First Nations Instructional Leadership for the Twenty-first Century

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Abstract

This research paper gives an insight into First Nations educational systems and how educational leadership influences the understanding of First Nations education today. It will suggest how First Nations instructional leaders can be effective leaders in today's society and how to treat everyone with care. It is important for leaders to know how to make changes slowly in First Nations schools. The research consists of a variety of peer-reviewed scholarly journals and books written by well-known authors, such as Schein. Some of the topics in this research paper will include: the history of First Nations education and educational leadership, transitioning into an effective leader in First Nations Schools, and how to be a caring leader within the school or community. The outcomes will benefit the first time leader when entering the reserve schools. Additionally, this paper will be a guide for use by all instructional leaders.

Key words: First Nation Instructional Leader

"*Leading in a Culture of change* is accurate as far as it goes, but because the leadership we are talking about is so complex, and so full of details, we need additional takes on its nature" (Fullan, 2003, p. 93).

In the twenty-first century there are many changes that need to occur in the First Nations school setting for an effective First Nations instructional leader (FNIL). "Canadian society should engage in open, searching, and ongoing discussion with First Nations partners about appropriate ways to prepare leaders who can re-structure, articulate, and lead educational institutions, particularly authentically First Nations educational institutions" (Fallon & Paquette, 2014, p. 205). The FNIL will need to support changes within their schools. In addition, leaders need to be more aware and willing to make educational changes in our First Nations (FN) educational system so our school system can be successful. As Fallon and Paquette (2014) stated, "First Nations need to adopt and adapt such content carefully and purposefully and likely will need to diverge from it in significant ways, in some cases ways so significant they may seem to 'reinvent 'the very concept of leadership'" (pp. 205-06). Gradual changes to the management of First Nations educational systems will see further improvements in the students' achievements. Researchers have indicated there are particular characteristics that leaders need to have to implement changes and improvements including energy, ideas, commitment and ownership (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005). FNIL will need to be persistent in making improvements in school-based management.

Change is considered to be a powerful force that involves leadership (Fullan et al. 2005). To be an effective and productive leader in the school, one needs to create movement in the organization (Fullan et al., 2005). When an effective leader retires, he or she will continue to influence the organization by establishing other leaders who will stay behind. As Fullan et al (2005) noted, "the main mark of a school principal at the end of his or her tenure is not just that individual's impact on student achievement, but rather how many leaders are left behind who can go even further" (p. 57). To be an effective leader within an organization such as the school, leaders need to have his or her staff on board and get ready for change to happen.

To be an effective school leader, Dimmock and Walker (2005) stated "effective school leadership and management are therefore seen in terms of their capacity to build strong institutional cultures based on shared values conducive to promoting collaboration in enhancing quality, especially in teaching and learning, thus bringing about school improvement" (p. 68). Importantly, if schools are to improve then change or transformation will need to take place (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Researchers indicated there is a three-stage process: (1) Understanding the school culture is important for external change. It involves assessing the current culture and working towards positive culture norms. There are discussions amongst the staff in re-examining their values and any problems that they may have. (2) Leaders will direct the change process through vision, purpose, and direction. (3) "[R]eculturing, or 'normative re-education' strategies will then need to be put in place, including clarification and reconstruction of values, improving the problem-solving capacity of staff and establishing supportive structures" (Dimmock & Walker, 2005, p. 69). For reconstruction to happen all stakeholders, community, students and staff must be involved (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Stoll (as cited by Dimmock & Walker, 2005) pointed out:

> Reculturing … needs to go beyond redefining teacher culture; it must include pupil and community cultures as well. Pupils can be a conservative force when teachers attempt to change their practice … Similarly … communities are often resistant to change … Change agents must therefore attend to both. (p. 69)

Changing the culture does not come easily, and it may take years to see the results. Change is scary for veterans in the school. There is so much to be learned by the principals of the First Nations culture in the educational communities.

