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The *SELU Research Review Journal (SRRJ)* is a forum for graduate student research reviews capturing the state of current research in Educational Administration. Topics related to leadership, policy, and the administration of K-12 education, post-secondary education, and other educational institutions are the focus of this journal. The work published in the journal reflects graduate students' work throughout their program at the University of Saskatchewan. This *Journal* is intended to provide a resource for educational practitioners to access current and comprehensive overviews of research. The reviews presented in the *Journal* represent diverse perspectives and findings from academic research that will aid in policy development and the improvement of practice in educational institutions.



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Editorial

Vicki Squires

University of Saskatchewan

Welcome to the third volume of the SELU Research Review Journal (SRRJ). As with other volumes of this journal, these papers were the result of the students' research in the capstone course of their Master's program: EADM 991.3; this volume represents some of the best papers submitted for the section held in the fall term of 2018. In this final course of their graduate studies journey, students are asked to develop a research question about which they have a deep curiosity or a strong connection. They then engage in the research process, examining the literature that is relevant to their question or topic of concern. The final papers that you will read in this journal have undergone multiple drafts based on my feedback and the papers have also undergone an editorial process. As the instructor for this section of the course, I was impressed by the final products that convey the students' passion for these topics and their sincere efforts to contribute the body of scholarship centred on their research interests.

In this volume, the authors examine topics of currency for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 education. Broadly described, the growing diversity among our schools is an underlying theme. In one paper, Gress explores the role of the principal in implementing and sustaining School-wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) whereby principals demonstrate engagement in the efforts, leading professional collaboration and sharing a positive vision so that the entire school community will be supporting the work. These tenets of collaboration, communication and professional development align with the model of instructional leadership and, as Gress contends, underpins the successful implementation and sustainability of the model. Kaiswatum examines the application of Response to Intervention (RTI) in First Nations schools, focusing on the role of administrators in supporting the RTI efforts underpinned by the goal of improving learning outcomes for First Nations students. Furthermore, Kaiswatum describes the three tiered model of RTI and highlights positive practices for successful interventions with key elements including intentional and regularly scheduled collaboration, progress monitoring, and effective communication among teachers, students and parents. In her paper, Appel explores approaches to serving students' diverse needs by focusing on culturally responsive teaching and developing a culture of caring within the classroom extending to the entire school community. Appel posits that within this culture, students develop cultural competence and empathy for others, laying the foundation for enhanced well-being for all students; the interpersonal exchanges in this culture will exemplify the Golden Rule. Fortier expands this discussion of positive practices to build up others and applies this approach to the development of authentic school-family partnerships. As Fortier points out, these relationships, if grounded in ideologies of social justice, cultural responsiveness, parent advocacy, and community empowerment, can be a powerful tool in supporting our increasingly diverse population of students and their families, with resulting improvements in academic achievement. Middleton elaborates on this idea by drawing on an analogy between student learning and a healthy garden; she notes that the model of instructional leadership provides crucial elements for supporting student success, much as gardens require critical nutrients, all underscored by a caring and thoughtful approach. As Middleton emphasizes, school-based administrators should establish a co-constructed vision for a school built on a foundation of a student-centered culture of learning that is supported by professional development, shared leadership and collaboration in order to address the needs of a very diverse student population. In keeping with the theme of diversity, Korver explores how female leaders can be supported in achieving their aspirations of becoming administrators within school divisions, a necessary consideration given the gender disparity among teachers versus administrators. Korver identifies from her search of the research literature that females encounter different challenges in pursuing a path of leadership in education, including

fewer professional development opportunities, unhelpful gender stereotypes, and lack of acceptance of differing leadership styles. In these six papers, I believe the students demonstrate an underlying focus on promoting diversity and supporting the success of students, teachers, and administrators.

I want to thank the students for their patience as we worked through some technical challenges and several delays to bring this edition of SSRJ to fruition. I hope you enjoy the final product and can appreciate the dedication these graduate students have for their profession, as evident in their research contributions.

Instructional Leadership for School-wide Behaviour Interventions and Supports

Rosemarie Gress

Abstract

This paper examines the effects of principal led School-wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) and investigated attributes of instructional leadership that contribute to the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS. The completion of a two-part literature review using 43 academic sources relating to the topics provided data and context from which to make connections and draw conclusions. Research indicated that SWPBIS is a viable system positively affecting student achievement, both academically and behaviorally. Considering the growing diversity of schools, principals need proactive strategies for positive school culture; therefore, SWPBIS is a worthwhile endeavour. The literature confirmed the role of the principal in implementing and sustaining SWPBIS is significant. Common themes of high impact included principal engagement, vision sharing, and leading professional collaboration as school leader essentials. The literature surveyed on instructional leadership showed that collaboration, communication, and professional development, align with and contribute to SWPBIS implementation and sustainability. The intended outcomes include increasing positive school culture resulting in a rise in student achievement. Further research is required on the topic; however, the results of this study are compelling.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this paper is to examine the attributes of principal instructional leadership contributing to the implementation and sustainability of school-wide positive behaviour interventions and supports. Practices in education are under constant pressure to adapt and evolve to meet the diverse needs of students (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Horng & Leob, 2010; Kelm et al., 2014). School leaders search for ways to respond to and support students and teachers. School-wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) as defined by Bradshaw et al. (2010) “aims to alter school environments by creating improved systems and procedures that promote positive change in student behavior by targeting staff behaviors” (p. 133). Thus, student achievement is improved by adapting the environment in ways that best respond to student need.

Instructional leadership practices support principals developing supportive, collaborative school-based teams able to respond to needs consistently and effectively. Blasé and Blasé (1999) stated, “Effective instructional leadership is embedded in school culture; it is expected and routinely delivered” (p. 368). The implementation of school-wide positive behaviour interventions and supports driven by instructional leadership has the potential for success. The overarching question then is if instructional leaders have the capacity for effective SWPBIS implementation.

Research Questions

The overarching question of this research was: does instructional leadership contribute to the implementation and sustainability of school-wide positive behaviour interventions and supports in the current context?

Secondary questions associated with the main question were:

1. How does the structure of SWPBIS effectively address the needs of schools?
2. To what extent do school administrators contribute to the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS?
3. How can the instructional leadership style increase principal efficacy for the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS?

Significance

As the diversity in schools continues to increase, so do the needs presented by students. The role of principal shifting from manager to leader is the current response to recent changes and a subject of much research and professional development (Sheng et al., 2017). Principal leadership skills are identified as one of the highest influencers on school efficacy (Şişman, 2016). More schools are adopting SWPBIS to address the complex needs of students. Likewise, in recent years instructional leadership models have proven to be a foundational leadership approach supporting teaching and learning (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). The research in this paper seeks to understand the ways instructional leadership methods complement SWPBIS implementation. School leadership is concerned with large-scale student achievement, including academic, social, and behavioural dimensions. Extending instructional leadership practices to include teaching and learning focused on social, emotional, and behavioural achievement is essential to meet the current student and teacher needs in schools (Stillman et al., 2018; Ylimaki et al., 2017).

Researcher Positionality

It is my goal through this study to discover the ways that principals as instructional leaders, can effectively implement and sustain SWPBIS to meet the needs of the current student population in schools. As a vice-principal in a school with a diverse student population that currently offers behaviour intervention programming, I see the need for principals to implement and sustain SWPBIS. I believe the information gathered in this study is useful in principals' planning of staff professional development and may influence administrator communication practices to successfully implement and sustain SWPBIS.

Research Methods

Most research for this investigation relied on peer-reviewed journal articles focused on the topics of principal instructional leadership and school-wide positive behaviour interventions and supports framework. There were several search terms used to effectively identify and access relevant authors on the topics. The terms used in the process of research included: "instructional leadership", "instructional leader", "principal", "administrator", "leadership", "positive intervention", "PBIS", "PBIS implementation", "school-wide intervention", "intervention", "supports", "school effectiveness", "leader effectiveness", and "school change". Searching the terms was followed by selecting terms and creating pairings and groupings additionally searched using the Boolean operators. The primary search engines used included: ERIC OVID, ProQuest Education Database, and Google Scholar.

The search identified almost all the journal articles used in this study. The study was completed by conducting a content analysis of the literature. The process included analyzing the available literature and identifying common themes applicable to the topics. In addition, journal articles presenting oppositional perspectives were selected and examined to ensure a thorough understanding of the literature was achieved and presented. Through the assessment of the literature, some gaps were recognized, resulting in areas requiring further investigation.

Limitations

During the initial literature search, the focus was on existing literature that looked explicitly at leadership styles best suited for SWPBIS implementation and found minimal research in this area. Much of the literature examining SWPBIS that was identified reflected research carried out in the United States of America (USA). Research within Canada is limited; however, despite this, the research identified is current and relevant in the context of the questions this paper seeks to address. Therefore, some data referenced may not carry as much relevance in the global context. In the research, no attention was given to the level of education and training specific to 'principals' studied beyond 'years of experience.' More research into the personal interests and personal motivation for principals implementing SWPBIS, along with specialized certifications demonstrating a broader variety of skills, would be an asset.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this research is to examine the effectiveness of instructional leadership on the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS. A key concept that emerged in the literature was the significant impact school administrators had on the success of SWPBIS. The literature review encompassed three sections: understanding SWPBIS, principal role, and attributes of instructional leadership that support principals.

In the first section, an understanding of SWPBIS is provided by defining the SWPBIS model, a description of processes and procedures of implementation, and the impact on both students and teachers. In the second section, the role of the principal in schools implementing and sustaining SWPBIS is explored. In the final section, the key attributes of instructional leadership that support the role of principal in the context of implementing and sustaining SWPBIS is discussed.

Understanding SWPBIS and Related Outcomes

School leaders are constantly in search of ways to create an optimal learning environment in schools. SWPBIS is a general term that refers to a group of practices and systems that aim to create and sustain "an effective, efficient, and relevant social culture in which teaching and learning are maximized" (Sugai & Horner, 2009, p. 307). Establishing a school environment that consistently reinforces student behaviour connected to optimal learning is paramount.

Defining SWPBIS. Sugai and Horner (2009) defined SWPBIS as a proactive method designed using evidence-based practices that support student management and is connected to school discipline systems. The organization of SWPBIS is continuum-based and relies on a three-tier behaviour support system implemented in schools by all teachers and accessible to all students (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

Yeung et al. (2016) noted that in the USA, Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is one of the most frequently utilized evidence-based, multi-tiered approaches present in schools. Yeung et al. (2016) described SWPBIS as the process of altering the school environment in a way to teach and support pro-social skills, explicitly taught by teachers, and driven by an identifiable PBIS school team. Sugai and Horner (2009) summarized the central objectives of SWPBIS are "to positively support teaching and learning environments so that the academic outcomes are maximized and to formalize the school and classroom organization and operation so that a positive social culture is established" (p. 311).

The use of SWPBIS is widespread; however, the initial practice commenced in the USA. Therefore, it is commonplace in schools and most researched throughout the USA, and often considered an American approach (McIntosh, 2014). With that said, countries across the globe including Australia, New Zealand, and Canada are implementing SWPBIS in schools (McIntosh et al., 2013)

Three-tiered structure of SWPBIS. The structure of SWPBIS is based on a continuum of social behaviour and supports that contribute to a positive school culture (Sugai & Horner, 2009). The tiers

of SWPBIS are established behaviour interventions and supports connected to the goals and needs of schools, targeted groups of students, and identified individual students (Yeung et al., 2016). Tier I is a universal and proactive system accessible to all students and generally reinforces expected behaviour and school norms (Yeung et al., 2016). Sugai and Horner (2009) suggested the majority of students would be responsive to the primary tier's teaching and learning to support positive school culture. According to Yeung et al. (2016), primary tier interventions influence approximately 80% of students.

The second and third tiers are aimed at providing additional supports for students exhibiting behaviour identified as unresponsive to universal interventions (Sugai & Horner, 2009). The general goal of these tiers is to increase the level of instructional intensity and provide additional opportunities for student feedback with the hope of improved student learning (Yeung et al., 2016). Sugai and Horner (2009) referred to the tertiary-tier interventions as specialized and individualized supports reserved for students typically exhibiting problem behaviour. Yeung et al. (2016) added students in this group that includes 1% to 5% of the population usually have chronic behaviour and academic challenges over an extended period.

The specialization of interventions in this group will often extend beyond the initial school PBIS team to include other educational resources and, in some cases, outside agencies (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Additionally, Yeung et al. (2016) remarked, "Evidence shows that understanding the function of behavior is essential for making the problem behavior ineffective, inefficient, and irrelevant" (p. 148) which usually integrates mental health supports in the intervention planning. In general, therefore, Yeung et al. (2016) indicated that schools implementing SWPBIS would observe changes in behaviours that can hinder teaching and learning and can expect positive outcomes for students and teachers. The results of this research suggest SWPBIS is an effective model for student and teacher outcomes.

Effects of SWPBIS on student outcomes. Several studies have revealed the positive impact SWPBIS can have on student outcomes, including decreased problem behaviour (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Kelm et al., 2014; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Menendez et al., 2008), positive academic improvements (Algozine et al., 2012; Menendez et al., 2008), and improved emotional regulation (Bradshaw et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2014). In addition, research on culturally responsive interventions indicated SWPBIS might have positive effects on all students (Banks & Obiakor, 2015; McIntosh, Moniz, Craft, Golby, & Steinwand-Deschambeault, 2014). (Banks & Obiakor, 2015) (McIntosh, Moniz, Craft, Golby, & Steinwand-Deschambeault, 2014)

Kelm et al. (2014) examined the effects of SWPBIS in the Canadian setting. In the two-year case study, Kelm et al. (2014) followed an elementary school in British Columbia implementing SWPBIS. The researchers focused on the social and academic results of the complete implementation of SWPBIS in a Canadian school (Kelm et al., 2014). The case study found results consistent with previous research, including positive effects on Canadian students' social, behavioural, and academic outcomes (Kelm et al., 2014).

McIntosh et al. (2014) added new depth for understanding SWPBIS in the Canadian context by studying the way SWPBIS contributes to Indigenous student outcomes. The case study examined the effect that implementation of SWPBIS had on a pre-K to grade 12 school in Northwest Territories, with a 94% Indigenous student population. The findings, like previous studies, portrayed positive outcomes. The results identified by McIntosh et al. (2014) include an increase in community involvement and engagement, a noticeable decrease in identified problem social behaviour, and data reflecting a lower number of student suspensions (p. 250). Consequent to community collaboration, the SWPBIS model included a major focus on "positive over punitive practices" (McIntosh et al., 2014, p. 249) directly tied to the Indigenous values presented. Furthermore, McIntosh et al. (2014) found this example "provides initial evidence for the promise of culturally responsive implementation of PBIS as a social and behaviour support framework for Indigenous students" (p. 252). Therefore, school leaders must ensure that foundational structures of SWPBIS reflect cultural norms and ways of knowing and learning of students and community members while planning implementation.

Bradshaw et al. (2010) studied the effects of SWPBIS on elementary student outcomes in 37 elementary schools in Maryland. The main objective was to identify whether altering the school environment, a foundational practice within SWPBIS models, will have a positive impact on students, specifically lowering office referrals and student suspensions (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Schools in Bradshaw et al.'s (2010) study received SWPBIS implementation training and participated in a school-level analysis that indicated a reduction in office referrals and student suspensions. A key factor in Bradshaw et al.'s (2010) work was the dependence on teacher engagement of the SWPBIS process. The concept suggested here is SWPBIS model is contingent on teacher roles, attitudes, and practices. Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) analyzed teacher perceptions associated with the overall effectiveness that SWPBIS processes have on meeting student needs and will be described in more detail in the following section.

Effects of SWPBIS on teachers. Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) theorized that successful PBIS depends on teacher implementation. Using a grounded theory approach, Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) analyzed teacher responses to identify student needs, given four fictitious scenarios. The researchers noticed some common themes among the relationship of teacher feedback, student needs, and the SWPBIS process (Feuerborn & Chinn, 2012). Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) found that teachers hold the belief that concerning student behavior will increase over time, (p. 224), teachers have limited intervention strategies for social, emotional, behavioural issues (p. 227), and most teachers relied on behaviour management strategies consisting of inconsistent systems of consequences and rewards (p. 227). Interestingly, while only 7% of teachers referred to using a prevention centered model, it is important to note, that the teachers in this group worked in a PBIS school (Feuerborn & Chinn, 2012). Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) mentioned a notable variation among less experienced and more experienced teachers' responses to the given scenarios. Still, more importantly, their work supports the strong relationship between student behaviour and educators, and demonstrates a potential need for a consistent preventative model such as SWPBIS to address student behaviour.

Ross et al.'s (2012) study support a connection between SWPBIS and teachers by comparing teacher well-being in 40 elementary schools implementing SWPBIS. Using a multilevel regression approach survey examining elementary school teacher burnout and efficacy, Ross et al. (2012) found teachers in schools implementing SWPBIS with fidelity had significantly lower levels of burnout and higher levels of efficacy. Additionally noted, teachers in low socioeconomic schools saw greater benefits to SWPBIS implementation (Ross et al., 2012). This study builds on the theory proposing the high degree of influence teachers have on successful SWPBIS and suggests the presence of a mutually beneficial effect (Ross et al., 2012). The evidence in the literature confirms the SWPBIS model's capacity to meet the needs of schools. The implementation of SWPBIS resulted in positive outcomes for both students and teachers.

Principal's Role in SWPBIS

Several studies indicate the value of schools implementing and sustaining SWPBIS for positive school culture, student and teacher outcomes, as presented in the previous section. Yeung et al. (2016) found that school leaders are responsible for decision-making and actions related to following through regularly during the school day, making the principal role vital to SWPBIS. A considerable amount of literature is published discussing the factors of school leadership that contribute to SWPBIS.

Administrator involvement and support. Coffey and Horner (2012) inspected the circumstances prominent in the sustainability of SWPBIS by surveying and collecting responses from 117 SWPBIS team leaders from six states in the US; they determined that school administrator support and coaching were significant factors for SWPBIS sustainability. Coffey and Horner (2012) found administrator support, specifically, communication was one of the strongest predictors of SWPBIS implementation fidelity.

Andreou et al. (2015) identified key elements that either supported or impeded SWPBIS. Using a qualitative interviewing process designed to analyze incidents, Andreou et al. (2015) interviewed 17 participants from three rural British Columbia schools implementing SWPBIS for 10-14 years. The data

collected demonstrates the valuable role principals have prioritizing SWPBIS through active initial and ongoing participation (Andreou et al., 2015). McIntosh et al. (2013) assessed the contextual variables affecting the implementation and sustainability process of SWPBIS through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of data collected using the School-Wide Universal Behavior Sustainability Index-School Teams (SUBSIST) survey. The data gathered reflected 257 school team members representing 234 different schools in the US (McIntosh et al., 2013).

The researchers theorized that understanding the contextual variables of the initial implementation of SWPBIS would lead to more efficient and effective implementation for future SWPBIS schools (McIntosh et al., 2013). McIntosh et al. (2013) found the role of principal was perceived by participants to be highly significant in both the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS. More specifically, participants identified, “having an administrator who actively supports SWPBIS, ensures time for and regularly attends and participates in SWPBIS team meetings, and describes SWPBIS as a top priority” (p. 38) is of importance when discussing the success of their school.

Kincaid et al. (2007) collected data from 70 participants in 26 schools selected after their completion of the Benchmarks of Quality measuring SWPBIS implementation fidelity. The researchers used group interviews to identify themes associated with aspects of implementation practices in schools, and Kincaid et al. (2007) found that school and district administrator support has positive effects on SWPBIS implementation. Additionally noted was that the principal capacity to use data-driven decision making as a priority had a positive effect (Kincaid et al., 2007).

Findings from the present study are consistent with Lohrmann’s (2008) results from interviewing 14 technical assistance providers from 10 states in the USA. The responses demonstrated insufficient administrator support leads to negative outcomes and resistance (Lohrmann et al., 2008). The research reveals the extent to which school administrators’ involvement and support affect the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS.

Vision and teaming. Bambara et al. (2009) explored elements of SWPBIS systems that increase or decrease the sustainability of the system in schools. Bambara et al. (2009) interviewed 25 SWPBIS team participants, teachers, and community members, gathering data regarding their perceptions. Bambara et al.’s (2009) findings were consistent with the previous research identifying that the perception of administrator support is highly important for the sustainability of SWPBIS. Furthermore, Bambara et al. (2009) noted whole school teams or school culture “defined as the importance of ensuring a common understanding of the practice” (p. 167) appeared to be a significant component of successful implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS. Schools with strong teams and shared common vision have positive outcomes.

Andreou et al. (2015) found a huge majority of participants agreed teaming was a critical factor of SWPBIS. Organizational structures in school that prioritize PBIS teams, which include defined roles, regular meetings, sharing, and data feedback, “ensure the follow-through for the whole school” (p. 161), resulting in a stable organizational system (Andreou et al., 2015). Like Andreou et al. (2015), McIntosh et al. (2013) found the effective and efficient practices of school teaming was perceived by participants as having a great impact on SWPBIS, including both implementation and sustainability. The SUBSIST data in McIntosh et al.’s (2013) study revealed the specific constructs of effective team functioning, including “regular meetings, knowledge, and skills of the team, and meeting organization and efficiency” (p. 40) were of the highest importance.

In keeping with the previous literature, Pinkelman et al. (2015) investigated the perceived enablers and barriers connected to SWPBIS sustainability and found the administrator support and teaming were among the essential components. Like Kincaid et al.’s (2007) study, Pinkelman et al. (2015) referred to insufficient administrator support as a major barrier to SWPBIS implementation and sustainability. Furthermore, Forman et al. (2009) showed that implementation is severely impacted when principals do not support school-wide initiatives. Forman et al. (2009) interviewed 24 developers of evidence-based intervention programs regarding characteristics of effective implementation and sus-

tainability factors. Responses indicated that a well-developed school team and school leadership was a vital aspect of intervention establishment (Forman et al. 2009). Specifically, Forman et al. (2009) noted intervention developers felt it was critical for the “principal to be a good manager, to be the instructional leader in their school, and to show they care about the success of the intervention” (p. 31). Considering the significant and substantial change that occurs in school environments when implementing SWPBIS, it is logical that school leaders are actively engaged catalysts leading the process.

Hubbuck and Stucker (2015) discussed SWPBIS implementation practices directed at school administrators. Hubbuck and Stucker (2015) theorized the shared experience of all parties involved in the SWPBIS process is a valuable component. This finding supports the critical requirement of a collaborative team; “Given the importance of team leadership to the sustainability of a PBIS initiative, it’s essential to prioritize time for team building during professional development” (Hubbuck & Stucker, 2015, p. 44). In addition to this, Hubbuck and Stucker (2015) explored the use of social media communication to engage and expand the school community, share information and support the SWPBIS model through online networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and blogs dedicated to PBIS sharing and learning (p. 43). Hubbuck and Stucker (2015) shared the important role social media has played for sustained SWPBIS and recommended, “social media should be embraced as a powerful tool to build capacity and improve practice” (p. 43). School teams should invest energy into developing their capacity with social media.

The literature presented consistently illustrates a high need for principal engagement and action in the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS. The general involvement of principals, through communication and organization practices leading to supported and effective teaming, are the primary aspects required for success. School leadership that involves engaged, ongoing, professional learning and focuses on developing school personnel can positively affect the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS.

