivated, and capable students. As access and teacher effectiveness increase, AP participation (i.e., an increase in the percent of students engaged in AP courses, persisting through completion, and taking exam) and AP performance (i.e., an increase in percent of students receiving qualifying scores on AP exams) increase, respectively.

These medium-term outcomes result in increased matriculation to prestigious undergraduate programs and schools nationally and internationally, increased persistence through first year and to second year, and increased graduation rates consistent with the completion of a 4-year degree.

Figure 4

Logic Model Depicting the Outcomes of an Access-Centered Approach to AP



Note. Loosely based on Philips and Lane (2021), this logic model depicts the outcomes of the institutionalization of an access-centered approach to AP and the removal of access barriers.

Next Steps, Future Considerations of the Organizational Improvement Plan

This organizational improvement plan was designed with a three-year implementation timeline in mind because of the immediate short-term problems that need resolving.

Operationalizing this OIP is the next major step. Meeting with my direct supervisor, discussing this OIP, building the AP Leadership Team, and engaging them in a thorough consideration of

the role AP plays at the school is paramount to successfully implementing this plan. This proposed AP Leadership Team comprises a broad mix of stakeholders who already have similar beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours about Advanced Placement, how students should engage with it, and what role faculty play. Already, they receive ample impressions from students, parents, faculty, and administration. Building collective efficacy amongst this group will be swift. Co-creating the implementation, communication, and monitoring and evaluation plans with this team will ensure great success. Reculturing is about changing faculty mindsets. By year three, the institutionalization phase of the CPM, faculty will have adopted an access-centered approach to AP and specific barriers to access identified above will have been removed.

Future Considerations

This OIP has focused on a few barriers that currently manifest at Birchwood, which limit access to AP for students. These barriers impede a broad swathe of students but this OIP just represents the initial work. Other barriers unaddressed in this OIP manifest too, including structural, social, cultural, and demographic. The first, structural barriers, manifests due to timetabling, course offerings, grade offerings, and the AP funneling process, all which advantage some students but create barriers for others. The second, social barriers, manifest in the way students are socialized to be or not be AP students by their peers, parents, or faculty, all which either encourage or discourage their engagement. The third, cultural barriers, manifests from familial influences. If the student's dominant cultural influences encourage university attendance, academic scholarship, and AP engagement, these students are more likely to pursue AP over students whose cultural heritage has little to no experience or interest in AP. The fourth, demographic barriers, manifests as a disproportion in the representation of students from across the wide spectrum of nationality/ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, and gender identities in

attendance at the school. In addition, representation of each of these identities of the students is not reflected in AP teaching faculty exacerbating the impact of this barrier. These dimensions all influence who engages and to what extent they engage with AP. Despite the accepted view that every student should be given an equal opportunity “there are many challenges associated with the successful implementation of this ideal at the ground level such as racial discrimination, financial problems, gender inequality and gap in digital competence” (Ling & Nasri, 2019).

Recognizing the need to evolve and address some barriers to access, the College Board has recently announced three new AP courses. The first, AP African American Studies, to be launched in Fall 2023, attempts to bring forward historical perspectives from an African American experience and framework. The second, AP Anatomy and Physiology, to be launched in Fall 2024, aims to support students intending to pursue nursing. And the third, AP Business, to be launched in Fall 2025, will appeal to business students eager to differentiate themselves in the university application process given their advanced business acumen. Each of these three courses opens opportunities for students to engage in AP more fully. Launching these courses could potentially create barriers to access witnessed with the other AP subjects. Planning for an effective implementation of these new courses, which considers all this OIP attempts to resolve, is paramount so their successful launch and students’ successful achievement.

Despite the College Board’s work to increase access and equity, many critics of the AP program highlight the potential AP has of further disadvantaging students often marginalized due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and socio-economic status (Hallett & Venegas, 2011; Kolluri, 2020; Makan, 2019; Ward, 2020; Xu et al., 2021). Having achieved the institutionalization of an access-centered approach, leadership and faculty at Birchwood will be primed to tackle the AP program through a social justice leadership lens identifying equity

barriers and systematically removing them (Casimiro, 2018; Cartegna & Slater, 2022; Crabtree et al., 2019; Marshall & Olivia, 2017; Phillips & Lane, 2021; Wang, 2018). An area of concern I see manifesting is in the twin objectives of admitting highly affluent families who can afford the steep tuition fees and raising the financial assistance goal to 25% of the student body. While giving educational opportunities to students who are socioeconomically less advantaged aligns fully with the principal's notion that a great private school has a great sense of public service (principal, personal communication, July 5, 2022), it is imperative that we ensure these students are not further marginalized (see Appendix T for more detail). Here is where I see the evolution of this OIP for me in the years to come.

Conclusion

This OIP began with reverence for multiple theories developed by Western educators which continually stay with me as I reflect on education. When I consider how Advanced Placement courses are scaffolded with a series of tasks culminating in a high-stakes exam, portfolio, or research paper, I reflect on how these advanced courses are structured with a sense of Bloom's (1956) domains of learning with its hierarchal learning levels—remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, and create. Students must build competence and confidence as they progress upward through this scaffold from the more basic levels through to creativity, the highest of domains. When I consider how the College Board offers 40 Advanced Placement subjects across six disciplines, I reflect on how it attempts to capture all Gardner's (2008) multiple intelligences—that is, linguistic, mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. Students can build studio art portfolios in drawing, two-dimensional, and three-dimensional art, or demonstrate their musical knowledge and ability. Students interested in STEM can select from 13 different science, math, and computer subjects to

choose from. Those interested in humanities, history, and social sciences have a dozen different courses. For students interested in world languages and cultures, another 8 are available. Finally, for any who want to expand their academic research and writing, the Capstone program offers the opportunity for students to pursue any topic of personal interest and mimic the scholarship of a master's program at the high school level; some students even get their work published as a result. But most of all, Maslow's (1943) pyramidal hierarchy of needs stands out: Advanced Placement offers students the opportunity for self-fulfillment (cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence) (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2007). I opened this work with two sentiments: education has the power to liberate the individual (Freedman, 2003; Gary, 2006) and give them agency of thought and action (Bandura, 1986, 1997). I do believe that higher education, in the form of Advanced Placement, increases this opportunity, elevating the power students have over their own circumstances and providing them with possibilities for personal fulfillment, career achievement, and overall life prospects.