The FNIL needs to be focused on effective instructional leadership, culture, wellness, collaboration, capacity building, mission, vision, First Nations knowledge in traditional learning, and student engagement. According to Backor and Gordon (2015) "developing the future instructional leader's *willingness to be visible and collaborate with stakeholders* was considered an important disposition for aspiring principals to develop" (p. 113). Foremost, FNIL will need passion to lead in the organization and have patience in laying the groundwork for what they are hoping to see in the future.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine potential strategies and approaches for the First Nations instructional leadership in the twenty- first century. This research paper will help other FNIL to understand and recognize how to be an effective leader. I will examine the history of First Nations educational systems and present strategies that will be effective for instructional leaders in First Nations Schools. I will also examine how First Nations instructional leaders should treat all the stakeholders, parents, colleagues, and students with care in the First Nations school setting. The research that I have gathered will benefit me one day when I become a leader as it will inform me on how to be an effective leader for my school.

Research Questions

These three research questions will examine the history of First Nations instructional leaders and how to be an effective leader in the future for First Nations schools:

1. How does the history of First Nations educational systems and First Nations educational leadership influence our understanding of First Nations education today?

2. How can First Nation leaders make the transition within the organization to become an effective instructional leader in the twenty-first century?

3. How can First Nations instructional leaders develop a supportive culture where stakeholders, including parents, staff, and students are treated with care in the school setting?

Significance of the study

This research study allowed me to discover, analyze, and identify the instructional leaders' role in First Nations schools. The study is significant in that it will provide a clear understanding of how to be an effective leader within the First Nations School. This study will provide a more detailed way to make changes slowly to be successful in First Nations schools. The research I have chosen was highly regarded and offered many insights into the nature of effective instructional leadership; these insights would be helpful for any teacher considering the challenge of entering school administration, but especially for First Nations instructional leaders.

Researcher Positionality

I will be able to use this research paper as a guide and a reference in my job as an administrator one day. The paper will be able to guide me when I run into situations as a leader in a FN school. I will be able to model to all stakeholders what an effective leader looks like in a FN school. As a First Nation's woman who resides on a FN reserve in Southend (in Northern Saskatchewan), it was important to me to further my education in an educational administration field. From the knowledge gained from the research and classes, I learned about leadership and how to manage a First Nations school that will benefit me when I become an administrator in the future. I have found many research articles that contained what you need to do to be an effective leader in the twenty-first century. As a result, this research paper is based on the outcomes of the research conducted for scholarly articles and books.

To further my growth as an effective leader, I decided to enrol in a Master of Education in Educational Administration (Course-Based) Degree at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. I took classes part time and summer classes for two and a half years. I had to travel 600 kilometres to attend the classes in which I was enrolled. However, I believed that this training was very important. In Beyer's (2009) article, he noted that leaders should be trained for their position as leaders. They should further their education in university programs that will direct them to prepare for educational leadership and to implement programs; these programs "prepared graduates to serve the unique needs of students and the communities which they will serve" (Beyer, 2009, p.2). FNIL will certainly have tools to do their job and to be an effective leader once they have completed the program.

Methods

The research method in this study is focused on an analysis of research articles and books that I retrieved from the educational library. The researchers used a variety of methods in retrieving their answers including through case studies, interviews, shared stories by elders, and audio recordings. Studies took place in a variety of locations in different school settings. The research consists of First Nations Schools and Non-First Nations Schools, on reserve and non-reserve.

The three research questions I chose to explore, analyse, and identify are the history of First Nations educational systems and First Nations leadership influence, leadership roles to be an effective leader, and engaging your staff and students in a healthy atmosphere. The applicable literature that was reviewed in this research was wide-ranging and included well-known researchers in the field of Aboriginal education, organizational culture, leadership (more broadly), effective school leadership, instructional leadership, and First Nations leadership.