Instructional Leadership Attributes Supporting SWPBIS

The literature review will conclude with studies that provide key attributes of an instructional leadership framework that facilitates school leadership required for SWPBIS. Burns (1978) stated, “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2). Principals implementing and sustaining SWPBIS must possess leadership characteristics that contribute to collaborative professional learning.

A key characteristic of instructional leadership is the commitment to ongoing professional learning. A group of educational professionals working collectively towards a precise goal, using data to direct decision-making, and being supported by the principal, is vital to the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS.

Collaboration and vision. Horng and Loeb (2010) researched instructional leader qualities that go beyond teaching and learning, to include an organizational management focus. Horng and Loeb (2010) surveyed and observed 800 principals, 1100 assistant principals, and 32000 teachers in three large urban school districts from coast to coast. Researchers found that student growth and achievement were consistently evident in schools with principals who exhibited strong organizational management (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Additionally, Horng and Loeb (2010) noted principals who “develop a working environment in which teachers have access to the support they need” (p. 69) sustained effective instruction long-term, the central goal of SWPBIS (Sailor, Dunlap, Sugai, & Horner, 2009). Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) agreed a correlation exists between vigorous professional learning communities, collaboration, and student achievement in schools. Organizational management and collaborative high impact professional learning in schools implementing SWPBIS emphasizes collective growth and shared vision, consistent with instructional leadership. (Sailor, Dunlap, Sugai, & Horner, n.d.)

O’Donnell and White (2005) analyzed the relationship between principals’ instructional leadership behaviour and student achievement. O’Donnell and White (2005) carried out their work by employing the use of Hallinger’s (1987) Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale for teachers and princi-

pals and comparing student achievement data for 75 Pennsylvania public middle schools. A significant finding of the study was that teachers' perceptions of principal behaviour directed towards improving school climate was a predictor of student achievement (O'Donnell & White, 2005).

An important issue emerging from these findings is the need for collaborative communication between teachers and principals; "this process will enable principals to learn teacher perspectives and improve essential aspects of principal instructional leadership" (O'Donnell & White, 2005, p. 64). Communication is a core feature of instructional leadership and essential for successful SWPBIS implementation and sustainability.

Şişman (2016) conducted a meta-analysis study, including 67 studies aimed at identifying common factors of effective instructional leaders using the Instructional Leadership Behaviors and Administrators Scale designed by Şişman (2004). Şişman (2016) found principals who exhibited high levels of instructional leadership characteristics had positive outcomes on student achievement. The previous literature purposed that administrator involvement and collaboration with teachers have the greatest positive impact on implementing and sustaining SWPBIS. Şişman (2016) supported the hypothesis of the presence of a collaborative vision stating, "Leadership consists of the behaviors in which teachers are considered important, they are listened to and their interests are taken into consideration" (p. 1779). Therefore, it is essential for school leaders who are determined to make school-wide changes of this magnitude to collaborate with teachers.

Building on Şişman's (2016) research of the importance of collaboration, McIntosh et al. (2016) examined the qualities of 10 principals across eight US states and British Columbia, Canada who were initially opposed to implementing SWPBIS, then experienced a shift and currently self-identify as "strong supporters" (p. 102) of the model. McIntosh et al. (2016) conducted interviews focused on principal experiences of support. McIntosh et al. (2016) theorized that features of principal experiences, networking, and collaboration would influence their level of support for or against SWPBIS practices. McIntosh et al.'s (2016) work confirmed the positive results collaboration could have on principal feelings toward implementing SWPBIS. Principals in the study reported that the most significant factor contributing to the positive change was the opportunity to learn from other administrators, closely followed by networking and communicating with other administrators implementing SWPBIS (McIntosh et al., 2016).

In addition to these, McIntosh et al. (2016) noted principals were more likely to support SWPBIS when they engaged in the professional training opportunities and ongoing SWPBIS team meetings. Şişman (2016) and McIntosh et al. (2016) found principals engaging in collaborative communities that were aimed at sharing experiences reported positive outcomes.

Communication. Communication between school administration teams and the larger school community is foundational to instructional leadership. Blasé and Blasé (1999) studied teachers' perspectives of principals' instructional leadership behaviours; data from over 800 US teachers were analyzed. Researchers aimed to isolate characteristics of instructional leadership perceived to have the highest influence on teacher practice. Two themes emerged: principals engaging in communication intended for reflection and principals who encouraged professional development had a significant impact on instructional practices (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). The data outlined instructional leadership communication-based strategies that encourage reflection were beneficial, such as, "Making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling, using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions from teachers, and giving praise" (Blasé & Blasé, 1999, p. 367). In this way, ongoing, regular communication between school leaders and teachers has the potential to build relationship and capacity that leads to positive outcomes.

In a similar way, Lineburg (2012) analyzed and identified the leadership behaviours of principals who demonstrated a strong influence on improving teacher instruction. Lineburg (2012) surveyed principals and teachers throughout the US and found an influential characteristic of instructional leadership was principals' constant communication with teachers. The most effective principals regularly communicated school goals, frequently visited classrooms, and held feedback conferences with teachers aimed at increasing reflection and professional improvement (Lineburg, 2012).

The research of Blasé and Blasé (1999) and Lineburg (2012) demonstrated the need for instructional leaders to participate in regular ongoing dialogue with teachers for improvement. Bambara et al. (2009) indicated principals in SWPBIS schools who fail to provide time for meetings intended to cultivate discussions and engage in data-based decision making will find sustainability of SWPBIS challenging. Furthermore, Bambara et al. (2009) recommended school administrators exhibit an optimistic attitude toward PBIS practices and communicate this by incorporating SWPBIS into the school vision. This example shows instructional leaders implementing strong communication practices would create the ideal conditions for implementing and sustaining SWPBIS.

Professional Development. In the literature on instructional leadership, ongoing professional development frequently appears as a foundational aspect of this model. In their study, Blasé and Blasé (1999) identified effective instructional leaders must develop a school culture that promotes ongoing professional learning. Specifically, Blasé and Blasé (1999) identified collaborative professional development, coaching, and peer observations as mechanisms to improve practice. The researchers insisted that principals must provide regular professional growth opportunities to support teachers; "Effective instructional leadership is embedded in school culture; it is expected and routinely delivered" (Blasé & Blasé, 1999, p. 368). As described previously, the change that occurs in the school environment for the successful implementation of SWPBIS is considerable and will likely be accompanied by professional learning. The research presented suggests that school leaders incorporate ongoing professional development opportunities to obtain optimal results.

Likewise, the research examining the role of the principal in implementing and sustaining SWPBIS holds a similar theory. Professional learning, training seminars, access to professional consults and coaching in addition to learning how to track and manage data effectively are frequently referred to as vital for implementing and sustaining SWPBIS in an array of studies (Bambara et al., 2009; Forman et al., 2009; McIntosh et al., 2013; Mercer et al., 2014). Moreover, McIntosh et al. (2013) noted principals are required to provide support for teacher professional development but may need to develop skills themselves in the area of meeting efficacy and data-driven decision-making strategies.

In addition to professional learning opportunities, Bambara et al. (2009) pointed out the responsibility of principals to provide quality resources necessary for SWPBIS implementation that include fund allocation, organizational resources including time and space for meeting, and human resources like personnel who can provide additional supports.

Urick (2016) examined leadership styles in the context of effective school leadership focused on understanding the impact of the influence between teachers and principals on the topic of instructional leadership. Urick (2016) analyzed data from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey, including responses of over 8000 principals across the US. Urick's (2016) study demonstrated the importance of principals allocating resources for improving student outcomes, showed the connection between influences over resources and shared instructional leadership. In schools, the resources principals identify and fund for professional development dictate and direct learning initiatives (Urick, 2016).

Hallinger and Wang (2015) discussed the obligation of principals to assess instructional leadership practices. They suggested Hallinger's (1983) "Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), a rating instrument used for assessing the instructional leadership of principals" (p. 25). This tool provides feedback for instructional leaders that will indicate areas for growth and improvement (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Hallinger and Wang (2015) indicated the need for principals to engage in the supervising and evaluating of instruction while also providing supports to actualize school initiatives and goals. In the context of SWPBIS, it has been deemed critical for principals and school teams to continuously assess practices and fidelity of implementation (Sailor et al., 2009).

Despite the evidence supporting the significance of professional development for SWPBIS, Yeung et al. (2016) indicated that professional development alone might not equate long-term SWPBIS sustainability. Professional development for initial implementation is key; however, ongoing support and assistance yield sustained school initiatives (Yeung et al., 2016).

This literature review set out to explore how if at all, instructional leadership theory might be advantageous for principals implementing and sustaining SWPBIS. The literature examined SWPBIS in the current context, principal role, and essential factors of instructional leadership, leading to high impact. The literature indicates that specific characteristics of instructional leadership practices have the potential to guide school administrators in the implementation of SWPBIS. In addition, principals exhibiting attributes of the instructional leadership framework with fidelity will contribute to SWPBIS sustainability.

Implications

Implications for Practice

The research in the area of SWPBIS effectiveness is vast. In reference to the questions asked for this literature review, some common themes emerged. In regards to the first question, which asked what the literature says about the effectiveness of SWPBIS in the current context of education, researchers agree that SWPBIS has positive outcomes for students. However, a challenge arising is the measurement of student outcomes and achievement. For example, in one study, the primary data source for student outcomes was the number of office referrals documented (Bradshaw et al., 2010). The findings of this study were promising because data demonstrated the number of office referrals decreased over the five-year assessment period (Bradshaw et al., 2010). As discussed previously, the importance of authentic data collection is prominent in the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS.

The limiting factors shared included observations of a supplemental program aimed at student supports, not included in the study, and the fact that schools volunteered to participate in hopes of engaging in high-quality training (Bradshaw et al., 2010). The fact that participants volunteered suggests that schools in the study had a previous desire to address student behaviour outcomes using SWPBIS. The desire to develop professionally combined with a common goal to achieve positive student results could affect office referrals. Carefully constructed criteria for the process of office referrals may help to mitigate the risk of inaccurate data.

In a similar study, Menendez et al. (2008) used reading scores in addition to office referrals to measure the effects of SWPBIS implementation in a yearlong study of 652 kindergarten to grade three students located in North Texas. Menendez et al. (2008) like Bradshaw et al. (2010), found a reduction in office referrals and positive effects on grade three reading scores. While the results are encouraging, Menendez et al. (2008) revealed that variables such as parental involvement and specialized literacy support in terms of tutoring for “students who were at risk of performing poorly on the TAAS” (p. 461) were not measured. The implications for practice, in this case, would be to ensure quality data tracking systems and professional development for effective use in schools. McIntosh et al. (2013) found “Team Use of Data” (p. 306) to be one of the greatest indicators for SWPBIS implementation fidelity. School divisions implementing SWPBIS might consider using a universal data tracking and management system to benchmark and track progress of student outcomes.

With respect to the second question, which examined the role of principals in implementing and sustaining SWPBIS, it is clear that perspectives agree. Principals have a substantial impact on implementing and sustaining school-wide initiatives and SWPBIS is not an exception (Andreou et al., 2015; Forman et al., n.d.; Kincaid et al., 2007; Langley et al., 2010). Pinkelman et al. (2015) captured respondents’ reference to a principal’s role in implementing SWPBIS by saying, “Administrative support is the most crucial part if PBIS will be effective. Without it, no matter how hard the team will try to change things, it will not work” (p. 175). The implication, in this case, is straightforward; principals must experience an alignment with their personal views and the core values of SWPBIS (Horner & Sugai, 2015).

Pinkelman et al. (2015) proposed school divisions consider embedding SWPBIS values into the hiring process as a strategy designed at increasing supportive administrator numbers. Furthermore, researchers insisted that developing principal capacity was a worthwhile endeavor, including training,

data-based decision-making processes, and school division teaming (Coffey & Horner, 2012; McIntosh et al., 2016; Mercer et al., 2014).

In spite of the significance of school principals' influence, as evident in the literature, Wilson (2015) cautioned the heavy emphasis on individual administrator values. Wilson (2015) analyzed the sociocultural facets of mental health in the context of SWPBIS, responding to Horner and Sugai (2015). Wilson (2015) warned the "top-down systemic approach" (p. 92) could result in PBIS core practices conveying administrators' behavioural expectations, rather than reflecting the student body. Wilson (2015) proposed principals "acknowledge the sociocultural differences between educators, administrators, and the student body" (p. 93), followed by collaborative development of "culturally appropriate pro-social behaviors to identify as school-wide rules" (p. 93). It may be the case that cultural responsiveness is an understated aspect of SWPBIS; on the other hand, considerable attention to this will lead to successful implementation and sustainability.

Lastly, the third question presented examined whether the instructional leadership style is advantageous for principals implementing and sustaining SWPBIS. The findings suggest the instructional leadership model contains attributes that align with what the literature suggests leads to successful implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS. The research outlines the significant role principals have in the process of implementation and factors that promote enduring sustainability. This information implies that principals currently acting as instructional leaders in schools have the capacity to enhance academic curricula for improved emotional, social, and behaviour outcomes leading to improved school culture and, ultimately, higher levels of achievement. Institutions of higher education can reflect on the ways the instructional leadership model can benefit the social, emotional, and behavioural needs of students using SWPBIS practices and challenge future school leaders to rethink the curriculum.

Implications for Research

The review of literature in this meta-synthesis demonstrates a need for future research. Considerable research in the area of the effectiveness of SWPBIS and the vital need for strong school leadership exists; however, the Canadian context, including culturally responsive SWPBIS practices are limited. McIntosh (2014) reviewed examples of SWPBIS in the Canadian perspective and acknowledged the potential for SWPBIS implementation that addresses cultural aspects of Indigenous students.

Further research should be done to investigate the ways SWPBIS can be adapted to meet the cultural identities and perspectives of students globally. In addition to this, the literature reveals some gaps in studies examining the methods of school administrators who implement culturally responsive school-wide guidelines for positive behaviour supports. On the second note, perhaps special attention should be given to understanding the protocol of principals who do not reflect the same sociocultural background as the student body.

Another important finding emerging from this study is the need for a universal data model intended to provide authentic data collection, analysis, and a decision-making framework for schools and school divisions. As the research suggested, using data is a critical component of SWPBIS and required to address the needs of students. Providing such a tool could assist school divisions with allocating resources to schools with higher levels of need. Additionally, accurate data is an asset for principals planning professional development supporting school goals. As a result of this literature review, it is apparent that a greater emphasis on the use of data for the implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS is necessary.

Conclusion

This paper set out to analyze the efficacy of SWPBIS for optimized learning environments in the current context of schools. More importantly, gaining an understanding of effective school leadership models for implementing and sustaining SWPBIS was essential. By conducting an investigative review of the literature, clarification on aspects of the topic was achieved. It is apparent that SWPBIS is a system of change and proactive adaptation that meets the needs of students and has the potential to become

the foundation of culturally responsive practices. Additionally, the research indicates school leaders are cornerstones in the processes leading to long-lasting systemic change.

Finally, it appears several key components of the instructional leadership model lend themselves to SWPBIS implementation and sustainability. Leaders with a desire to take measures in developing proactive solutions to meet diverse student needs can turn to the instructional leadership framework for guidance. Teaching and learning is the underpinning of every interaction and action in schools, and leaders must be prepared to lead. Sergiovanni (1996) said it best, "The essence of leadership is, after all, action" (p. 97). Schools are in need of and ready for positive change, growth, and development; it is time to act.

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Response to Intervention in a First Nations School Context

Jonathon Kaiswatum

Abstract

Reading skills are essential to the success of students in school. Like anything else taught in school, students learn reading skills at different rates. There are many interventions for students who struggle to learn these skills. Response to Intervention (RTI) is a tiered system that was developed to identify and help students with learning and behavioural difficulties. When correctly implemented, RTI delivers interventions to students who are struggling with reading in an effort to get them back on track with where they are supposed to be. This paper provides a framework that administrators in First Nations schools can use when implementing RTI to address the needs of struggling readers. The goal of this paper is to encourage administrators in First Nations schools to implement RTI to enhance reading skills to ensure the overall success of First Nations students.

Purpose Statement

Currently, there is limited research on how First Nations schools implement Response to Intervention (RTI). With that, comes even less information regarding administrator involvement in the RTI process in First Nations schools. Robinson et al.(2008) indicated that administrators establish the conditions for teachers to make a direct impact on students. The purpose of this paper is to develop a framework for administrators in First Nations schools to support the RTI process adequately. By giving an overview of RTI, outlining the role of the administrator in the process in other schools, and examining the benefits of it, the research question and sub-questions will be answered. In doing so, a framework for administrators in First Nations schools to adequately support the RTI process will be developed.

Research Questions

1. How can administrators in First Nations schools adequately support the RTI process?
2. What is RTI?
3. What is the role of the administrator in the RTI process?
4. How do the benefits of RTI help with the issue of lack of resources that exists in First Nations schools?

Significance

RTI has increased in application since its inception (Hughes & Dexter, 2011). The three-tiered structure of RTI models can be applied to any school context or curricular area, including literacy, numeracy, and behaviour. RTI has been implemented in schools in the United States to address concerns of students having equitable access to education, including students from different cultural backgrounds and students with learning disabilities (Stuart et al., 2011). First Nations schools in Canada are under-resourced due to lack of funding (Montour, 2010). Thus, First Nations schools in Canada share similar concerns with the schools in which RTI was first implemented in the United States. The benefits of RTI will be examined in developing a framework for administrators in First Nations schools to adequately

support the RTI process. The significance of this paper is to encourage administrators in First Nations schools to apply RTI to their contexts in an effort to improve overall learning outcomes for First Nations students.

Researcher Positionality

In my current role as Principal of Cowessess Community Educational Centre (CCEC), I am in a position to support the RTI process to address the needs of struggling readers. However, I want to be sure that I have a strong understanding of the process before taking on this initiative. By gaining this understanding, the role of the administrator in the process of RTI will be uncovered. Knowing this will allow me to better support the initiative at CCEC. That is why I chose RTI as the topic for my capstone paper.

Research Methods

When gathering literature for this capstone paper, the following search terms were used: "Response to Intervention," "Instructional Leadership," and "Indigenous Educational Leadership Canada." The Boolean operator of "OR" was used with the search terms. The databases used to search these terms were Educational Resources Information Centre (Ovid) (ERIC) and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. These search terms, along with the Boolean operator, brought forward literature that was instrumental in answering the research question and sub-questions.

Limitations

Although plenty of research exists on RTI, the research provided limited information on how parents are involved in the process. The information that pertained to parental involvement communicated the importance of keeping parents informed. However, next to no information was provided with respect to strategies that parents can use to support RTI in the home environment. Thus, limited information was provided in this paper regarding the fundamental aspect of home support in the RTI process.

As well, the majority of the research that exists on RTI are from American sources. This is due to the fact that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) supports the implementation of RTI in schools in the United States (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009). The research provided very few Canadian sources with respect to RTI. With that, comes almost no information regarding how RTI can be implemented in First Nations schools. However, the research provided information that pertains to RTI implementation in schools in the United States shares similar concerns as First Nations schools in Canada. This information provided context as to how First Nations schools can have success when implementing RTI.

Literature Review

Overview of Response to Intervention

IDEA was signed into law in the United States in 2004 (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). IDEA supports high quality, scientifically-based instruction, and interventions, as well as ensuring that schools are accountable for students meeting grade-level standards (Stuart et al., 2011). RTI methods are a significant component of IDEA and have garnered a lot of attention since IDEA was enacted (Canter et al., 2008). As a result of RTI being incorporated into legislation, more and more schools in the United States are implementing RTI into practice (Hughes & Dexter, 2011).

RTI is a three-tiered structure designed to support struggling readers (Hughes & Dexter, 2011). Stuart and Rinaldi (2009) explained, "A tiered system is an educational model that delineates three or more levels of instructional interventions based on gaps in student skills" (p. 52). The interventions

become more intense as students move across the tiers (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). It is effective in that it helps students who are struggling in the general education setting before they are referred to and placed in special education (Canter et al., 2008). Within each tier, student progress is closely monitored to determine the required instruction. RTI is an intervention designed to be used until it is no longer needed (Johnson, 2017).

Tier 1. The majority of RTI models refer to Tier 1 as classroom instruction provided by the general education teacher. However, the instruction delivered in Tier 1 must be scientifically validated in order for it to fit within the scope of RTI (Fuchs & Deshler, 2007). Fuchs and Deshler (2007) indicated, "Scientifically validated refers to a process of experimentation by which the importance of an instructional procedure or curriculum has been tested" (p. 131). It is imperative that the scientifically validated instruction delivered is practical and effective (Johnson, 2017). Equally important is that it must be delivered by teachers proficient in reading instruction, as they are responsible for teaching both the curriculum and intervention. These teachers generally have a strong understanding of theories, research, assessment, and instruction related to literacy (Johnson, 2017).

Although there are no methods of instruction that have been validated for use with all students struggling in reading, there are methods that have proven successful (Fuchs & Deshler, 2007). Some of them include: increasing reading volume of level-appropriate material, writing daily to convey ideas, group reading lessons, phonics instruction, and repeated reading (Johnson, 2017). Because these methods have proven to be effective, they are commonly used within Tier 1 of RTI. Furthermore, scientifically validated instruction eliminates inadequate instruction as a reason for lack of progress (Hughes & Dexter, 2011).

When RTI is implemented, all students in the general education classroom begin in Tier 1 and are screened using various benchmarks. This process is referred to as universal screening. Hughes and Dexter (2011) stated, "Universal screening is typically conducted three times per school year, in the fall, winter, and spring" (p. 6). It is used to determine whether or not students are responding to the scientifically based instruction provided in Tier 1 by the general education teacher (Johnson, 2017). The three components of universal screening are establishing a baseline, goal setting, and progress monitoring (Averill et al., 2014). The baseline provides the students' current reading level. Setting goals provides a long-range plan for students throughout the school year. Lastly, progress is monitored to determine if students are benefitting from Tier 1 or if they need further interventions. Universal screening is usually completed by the general education teacher.

Tier 2. Students who are unresponsive to the scientifically validated instruction offered in Tier 1 are moved to Tier 2. This need is determined using benchmarks that are established by the school (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012). In Tier 2, more targeted interventions are provided to students who are struggling with reading (Stuart et al., 2011). Tier 2 interventions build upon the scientifically validated instruction provided in Tier 1. Interventions in Tier 2 focus on specific skills (e.g., reading comprehension) that students need to improve in reading (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012).

Canter et al. (2008) indicated, "Specific interventions are designed and delivered as needed, often in small-group contexts, and students' progress is measured frequently" (p. 2). Interventions in Tier 2 are usually delivered to a small group of students and are led by the classroom teacher or a knowledgeable paraprofessional (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012). Typically, Tier 2 group interventions take place outside of the general education setting (Johnson, 2017). To be effective, groups should meet at least 3 days a week for a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of 45 minutes (Johnson, 2017). Groups can be made up of students in different grades.

Data collection is used to inform decision making within each tier of RTI (Averill et al., 2014). As a part of this data collection, progress monitoring is used to inform instruction in Tier 2 (Johnson, 2017). Progress monitoring consists of assessments that are used to decide whether or not students are meeting their long-term goals (Stecker et al., 2008). Assessments that measure fluency, word identification, and comprehension should be used for progress monitoring in Tier 2 (Johnson, 2017). Assessments should

be brief and easily administered to ensure effectiveness (Hughes & Dexter, 2011). This process should occur at least monthly within Tier 2.

