

**Teachers Developing Leadership Capacity in Students**

by

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### **Abstract**

Young adults finishing school and entering the workforce today require a wide range of unique skills to succeed in their personal and professional lives. Today's youth are expected to demonstrate and exemplify knowledge in many additional areas that are currently commonplace, such as technology skills, the ability to communicate effectively, and exhibit numerous leadership and citizenship qualities. Cabus & De Witte (2016) indicated the drop-out rate of Canadian high-school students is a concern. It can be argued that many adolescents are not receiving the training required to effectively lead them and their careers in a positive, lifeward, proactive direction. There is currently no leadership course mandated in the core curriculum of Alberta schools, which may leave today's youth without particular knowledge, skills, and attributes related to leadership which is an important life skill. Building leadership capacity in students during their formative years can help inspire adults who are willing and able to think critically, solve problems, effectively lead day-to-day operations, take risks, set and reach goals, and help create other capable leaders. Societal expectations of today's young adults are currently at the highest standards in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with particular Grade 12 core courses being not only a prerequisite to post-secondary education, but also for entry-level positions within the world of work. Further to the societal demands of a high-school diploma are the knowledge, skills, and attributes of equally high standards in today's youth such as character and citizenship education and the application of those attributes in a leadership capacity. Examples of character and citizenship traits, included in many Christian-based school divisions, are leadership attributes such as faith, hope, charity, gentleness, hospitality, humility, kindness, patience, prayerfulness, respect, forgiveness, and righteousness (Alberta Education, 2005). Students are expected to be engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit, who contribute to a strong

and prosperous economy and society, as per the Alberta Government's Ministerial Order on Student Learning (Alberta Education, 2015). Teachers have a critical role in facilitating leadership capacities in students through both curricular and non-curricular training within the framework of the Teacher Quality Standard (Alberta Education, 2018) and the Leadership Quality Standard (Alberta Education, 2018). Teachers, as lifelong learners and leaders, have the expertise to develop those same learning and leadership qualities in their students which may enable them to become critically thinking responsible citizens who contribute to both the economy and society.

### **Keywords**

principal leadership, leadership capacity, leadership quality standard, teacher leadership, teaching quality standard, student leadership, faith-based, distributive leadership, effective leadership, school culture

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.0 Background to Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine how teachers can develop leadership capacity in students to enable them to become lifelong learners that contribute to society. True leaders help develop other leaders. Howell (2006) reported high-school completion rates were a “pressing societal issue” which then Education Minister Gene Zwozdesky planned to address with recommendations for change. In a study by Rud (2007), three-quarters of former students surveyed indicated there were things that could have been done to help them remain in school and by contrast, three-fifths of respondents in the same study indicated that even though they were encouraged to remain in school, they decided to drop out. Dropout rates are of concern not only in North America, but also internationally according to Cabus and De Witte (2016) and have become a central theme in the national policies of developed countries in forming guidelines such as the United States’ *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002). Several policies have been dedicated to reducing early school leaving using strategic methods and practices, including the *Alberta Initiative for School Improvement* (2008) study which explored why so many Aboriginal students were not graduating from secondary school and/or pursuing post-secondary education. Implications of having a workforce of undereducated, unskilled, unmotivated, and unprepared individuals affect all stakeholders in the economy as well as the domestic and global society. An individual’s desire for further learning, if not properly nurtured and rewarded, will inevitably cease to exist, resulting in apathy. Apathetic citizens in a society detrimentally impact the attitudes of those around them, including their well-being. Researchers have uncovered evidence of links between various facets of the socio-economic status of individuals and their health (Cooper et al., 2008). The cause and effect relationship between learning motivation and school experience has been the basis for much debate and study, largely because of its effect on

citizens both individually and collectively. Historically, students did not have a need for higher education when their talents were more centred on domestic, farm, or industry obligations. That practice worked for centuries, but emerging research has proven that there is great value in education for learning's sake alone. According to Rhodes (2017), when it comes to student learning, there is always enough benefit to engender investment and exploration. Likewise, according to Behrman and Stacey (2010), collective educational advantages spread beyond direct economic effects to include social benefits for society, including better ways to take care of ourselves and creating a better society in which to live. Individual benefits of education include producing cognitive achievement or specific knowledge. Cognitive achievement leads to other important dimensions of human development such as self-discipline, problem-solving capabilities, and learning how to learn (Behrman & Stacey, 2010), which enables individuals to function at an advantageous capacity.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Nurturing leadership in students cannot be accomplished in the school environment if students or teachers are not willing or able to develop in this area. It cannot be accomplished if students are not present regularly or are indifferent to bettering themselves. Since these barriers are multifactorial, educators need to probe schooling experiences and constructs such as type of school, curriculum, public or private provision, class size, expenditures per student, and teacher qualification. These factors are what researchers (Behrman & Stacey, 2010) referred to as the *intensive margin* or *quality* of education. With today's exceptionally high pedagogical standards for teachers and principals through the *Alberta Teaching Quality Standard* (2018) and *Leadership Quality Standard* (2018), leadership should not only be modelled and nurtured by educational leaders, but also promoted to all students within their sphere of influence. The

current responsibility of students also has an exceptionally high standard through the requirements of the *Ministerial Order on Student Learning* (2015), with nearly every expectation in alignment with a leadership quality. For example, students are expected to know how to solve complex problems, apply career and life skills, and think critically, to name just a few competencies. Development of these skills takes leadership attributes and attitudes.