From the literature and book reviews, I was able to understand how the history of First Nations educational systems and First Nations educational leadership influence our understanding of First Nations education today. Other sources explained how effective leaders could manage the school by effective instructional leadership, awareness, culture, collaboration, capacity building, mission and vision, technology, and First Nations knowledge in traditional learning. From this literature, I was able to compre-

hend what an effective leader needs to do to show care, and facilitate wellness and student engagement in the organization.

The articles and books were peer reviewed and are trustworthy. Also, the articles and books consist of secondary and primary sources. I tended to represent sources of ideas by using quotes or paraphrasing. To not misrepresent the author's intentions by quoting out of context, I used the proper code of ethics in my research paper.

Literature Review

History of First Nations Education

The First Nations people were introduced to the Euro-Western style of education as a means to a livelihood when the newcomers arrived into what is now Canada. Researchers, such as Watt-Cloutier (2000) have noted that the type of history taught within First Nations was different from that of the newcomersWatt-Cloutier found in her research that "[f]or thousands of years Aboriginal peoples had a very effective education. We knew how to prepare our children to handle the challenges they would face when living on the land" (p. 114). First Nations people had their own ways of learning how to survive on their traditional land. The young men were taught to hunt on the land and technical skills such as handling a gun or a harpoon at a certain age. They were also taught the "characteristic skills of courage, respect, determination, persistence, and patience" (Watt-Cloutier, 2000, p. 118). For the First Nation young women, they were taught how "to prepare and sew skins and materials for clothing; she is also taught the appropriate character skills to go along with her creativity" (Watt-Cloutier, 2000, p. 118). However, if schools would help prepare our children for changes they were facing, then most parents were willing to let their children be educated in the southern way" (Watt-Cloutier, 2000, p. 114).

Significant changes occurred in First Nations education when the newcomers came to dwell on the land with them. Education for First Nations children became controlled by the residential system when the government and the Catholic system came to take children away from their homes, their parents, and their family. "The force of the law was used to ensure parents complied with the edict on residential schooling: parents who 'prevented their children from attending' were 'upon summary conviction' fined, imprisoned, or both" (Indian Act, Section 137-2, as cited by Carr-Stewart, 2006, p. 9). The government through their department called the Indian Agency came to get their children to take them to residential schools. However, "if schools would help prepare our children for changes they were facing, then most parents were willing to let their children be educated in the southern way" (Watt-Cloutier, 2000, p. 114). Washington (2004) identified "our parents were forced by law into residential school, where our traditions were devalued and outlawed" (p. 595). Leaders were not informed and did not have any say in what the government intended to do with their children. Leaders went to court to try and get control of education.

Researchers Abele, Dittburner, and Graham (2000) noted the turnover of education in First Nations (FN) education "was the time when we saw the formation of major Indian, Inuit, and Métis political organizations" (p. 5). The government introduced the white paper in 1969 to First Nation leaders. According to Fallon and Paquette (2014):

In a 1969 White Paper the Government of Canada proposed, in the name of a more "just society" and of equal opportunities for "status" Indians (those inscribed on the official registry of status Indians maintained by Indian Affairs), to repeal the Indian Act and thus end the existing legal status of "registered Indians". (p. 195)

As Abele et al. (2000) indicated "the 1969 *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, known as the White Paper (Canada 1969), initiated a controversy concerning the relationship between the federal government and Indian peoples" (p. 5). The provincial government made changes in initiated comprehension capital and tuition without involving the First Nations leaders (Abele et al., 2000). The Indian Association of Alberta and the National Indian Brotherhood came together to have discussions

with the federal Cabinet in reviewing the federal approaches to Indian Education following the Red Paper (Abele et al., 2000). The researchers further stated "the Department of Indian Affairs continued to reject the Indian request for improvements to on-reserve schools, is part because of its financial commitments to provincially operated schools located in towns near the reserves" (Abele et al., 2000, p. 5).