Along with informing instruction in Tier 2, progress monitoring also generates information that determines program placement decisions for students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). If a student is responsive to Tier 2 interventions, they are moved back to Tier 1. Conversely, if they are unresponsive to Tier 2 interventions, they are moved to Tier 3.

Tier 2 interventions are not meant to replace the scientifically validated instruction offered by the general education teacher in Tier 1. They are intended to supplement it. Students who receive targeted interventions in Tier 2 continue to receive the scientifically validated instruction in Tier 1 from the general education teacher. The goal of Tier 2 is to build on the Tier 1 interventions as much as possible (Johnson, 2017).

Tier 3. Students who demonstrate minimal progress, or are unresponsive to Tier 2 interventions altogether, are provided with Tier 3 interventions (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2010). Averill et al. (2014) indicated, “Tier 3 involves the application of individualized, intensive instructional interventions provided daily that are designed to increase the rate of student progress” (p. 30). Interventions in Tier 3 are validated instructional approaches that supplement the instruction provided in Tiers 1 and 2 (Averill et al., 2014). The goal is to improve skills that students need to improve in reading and, at the same time, build on Tier 1 and 2 interventions as much as possible.

Tier 3 interventions are often mistaken for special education; however, that is not the case, as RTI was explicitly designed to prevent students from entering special education (Johnson, 2017). Students do not have to qualify for special education to receive Tier 3 interventions. In this tier, interventions are delivered to individual students or in very small groups. This approach is to maximize opportunities for direct instruction. IDEA recommends that the general education teacher provides as much of the intervention in Tier 3 as possible (Johnson, 2017). However, interventions in Tier 3 may also be delivered by an intervention specialist or even a special education teacher. Nonetheless, it is expected that teachers providing Tier 3 interventions be proficient in reading instruction (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2010). Students who are unresponsive to Tier 3 interventions should be referred for testing to see if they qualify for special education (Johnson, 2017).

RTI addresses reading difficulties before they arise and can be implemented for all students, regardless of age. It is not reliant on special education funding or requirements and can be undertaken as a school-wide initiative. Because it is founded on scientifically validated instruction and progress monitoring, it can reduce the number of students who require special education. It is important to remember that RTI is not meant to be used as a curriculum. It is an intervention that is meant to supplement the curriculum in place. Please refer to Appendix A for a visual representation of the three tiers of RTI (Alberta Education, 2018).

The Role of the Administrator in Response to Intervention

Instructional leadership is a leadership style that entails determining goals to guide practice, offering expertise in curriculum and instruction, and promoting a positive school climate (Gawlik, 2018). It is a relatively new concept in education. The origins of instructional leadership stem from studies undertaken in the 1970s and 80s of schools in low-class, urban centres where students achieved high rates of success (Edmonds, 1979). Bossert et al. (1982) concluded that instructional leadership was strong in these schools because a) they fostered a learning environment free from disruption, b) learning outcomes were clear, and c) teachers’ expectations for students were high. In these studies, it was assumed that the primary role of a school administrator was instructional leadership (Robinson et al., 2008). However, these studies did not clearly define what effective instructional leaders do (Gawlik, 2018).

More recent studies on instructional leadership focus on the actions of administrators as instructional leaders and how these actions influence outcomes (Gawlik, 2018). These studies have concluded that instructional leadership has been found to positively impact student outcomes (Robinson et al., 2008). Furthermore, it was found that the manner in which administrators carried out the practice of

instructional leadership is dependent on school context (Rigby, 2014). Braun et al. (2011) grouped context into four categories: situated (setting), professional (policy), material (infrastructure), and external (school board). These contexts drive instructional leadership practices. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the administrator to understand how these contexts apply to their own setting in order to implement instructional leadership strategies (Gawlik, 2018) effectively.

Early research assumed that the administrator was solely responsible for instructional leadership (Robinson et al., 2008). However, recent research has indicated that administrators and teachers are beginning to share this responsibility. Marks and Printy (2003) stated:

shared instructional leadership involves the active collaboration of principals and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Within this model, the principal seeks out the ideas, insights, and expertise of teachers in these areas and works with teachers for school improvement. (p. 371)

This notion allows teachers to become stakeholders in their curricular and instructional development (Marks & Printy, 2003). Thus, instructional leadership becomes a shared responsibility, with the administrator being the “leader of instructional leaders” (Glickman, 1989, p. 6).

Fostering teacher collaboration is reflective of shared instructional leadership. Moolenaar et al. (2012) expressed that teacher collaboration enhances teacher practice, which in turn improves student achievement. Furthermore, teacher collaboration is essential to overall school improvement (Datnow et al., 2013). More recently, schools and districts have begun the process of placing teachers into collaborative groups to engage in data-driven decision making (DDDM) (Datnow et al., 2013). DDDM refers to the process in which administrators and teachers gather and analyze data to make decisions for school improvement (Ikemoto & Marsh, 2007). Regarding DDDM, Datnow et al. (2013) indicated, “The theory is that by working together, teachers will be able to assist each other in making sense of the data, engage in joint action planning, and share instructional strategies” (p. 342). DDDM is a process that fosters teacher collaboration.

Another process that fosters teacher collaboration is engaging in professional learning communities (PLCs). The process allows teachers to gather for the purposes of reflecting on their practice (Stoll et al., 2006). Furthermore, research from Dufour and Eaker (1998) characterized a professional learning community as a school with: a shared mission, vision, and values, a process of collective inquiry, a structure of collaborative teams, an orientation toward action and experimentation, a commitment to continuous improvement, and ongoing assessment of results. Lastly, when professional learning communities have a strong focus on instruction, their likelihood of effectiveness increases (Saunders et al., 2009).

The model of DDDM and a PLC can be used to enhance progress monitoring and collaborative practices, respectively, within RTI. They are models that foster teacher collaboration and, looking at the bigger picture, are reflective of shared instructional leadership. A general overview of these practices and how they are utilized in shared instructional leadership was provided to enhance the practices that are adopted within RTI.

Fostering collaboration in response to intervention. RTI is a process that requires teachers to collaborate regularly. This collaboration time helps drive the process of RTI and ensures that schools address the needs of struggling readers (Rinaldi & Stuart, 2009). Canter et al. (2008) stated, “Interventions are carried out by individual teachers, but the process requires team decision making and sharing expertise” (p. 13). Stuart and Rinaldi (2009) presented a collaborative framework that includes three phases: instructional planning, execution, and feedback. These elements will be elaborated upon in this next section of the paper.

In order for the instructional planning phase of the framework to be carried out, grade level teams must be established. Once in place, it is their responsibility to determine specific areas of reading difficulty that students in their levels are experiencing (Stuart & Rinaldi, 2009). As well, grade level teams can help with finding interventions that support scientifically validated instruction (Stuart & Rinaldi, 2009). Lastly, grade level teams can be responsible for identifying and monitoring students that are

at risk for requiring Tier 2 and 3 interventions (Stuart & Rinaldi, 2009). These are only a few of the responsibilities that grade level teams can undertake. Regardless, the main focus of grade level teams is to drive the instructional planning phase of the framework.

The execution phase of the framework refers to the process of establishing goals for students receiving Tier 2 and 3 interventions based on data that was collected through screening and progress monitoring (Stuart & Rinaldi, 2009). It is called execution because instructional strategies are implemented based on the goals that are established for the students. This stage ensures that all teachers use scientifically validated instruction and that interventions are based on data (Stuart & Rinaldi, 2009).

The feedback phase is the last part of the framework and refers to the evaluation of the interventions (Stuart & Rinaldi, 2009). The grade level teams typically provide the evaluations. In this phase, data from progress monitoring is analyzed to see if students have improved in reading. This data is used to determine the appropriate interventions for students. The feedback phase also lets the grade level teams know if the goals that were established in the execution phase need to be adjusted (Stuart & Rinaldi, 2009).

The collaborative framework presented by Stuart and Rinaldi (2009) provides the foundation for ensuring that all students have equitable access to scientifically validated instruction while addressing the needs of at-risk students. Collaboration is an essential part of the RTI process and can only occur with support from the school administrator. Further, collaboration must be provided long-term for teachers to develop the ability to problem solve in groups (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009). For teachers to share effective literacy strategies in collaborative groups, they must learn them first through professional development (Stuart & Rinaldi, 2009). Providing teachers with opportunities to engage in professional development that focuses on literacy strategies is another responsibility of the school administrator.

Any initiative that seeks to create positive change within a school needs to be supported by the administrator in order for it to produce its desired result (Robinson et al., 2008). RTI is no different and the most effective way for administrators to support the process of RTI is to be knowledgeable of and able to promote scientifically validated instruction, collaborative processes, and progress monitoring practices (Canter et al., 2008).

The Benefits of Response to Intervention

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), previously known as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), provides funding to every First Nation in Canada. This funding is for the overall operation of the First Nation. Included in this funding are monies for education. The amount of money that each First Nation gets for education is based on that First Nations' nominal roll. Wilke (2008) explained:

The nominal roll is an annual census of Indian students living on reserve and attending an elementary/high school, whose education is being funded by the federal government either directly or indirectly and was the method used by INAC to establish the elementary and secondary education budgets in the various regions of Canada. The nominal roll was, thus, a census, and the census date is either September 30 or the last school day in the month of September. (p. 94)

Each First Nations' nominal roll is different; thus, each First Nation gets a different amount of funding for education. Further, each First Nation's nominal roll fluctuates from year to year, which leads to funding changes from year to year. Nominal roll significantly impacts funding for First Nations education (Wilke, 2008).

Regardless of the nominal roll, First Nations schools remain underfunded in comparison to Provincial education systems (First Nations Education Council, 2009). This underfunding is due to the fact that the formula used to fund First Nations education is outdated. First Nations Education Council (2009) explained, "For the 515 First Nations schools in Canada, funding needs are determined by INAC using a national funding formula that was developed in 1987 and last updated in 1996 for appropriate population and living costs" (p. 12). Because the funding formula used by ISC is outdated, First Nations schools have failed to produce an education system equivalent to provincial systems. Even more alarm-

ing is the fact that the funding formula that ISC uses to fund First Nations schools is not sustainable for any education system, period (First Nations Education Council, 2009).

It is clear that ISC needs to update its funding formula for First Nations schools. As long as it is kept in place, First Nations education will continue to underachieve. Further, an increase in funding would not only lessen the gap between First Nation and Provincial education systems, it would also lead to improved outcomes for students who attend First Nations schools. Moreover, it would ensure that First Nations children get equal rights to education like every other child in Canada.

Using the wraparound approach to support response to intervention. With a lack of funding, comes a lack of resources for First Nations schools. The process of RTI effectively maximizes resources within schools. One of the benefits of RTI is the wraparound approach it provides within the school in which it is being implemented. Walker et al. (2011) indicated, “Wraparound emerged in the early 1980s as a collaborative, team-based planning approach to providing community-based care for children and youth” (p. 30). In order for RTI to be effective, all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, and community) need to collaborate (Murawski & Hughes, 2009). The wraparound approach is applied to the following three areas of RTI: enhancing scientifically validated instruction, collaborative processes, and progress monitoring practices.

Scientifically validated instruction is provided by the general education teacher to meet the needs of all students (Fuchs & Deshler, 2007). Buffum and Mattos (2009) explained, “Schools must first ensure that exceptional and committed teachers are delivering research-based core programs as intended and using classwide formative assessment data to identify emerging areas of need” (p. 74). Ensuring that scientifically validated instruction is being delivered to students in RTI is the responsibility of the general education teacher. However, it is up to the administrator to hold the general education teacher accountable for carrying out this instruction. Further, the grade level teams and the administrator are responsible for providing the general education teacher with strategies to enhance scientifically validated instruction in Tier 1. Suffice it to say, the delivery of scientifically validated instruction cannot happen in isolation. It can only occur when the general education teacher, administrator, and grade level teams utilize the wraparound approach to enhance the effectiveness of this area of RTI.

Collaborative processes are an essential component of RTI. They occur throughout the process of RTI and allow grade level teams time to work toward a common goal (Buffum & Mattos, 2009). As mentioned previously, collaboration can only occur with support from the administrator. This approach requires the administrator to make collaboration a priority when implementing RTI. Further, once this time is provided, it is the responsibility of the grade level teams to ensure that this time is being used efficiently. To make the best use of collaboration time, grade level teams must determine what they want their students to learn (Buffum & Mattos, 2009). This information is provided based on the data that is collected through progress monitoring in each tier of RTI. Being that grade level teams are made up of teachers, and both support and special education staff, the wraparound approach must be applied to collaborative processes for them to serve their purpose.

Progress monitoring practices occur within each tier of RTI. They are typically carried out using universal screening and provide data regarding student achievement in reading (Hughes & Dexter, 2011). This data is then used to determine the appropriate interventions for students. In Tier 1, the general education teacher screens students to determine if they require more intensive intervention. In Tiers 2 and 3, students are screened by both the general education teacher and support and special education staff. Screening occurs more frequently as students move across the tiers (Buffum & Mattos, 2009). Crucial to the success of RTI is the communication of data from progress monitoring practices amongst all stakeholders in the process. The wraparound approach is an effective way to communicate this information to those stakeholders.

The resources that general education teachers, support, and special education staff, and administrators utilize to carry out the process of RTI are the same. Thus, resource sharing occurs within RTI. However, this resource sharing cannot occur without the utilization of the wraparound approach. This

approach allows the process of RTI to maximize resources within the school of implementation. As such, RTI can help with the issue of the lack of resources that First Nations schools face.

Decrease in special education referrals. The end goal of RTI is to get students on track with where they are supposed to be academically. The interventions delivered in each tier are intended to help with this process. One of the main reasons RTI was designed was to decrease the number of special education referrals (Johnson, 2017). This notion helps with the lack of resources problem that First Nations schools are faced with, as special education testing is not cheap. Furthermore, schools are not required to hire any additional staff to implement RTI. It can be implemented using the existing staff within a school.

Implications

Implications for Research

The purpose and intent of school initiatives should always be communicated to parents. This notion applies to the process of RTI. Canter et al. (2008) explained, "Parents should be invited to information sessions and included on advisory councils to provide input as the design of the RTI program gets underway" (p. 3). However, the reviewed literature provided limited information regarding parental involvement once RTI has been implemented. The studies that cited parental involvement focused on keeping parents informed. Canter et al. (2008) indicated, "Parent involvement at each stage of RTI is important because home-school collaboration is essential to the success of any assessment, intervention, or program modification" (p. 3). None of the studies provided any scientifically validated strategies that parents could implement at home to provide additional support to the interventions in the process of RTI. Information that students learn in school needs to be reinforced in their home environment in order for it to be relevant. In support of this notion, research that provides parents with scientifically validated strategies they can use at home to support the process of RTI needs to be completed.

Implications for Practice

The literature supports RTI as an effective intervention for struggling readers. However, like any intervention, it takes time, in some instances years, for the results of RTI to come to fruition. As mentioned previously, the formula used to fund First Nations schools is outdated. This underfunding has led First Nations schools to experience challenges. Further, there is no consistency in the amount of funding that First Nations schools receive, as it is based on nominal roll. Moreover, this funding is from year to year, and there is no security in it. One of the challenges with this funding model is that there is no job security for teachers and administrators who work in First Nations schools. Most often, their contracts are for a period of one year, and in some cases, two. This process has made it challenging for First Nations schools to recruit quality teachers and administrators. Even more alarming is the lack of success that First Nations schools experience when it comes to retaining quality teachers and administrators. With such a high teacher and administrator turnover rate, initiatives undertaken by First Nations schools fail to see desirable results because of a lack of consistency in staff assuming responsibility for them. This issue is a detriment to First Nations schools implementing RTI, as it often takes years for the results to come to light in schools where teacher and administrator turnover is not a problem.

In order for First Nations schools to experience maximum success with RTI, a funding model that establishes job security for teachers and administrators who work in those systems needs to be established. This approach will create consistency in staff assuming responsibility for RTI in First Nations schools, which, in turn, will lead to desirable results for all students involved in the initiative.

Conclusion

As education continues to evolve, so does the role of a school administrator. In fact, school administrators have more responsibilities now than ever before. The absence of formal education structures in First Nations education adds to the responsibilities of administrators in First Nations schools. With the

demands of the position, it would be nearly impossible for an administrator in a First Nations school to adequately support RTI based on the traditional model of instructional leadership, where the administrator is the sole instructional leader. Thus, it is crucial for administrators in First Nations schools to use the model of shared instructional leadership to support RTI. This model relies on teachers, support and special education staff, and administrators to collaborate to improve instruction and to become instructional leaders in their own capacity. These are essential components of RTI and will ensure its success in First Nations schools.

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The Golden Rule Revisited: A Literature Review on Teacher Care

Donna Appel

Abstract

This paper presents a detailed discussion regarding the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on immigrant students. As the author searched specifically for information regarding Filipino immigrant students in Saskatchewan, which was sparse, she found that culturally relevant pedagogy, including authentically caring for students, is the path to academic achievement for these group of students. Academic achievement, however, should be a fringe benefit and not the focus of education. The author takes the reader on a journey from discovering the need for culturally relevant education to respond to a changing world, through to creating a classroom community, and finally to developing individual people. Education systems need to develop people who will be global citizens and tackle the problems of the world through critical thinking and social justice. The classroom is changing to include culturally diverse students in rising numbers. Teachers need to view diversity in a positive frame and value the cultural knowledge students are bringing to the classroom. Teachers are to have high expectations and provide opportunities for children to be caring as this is how children learn to care. Teachers need to revisit the Golden Rule, model it themselves, and help children learn this newer and deeper version of the Golden Rule. "Do unto others as you would have them do to you" is tweaked to "do unto others as they would have done to them" and this requires a deep understanding and caring relationship with students.

Purpose of the Study

Educational reformers manipulate specific factors in the school environment with the hope of improving average schools and fixing unsuccessful schools (McEwan, 2003). For example, the Saskatchewan Education Sector Strategic Plan 2014–2020, states specific priorities, outcomes, improvement targets, and enduring strategies to improve education in the province (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018). These enduring strategies include: a culturally relevant and engaging curriculum, differentiated and high-quality instruction, culturally appropriate and authentic assessment, and the inclusion of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit experience, among others (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018). The enduring strategies have common threads of high expectations and caring relationships running through them. This paper will follow the development of culturally responsive teaching and highlight the importance of the ethos of caring for immigrant student achievement. The information gleaned from this study will inform teachers regarding the enduring strategies of the strategic plan and assist principals in helping their students to meet the targets and outcomes of the strategic plan.

Research Questions

Exploring the ethos of caring, this study will attempt to answer the overarching question: What is the influence of 'teacher caring' on immigrant student achievement? The study is guided by the following sub-questions:

- What are the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching?
- What is the perspective of an immigrant student regarding the ideal caring teacher?
- How does the ethos of caring impact an immigrant student's experience?
- How can teachers be prepared to be caring teachers?

Significance of the Study

Canada's population has surpassed 35 million, and two-thirds of the increase is due to increased immigration to Canada (Press, 2017). The 2016 Canadian census predicted, if current trends continue, immigrants and people with at least one parent born outside of Canada could account for almost 50% of Canada's population by 2036 (Statistics Canada, 2017). The prairie provinces recorded the most growth in population in Canada, a feat not accomplished since Confederation (Grenier, 2017). Multicultural classrooms in schools reflect these statistics and indicate the growing ethnic diversity in Canada.

The Philippines were the top source of immigrants in Canada according to the 2016 Canadian census, a trend that has been noteworthy since the 2011 Canadian census (Press, 2017). The 2016 Canadian census reported an increase of 123% since the 2011 census, in the number of people in Saskatchewan speaking the Filipino language, Tagalog ("Saskatchewan's Filipino Community," 2017). In order to help students be academically successful, teachers need to develop culturally responsive interactions with Filipino students, and the many other cultures, now present in classrooms

Researcher Positionality

I am the principal at Drake Elementary School. In this school, situated in a small rural community in central Saskatchewan, the majority of students come from a German Mennonite culture. About one in five of the students attending this elementary school have parents who emigrated from the Philippines. Even this small school reflects the provincial and national trends in immigration, as indicated by the recent (2016) Canadian census. As such, terms like multicultural, culturally relevant, engaging, differentiated, inclusion, and caring relationships have significant meaning and substantial connection to the achievement targets described in the Education Sector Strategic Plan for which I am responsible for in my school. My personal situation combined with my professional responsibility, has led me to investigate the caring actions of teachers or teacher care more deeply.

Research Methods

A thorough investigation of the current knowledge regarding teacher care in a multicultural environment is the foundation of this capstone project. Research focused on primary, peer-reviewed sources dated no earlier than 2012 (except for two articles). I started, however, with some secondary and tertiary sources in order to establish a background for the reader. I explored Google Scholar and used several strategies to narrow the search in the ERIC database. I accomplished the narrowing process by using the Boolean operator, "and," with key words: "culturally relevant education", "teacher-student relationship", "academic achievement", "elementary schools", and "caring". Once procuring several exceptional articles, I mined their resource lists for additional sources. One article even led to contacting the author via email. He invited me to phone him, and after a short conversation, he emailed me his Ph.D. dissertation on which he wrote one of his articles. The search was concluded once I reached saturation point and the articles I was reading were referencing a core group of authors, namely, James Banks, Geneva Gay, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Nel Noddings.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to my research, which has led to identifying gaps in the knowledge. First, most of the literature I reviewed originated in the United States. The gap identified is the need for Canadian studies and, perhaps, studies originating in the province of Saskatchewan. The second limitation includes the subjects of the majority of the studies. Much of the research I read was pertaining to black students or Latino/a students. The gap identified is the need for studies regarding Filipino students since the trend in immigration shows this population growth in Saskatchewan. In fact, when I used the keyword 'Filipino' with the Boolean operator "and" with my other keywords, the search resulted in

very few hits. Nonetheless, the literature review, creatively presented, sheds light on an interesting and current issue, the influence of teacher care on immigrant student achievement.

Literature Review

The literature review begins with a brief history of the failure of schools in the United States and the response of two major educational reforms. One of these reforms led to the development of culturally relevant pedagogy. A description of culturally responsive teaching flows from the pedagogy and includes a description illustrating the characteristics of a caring teacher. As such, this review is grounded in the work of James Banks (multicultural education), Gloria Ladson-Billings (culturally relevant pedagogy), Geneva Gay (culturally responsive teaching), and Nel Noddings (care ethics). From this framework of caring, the philosophy of education is described with special reference to culturally relevant pedagogy to respond to a changing world. Next, the author explores studies discussing creating a caring classroom community that addresses the needs of all students. Lastly, the author describes the caring teacher; as a principal, she is the one developing individual people to navigate the changing world. In this manner, the information presented comes full circle, narrowing from a global view, to the classroom, and to a single student. The immigrant student's perspective is demonstrated through the presentation of current studies and results in the synthesis of the characteristics of a caring teacher. Through the synthesis of the information, including studies highlighting caring relationships, immigrant student achievement is connected to teacher caring.