### **1.2 Purpose of Study**

Since young adults are the future and largely define its course, it makes sense to equip them to be leaders for the next generation. Building competent and skilled community members provide multiple benefits for all stakeholders in society, present and future. Research demonstrates that the more opportunities for students to lead at a young age, the more likely they will become leaders in the future (Posner, 2012). Teachers are in a pivotal position to provide the inspiration and training for students to become aspiring leaders. Through modelling the way, enabling others (students) to act, and encouraging the heart, teachers can demonstrate a pattern of behaviours that contribute to effective leadership (Posner, 2012). Once leadership skills have been introduced in students, reinforcement of this skill set will continue to strengthen emerging leadership capacity. A sense of leadership being developed in the influential school years will continue into high-school, post-secondary, and eventually into the workplace (Covey, 2008).

### **1.3 Statement of Research Questions**

This study will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. How can teachers develop leadership capacity in students?
2. How can teachers model Alberta's *Teaching Quality Standard* (2018) and *Leadership Quality Standard* (2018) to develop leadership capacity in students?

#### 1.4 Definition of Terms

*Distributive Leadership*: multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in a school, made coherent through a common culture (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007).

*Effective Leadership*: the leader's ability to make others better, to help them to grow, to support and challenge them (Hoerr, 2005).

*Faith-Based*: gospel values permeate the ethics, curriculum, and cultures of schools and challenge students to be thoughtful about ethical issues and to have a "right relationship" with self, others, and the world (Alberta Education, 2005).

*Leadership Capacity*: developing participation and creating structures that let educators work and learn together and share leadership responsibilities (Lambert, 2003).

*Leadership Quality Standard*: a standard for principals by the Alberta Government to govern leadership certification (Alberta Education, 2018).

*Principal Leadership*: a change leader who focuses on improvement of school culture (Alberta Education, 2005)

*School Culture*: how individuals treat one another, the expectations people have for their own and others' behaviour, and the belief structure underlying school practices (Danielson, 2006).

*Student Leadership*: creating a climate that turns challenging opportunities into remarkable successes, such as risks into rewards and separateness into solidarity (Kouzes et al., 2013).

*Teacher Leadership*: the set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms to others within their own school and elsewhere (Danielson, 2006).

*Teaching Quality Standard*: a list of competencies and indicators that govern Alberta teacher certification (Alberta Education, 2018).

### **1.5 Importance of the Study**

The need for qualified educational leaders is paramount in today's rapidly evolving and competitive world. In order for schools to be credible and marketable, they must produce graduates who are well equipped to think critically and problem solve wisely. Leaders need to effectively influence others to become leaders themselves. Effective teachers may be the influential factor in a student's life to inspire this motivation. Burns (1978) indicated leadership depends upon relationships and shared values between leaders and followers. Modelling leadership within a school can set the tone to build leadership capacity in students, which can be indicated in the results of their academic achievement. According to the research of Waters and Marzano (2006), a positive relationship between school district leadership and student achievement was found and identified district-level leadership responsibilities that correlated to student achievement. The positive benefits of nurturing leadership skills in those to whom one is able to influence are exponential. Leaders are at the forefront of positive change. This concept was researched and confirmed by Shannon and Bylsma (2007) in coining the term *distributive leadership* which acknowledges and promotes leadership that exists throughout the organization. This concept moves beyond identifying leadership solely in the traditional leader to recognizing the leadership functions that may be assumed or assigned to teacher leaders and

others such as students. Shared values may induce shared leadership.

### **1.6 Outline of the Remainder of the Paper**

Chapter One addresses the individual and collective value of teacher leadership used to instill a lifetime love of and desire for learning in students. Developing young leaders ensures the development of future leaders which in turn ensures preservation of a high-functioning society. A lifelong learner may become a self-directed leader based on the motivation to learn for the sake of investment and exploration alone. A teacher may be the facilitator that connects students with that opportunity for investment and exploration.

Chapter Two is a review of related literature addressing the importance of positive and healthy relationships between teachers and students in order to foster leadership capacity. Additionally, Chapter Two explores the importance of instructional practices in the development of learning attitudes in students. The impact of the overall school experience is also studied.

Chapter Three is a summary of the research in relation to teacher-directed leadership and the recommendations for its implementation in schools. It includes suggestions for further research. Chapter Three further summarizes the added value of building leadership capacity in students.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### 2.0 Introduction

Rud's (2007) research determined that by identifying common dropout motivations, educators will be better prepared to help students succeed. The study included factors of school influence only and did not include factors of direct student choice such as needing money to help out at home, falling into alcohol or drug problems, being in trouble with the law, or becoming a parent. From this standpoint then, and from the perspective of school experiences, the common motivators that educators may influence according to the study, included personal habits such as too many absences, a greater emphasis on a social life, an inability to adjust to a school routine, and getting suspended or expelled. Affective factors included not feeling happy in school, having emotional problems, not liking school, boredom, not getting along with other students, and not feeling a part of the school. Academic motivational factors included poor grades, poor test scores, lack of teacher help or relationship, and poor teaching. Rud's study noted that while many respondents felt there were reasons to stay in school and continue learning, 27% stated there was nothing that could have been done to help them remain in school and an additional group of 5% stated they were unsure if anything would have helped them finish school. This left 68% of the respondents who felt there were things which could have been done to help them remain in school. Clearly, educators play an important role in fostering a love for lifelong learning within their students.