In September 1970, the first school in Canada that was run and administered by Indian people was the Blue Quills School in St. Paul, Alberta, which became symbolic (Abele et al. 2000,). Abele et al. (2000) stated: "*Indian Control of Indian Education*, for instance, is based on the positions of the territorial and provincial associations that comprise the National Indian Brotherhood's general assembly" (p. 7). Also, Abele et al. specified "the need to transfer decision-making authority over education to the local or community level to give parents and communities greater control over the education of their children" (p. 9). The period following the Hawthorn Report is important because that is when "the first signs of the federal government moving away from an assimilationist paradigm" (Abele et al., 2000, p. 10). The discussion of Aboriginal education involved three main parties: Aboriginal organizations, provincial governments and federal government (Abele et al., 2000). All parties agreed to cooperate and have a partnership. They needed to revitalize Aboriginal controlled education, parental responsibility, and local control (Abele et al., 2000). In 1982, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Constitution Act recognized the Aboriginal people and treaty rights of the Aboriginal people of Canada (Abele et al., 2000).

Effective Instructional Leader

To be an effective and successful FNIL, you need to take risks in making changes in the school, as suggested by Fullan (2003) who proposed that leaders need to be taking risks, connect ideas within their teams, and share leadership roles. Normore (2009) noted, "the program must develop leaders with knowledge and understanding, and who acknowledge and are sensitive to social and equity issues, culture, history, and economic challenges of First Nations schools and surrounding communities" (p. 60). Further, FNIL will naturally need to be respectful and passionate about helping students achieve their highest potential. As Gurr, Drysdale, and Mulford (2006) found in their research, "common traits identified included being passionate, enthusiastic and highly motivated towards helping children achieve their best" (pp. 381-382). Researchers also found that, in the leadership role, leaders will need to have excellent communication skills, build trust, integrity, care, and respect with regard to all stakeholders (Gurr et al., 2006).

Another area that needs to be considered to be an effective leader is to have professional development training for your employees. *"Professional development* was identified as another function of instructional leadership. The participants believed that principals should assess teachers' professional growth needs and provide learning opportunities congruent with those needs" (Backor & Gordon, 2015, p. 109). With the new programs and technology in the twenty-first century, the veteran leaders and teachers all need to be updated in how to use the programs. They need to know what to do so they do feel confident. Leadership conferences are an essential component for refreshing the mind of an effective leader. As well, getting ideas from other instructional leaders will benefit FNIL.

Situational Awareness

If faced with angry students, parents, or guardians (either in person or over the phone), FNIL will need to manage the situation. Leaders will need to be aware of how to avoid or cope with disturbances when they occur. Lindle (2005) stated that leaders "must develop mental health strategies for coping . . . understand the trauma from forces larger than they or their power can control" (p. 115). Some of the examples are verbal assaults by students who shout threats or use foul language towards the leader. The leader will need to recognize the situation and not retaliate at the outburst of the student. The leader will need to remind themself to remove their personal identity from their job. The shouter is often upset with the job, role, or position and not the leader; therefore the leader needs to remain calm with the upset person (Lindle, 2005). There are a number of ways to deal with assaults, and one of the elements Lindle (2005) illustrated is journal writing:

By writing in a journal, the collaborative leader keeps a diary of all contacts, such as phone logs, emails, letters, memos, and notes on face-to-face meetings and encounters. These journals include

date, time, and place with summaries of the ideas expressed and exchanged . . . the leader analyzes the journal entries relevant to the traumatic events. He or she looks for patterns. (p. 116)

FNIL will need to be organized by having separate journals for each individual or have a USB and make folders of the incidents that occur.