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Appendix A: Table 2 Leadership Connections to Social Cognitive Theory

Table 2

Leadership Connections to Social Cognitive Theory

Approach and Tenets	Focus	Connection with Social Cognitive Theory
Ethical	Philosophical	Internal competency (cognitive and emotional)
Behaving ethically		Behaviour (attitude, belief, and action)
Authentic	Relational	Internal competency (cognitive)
Striving for excellence		Behaviours (decisions and actions)
Expanding competencies		Personal accomplishment
Building relationships		Verbal persuasion
Leading with balance		Emotional state
Instructional	Actionable	Internal competency (cognitive and emotional)
Maximizing influence		Behaviours (decisions and actions)
Recognizing potential		Verbal persuasion
Embracing change		Emotional state
Working collaboratively		

Note. This table demonstrates the connection between my leadership approaches, my professional tenets, and Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory.

Appendix B: Ethical Leadership Style Questionnaire

This questionnaire asks you to respond with one of the six ethical behaviours to a series of ethical dilemmas. Your most preferred response is the response that best describes why you would do what you would do in that situation.

1. *Virtue Ethics*. I would do what a good person would do: exhibiting excellence of character, acting with integrity, and being faithful to one's principles, including employing virtues such as courage, honesty, and loyalty.
2. *Justice Ethics*. I would do what is fair: acting with justice, being equitable to others, and treating others fairly, including distributing benefits and burdens to everyone equally.
3. *Duty Ethics*. I would do what is right: following the rules (explicit or implicit), meeting my responsibilities, fulfilling my obligations, and adhering to organization policy.
4. *Utilitarian Ethics*. I would do what benefits the most people: what helps the most people overall and what creates the greatest total happiness.
5. *Caring Ethics*. I would do what shows that I care about my close relationships: building and maintaining caring relationships, nurturing relationships, and being responsive to the needs of others, especially to those with whom I share a personal bond or commitment.
6. *Egoism Ethics*. I would do what benefits me the most: achieving my goals, being successful in my assigned task, advancing my career, and doing things in my self-interest.

Note. Adapted from Northouse, P. (2021), the order reveals my personal priority of ethical responses from highest to lowest based on my responses to a series of ethical dilemmas.

Appendix C: Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire

This questionnaire contains items about different dimensions of authentic leadership.

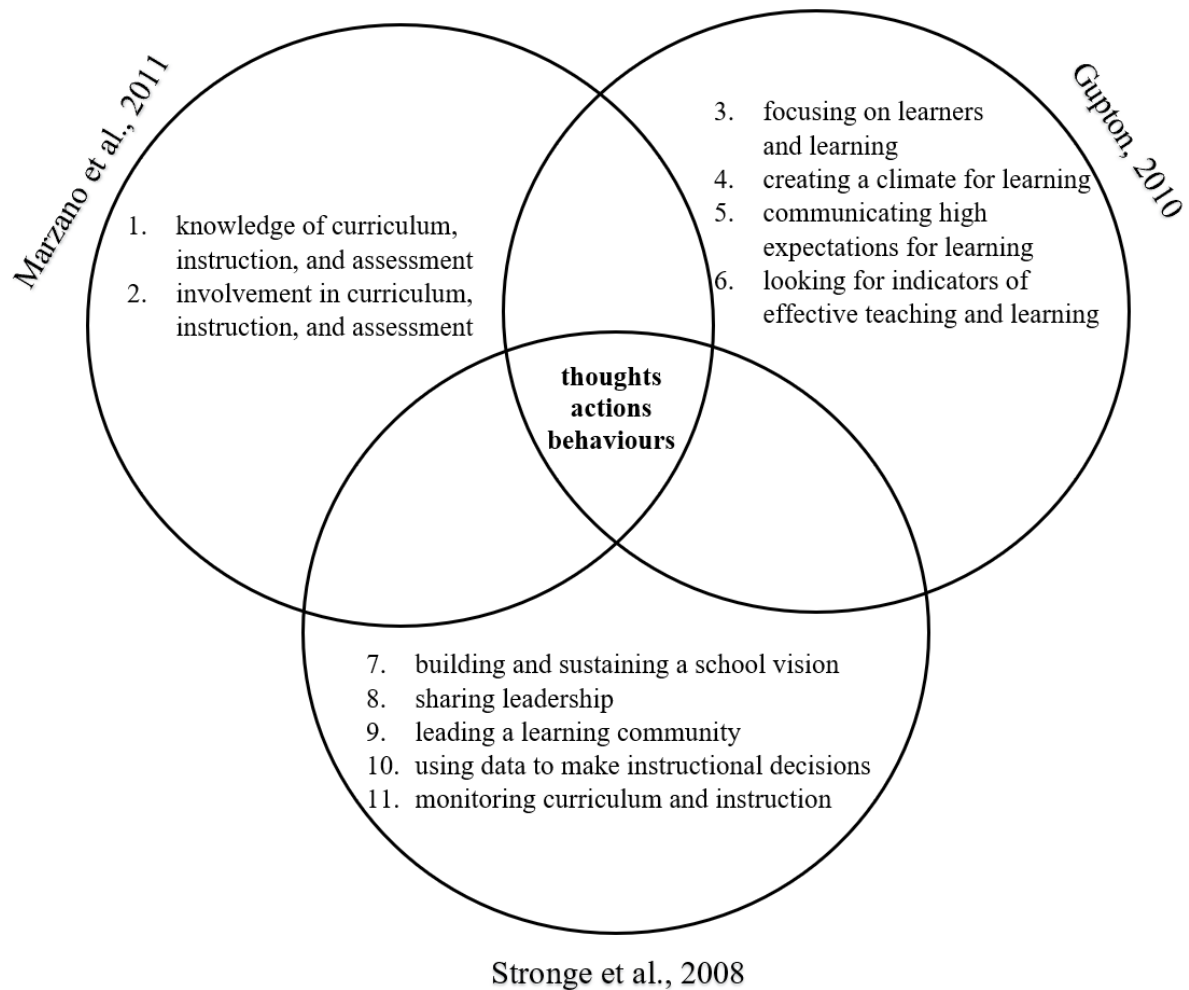
1. I can list my three greatest weaknesses
2. My actions reflect my core values
3. I seek others' opinions before making up my own mind
4. I openly share my feelings with others
5. I can list my three greatest strengths
6. I do not allow group pressure to control me
7. I listen closely to the ideas of those who disagree with me
8. I let others know who I truly am as a person
9. I seek feedback as a way of understanding who I really am as a person
10. Other people know where I stand on controversial issues
11. I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others
12. I rarely present a 'false' front to others
13. I accept the feelings I have about myself
14. My morals guide what I do as a leader
15. I listen very carefully to other ideas of others before making decisions
16. I admit my mistakes to others

