

Effective Leadership Promoting Effective Change in Schools

by

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Abstract

In order for K-12 schools to operate successfully, the structure of leadership is vital in facilitating change that will ultimately foster positive growth in teaching and learning. With curriculum changes, innovative technology, evolving teaching methods, and a diverse classroom of abilities and needs, educators no longer face the traditional teacher directed classroom where students are expected to absorb everything; rather, there is an increasing demand to modify educator practices to compliment the 21st Century learner. This is not an easy transformation. As a result, the transition has presented an obstacle for many leaders in schools because they are facing a culture resistant to change. This project reviews nine qualities that should be adopted by all leaders in K-12 schools to foster their effectiveness in implementing and modifying teaching and learning practices that embody the characteristics of 21st Century learning and are inclusive for all types of learners. The findings suggest the degree of change is highly influenced by the qualities of leadership and the extent to which teachers are involved in building the school's shared vision. This review will consider studies about leaders in school settings who may or may not have been successful at implementing effective change in their school practices. These findings, whether they profile effective change or not, may still be valuable to current school leaders, since they highlight potential areas of growth that educators may apply in their own school setting. Therefore, leaders would benefit from developing a comprehensive understanding

of their school's context and anticipating potential challenges they may face prior to implementing change.

Keywords: lead teacher, instructional coaching/leadership, 21st Century learning, change agents

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures.....	v
Introduction	1
Personal Interest	2
Research Background	4
Research Questions	6
Research Pathway	7
Definitions	10
Literature Review	11
Introduction	11
Defining Educational Reform	11
Leadership Qualities to Implement Change	12
Change Leader: Self Evaluation	14
Relationships First	14
Beware of Fat Plans	17
Behavior Before Beliefs	20
Implementation Dip	22
Communication During Implementation	25
Learn During Implementation	27
Prior Excitement is Fragile	28
Take Risks and Learn ..	30
Be Assertive	32
Summary	35
Project Proposal.....	38
Rationale: From Research to a Project Proposal	38
About the Self-Reflection Tool on Change Leadership.....	39
A Self-Reflection Tool on Change Leadership	40
Reflection	44
References	46

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1.</i> Flow chart of research framework.....	7
<i>Figure 2.</i> Flow chart of research pathway and findings.....	9
<i>Figure 3.</i> Nine qualities of a Change Leader (Fullan, 2011).....	14
<i>Figure 4.</i> The self-reflection tool and checklist.....	40

Introduction

The role of an educator continues to become increasingly more complex with the expectation and responsibility of accommodating the various needs, abilities, and styles of learners present within a diverse and inclusive classroom setting. Accordingly, research shows these challenges are not subdued by the constant demand for curriculum reform, which has challenged the leadership structure in some schools (Poon-McBrayer & Wong, 2013). As a result, leaders have struggled to promote a culture where educators strive to enhance their understanding of these diverse needs and develop a stronger skillset, while simultaneously modifying their instructional and learning practices to compliment these changes. One study suggested “inequality issues” (Garcia-Carrion, Gomez, Molina, & Ionescu, 2017, p. 44) such as budget constraints, limited resources, and poverty were “directly related to the quality of teaching students receive” (p. 44). As a result, the change agents in schools face a difficult culture and mindset that lives among educators who challenge the effectiveness of new ideologies based on these difficult circumstances. Personally, I am motivated through the simple message that in order to lead, educators must be open to learn (Fullan, 2011). Therefore, these challenges that administrators and teachers experience invite educators to consider what support systems may be put into place to better assist teachers.

Professional learning communities have been one way that many educators have found success (Kruse & Johnson, 2016). These communities have been grounded on three main principles: consistent collaboration, evidence and research-based practices, and a safe environment in which to practice (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017; Kruse & Johnson, 2017). On the other hand, some schools have placed great emphasis on professional development (PD) with accountability measures to encourage educators to self-reflect and self-improve. For example,

educators have engaged in PD through “digitized content” (Xie, Kim, Cheng, & Luthy, 2017, p. 1068) to allow them to experience learning in a fashion that could be used with their students. Regardless, both scenarios suggest that educational leaders should not assume teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills as it would be impractical and harmful to the quality of education. Therefore, it is critical that leaders and teachers consider potential challenges as a precursor to implementing change. This allows educators to enter a reflective process on both their teaching and leadership practices. This literature review focuses specifically on the varying styles of leadership and their effectiveness for implementing change. An interesting comparison of the leadership models is that each one has resulted in inclusive and sustainable learning communities. These models of leadership share similar characteristics and hold their own unique values as well; thus, the process of change is considered at either a classroom level, involving one teacher and a class of students, or at a global level, catering to the whole school. This leads me to review which qualities of leadership bring about the most effective change. Additionally, it is worth considering whether certain models of leadership are more effective than others in light of inequality factors. These are some of the topics I reflect on in hopes of grasping a better understanding of effective leadership and the processes of change.

Personal Interest

My passion and desire to inquire further into this topic has stemmed from my teaching experience at my previous school, where I worked for the last five years. It was a kindergarten to grade 9 (K-9) school with approximately 650 students, located in a demographically challenging area where the majority of our students came from low-income families and foster homes. With serious behaviour problems, low academic success, a high turnover in teaching staff from year-to-year, and a school culture where teachers were resistant to change, the school struggled to

maintain a cohesive presence from the administration team. This made it increasingly challenging for any administrator to implement positive change; however, the addition of a new principal who had a strong background in twenty-first Century learning, as well as an exceptional aptitude for leadership altered the dynamics of this school. With this new addition, I was fortunate and grateful to not only be a witness to the impact of effective leadership, but also to have the opportunity to play a vital role in initiating change which transformed an entire school culture. Now, as I have begun a new experience in a high school setting as the English Language Learner (ELL) coach, I face several challenges with the leadership structure and a culture that is not only resistant to change, but a mindset that believes the school exists to serve educators and not the students. Therefore, I believe that some educators may have lost their purpose for teaching due to a lack of accountability from administration and lack of training and professional development. Given my past experiences with leadership and change, I have begun to contemplate the best practices in leadership for cultivating a school environment that progressively meets the needs of students.

Leadership encompasses a substantial “umbrella” in the field of education. The techniques, approaches, and structures of leadership are likely to differ depending on who is being catered to and at what level of authority. As a result, I would like to focus particular attention on administration teams within schools. This includes principals, assistant principals, and lead teachers. While my drive to consider leadership practices stems from my experiences with the current district in which I am employed, Edmonton Catholic Schools, I believe schools in other provinces and countries have experienced similar challenges. Additionally, I have reached a point in my career where I would like to shift from teaching into administration. Before doing so, however, I would like to develop a better understanding of who I want to be as

a leader. As a result, I would like to consider current action research in order to further investigate leadership practices that have proven to be successful while also being informed about unsuccessful initiatives. I believe this will allow me to compare the similarities and differences among varying teaching contexts in order to determine whether certain practices should be adopted by all schools seeking the best ways to support their students.

More recently, Edmonton Catholic Schools has been investing money in teachers willing to take on a lead teacher role in schools. From the Edmonton Catholic perspective, lead teachers are specialized in a particular area of focus and are able to support other teachers as well as support staff in their school to enhance teaching and learning. Areas of specialization may include literacy, special needs, ELL, technology, physical literacy, and numeracy. The push for lead teachers developed as a district-initiated strategy to support teachers in reforming and improving curriculum so teaching and learning practices embody the values and ideologies of twenty-first Century education. Whereas not all education systems have adopted the same structure, the value in recognizing and understanding the differences, good or bad, are worthy of attention to fully understand effective leadership practices.

Research Background

When considering the element of change in schools, I am referring to the varying leadership processes carried out “to support teacher development and thus indirectly support student learning” (Cherkowski & Brown, 2013, p. 40). As a result, change in schools can be difficult to measure as there is little to no quantitative value attached to this topic of research; rather, qualitative measures are considered through surveys, interviews, reflections, and evaluations. Based on my research in this area, the studies are encapsulated by three overarching themes.

The first main theme considers the qualities and structures educational leaders should adopt within their schools to implement change effectively. Whereas each school context is unique and represents specific beliefs on educational reform, several studies highlight a “distributed leadership” (Cherkowski & Brown, 2013, p. 23) approach that promotes and fosters meaningful and purposeful collaboration, also known as professional learning communities (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017; Kruse & Johnson, 2016; Longaretti & Toe, 2017; Nishimura, 2014; Robertson & Briggs, 2006); meanwhile, others recognize professional development as an effective approach for implementing change (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017; Hammond, Thorogood, Jenkins, & Faaiuas, 2015; Nishimura, 2014; Xie et al., 2017). Recognizing collaboration as a valuable quality and PD as an imperative structure, both approaches allow for or demand that leaders understand their school’s needs from a global and societal perspective; therefore, it is imperative that school leaders are aware of the central qualities that foster and develop change so they can adopt and implement accordingly.