Culture

FNIL will need to get to know the culture in the work force of which they are a part. Regarding the term "culture", Schein (2011) noted "in the last several decades it has been used by some organizational researchers and managers to refer to the climate and practices that organizations develop around handling people, or to the espoused values and credo of an organization" (p. 350). Managers try to use the right kind of culture in their organizations (Schein, 2011). By facilitating an effective culture and enhancing performance, the leader can help the organization be stronger (Schein, 2011). Schein mentioned that leadership is what "creates and changes cultures" (p. 325). Culture provides stability, meaning, and predictability in organizations (Schein, 2011). In addition, Schein found that "culture is pervasive; it influences all aspects of how an organization deals with its primary task, its various environments, and its internal operations" (p. 354). FNIL should develop an idea what culture exists in the organization.

As Schein (2011) found in his research culture is formed in two ways. Unorganized interaction with groups that lead to patterns and norms of behaviour will become the norm of that organization. For shared learning to occur, there must be a history of shared experience (Schein, 2011). "In more formal groups an individual creates the group or becomes the leader" (Schein, 2011, p. 355). Whoever the founder of the new group is, that leader will lean towards "certain personal visions, goals, beliefs, values, and assumptions about how things should be" (Schein, 2011, p. 355). The followers, in turn, do things that the leader is asking of them, and this may result in success when the task is completed. (Schein). The accomplishment the followers achieve is based on shared leadership and that is what they come to recognize (Schein, 2011). Alternatively, culture formation based on the leaders' beliefs and values which then results in failure signals a need to change leadership (Schein, 2011). The organization will then find another new leader to form the culture. According to Schein, "with continued reinforcement, the group will become less and less conscious of these beliefs and values and will begin to treat them more and more as non-negotiable assumptions" (p. 355). Schein stated, "definitions of culture that deal with values must specify that culture consists of nonnegotiable values—which I am calling assumptions" (p. 355). Culture determines the criteria for leadership and who will or will not be the leader (Schein, 2011).

The theories behind how an organization should be managed and structured in the past have not changed that much when applied to First Nations schools. As Shafritz, Ott, and Jang (2011) indicated "organizational members often hang onto familiar 'tried and true' beliefs, values, policies and practices of the organizational culture even when these 'old ways' have ceased to serve the organization well" (p. 338). In today's society, the First Nations people have come to realize higher education is needed in organizations to be able to achieve success in managing it. The leaders also realized this in the past, as Carr-Stewart (2006) pointed out. She noted that previous First Nations Leaders, such as Morris and Venn, who negotiated the treaty right to education recognized that education would prepare them to live with newcomers. The past First Nations leaders knew the future of their people and what they needed to improve their own organizations.

To further understand the importance of knowing about the First Nations community or school, the leaders will need to stand back and observe the community and school culture before he or she first becomes the leader. Stockdale, Parsons, and Beauchamp (2013) found that "highly effective First Nations principals take the time to really 'know' the community and are comfortable attending community functions . . . supporting the community in times of bereavement . . ." (p. 99). An effective leader will be able to fit right in if he or she understands the FN culture.

Collaboration

Beyer (2009) noted, "an education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobiliz-

ing community resources" (p. 9). Collaboration needs to happen in the school setting so resources and ideas are shared amongst one another to achieve success in schools. Principals allow sharing of resources and knowledge to take place in the school setting (Mulford, 2007). FNIL will need to be visible in their workplace. According to the findings of Backor and Gordon (2015) "developing the future instructional leader's willingness to be visible and collaborate with stakeholders was considered an important disposition for aspiring principals to develop" (p. 113). Mulford (2007) found that the principals expressed a firm belief in collaborative work and "the provision of individual professional development to increase the capacity of individuals to work collaboratively" (p. 24).