Note. Adapted from Northouse, P. (2021), this questionnaire indicates my preferred order of authentic leadership tendencies to be balanced processing, self-awareness, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective.

Appendix D: Figure 5 Instructional Leadership Models

Figure 5

Instructional Leadership Models



Note. This diagram is a representation of my Instructional Leadership thoughts, actions, and behaviours framed according to the descriptors used by Gupton (2010), Marzano et al. (2011), and Stronge et al. (2008).

Appendix E: Table 3 AP Courses and Exams

Table 3

AP Courses and Exams

Discipline & Subject	Discipline & Subject	Discipline & Subject
Capstone	Math and Computer Science	English
Seminar	Calculus AB	English Lang. and Comp.
Research	Calculus BC	English Lit. and Comp.
Arts	Computer Science A	History and Social Sciences
2-D Art and Design	Computer Science Principles	African American Studies
3-D Art and Design	Precalculus	Business Studies
Drawing	Statistics	Comparative Gov. and Pol.
Art History	World Languages and Cultures	European History
Music Theory	Chinese Lang. and Culture	Human Geography
Science	French Lang. and Culture	Macroeconomics
Anatomy and Physiology	German Lang. and Culture	Microeconomics
Biology	Italian Lang. and Culture	Psychology
Chemistry	Japanese Lang. and Culture	United States Gov. and Pol.
Environmental Science	Latin	United States History
Physics 1: Algebra-Based	Spanish Lang. and Culture	World History: Modern
Physics 2: Algebra-Based	Spanish Lit. and Culture	
Physics C: Elec. and Mag.		
Physics C: Mechanics		

Note. Adapted from College Board (2022c), this list provides the complete list of AP courses, including those under development.

Appendix F: Table 4 Barriers, Symptoms, and Effects

Table 4

Barriers, Symptoms, and Effects

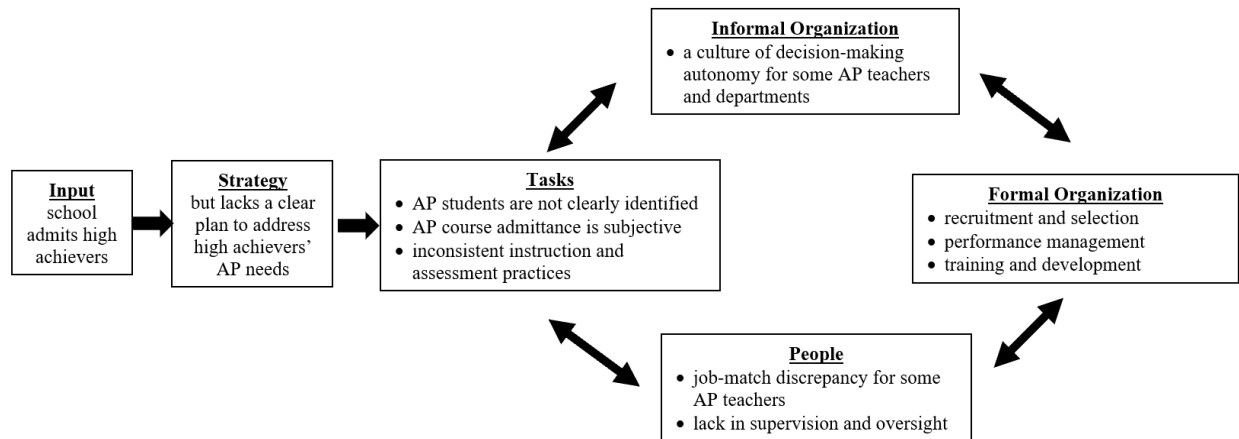
Barrier	Symptoms	Effects
placement tests	restrict access to students who perform well according to established test criteria	result in fewer students engaging with AP, feelings of rejection may ensue, and socialized to believe themselves incapable of learning AP
enrollment criteria	restrict access to students who meet all criteria	precludes students do not have the capacity for AP, feelings of rejection may ensue, and socialized to believe themselves incapable of learning AP
instructional methods	restrict access to students willing to grind through the higher expectations	reduces university prospects for students who are unwilling to devote the necessary time to succeed in AP
evaluation methods	restrict access to students willing to take a lower mark in exchange for completing the AP course and exam	result in many students dropping out of the courses for fear of the impact on university admission
teacher misalignment	restricts access to students willing to accept they may not receive the required support to perform well	results in disadvantages for students interested in the subject matter and the university prospects it offers
course misalignment	restricts access to those students willing to supplement their own learning through alternate methods	forces students to find alternative methods to learn the material of personal or career interest, including tutors, night-classes, online courses, or self-study