As previously highlighted, each school context is unique; thus, there are similarities from one site to another. The second central theme suggests schools are suffering from inequality issues such as poverty or resistant mindsets which in turn is challenging the leadership structures in place (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017; Longaretti & Toe, 2017; Moller, 2017; Poon-McBrayer, 2017; Schmidt & Venet, 2012; Tiwari, Das, & Sharma, 2015). For example, due to “socio-political contexts” (Poon-McBrayer, 2017, p. 295), school leaders struggled to change a pre-existing culture and mindset regarding inclusive education in Hong Kong as the communities being investigated did not support the ideologies of inclusive education (Poon-McBrayer, 2017). On the other hand, a study conducted in Delhi, India suggested teachers supported the idea of inclusive education, but did not see it as a reality without the proper supports and training

(Tiwari et al., 2015). Other factors such as poverty (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017; Scholes, Lampert, Burnett, Comber, & Hoff, 2017), socio-economic equalities and newcomers (Longaretti & Toe, 2017; Moller, 2017) have further challenged educational leadership and its effectiveness in schools as they are faced with unprecedented issues. The studies reveal various approaches to be considered by educational leaders based on the qualitative data gathered and also, practices that should be pre-emptively avoided to prevent potential failure and to be better equipped for the complex needs of the twenty-first Century.

The third theme suggests internal (classroom-based) and external (school-wide) supports from the school community play a significant role in either promoting or hindering the vision of the school leader. For example, with the principal being the head of a school, the teachers are the principal's supporting figures. Unfortunately, if the teachers neither share nor support the same vision as the principal, the opportunity for change is highly unlikely. As a result, one study recognizes how prominent the "partnership between school leaders and teachers" (Poon-McBrayer, 2017, p. 1523) is, in order to establish a shared vision that addresses the needs of students. Another study reveals the importance of establishing "social supports" (Grapin, Sulkowski, & Lazarus, 2016, p. 93) in schools in order to create a nurturing and welcoming environment that fosters positive academic experiences and behaviours for students (Grapin et al., 2016). In order for change to be effective and long-lasting, support is required from the entire school community which includes educational staff, students, and parents.

Research Questions

With the research background outlined above, the overarching question that will facilitate the review of literature is:

- What leadership qualities should administrators and lead teachers possess to implement change effectively in an inclusive setting?

In the following section, I review various leadership styles in different contexts, consider various factors that impact or challenge educational reform, and then highlight important evidence and data that will bring clarity or perhaps leave us questioning even further.

Research Pathway

To begin my research path, I created a flow chart to outline a framework for my topic that was based on my experiences as an educator and my understandings in my classes throughout the Masters Program-Curriculum Instruction and Leadership. The flow chart initially looked like this:

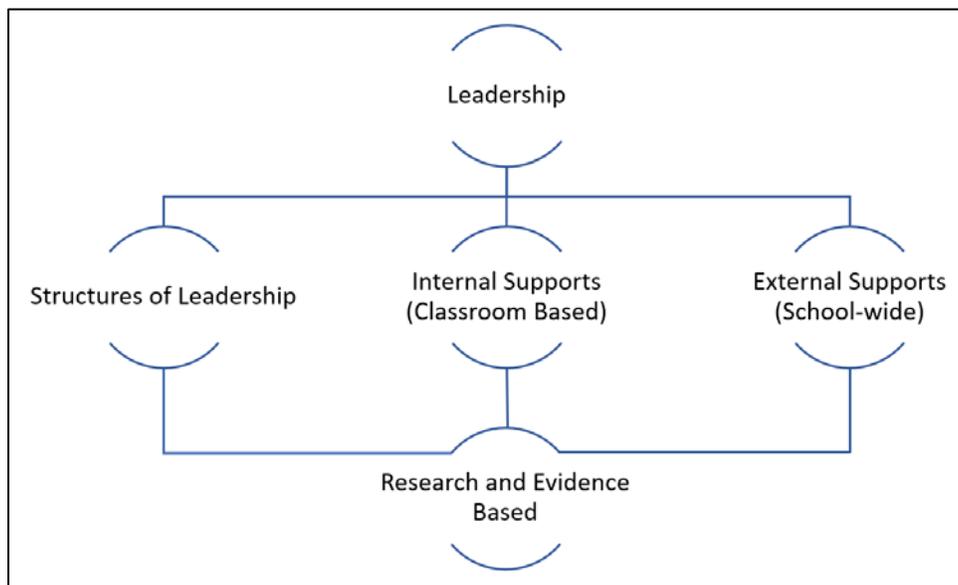


Figure 1. Flow chart of research framework

Whereas I will admit this was rather brief, this starting point led me to a more comprehensive outline as I researched literature. Using the University of Victoria's Library search engine and Web of Science, I began to enter the term "leadership" with keywords such as "change," "improving schools," "improving teaching," but then, ran into one major issue. The

search had brought forward several articles on leadership in medicine or in the medical field. I had not specified the area of leadership; therefore, I changed my main term “leadership” to “educational leadership” to narrow my results. As I reviewed the list of literature, key terms that stood out to me in the titles were “professional development,” “inclusive,” “instructional practices,” “instructional coaching,” “professional learning communities,” “dilemmas,” “measures,” and “sustainable learning communities.” From here, I read the abstract for each composition that interested me and determined whether it was worthy of further analysis and whether it was an empirical study. Searching for literature served to be challenging because given the context of my topic, effective leadership in schools is difficult to measure. As a result, most of the empirical studies I found were qualitative studies; however, there is a plethora of articles available based strictly on theory rather than action research.

To further organize my findings, I created a literature sweep of all of the articles where I included the journal name, article title, year of publication, authors, abstract, and key words. This structure was adopted from an assignment completed during previous course work. By doing this, I found studies that shared similar key words and presented correlation amongst each other which helped me to elaborate further on my framework. Consider the following diagram:

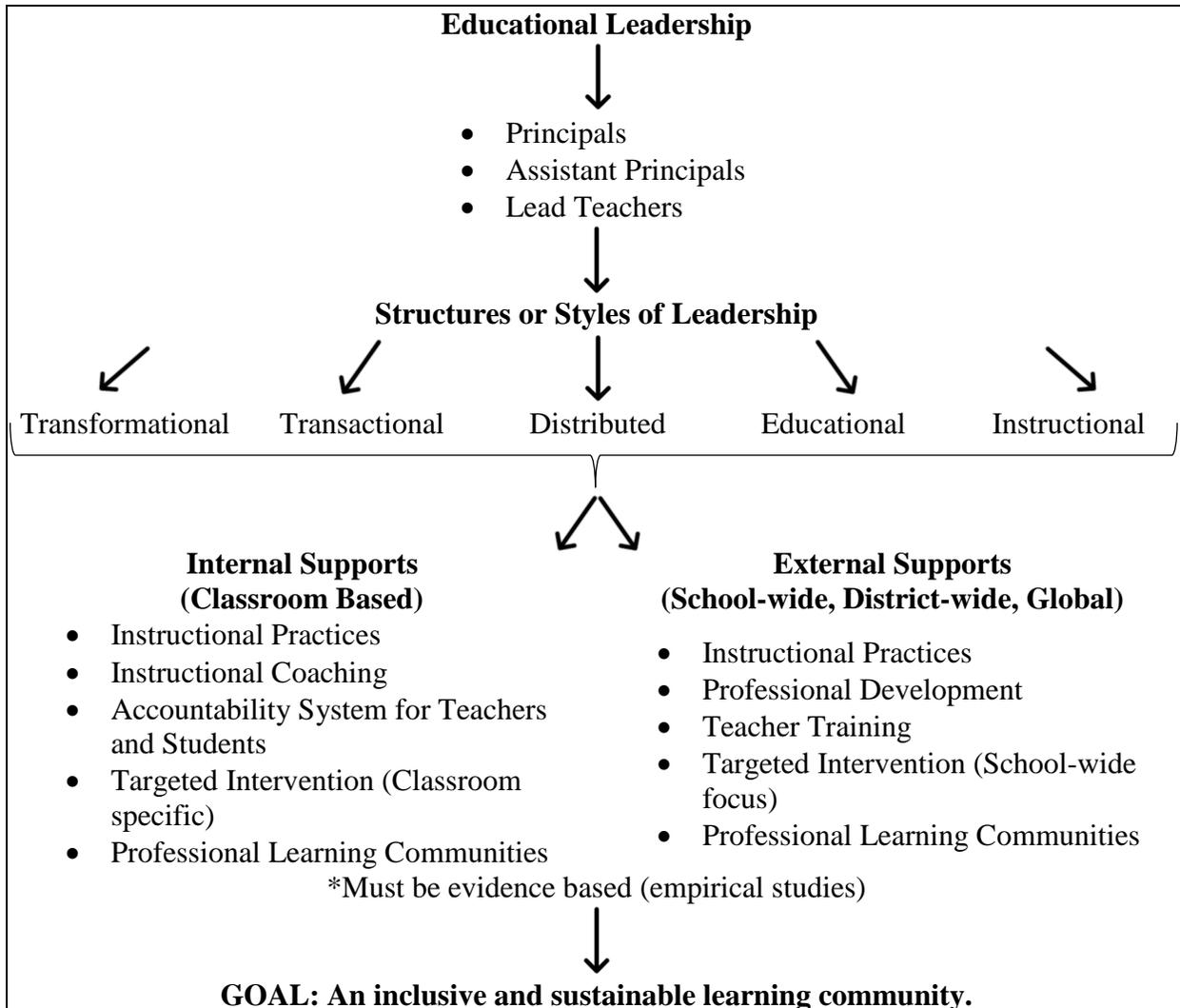


Figure 2. Flow chart of research pathway and findings

The above framework is based on a total of twenty-six peer reviewed articles of which twenty-one are empirical studies. To ensure the issues being discussed correlated with trending educational issues, all of the empirical studies stem from research completed between 2011 and 2017. In addition, various chapters from *The Curriculum Studies Reader* Second Edition (Flinders & Thornton, 2004) were also used to support or clarify questions that emerged. To understand the process of effective change, I have chosen to use the works of Michael Fullan, who is a guru in the field of “organizational transformations” (Fullan, 2011, p. xvii).

Definitions

There are a couple of terms discussed in this review that require further clarification to ensure there is a clear understanding of my interpretations.

Learning Communities. The term *learning communities* is referred to as a project (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017), but the objective of the project serves the same purpose that other scholars have identified, which is an environment that encourages “rich thinking and intentional practice” (Kruse & Johnson, 2017, p. 588). Therefore, learning communities may be defined as the practice of fostering effective teaching practices through collaborative learning processes (Garcia-Carrion et al, 2017) and a place “where teacher leaders also exercise influence” (Cherkowski & Brown, 2013, p. 26).

Inclusion. A definition for *inclusion* is provided by several industries, but for the sake of focusing on inclusion in schools, it can be defined as “an education that is not only accessible, but also free, appropriate, timely, non-discriminatory, meaningful, measurable, and provided in the least restrictive setting” (Borosan, 2017, p. 19). This definition, therefore, encompasses the learning needs of all students, including those with special needs. In fact, to avoid any stigmas or labels when referring to students requiring differentiation, “every student in every classroom is an inclusion kid” (Borosan, 2017, p. 21) and “every teacher in every classroom is an inclusion teacher” (p. 21). Therefore, it is important to recognize that the review of literature will consider all learners and will recognize learning communities as an opportunity to share and also an opportunity to lead from practice.

Literature Review

Introduction

Numerous studies have been executed to consider the challenges and successes of educational reform in an inclusive setting (Cherkowski & Brown, 2013, p. 23; Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017; Hammond, Thorogood, Jenkins, & Faaiuolo, 2015; Kruse & Johnson, 2017; Longaretti & Toe, 2017; Nishimura, 2014; Robertson & Briggs, 2006). Specifically, some studies considered the worthiness of leadership qualities and characteristics with educational reform (Cherkowski & Brown, 2013; Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017; Hammond et al., 2015; Nishimura, 2014; Xie et al., 2017); which often shared similar sentiments to those expressed by Fullan (2011). Other schools were challenged by inequality issues, which in turn, challenged leadership structures and their efficacy in creating change when necessary (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017; Longaretti & Toe, 2017; Moller, 2017; Poon-McBrayer, 2017; Schmidt & Venet, 2012; Tiwari, Das, & Sharma, 2015). Regardless, such findings will provide administrators and lead teachers with a structure for leadership that is worth considering and worth using to create effective change in their own school community. Therefore, this review will provide a possible answer to one specific question: What leadership qualities should administrators and lead teachers possess to implement change effectively in an inclusive setting?

Defining Educational Reform

As we progress through the 21st century, the impact of modernization and innovation on education is similar to a domino effect. For example, consider technological advances. When I was a student in elementary school, we were just being introduced to computers that were incredibly heavy, took up extensive space, were capable of simple commands, and were often a nuisance due to their limited abilities. Today, I sit in my classroom with a laptop, Chromebooks,

and iPads that are all light in weight, mobile, accessible to the internet, capable of simple and complex tasks that have proven to make daily tasks more seamlessly efficient. The modernization of computers did not happen overnight; rather, the changes happened over time as problems were faced, suggestions were made, and new ways were introduced and improved. This has impacted our entire world; hence, the chain reaction. Educational reform, should take on a similar process. “Instead of looking for saviors, we should be calling for leadership that will challenge us to face problems for which there are no simple, painless solutions – problems that require us to learn new ways” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 21). Fullan (2001) provides a “framework for leadership” (p. 4) to “cultivate and sustain learning under conditions of complex, rapid change” (p. vii). Hargreaves (2009) considered this rapid change in the past and the present, and as a result, provides a definition of educational reform that is encompassing of the rapid change in our society and the increasingly difficult conditions students and teachers are experiencing. Therefore, educational reform can be defined as the:

age of innovation and inspiration in a post-materialist world where people are increasingly prepared to look to each other in building a more hopeful and innovative society together, rather than acquisitively and self-indulgently looking only to their own families and themselves. (Hargreaves, 2009, p. 99)

Leadership Qualities to Implement Change

My research question is, “What leadership qualities should administrators and lead teachers possess to implement change effectively in an inclusive setting?” To begin, Fullan (2011) provides a tool to rate ourselves in various skills related to leadership, known as the “Motion Leadership Rating Form” (Fullan, 2011, p. 63). I have completed the form based on my experience as the English Language Learner (ELL) Coach and Learning Coach at St. Elizabeth

Seton School. I completed my advanced teaching practicum there in 2010 and worked at that school for 5 years, from 2012 – 2017. During my time at that school, I saw numerous leadership changes including 4 different principals and 5 assistant principals. In my time there, I grasped a solid understanding of the struggles in our school. With this background knowledge, I was asked to join my principal's learning team in 2014, which included the administration, the head learning coach, and me. This formed the beginning of my leadership journey. Fullan's (2011) book truly resonated with me as this was my principal's book of inspiration and he has been an excellent role model for me in terms of leadership. Ironically, I did not realize this until I finally asked him recently where he adopted the "ready-fire-aim" expression and he mentioned this book. This process has allowed me to reflect on how my administrators and practices have influenced and moulded my beliefs and understandings as a leader, leaving me to praise my areas of strength and consider areas of improvement. Additionally, I will compare my experiences to those of various studies and reflect on how they align with Fullan's (2001) "framework of leadership" (p. 4).

Change Leader: Self Evaluation

Exhibit 3.2: Motion Leadership Rating Form

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest, rate your Motion Leadership on each of the nine qualities:

	(1) Weak	(2) OK	(3) Middling	(4) Strong	(5) Very Strong	Total
1. Relationships First				✓		4
2. Beware of Fat Plans			✓			3
3. Behavior Before Beliefs				✓		4
4. Implementation Dip			✓			3
5. Communication During Implementation				✓		4
6. Learn During Implementation				✓		4
7. Prior Excitement Is Fragile			✓			3
8. Take Risks and Learn				✓		4
9. Be Assertive			✓			3
*Total Score:						32

Figure 3. Nine qualities of a Change Leader (Fullan, 2011)

Note: Reprinted from *Change Leader: Learning to do What Matters Most*, by Michael Fullan. Copyright 2011 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

1. Relationships First [Score = 4]

Definition: The ability to develop and foster relationships in order to challenge others in creating change.