Leadership capacity may be modeled by educators in three key categories: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Effective leadership, as Hoerr (2005) noted, is the leader's ability to make others better, to help them to grow, and to support and challenge them. What leaders have learned and experienced, how they act on what they know, and what they believe are

fundamental principles that mirror who they are. This transparency is evident in their personal lives as well as their classrooms, indicating that true leadership becomes an actual lifestyle based on learned behaviours. Since leading and learning are synonymous and co-exist, the school setting provides an ideal opportunity for the development of leadership capacity for both teacher and student. Nonetheless, in order for the teacher to best provide leadership capacity and training for students, an environment of discretion, autonomy, reciprocity, and professionalism must first be firmly established in educators' lives before they can effectively be taught to students (Lambert, 2003). Lambert concluded that student-centered professional development is certainly necessary, but there is a need to pay attention to adult concerns as well. Using an analogy of an airplane emergency scenario, Lambert stated, “. . . we should put on our own oxygen masks before helping children with theirs, because adults can't help children unless they are breathing properly themselves” (Lambert, 2003, p. ix). In an educational context, if teachers are able to reflect their *own* love for lifelong learning through knowledge, skills, and attitudes imparted to their students, it would naturally follow that such modelling would engender a desire for students to grow into each level of leadership that was presented before them.

## **2.1 Knowledge**

### **2.11 Instructional Practices.**

The instructional practices of teachers are crucial to the development of learning attitudes in their students. According to research authors (Zeid et al., 2017), if a teacher is highly motivated and willing to change, they will be more influenced to differentiate their teaching methods. As poor teaching and student boredom having already been identified as a disengaging factor to learning (Rud, 2007), a teacher is the key figure to adapt accordingly to meet students' needs for engagement and subsequent success. Students are motivated by relevant learning

opportunities (Preston & Claypool, 2013) and require age- and ability-appropriate instruction and activity for learning to flourish. This corroborates with the research of Hough and Schmitt (2011) citing the organizational climate as one of the most important factors of motivation, with Preston and Claypool (2013) also noting factors under this theme of “hospitable school culture.”

To build leadership capacity, teachers must be aware of the basic developmental and physical needs of their students. In a middle-school setting, these needs are very well researched and documented. Wise educators take them into account. Youth have specific functional requirements at this stage of their lives which need to be considered. The adolescent age-group holds social interaction with their peers highly important, and allowing them to learn while being frequently mobile supports the research that says this age-group often feels achy and has a need to move around (Kolodziej, 2010). One learning strategy that greatly accommodates middle-school students is the idea of cooperative learning (Bennett et al., 1991). Bennett listed some of the benefits of cooperative learning as: the interchange of ideas, contributing towards a common goal, working out differences, task selections, and socialization. The time-management and team-building skills that are developed through cooperative learning are precursors to the leadership skills required by adults, acting as a type of dress rehearsal at the emerging level. There is also a social justice aspect to cooperative learning which supports peer evaluation as another form of consequential reality for students. To receive a poor grade by a teacher may be disheartening, but to receive a poor grade by a peer may provide enough incentive and motivation to willingly improve the learning process. Part of the social needs of adolescents require belonging to a group, and to receive a favourable review from peers strengthens that sense of belonging. Communication, an expected student competency, is developed in the

process as well as critical thinking and problem-solving skills, all of which are learner expectations from the provincial government (Alberta Education, 2016).

In a study conducted by Jenkins (2013), leadership educators confirmed that certain instructional strategies were preferred that promoted conceptual understanding and personal growth as well as discussion-based pedagogies. Jenkins noted that the infrequent use of tests and quizzes in leadership education was anticipated, but the sparse use of highly experiential skill-building activities such as simulation, role play, and games was surprising. Based on this research, it is evident that the latter strategies would prove more useful in building leadership capacity for students, but are used less than they should be. Teachers may easily implement simulation experiences into their classrooms in the form of virtual reality field trips. Some virtual reality software can coincide with different time frames, settings, and characters in concert with a novel study for example, for a richer experience in terms of bringing a story to life. This may hold true best for non-fiction accounts such as biographies, where the students can technically re-live the lives, times, and places of the protagonist. A full experience such as this is more likely to create personal connections because of the simulated sense of encountering another point of view as firsthand as possible. Involving students in role-playing activities may be accomplished in any subject to further enhance the learning activity at hand. Unlike virtual reality, this method doesn't require technology or cost, merely a persona or role to be played, where students' imaginations are encouraged and developed, which increases many aspects of leadership capacities. While the frequency of game playing is more common in schools of today, more use of the same can help develop leadership skills in students. Teachers may assist their students easily in this regard through get-to-know-you and team-building games in their

classrooms, both to kick off the new school year and for leadership activities throughout the term.

Further to the research of Jenkins (2013), teachers may use instructional strategies to develop leadership capacity in their students which may directly address the role of taking leadership initiative. These practices include in-class assignments such as case studies, where students examine written or oral stories or vignettes that highlight a case of effective or ineffective leadership. Discussions about those leadership practices would enable students to think about what may have been done differently and the impact on the outcomes. Students could enlist a guest speaker whom they believe has a high level of leadership skills and ask questions about their experiences. They could partake in individual leadership activities in terms of developing their own goals and vision statements, or come up with icebreakers or relationship-building activities within the classroom to get to know their peers better. Students could formally interview a local leader and report their findings back to the instructor and the class. They could use media clips to learn about leadership theory and topics through film, television, or other media sources such as YouTube and report and connect their findings in a research report or a reflective journal. Using any or all of these specific strategies encourages students to develop their own capacity to become leaders in their school, community, and world.