In addition, an effective leadership style is a way to bring people together and support collaboration with one another (Gurr et al., 2006). The leaders need to put their differences aside as they team up with their colleagues to figure out a solution to the problem they are trying to solve, such as a problem with low academics in students' test results in English Language. Gurr et al. (2006) reported that effective leaders "cleared a pathway for people to be involved and achieve by removing blockages and providing a clear vision serviced by adequate resources" (p. 382). A leader is well liked by staff because of the skills they have in engaging their staff and listening to their voices and staff do not feel overpowered by their principal (Gurr et al., 2006). The principals were excellent at remaining focused on enhancing the quality of education for students and families (Gurr et al., 2006). Staff are sharing ideas with one another and are not having any fear of their leaders to do their jobs as they see fit. The leaders are interactive with their staff and know they will have benefited in learning new methods from one another.

Capacity Building

A case study by Mulford (2007) identified that capacity building consists of a three stage process through which leaders who supported and encouraged their staff, "encouraged others to undertake leadership roles, encouraged staff to accept responsibility for their professional learning, and fostered and supported professional learning for groups (for example, senior staff)" (p. 22). The study indicated that there need to be many interventions in personal, professional, organizational, and community capacities. Also, leaders need to be aware to stand by their employees and to provide professional development for support (Gurr et al., 2006). Additionally, when leaders go outside of their community to gain knowledge from other schools, they will positively affect their schools. "Many of the principals were actively involved outside their school to ensure that knowledge and ideas were brought into the school and to promote and protect their schools within the wider community" (Gurr et al., 2006, p. 384). King and Newman (as cited by Gurr et al., 2006) contended that "student achievement is influenced by the quality of instruction (curriculum, instruction and assessment), which is influenced by school capacity (teacher knowledge, professional community and programme coherence)" (p. 385). As Harris (2002) reported, leaders should "recognize that 'family' school and community relationships directly affect student outcomes' hence the need to connect with the community was of paramount importance to the success of the school" (p. 22). The success of what helped was the beliefs, values, visions, personal characteristics and leadership style of the principal.

Mission and Vision

Effective leaders will need to develop a successful mission and vision for all staff and students in the school setting. Leaders will advocate for the community, parents, stakeholders, teachers, and students to be involved in what needs to be inscribed in the mission and vision statement for the school. "It is important to understand that success in First Nations schools must be supported and fostered by the community's political leaders" (Stockdale et al., 2013, p. 98). By having the trust of community members, the leader can feel supported to run the school successfully (Stockdale et al., 2013). Mendels (2012) analyzed "the Minnesota/Toronto team found that principals rated highly by teachers for having created a good instructional climate or taken sound instructional actions had been able to nurture a strong vision that all students can learn" (p. 55). In building of shared vision, a group of people build a sense of commitment together. Stockdale et al. (2013) stated, "only through shared vision that encourages the heart can action be taken" (p. 98).

Technology

Technology is commonly used in today's society. The technology used in schools should benefit everyone in the school. An instructional leader should invite technology use by having smartboards, iPad, and computers in the schools. By having technology in schools, students will be well supported in developing skills to succeed in life. Bottoms and O'Neill stated, "they need to understand how technology can engage students in learning, what a classroom looks like when technology has been successfully integrated into instruction, and how to support teachers in learning how to use technology to advance student achievement" (as cited by Backor and Gordon, 2015, p. 120). Using technology of the twenty-first century will allow our leaders, teachers, and students to experience success. FNIL will need to move away from the old ways such as chalkboard notes and overhead projectors.

First Nations Knowledge in Traditional Learning

For centuries the Aboriginal youth were taught not to value their language or their culture by the Canadian residential schools because they wanted to "eliminate Aboriginal culture" (Gunn, Pomachac, Good Striker, & Tailfeathers, 2011, p. 327). In the twenty-first century, in band schools, FN children need to know their history, their ancestry, and who they are as Aboriginals. Gunn et al. (2011) stated, "[b]y educating teachers, staff, and non-Aboriginal students about FNMI cultures, history, and language, it was reported that FNMI students would receive better instruction as well as experience an enhanced sense of belonging" (p. 335). By knowing the history of their ancestors, the students will know their identity and their academics will improve.