Tracing Multicultural Education

As a response to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and commissioned by the president of the United States of America (USA), J.S. Coleman published a report in 1966 on the lack of equity education in schools based on race, color, or religion in America. One of Coleman's (1966) findings was "whatever may be the combination of non-school factors — poverty, community attitudes, low educational level of parents — which put minority children at a disadvantage in verbal and nonverbal skills when they enter the first grade, the fact is the schools have not overcome it" (p. 21). In other words, schools were not adequately serving minority children. It seemed there was a direct relationship between minority children and an achievement gap in education. A cultural deprivation explanation emerged from the research at this time to explain that socialization experiences in their homes and communities were thwarting the potential of students to achieve at school, which prevented them from attaining the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be successful (Banks, 2004a). Blamed for their own fate, the lack of achievement of minority children focused on social class and poverty.

Later, other researchers began looking at schools that were successful, in spite of these conditions, in order to see what was working. These investigations were the origin of two paths of research, the effective schools theory and the cultural difference theory. The definition of effective schools was stated by Ron Edmonds, a leading spokesman in the 1970s, as a school bringing disadvantaged (poor) children to the same achievement level as middle-class children in the basic school skills of numeracy and literacy (Lezotte, 2004). The effective school movement focused on the school system and structure, putting forth seven characteristics of effective schools: safe and organized; high expectations; strong instructional leadership; focused mission; maximum student time on task; monitoring of student progress; and, good home-school relations (Lezotte, 2004).

Challenging the cultural deprivation explanation and centering on the rich cultures of the minority children led to the development of the cultural difference theory, which revealed the strengths and resilience of minority children (Banks, 2004a). This theory explained the achievement gap due to the serious culture conflict experienced at school by low-income students (Banks, 2004a). This theory was the beginning of the multicultural education movement. Both multicultural education theory and effective schools theory postulate that all students can learn (Banks, 2004a; Gay, 2018; Lezotte, 2004). There is division when considering the focus of each movement. The effective schools movement focuses on improving basic academic skills and the use of standardized testing for measuring achievement. In

contrast, the multicultural education movement focuses on diverse ethnic groups and the changing of attitudes, which, in turn, leads to academic achievement (Banks, 2004a). This research project follows the path of the multicultural education movement

Culturally relevant pedagogy. The cultural difference theory gave birth to culturally relevant pedagogy that offers guidance to improving the academic achievement of students from a variety of ethnic, linguistic, and social-class groups (Gay, 2018). Gloria Ladson-Billings was a key cultural difference theorist who researched the academic gap of marginalized students and proposed teaching strategies to address the gap (Gay, 2018). Ladson-Billings was concerned with improving teacher education in order to produce teachers who could bring the strengths of African American students to the classroom. She found that successful teachers of these marginalized students used non-traditional teaching strategies resulting in academic success, helped students appreciate and celebrate their own culture while learning at least one other culture, and took learning beyond the classroom to address real-world problems (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Ladson-Billings (2014) described a ‘classroom death’ where teachers either stopped trying to reach students or where teachers folded to the pressures of rules and testing. She described the secret behind culturally relevant pedagogy as linking the principles of learning to a deep knowledge of culture. The secret is accomplished by focusing on student learning and achievement (as opposed to managing the classroom), cultural competence (as opposed to assimilation), and sociopolitical consciousness (as opposed to impractical tasks) (Ladson-Billings, 2014). A critical component of culturally relevant pedagogy is that the student is the expert, that is, the learner is the source of knowledge and skills in the classroom.

Culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching is the practical piece using theory connected to culturally relevant pedagogy. The goal is to give guidance and instruction to teachers to increase the achievement of ethnically diverse students by building on their culture and language strengths (Gay, 2018). Culturally responsive teaching is about teaching, not instructional leadership, equitable funding, or other factors concerning culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally responsive teaching validates and empowers ethnically diverse students by encouraging cultural integrity, individual abilities, and academic success (Gay, 2018). It promotes academic achievement, cultural affirmation, community building, individual self-worth, and an ethic of caring (Gay, 2018). There are four main components to culturally responsive teaching. Curriculum content, including cultural diversity, is the resource for culturally responsive teaching, and classroom instruction is the acting out, the action, of culturally responsive teaching. The tool used in the classroom is cultural communication, and the ideological grounding of culturally responsive teaching is an ethic of caring (Gay, 2018).

Ethics of caring. To be caring is more than to be sensitive to and attentive to the needs of others. Caring is to be emotionally invested in others and to act on this feeling (Gay, 2018). To be caring is simultaneously a promise, an ethic, and an action (Gay, 2018). It involves thinking and planning in order to make the best possible decisions when deciding how to act in the best interests of others. It requires commitment and is demonstrated by teachers through their attitudes toward and expectations for their students. In reference to caring teachers, Gay (2018) stated, “Their performance expectations are complemented with uncompromising faith in their students and relentless efforts in helping them meet high academic demands” (p. 75). In other words, caring teachers believe all students can learn, and they will go above and beyond to assist their students in meeting the high expectations they hold of their students.

Caring teachers believe who they teach is significantly more important than what they teach and keep the student at the center of all they do. In addition, caring teachers model what they value and try to become a part of the lives of their students beyond the classroom. They constantly seek ways to get to know their students better (Gay, 2018). Thus, authentic caring relationships are characterized by patience, persistence, support, and empowerment (Gay, 2018). Caring teachers do not accept excuses and demand effort, while at the same time being available to give support and encouragement (Gay, 2018).

Caring teachers have committed to being culturally knowledgeable and are tenacious in their efforts to develop students to their potential. Teacher care is enacted with concern for students’ well-being,

morality, cultural connections, and social relationships (Gay, 2018). Caring is a consistent interest for the whole student, including their emotional, social, physical, and economic condition (Gay, 2018). As such, caring teachers know all about their students and become involved in the lives of their students. Caring teachers are determined to understand people, develop connections, and use this knowledge to guide their actions (Gay, 2018).

The capacity of a teacher to care — the teacher's attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and feelings of efficacy — is critical to culturally responsive teaching. Caring teachers find the time to support students and build a classroom atmosphere of joy, choice, challenge, praise, and engagement (Gay, 2018). They understand that cultural differences affect the teaching-learning process and account for this in their classrooms. Caring teachers are grounded in a constructivist pedagogy that believes students possess a knowledge that comes from their home cultures and life experiences and that this knowledge needs to be used in order for students to achieve to their potential (Dallavis, 2014). Caring teachers are confident in their own efficacy to change the achievement level of students who are struggling (Gay, 2018).

Responding to a Changing World

The movement of people across national boundaries is commonplace across the world and is currently occurring at the most rapid rate ever recorded in the history of the world (Banks, 2011). The diversity within countries raises many questions about citizenship, justice, and education, and various countries have responded in a variety of ways. Some countries (for example, France) assume an assimilationist ideology, expecting immigrants to give up their cultural identities and assume the language and culture of the host country (Banks, 2011). Other countries (for example, Germany and Japan) allow a partial integration of immigrants into their society whereby the country uses immigrant skills to fill an economic role, but the country denies full civic participation (Banks, 2011). Then, there are countries (for example, the USA, Australia, and Canada) who claim to be multicultural democracies but within which there is still tremendous discrimination in society and schools (Banks, 2011).

In order to achieve a strong nation with citizens who possess allegiance to the country, the nation should allow the citizens to maintain their own language and culture, thereby finding a balance between unity and diversity for the sake of accomplishing a democratic and just nation (Banks, 2011). Citizenship education ought to develop cultural, national, and global identifications creating cosmopolitan citizens, or citizens who are effective in the global community (Banks, 2004b). People are challenged to get along and cooperate to solve some of the world's most significant issues, for example, global warming, disease epidemics, poverty, racism, and war (Banks, 2004b). Educators are required to develop transformative citizens whose actions "are designed to promote values and moral principles — such as social justice and equality — and may violate existing conventions and laws" (Banks, 2008, p. 137). The focus of education has to be more than the development of reading, writing, and math skills. Students need to develop critical thinking skills in order to change the world to make it more democratic and just (Banks, 2004b).

The Multicultural Education Consensus Panel was an expert group in the USA that spent four years reviewing and synthesizing research concerning diversity (Banks et al., 2001). The Panel presented twelve essential principles that described how to improve pedagogy with regard to diversity (Banks et al., 2001). Incorporating these principles would increase both academic achievement and intergroup skills. There are challenges to, and benefits from diversity in the classroom, and these essential principles address both these characteristics of classrooms (Banks et al., 2001). Effective multicultural schools are successful at developing the academic skills and the skills needed to interact in a diverse classroom and world (Banks et al., 2001).

Acquiring academic skills is important, but so is developing the skills to think critically, when considering improving the world. Emphasizing the importance of the former, dominant culture suggests there are cultures that need to be addressed with deficit strategies to improve academic achievement. Culturally relevant pedagogy is an asset pedagogy (honouring, exploring, and encouraging non-dominant cultures) professing to not only improve academic achievement but also develop a sociopolitical consciousness. Culturally relevant pedagogy challenges the view that education should focus on measuring

the performance of students with White middle-class norms, with the view that multiculturalism and critical thinking are the access and power needed by students today (Paris & Alim, 2014). Paris and Alim (2014) suggested education move away from the “panoptic white gaze” (p. 86) and toward demographic changes and the importance of multiculturalism.

Zoch (2017) found that teachers cannot just teach, but they also must navigate the politics of education; this cannot be ignored altogether, as Paris and Alim (2014) hoped. She wrote about interrupting the dominant curriculum and pressure on testing by acknowledging the importance of the students (Zoch, 2017). For example, she researched four teachers in a big school in Texas who found a way to be culturally responsive while still managing to prepare their students for the academic testing required. Most of these students, 96%, spoke Spanish at home, and the four teachers in the study taught third and fourth grades and were certified English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. These teachers prepared their students for the tests, providing access to dominant cultural competence, and still sustained students’ cultural competence (Zoch, 2017). Through carefully selected texts, texts that addressed social justice issues, supported cultural hybridity, encouraged critical consciousness, and connected with the students, these teachers accomplished both educational tasks.

Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) presented the compelling ‘why’ of culturally responsive teaching, framing it as an issue of ethics, social justice, and caring. This ethical stance is in strong agreement with Gay’s (2018) definition of caring as encompassing ethics and action. Engaging young teachers often in discussions regarding the theory behind culturally responsive teaching is crucial. This exposure to theories of culturally responsive teaching will increase teachers’ capacity to care and will assist them to understand everything they do is “a manifestation of the care and ethics necessary to fulfill education’s promise as the ‘balance wheel’ of society and ‘the key to securing a more equal, fair, and just society’ (Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012, p. 1102). Shevalier and McKenzie’s (2012) research was embedded in the framework of Noddings’s care theory and reflects the aim to care for others, not just care about others. The caring-for relationships are the true underpinnings of education and provide the groundwork for a just society (Noddings, 2012a).

Creating a Classroom Community

Schools need to accept and encourage the identities of diverse students, if, in turn, schools expect these same students to internalize human rights and work to make the world better (Banks, 2011). Brown and Chu (2012) studied third and fourth grade Mexican immigrant students in a predominantly White community in the USA. Brown and Chu (2012) found that teachers who valued diversity created environments that freely discussed differences in cultures and encouraged students to feel positive about their ethnic groups. Further, Brown and Chu (2012) found that for immigrant children in the minority at school, a strong positive ethnic identity led to better academic outcomes, a stronger sense of belonging to the school, and the ability to moderate teacher and peer discrimination. The study seems to strongly infer cause-effect relationships but caution is advised as the research is cross-sectional across nineteen schools in this community. None-the-less, the study did indicate the importance of school context and teacher attitudes to immigrant students, especially when they are in the minority (Brown & Chu, 2012).

Feinauer and Cutri (2012) completed a study built on the conclusion that a strong ethnic identity resulted in academic success. Their study’s aim was to help teachers understand how fifth grade Latino/a students in Boston and Chicago show connections to their ethnic group in order to allow teachers to capitalize on this information in their classrooms and lead students to academic improvement. It is essential for minority people to make sense of who they are within their own cultural community and in relation to the culture of power in their society before they can become global citizens. Banks (2011) believed teachers should help students develop their multiple identities, cultural, national, and global, in order for students to become positively contributing citizens. Feinauer and Cutri (2012) added to the literature concerning pre-adolescent students and ethnic identity formation. Students at about the fifth grade, moving from a family-based social milieu to a peer-based social milieu, are vulnerable to receiving negative messages about their ethnic group (Feinauer & Cutri, 2012). Teachers become crucial in creating a social environment in their classrooms that encourages ethnic identity formation. Feinauer

and Cutri (2012) found that pre-adolescent students were concrete in their descriptions of their ethnic identity, citing the symbols of food, language, and family as most important. Teachers can utilize this information to connect academic learning with the student experience. This process of connecting is the beginning of positive ethnic identity formation at school and will lead to a more complex understanding as the child grows and social settings become more elaborate (Feinauer & Cutri, 2012).

Acculturation is the process of adapting to or borrowing characteristics of another culture, thereby modifying the original culture, when people immigrate to a new country (Zadeh et al., 2008). Zadeh et al. (2008) interviewed sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students and their mothers from a city in Iran and the same-aged Iranian students (who had been in Canada at least five years) and their mothers from Toronto. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of acculturation on immigrant students' and immigrant mothers' perceptions of academic success. Iranian children and their mothers defined success/failure by the student's marks and attributed academic success and failure to the child's effort. Iranian-Canadian children and their mothers defined success/failure to include the process of learning and attributed academic success and failure to family, interest, and effort, similar to Western belief systems (Zadeh et al., 2008).

The Iranian-Canadian students attributed their success and failure to mostly interest and effort. The study showed acculturation took place regarding perceptions of academic achievement (Zadeh et al., 2008). It is a bit shocking that school and teacher made the top ten factors listed but did not enter the discussion due to their perceived minimal impact. Iranian-Canadian mothers and students are not connecting student interest, or learning, to the teacher or school in either a positive or a negative manner. This absence of connection means Iranian-Canadian mothers and students are neither crediting the school and teachers for academic success nor blaming them for academic failure. This shocking result begs the question if the perceived lack of impact of teachers and schools to student achievement is a Western belief. The result also suggests students are not aware of culturally relevant pedagogy, just if they are interested or not in school.

The life work of Gloria Ladson-Billings began with investigating the qualities of teachers and their classrooms within which diverse students were experiencing academic success. Ladson-Billings (2014) found these teachers promoted cultural competence and helped students celebrate their own culture while gaining knowledge in another culture. Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) stated that teachers who care for their students had competent understanding of their students' cultural rituals and symbols and could include these in their teaching and their informal interactions with their students. Summarizing, teachers need to understand the culture of their students. Ladson-Billings (2014) demonstrated that students could be the sources, or experts, of knowledge and skills, and the teacher can take the learner role. Dallavis (2014) concurred, stating students come to school with funds of knowledge, from their home cultures and experiences that need to be explored and used by the teacher to help students achieve academically. The Multicultural Education Consensus Panel stated teachers should be knowledgeable about the cultural backgrounds of their students. This concept is one of the Panel's twelve essential principles to improve pedagogy related to diversity (as cited in Banks et al., 2001).

Five additional principles presented by the Panel stated that i) teachers need to create superordinate groups for extracurricular activities, ii) teach about the negative effects of stereotyping and discrimination, iii) teach about universal values (like peace and justice), iv) teach the social skills necessary to interact with diverse groups, and v) provide social situations in which diverse groups must interact (Banks et al., 2001). Teachers demonstrate caring for students by modelling caring behaviours and also by allowing students to talk about caring and providing opportunities for students to practice caring for others (Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012). To create this caring classroom climate, teachers can do such things as holding regular class meetings for students to express feelings and discuss problems, rotate assigned leadership activities, facilitate cooperative learning experiences, and use games, hands-on work, and small groups in order to impose interaction and discussion (Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012).

In summary, teachers can create a caring classroom community. By choosing to value diversity and encouraging students to develop their ethnic identities, the classroom can be a positive environment

filled with students who are confident in themselves. Teachers can become adept at connecting learning to the experience that students bring to the classroom. Learning more about the cultures of the students is necessary for this connection and could be accomplished by the teacher becoming the learner. In this manner, students become interested and invested in the school. Teachers can create opportunities for their students to practice working with each other and caring for each other. Although practicing acceptance is an educational goal worthy in itself, building a caring classroom community is found to lead to academic success as well.

Developing Individual People

Wedin (2014) studied four classrooms in two different elementary schools in Sweden. She researched classroom activities and teachers' attitudes toward immigrant children. For these children (the home country of whose parents is not revealed), the language of instruction was Swedish, which may or may not have been spoken at home. Wedin (2014) found that two teachers at one of the schools regarded the immigrant children as possessing deficiencies. These teachers ran highly controlled classrooms. The academic results of these students were poor as they were not engaged in learning, had low expectations of achievement expressed by the teachers, and they were not challenged in the classroom (Wedin, 2014). The two teachers at the other school regarded the immigrant children in a more positive light, stressing the children's abilities and potential. These teachers allowed more creativity by students and gave them more choices. The academic results of these students were good as they were interested in their learning, their teachers held high expectations in regard to their work, and they were challenged academically (Wedin, 2014).

Academic achievement was greater in classrooms where the learner could be the expert sometimes, where there was room for individual learning, where there was an opportunity for authentic conversations, and where classroom work demanded active involvement of the learner (Wedin, 2014). Providing a challenging education means giving all students an equal opportunity and this is not only the democratic thing to do, it is the caring thing to do for students. Believing that all students can succeed is a major assumption of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Gay (2018) stated caring teachers are "warm demanding" (p. 86) taskmasters holding all students accountable for their best efforts and academic performances. Dallavis (2014) added that parents and students appreciated teachers who held high expectations of academic achievement because this leads to social mobility (much desired by immigrant people).

Dallavis (2014) interviewed teachers, parents, and eighth grade students of a Catholic school in Chicago in his study. Dallavis (2014) investigated various perspectives of academic achievement, trying to determine the intersection of Catholic schooling with culturally responsive teaching. Teachers, parents, and students concurred that teachers need to hold high expectations for academic achievement and these expectations need to be challenging, not such that everyone passes, even those who do not put in effort (Dallavis, 2014). Dallavis (2014) also found these stakeholders agreed that caring on behalf of teachers for students was crucial to academic achievement. Further, as described by students, caring was not to be friends with a teacher but was to be pushed by the teacher to perform academically. Caring while still pushing was an interesting find. One of the teachers in Dallavis' study actually sacrificed instruction for the formation of personal relationships, and a former principal sacrificed high expectations for consistently showing love (both of which led to poorer academic achievement), which Dallavis defined as not the authentic caring described by culturally responsive teaching (Dallavis, 2014).

Teague (2015) explored the teacher-student relationship in a primary school in the UK, and it seems to counter what Dallavis found about the teacher caring relationship not being friendly or loving. Teague (2015) described the pedagogical relationship as existing in the space between teacher and student. One cannot completely know themselves or others, and so there should be a tolerance for this unknown; as such, the teacher has to be gentle when dialoguing with a student regarding their behaviour (Teague, 2015). The teacher enacts "an ethical violence" (Teague, 2015, p. 405) if they are too demanding in this instance. The teacher has the opportunity to hold or contain whatever story the child is going to deliver and being gentle and open to listening will allow the child to tell more of his narrative. This

type of interaction will allow the potential to develop a more meaningful relationship because the child is being listened to, and the hierarchical arrangement is momentarily suspended (Teague, 2015).

Dallavis (2014) also found that a part of having high expectations and holding students to these high expectations was for the teacher to give extra time to help each individual student and give them personal attention. Students, as well, linked a sense of being cared for to this extra time and personal attention (Dallavis, 2014). Zoch (2017) also found that teachers successfully navigating the high stakes testing focus balanced this with extra time to help individual students, to discuss social issues, and to develop culturally relevant lessons. Noddings (2012a) demonstrated that teachers should take the time to build a relation of care and trust, even at the expense of teaching curriculum sometimes. Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) determined that caring teachers developed deep connections by taking the time for informal dialog and personal attention with individual students.

Indeed, Noddings' care theory describes the carer as being attentive, that is, she listens, observes, and is receptive to the needs of the cared for in the caring relation (Noddings, 2012b). Further, the care relation does not exist if the cared for does not respond, and in the teacher-student relation, these roles are not reversible; that is, the teacher is not to become the cared for in this relationship (Noddings, 2012b). The cared for's response will provide further information about needs and interests and could provide the carer with the opportunity to build a deeper relationship (Noddings, 2012b). In the care relationship, the carer is giving attention in a receptive manner in order to understand what the cared for is going through (Noddings, 2012b). This receptive stance is defined as empathy, which is reading the other person with both understanding and feeling (Noddings, 2012b).

Teachers can provide students with opportunities to care for others. The Multicultural Education Consensus Panel suggested teaching students different viewpoints of history, for example, in order to develop empathy for various groups and to increase the ability to think critically (as cited in Banks et al., 2001). Students can be taught to be carers to their peers. Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) described effective teachers as those who provide time for students to discuss feelings and the impact of their own behaviour on other students. Dallavis (2014) revealed that teachers perceived themselves both as role models of caring and as responsible for developing the sense of caring in their students. In Dallavis's study of the intersection of Catholic schooling with culturally responsive teaching, the teachers understood religious belief and caring to be interdependent; to teach students to care is to teach them to act in just and respectful ways like Jesus did (Dallavis, 2014).

Noddings (2012a) added that teachers, who already possess empathy, try to develop the caring relationships within their students, that is, "the capacity to be moved by the affective condition of the other" (p. 773). Being empathetically accurate is a curious point that Noddings described. She said accurate empathy is not trying to put one's self in another's shoes. That is, it is not asking children to think, 'how would you feel if that happened to you?' The Golden Rule, long taught in schools and across cultures, is 'do unto others as you would have done unto you.' Noddings (2012a) suggested teaching this differently and more accurately as 'do unto others as they would have done unto them.' This is a different twist on the Golden Rule and perhaps suggests a deeper level of understanding and caring than previously realized.

In summary, it is vital that teachers hold a positive attitude concerning the abilities of their students and not view them as a collection of deficiencies. It is crucial that teachers have high expectations of their students, and this is recognized as caring by both teachers and students. Caring teachers believe all students can succeed and proceed to challenge every student. A balance needs to be found; however, while being demanding, the teacher must demonstrate gentleness in order to develop relationships with students. Caring will involve the teacher finding time to develop relationships, construct culturally relevant lessons, and create space for moral discussions. Learning to be attentive is the key to becoming empathetic, which is, in turn, crucial to being caring.

The research trek funneled the reader from a global view of the issue down to the focus of the issue – the student - while touring the reader from the 1960s to the present day with an emphasis on current

research concerning teacher care. Beginning with a quick investigation of schools' inability to meet the needs of culturally diverse students in the USA in the 1960s, culturally responsive teaching was traced through multicultural theory, which was to reform education. A case was made for following the path of culturally relevant pedagogy as a strategy to respond to the changing world, which is witnessing increased diversity of students. Next, exploring a caring classroom that could meet the needs of all students, the reader was informed of valuing diversity. Lastly, the characteristics of a caring teacher were presented as the manner in which to develop successful students.

Implications for Research

The Multicultural Education Consensus Panel found one of the essential principles to improving education for diverse students is that teachers need to be knowledgeable about the characteristic cultural behaviours of their students in order to use this information to engage students and link their prior knowledge to what they are being taught (as cited in Banks et al., 2001). There is a considerable gap in the research concerning Filipino students and this gap widens when searching for studies on this group of students in Canada and specifically Saskatchewan. Teachers in Saskatchewan need to know about the culture of these diverse students as they are starting to occupy an increasing number of seats in classrooms.