Fullan (2011) shared eight points from Herold and Fedor (2008) that suggest what a “change-savvy” (p. 62) leader should embody. Specifically, Fullan (2011) emphasized the importance of “their “careful entry,” “listening,” and “engaging in fact finding and joint problem solving”” (p. 64). Similarly, Sergiovanni (2008), recognized “relational trust” (p. 117) as the key element when fostering effective relationships. Reflecting on my own experiences as an ELL Coach and Learning Coach, and in working with our school’s learning team, I can recall this being the first step as we endeavoured to implement change in our school. In addition to a 55% staff turnover rate, 65% of the newly hired staff were brand-new teachers or were teachers who had just moved from Ontario to Edmonton. As a team, we decided to arrange one-on-one meetings with each teacher early in the school year to *listen* to their needs, their concerns, their strengths, and their areas of growth so we could establish relationships built on a solid foundation of trust. We made personalized plans with teachers to support them with their areas of growth and praised their strengths by asking them to share their talents with others when necessary. By doing this and making a positive “first impression” (Fullan, 2011, p. 64), we knew we would be able to challenge our teachers, make mistakes, learn from them, and try new strategies. Additionally, we built a solid foundation of trust with our colleagues to ensure they would be well supported and recognize they were valuable and contributing members to the school community (Sergiovanni, 2008). For this reason, I have given myself a score of 4 as I feel that I have a strong understanding of the importance of building relationships and the effect it will have on a change-savvy leader. Furthermore, I recognize that “trust is the tie that binds roles together and allows for the creation of role sets that embody reciprocal obligations” (Sergiovanni, 2008, p. 117).

In a qualitative study conducted in Hong Kong, 10 principals were interviewed for being “recognized for their proficient practices in adopting the whole school approach to cater for student diversity” (Poon-McBrayer, 2017, p. 299). Among these principals, 80% admitted to making a unilateral decision to “launch inclusive education” (p. 302) to increase student enrollment, uphold teacher positions, and retain a positive association “with the Education Bureau” (p. 302). One principal stated, “I knew that my teachers didn’t want to lose their jobs and would understand that we must increase the number of students to keep our school from closure” (p. 302). While the principals were proactive in recognizing their despotic decision-making was not inclusive of their teachers’ beliefs, they set out to develop a “shared vision” (p. 303) as they also recognized “a shared vision prompts people to grow and utilize resources in an efficient and effective manner to solve problems and achieve common goals” (p. 303). If I consider where these principals would initially score on Fullan’s (2011) form for relationships, I would personally give them a score of three. Whereas in my personal experience shared earlier, I set out to meet with teachers individually to honor their strengths, concerns, and areas of growth, the principals in this study made a rash decision for their schools before “obtaining buy-in” (Fullan, 2011, p. 63) or considering any pre-existing concerns and establishing that mutual trust (Sergiovanni, 2008). Though I do feel they analysed the situation by recognizing the need for improved student enrollment and preserving teaching jobs, they had to develop a plan and address teacher’s concerns after making a considerable decision. Thus, any concerns that teachers had prior to the implementation of inclusive education were likely dismissed or simply not dealt with. In fact, the study addresses the fact that the support administration provided was limited in terms of success as it only alleviated short-term concerns or problems, rather than building capacity (Poon-McBrayer, 2017).

As I reflect on the skill “relationships first” (Fullan, 2011, p. 62), there are two essential components required to be successful: listening and building trust. In my personal example, I shared the importance of hearing out my fellow colleagues to truly grasp a solid understanding of our teacher’s strengths, concerns, and areas of growth. The value behind this opportunity to exchange ideas in a safe and constructive manner will provide for purposeful learning experiences for both educators and leaders. As a result, I am a firm believer that fostering effective relationships is reciprocal in terms of learning. The principals in Hong Kong failed to involve their staff in making the grand decision to adopt inclusive education practices, which may have hindered their relationships with their staff members. Fullan (2011) elaborates on this by suggesting leaders often face resistance when they “come on too strong” (p. 62); thus, emphasizing the importance of a “careful entry” (p. 62) and “joint problem solving” (p. 62). Therefore, I believe it is possible to conclude that the principals in Hong Kong may have found greater success, had they consulted and discussed with their staff the reasons behind implementing inclusive education. It is likely faculty would have supported their principal’s ideas and collectively, come up with “a credible plan” inclusive of their concerns.

2. Beware of Fat Plans [Score = 3]

Definition: A plan of action that is “clear, specific, communicable, “sticky,” linked to action, and above all internalized by the vast majority of people” (Fullan, 2011, p. 67).

Fullan’s (2011) greatest message regarding elaborate, drawn out plans was that their size is often counterintuitive to the effect they will actually have on teaching and learning. As I admitted earlier, I would consider myself to be quite particular and thorough in how things are executed especially when pertaining to teaching. I genuinely try to meet all the needs of my students; therefore, I try to have clear, well thought-out plans to show how I am doing just that.

Thus, as a leader in a school community, I admit that it is not always feasible, nor is it easily achieved. One thing I appreciated from my last few years at my school is just how messy things could get, and yet we would find success. While the story shared by Fullan (2011) about Haji Ali telling Greg to relax and take it easy was related to relationships, I experienced the same thing in reference to letting things happen and learning from our experiences.

Anyone who knows me well, will tell you I am incredibly organized, and at times, a bit too obsessive about how things are done. I experienced a huge wake-up call when I first met with the learning team. My principal wanted to initiate projects on an ongoing, as-needed basis; that is, through dialogue with our staff, we would identify areas of growth and proceed accordingly. In fact, my principal even used the exact same quote as Fullan (2011): “ready-fire-aim” (p. 58). The idea of implementing change without a concrete plan laid out, “on paper” (Fullan, 2011, p. 66) made me uneasy. I rated myself a 3 in this category because, though I admired the concept of getting “to action sooner” (Fullan, 2011, p. 66), I sometimes questioned it. Looking back now, I realize the experience was more valuable than the theory that would have been outlined in my paper plan. Experience was, without a doubt, more valuable, and I can appreciate why Fullan (2011) stated, “practice becomes a powerful tool for change” (p. 3). The importance of starting small and learning from our experiences is of great value here. I could not agree more with Fullan (2011) that we learn from our experiences and the same approach should be used with our students. As a teacher who is now in charge of programming for ELL’s, I truly try to demonstrate Fullan’s approach to ensure I have collective buy-in from all departments in my school to develop a foundation of trust. By doing so, I have revisited and revamped the structure I have implemented on several occasions, as these first five months of the school year have been an enriching period of learning.

The study in Hong Kong was successful in avoiding fat plans (Poon-McBrayer, 2017); therefore, I would give them a score of 4. The principals collectively recognized the importance and value behind practicing, so they implemented three strategies: (1) they formed partnerships with their “special educational needs coordinators (SENCO)” (p. 296) to supervise and mentor teachers, (2) the principals served as role models by working first hand with students with special needs to understand “the challenges that their staff faced” (p. 303), and (3) supporting teachers through professional development and “showing sensitivity in managing teachers’ workload” (p. 304). These plans were fairly flexible as they were dependent on teachers’ areas of growth and needs which would allow principals and SENCOs to modify their mentorship accordingly. Additionally, rather than pre-emptively organizing PD, sessions were provided on an as-needed basis.

In another study conducted in New Zealand, researchers developed a plan to address the reoccurring issue of “student reluctance to access learning support” (Hammond et al., 2015, p. 179). The plan consisted of providing students with “a Targeted Learning Session” (p. 180) to support “students in accessing academic and information literacy support” (p. 180). The Targeted Learning Sessions, in my opinion, are an excellent example of Fullan’s (2011) idea to “get to action sooner, and treat it as a learning period” (p. 66). Sessions would provide support with specific assignments alongside extra teaching staff and education support staff so students were able to receive one-on-one or small group support with their specific needs or concerns. Whereas this example looks at a plan in a classroom, the concept of trying new approaches and learning from those experiences, regardless of whether they are successful or not, demonstrates the importance and effectiveness of having specific plans that target individual needs. Educators had the opportunity to implement the plan together, and later reflect on the successes of their actions

(Hammond et al., 2015). Several educators reported “the collaborative process increased levels of professional connection and satisfaction among staff” (Hammond et al., 2015, p. 184). This reiterates the importance of fostering effective relationships and creating plans that are interrelated with action for effective learning to take place (Fullan, 2011).