In Saskatchewan curriculum, it is written that all schools within the province must engage in "Teaching Treaties in Classroom" in Social Studies (Government of Saskatchewan, Ministry of Education, 2013). The Office of the Treaty Commissioner located in Saskatoon put the accompanying kit together. In the kit, there are resources from K to 12 including books, videos, and online smartboard activities. It became mandatory in 2007 for all grades to be taught the First Nations Inuit Metis (FNIM) education in history in Saskatchewan (Government of Saskatchewan, Ministry of Education, 2013). The FNIL will need to make sure their staff is teaching their students the FNIM history. As Normore, (2009) noted, "improved academic performance will not occur until other factors identified … are included as part of a comprehensive approach for nurturing and educating the whole child" (p. 61). FNIM and non-Aboriginals will need to learn and understand the FNIM history. An effective leader will ensure his or her employees deliver this curriculum to the students.

Showing care with staff, students, and stakeholders

Studies show that if a leader has love toward his or her employees and encourages them to find meaning in their jobs, to develop new skills and "derive personal satisfaction from making contributions that simultaneously fulfill their goals and the goals of the organization", the employees will feel supported (Fullan, 2008, p. 60). According to Fullan's (2008) research "a new report from McKinsey and Company focusing on the top-performing school systems in the world provides the central reason why we must value employees (in this case teachers) such as customers (children and parents)" (p. 23). Leaders who commit to respecting their employees as well as showing love will motivate their staff to do better (Fullan, 2008). Everyone within the organization (or school) is shown respect and love.

Another area that is important for leaders to perform their job well is to take care of their health. For leaders to perform well at home or work, they need to balance their lifestyle and take care of themselves. Lindle (2005) revealed, "school leadership encompasses many responsibilities also generates stress; most of the time, members of the school community do not recognize the signs that their leader may be stressed." (p. 11). Therefore, leaders need to recognize stress. Staff members need to motivate each other in the area of healthy eating and exercise. Lindle suggested that school leaders need to be creative in exercising at least 20 to 30 minutes a day. School leaders can use the hallways for walks, gym, or the exercising room if it is available.

Student Engagement

FNIL will need to bring in new programs; as Christenson and Thurlow (2004) suggested, "[r]esearch is only beginning to address the critical need for programs that promote student engagement and school completion, and thereby reduce dropout rates" (p. 38). According to Christenson and Thurlow, "[s]tudent engagement across the school years depends on the degree to which there is a match between the student's characteristics and the school environment so that the student can handle the academic and behavioural demands of school" (p. 38). Beyer (2009) indicated "[a]n education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning" (p. 8). Students are encouraged to take part in as many programs that are being offered in the school year for example sports and community events (Beyer, 2009).

By engaging FNIM students in the schools and motivating them to do the best they can in their academics, teachers and principals can facilitate students' achievement in society. The FNIL will need to help students develop a sense of belonging in the school and classroom for learning to take place (Gunn et al., 2011). "FNIM children need to feel they are important" (Gunn et al., p. 339). All leaders in the organization will show the passion for their students by involving them in making decisions with them in class or by showing their students that they care by greeting them in the doorways as they come to school in the mornings. Gunn et al. (2011) wrote that there are a variety of ways that you can promote student belongingness in the school by involving parents, elders, and the community members to participate in the school activities, parent committees, newsletters, culture, and advocating for First Nations People. Lastly, Gunn et al. contended that students should be encouraged to "be visible and be proud'" (p. 340). Backor and Gordon (2015) stated in their article:

> One professor described the need for visibility: You must have a certain visibility. You have to have presence. You can't lead a school from your office anymore. The DNA of the school is found in the classrooms and in the way that the teachers interact with students. The only way you can do your job [is] to gain entry into the world of teachers. (p. 113)

Instructional leaders will need to do their walks in the morning to greet staff and students who are coming into the school. Leadership will need to get to know each student's name and what they like so students see that his or her leader cares (Personal communication by Warren Noonan, July 2014). The principal is the important part of the school in determining the success (Gurr et al., 2006).