Grouping all newcomers to Canada and using the term 'immigrant' is not an accurate method of establishing a participant pool in any study and presents a tremendous disservice to the Filipino culture and all the diverse cultures that immigrate to Canada. This lack of demarcation is prevalent in current research. Scholars are grouping those new to Canada, or those who do not speak English as their first language, as 'immigrants.' Several features distinguish the Filipino immigrant, one of which is they quickly fulfill roles in the health field created by the Live-in Caregiver Program, an immigration focus of Canada (Laquian, 2018). In addition, Filipino's are predominantly Roman Catholic, are generally well educated, are proficient in the English language, and tend to be actively involved with their communities integrating into them as opposed to forming ethnic subgroups within communities (Laquian, 2018). These characteristics may or may not differentiate the Filipino immigrant from an immigrant who has come from a different country. The point is, not all immigrants can be lumped together as a group, and then researchers draw conclusions from this clump of diverse cultures. More research is needed on this specific, increasingly impactful, newcomer, and their children, namely the immigrant from the Philippines.

Culture and ethnic identities are fluid concepts (Banks, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012). This fluidity means the identities evolve or change over time. For example, a family may emigrate from the Philippines to Canada and have children in Canada. These Filipino Canadians will eventually have families as well, and the culture they recognize may be somewhat different from the culture in the Philippines. Younger generations are experiencing multiplicities of identities or cultural pluralism (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012). Paris (2012) offered that researchers should start thinking about these multilingual and multicultural students and the pedagogy needed to "perpetuate and foster" (p. 95) this cultural pluralism. It is one of the next steps in culturally relevant pedagogy, and it is referred to as culturally sustaining pedagogy. Research is needed in the area of the global identities of students.

For McCarty and Lee (2014), culturally relevant pedagogy includes addressing "the ongoing legacies of colonization, ethnocide, and linguicide" (p. 103) and, thus, they extended culturally relevant pedagogy and referred to it, in the case of Indigenous peoples, as culturally revitalizing pedagogy. Native American schooling needs three components: transforming the legacies of colonization, reclaiming what was lost (including language) to colonization, and serving the needs of Indigenous people as defined by Indigenous people (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Further research in the area of culturally revitalizing pedagogy, especially concerning the First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people in Saskatchewan would inform practice and assist moving Indigenous students forward academically.

The Saskatchewan Education Sector Strategic Plan 2014-2020, states specific enduring strategies to improve education in the province. These enduring strategies include a culturally relevant and engaging curriculum; differentiated and high-quality instruction; culturally appropriate and authentic assessment; and the inclusion of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit experience, among others (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018). This study has fleshed out culturally relevant pedagogy and the practice of caring teachers' strategies to address immigrant students. There is room for research regarding the specific Filipino immigrant culture and student in Saskatchewan. While there is an indication that ideas presented in this study could possibly address the needs of the specific Indigenous culture and student in Saskatchewan, as well, research in culturally revitalizing pedagogy – a branch of culturally relevant pedagogy – is just beginning.

Implications for Practice

This study began with a brief history of educational reforms in the USA introduced after the 1960s, the beginning of the human rights movements. Schools were not effective at meeting the needs of culturally diverse students as indicated by their academic achievement. Looking at the Saskatchewan Education Sector Strategic Plan 2014-2020, one wonders if there has been any progress with reform plans. By highlighting the priorities, outcomes, and targets with colour; and by assigning various directors of education to the priorities and outcomes (their names and areas are listed at the bottom), the enduring strategies piece of this plan seems 'left out.' "This competitive spirit and the notion that economic motives should drive schooling undermine the richest aims of education: full, moral, happy lives; generous concern for the welfare of others; finding out what one is fitted to do occupationally" (Noddings, 2012a, p. 778). This spirit of competition still dominates the philosophy of education even though today we know that nations must work together for global peace and to solve the major issues in the world. The focus of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education should consider this mandate.

John Hattie has contributed knowledge on strategies teachers can use to impact student achievement. What seems to be missing from Hattie's work is the recognition of culturally relevant pedagogy (Lewthwaite et al., 2015). This oversight is interesting because the study produced here shows clearly that culturally relevant pedagogy leads to student achievement by being a pedagogy of difference, as opposed to a pedagogy of indifference as implied by scholars like Hattie (Lewthwaite et al., 2015). While it is great that the Saskatchewan Education Sector Strategic Plan 2014-2020 includes the words culturally relevant, high expectations, and caring relationships (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018), this focus needs to be elevated. Teacher programs are available to assist teachers in developing culturally responsive teaching. For example, the CEEDAR Center (Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform) in the USA has developed an innovation configuration rubric for culturally responsive teaching (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). The rubric, for assisting teachers to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy, lists the essential components and descriptors indicating the degree of implementation of each component. It would be a good starting point to help teachers in Saskatchewan to address the needs of culturally diverse students. Potentially the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation or the Colleges of Education at the province's two universities could collaborate with the Ministry of Education to flesh out this crucial piece of the Education Sector Plan for teachers.

This study demonstrated the importance of caring for students, which includes building relationships with them and taking the extra time needed to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy. It seems that the power of caring relationships is undervalued despite the relationship between culturally responsive teachers and effective teachers as indicated by student achievement (Lewthwaite, 2015). At the very heart of the Saskatchewan Education Sector Strategic Plan 2014-2020 is the phrase, "I am valued: I have a voice and am supported in my ways of learning" (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018). Teachers should apply the tweaked Golden Rule provided in this paper, that is, give to the students what they are saying they need. If you are a passionate teacher who authentically cares for students, then take the time to become a culturally responsive teacher. It will result in academic success for immigrant students, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students, and all students. It is the best practice

Conclusion

Teachers can be educated on culturally relevant pedagogy. The teacher will be required to find the extra time to develop caring relationships and build culturally relevant lessons. The passion to care for students and the attitude to value diversity is what moves a teacher to follow culturally relevant pedagogy. All students, including immigrant students and First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, have the opportunity to achieve academically when they are cared for. When a teacher cares for a student, she understands his culture, she regards him as possessing assets, she uses these assets to connect the student to learning, and she has high expectations for the student. The result of culturally relevant pedagogy is the production of citizens who think critically, have a strong sense of social justice, and care for the issues plaguing the world.

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Leading Schools towards Authentic School-Family Partnerships: A Conceptual Literature Review

Paula D. Fortier

Abstract

Research proves that parent involvement/engagement raises student achievement. However, there is also evidence that a deeper relationship between educators and families, one built on trust, dialogue, and power-sharing, provides even more benefits. This literature review compiles research on a specific type of relationship – an authentic school-family partnership. This research endeavors to define this type of partnership and identify the key beliefs, strategies, and conditions that support such a school-family relationship from the perspective of school leadership. A description of the type of school leader who values and builds authentic school-family partnerships through the ideologies of social justice, cultural responsiveness, parent advocacy, and community empowerment is made clear; as well as tangible ideas of how to attain such partnerships.

Purpose Statement

Over the years, leadership programs and texts have invoked the importance of school-family partnerships and parent involvement most often in relation to raising student achievement (Auerbach, 2010; Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Pushor, 2010). So much so, Pushor (2010) and Auerbach (2010) felt that the value of school-family partnerships is taken for granted, yet genuine relationship and deep trust is often missing. This style of partnership is described by Auerbach (2010) as an authentic school-family partnership, which is defined as a “respectful alliance among educators, families, and community groups that value relationship building, dialogue, and power sharing as part of socially just, democratic schools” (p. 729). This paper will investigate the need to support leaders who believe in transforming school culture and building authentic school-family partnerships. With this knowledge, schools can be places where all students are engaged in their learning, families of diverse social and cultural backgrounds feel welcome, and school leaders are more aware of what their students and families require to succeed.

Research Questions

1. What are authentic school-family partnerships?
2. What are the key beliefs, strategies, and conditions that support school-family partnerships?
3. What type of school leader builds authentic school-family partnerships?

Significance

As schools become more diverse, the need for educational leaders to address this diversity has taken on greater significance. In Saskatchewan, our diversity is even more unique due in large part to the high population of Aboriginal students who, according to the province graduation rates, are not having their educational needs met (Government of Saskatchewan, 2012; 2014). The disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students has become abundantly clear over the past decade with the collection of detailed data on student achievement by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (Government of

Saskatchewan, 2012; 2014). Therefore, the purpose of this research would be an attempt to understand better what school leaders can do to facilitate authentic school-family partnerships to continue to work towards mitigating this inequality. Researchers from the Joint Task Force (2013) stated that a western worldview often gets in the way of creating strong relationships and building trust. Consultation with Aboriginal community members, students, and families found that they believed that positive interactions and dignified mutual relationships were of utmost importance (Pelletier et al., 2013). Researchers heard that the way in which school leaders and teachers welcome First Nations and Métis children and youth, build deeper relationships, and deliver the curriculum to create relevance and meaningful engagement in the lives of their students are crucial to student success. Pelletier et al. (2013) quoted an Aboriginal elder who believed that “a shift towards mutual cultural acceptance and respectful relationship was building a sense of optimism for the future of all students” (p. 198). This paper understands these mutually accepting and respectful relationships as authentic school-family partnerships. This research will endeavor to define authentic school-family partnerships and identify the key beliefs, strategies, and conditions that support this type of partnership. It will also aim to clarify the kind of leadership needed to facilitate authentic school-family partnerships.

Researcher Positionality

Research is pointing to school administrators to play an active part in this transformative time in Saskatchewan education to better support all families (Government of Saskatchewan, 2012, 2014; Joint Task Force, 2013). Administrators have an incredible opportunity and obligation to help animate a healthy future for all the children of Saskatchewan. However, where do they begin? Many researchers indicated that administrators can lead change through the development of a school culture (Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Goodlad, 1994; Owens, 2004) that facilitates beliefs such as the importance of school-family partnerships (Auerbach, 2010). I believe that choosing an authentic school-family partnership means considering the needs of all students and families, those of diverse cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, cognitive/physical development, and learning needs. This type of socially just leader will consider the beliefs and strategies needed to develop such a partnership, and in doing so, will develop a school culture where all students and families are welcomed and achieve success. Although this paper has a focus on the need to balance the disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students' achievement and mitigate inequality in schools, working towards true school-family partnerships would also support students and families who are new to Canada as well as any diverse or atypical learners. I would like to see this type of future for my students and my own children.

Research Methods

The literature collected for this review was compiled using a variety of sources including journal articles, research projects, books, and published dissertations retrieved from several databases as well as past course reference lists. Keywords used to search for relevant literature were “relational leadership”, “family engagement”, “school-family partnership”, and “building relationships in schools”. After reading articles that applied to the topic of school-family partnership, I conducted another search with the terms “socially just education”, “socially just leadership”, “leadership for social justice”, and “education for social justice”.

Limitations

Although there were many sources on parent involvement and engagement in schools, there were very few that went deeper to an authentic school-family partnership as described by Auerbach (2010). Findings were like that described by Pushor (2012), as she searched the term parent/family engagement. There were many items about engagement, which indicated that the term had gained much usage in the field. However, there was a lack of focus on how educational leaders could help facilitate this engagement through a true partnership with families. At the same time, an extensive body of research shows that

parents' engagement in their children's education positively affects student achievement (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Pushor, 2007, 2012).

Regardless of this knowledge, the research around educational leaders facilitating these ideal partnerships seems to be lacking. Very few empirical studies gave more than just general recommendations on how to lead a school towards authentic school-family partnerships (Auerbach, 2012; Henderson et al., 2007). There was also very little research done around socially just leadership, except for what was tied to transformational leadership or developing school programs that focus on social justice. Very few were specific to facilitating a school culture open to building relationships with families.

Literature Review

As the literature was compiled, many possibilities and themes arose. When focusing on how a leader might develop the type of relationship that community members, especially Aboriginal community members, would find mutually respectful, welcoming, and meaningful, one author's definition stood out. Then, in comparison with other authors, a deeper understanding was achieved as well as a list of tangible ideas on how a school leader might achieve such partnerships.

Leadership towards Authentic-School Family Partnerships

Being that the intersection between leadership and school-family partnerships seemed underdeveloped in both the parent involvement/engagement literature and the leadership literature with only general recommendations and few empirical studies (Auerbach, 2010; Cooper, 2009; Griffith 2001), this study focused in large part on the work by Auerbach (2007, 2010, 2012) who devised the term authentic school-family partnership.

Defining school-family partnerships. School-family partnership seems to be a topic that has been discussed for some time. Many authors made it clear that both the school and student clearly benefited from parent and family involvement (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). However, Pushor (2007) went further in stating that the goal of educators should not simply be parent involvement but ideally parent engagement. Pushor (2012) described parental involvement as important but as primarily serving the school's agenda to do the things the educators considered important. Engagement, on the other hand, was described as activities that were mutually determined by educators and parents to be important for children and were lived out in a respectful and reciprocal relationship (Pushor, 2007). Many authors agreed and found that parents who participated in decision-making experienced greater feelings of ownership and were more committed to supporting the school's mission (Addi-Raccah & Ainhoren, 2009; Auerbach, 2010; Hiatt-Micheal, 2006).

Auerbach (2010) took the idea of engagement to another level. She focused on authentic school-family partnerships as "respectful alliances among educators, families, and community groups that value relationship building, dialogue, and power sharing as part of socially just, democratic schools" (p. 729). In defining the term school-family partnerships, two major themes arose: relationship building and social justice.

The importance of relationship building was discussed not only by Auerbach (2010), but also by Addi-Raccah and Ainhoren, (2009), Hiatt-Micheal, (2006), Moll et al. (1992), and Pushor (2007, 2012). With so many authors focused on the importance of relationship building in education, this topic became a central focus for this discussion.

Auerbach (2010) also mentioned "socially just democratic schools"; therefore, another focus of this literature review became social justice in education (p. 729). Bogotch (2002), Brown (2004), and Scanlan (2013) all believed that creating a socially just school culture was essential to building partnerships. Therefore, guided by an understanding of basic issues, this conceptual literature review looks for key factors, concepts, or variables, and the presumed relationship between them. This review is organized into two parts; the first part focuses on how to build authentic school-family partnerships, and the

second part examines how school leaders can create a culture of school-family partnerships built on social justice.

Key beliefs, strategies and conditions for building partnership. Auerbach (2010) initially performed a study based on 35 administrators' visions of family engagement, which led to her defining the importance of school-family partnerships. All school leaders who participated in her study were on-site administrators working in diverse schools in the Los Angeles area. Interestingly, her initial research did not include the perspective of parents. However, Auerbach's (2012) later work prompted her to edit a compilation of research perspectives, which included authors who contributed from the perspective of parents as well as educators (Chrispeels, 2012; Stein et al., 2012).

Arguments by some researchers such as Correnti and Rowan (2007) and Knapp et al. (2010), contradicted the need for family-school partnerships. They claimed that although research supports improved student achievement with improved parental engagement, the instructional work put in by high-quality teachers creates the biggest impact on learning. With this focus on student achievement alone, these authors are missing the other benefits that an authentic school-family partnership can bring. Henderson et al. (2007) and Moll et al. (1992) described the benefits of more acceptance among students, families, and educators, and less anxiety in students and parents. Auerbach (2012) and Pushor (2007, 2010) corroborated and added improved student engagement, better cultural understanding, and an overall welcoming school climate.

Researchers stated the importance of key beliefs such as seeing family as equal partners and "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al., 1992). They also recognized the importance of "power sharing" (Auerbach, 2012; Pushor, 2010). With these key beliefs in mind, these same authors recommended that leaders set the tone for partnership in the school, model practice, acknowledge and validate parent views, and take initiative by reaching out to make partnerships central (Henderson et al., 2007; Moll et al., 1992; Pushor, 2007; Toso & Grinder, 2016). What kind of school leader holds these beliefs and how do they facilitate school-family partnerships in this way? Auerbach (2010) explained that such a leader has visions of partnerships "nested within broader ideologies of social justice, cultural responsiveness, parent advocacy, and community empowerment" all built on a strong foundation of trust (p. 751).

Type of leader best suited to building school-family partnerships. Auerbach (2010) gave examples of different types of leadership and partnership. At the far end of the spectrum, reflecting the historical division between schools and families, was the type of leadership that prevented partnerships. This type of leadership seems to be rare today because of the more recent evidence of the importance of parent engagement and the work towards change made thus far. The next level was leadership for nominal partnerships in which leaders made some effort to involve parents but kept them limited and controlled. This nominal partnership seems to be a more common model seen in present-day schools. However, this model still lacks the deep partnerships that families need. Finally, there is the ideal, the transformative leadership model of authentic school-family partnership (Auerbach, 2010).

One way to view the balance of an administrator is by understanding what Pushor (2007) described as two types of host educators or administrators. Each type sees the school, the students, the families, and their role as educators or leaders differently. On one hand, the administrator in a school can be the type of host who oversees when families come and go, who decides where families can be, and what families are allowed to do when they are in the school. This type of administrator enters a school building and claims it for their own while isolating themselves from the parents and the community. This type of administrator designs and enacts all policies, procedures, and programs for the students on their own, possibly including other staff members (Pushor, 2007). These administrators provide what Auerbach (2010) described as nominal partnerships.

The other type of host includes the administrator who sees the school building as belonging to the community. These administrators recognize that they are entering a place with relationships, culture, and history (Epstein, 1995; Epstein & Sanders, 2006). This type of leader feels "that only when they know how to behave as guests will they have the honour to act as hosts" (Pushor, 2007, p.8). There-

fore, an important question develops; how do administrators in the school landscape behave as guests? Pushor (2007) explained that being guests means learning about the community which educators are entering, spending time and energy to know the context, the history, the culture and particularly the people who reside there. This type of administrator recognizes that the school belongs to the community; it is their school, their home, and administrators and educators assigned to a school come as guests (Auerbach, 2010; Chrispeels, 2012; Epstein, 1995).

Although educators are guests, they are also called to host, and this is where the challenge of balance is found. An administrator who is guest and host works to create a welcoming environment that will draw parents and families into the school. Auerbach (2012) and Pushor (2007) agreed that this is the type of administrator who supports and facilitates authentic school-family partnerships.

Social justice. Auerbach (2012) mentioned the importance of examining the role of educational leaders in encouraging partnerships as a dimension of leadership for social justice (p. 3). Leadership preparatory texts and programs invoked the importance of school-family partnerships; however, research on how leaders could facilitate such a partnership was limited (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Owens, 2004). In the literature regarding educational leadership for social justice, many agreed that theory, research, and practice should be intertwined to support the type of schooling that values rather than marginalizes. However, few researchers offered practical approaches to developing a socially-just school through partnerships.

Social justice is a “messy concept, complex and contested, stretching across a wide array of issues”, including resource distribution, cultural domination, respect, and power relations (Scalan, 2013). Studies in the field of educational leadership both affirmed the importance of social justice (Noble, 2015; Scalan, 2013) and acknowledged that moving from theory to practice is complicated.

Researchers such as Brown (2004), Marks and Printy (2003), and Shields (2004), referred to many different types of leadership with the goal of socially just leadership in mind. Shields (2004) discussed theories of transformative leadership, relational pedagogy, and moral dialogue to provide school leaders with criteria and direction. Furthermore, transformative leadership, when based on dialogue and strong relationships, can provide occasions for all children to learn in school communities that are socially just and deeply democratic (Shields, 2004). Marks and Printy (2003) found that by integrating the qualities of transformational and shared instructional leadership, leaders more effectively activate collaborative achievement and produce high-quality teaching and learning. Merging adult learning theory, transformative learning, and critical social theory, Brown (2004) described ways to reform leadership preparation with the goal of cultivating school leaders committed to facilitating social justice in their practice.

So, within all of that research, what does socially-just leadership look like? There was not a lot of research that demonstrated the practice behind the theory. However, Noble (2015) shared his opinion that if leaders are to be advocates for cultural diversity and become agents of social justice, it is necessary that they be equipped with the required language. He then referred to a study done by Tharp (2012), which identified six critical foundational terms: privilege, oppression, cultural salience, intersectionality, critical consciousness, and social equity (p. 20-22). Many of these terms, or similar ones, were also mentioned by other authors in terms of cultural responsiveness, which will be explained further in the following section.

Cultural responsiveness. Addi-Racah and Ainhoren (2009), Cottrell (2010), Khalifa et al. (2016), and Lopez (2015) clarified that cultural responsiveness is a large part of building partnerships in diverse school settings. Khalifa et al. (2016) went so far as to state that culturally responsive teaching is important, but that teachers alone cannot solve the major challenges facing “minoritized” students (p. 1275). Leadership also needed to be culturally responsive to set the tone and model practice. The authors amplified the importance of “reforming and transforming all aspects of the educational enterprise,” such as funding, policymaking, and administration, so they too are culturally responsive (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1273).

Khalifa et al. (2016) and Lopez (2015) acknowledged that such incisive transformations have yet to happen soundly and consistently in the field of educational leadership. Therefore, a first step could be for school leaders to provide the opportunity for educators to “confront their epistemic and ontological assumptions about teaching and learning [and challenge] the established curriculum practices and interests that have been traditionally exercised in public schools” (Cherubini, 2009, p. 18). Once more leaders have facilitated this, there will be a clear culture and more voices to encourage change in every school, in every community across the country (Lopez 2015).

Cottrell (2010) spoke of the importance of culturally responsive leaders who could lead Saskatchewan towards authentic partnership. He described such a leader as one who has a strong knowledge of history and awareness of links between history and current circumstances. Furthermore, this leader has a commitment to social justice and an understanding of the inequalities of privilege and exclusion (Cottrell, 2010; Noble, 2015). With this understanding, a culturally responsive leader works towards democratic participation in all aspects of the school so that all members are heard and can be a part of making decisions (Cottrell 2010).

Educational leaders must be concerned with how to incorporate diversity into a community’s shared values and beliefs that define a cultural unity and promote a climate of social justice. Chance (2009) explained that leading for social justice suggests a mindful and deliberate attempt to influence the organizational culture and to change assumptions. Thus, educational leaders must actively engage multiple stakeholders in an inclusive process to dialogue about what they value and create a new vision for their school (Auerbach, 2012; Pushor, 2010). One way of changing deeply held assumptions and create a new vision is to include parents in the process.

Parent advocacy. Auerbach (2012), Henderson et al. (2007), and Pushor (2010) all spoke of educational leaders engaging multiple stakeholders and defined one of the most important stakeholders as the parents and families. Moll et al. (1992) further clarified that an educational leader should start relationships with their students and their families; basing practice on the belief that all families are funds of knowledge and focused more on what children know, rather than what they do not know, schools would be truly welcoming places. With this perspective, families would be included in developing an emergent curriculum that achieves outcomes based on the interests, knowledge, and cultural understanding of all families and students (Henderson et al., 2007; Moll et al., 1992).

Burke and Burke (2005) challenged the framework that bases school reform on a deficit model. A deficit model mandates that students be made ready for school. Instead, Burke and Burke (2005) proposed ways in which schools can be made ready for students. The authors suggested that children be taught based on where they are cognitively, socially, and emotionally when they arrive at school, rather than seeing them as lacking (Burke & Burke, 2005). Cottrell (2010) found that this was analogous to a First Nations medicine wheel, which emphasizes the idea of balance. Although some sections of the wheel may be stronger than others, a child is composed of all four parts —spirit, mind, body, and heart —when he or she arrives at school. The strongest educators teach the whole child, and the whole child includes family (Chrispeels, 2012; Pushor, 2012).