When implementing change, leaders must ensure their plans are founded on a vision that is transparent to educators to ensure buy-in from all. Edgar H. Schein (2010), an expert in organizational culture and leadership, suggests a leader’s vision “must be articulated” (p. 305) and clearly laid out with the expectations defined. In other words, leaders must outline what is expected of educators and emphasize “that this new way of working is nonnegotiable” (Schein, 2010, p. 306). Whereas this may come off as a bit assertive, I believe if Fullan’s first quality of fostering effective relationships is accomplished, then the new way of working should not be perceived as a threat. Instead, the leader would have established an environment of relational trust (Sergiovanni, 2008) so the opportunity to learn from experiences, regardless of whether they are successful or not, should be welcomed. This was evident with my own personal experience. For example, I knew our target and bought in to the principal’s vision, but even though his approach was unconventional to me, I trusted his pathway regardless of knowing whether it would be successful or not. This was in response to the culture of acceptance he cultivated and his support and encouragement to try new things and make mistakes if it meant teaching and learning would improve. Therefore, I think Schein’s (2010) approach would work, as long as that foundation of trust is established.

3. Behavior Before Beliefs [Score = 4]

Definition: The ability to use behaviors and practices “as the route to changing basic beliefs” (Fullan, 2011, p. 70).

Stemming from my realization in the previous category, the importance of purposeful experiences “with trusted peers” (Fullan, 2011, p. 68) was a major contributing factor to the change implemented in my school. Similar to the example about Jamie Oliver giving the school cook “new experiences and skills” (Fullan, 2011, p. 70), I had to do the same thing when trying to gain support in using iPads in the classroom. Teachers were struggling to buy-in to using the devices in their classroom as their previous experiences involved them using technology as a tool to simply replace paper and pencil. On the other hand, the learning team was trying to promote the use of technology in an interactive manner that fostered more purposeful and meaningful experiences. One way I endeavoured to instill these behaviours was through a professional development session that I hosted for my colleagues. Teachers were split into groups, provided with an iPad, and were assigned a scavenger hunt to complete. With their iPad, they were using the app, Aurasma, which would allow them to engage with images that were placed throughout the school through augmented reality experiences. The expression on teachers’ faces when they realized how the application worked, revealed that the app not only blew them away, but the experience also sparked dialogue among each group about how they could incorporate it in their classrooms.

I appreciated Fullan’s (2011) comment that change-savvy leaders need to be “developing supportive leaders and peers” (p. 70). The Aurasma experience was first introduced to me by the principal, and it was at that point that I suggested we use the tool in our professional development session. I would like to think of myself as a supportive peer to my principal, which in turn, inspired me to be a supportive leader.

In a study conducted in Ohio, 109 teachers participated in a “1-year professional development (PD) program that focused on supporting teachers in evaluating and selecting

digital learning contents” (Xie et al., 2017, p. 1067). This study focused particularly on instilling the necessary behaviors among teachers by providing them the necessary PD and the opportunity to practice technology tools in the classroom. As such, the experiences proved to be “purposeful” (Fullan, 2011, p. 68) as practicing with the tools was the driving force for developing the teacher’s beliefs as opposed to providing teachers PD that is rich in theory and no practice. This confirms Fullan’s (2011) idea of “Behavior Before Beliefs” (p. 68). His theme “Ready-fire-aim” (Fullan, 2011, p. 70) is transparent as the study “[uses] behavior as the vehicle to get at new beliefs” (p. 70). The concept of behavior before beliefs is directly connected to the previous skill of making “sticky” (Fullan, 2011, p. 66) plans which are also grounded by action before theory.

Both examples model scenarios that involve a new way of doing things; whether it was the principal in my story, or the study in Ohio, new ways of learning were explored but in different manners. This is evident in inclusive classrooms where teachers seek various ways to target the learning needs of all students. Schein (2010) explains this well when he suggests “the goal of learning is nonnegotiable, but the method of learning can be highly individualized” (p. 306). As a result, I believe a similar approach should be taken with educators. Like students, educators come with their strengths, areas of growth, and areas of interest. Therefore, I think change leaders must be cognizant of these elements among their staff and should be open to the various behaviors that can bring about effective change.

4. Implementation Dip [Score = 3]

Definition: Honor the time required to implement change.

This category is one in which I can definitely grow. I could not help but laugh and agree with how true Fullan’s (2011) words were when he mentioned as “an implementer, the costs to you are immediate and concrete, whereas the benefits are distant and theoretical” (p. 71-72).

Likewise, Hargreaves and Harris (2015) recognize that “profound change does not occur without fear of failure, threat or the future” (p. 37). For that reason, I have given myself a score of 3 because as a leader trying to implement change, I was in that middle ground, questioning whether I was on the right path; meanwhile, at other times I could be confident with my decisions. Given this phase reaps more negative reactions, I found it to be unpleasant, but a true test of how strong of a change-savvy leader I was and whether I was cut out for this role.

Entering a new school this year, I was equipped with a bank of knowledge, skills, and strategies, that I had planned to share with my new staff. Eager to transform teaching practices with ELL’s, I quickly began to experience resistance, alerting me to take a step back from my “fat plan” (Fullan, 2011, p. 66). My strategies were simply not welcomed, and I was dealing with a resistant culture. In all fairness, my principal had pre-warned me how my ideas might not be immediately accepted because he recognized that high school teachers at my school were highly teacher-directed and take on a more traditional approach to teaching and learning. For example, they were strong supporters of individual paper-pencil activities, whereas I planned to implement learning structures that encouraged collaboration and teambuilding that foster 21st century learning skills. Thus, five months into the school year, I realized the importance of “[honoring] the implementation dip” (Fullan, 2011, p. 71). Bringing forth new ideas, strategies, and practices takes time as it is a learning process. In fact, the rate of change can be reciprocal to an organizations performance (Hargreaves & Harris, 2015). Therefore, it is important to not be too hasty when implementing change (Hargreaves & Harris, 2015); rather, honor the time (Fullan, 2011) required for change to ensure “sustainable growth” (Hargreaves & Harris, 2015, p. 46). I would like to consider myself as an educator who understands the value of time. For example, I have been able to work one-on-one with teachers to support them individually in the classroom

which has proven to be rewarding as they have now shared their successes with other teachers. Throughout those months, I spent a significant amount of time pondering whether I was making a difference or whether I was effectively supporting my colleagues. It is not until now, that I realize time was an influential factor in promoting and sustaining that growth as I have begun to witness how I have impacted teaching practices in a positive manner.

In the United States, one teacher provided other educators a course that allowed teachers “to work collaboratively to integrate technology in one of the mathematics courses taught at the secondary level” (Yamamoto, Kush, Lombard, & Hertzog, 2010, p. 280). While the purpose of the course was designed to support teachers in infusing technology in their teaching practices to provide students with enriching learning experiences, teachers reported they required more “opportunities to learn mathematics with technology” (p. 282). This reaffirms Fullan’s (2011) and Hargreaves and Harris’ (2015) idea of respecting the time required to implement new behaviors to ensure successful and purposeful execution. Learning new strategies is only rewarding if time is given to implement, reflect, and revisit to enhance teaching and learning practices. Additionally, students felt the implementation of new behaviors would be more long term if they were infused in multiple subject areas. That way, students would be acquiring skills that would be multifaceted and applicable in various dimensions, fostering life-long learning.

In consideration of my personal experience and the example of integrating technology in mathematics, both examples emphasize the importance and value of time. In my personal example, time was required for me to establish myself as the ELL designate, and work one-on-one with teachers; meanwhile, the other example reiterates the importance of granting students and teachers adequate time to practice technology in mathematics and other subject areas. To ensure successful implementation, maintaining effective communication throughout the process

ensured clarity and focus. This was evident through the collaborative and reflective practices I engaged in with my administrative team and other teachers, and through the evaluative procedures the teachers and students completed in the study. The importance of communication during implementation will be explored further in the next section.

5. Communication During Implementation [Score = 4]

Definition: Communicate with your staff throughout implementation to ensure transparent communication and revitalization for success (Fullan, 2011).

While I initially found that implementing change without a detailed paper plan could be risky, I realized that communication is a critical asset for success. As the learning team first attempted to implement new strategies in the classrooms, there were certain elements that we had not foreseen. Through communication with teachers, our learning team heard the successes, challenges, and concerns about the various strategies. We quickly realized the value behind “two-way communication” (Fullan, 2011, p. 73). In the following school year, our learning team understood that in order to manage effective communication among our staff, we would have to hold monthly staff meetings where staff were invited and encouraged to reflect on the positives and negatives, the struggles, the successes, and collectively, try to find solutions for areas of need. In addition, we would regularly send staff surveys and self-evaluations, or invite feedback from the entire school (if all were involved) by means of web tools known as Today’sMeet or Mentimeter. This feedback was always documented because we wanted to refer to it to ensure we were addressing the areas of need and growth, meanwhile, praising the successes in the classroom.