Effective instructional leaders use a variety of techniques to keep students and teachers focused on the goal of learning for all (McEwan, 2003). In the education field, there is no “one size fits all” mindset and educational leaders understand that expectations, instructional strategies, and assessments vary from student to student. A willingness and ability to adapt to those changing and diverse needs lie at the foundational core of an effective leader. Learning to

be as flexible as the situation warrants while maintaining leadership integrity is a wise philosophy.

### **2.12 Reflective Practices.**

If teachers are able to provide the optimum learning environment, they can create the general success factors that motivate students to stay in school and graduate such as realizing the importance of learning, the importance of education, and not wanting to let others down (Booker, 2011). Booker's research concluded the aforementioned factors as those found in graduating students. Teachers may help students understand the importance of learning and education by modelling their day-to-day passion of it themselves; they may help students understand that accomplishments are celebrated by many stakeholders (parents, siblings, relatives, friends, extended family) and that sometimes motivation to graduate can take place to make someone else proud, such as a neighbour or a mentor. These successes are more likely to induce a desire for future successes in the form of lifelong learning.

Teachers need to become reflective practitioners, a term used in Hoerr's (2005) research, in regard to student leadership. Since the classroom is made up of human beings, it is always dynamic and therefore cannot be managed from a script. Educational leaders must reflect, create, plan, and bring together their understanding of child development, the learning process, and pedagogy. Effective teachers design opportunities for students to learn and they assess that learning in fair methods that also teach. They motivate and inspire. They challenge and support. They ponder and analyze (Hoerr, 2005). This process of being a reflective practitioner assists the teacher to have the skill set to build leadership capacity in each and every student, wherever they may be positioned on their educational journey. Thinking reflectively allows the classroom leader to go in a different direction when the first pathway comes to a dead end. It encourages

the critical thinking and problem-solving competencies to flourish and proves how necessity can inspire creativity. Due to the uniqueness of each individual and each group, there is not a single successful leadership formula that works, but combinations of several. Leaders find innovative solutions to obstacles, and therefore are able to determine the formula for leadership success that works the best in their classrooms and for their students.

In order to be an effective classroom leader, teachers need to develop and strengthen their own professional skills on a regular basis. Since the purpose of teacher leadership is to mobilize others around a common purpose, one of the most critical skills for a teacher is the ability to facilitate dialogue among other teachers (Danielson, 2006). Collaboration and exchange of ideas are essential to professional growth which, when fostered properly among adult peers, enables a teacher to be in a better position to teach those skills to students. As students observe their teachers communicating positively with other teachers, they may see the benefit of team thinking and begin at an early age to follow suit with their own counterparts. An additional asset to promoting dialogue among peers is that it promotes effective communication, another essential leadership quality. Danielson (2006) noted that building leadership skills in teachers required that both the conditions and capacity of the school support these teachers (through principal leadership). This principle applies equally in building these skills in students requiring both the conditions and capacity of the classrooms (led by teacher leadership). Leadership reciprocity such as this enables all stakeholders within the education system to share the same vision of success.

### **2.13 Professional Practices.**

The *Leadership Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018) requires teachers to provide instructional leadership. With the diverse and multicultural classrooms of today, this translates

into differentiated learning to promote student success and leadership. In an Australian study conducted by Mills et al. (2014), it became apparent that pedagogical differentiation can align with a social justice agenda in schools. For instance, their research was concerned with ensuring that all children are challenged intellectually in the classroom, that teachers consider student backgrounds to ensure that the learning is meaningful, encouraging active learning, creating spaces for student voices to be heard, and ensuring that student differences are respected and taken into account. Adjusting instructional leadership to meet the demands of all learners ensures a positive classroom climate that is equitable for all stakeholders. Social justice in the classroom needs to be consistently applied and promote fairness to all students but may take different shapes in its individualization. For example, it ethically may mean fair assessment is grading a capable but disengaged student who *refuses* to complete an assignment a zero, while granting a struggling but hard-working student a pass for substandard work completed that is to the best of his ability. Attitude and effort both play a crucial role in a student's academic success. In order to teach students leadership with concurrent ownership and accountability, they must understand the reality of just consequences and that fair may not always be equal.

Accountability includes effort and attitude and is therefore a changeable and controllable entity; thus, it is fair to judge accountability through assessment. Students must realize that they own their grade through their work habits, effort, and attitudes. They must realize that fair teachers award the grade that is student-warranted and teacher-justified. As Earl (1998) noted about accountability, it means making judgments about quality, about how good is good enough, and most importantly, about how to make changes that will enhance and extend learning for all children.

The formation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within a school is consistent with Danielson's philosophy of teacher interaction. According to Dufour et al. (2006), the fundamental purpose of a PLC is ensuring high levels of learning for all students. This educational goal aligns with developing leadership capacity in both teachers and students simultaneously, as the skills learned are transferred from teacher to student. These skills emerge from teacher and student interaction through dialogue, instructional practices, and assessment. Teachers being like-minded about the ultimate success for all students within their buildings may help each other find ways and means to lead students to achieve in academics and personal interests as well, since leadership skills are transferable to all walks of life and build confidence to take risks. Leading a learning community is a professional standard expected of educational leaders (Alberta Education, 2018).