Note. This chart reflects the barriers to access, along with their symptoms and effects evident.

Appendix G: Figure 6 Congruence Model and Problem of Practice

Figure 6

Congruence Model and Problem of Practice



Note. This figure illustrates the challenges of congruence in the Advanced Placement program in the organization. Adapted from Cawsey et al. (2016). *Organizational Change*. Sage.

Appendix H: Table 5 Readiness Dimensions and Birchwood

Table 5

Readiness Dimensions and Birchwood

Readiness Dimensions	Score
Previous Change Experiences	
1. Has the organization had generally positive experiences with change?	1
2. Has the organization had recent failure experiences with change?	0
3. What is the mood of the organization: upbeat and positive?	1
4. What is the mood of the organization: negative and cynical?	0
5. Does the organization appear to be resting on its laurels?	0
Executive Support	
6. Are senior managers directly involved in sponsoring the change?	2
7. Is there a clear picture of the future?	1
8. Is executive success dependent on the change occurring?	0
9. Has management ever demonstrated a lack of support?	-1
Credible Leadership and Change Champions	
10. Are senior leaders in the organization trusted?	1
11. Are senior leaders able to credibly show others how to achieve their collective goals?	1
12. Is the organization able to attract and retain capable and respected change champions?	2
13. Are middle managers able to effectively link senior managers with the rest of the organization?	0
14. Are senior leaders likely to view the proposed change as generally appropriate for the organization?	2
15. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by senior leaders?	2
Openness to Change	
16. Does the organization have scanning mechanisms to monitor the environment?	1
17. Is there a culture of scanning and paying attention to those scans?	1
18. Does the organization have the ability to focus on root causes?	1
19. Does 'turf' protection exist in the organization?	0
20. Are senior managers hidebound or locked into the use of past strategies, approaches, and solutions?	0
21. Are employees able to constructively voice their concerns or support?	1
22. Is conflict dealt with openly, with a focus on resolution?	1
23. Is conflict suppressed and smoothed over?	0
24. Does the organization have a culture that is innovative and encourages innovative activities?	1
25. Does the organization have communications channels that work effectively in all directions?	1
26. Will the proposed change be viewed as generally appropriate for the organization by senior leadership?	2
27. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by those not in senior leadership roles?	2
Readiness Dimensions	
28. Do those who will be affected believe they have the energy needed to undertake the change?	2
29. Do those who will be affected believe there will be access to sufficient resources to support change?	2
Rewards for Change	
30. Does the reward system value innovation and change?	1
31. Does the reward system focus exclusively on short-term results?	0
32. Are people censured for attempting change and failing?	0
Measures for Change and Accountability	
33. Are there good measures available for assessing the need for change and tracking progress?	1
34. Does the organization attend to the data that it collects?	1
35. Does the organization measure and evaluate customer satisfaction?	1
36. Is the organization able to carefully steward resources and successfully meet predetermined deadlines?	1
Scores range from -10 to +35. The higher the score, the readier the organization is for change	31

Note. Adapted from Cawsey et al. (2016), this table reveals Birchwood's readiness for change..