Whereas the example I shared considered change within a school, a study conducted in Tanzania, considered change at a more global level. Specifically, it considered “educational

accountability relationships, arrangements, and procedures to determine how they either hinder or facilitate positive students' learning outcomes" (Komba, 2017, p. 4). The study revealed four styles "of accountability relationships: voice, compact, client power, and management relationship" (p. 5). All four relationships collectively stress the importance of communication among all parties involved to effectively facilitate students' learning outcomes. The four accountability relationships can be defined as follows:

- Voice relationship: "connects families and government officials in education, for example, policy makers and politicians" (Komba, 2017, p. 5)
- Compact relationship: "a long-term relationship of accountability that connects politicians and policy makers to organizational providers" (Komba, 2017, p. 5)
- Client power relationship: "a relationship that connects families to school or organizations" (Komba, 2017, p. 6)
- Management relationship: "the relationship that connects organizational providers and frontline professionals (Komba, 2017, p. 6)

Lambert (2003) tributes communication as "the most powerful means for evoking our thoughts and feelings about issues and self" (p. 426). She suggests this is the one element that is often missing in a leadership framework or an area that lacks awareness leading to leadership instability. Personally, I see the value in the four relationships identified above (Komba, 2017) but I would agree with Lambert (2003), that in order for those relationships to be successful, communication must be welcomed and sustained. Reflecting on Fullan's (2011) idea of the importance of "communication during implementation" (p. 73), it is evident that communication is essential in terms of finding success when implementing new ideas. Regardless of whether we are considering communication at a global level as evidenced by the study in Tanzania or on a

smaller scale such as my personal example, communication is paramount in order to acquire the “collective clarity and energy necessary for success” (Fullan, 2011, p. 75).

6. Learn During Implementation [Score = 4]

Definition: Leaders encourage collaborative partnerships among their staff to encourage learning from each other (Fullan, 2011).

As I mentioned in the previous category, praising the successes was just as vital as recognizing areas of growth. After receiving training on instructional coaching (Lipton & Wellman, 2013) in a professional development session in March of 2015 by Laura Lipton, a renowned consultant in instructional practices, and armed with the desire to build capacity, I quickly realized the importance “for implementers to learn from other implementers” (Fullan, 2011, p. 75). I agree with Fullan (2011) that “this is not a “why can’t you be more like your brother”” (p. 76) scenario; rather, it is an opportunity for teachers demonstrating success in one area to coach teachers who require growth in that same area. Thus, we chose to receive training on instructional coaching because we wanted to ensure we were doing this through a constructive and productive manner.

Collaboration, in my opinion, is one of the key strategies to encourage and foster effective learning communities. The exchange of information and knowledge holds great value for the entire school community; however, ensuring conversations are essential and pertinent requires leaders to structure collaboration with a productive framework. Particularly, I appreciated the idea of “mindful praxis” (Kruse & Johnson, 2016, p. 598) which “requires leaders to apply what they know in the context of their own organization and be able to respond in the midst of daily activity by employing cognitive and organizational knowledge in tandem” (p. 598). In other words, by taking what we know, applying it to our practice, and collectively

reflecting on our experiences, learning “is positioned as reflection-in-action in tandem with informed mindful praxis” (Kruse & Johnson, 2016, p. 598). Schein (2010) echoes this sentiment by expressing the importance of “coaching and valid feedback” (p. 306). We have acknowledged the benefits mistakes have on learning, but the opportunity to collaborate and reflect on teaching practices serves great value to the entire school community as it fosters relational trust among all (Fullan, 2011; Schein, 2010). This was very similar to the approach taken in a study that explored the effectiveness of “Inclusive Professional Development” (Nishimura, 2014, p. 35). The study considered the impact on “teacher attitudes towards inclusive practices” (Nishimura, 2014, p. 33) by offering one group of educators “professional development intervention” (p. 33) and another group no intervention. The study revealed the entire group that received PD intervention, had meaningful experiences “and a new appreciation for inclusive education practices” (p. 33). Whereas the training, coaching, and follow up sessions were beneficial to improving teacher attitudes, one of the limitations of the study was the length of the intervention. The teachers reported more time was required to “reflect and refine their implementation of inclusive strategies” (p. 36). This reiterates Fullan’s (2011) fourth skill to honor the implementation dip. In order for change to be effective, adequate time must be given to ensure meaningful learning.

7. Prior Excitement Is Fragile [Score = 3]

Definition: Leaders should avoid early excitement as it tends “to be superficial” (Fullan, 2011, p. 77); instead, “strive for small early successes, acknowledge real problems, admit mistakes, protect their people, and celebrate success along the way” (p. 77).

I am guilty of being an individual who experiences excitement prior to doing something despite not having “much of a foundation” (Fullan, 2011, p. 76) on which to base my excitement.

In fact, I also realize that not everyone shares the same excitement as me as they have not all bought in to the concept in the same manner. According to Fullan's (2011) criteria for this category, I consider myself to be capable of recognizing "real problems" (p. 77) and admitting when I have made a mistake. At the same time, I was never fully satisfied with "small early successes" (p. 77) as I always strived for more. The principal, on the other hand, was an excellent role model of the "knowledgeable change leaders" (Fullan, 2011, p. 77) that Fullan described because he was the one who continuously "[stirred] the emotions, and [energized] us" (Fullan, 2011, p. 79). Fullan's (2011) quote on fostering "intrinsic motivation" (p. 79) truly resonated with me as I can now see the importance and the impact of those small success stories after 3 years of creating change in our school. Thus, I clearly identified this as an area for me to grow in.

Fullan (2011) shares a strategy used with teachers known as the "critical learning pathway" (p. 78). The purpose is for teachers to gather regularly over six weeks and reflect on "their students' writing so that they can be helped in assessing the quality of the writing according to a set of standards, and in turn to use some targeted instructional strategies to help their students improve" (Fullan, 2011, p. 78). At the end of the PD sessions, "a veteran grade 4 teacher who had taught for over 25 years" (Fullan, 2011, p. 78) expressed the effectiveness of the sessions and the impact it had on her students' writing. Additionally, she revealed that in her years of teaching, she had set such low expectations for her students that she was emotionally hurt for not setting higher standards for all of her students. Fullan (2011) recognizes this example as a true celebration of "excitement during implementation" (p. 78) as it was through her experiences that she became excited and inspired to accomplish more. This serves as a reminder that as leaders, we must be cautious in our excitement and "celebrate success along the way"

(Fullan, 2011, p. 77). Lambert (2003) elaborates further on this quality by suggesting that in order for leadership to be maintained, the dialogue among the entire staff must be “sustained” (p. 426). Some specific ideas Lambert (2003) shares in order for this to be accomplished are:

[Coaching] questions asked or ideas shared in one-on-one conversations, data dialogues in inquiring conversations, exploring action research, engaging with parents and community members in partnering conversations, and long-range planning in sustaining conversations all evoke values, experiences and increasingly skillful actions. (p. 426)

Much like Fullan’s (2011) example about the fourth-grade teacher, it was through her regular conversations and experiences that led to meaningful and effective change. Therefore, by fostering effective conversations, the vision is shared among the staff and the target remains in focus for the entire school community (Lambert, 2003). Educators should recognize the concept that “prior excitement is fragile” (Fullan, 2011, p. 63) as an opportunity to reflect on our learning experiences and refine when necessary; thus, learning during implementation.

8. Take Risks and Learn [Score = 4]

Definition: the ability to foster and develop “a culture and atmosphere of non-judgmentalism” (Fullan, 2011, p. 80) to encourage risk free learning.

The excitement I expressed in the previous category stems from my confidence in taking risks. I am a risk-taker and have no problem in making mistakes because as Fullan (2011) unveiled, “you take risks in order to learn” (p. 80). Therefore, whether our risks are successful or not, it provides useful feedback or data for the next steps to follow. I found by taking this approach, other colleagues were prepared to buy in to the changing strategies, knowing we were not expecting, nor demanding, perfection. Creating a flexible environment to learn and discover

made it a safe zone for everyone to collectively experience the change. I foster this same notion in my classroom because students must be willing to make mistakes and learn from them.