#### **2.14 Technology.**

The increasing necessity of technology in schools today cannot be overlooked or under-emphasized in its importance and prominence regarding student learning. The access to global information has helped implement standards to responsibly use technology in the classroom. Leadership development supports technology use in many ways, from the teachers' and students' perspectives. *ISTE Standards for Administrators* (2019) defined the skills school leaders need to support the successful use and integration of computer technology. These standards, in part, require that leaders create a culture where teachers and learners are empowered to use technology in innovative ways to enrich teaching and learning. In part, these goals are accomplished through the educational leader helping students to develop the skills needed to lead and navigate change, advance systems, and promote a mindset of continuous improvement for how technology can enhance learning. In building their own leadership skills, teachers

themselves better prepare students to meet their *ISTE Standards for Students* (2019), which require, in part, that leadership capacity is developed through leveraging technology to demonstrate competency in their own learning goals. Specific goals of student standards require leadership development in the areas of: empowering learning, becoming a safe, legal, and ethical digital citizen, constructing knowledge, problem solving innovatively and creatively, and becoming a computational thinker, a creative communicator, and a local and global collaborator.

### **2.15 Mentoring.**

Mentoring and leading are critical to helping individuals reach their goals (Taylor & Taylor, 2013). The old have wisdom to pass to the young and when willing to share their knowledge and experiences, the young can benefit greatly. The direction and creativity that positive mentoring provides is invaluable in training students for leadership. As Taylor and Taylor (2013) discovered, a good leader can admit to a (student) that her idea is better than his. A good leader can make mistakes, and a good leader can fail. A good leader who errs will stand tall and admit his mistake. A leader will not lose sight of the goal; she will take the team's suggestions and contributions and make the whole stronger than its parts. Taylor and Taylor described their will to succeed as a direct result of mentoring in their lives. All their mentors had strong leadership qualities and served more as coaches and teachers who helped them succeed. The will to succeed was described as "We would have gone as far as was humanly possible to make sure our leader's goals were realized" (Taylor & Taylor, 2013, p.65). The power of positive mentoring, when received willingly, may have this effect on student leadership. Taylor and Taylor concluded their research with the advice

If you aspire to become a leader, find a mentor to help you get to where you want to go. Find someone you can talk to, brainstorm with, and get ideas from. If you

are in the position to be that leader and a mentor, spend more time and effort to help those who can benefit from your guidance and wisdom. Serving as a mentor and leader will ensure that the return on your investment will be immeasurable. (p 67).

Over time, the investment of leadership training into students begins to reveal results. Since the influence of a leader is significant, it is imperative that their mentoring of students is age-appropriate, authentic, sustainable, and research-based for positive outcomes. As Westlake (2015) confirmed, the training of leadership attributes actually shapes the ever-developing personality of the individual. Mentoring students for leadership in the school setting and beyond to life goals requires dedication and consistency that may produce great results if done carefully and wisely.

## **2.2 Skills**

### **2.21 Cultural Democracy.**

In order for all students to have equitable opportunities to develop leadership capacity, teachers must intentionally honour learners' cultural diversity and dynamics. According to Browne (2012), a growing number of immigrants from all over the world who are students in our public schools, in addition to many diverse native-born students of color, are subject to stereotypes and low teacher expectations. Therefore, to ensure a cultural democracy, three considerations must be taken into account: a culturally relevant curriculum, culturally responsive instruction, and equitable conditions in schools. Browne (2012) also noted that cultural democracy should help facilitate equitable educational opportunities and outcomes by all disaggregated student groups. The correlation between the teacher's attitudes and beliefs about cultural equity and subsequent student success is evident. As confirmed by Smith et al. (1999),

one's identity has a major influence on how they perceive others, their self-esteem, self-confidence, aspirations, motivation, and effort expended in various aspects of their life.

Fostering a classroom of cultural democracy is yet another way for teachers to help disaggregate students enjoy school and strive for high achievement and aspire towards leadership capacity.

### **2.22 Motivation.**

A major assumption in the development of leadership capacity according to Lambert (2003), is that teachers yearn to be more fully who they are: purposeful, professional human beings. However, she concluded that yearning alone is not enough. When leadership is defined as reciprocal, purposeful learning in a community, teachers are much better able to see the many opportunities for them to contribute. Leadership development requires full participation from both teachers and students. Teachers devote much of their daily time to engage students who are reluctant to learn and lead. By the same measure, teachers must be aware of their own cognitive approaches in developing leadership capacity. Lambert (2003) noted the importance of engagement with colleagues in concluding, "Full participation is first and foremost a function of design. When we design our times together as we would a powerful lesson, we include strategies that engage everyone" (p. 18). Lambert further noted that teacher participation is a matter of "interest and will" (p. 19) and that educators need to see a close connection between what they value and the tasks at hand. Clearly, the task of developing leadership capacity in one's self and others is not a solo endeavour. Including others who are like-minded provides powerful motivation to reach leadership goals individually and collectively. As Lambert (2003) confirmed, "That is why it is so important to use a shared vision as the guidepost for building leadership capacity" (p. 19). Students observing teachers motivating each other can serve as a powerful example for their own learning incentives.