Within this idea of supporting students, there are many examples of how schools chose to respond to external factors such as demographics or student backgrounds to promote student learning (Riehl, 2012). Unfortunately, many of our current school divisions focus heavily on the administrator’s role as an instructional leader and assumes that all the resources needed to support student learning are found within the school, and consequently, no partnerships with families or communities are necessary (Correnti & Rowan, 2007; Knapp et al., 2010; Rowan et al., 2002).

However, a student-ready school, as defined by Burke and Burke (2005), incorporates a culture where diversity is considered a resource to embrace rather than an obstacle to overcome. In a student-ready school, “children’s circumstances and culture become the foundation for growing their experiences, instead of dismissed as disadvantaged and in need of change” (Burke & Burke, 2005, p. 282). Educational leaders with the goal of student-ready schools in mind would encourage teachers to create opportunities

to know their students and their families, to connect their ideas and interests to the curriculum (Pushor, 2010), and to evaluate how students understand the material and see it as relevant to their lives (Moll et al., 1992).

Auerbach (2010) detailed that when school leaders build relationships working towards the goal of authentic school-family partnership, fostering a feeling of welcome and acceptance, and being sure that everyone is heard and seen as equals, then everyone will be more eager to engage. By taking this approach to learning and understanding what students and their families bring to the school community, the learning community in turn allows the students and their families to develop their own voice and ownership in the learning process (Pushor, 2010, 2012; Toso & Grinder, 2016). In this way, Moll et al. (1992) explained that students and families are encouraged to articulate their experiences and their own understanding. The process of voice development and articulation is more about personal growth rather than meeting external standards (Toso & Grinder, 2016). These student-ready schools (Burke & Burke, 2005) would be a step closer to an authentic school-family partnership (Auerbach, 2010) because they are only sustainable if they are based on an inclusive view of the larger community that the school serves (Pushor, 2010, 2012).

Since the best administrators understand the difference between leadership and management, and view leadership as a process rather than a position of authority, it is essential to define both leadership and management roles (Stobie, 2015). Stein (2006) defined management as the “application of social scientific principles with a focus on planning, organizing, directing, and controlling” (p. 22). On the other hand, he described leadership as an art that includes the essentials of management but goes much further by taking on the vastly more important and challenging task of influencing people and aspiring them to thrive (Stein, 2006). From the research, it was clear that one of the first steps towards influencing people and aspiring them to work towards building school-family partnerships is building trust.

Trust building. Auerbach (2010) mentioned how trust and listening well in a dialogue is tied to authentic partnerships. Through research into First Nations’ ways of knowing and understanding, it was found that many elders believe that “patience and trust are essential to listen[ing]...to listen with three ears: two on your head and one in your heart” (Archibald, 1997, p. 10). Archibald (1997) explained that this concept of listening is one part of the philosophy of interconnectedness that is the central core of Aboriginal worldviews and can teach educators much about relating to others. Researchers from the Canadian Council on Learning (2007) found that when people take the time to be present with another person, they utilize their inner knowing to sense deep levels within each other. Listening attentively and respectfully to each other, allows people to know one another better, more than just with rational minds. By going further and regarding everyone as genuinely connected, relationships go even deeper, to the inner essence of each person (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007). This deep connection serves as the foundation of a relationship. If this interconnectedness was the base of our education systems, educators would be better able to support the whole child and, in this healthy way, see the positive academic results that society and school systems crave (Cottrell, 2010).

Therefore, to be an effective educational leader, one has a commitment to build relationships with families and create authentic school-family partnerships (Auerbach, 2010, 2012). Walker et al. (2011) detailed that leaders demonstrate trust when they care for the personal, as well as the academic well-being of others. Consequently, it is important to take the time to get to know the unique needs of all students and families. To do this, an administrator has a duty to be present, available, and able to listen (Walker et al., 2011). Since trust is an important factor of all healthy relationships and healthy relationships are necessary for the establishment of a positive school climate, educational leaders have a duty to strive to cultivate and preserve trusting relationships within school communities (Pushor, 2010, 2012). Trusting relationships are built on cultural humility, transparency whenever possible, open communication, and moral integrity to be able to change not only the perception of the school and the administrator but also the perception of the learner and family. By being genuinely open and listening with “three ears,” as First Nation elders recommend, there would be more opportunity to build trust and mutual respect (Archibald, 1997, p. 10). The researchers assumed that educators who model the leadership as

guest/host (Pushor, 2007) would be better able to engage parents in their children's learning. Cottrell (2010) and Noble (2015) understood that an educator's reflection and transformation of underlying beliefs and assumptions would help to bring about this change and help to build authentic school-family partnerships (Auerbach, 2010).

Community empowerment. Unfortunately, as Auerbach (2010) explained through her continuum of leadership, society has previously created schools on nominal partnerships, that traditionally look like the predominantly white middle-class administrators and teachers that staff them (Cottrell, 2010). Klibard (1995) pointed out that the purpose of school historically had been the reproduction of the social structure and assimilation of the masses to one version of the educated. Pushor (2012) expounded that this has been the purpose of schools for centuries and is the way society continues to perpetuate it. Part of her research looked at "interrupting the story of school as protectorate" (p. 466). She went on to explain that the limitations of the western model of schools is that it does not allow the space for community or family (Pushor, 2012) and Cottrell (2010) supported this statement. For example, all schools have a staff room, but few schools welcome family and community there. Both Pushor (2010) and Cottrell (2010) believed that schools could consider creating community space, and in turn, emotional space, by making themselves less dominant.

Chance (2009) cited Sergiovanni, who suggested that schools must decisively work to become holistic communities. This decision to work towards a purposeful and holistic community requires schools to explore and define core beliefs and values that bind them and to develop norms and structures that guide decisions and behaviors. Until a school becomes a purposeful and holistic community, it cannot be a caring community, a learning community, a professional community, or an inclusive community (Chance, 2009).

Lopez (2015) explained that school leaders are called to challenge the existing notions of society. This call to action includes an obligation to issues of equity, diversity, and social justice. With these issues in mind, school leaders will more readily identify inequalities in the schools in which they work and will be more able to lead educators in practices that will transform the school into a more holistic community, as described by Chance (2009). Auerbach (2012) corroborated with her definition of authentic school-family partnerships as "respectful alliances, relationship building, dialogue, and power sharing as part of socially just, democratic schools" (p. 729). Noble (2015) and Scalan (2013) supported Auerbach's (2010) findings by describing a socially just leader with many similarities. The importance of gaining trust and building relationships with families before achieving the goal of true school-family partnerships was validated by Pushor (2010) and Walker et al., (2011). Being culturally responsive to all families was corroborated by Lopez (2015). All these changes would, in turn, break down the traditional view of school and educational leaders as being all-knowing (Pushor, 2010). In this way, school leaders would be working towards the ideal of a partnership school (Auerbach, 2012), which has a balance of school empowerment and parent empowerment (Addi-Raccach & Ainhoren, 2009).

To achieve this goal, Hiatt-Michael (2006) focused on the critical role of the school leader in engaging the community. She stated that the school leader is the link between school and community and sets the tone for trust and cooperation between the two. She also suggested furthering teacher education on the topic of parental engagement so that teachers are prepared to work closely with school families (Hiatt-Michael, 2006). Chance (2009) agreed and explained that change must be implemented collaboratively. This collaboration would involve open communication throughout the school, with staff, students, and families, so that individuals would gain a level of comfort and develop expertise over time in a new way of doing things (Chance, 2009).

Creating Change

When considering the organizational change process, Fullan (2011) spoke about the importance of changing the whole system. He explained that a leader cannot expect long-term change if focusing solely on changing the culture of one school or even a community of schools. Long-term transformation would only happen with a large-scale change, one that fundamentally impacts multiple elements. Owens (2004) mentioned four dimensions specifically: ecology, milieu, organization, and culture. He

went on to explain that these four dimensions are intricately intertwined (Owens, 2004). The dimension of culture may be less apparent but can be inferred by observing the behaviours of the staff and the school community, watching how they are guided by their patterns of thoughts, beliefs, and values. These patterns, which are the base of the school culture, are established with the support of the school leader who uses different strategies to develop and clarify the school's values, norms, and vision (Owens, 2004). Therefore, one could assume that if these values, norms, and vision included social justice, cultural responsiveness, parent advocacy, and community empowerment, an initiator could drive teachers and community members towards a vision of school-family partnership. For example, a current focus within some school divisions is land-based learning, which supports Aboriginal ways-of-knowing and is, therefore both culturally responsive and community empowering.

Goodlad (1994) found that school culture is also reflective of the larger societal culture in which it exists. He explained that social issues, which influence the larger culture, are often mirrored in the school setting, such as divisions that arise based on ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Thus, educational leaders have the opportunity and the challenge to reinforce or influence change in the school's culture through various mechanisms, such as organizational structure, decision-making processes, and inclusive dialogue to find the balance that our schools and society are working towards (Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Goodlad, 1994; Owens, 2004).

Since core beliefs and assumptions reflect the broader local and national cultures, changing culture is difficult and slow (Senge, 1990). Senge (1990) clarified that innovations often fail to be implemented because they conflict with deeply held internal images or assumptions, as mentioned by Auerbach (2010), Cherubini (2009) and Pushor (2007). Senge (1990) explained that these deep-set ideas and images of how the world works, limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting. Consequently, researchers believe that change is still needed (Auerbach, 2012; Pushor, 2012). It was found that schools are often still portraying themselves as protectorate (Pushor, 2012), expecting students to be ready for school (Burke & Burke, 2005), hiring predominantly white administrators and teachers who are not necessarily open to listening to families (Cottrell, 2010), and who still hold parents at arm's length (Henderson et al., 2007). Once these problematic beliefs are recognized and refuted, Auerbach's (2010) dream of authentic school-family partnerships would be more easily achievable.

Implications/Recommendations

Implications for practice. In looking at the type of leader best suited to building school-family partnerships as defined by Auerbach (2010), with a focus on social justice, cultural responsiveness, parent advocacy, trust-building, and community empowerment, the question is, how might this type of leader behave or how might this type of transformed school look?

Firstly, Hiatt-Michael (2006) suggested furthering teacher education on the topic of parental engagement so that teachers are more willing to work closely with school families. Universities could implement courses based on parental engagement and school-family partnerships within the College of Education so that each new teacher is prepared to join a community comfortable with the idea of working alongside parents and families. Administrators could encourage school divisions to offer professional development for their current teachers as well as making the school-family partnership a large part of the school norms and vision when preparing each school year.

Some challenges with implementing university courses or professional development might be the lack of professionals in the field of parent engagement and the challenge of creating and approving courses within the university. Although there are some post-graduate options at the University of Saskatchewan, more training would be necessary to reach a larger group of educators and new teachers. Without this further education, school leaders may not feel adequately prepared in leading conversations around school-family partnerships as a part of the school norms and vision.

Administrators would also have to be prepared to have crucial conversations around potential bias, stereotypes, and assumptions that stem from many educators' historically western worldview (Cottrell, 2010). Administrators may even have to encourage potentially uncomfortable discussions around racism and privilege. These types of conversations would be necessary not only in schools with a high Aboriginal and immigrant population but also in schools with very few, if any, diversity. Those schools with a low population of Aboriginal and immigrant students have a unique challenge to animate similar discussions with their less diverse students around bias, stereotypes, privilege, acceptance, and reconciliation. At that point, with teachers trained in parental engagement, prepared to have critical conversations with students backed by a culture of inclusivity established within the school, a staff could put work into action while taking on the simultaneous roles of guest and host (Pushor, 2007).

Again, the challenge to this goal of animating critical discussion with staff and students would be the potential feeling of inadequacy or unpreparedness. A school leader without the experience or comfort-level to lead the discussion around such issues would not be able to model how teachers should facilitate these potentially emotional and challenging discussions with their students. A school leader without the knowledge of what being a guest/host entails would also find it challenging to present the idea to their staff and community and would most likely need to study and discuss the concept with colleagues.

How do administrators on the school landscape behave as guests/hosts? Being a host means extending invitations multiple times and in multiple ways; it means welcoming parents, more than simply welcoming them into the school building, but welcoming them into the process of schooling in numerous ways that parents may deem significant. Host educators have a simultaneous function as guests. Therefore, even in the role of host, staff members need to remember that the school belongs to the community. Most of the time, the educators and administrators come from outside of the community. However, it is still easier for an administrator to reach out to families and to support teachers to do the same than it is for parents to reach into the school (Pushor, 2007). Therefore, administrators and teachers need to remember that the responsibility for building these partnerships between the school and home rest primarily with school staff as inviting hosts (Henderson, et al., 2007).

This interaction may seem like an overwhelming challenge in some schools. Community members who are not used to being a part of the school culture, may find it difficult to accept the initial invitations to be more engaged in the school. It would take patience and determination to continue to invite and create opportunity and space within the school for families and community members. Also, transfers among schools can negatively affect the ability to build these communities; at times, school leaders and staff just begin to establish trusting relationships and a comfort with the role of guest/host in one school community when they are transferred to another school within the division. These issues would be challenges to consider when transferring staff, which would add to the already difficult job of superintendents when placing staff in schools, especially in large school divisions.

However, community schools are unique in this challenge of guest/host because it already has an established set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. "Community schools have an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement with the goal of improved student learning, building stronger families, and healthier communities" (Coconino Coalition for Children and Youth, 2017, para. 3). Epstein's (1995) framework of parental involvement/engagement supports the community school example by offering parenting courses, being sure to have constant communication with families, offering volunteering opportunities, proposing ideas for learning at home, creating opportunities for decision-making, and collaborating with community members (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). With this framework in mind and knowing, as Stein (2016) suggested, that leadership is what gives an organization its vision and its ability to translate that vision into reality, administrators have a significant role to play in developing schools that are the centre of the community and are open to everyone. Once more, this would require educating our school leaders to be able to establish a school vision that includes school-family partnerships.

More implications for practice would include creating a school environment to be as welcoming as possible (Pushor, 2007). Administrators could encourage educators and community members to work

together to create space for families to spend time learning together and building relationships. A parent room where the community could offer parenting courses and other courses of interest regularly to support families would be a welcome addition to any school. Collaboration with elders and families would help an administrator know which courses would be of most interest and the diverse communities could offer cultural courses to help Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal adults learn more about traditional ceremonies and ways-of-knowing. Administrators could also make space for community partners to support the whole child as well as their families: physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. These types of supports would look different depending on the community.

In terms of creating an inspiring and welcoming school environment, administrators could make Aboriginal ways of knowing evident in the building by hanging Aboriginal flags, displaying Aboriginal art, posting Treaty declarations, and using Aboriginal language so that Aboriginal students and family feel seen, safe, and respected. It would also be important to celebrate all cultures and how they all come together in our diverse schools (Lopez, 2015). This celebration would also be important when including families new to Canada and families of all cultures and backgrounds.

Cottrell (2010) found other specific practices that administrators could consider when envisioning transformation in schools. He mentioned i) enhanced early learning opportunities and meaningful partnerships with parents early on, ii) the delivery of culturally responsive instruction by relational educators, iii) ensuring adequate time for learning, iv) ensuring smaller class sizes catering to heterogeneous student groupings, and v) creating models of governance where Aboriginal communities have meaningful control over their children's education (Cottrell, 2010). Stein (2016) agreed, especially with Cottrell's (2010) last proposition concerning meaningful control, and he encouraged active school leaders to serve to unite people by providing opportunities for meaningful participation in the decision making process.

It is also understood that not all parents will need the same level of partnership. Once that level of communication is established in the building of a relationship between the school and family, parents will be able to share their stories; maybe they cannot attend an event because they work two jobs, they have younger siblings that are ill, or other reasons that may hinder their involvement in their child's schooling, yet not their engagement. Being able to think outside the box and, without judgement, coming up with a solution together would be part of that trusting partnership. This is a place where technology would be helpful as some community members can share concerns and ideas through email or communication apps.

Therefore, one of the biggest challenges of Saskatchewan school leaders, its education system, ministry, and boards would be in creating an opportunity for all families and community members to make decisions concerning their children's education. It would be ideal to create models of governance where Aboriginal communities have meaningful control over their children's education, at the very least committees for specific learning improvement plans where educators could share curriculum outcomes and where families and community members would be equal funds of knowledge in an authentic partnership.

Implications for research. As stated by Riehl (2012), both the more traditional domain of research on leadership for organizational effectiveness and student learning, and the more emergent domain of research on leadership for social justice have room for conceptualizing the role of families and communities in promoting learning as well as defining leaders' roles in the partnership. Success in developing and uniting these lines of research will depend on researchers' collective ability to articulate clear theories and then on their ability to find ways to document the conditions and processes to measure their effects on student learning. As the literature review demonstrates, these partnerships are complex, and the leadership research field would do well to develop comprehensive models and gather persuasive evidence. Researchers will need to adopt common definitions, methods, and metrics.

Conclusions

Most people think of schools as serving a single purpose; teachers teach, and students learn. However, throughout studies on how children learn best, researchers have found that parental engagement does make a difference in student achievement (Hiatt-Micheal, 2006). Yet, schools should not take parental engagement for granted (Pushor, 2007). Families, especially Aboriginal families, are looking for deeper, authentic partnerships (Joint Task Force, 2013), the type of partnerships described by Auerbach (2010) as “valu[ing] relationship building, dialogue, and power sharing” (p. 729). It is essential that leadership for authentic school partnerships go beyond symbolic activities. Although many administrators are working towards this ideal, evidence shows that schools are still not supporting all students and their families (Government of Saskatchewan, 2012, 2014). Unfortunately, it seems that Aboriginal students and families are the ones suffering the most (Cottrell, 2010). When looking at the current perceptions of schools, their leaders, as well as the families and students that attend, it is evident that transformation is necessary.

Research shows that if school administrators were inspired to facilitate schools where families genuinely have a voice, they would need to spend the time to build important relationships with families, to model and encourage staff to do the same. They would need to point the way to possibilities beyond the traditional involvement of parents towards leadership for authentic school-family partnerships. They would achieve this goal of authentic partnerships through establishing a joint definition of school-family partnership. They continue the work by recognizing the key beliefs, strategies, and conditions that support this type of partnership, which include ideologies of social justice, cultural responsiveness, parent advocacy, and community empowerment, all built on a strong foundation of trust. These administrators would need to be willing to create change and encourage others to do the same. In this way, the future would be a reality where families would realize the deep school-family relationships/partnerships that they crave. By preparing new teachers and current school leaders in this model of school family partnerships based on the definition of Auerbach (2010), including other research that refers in varying ways to this ideal, our school divisions would be better able to balance the disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students' achievement and mitigate inequality in schools.

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Tending the Garden: Instructional Leadership and the Impact on Student Learning and Achievement

Jalynn Middleton

Abstract

A healthy garden requires nourishment, stimulation, and most importantly, proper care; instructional leadership that impacts student learning requires the same. According to Leithwood and Riehl (2003), school leadership plays a significant role in student learning and achievement. School-based administrators can have a major influence on student learning through a variety of practices and priorities. Through a reflection of the literature, there are numerous intersecting themes across impactful instructional leadership practices. Foremost, school-based administrators must foster a student-centered culture of learning. An effective culture of learning requires instructional leaders to establish a co-constructed vision consisting of strategic and realistic goals while simultaneously building teacher capacity by leading and participating in purposeful professional learning. Lastly, instructional leaders need to promote shared leadership and collaboration amongst staff. Therefore, it is an instructional leader's ability to influence other areas of learning that solidifies their central role in student success.

Purpose Statement

It has been proposed that instructional leadership has a direct impact on student achievement. According to Leithwood and Riehl (2003), "school leadership is the second greatest influence on student learning, second only to teacher effectiveness" (p. 4). This paper will examine the various intersecting principles and roles of instructional leaders and surveys their impacts on student learning and achievement.

Research Questions

The overarching research question is: How does instructional leadership impact student learning and achievement?

1. What are the expected leadership practices of instructional leaders?
2. How can instructional leaders develop a culture of learning that supports student success?
3. How does creating a vision, supporting professional learning, and engaging in shared leadership impact student learning?

Significance

Researchers believe that school-based administrators have an impact on student learning through a variety of influences (Adams et al., 2017). Therefore, current and aspiring administrators must have the knowledge and ability to reflect upon their current instructional leadership practices and understand the impact of these practices on student achievement. As schools grow more and more complex in an

ever-changing society, it is critical that instructional leaders maintain focus on the purpose of education: student learning. School-based administrators have a duty to facilitate numerous impactful practices and focus on priorities to optimize student learning for their students.

Research Methods

This research paper is a literature review. I focused on gathering a variety of peer-reviewed articles, journals, books, and doctoral dissertations. I primarily gathered data through the educational search engine ERIC OVID - Education Resources Information Center with key search terms: “academic achievement”, “student learning”, “leadership”, and “instructional leadership”. Due to limited results of previous valid ERIC terms, I chose not to specify types of research used. I was concerned I was too specific with principal or teacher surveys that my results would be too restricted. After gathering a variety of sources, I examined commonalities and differences, as well as further areas of study to consider.

Limitations

In terms of the literature analyzed, there are several limitations to note. First, the majority of the research studies surveyed were conducted in the United States, which has a reasonably larger student population and an emphasis on standardized testing. These factors may have influenced data results and, therefore, various findings. It would have been interesting to compare the American studies to further Canadian-based research. In addition to geographical limitations, the majority of the articles explored are more than five years old. Due to changing demographics and responsibilities of schools, it would have been ideal to use more present-day research.

Literature Review

The Gardener: Instructional Leadership

It is the gardener’s duty to cultivate, develop, tend, and consistently reassess the state of the garden. Similarly, instructional leaders have very complex and essential duties. According to Hanna (2010), instructional leadership is the acute focus by leadership on teaching and its effects on student achievement. Instructional leaders not only ensure professional development that enhances student learning, they also create a culture of learning conducive to academic achievement (Hattie, 2015). Introduced in the early 1980s, instructional leadership encourages school-based administrators to be hands-on leaders eagerly engaging in curriculum, instruction, and data collection side by side with teaching staff (Robinson, 2011). Instructional leaders understand the importance of teaching and learning. They recognize that student achievement is deeply influenced by evaluation, communication, assessment, goal setting, and collaboration (Hattie, 2015). Stronge et al. (2008) also suggested that instructional leaders lead a learning community and promote shared leadership.

Instructional leaders collaborate and are a part of daily activities that take place in a school. Sahin (2011) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of instructional leadership on student learning. She concluded that school-based administrators need to be role models in their schools and can simply promote a positive learning environment by behaving in particular ways (Sahin, 2011). Sahin’s (2011) investigation examined school culture and instructional leadership and was conducted using questionnaires and personal meetings with teachers. The findings of the study indicated that, overall, staff had very positive feedback towards leaders who elected to use an instructional leadership approach (Sahin, 2011). Instructional leaders need to be focused, intentional, and willing to grow and learn with the staff they lead. Therefore, to impact student achievement, instructional leaders must skillfully balance many intersecting practices, beginning with establishing a culture of learning.

Preparing the Soil: School Culture

The gardener plays a vital role in providing the conditions necessary for a healthy garden. The same roles apply to an instructional leader seeking to develop a school culture that is conducive to student

learning. Sarason (1996) suggested that fundamental changes in student learning are unlikely unless the school culture is altered.