Reflecting upon the first skill Fullan (2011) shared, relationships are essential in order to be a successful change leader. The concept of taking risks to learn, may be greeted with hesitation as students and teachers are likely to avoid displaying their areas of growth or their insecurities. Fullan (2011) suggests that leaders must “foster a culture and atmosphere of non-judgmentalism” (p. 80). By building effective relationships, the ability to be open among administrators, teachers, students, and parents is more probable as there is a sense of trust and a safe environment established. For example, principals and other school leaders were interviewed in a study conducted in Victoria, Australia to determine their beliefs “on teacher effectiveness and student engagement and the challenges teachers encounter in low SES [socioeconomic status] schools” (Longaretti & Toe, 2017, p. 5). The findings revealed that in order for students and teachers to feel comfortable enough to take risks, solid relationships were needed. Additionally, the quality of the relationships that were established had a direct impact on students’ learning. One principal commented,

Now, which comes first; relationships, probably is the strength of it. On top of the relationships and communication we’re looking for someone who has a sense of helping us to build community, a school community, a place where people feel welcome to come and are comfortable to have their children here, obviously but feel comfortable themselves to become part of who we are as a community and what we’re aiming to do as a community, and that’s build a community of learners and a place where students can flourish.

(Longaretti & Toe, 2017, p. 7)

In my personal experience as a teacher, I would agree that I am more willing to take risks knowing I am not going to be ridiculed in any way. In fact, I agree with the principal's statement that staff must be team players. Anytime anyone takes risks, the outcome can be successful or unsuccessful; however, the opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning experiences serves great value as we are able to learn from our "behaviors before beliefs" (Fullan, 2011, p. 68).

Carl Glickman, an instructional coaching guru, recognizes how this may be an issue full of contradictions. For example, he recognizes the importance of creating an environment with the 'freedom to fail' (Glickman, 2006, p. 690) but questions whether this is acceptable considering it would be at the detriment of humans. I appreciated this perspective because as much as we can learn from our experiences, successful or not, are the failures we experience in schools worthy of the "human costs" (Glickman, 2006, p. 690)? I do not believe I or anyone else necessarily has the correct answer but as an individual aspiring to be a leader in my school district, I would rather learn as much as possible from my failures so that eventually, "the human benefits outweigh the human costs" (Glickman, 2006, p. 690).

9. Be Assertive [Score = 3]

Definition: Leaders may occasionally need to be assertive but in doing so, should consider the following three factors:

1. build relationships on trust,
2. recognize when they have good ideas, and
3. inspire staff to foster and develop ideas. (Fullan, 2011)

I have given myself a 3 in this category as I am not completely comfortable with being assertive. I, admit that unfortunately I select the individual with whom I will be assertive. To explain this further, depending on with whom I am having to be assertive, and depending on how

I suspect they will react, I contemplate whether I should give them a “wake-up call” (Fullan, 2011, p. 80). If I suspect they will be defensive or intimidating, I will gladly pass it on to someone else who is willing to respond to them. This is not to say that I have never dealt with those difficult individuals and to be clear, I have, but I do not enjoy the anxiety and stress that comes along with doing so. As Fullan (2011) has emphasized, relationships built on trust are a supportive factor when being assertive. With that said, I would often resort to the instructional coaching training I received from Laura Lipton as I engaged in these difficult and sometimes awkward conversations. This was my way of trying to maintain a safe and constructive environment to discuss any concerns.

A study conducted in Taiwan, involved 732 kindergarten teachers completing “a questionnaire about their work performance and how it is affected by principals’ leadership behaviors” (Cheng, 2013, p. 251). Three leadership behavior types were considered: (1) assertive orders, (2) empathetic concern, and (3) rewards and punishments (Cheng, 2013). Fullan’s (2011) definition of being assertive differs from the study as Cheng (2013) identifies assertion as exerting authority to respond to educator’s needs and areas of growth with the expectation that teachers will “submit” to such demands. On the other hand, Fullan (2011) suggests assertion is used only when “the status quo needs a wake-up call” (p. 80) and has fostered the three factors mentioned earlier. Contrary to both, Sergiovanni (2008), suggests that neither are effective and that “the most important, yet most neglected leadership virtue is hope” (p. 113). I am not in complete disagreement with Sergiovanni as I believe hope can be the driving force for wanting to implement change; however, to suggest that “relying on hope rather than facing reality is to change reality” (p.113) seems somewhat naïve. Fullan’s (2011) idea of being assertive only when necessary is a more realistic approach than having hope. I agree that change leaders should

be “active” (Sergiovanni, 2008, p. 114) but I think a more realistic approach would be to be prepared for those individuals who may be resistant or may require “a wake-up call” (Fullan, 2011, p.80). As a result, I think Fullan (2011) has grasped a better understanding of the reality that lives within our schools and an approach that fosters growth among leaders, educators, and the entire school community to ultimately create change.

Summary

To recap, my research question was: What leadership qualities should administrators and lead teachers possess to effectively implement change in an inclusive setting? I have considered the nine qualities Fullan (2011) shares to initiate “motion leadership” which “is simply leadership that causes positive movement” (p. 60). In addition, I have considered each quality through the lens of other leadership theorists such as Glickman, Sergiovanni, Schein, Lambert and Hargreaves. Personally, I believe Fullan’s (2011) “Motion Leadership Rating Form” (p.60) allows aspiring leaders to evaluate themselves according to the nine qualities to highlight their areas of strength and growth. In this literature review, I have presented my own personal examples for each element and presented examples from numerous studies. Whereas the participants and schools involved in each study presented limitations or challenges such as budget constraints, limited resources, or challenging socio-economic factors, the Motion Leadership Rating Form allows for individuals to highlight these limitations as potential areas of growth. On the other hand, whereas the educational theories presented on leadership were not always consistent, they recognized the value of being informed of alternative perspectives, especially as a leader in education. The entire process encourages reflection to stimulate positive movement in a constructive manner and to foster leaders into being dynamic and cognizant individuals.

Several of the qualities are often dependent or intertwined with each other. For example, in order for effective learning to take place during implementation (6. Learning During Implementation), adequate time must be given for this to exist (4. Implementation Dip). Additionally, the grade 4 teacher who learned the importance of celebrating the successes along the way (7. Prior Excitement is Fragile), reminds us of how important communication is during

change so successes can be celebrated as a team to reinforce the shared vision. From this, one may conclude that each skill is vital in promoting change and neither one is necessarily more important than the other. As a result, all nine qualities should be adopted by administrators and lead teachers to effectively implement change in an inclusive setting.

Given that each educator's teaching experience varies from their teaching assignment, to student needs, school location, and other socio-economic factors, I question whether it is realistically possible for any educator to enter a leadership role with a comprehensive and developed understanding of what it means to be a change leader. It is evident that twenty-first Century leaders must encourage and facilitate educational reform with the continuous advancements in society and the complex student needs within the classroom; however, I believe the invitation to leadership is lacking among schools and school districts. For example, certain criteria exists for interested applicants, such as, an individual must have a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience. I question, however, whether an individual with 7 years experience at the same school, in the same position acquire a better understanding of leadership than an individual with 5 years experience who has experienced 3 different schools and positions. These limitations are impacting invitations to leadership, rather than calling educators to engage in deep reflection to learn from their experiences. As a result, with a shared vision of serving students and teachers, and being motivated to being open to learn, I provide a checklist for aspiring leaders to self-evaluate their ability to be a change-savvy leader. The model is designed for educators interested in entering a position of leadership capacity as it is intended to foster meaningful discussion and reflection of Fullan's (2011) nine qualities and an opportunity to engage in "mindful praxis" (Kruse & Johnson, 2017, p. 598). Therefore, not only would educators develop a better

understanding of the qualities needed in a change leader, but they would be capable of demonstrating their understandings within their school in some form of leadership capacity.

Project Proposal

Rationale: From Research to a Project Proposal

Given my recent application for assistant principal with the district in which I am currently employed, I have mixed views on the process I encountered. Upon completing an extensive application that included a letter of application, a reference from my current principal, eight other references from teachers at my current school, and a thorough analysis of my educational accomplishments and presentations as an educational leader, I was then interviewed by a panel of six administrators to determine whether I was ready for a role in leadership. After experiencing an intense and formal process, I am interested in developing a model for aspiring leaders that would also offer support and mentorship, rather than a “here’s what I look like on paper” approach. In the same vein, I have come across my fair share of administrators who are unable to provide professional development or are unable to support me in the classroom as their experiences were limited to one grade in one subject. As an educator who aspires to be a leader with our district and as someone who has faced several challenges, this is one of the most infuriating things to experience. This is not to discredit the application process, but I would like to recognize the importance of being able to apply what we know into our personal experiences as leadership calls for “behavior before beliefs” (Fullan, 2011, p. 68). Leaders must be able to draw from their experiences to effectively support educators and I believe that should be accounted for when selecting successful candidates. On the other hand, participants should reflect on these nine qualities to determine whether they feel they are ready to enter a leadership role or possibly require more time to foster and develop areas of growth that are unveiled in the self-reflection tool.