Community Building

FNIL who are working within the school will need to work outside of the school with the community. "The heads in the study emphasised the need to establish an '*interconnectedness of home, school and community*'" (Harris, 2002, p. 22, italics in original). Harris (2002) noted, "this involved communicating and understanding the needs of the community, establish a dialogue with parents and to connect with formal and informal community leaders" (p. 22). FNIL can send out school newsletters, host parent night, hold penny carnivals, participate in community events and so on. Harris (2002) finds "the head-teachers in the study visited homes, attended community events, communicated regularly with public about success and engendered trust by showing care of the young people" (p. 22). FNIL will recognize the community, family and the school with which they have to build relationships for student success to occur (Harris, 2002).

Implications

The findings answering the research questions have been informed by a variety of articles and books that had both quantitative and qualitative research. Researchers shared their knowledge and insights for others to use or know about the history of FN education, an effective instructional leader, and how First Nations instructional leaders should treat all stakeholders, parents, colleagues, and students in the First Nations school setting.

Community is very important in developing an effective school and building connections for the students. Elders should be included in the school setting at all times. Elders are an important resource for all leaders, stakeholders, teachers, community and students. They bring in the traditional teachings, knowledge, values and kindness in the school. They show respect and love toward the younger generation. Even the adults need guidance from the elders. We should be bringing the positive elder role models from the community to the school. How can we bring in the elders to the school? Ask elders in the reserve how they can help the school.

Further research needs to be done by conducting a survey on how other FNIL are effective leaders in a reserve school; the survey could be through emails, or interviews could be conducted. Other leaders should share what works for them in their schools so other FNIL can try the procedures as well. Also, research that should be conducted includes an interview with individual leaders of the band schools such as the education coordinator, principal and vice principal. FNIL should make themselves available for any educational research and cooperate with researchers when the opportunity arises. Instructional leaders need to be involved in the research, participating in important research topics such as how to be an effective leader, Professional Learning Communities, collaboration, capacity building, and so on. Finding solutions that improve the organization will benefit leaders, stakeholders, the community, employees, parents, and students. According to Gunn et al. (2010) "only elders and Aboriginal community members, parents, academics, and teachers can design and disseminate educational programs for them to be authentic and effective" (p. 343). Further research should be conducted on effective program development that facilitates success for First Nations students.

My study personally equipped me to use the tools that I have researched regarding how to be an effective FNIL in a reserve school. The research findings will help in the future and I can share what I have learned amongst other FNIL. I will be able to give back to my community and be a role model to my employees in how to be an effective and caring leader towards everyone who enters the school. Stockdale et al. (2013) defined: "First Nations principals must understand it is more than just leading a school: it is leading a school with a strong focus on cultural identity and language" (p. 107).

Conclusion

In conclusion, investigating instructional leadership has brought me a deeper understanding "of what strong instructional leadership looks like" (Mendels, 2012, p. 58). As Washington (2004) indicated, "our culture and our teachings will clear the path and make us a strong and independent nation once again" (p. 597). FNIL will need to cooperate and have respect for one another for change to occur in leadership. Furthermore, Washington (2004) wrote "we do not always have to agree, but it is time for all of us to work together again (p. 602).

"To achieve the goal, we must develop leaders who have greater change knowledge and who can, in turn, develop leadership in others" (Fullan et al., 2005, p. 58). FNIL will need to focus on how they represent themselves as effective leaders so they can develop other leaders in the organization. Fullan et al. (2005) further stated "knowing is insufficient; only knowing-by-doing, reflecting, and re-doing will move us forward" (p. 58). Making mistakes and not giving up is one way to be an effective leader in the school. FNIL should not be hesitant to ask for guidance by other FNIL when they go their principals' meetings. FNIL need to reflect on how their schools are improving and how they can continue to support their staff and students.

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