In a peer-reviewed study conducted by Adams et al. (2017), the authors analyzed the ability of school-based administrators to support student learning capacity. They sought to provide evidence that school-based administrators influence student learning capacity by facilitating a culture of learning, specifically by supporting the psychological needs of students and intentional interactions with staff. According to the authors, "Principals, through the push and pull of leadership, can influence teachers and other school members to create learning conditions that activate the natural curiosity, interest, and motivation in students" (Adams et al., 2017, p. 562). The study collected data from over 3,000 students across 70 high poverty and high non-Caucasian schools in the United States. Three hypotheses about principal support for psychological student needs related to autonomy, competence, and student grit were tested. The findings of the study corresponded with the authors' theories of a school-based administrator's impact on student learning capacity. Instructional leaders were relied upon to interact meaningfully with teachers about student needs and facilitate learning environments that promoted necessary instructional practices. When school-based administrators did this, students experienced autonomy and competence, supporting learning environments resulting in an increased student learning capacity. Adams et al. (2017) concluded that instructional leaders who focus on fostering a culture of learning had a positive impact on student learning.

Authors Day et al. (2016) conducted a different peer-reviewed study that analyzed a combination of transformational and instructional leadership practices and how they improved student learning. Data was drawn from a three-year impact study that examined the correlation between school-based administrators at effective and improving schools, and student outcomes through standardized testing. This multifaceted study included literature analysis, national surveys, and in-depth case studies at 20 schools, all of which focused on perceived strategies for student improvement. The key findings of the study proved that school-based administrators could directly impact student achievement by layering various instructional and transformative leadership strategies. The authors concluded that increased student learning was not simply a direct result of a principal's leadership style but rather the principal's ability to identify school needs and implement leadership strategies over time so they become rooted within the school's culture. Day et al. (2016) stated:

There was consistent evidence in the first survey that both principals and key staff were positive about the role of instructional leadership strategies in promoting and sustaining the academic standards and expectations in their schools, which, to some extent, might be expected given the study's focus on more effective/improved schools. (p. 231)

Through a variety of research methods, the authors determined that successful school-based administrators build cultures of learning that promote student engagement and thereby increase student achievement.

Comparatively, scholars Hallinger et al. (1996) directed a peer-reviewed study that analyzed the effect of school-based administrators on student reading achievements. The study examined reading scores in a sample of 87 United States elementary schools and used principal and teacher questionnaires to collect data. They examined the relationship between school variables, instructional leadership, and school culture on student achievement scores. Surprisingly, the study found that there was no direct impact of instructional leadership on student scores. Rather, the results showed that school-based administrators have an indirect impact on student learning through their ability to foster a culture of learning. Hallinger et al. (1996) discovered that variables such as parental engagement, gender, student socioeconomic status, and principal's experience all influence the effectiveness of the principal's impact on student learning.

Just as a gardener ensures the quality of the soil prior to planting a garden, school-based administrators must ensure that a school's culture is one that supports and encourages student learning and achievement. Through studies such as these, numerous authors determined that successful school-based

administrators build cultures of learning that promote student engagement and thereby increase student achievement. The research suggests that instructional leaders should prioritize meaningful interactions with staff and students, and most importantly, identify school needs and implement strategies to improve student capacity. Therefore, for a cultural shift to occur, a process of inquiry and reflection to establish a clear vision must transpire.

Planting the Seeds: Establishing a Vision and Goals

Planting the seeds for a culture of learning requires instructional leaders to co-construct a school vision with specific and realistic goals related to student achievement. This focus, according to DuFour et al. (2002), attempts “to move from a culture that has a primary emphasis on teaching to a culture with a primary emphasis on learning” (p. 13). Robinson (2011) explained that establishing a vision and goals indirectly impacts student achievement by focusing on and coordinating the work of adults around the needs of students. According to Stronge et al. (2008), “A successful principal must have a clear vision that shows how all components of a school will operate at some point in the future” (p. 4). This vision plays a critical role in student success because it is the driving force behind all teacher instruction. Setting specific goals increases student achievement because teachers believe they have the capacity to achieve them (Robinson, 2011).

In Leithwood and Sun’s (2012) meta-analytic review, they argued that when strengthening school culture, leaders must encourage a foundation of trust and empathy and consistently refocus staff on the school vision and agreed upon beliefs. Authors Stronge et al. (2008) emphasized the importance of sustaining the school vision by ensuring the quality of instruction through classroom monitoring and management. The nurturing of a clear vision and goals for learning is consistently stressed by school-based administrators of high-achieving schools (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Effective leaders are intentional when creating a positive school culture. They develop a shared vision that encourages all to input their ideas and they have high expectations of staff. These leaders also offer support on a continual basis and model valued behavior, beliefs, and values (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Leithwood and Sun (2012) explained that by having a shared vision and goals, high expectations, and standard practices, leaders could positively impact student learning.

It is also important to note that students should be involved in the process of creating a common vision and that their perceived school experience has a direct impact on the school culture and thus their learning (Bell & Kent, 2010). Having leadership invite students to participate in developing vision and encouraging student’s voices is an effective way to improve student learning. Data from Bell and Kent’s (2010) study were collected through a series of interviews of students from the same school on the values and culture of their school. The authors concluded that students referred to the school culture as egalitarian. Students felt the need to conform to the organizational culture of the school. When asked who influenced the school culture the most, students concluded that it was not one person who set the tone of the culture but a combination of many people (Bell & Kent, 2010). The collaborative efforts of staff and students to form a school vision and establish clear and realistic goals play an integral part in promoting a positive school culture and thereby increasing student achievement.

Therefore for student learning to blossom, the proper seeds of vision and goals need to be planted. However, as Robinson (2011) explained, establishing a clear vision and set of goals is not always easy. Competing agendas and policies through governments and school divisions can lead to disjointed and unrealistic goal setting. Hence, it is critical the goals outlined by instructional leaders need to be clear, concise, and, most importantly, student-centered. DuFour, et al. (2002) suggested that school improvement plans should not only focus on goals which affect student learning but that they are also “the vehicle for organized, sustained school improvement” (p. 24). Built into a culture of learning is an aspect of ongoing self-audit to assess if student learning is occurring. Every goal laid out by leadership and school data teams should have an impact on student learning. There is a good deal of monitoring done by instructional leaders and of data collection, which is then dissected to try and better understand if students are learning (Dufour et al., 2002). Data collection and its interpretation play a significant role in instructional leadership and the impact on student achievement.

Germinating the Seeds: Professional Learning

In a healthy garden, germination will occur once water begins to fill the seeds, triggering the process of growth. Germination is comparable to the necessity of instructional leaders participating in and leading professional learning to improve student learning. School-based administrators who have proven to impact student learning are active participants in professional learning. Robinson's (2011) research of high-impact leadership revealed that the leadership dimension with the largest effect size on student learning is the school-based administrators' role in promoting and participating in teaching and learning. School-based administrators need to be participants in the learning process to encourage learning in their own schools (Stronge et al., 2008). Robinson (2011) agreed, stating, "Leaders' close involvement in building such capacity gives them a clear understanding of the conditions and the support teachers need to learn more effective instructional practices" (p. 10). Therefore the most powerful professional development occurs when the leader participates.

In a peer-reviewed study by Robinson et al. (2008), the authors examined the impact of various leadership styles on student outcomes. By analyzing the differences between different types of leadership styles rather than one, the authors recognized that leadership impact relies heavily on the type of practice in which school-based administrators engage. The authors analyzed 27 published studies. They conducted two meta-analyses: one looking at the effects of transformational and instructional leadership practices, and the second comparing the effects of five derived sets of leadership practices. The findings of the study exposed that instructional leadership had three to four times the effect size of transformational leadership. By comparing instructional and transformational practices, they found that school-based administrators who promote, participate, and assist in the development of professional learning had a large effect size on student achievement (Robinson et al., 2008).

In another peer-reviewed study by Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) the authors analyzed how principal leadership in high schools impacts student achievement. The study investigated how various factors, including school culture, parental engagement, and teacher professional learning facilitated by school-based administrators, increased student learning. The authors collected data through teacher surveys which were administered to all Chicago public high school teachers in the 2006-2007 school year. Connections between leadership, school structure, teacher capacity, and student achievement scores were examined. The authors found that within the same school, differences in teacher capacity were directly linked to leadership primarily through the quality of professional development. Among different schools, variations of teaching capacity and student achievement were connected to principal leadership.

Timperley (2011) defined professional learning as "an internal process in which individuals create professional knowledge through interaction...in a way that challenges previous assumptions and creates new meaning" (p. 5). She recognized professional learning as an ongoing systematic process. High impact professional learning encompasses numerous characteristics. Robinson (2011) stated that effective professional learning always begins by identifying student needs and the relationship between teaching and student learning. Additionally, high impact professional learning offers teachers numerous opportunities to learn, utilizes external expertise, is respectful of time, integrates theory, and is worthwhile (Robinson, 2011). Impactful professional learning includes creating a high-quality collaborative environment for teachers to improve their teaching (Robinson, 2011). DuFour et al. (2002) emphasized its importance and suggested that collaboration should be "embedded into every aspect of the school culture" (p. 11). The ability of teams to work together is the key to achieving success in a professional learning community. In addition to increased teacher capacity through professional learning, shared leadership amongst staff plays a crucial role in student learning.

Stimulating Growth: Shared Leadership and Collaboration

A healthy garden requires consistent stimulation to ensure proper growth, similar to the need for instructional leaders to encourage shared leadership. According to Robinson (2011), "Instructional leadership is performed by all teachers who have some responsibility, beyond their own classroom, for the quality of learning and teaching" (p. 82). Leadership both from administrators and teaching staff is an important and critical component of student learning. Traditional schools usually have administrators

in the leadership role and the teaching staff as the followers or implementers. In contrast, DuFour et al. (2002) viewed administrators as “leaders of leaders” (p. 22). Although administrators still maintain their leadership positions and prominent roles, they enter into a power sharing arrangement with the other teachers and their role becomes one of a facilitator. The result is teacher empowerment and increased student achievement.

This new way of teaching staff to evaluate their roles has a profound impact on the learning culture within a school. Calhoun et al. (1993) suggested, this new role certainly changes the culture of the educators and the roles they play. In a professional learning community, teachers would then, “...become reflective practitioners who continually expand their repertoire of tools and study groups and as faculties work together to implement new teaching strategies and curriculums” (Calhoun et al., 1993, p. 11). Having staff evaluate their own roles has the effect of changing the hierarchical top-down approach of traditional school structures. Further, Calhoun, et al. (1993) viewed this new structure or system as one of co-leadership. Communication is the key to “...co-ordinate ideas and actions, giving consideration to the energy and needs of different people across the organization and to the content and requirements of the initiatives” Calhoun et al., 1993, (p. 11). This is a system that works well for individuals who are able to hand over control of situations and programs for which they once were responsible. Mitchell and Sackney (2001) suggested that leadership can work “where leader and follower roles are interchanged on given issues.” (p. 6). A communicative relationship ensures the focus of instructional leaders and teaching staff remains on student learning.

According to Robinson (2011), “A well-functioning professional learning community will bring greater diversity of thinking to the analysis and resolution of particular teaching problems and thus help its members to break free of self-limiting assumptions and practices” (p. 106). The result is a heightened sense of power realized by teaching staff. According to Danna (2004), teachers have a sense of empowerment that was previously unknown. Collaborating with peers has been proven to boost teacher capacity, confidence, and sense of belonging (Robinson, 2011). Although teachers have been relatively autonomous in their classrooms over the years, decisions regarding school improvement have typically been left to administrators. In a school culture focused on learning, Danna (2004) suggested that “teachers and administrators work together in a new way to highlight strengths and weaknesses in student performance and to come up with strategies to address the weaknesses” (p. 26). This new relationship serves to provide teachers with input that is valued and coveted in a way that has not been previously seen. Mitchell and Sackney (2000) suggested that this type of leadership is shared amongst a community of leaders in a school and that “this does not mean that leadership is shared by all or that there is no place for the school principal. Instead, it means that leadership is enacted throughout the school by a variety of individuals and in a variety of ways” (p. 93). This new sense of power for teachers is one that some will welcome, and others will resist. However, with time it should become more comfortable for teachers and administrators alike.

A peer-reviewed article by Hallinger and Heck (2010) analyzed the findings from numerous quantitative studies to understand how leadership impacts student learning and contributes to school capacity for improvement. The article compared four conceptual perspectives of linking leadership and learning: direct effects model, mediated effects model, reverse mediated effects model, and reciprocal effects model. The effectiveness of these four models was compared to the pattern of leadership, school improvement capacity and learning outcomes in data collected from 198 primary schools over a four-year period in the United States. The study revealed that results favored perspectives on school improvement leadership as a reciprocal process. The findings supported that collaborative leadership, rather than individual leadership, provided more opportunity for practical school improvement. Therefore, collaborative school leadership can improve capacity and ensure growth in student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

Collaboration plays an integral role in improving student achievement. Specifically, having time to collaborate with colleagues is extremely important. It is an instructional leader's duty to give educators an opportunity to focus on the relationship between teaching and student learning (Robinson, 2011). DuFour (1997) suggested that if collaboration is important, then time within a normal day or week must

be provided by instructional leaders. DuFour (1997) maintained, “a school functioning as a learning organization would recognize that providing teachers with time to consider and discuss how they might improve the effectiveness of the school enhances the productivity” (p. 83). Mitchell and Sackney (2000) would agree that learning and collaboration are essential, stating it is “through interaction with and between a number of people who operate as a community of learners” (p. 45) that positive results can be realized. In order for student learning to flourish, teacher capacity and shared leadership need to be cultivated. Leadership both from administrators and teaching staff is an important and critical component of effective student learning and achievement.

The Final Yield: Implications and Recommendations

Implications for Practice

A focus on student learning is essential and should be embedded within every school community. Instructional leaders can improve the outcomes of students by putting in considerable amounts of time and resources in establishing a school-based culture of learning, setting a clear vision and specific goals, leading and participating in professional learning, and promoting shared leadership and collaboration (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). As the research has indicated, it is the principal’s role as the gardener to develop a culture of learning that eventually facilitates all other factors leading to student learning. Before a school can develop into a learning community, there needs to be a shift within the administration, teaching staff, and the overall philosophy of the school. If school-based administrators want to change and improve the outcomes of students, a process of inquiry, and reflection into the school climate must occur first and foremost.

A valuation of school culture can easily be attained through a snapshot-like assessment. Saskatoon Public School Division uses the Tell Them from Me Survey to gather data and understanding of school culture. Students and staff alike answer a short survey on their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about school, learning, safety, and other critical elements. Surveys such as these provide instructional leaders with valuable data to use for school improvement. Thereby a shift in focus from the traditional instructional aspects of education to an emphasis on improving school culture must be reinforced in order to have a positive impact on student learning. This shift, initiated by a school’s instructional leader, plays an integral role in cultural change necessary to form an effective learning community. The research shows that academic achievement is quite dependent on school culture and that student success is affected by leadership. Therefore, it is recommended that instructional leaders recognize the vital role that school culture plays in impacting student learning and ensure that the current status of their school’s culture is promptly assessed and a plan of action through a co-constructed vision is established. By implementing these intersecting roles and practices, instructional leaders can have a significant impact on student achievement and learning.

The principal’s focus on shifting to a culture of learning intersects with the need for a shared vision. This vision and the coinciding goals act as the seeds to growing an atmosphere of learning. Each year school staff and administrators in Saskatoon Public School Division complete a school action improvement plan. These plans focus on the school’s mission, values, and goals. The school then works throughout the year to achieve the goals set out in the plan. The goals outlined by the division and school staff need to be student-centered. School improvement plans continue to be an ongoing form of goal-setting in school divisions across the country. In a culture of learning, the focus on school improvement plans is very important. It drives home the concept of having a goal-oriented focus on student learning. In an impactful learning community, every goal in a school improvement plan should affect student learning. It is this focus that makes improvement plans so attractive for schools and organizations to adopt. I would recommend that in addition to co-creating a vision and school goals, instructional leaders need to perform regular audits of student learning by monitoring classrooms and engaging in meaningful conversations with staff on areas for improved professional learning.

In order for the garden of student learning to flourish, teacher capacity and shared leadership need to be stimulated. Leadership both from administrators and teaching staff is an important and critical component of an effective professional learning community. When shifting to a shared leadership model, the power of the collective group of administrators and staff is incredible. The primary task becomes how to harness the power and direct it in positive ways. Collaboration amongst staff is the key to bringing about positive change in a professional learning community. Therefore it is recommended that instructional leaders count on the expertise of teacher leaders to improve school effectiveness and actively participate in the professional learning themselves.

Implications for Research

As the research indicates, instructional leadership can be very complex and demanding. Canadian scholar Michael Fullan (2014) brought a different take to instructional leadership stating that this leadership style, "...has led the principalship down an unproductively narrow path of being expected to micromanage or otherwise directly affect instruction..." (p. 39). Fullan's take on instructional leadership raises some thought-provoking questions concerning the roles of leadership in monitoring curriculum and instruction, as well as the potential dangers of burnout and micromanaging. Hence future research could be done in these areas to weigh the possible risks and rewards of instructional leadership.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident through the research that instructional leadership has a major impact on student learning. Calhoun, et al. (1993) suggested that student learning should always be the primary focus and purpose for all school-related activities - after all, "student learning is the purpose of education" (p. 190). Similar to how a healthy garden requires a competent gardener, good roots, proper nourishment, and constant care, instructional leaders are responsible for ensuring that the schools in which they lead have environments conducive to learning, a set direction, and capable, confident, and collaborative staff. Although instructional leaders may not necessarily have a direct impact on student learning, it is their ability to influence staff, school culture, teacher capacity, and school vision that results in such a strong evidence of supporting student achievement. When all factors that influence student learning are intentionally brought together by instructional leaders, great learning and student success is the result.

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Supporting Female Leaders Entering K-12 Administration Positions

Amy Korver

Abstract

In the education sector, women are over-represented in the classroom but under-represented in administrative positions; identifying how the paths differ between females and males entering into administrative positions and the barriers women face entering into K-12 administration will provide insight into this disparity. Males and females are different in their preparation, education, time in the classroom, and confidence. Women face additional barriers, such as gender stereotypes that are evident in the hiring process and are impacted by decisions to focus on family commitments. Further, much has been written regarding feminine and masculine leadership styles and the impact they have on women in leadership. By comparing these characteristics to exemplary traits of leadership, one can question if dominant societal perceptions impact the hiring process. Last, a discussion as to how divisions can better support women entering education administration to ensure gender parity is discussed.

Purpose Statement

In the education sector, we know that females far outnumber the males as teachers, yet, males outnumber females in administrative positions (Diez Gutierrez, 2016; Eagly & Sczesny, 2009; Robinson et al., 2017; Shakeshaft, 1987; Shepard, 2017). Hearing from female administrators will provide insight into this issue. By examining the barriers and the facilitating factors that affect females entering into administrative positions, school divisions can better understand and support female leaders in the future.

Research Questions

1. Why are women underrepresented in K-12 administrative positions?
 - a. How do the paths of female administrators differ from men entering into administration positions?
 - b. What are the barriers that women face entering into K-12 administrative positions?
2. What are the perceived differences between feminine and masculine leadership style, and how might this impact leadership opportunities?
3. How can school divisions support females interested in entering administrative positions?

Significance

If society wants to truly embrace gender equality, it cannot just encourage young girls to pursue jobs that are in traditionally male-dominated sectors; we also need to provide role models of females in positions of leadership. We silently say to young girls that leadership is a masculine role and when they see that the majority of their teachers are female, but the leader of the school or school division is a male we continue to perpetuate the substantial gender roles that are still part of our culture (Eagly & Sczesny, 2009). This silent statement is a failure of the education system (Kerr et al., 2014). The disproportionate number of females entering into administration positions should be worrisome to school divisions because it is not reflective of their teaching staff. School divisions should be working to support and assist females to achieve administrative positions. This paper will examine potential barriers to that goal and strategies that school divisions can employ in addressing those barriers.

Research Methods

The majority of literature was found using the search terms “women in leadership,” “women administrators,” “female administrators,” and “female leadership”. Articles were secured using the ERIC OVID search engine and Google Scholar. Theses, dissertations, and books were found using the University of Saskatchewan’s Library search engine. Literature was examined for applicability in addressing the research questions.

Researcher’s Positionality

Recently a female administrator was appointed principal to a large school in my division. Talking with colleagues about the appointment, it was shocking to hear that they were concerned because “she was a woman.” Concerns centered around her being too soft on the students, and other stereotypically gendered responses, but had nothing to do with anything they knew about her leadership style or personality; rather, it was based on her gender. It is shocking that despite the vast number of women who work in the education system, men typically rise to administrative positions.

Limitations

One of the critical limitations is the lack of statistical data available for Saskatchewan or a broader Canadian context. Studies that are available can be upwards of fifteen to twenty years old, so comparisons and assumptions have to be made using available data from the United States educational system or extending the research to women in management positions extending beyond the school system. One can make assumptions based on parallels and similar experiences, but they do not reflect the present situation. Another important note is that participation in research studies is voluntary, which limits the experiences shared and the narrative told. Further, qualitative research tends to focus on a single school division, which limits the statistics provided.

Additionally, it appears that most studies have assumed the heteronormative view of families. The literature frequently references the “husband” as a spouse or partner and extend the heteronormative view to “household duties” such as child-raising, elder care, and housework.

Literature Review

The literature review provides an overview of the research available regarding female administration. By first examining the statistics of female representation in the workforce outside of education, then narrowing the available statistics to the education sector, and finally narrowing the data to a Saskatchewan context, it allows a comprehensive understanding of gender disparity in broader society and the educa-

tion sector. Next, an overview of female paths to administration positions and how they differ from male administrators, the barriers women face once entering administration positions, and analysis of feminine and masculine leadership styles and how they compare to current trends of exemplary leadership traits will be presented. Last is a discussion on supporting more women to enter administrative positions.

Overview of Available Data

Despite it being 2018, women are still frequently underrepresented throughout society in management and leadership positions. It is commonly pointed that more women are working outside the home than ever before (Barreto et al., 2009) and that more women are in middle management (Eagly & Sczesny, 2009). However, in corporations, men still hold a vast majority of upper management positions where decision-making authority occurs (Eagly & Sczesny, 2009). In Canadian corporations, women make up 45% of entry-level jobs, 35% of director positions, 25% of vice presidents or senior vice president positions, and 15% of CEO's. Further, women are 30% less likely to be promoted from entry-level to a manager and 60% less likely to advance from a director to a vice president within corporations (McKinsey Global Institute, 2017). These statistics are comparable to other countries around the world—women form only 10% of the top executives in the European Union and in the United States women make up less than 16% of the corporate leaders and 15% of the board of directors of Fortune 500 companies (Barreto et al., 2009).

One could assume that these statistics appear only in male-dominated professions, yet, the gender discrepancy extends in female-dominated occupations as well, such as education, social work, and nursing (Eagly & Sczesny, 2009). In the education field, men typically rise to leadership positions such as vice-principal, principal, superintendent, and director of education more often than women despite comprising 24% of the workforce (Lennon, 2014). The question remains as to why, in such a female-dominated profession, men tend to rise to the top in leadership positions? Today, on average, statistics show that around 75% of teachers are female, and only 25% of administrators are female (Robinson et al., 2017). This occurrence has been coined, 'the glass escalator' (Williams as cited Eagly & Sczesny, 2009) meaning that men quickly ascend career ladders faster than women, even in professions where they are in the minority.