Appendix I: Table 6 Climate Dimensions and Birchwood

Table 6

Climate Dimensions and Birchwood

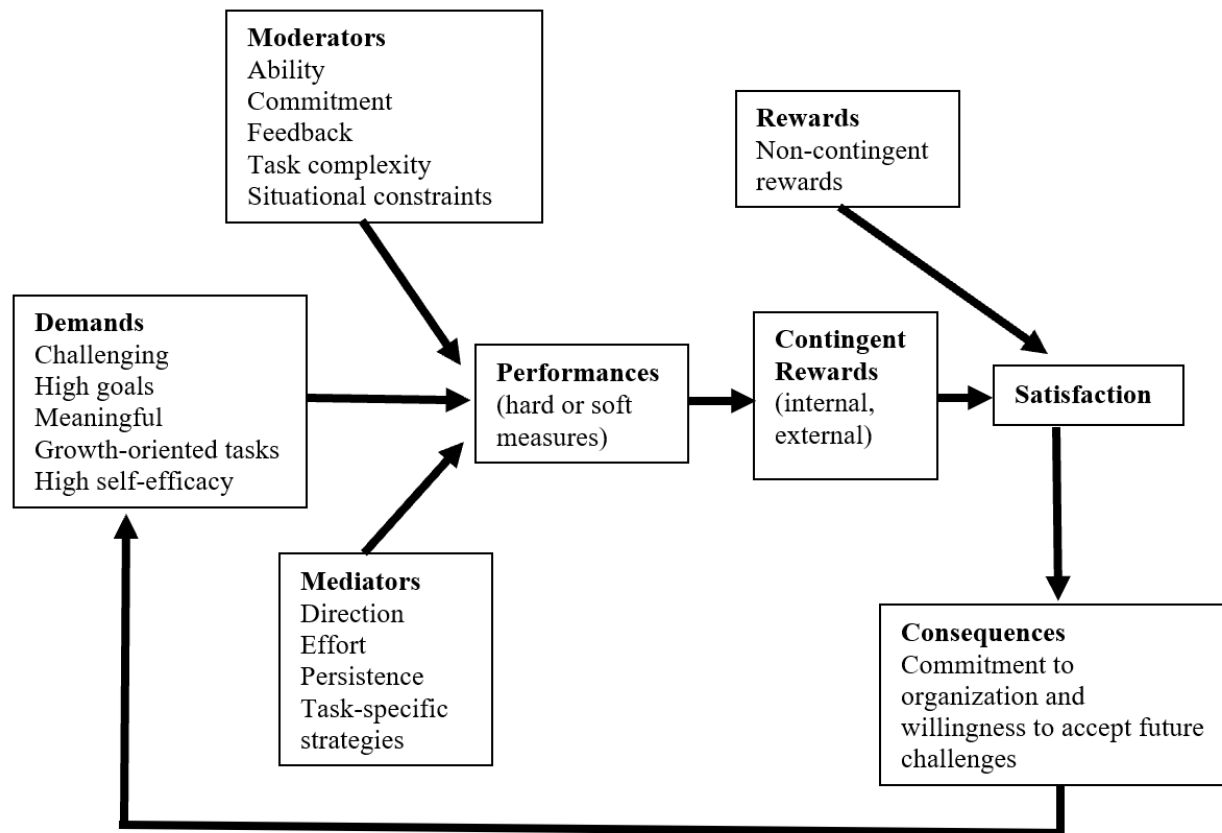
Climate dimension		
Internal context		
Trust in leadership	Trust in leadership is the extent to which staff members perceive their supervisors and top management as trustworthy. Does management practice what they preach? Do they keep their promises? Are they honest and fair towards all departments? To put it differently, employees feel they can communicate openly about problems, without running the risk of being held responsible for it.	5
Politicking	Politicking describes the perceived level of political games within the organization. A high degree of politicking leads to unnecessary expense, considerable delays, and unwillingness to share knowledge. Is there a low degree of politicking at the school? (Question added by me)	5
Cohesion	Cohesion refers to the extent of cooperation and trust in the competence of team members. It is the perception of togetherness or sharing within the organization setting, including the willingness of members to support each other. In general, are colleagues accessible?	5
Process		
Participation	Participation is the extent to which staff members are involved in and informed about decisions that directly concern them, decisions about organizational change inclusive. Can procedures and guidelines be discussed bottom up? In other words, is the information supplied by front line staff considered, and is the frontline involved in the change process?	5
Support by supervisors	Support by supervisors is conceived as the extent to which employees experience support and understanding from their immediate supervisor. More specifically it measures their openness to reactions of their staff and their ability to lead them through the change process.	5
Quality of change communication	Quality of change communication refers to how change is communicated. The clarity, frequency, and openness determine whether communication is effective. Are the staff clear about how they must apply change in practice? Should they learn about changes through rumours?	5
Attitude of top management toward change	Attitude of top management toward change involves the stance top management is taking with regard to change. Does management support the change initiative? Are they actively involved in the change?	5
Readiness for change		
Emotional readiness	Emotional readiness for change is the affective reactions toward change.	5
Cognitive readiness	Cognitive readiness for change is the beliefs and thoughts people hold about the change. For example, what are the benefits or disadvantages caused by the change?	5
Intentional readiness	Intentional readiness for change is the extent to which employees are prepared to put their energy into the change process.	5

Note. Adapted from Bouckennooghe et al. (2009), this table reveals Birchwood's readiness for change. I completed this series of questions using the Likert scale with the following five levels: 5—strongly agree, 4—agree, 3—neutral, 2—disagree, and 1—strongly disagree.

Appendix J: Figure 7 The High-Performance Cycle

Figure 7

The High-Performance Cycle



Note. Adapted from Latham et al. (2002), this diagram depicts the high-performance cycle consistent with Birchwood faculty who progress along this trajectory. High-performing faculty enjoy the demands of a challenging position. Mediators influence their performance and multiple rewards (both contingent and non-contingent) result in satisfaction, the consequence being additional challenges. When moderated by situational constraints like micromanagement, the cycle is interrupted and faculty may lose interest in continuing in this environment.

Appendix K: Curriculum as Culture

Understanding curriculum as culture is facilitated through a series of questions that can be asked as we witness our classrooms and schools. Here Joseph (2011) offers clarity:

In what activities do people participate? What are everyday practices? What rules and laws influence these practices? What behaviors and attitudes are encouraged or discouraged? How are social groups organized? What are the relationships between students and instructors? Who has power to make decisions and who does not? And how are these power relationships maintained? How does the surrounding community and other outside stakeholders historically and currently influence the school? What has symbolic meaning in the environment and in what ways are these symbols communicated? What systems of thought are valued and modelled? What is the nature of the course of study? Whose history or literature is considered important or universal? What undertakings and talents are praised and rewarded? What do people believe to be appropriate goals of education?

Note. The above appears in Joseph et al. (2011). *Cultures of Curriculum*. Routledge. p. 27.