### **2.23 Interpersonal Relationships.**

There is one inescapable fact about building leadership capacity in students; leadership is about relationships. Hoerr (2005) asserted that a great leader helps everyone improve, whatever the task or goal. A leader begins with a vision but does not stop there. A leader listens, understands, motivates, reinforces, and makes the tough decisions. A leader passes out praise when things go well and takes responsibility and picks up the pieces when things fall apart. In a classroom setting, relational leadership can take on many aspects. Some of these aspects include the encouragement from a teacher to a student about reaching their academic and personal goals, looking beyond those current goals into life beyond school, or giving second chances to a student should they require rewriting a test. Other aspects include allowing the editing of an essay or re-doing an assignment, praising them for their efforts and growth as well as their achievements, and removing a vague or unfair question on an exam. This type of support enables a student to work towards their potential while feeling safe and nurtured. As Hoerr (2005) affirmed, good leaders bring out the best in others.

Positive relationships between teacher and student lie at the core of student motivation. Developing and nurturing said relationships is a key factor for instilling an appreciation of all that a school setting provides for current and future student success. Evidence of this are research-based programs for teachers based on the premise that relationship skills can be taught in much the same way as the other “three Rs.” An example is *The Fourth R: Skills for Healthy Relationships* program for adolescents (Crooks et al., 2013). This *Fourth R* developmental stage presents a window of opportunity for youth to foster healthy relationship patterns as they begin to develop intimate relationships outside of the family. The school setting provides many logistical advantages for universal delivery of services and can provide many

positive mental health and adjustment outcomes. Teachers who are trained in the program are better equipped to address the particular social and emotional needs of adolescents. This relational coaching, through communication and commitment, may pave the way for engendering a student's drive for more knowledge. A knowledgeable adult may greatly influence youths to intrinsically appreciate and strive for more knowledge. Students who were interviewed 2.5 years post-intervention were found to make healthier relationship choices compared to peers. The students who were part of the program were better positioned toward developing their leadership capacity.

### **2.24 Humour.**

An essential component of both communication and resiliency skills in the classroom while developing leadership capacity in students is the need to maintain a sense of humour. The ability to see the lighter side of life may motivate leaders to keep going when problems occur. Setbacks are a natural part of any training discipline and life in general, and the appropriate modelling of humour can demonstrate to students an entertaining response to problems. Positivity and humour make any process more enjoyable and memorable, and thus deeper learning can take place. Evans-Palmer (2009) confirmed the positive relationship between a sense of humour and teacher self-efficacy. Keeping the end result in mind and remaining optimistic about the process increases the likelihood of success. Morrison (2010) concluded, "Our emotions are at the very core of the human experience of learning" (p. 6). Leaders understand the need to acknowledge the emotional experience as well as the intellectual experience and realize the value of adding appropriate fun into the work day.

For students who experience fear or anxiety about school or life, a sense of humour in the classroom can help them develop a sense of control, increased confidence in an ability to adapt,

ease pain, and promote physical healing (Morrison, 2010). Humour can diffuse stress so that essential learning can be facilitated more purposefully. The use of humour increases the capacity for memory retention (Morrison, 2010) which is essential for developing several leadership qualities. When something funny happens, students tend to remember it for a longer period of time. Since humour is linked to learning, the learning associated with humour is also remembered longer. In developing leadership capacity, students can gain further benefits from having a sense of humour. Morrison's research revealed that aside from maximizing brain power, humour enhances creativity, facilitates communication, supports the change process, and creates an optimum environment for teaching and learning. "When you find fun, laughter, and teachers with a sense of humour, learning thrives" (Morrison, 2010, p. 14).

Yerkes (2001) asserted that fun is an indicator of trust. Since leadership is correlated with building relationships based on trust and works towards school improvement (Morrison, 2010), the need for fun and laughter in the classroom should be reinforced. Innovative ways to bring humour into students' lives include incorporating small but meaningful activities such as the joke of the day, silly puzzles, creative writing with a funny component, and in-class readings of humorous stories or articles. Class discussions could be engendered by having students connect the humorous events in a story to their own lives. Most students are quite willing to share anecdotes of themselves that result in making their classmates and teacher laugh. Often the effect is quite contagious and in the author's experience, several volunteers come forth as a result of one shared story that has reminded other students of their own humorous adventures.

The use of humour by educational leaders reduces test anxiety in students (Poirier & Wilhelm, 2014) which in itself is a great benefit for learning and leadership capacity since formal assessments are a recurring part of a student's school life. Being able to write a test without

stress, especially when tests are frequent, provides a richer and more meaningful learning experience as a foundation for leadership training. Reduced test anxiety in students can lead to more positive teacher-student relationships and help the student understand that the teacher is indeed someone who is on their side. According to Poirier and Wilhelm (2014), the use of humour also increased perceptions of faculty credibility and enhanced students' attitudes toward the faculty member and made that staff member more likeable. A student who perceives their teacher as likeable and one whom they can feel at ease with, is more likely to want, receive, and develop leadership potential.

Poirier and Wilhelm (2014) concluded that today's generation of students expect learning to be enjoyable. "Humour creates a relaxed, engaging, and safe environment. It has been suggested that using humour as a pyromaniac can fuel the fires of curiosity in our students" (p. 1). Clearly, when work is successfully integrated with play, the positive long-term effects of learning are enhanced. In a leadership capacity, that can equate to instilling lively and entertaining professionalism from one generation to the next, perhaps as an incentive to "join the fun." Leading with laughter definitely attracts those students who enjoy merriment mixed in with their learning.