Self-Reflection Tool on Change Leadership

This review focused on providing a possible answer to one specific question: What leadership qualities should administrators and lead teachers possess to implement change effectively in an inclusive setting? I have explored the nine qualities that define a change leader and appreciate that it is grounded on the simple idea that leadership is “learned primarily through experience” (Fullan, 2011, p. 21). In an evolving society, the ability to reflect, “relate” (Fullan, 2011, p. 21), and refine our practices will only enhance our understanding; therefore, I have created a checklist based on Fullan’s (2011) “Motion Leadership Rating Form.” The tool allows potential leaders to engage in self-reflection practices highlighting their individual strengths and areas of growth, and the opportunity to rate themselves according to Fullan’s (2011) nine qualities. There are two factors provided for each quality that were based on the literature reviewed, Fullan’s ideas, and other theorists. The intent of these elements is to allow participants to reflect on the experiences they share in step one, and then determine whether they are well versed in that area or require improvement.

A Self-Reflection Tool on Change Leadership

Leadership Qualities	Step 1: What do I do to demonstrate this? Provide examples from your own personal experiences.	Step 2: Based on your experiences, rate yourself on the following criteria.		
<p>1. Relationships First <i>Definition:</i> The ability to develop and foster relationships in order to challenge others in creating change.</p>		I have built a strong sense of trust among the entire school community - students, parents, teachers, staff (Sergiovanni, 2008).		
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		I listen and engage in collaborative discussions and problem solving (Fullan, 2011).		
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Beware of Fat Plans <i>Definition:</i> A plan of action that is “clear, specific, communicable, “sticky,” linked to action, and above all internalized by the vast majority of people” (Fullan, 2011, p. 67).</p>		I can articulate my plans in a clear manner, so they can easily be adopted (Fullan, 2011).		
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		I keep the goal in focus to ensure our actions are grounded by our vision (Schein, 2010).		
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. Behavior Before Beliefs <i>Definition:</i> The ability to use behaviors and practices “as the route to changing basic beliefs” (Fullan, 2011, p. 70).</p>		I am a supportive peer to my colleagues by actively supporting them in the classroom (Fullan, 2011).		
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		I consider learning to be individualized; therefore, I am not afraid to try new		

		things, regardless if it may be successful or not (Schein, 2010).												
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 245 1589 293">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="1589 245 1780 293">Somewhat</td> <td data-bbox="1780 245 1969 293">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 293 1589 342"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1589 293 1780 342"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1780 293 1969 342"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes	Somewhat	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Yes	Somewhat	No												
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												
<p>4. Implementation Dip <i>Definition:</i> Honor the time required to implement change.</p>		<p>I value time when implementing change and understand the long-term effects it can have on a school. (Fullan, 2011; Hargreaves & Harris, 2015).</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 492 1589 540">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="1589 492 1780 540">Somewhat</td> <td data-bbox="1780 492 1969 540">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 540 1589 589"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1589 540 1780 589"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1780 540 1969 589"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>To avoid losing focus, I revisit my goal and my vision.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 667 1589 716">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="1589 667 1780 716">Somewhat</td> <td data-bbox="1780 667 1969 716">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 716 1589 764"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1589 716 1780 764"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1780 716 1969 764"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes	Somewhat	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Somewhat	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<p>5. Communication During Implementation <i>Definition:</i> Communicate with your staff throughout implementation to ensure transparent communication and revitalization for success (Fullan, 2011).</p>		<p>I welcome effective and collaborative communication to maintain focus among all parties involved (Lambert, 2003).</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 878 1589 927">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="1589 878 1780 927">Somewhat</td> <td data-bbox="1780 878 1969 927">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 927 1589 976"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1589 927 1780 976"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1780 927 1969 976"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>I exercise communication as being reciprocal among the school community (Fullan, 2011).</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 1089 1589 1138">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="1589 1089 1780 1138">Somewhat</td> <td data-bbox="1780 1089 1969 1138">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 1138 1589 1182"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1589 1138 1780 1182"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1780 1138 1969 1182"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes	Somewhat	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Somewhat	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<p>6. Learn During Implementation <i>Definition:</i> Leaders encourage collaborative partnerships among their staff to encourage learning from each other (Fullan, 2011).</p>		<p>I often engage in collaboration to reflect on teaching and learning practices as a community (Fullan, 2011; Schein, 2010).</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 1295 1589 1344">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="1589 1295 1780 1344">Somewhat</td> <td data-bbox="1780 1295 1969 1344">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1398 1344 1589 1393"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1589 1344 1780 1393"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1780 1344 1969 1393"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>Reflection and collaboration with my colleagues has allowed me to refine my own teaching practices (Fullan, 2011; Schein, 2010).</p>	Yes	Somewhat	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Yes	Somewhat	No												
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												

		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>7. Prior Excitement Is Fragile <i>Definition:</i> Leaders should avoid early excitement as it tends “to be superficial” (Fullan, 2011, p. 77); instead, “strive for small early successes, acknowledge real problems, admit mistakes, protect their people, and celebrate success along the way” (p. 77).</p>		Change needs time, so I value the small successes along the way (Fullan, 2011).		
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		I admit and share my mistakes so that I can grow and learn with my colleagues to improve our teaching practices (Lambert, 2003).		
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>8. Take Risks and Learn <i>Definition:</i> the ability to foster and develop “a culture and atmosphere of non-judgmentalism” (Fullan, 2011, p. 80) to encourage risk free learning.</p>		I do not judge others when they try new things that I may be questioning. Instead, I pay attention, so I can learn from them, regardless of whether they are successful or not (Fullan, 2011).		
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		I am not careless with risk-taking to limit or prevent human costs when possible (Glickman, 2006).		
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

<p>9. Be Assertive <i>Definition:</i> Leaders may occasionally need to be assertive but in doing so, should consider the following three factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. build relationships on trust, ii. recognize when they have good ideas, and iii. inspire staff to foster and develop ideas. (Fullan, 2011) 		<p>I am assertive in a professional manner only when someone needs a wake-up call (Fullan, 2011).</p>		
		Yes	Somewhat	No
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<p>In times of assertion, I had established relational trust with my colleagues to ensure they did not feel threatened (Fullan, 2011; Sergiovanni, 2008).</p>		
Yes	Somewhat	No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Figure 4. The self-reflection tool and checklist

Reflection

The self-reflection tool is intended to provide aspiring leaders the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and their ability to be a leader according to Fullan's nine qualities. I believe there is great value behind this format as I have modelled an in-depth personal reflection of this, in conjunction with comparing my experiences to several studies, and finally, understanding each quality through the lens of other educational theorists. The process has allowed me to admit where I can grow and how I can contribute to a school community. Thus, it is important to realize and highlight that even though I was not exemplary in all qualities, that does not mean I am not prepared for leadership. Instead, I am suggesting that in order to be a change-savvy leader, one must be a reflective educator. Additionally, leaders must be able to draw on their experiences and be willing to be actively involved within their school community in various capacities. For example, this may include professional development, or organizing professional learning communities, or entering classrooms for instructional coaching purposes. The tool specifically indicates the sharing of experiences as "Step 1" because educators must be able to relate theory or their beliefs with experience. If educators are not able to support each quality with an example, or the example shared is weak, then the ability to be honest in "Step 2" is crucial. It is an honest representation of who we are as educators and a reflective process that inadvertently calls for change.

On a final note, as I consider the impact this reflective process could have on the application process for teachers interested in becoming assistant principals, I believe it would highlight teachers' areas of strength, and reveal whether participants are reflective and forthcoming with their areas of growth. Depending on whether an individual is capable of being a reflective educator or not, defines whether they are ready or not. Interestingly, the word

“reflect” has been used forty-one times (excluding headings and references) in this paper because the entire literature review has been a reflection on Fullan’s (2011) nine qualities of leadership. From the studies reviewed, the personal experiences shared, and the wise words of several master thinkers on leadership, all have stimulated and formulated a deep reflection of Fullan’s (2011) nine qualities. The process has reminded me of the simple message that learning “is positioned as reflection-in-action in tandem with informed mindful praxis” (Kruse & Johnson, 2016, p. 598). Therefore, I am simply suggesting calls for leadership should adopt and explore similar practices that call for reflection to instill those “behaviors before beliefs” (Fullan, 2011, p.68).

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