Appendix L: Table 7 Framework for Understanding a Culture of Curriculum

Table 7

Framework for Understanding a Culture of Curriculum

Focus	Explanation
Quote	What statement(s) synthesizes major beliefs within this culture of curriculum?
Impressions	What depiction of education within this culture of curriculum captures many of its important themes and assumptions?
Visions	What are the goals of education or schooling for the individual? What is the ultimate benefit for society if all individuals were educated in this culture of curriculum?
History	How has this culture of curriculum been present in schooling? What are the forces, events, and ideas that influence this culture curriculum?
Students	What are the beliefs about students' needs, development, competencies, motives, and interests? How have these beliefs influenced practice?
Teachers	What are the beliefs about the role of teachers? How should they facilitate learning?
Content	What constitutes the subject matter? How is this subject matter organized?
Context	What is the environment of the classroom and school? How is instruction organized?
Planning	What are the models of curriculum development? Who plans the curriculum? Who has the power to make decisions?
Evaluation	How should students be assessed? How is the worth or success of curriculum determined?
Dilemmas of Practice	What problems or challenges did teachers face when they work in or try to implement this culture of curriculum?
Critique	What problems are inherent in the vision of this curriculum for individuals and society? What are blind spots not perceived by advocates of this culture curriculum?

Note. Adapted from Joseph et al. (2011), this framework aids in conceptualizing curriculum as culture around twelve broad domains.

Appendix M: Table 8 Comparison Chart of All Possible Solutions

Table 8

Comparison Chart of All Possible Solutions

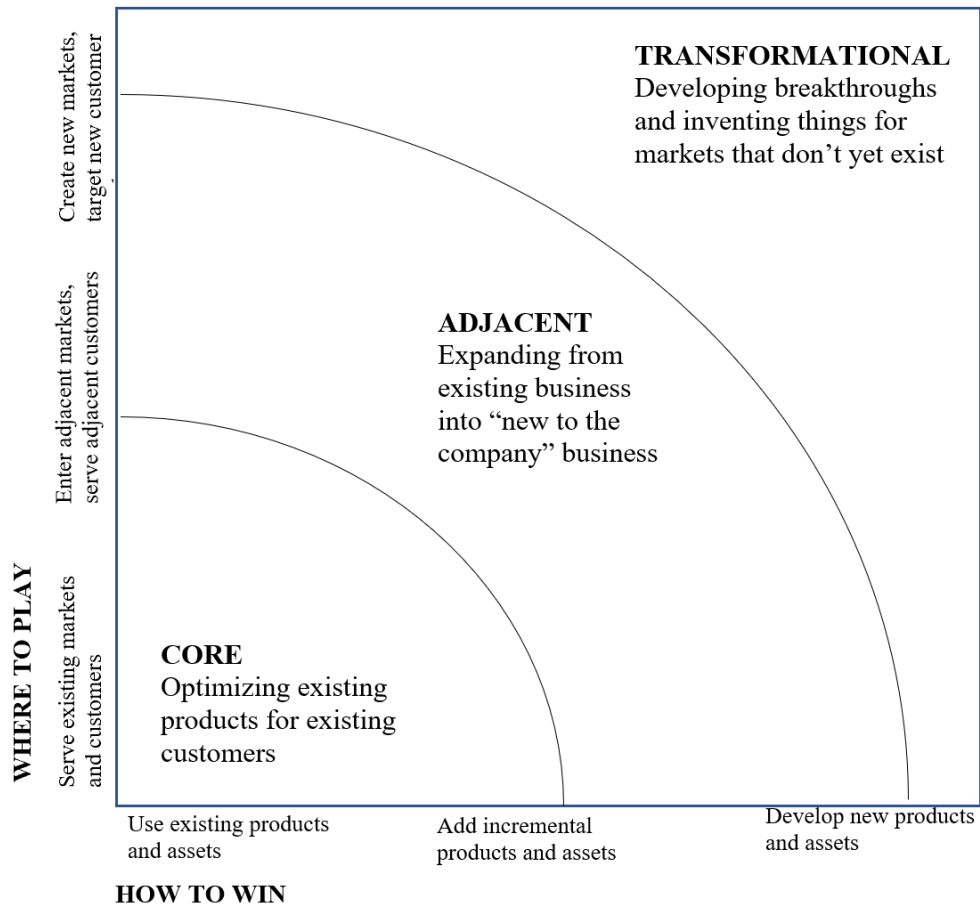
Solution 1	Solution 2	Solution 3
Increase AP Offerings	Effective Supervision of AP	Reculturing AP Curriculum
Barriers Removed	Barriers Removed	Barriers Removed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> faculty alignment course alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> placement tests selection criteria instruction and implementation assessment and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> placement tests selection criteria instruction and implementation assessment and evaluation teacher alignment course alignment
Added Benefits	Added Benefits	Added Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing student engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing student engagement improving professional practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing student engagement improving professional practice
Resources Required	Resources Required	Resources Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> longer time horizon financially costly human resource substantial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> short time horizon financially inconsequential human resource economical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> medium time horizon financially inconsequential human resource economical
Possible Drawbacks	Possible Drawbacks	Possible Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involution / mental health disruptive growth period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> disgruntled faculty toxic culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unengaged faculty

Note. This chart is developed based on my observations of the current problem and what the anticipated benefits, resources, and drawbacks might be for each proposed solution.

Appendix N: Figure 8 The Innovation Ambition Matrix

Figure 8

The Innovation Ambition Matrix



Note. The principal and BoD use Nagji and Tuff’s (2012) matrix to guide strategic thinking. This OIP reflects the “Core” of this matrix as it optimizes existing products for existing customers.