### **2.25 Skill Building.**

According to Bonwell and Eison (1991), active learning means involving students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing. The most common instructional strategy used in Jenkins's (2013) study was class discussion. This method hosts a wealth of skill-building opportunities for students to pose hypotheses, ask questions, provide their opinions, relate prior knowledge, make predictions, infer, discuss their own experiences and observations, make connections, and reflect on all of the above. Additionally, students are better

equipped for real-life adult conversations with practice in-class discussions. Leaders must be able to communicate effectively, and teachers are in an ideal situation to form the framework for these leadership life skills in students.

### **2.26 Resiliency.**

The practice of developing leadership capacity in students requires resilience on behalf of student *and* teacher. Through much trial and error, both parties will begin to see the fruits of their perseverance in terms of skills and confidence. However, the process will inevitably have challenges and roadblocks along the way, reinforcing the need for resilience in those times of setbacks to academic and personal goals. Reeves (2008) stressed the need for schools to be resilient as well, stating that an educational system should commit to a transparent, consistent focus on improved student achievement based on systematic, continuous changes in teaching and leadership practice. When a setback occurs, or more specifically, when a student does not reach a goal within the classroom, the teacher's job as a leader, is a commitment to be the change agent responsible for finding another pathway to student success. This process is much more meaningful and effective if the teacher seeks input from the student at this time. For example, if a student has not succeeded on a written test, they could be given the option to take an oral test or be given a second chance at rewriting the exam with extra time for preparation given. Or, they may come up with an alternative of their own. In this way, a student is better equipped to succeed and can feel more optimistic because they have experienced some ownership of their specific learning requirements. Building resiliency in this way can motivate students to be proactive in their own learning and take initiative and leadership in metacognition. This skill is a building block for them to eventually become a reflective practitioner of their own. As Reeves (2008) confirmed, the legacy of resiliency leads to enhanced capacity. Encouraging student

ownership is one way a teacher may “foster a way to be a leader that makes leadership a personally desirable and manageable activity” (Donaldson, 2006, p. 46).

### **2.27 Team Work.**

The importance of effectively collaborating is paramount in a leader’s repertoire of skills. Training students to be team players instills in them the behaviours that will be required in everyday adult life, whether managing a family at home or completing a project with colleagues at work. The scholastic locale is an ideal framework for setting a standard of student accountability to peers and teachers in refining leadership skills. Aside from instructional practices such as cooperative learning, teachers may set classroom standards for non-curricular expectations such as character development in tolerance, patience, and understanding. As the research of Chowdhury et al. (2002) confirmed, team work allows students valuable experience in group environments before they graduate and to become involved in real-world team situations. Student leaders could be chosen for classroom activities such as organizing the school’s recyclable containers, setting up for a spring fair, creating a book club, leading Praise and Prayer, organizing a schoolyard cleanup, gathering data for student surveys, fundraising, initiating a school newspaper, organizing a hot lunch or breakfast program, or scheduling a rotating list of classroom cleaners. Placing students together to brainstorm a list of opportunities for their school could add to this list.

## **2.3 Attitudes**

### **2.31 Beliefs.**

Effective teacher leadership instills patience and virtue in youth. Students are bound to experience failure at times in their schooling and personal pursuits. In the physically challenging and demanding world of youth, life can be turbulent and frustrating. “Adolescence is that

awkward age when a child is too old to say cute things and too young to say sensible things” (Grube, 1999, p. 34). Students may struggle with their own sense of self-worth and a lack of self-esteem. They are not children anymore, yet they are not quite adults either, and this gap may create a crisis of identity and fitting in. In a faith-based school, educational leaders may encourage students with scripture that models Jesus Christ as the ultimate leader and role model to emulate. Reading and understanding scriptures about the Bible’s instructions for working through sin and failure can provide hope in a situation that may seem hopeless at the time to an emerging adult. Learning that faith can successfully bring people to a place of peace and trust may spark self-direction and motivation in students to see the “consequence bundle” (Patterson et al., 2013) of perseverance and courage through times of doubt and darkness. As Grube (1999) determined, “The secret of escaping adolescence is to depend on God for His divine maintenance plan: Jesus Christ for righteousness and salvation and the Holy Spirit for guarding and building our faith” (p. 35).

An effective and seasoned educational practitioner will have a strong sense of their own beliefs that will work for the ultimate success of the student’s leadership growth and potential. Hansen (2001) noted that good teaching involves enriching, not impoverishing, students’ understandings of self, others, and the world. It means expanding, not contracting, students’ knowledge, insights, and interests. It means deepening, not rendering more shallow, students’ ways of thinking and feeling. It entails paying intellectual and moral attention as a teacher. Hansen further honed in on the fact that “the teacher has a sense of agency, can fashion intentions, can act on them, can think about what he or she does, can feel things . . . can use imagination . . . can remember things pertinent of the work [and] is a social being” (p. 24). These are qualities, Hansen argued, that many take for granted, relying on the reality that

*teachers are people*. Yet, it is this very idea of personhood that allows teachers to accomplish the central objective of their work, “to recognize and cultivate the emergence of personhood in the young in ways machines or functionaries never could” (p. 24). The interplay of clashing human dynamics within a classroom may seem like a paradox at times, but the social necessity of each individual’s beliefs remains solid in building moral attention to one another.