Finding information on female administrators in a Canadian context, or more specifically in a Saskatchewan context, proves to be difficult. Klein (2003) was able to collect data through personal communication with the Canadian Teacher's Federation. She summarized that 76% of elementary teachers were female, and 49% held leadership roles; in secondary education, women made up 48% of teachers and 30% of administrative positions in Canada (Klein, 2003). Narrowed to Saskatchewan, 72% of women held elementary teaching positions, and 43% held secondary positions while 39% of elementary school administrators were women and 24% of secondary administrators were female (Klein, 2003). It is important to note that this data does not divide the data between males and females in vice principalship and principalship roles.

The statistics from Canada and Saskatchewan contexts are similar to more current data on teachers in the United States and Spain. In Spain, 8.5% of women teach pre-school or primary school, 57.8% of females teach secondary; with regard to administrative positions, 38.6% are female in elementary schools (Diez Gutierrez, 2016). Diez Gutierrez (2016) also noted the trend of women administrators sticking to elementary, whereas men typically go to high school. This trend was also pointed out by Lennon (2014). Extending the data to the role of superintendent also provides insight into the gender disparity in education, Robinson et al. (2017) reported that 25% of superintendents in the United States are female, leading them to cite Bjork (1999) asserting that the superintendency is the "most gender stratified (that is, segregated) occupation in the United States" (as cited in Robinson et al., 2017, p. 2).

Finding data continues to be limited; very little data shows a whole picture of female administrators in the education system. Researchers often utilize existing data for their papers. For example, Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) relied on the American Association of School Administrators survey that collected voluntary data from superintendents; this data was originally reported in 2007-2008. As another

example, Robinson et al. (2017) used statistics from the 2015 Mid-Decade Survey issued to superintendents. Both only collected data from the United States; Canadian data was not available.

The Path to Administrative Positions

Research shows that women tend to be more prepared than men when they enter administrative positions (Cui, 2006; Kruse & Krumm, 2016; Ringler et al., 2001; Robinson et al., 2017). Females tend to have increased classroom teaching experience, more education, and take advantage of more professional development than their male counterparts (Kruse & Krumm, 2016). Women, on average, tend to wait to apply for administrative positions until they have met all the requirements needed—60% of women, compared to 5% of men, wait to apply (Hoff & Mitchell, as cited in Kruse & Krumm, 2016).

Females tend to have more education degrees (at a bachelor, masters, or doctoral level) than men, which connects to the research presented that women tend to prepare in advance for administrative positions through degrees and professional development. Women outnumber men in post-secondary education administration programs; Ringler, et al. (2001) cited that 51% of doctoral degrees granted are to females. This statistic is reflected in Kruse and Krumm's (2016) study; female participants completed more than the required educational degrees and teaching positions before applying for jobs. In Saskatchewan, an increase in professional development relates to females frequently participating in the Saskatchewan Principal's Short Course offered by the Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit, professional development workshops offered by the Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit (through the Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation) in addition to obtaining a graduate degree (Cui, 2006). Similar findings in Kruse and Krumm (2016) also noted investment in professional associations by women before becoming a principal.

In addition to formal education, females tend to spend more time in the classroom than men do before entering an administrative position. On average, a woman spends seven to ten years teaching compared to five to six years (Kruse & Krumm, 2016). This classroom teaching experience lends itself to increased knowledge and familiarity with curriculum and instructional leadership, leading some females to believe that they are preferred for their expertise in curriculum and instructional leadership over men in the interview process. This trend is also evident in the perceived hiring process for superintendents. Female superintendents cite that they believe the reason they were hired is "due to admin experience and curriculum and instruction knowledge, while men believe they were hired for their personal characteristics" (Robinson et al., 2017, p. 4). Further, consideration of gender has come up in discussions regarding formulating administrative teams within a school; "if there is already a woman in one of the administrative positions in the school then a man would fill the other positions. It was not a problem for two males to have administrative positions in the same school, but it was for two women" (Cui, 2006, p. 87-88). It should be noted, that the prolonged time in the classroom may be tied to family duties and child-raising, rather than a desire to gain as much classroom experience as possible before taking on an administrative position (Kruse & Krumm, 2016).

Despite having extensive teaching experience and education, it is often assumed that women lack a sense of confidence in applying for administrative positions and that women need more affirmation than men when applying for a job (Cui, 2006; Kruse & Krumm, 2016; Robinson et al., 2017). It is common for women to be asked or encouraged to apply for administrative positions (Kruse & Krumm, 2016). This networking system links to the importance of informal and formal mentors for women; 100% of respondents in Cui's (2006) study were influenced by an informal mentor (someone they truly admired) and who encouraged them to pursue administration. Similar to the theory of prolonged time in the classroom being connected to family commitments, it may also be that females are more willing to take on education degrees, extra professional development, or activity with a professional association, rather than the day to day grind of an administrative position as it fits into their lives (with a shorter commitment period), which may be especially true for those with a young family (Kruse & Krumm, 2016).

To summarize, women are often more than qualified for administrative positions, and the talent pool for future administrators is available; however, then the question lies, why are they not getting the jobs?

Barriers Women Face Entering K-12 Administration

Gender stereotypes still exist in society and are considered to be a barrier for females trying to achieve management positions or administrative positions. Eagly and Sczedny (2009) affirmed that gender stereotypes are cultural, stating that “the beliefs that individuals hold about women, men and leaders tend to be consensual and therefore are part of the culture” (p.22). It is this cultural belief that seems to be the undercurrent for any barriers, internal or external, that women face. It is important to remember that organizations were designed to fit men’s lives and situations (Ibarra et al., 2013). Diez Gutierrez (2016) noted an example of this perception explaining that when men achieve a leadership position their achievement is celebrated and valued, even going so far as to state that it is considered acceptable for a man to devote less attention to his family if he holds a role of responsibility yet, often that the opposite reception can occur for a female. If a female is awarded a leadership position, it can be perceived by some as an additional problem that will correlate to the female’s other responsibilities such as family and household duties. In this case, the woman is perceived as a bad mother because she neglects her partner, spends less time with her children, and neglects household chores (Diez Gutierrez, 2016). Diez Gutierrez (2016) added to this observation that in the eyes of upper management, having a family can be viewed as a sign of stability for a man. Yet, for a woman, it can be seen as a burden or a distraction.

Yet, these gender roles seem to be embraced by women in our society today as well; in some ways, this belief system is perpetuated by and believed by women. Despite that the majority of women work outside the home, they still maintain gender roles to a certain extent. Studies show that women continue to take on a disproportionate portion of household and parenting duties (Diez Gutierrez, 2016; Garcia, 2015; Kruse & Krumm, 2016; Olsen, 2006; Shepard, 2000). In some cases, it is reported that the physical act of completing household chores is split, but women are considered to carry the mental load of this role, that is, they are planning, reminding, organizing calendars, schedules, and activities for a family. The Bright Horizons Family Index (2017) supported this stating that 72% of women, compared to 22% of fathers, feel it is their job to organize children’s schedules, 63% of women have missed work to care for a sick child, compared to 29% of men, and 59% of women handle the organization of household activities (p. 3). These statistics were slightly reflected in Garcia’s (2015) study when interviewing female principals; a resounding theme was the necessity to maintain a balance between the two roles, citing both as important priorities. Participants mentioned that in some cases, they have prioritized being a mom over their job, but they also noted that having an extensive support system through their spouse, and extended family, helps to maintain the balance. One could suspect that the differences presented in the Bright Horizons (2017) study would be slighter based on the interviews provided. It is evident that women in the role of administration do have to fight against a societal perception of cultural gender roles. “Society has conditioned many women to believe that they are less responsible mothers to their children and less caring wives to their husbands if they spend too much time pushing admin aspirations” (Sherman as cited in Olsen, 2006, p. 21) and that often society will perpetuate the notion that a woman cannot be both (Olsen, 2016). Diez Gutierrez (2016) also pointed to the societal norms, stating,

Low female representation in school leadership positions is more related to structural aspects of our society and culture that stem from the dominant patriarchal worldview transmitted from generation to generation, which is so ingrained that it is difficult to change (p. 344)

Interestingly in Diez Gutierrez’ (2016) study, 91.6% of men interviewed identified family responsibilities as a barrier preventing women from entering into administration positions, yet, 60% of women stated it was not—which seems to contradict some of the interviews researchers reported on (Klein, 2005; Olsen, 2006; Shepard, 2017; Sherman, 2000).

The century-old patterns of male dominance, patriarchy, and relationships outside of work feeds into the hiring process. Men often socially interact with upper management and superintendents outside of the workday. Dubbed the “old boys club theory,” this participation in masculine dominated activities (such as golf or hockey) creates strong interpersonal relationships and is seen to influence the hiring process (Diez Gutierrez, 2016; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Sczesny, 2009; Robinson et al., 2017). A female principal aptly described this networking as “the old way of hiring a principal, when all you needed

was a penis and hockey stick” (Sherman, 2000, p. 136). The idea of the “old boys club” can be extended to the role of coaching athletics—this acts as an entry point for male teachers. Kruse and Krumm (2016) noted that “65% of male superintendents previously coached athletics. Research supports the argument that coaching provides the easiest access to the high school principal’s position” (p.29). Shepard (2017) extended this past the superficial level of gender and personality and stated, that often when hiring, homosociality is applied. Often the hiring committee ensures that the person hired is not only just a good fit for the team but also selects people just like themselves; essentially, hiring committees try to clone the existing leaders (Shepard, 2017). These ideas frequently solidify beliefs about women in leadership positions, citing that an unspoken rule is often, if all things are equal, the man is always a better choice.

All of this combined—assumed female characteristics of leadership, barriers such as discrimination—lends itself to the “belief that women are ill-suited for educational leadership (Sperandio, 2015, p.417). Gender discrimination was identified as the main challenge (Cui, 2006), where 80% of principals in Saskatchewan interviewed answered “yes” to gender discrimination. This gender discrimination often extends to women being pigeon-holed into elementary administrative positions and being unable to move up into secondary positions, limiting women from entering into superintendent roles (Sperandio, 2015). More women lead elementary buildings, rather than high school (Kruse & Krumm, 2016; Robinson et al., 2017) and administration at a high school level typically leads to the superintendent positions (Robinson et al., 2017). Ibarra et al. (2013) identified this as second-generation gender bias,

Research has moved away from a focus on the deliberate exclusion of women and toward investigating “second-generation” forms of gender bias as the primary cause of women’s persistent underrepresentation in leadership roles. This bias erects powerful but subtle and often invisible barriers for women that arise from cultural assumptions and organizational structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently benefit men while putting women at a disadvantage. (p. 5)

Essentially this means that there is still something lurking in the background and that gender bias does not mean to exclude or even produce harm towards women; it is still subtly there acting as a gatekeeper in many organizations.

Feminine, Masculine, and Exemplary Leadership Styles

The majority of the research indicates that women have a distinct leadership style that tends to go against the general societal understandings of influential leaders (Cui, 2006, Diez Gutierrez, 2016, Garcia, 2015; Kerr et al., 2014). Leadership is often synonymous with masculine characteristics such as being assertive and controlling, disciplining when needed, possessing strategic decision-making skills, and a strong sense of confidence; these masculine models of leadership are more valued in organizations (Eagly & Sczesny, 2009; Garcia, 2015). There is a notion that the ideal leader shares the same qualities with the perfect man (Eagly & Sczeney, 2009) leading to a repeating cycle: men appear to be better suited to leadership roles, they seek and move into and attain powerful positions, thereby reinforcing the notion that they are better leaders (Ibarra et al., 2013). The idea that a feminine style of leadership is different from the expected assertive and authoritarian leadership style that men possess is a common reason cited as to why women do not acquire administrative positions because they hold a “lack of identification with the prevailing model of leadership, and the differences between the methods, manners, and styles of female principals and those of their male colleagues” (Diez Gutierrez, 2016, p.347). Therefore, female leaders are frequently expected to approach leadership in a masculine way to be successful yet, are often looked down upon when they do (Garcia, 2015).

Many researchers point to feminine leadership characteristics as emphasizing relationships, focusing on instructional leadership, and owning strong communication skills. Sherman (2000) asserted that women in educational leadership tend to focus on holistic issues and are more student-centered than men. Women emphasize relationship building and building a sense of community among staff (Sherman, 2000) and are focused on collaboration, capacity building, and teamwork (Robinson et al., 2017). Females typically show characteristics such as being nurturing, comforting, optimistic, patient, and cooperative when interacting with stakeholders (Cui, 2006; Sherman 2000) and women value input from all the community and value student learning (Robinson et al., 2017).

As instructional leaders, women are determined to “make school a better place” (Robinson et al., 2017, p.9) and are motivated by improvement (Diez Gutierrez, 2016). Having more classroom teaching experience, females are likely to have a strength in instructional skills, and emphasize curriculum and instruction (Kerr et al., 2014, Robinson et al., 2017); interestingly, women often will self-identify as a teacher rather than an administrator when meeting people (Sherman, 2000) which points to their emphasis on instruction and students. Communication is also listed as a key feminine characteristic of leadership. Women possess the ability to articulate the overall school vision with stakeholders (Sherman, 2000) and can positively interact with teachers, parents, and the community, “We [women] are better at communicating with people, and I think that we are better at internalizing how they (others) are feeling, and we are more empathetic and more understanding” (Sherman, 2000, p.84). Kerr et al. (2014) stated that putting women in upper management is associated with improved communication, inclusive leadership, democracy, and empowerment.

This imbalance between the characteristics of a male leader and a female leader seems to contradict some of the current educational research on exemplary leadership. Frequently in educational leadership, leaders are encouraged to move away from bureaucracy and focus on collaboration and relationship building with stakeholders, emphasizing professional development, offering authentic feedback, and placing students at the center of all decisions (DeWitt, 2017; Fullan, 2011). Eagly and Sczesny (2009) also noted this change, stating that there is a shift to a coaching role or transformational leadership model moving away from authoritarianism. In the research conducted by Prime et al. (2009), they examined perceptions of female and male leaders and compared their effectiveness to ten qualities of leaders. They found that women typically outperformed men in mentoring, consulting, and team building, but males outperformed women in one area: problem-solving. Women tended to identify these qualities as masculine and feminine characteristics, but men did not recognize the difference and indicated that most of the traits were neutral (Prime et al., 2009).

Lennon (2014) pointed out that female principals outperform their male counterparts by 55% to 45% among the top-performing schools in the United States—one wonders if this is tied to the leadership style of female leaders or their gender? This question leads to another: “what is changing—stereotypes of women, men, or leaders?” (Eagly & Sczesny, 2007, p. 32). For the most part, one can assume that the roles and characteristics of leaders are changing, but not gender stereotypes. “Portrayals of managers in contemporary research have somewhat more emphasis on feminine qualities such as being helpful and supportive as well as on gender-neutral qualities such as being smart and dedicated. Still, masculine cultural qualities have continued to be well represented.” (Eagly & Sczesny, 2007, p.25).

Supporting Women Entering into K-12 Administration

If we want more women to take on administrative positions, then women need to see themselves in that role. One of the proposed solutions to conquer the gender discrepancy that occurs in educational leadership is to place a more significant emphasis on mentorship to aspiring female leaders. Mentorship allows women to see role models and will enable them to emulate their actions and evaluate their reactions against the actions of the role model (Ibarra et al., 2013). Current female administrators frequently support mentoring as a way to obtain a position (Sperandio, 2015). Mentorship “is a crucial career tool with positive implications for women and that access to a mentor relationship is essential for women educators who are aspiring to positions in the educational hierarchy” (Sherman, 2000, p. 141).

At times, the literature points to the importance of finding and accessing a mentor, and data frequently shows a high correlation between women who secured administrative positions and identified a mentor that assisted them but the research does not go into details regarding if it was a formalized process (Sperandio, 2015). Garcia (2015), Olsen (2006), Sherman (2000) all discussed the importance of formalized mentorship programs for women. Formalized programs would allow anyone to participate regardless of access to female role models.

In most cases, one can assume that successful female administrators had an informal mentor. Robinson et al.'s (2017) study showed that more than 95% of superintendents claimed a mentor assisted them throughout their career. In most studies, women have indicated that mentors guided them through the

transition from the classroom to administration and cited it as a reason for their success. Knowing that females tend to seek encouragement to apply for administrative positions and that not all aspiring administrators have a mentor, “it is likely that there are many female teachers who have leadership abilities and many skills who, because they lack a particular or important person to guide them and encourage them, are still working as classroom teachers” (Cui, 200, p.76). In this case, a formalized mentorship program offered by school divisions or the Ministry of Education may pull more women into the process. In general, the research supports finding a trusted colleague who can help to guide and encourage them through the transition from classroom teacher to administrator (Cui, 2006; Garcia, 2015; Robinson et al., 2017; Sperandio, 2015). It is usually assumed that the colleague would be a female, but Kruse and Krumm (2016), indicated the male mentorship is essential to support the transition to truly allow women a way in to administration and leadership. However, mentorship is still focused on socializing the woman and helping her to navigate a patriarchal organizational system. It is aimed at increasing the numbers of women, not about changing the conditions that allow women to succeed (Barreto et al., 2009). Mentorship seems like a surface solution for a much deeper problem, so instead, a fundamental shift in thinking needs to begin in society from understanding leadership as feminine and masculine and moving towards an understanding of the actions and characteristics of good leadership.

However, the barrier still occurs with many females who fail to recognize or acknowledge that gender bias still occurs, with many women unaware of having personally been victims of gender discrimination (Ibarra et al., 2013). Many women have worked hard to take gender out of the equation in their personal lives and do not acknowledge or believe the gender bias still occurs.

Summary

In conclusion, there is a definite gender disparity that exists in education administration. Women face barriers such as gender stereotypes that hinder their path into administration despite being over-qualified and more prepared than men entering the field. Further, despite assumed differences between masculine and feminine leadership styles, females are not getting hired due to exemplary leadership styles. School divisions must work at educating people on gender disparity and encouraging formal and informal mentorship.

Implications and Recommendations

Several implications and recommendations have emerged from the literature review, such as conducting a quantitative study on gender disparity in a Canadian context, education on gender bias, and what makes an excellent leader change the hiring process and a study to evaluate the impact female leaders have on students.

Implications for Research

As indicated by the data, very little comprehensive data is available on female and male leaders in Canada. It is imperative that a Canadian focused quantitative study examines administrators' gender, the perceived stereotypes, and how it relates to leadership positions. Relying on data that is upwards of twenty years old or current data from other countries does not paint a fair picture of the Canadian context and only allows for assumptions to be made. Further, much of the current research is based on qualitative data, which enables the researcher to go deep, expand, and reflect on the experiences of individual teachers, but it does not provide a realistic understanding of the whole picture; a qualitative study based on a handful of administrators' experiences does not reflect the reality for everyone.

Further, it is essential to recognize that women are not the only group disproportionately represented in the education system. Ideally, a comprehensive quantitative study would also extend to an examination of ethnicity and other areas of diversity, such as sexual orientation, religion, or culture. If embracing diversity is essential for student learning, students need to see teachers who reflect who they are.

Lastly, a research analysis that targets the hiring policies of school divisions may be worthwhile. As Kerr et al. (2014) suggested, “At a minimum, school districts with poor records of hiring and retaining

women in high-level school district positions should be the objects of additional research and policy scrutiny” (p. 394). This study could analyze the priorities given to experience, education, connections, and characteristics that are prioritized when hiring new administrators.

Implications for Practice

It is not enough to say, hire more women or to claim that establishing mentorship programs will decrease the gender gap. If one were to imagine the under-representation of women in leadership as an iceberg, those would be two of the identifiable characteristics that appear above water; however, what is below water is much deeper and more significant than what is in the sightline. The issue is much more deeply rooted in societal norms, patriarchy, perceptions based on gender, and understanding of who possesses leadership qualities.

School divisions can take an active role in preparing potential administrators for future positions and support them in the early years of administration positions. Knowing that many women like to feel prepared and have a sense of confidence before becoming an administrator, school divisions can create principal preparation courses as a form of professional development for anyone interested in the role. Encouragement to participate in, and financial coverage of, outside professional development on leadership or the Principal’s Short Course could also help individuals prepare for the position. However, it is also crucial that school divisions identify and shoulder tap individuals to participate as well, knowing that often women will not attend unless asked (Cui 2006; Kruse & Krumm, 2017).

Once a female becomes an administrator, school divisions can create and encourage formal and informal mentorship opportunities. Mentorship allows women to see themselves in the role of principal (Ibarra et al., 2013; Sherman, 2000; Sperandio, 2015) and creates a networking opportunity for women to identify potential informal mentors as well. Finding a mentor and securing a support system should be a high priority and encouraged by school divisions as females enter the role. This formal mentorship program will ensure that new administrators can navigate the system. However, informal mentors should also be encouraged, allowing new administrators to secure and ensure a support system of colleagues and family members that will help and support them as they enter the new role.

School divisions should undertake an analysis of their hiring practices and need to start educating their staff and hiring committees on gender bias as a way to tackle the societal beliefs that are held about female leaders. Gender stereotypes exist in peoples’ minds, and therefore it will affect organizations and their hiring practices. This analysis includes tackling the expectations of a good leader and separating it from gender; “in thinking about women as leaders, people would combine two somewhat divergent sets of expectations—those about leaders and those about women. In contrast, in thinking about men as leaders, people would combine largely redundant expectations” (Eagly& Sczesny, 2009, p. 28). Prime et al. (2009) suggested that hiring committees develop a weighting system that applies to leadership characteristics, allowing the hiring committee to hone in on all characteristics needed and focus on the experience and skills of each candidate rather than a person’s gender.

Last, research shows that diversity in teaching and leadership positions has a positive impact on students “Lack of female representation is a problem not only because of fairness and equity but also because diversity brings improvements in leadership and learning” (Robinson, 2017, p. 2). Just like women need to see themselves in the role, students need to see themselves reflected in the school system and not only does this include women, but it also includes other diverse groups,

It is important to know whether school districts with higher percentages of teachers, principals, and administrators in certain identity groups demonstrate higher levels of achievement among students in matching identity groups, but these research designs leave important unanswered questions about resource distribution, namely the social equity of employment distribution, and the efforts of school districts to address inequities. (Kerr et al., 2014, p. 382)

It is assumed that student achievement would increase, with more diverse teaching and leadership. To date, many staff lacks the diversity that their student body has, and by applying similar recommenda-

tions for women in leadership positions, one should also work to increase diversity in teaching and leadership positions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the underrepresentation of women in educational leadership is an important issue that needs to be addressed. Women face longer paths to administrative positions, barriers in the hiring process, and are perceived to hold a weaker set of leadership characteristics than men. We often tend to place blame on the women for not applying, or prioritizing differing leadership skills than men, but the reality is that this is still a subtle undercurrent of gender bias that affects organizations and their hiring practices. School divisions need to start to recognize this and work towards dismantling the bias, encouraging women to apply for positions, and supporting them with mentoring opportunities. Women are qualified, experienced, and eager to take on leadership positions but are often stopped by a glass ceiling that prevents them from achieving the highest levels of administrative positions.

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