Appendix O: Key Principles in Communicating Change

In collaborating with key stakeholders, I will be employing Klein's (1996) six key principles in communicating change. First, reporting to my immediate supervisor builds confidence, trust, and validity in me and my problem posing. Second, leveraging guidance counsellors as opinion leaders who can advise faculty would serve as additional authority figures to communicate the problem and the need to fix it. Third, communicating face-to-face is crucial for building relational trust with this leadership team and enacting my authentic leadership approach. Fourth, applying message and media redundancy to continually repeat the message via multiple face-to-face meetings and through various media, including email and posts, will ensure the problem remains top-of-mind and the improvement plan implemented. Fifth, managing the readiness for change by collaborating with these key stakeholders builds momentum and viability that this plan will be adopted by faculty because faculty look to their managers for direction and guidance and pick up on and retain personally relevant information (Cawsey et al., 2016; Klein, 1996).

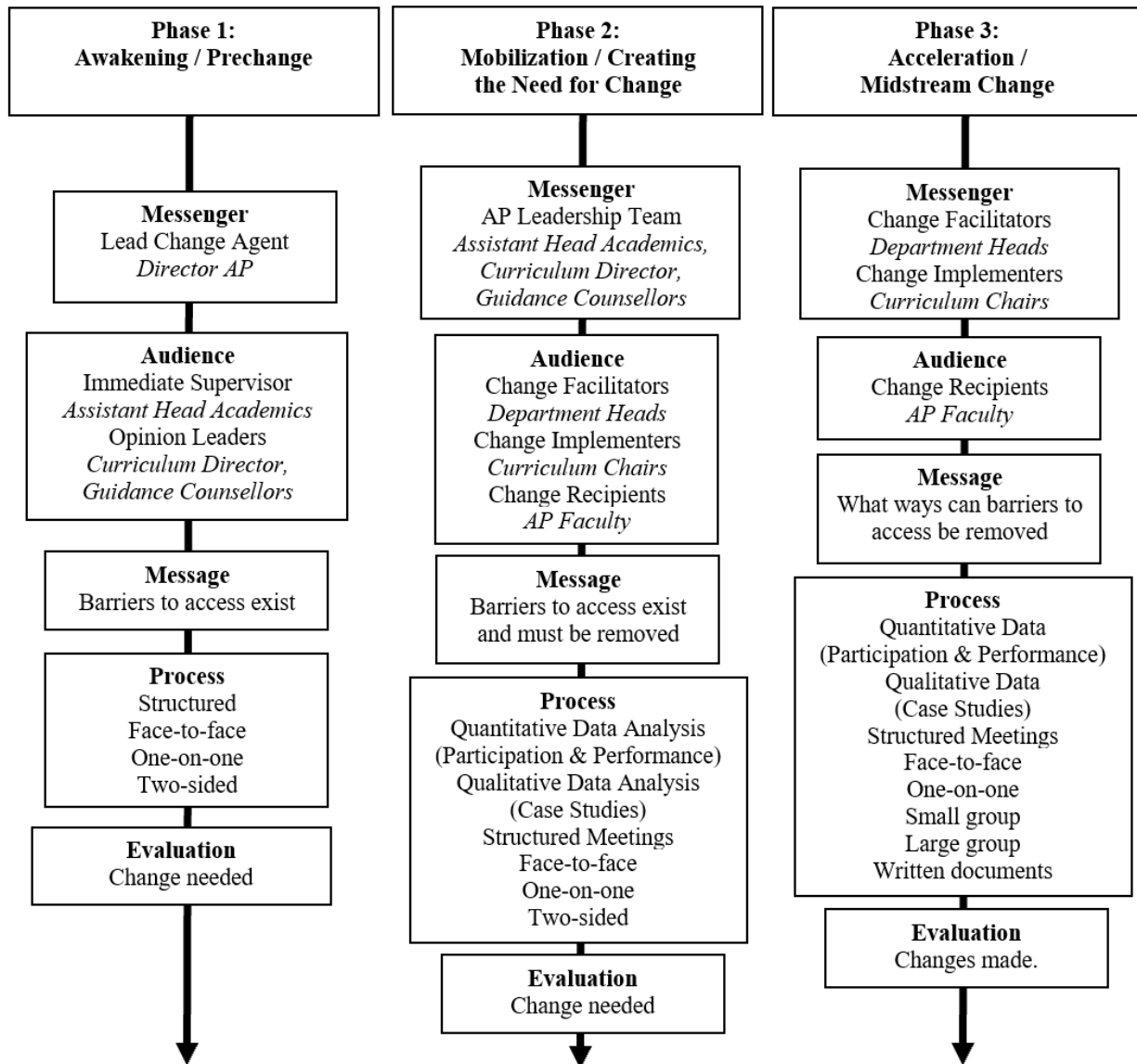
Appendix P: Understanding Bases of Power

Understanding each key stakeholder's bases of power and monitoring the stakeholder's reactions (Lewis, 2019) is essential for the successful communication of the message and how the message is received. Each faculty has their bases of power including (a) positional/assigned authority, (b) expertise, competence, and experience, (c) standards, protocols, and professional expectations, (d) norms, culture, and tradition, (e) resource control, (f) reward control, (g) unique knowledge, (h) strong-tie networks of loyalists, and (i) coalition membership (Lewis, 2019, p. 196). An OIP that takes into consideration each stakeholder's bases of power is more thorough, credible, and convincing and stands a greater chance of being fully implemented. Despite the organizational charts' hierarchal description of leadership responsibilities, faculty have impact beyond their sphere of influence because their bases of power extend to the organization more broadly. For instance, a senior faculty member with years of experience teaching may have credibility for their longevity and expertise that extends beyond their sphere of influence as a teacher to develop strong-tie networks with other loyalists. Orchestrating a communication plan that considers each organizational member's bases of power is crucial to the successful fulfilment of this OIP. Faculty who have multiple bases of power have greater influence on more impressionable, vulnerable, and newer teachers. Their opinions may sway these faculty toward or against this OIP. This verbal persuasion needs to be steered toward an access-centered vision. Ensuring their contributions are constructive and align with this collaborative approach may take some pre-discussions or gentle reminding throughout the process. Here I will engage ethical, authentic, and instructional leadership tendencies as I collaborate with faculty.

Appendix Q: Figure 9 Knowledge Transfer Strategy

Figure 9

Knowledge Transfer Strategy



Note. The above graphic is a representation of this OIP's Knowledge Transfer (KT) strategy following Lavis et al.'s (2003) research knowledge transfer and imbedded in Cawsey et al.'s (2016) implementation and communication phases.

Appendix R: Figure 10 Knowledge Mobilization Plan

Figure 10

Knowledge Mobilization Plan

Products	Events	Networks	Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP Score Reports for Educators • AP Data and Research • Toolkit for AP Teachers • CB Access Policy Brief • Success Stories • Case Studies • AP Fact Sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal PD Opportunities • Professional Learning Communities • College Board Forum • AP Annual Conference • AP Summer Institutes • AP Panels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP Community Listserv • CAIS Community Listserv • NAIS Community Listserv • Ontario Council of AP Schools • Online Forums • Social Media • AP Mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Releases • Newspaper Articles • Blogs • Tweets • Magazines • AP Daily YouTube Channel

Note. Adapted from Cooper (2011), this graphic demonstrates the multiple strategies knowledge users will engage in research to make decisions about Advanced Placement curriculum practices.

Appendix S: Table 9 Change Outcomes, Indicators, Baselines, and Targets

Table 9

Change Outcomes, Indicators, Baselines, and Targets

Change Outcome	Indicator (Impact)	Baseline (at commencement)	Target (by end of change implementation)
Placement tests: Assessment changed to be evidence-informed	Increased validity and reliability of placement tests and decreased subjective decision-making	70% retention of AP Potential students	Greater than 70% retention of AP Potential students
Selection criteria: Criteria to be multi-faceted and evidence-informed	Increased validity and reliability in selection criteria and decreased subjective decision-making	Some uncertainty as to the reliability of the selection process in identifying qualifying candidates	Higher degree of certainty in the validity and reliability of the selection process
Personnel increased to represent a broader diversity of stakeholders	Increased number of stakeholders and shared decision-making regarding student qualifiers	Some dissatisfaction from stakeholders with collective efficacy of the selection process	Higher degree of satisfaction from stakeholders with collective efficacy of the selection process
Coursework: Course content to reflect OSS predominantly and AP secondarily	Increased retention of students	70% retention rate	85% or better retention rate
Evaluation methods: Assessment and evaluation based on OSS and not AP	Decreased complaints about marks Decreased number of course drops	Multiple complaints 15% course drops	Fewer complaints 5% course drops
Job-match alignment: Increases in teacher engagement and capacity	Increase in faculty teaching AP	80% of AP teachers engaged	90% or higher engaged
Course-match alignment AP courses offered align with student self-study interest	AP courses launched by interested and qualified faculty	25% of AP subject exams self-studied by students	10% of AP subject exams self-studied by students

Note. Adapted from Markiewicz and Patrick (2016), this table shares the change outcomes, indicators, baselines, and targets of this organizational improvement plan.

Appendix T: The Impact of Capital on Student Engagement in AP

Häuberer (2006) reminds us that there are three types of capital—social, cultural, and economic—and that these are interchangeable and distributed differently amongst people. In the case of Birchwood, there are families with disproportionately greater amounts of social, cultural, and economic capital: they are highly affluent (economic capital), well-educated (cultural capital), and are well-connected with influential people (social capital). Stanton-Salazar (1997) extends this notion of social capital within institutions and identifies seven principal forms termed funds of knowledge including: institutionally sanctioned discourses (i.e., socially accepted ways of using language and communication), network development (i.e., knowledge of how to negotiate various gatekeepers), and knowledge of educational markets (i.e., knowledge of how to fulfill requisites and overcome barriers), in addition to a few others. Students with high levels of social capital have increased chances of converting that social capital to cultural capital (higher levels of education) and economic capital (greater economic prospects with increased opportunities for wealth accumulation). Stanton-Salazar (1997) and González et al. (2006) found that students with access to funds of knowledge have increased opportunities while students lacking access, conversely, lacked opportunities.

There are many students who arrive at Birchwood with vast amounts of social, cultural, and economic capital and begin the career-path with high levels of self-efficacy, and patterns of success in outcome expectations and goal achievements (Lent et al., 1994). They have high levels of funds of knowledge and are highly motivated students ready to challenge AP courses and exams. They can navigate the structures (Coleman, 1998), they are culturally supported, and they are socially capable and they do what it takes to succeed, including hiring private tutors and taking additional online courses to supplement their learning and meet with success. For these

students, their career-path trajectories are comparatively free and clear of barriers; they enroll in Birchwood specifically for the AP program and engage with it at increasingly younger ages (admissions officer, personal communication, July 12, 2022). Of greatest concern is there are many other students who lack high levels of social, cultural, and economic capital, who lack the self-efficacy, outcome expectancies, and funds of knowledge of these more accomplished students, and who invariably set lower goals for themselves, achieve less, and enter less prestigious universities. Students who identify as having a low socioeconomic status, who are at the school on bursaries and scholarships, who identify as Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous face challenges to this opportunity to learn Advanced Placement (Hallett & Venegas, 2011; Kolluri, 2020; Makan, 2019; Ward, 2020; Xu et al., 2021).