Hill (2016) made the argument that a teacher’s beliefs cannot be hidden from the view of students, no matter how *neutral* a teacher may appear to be. Curry (2017) concluded that teachers and students are not machines, and so their reactive and reflective levels are in the open. It is inevitable that all teachers will bring to their field subject matter competencies that provide the bedrock of their practice. However, what is also likely is that teachers bring with them into their classrooms values that motivate their own lives and influence their work. Such values become embedded into any curriculum that a teacher is supposed to teach. Thus, there can be development of a hidden curriculum that can either subvert or support the work in the classroom as a whole. This is because teachers are responsible for much more than just facilitating curriculum. Since identity and integrity are vital to the work of teachers, their beliefs help shape how they go about that work. Indeed, teacher beliefs may have a more profound impact than a teacher’s professional training and preparation (Curry, 2017). Similarly, each student’s beliefs may set a palpable tone and greatly influence their behaviour and work within the classroom as well.

### **2.32 Faith.**

The importance of faith is reiterated in the research of Bandura (1997), who observed that if people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen. In this regard, teachers may be the gateway between unbelief and belief in their

students. Looking at failure in a positive way and setting up the environment to encourage mistakes for the sake of learning and growing is essential in classrooms. Teachers must acknowledge their own shortcomings and mistakes made along the way of their personal learning experience, which is a continuing journey, as is their students' journey. Teacher transparency paves the way for student leadership in understanding that everyone, even leaders, make mistakes from time to time. Hoerr (2005) affirmed that the best learning opportunities do not come from those occasions when everything went as planned. Instead, they result from lessons when something went awry. He discussed the *MNM philosophy - Make New Mistakes*, recognizing that mistakes are opportunities to learn. This principle is applicable to any leader, whether student or teacher, and serves as a constant classroom reminder to try new learning experiences without fear of failure. Hoerr added that we need to learn from past mistakes and attempt not to repeat them, but that making *new* mistakes should always be encouraged, to the point of being adopted as a classroom philosophy. In promoting this philosophy of making new mistakes, teachers would help student leaders have the faith to believe that risk-taking is necessary in order to grow and ultimately lead to success.

School leadership requires faith in our fellow educators and faith in our school. When we are not certain about decisions to make, it is faith that will motivate continued positive action (Kams, 2008). Educational leaders are well aware that "the challenges are real and the goals are attainable" (p. 28). Kams concluded that "leaders reinforce good work and the expectations that shape it" (p. 28). Faith is a leader's confidence in the middle of uncertainty.

As noted previously, leaders are effective communicators, and part of communication is the ability to read and write well. In a faith-based school, teachers are blessed with a "Daniel" opportunity to reveal God's word while teaching literacy (Grube, 1999). Grube noted that while

stringing letters together for others to read, teachers may see the work of the Holy Spirit in themselves manifest itself as faith in the hearts of children to “read Bible stories and see God’s hand at work in their own lives” (p. 20). He noted that when that process takes place, subjects like reading and handwriting “take on what economists call ‘added value’” (p. 21). This added value can be sought through faith in terms of decoding and translating, as in the story of Daniel, a recognized leader in knowledge and understanding of his times in interpretation of data. Through faith, Daniel was able to decode information that the other wise men of his day could not. (Daniel 5:5, New International Version).

Faith-based educational leaders often feel they have a calling over and above a profession. Their faith may be such an integral part of them that it cannot be separated from their identity. Their desire to edify and build students up in a spiritually empowering way is often revealed with Christian teachers focusing on developing social-emotional needs as well as academic needs. Social-emotional learning (SEL), as defined by Elias et al. (1997), is a process through which individuals learn how to manage emotions, care about others, and develop positive relationships that ultimately affect academic outputs. Since faith-based teachers care about their students’ future choices and well-being for leadership opportunities, they invest time and energy into that calling. The teacher’s worldview (faith system) is the most powerful contribution that the teacher can provide to the students (Curry, 2017).

Faith can be described as a belief in the unknown and the unseen. Spirituality in education refers to a deep connection between student, teacher, and subject (Curry, 2017). When teachers can nourish spirituality in the classroom, students can flourish elsewhere in the world, whether it be in politics, medicine, engineering, or whatever arenas they choose to pursue (Jones, 2005). The art of teaching is inextricably linked to the way in which one sees and experiences

the world (Curry, 2017). Unquestionably, teachers' beliefs are inseparable from their practices and faith is foremost when it comes to positively influencing students towards leadership capacity in an unknown future. The concluding research of Curry (2017) stated that relationship and interaction with others is rooted in the Christian faith - based on the tenet that ultimately, individuals are charged to live in community with one another and be their brother's keeper. This emphasis on relationships clearly empowers teachers to view their role as greater than just a job description when building future leaders in faith.

### **2.33 Students' Perception and Self-Efficacy Through Opportunity.**

Teachers are the most influential authorities during a student's school day and therefore have a significant opportunity within that timeframe to instill valuable lessons and morals into their charges that increase their self-esteem and character. Building leadership capacity in a student begins with the skill of the teacher and the will of the student. A strong foundation of believing in oneself lies at the core of creating will in a student to believe he or she can achieve the desired results and therefore train and learn with that purpose in mind. If students believe that leadership is an important part of their lives, their will to succeed will increase. According to Shertzer et al. (2005), there are four dimensions of student leadership that predict students' attitudes towards leadership development: leadership is important to the student, the student considers himself or herself to be a leader, leadership will be important to the student after college, and leaders need to be able to work in teams or groups. Teacher-led strategies to develop these four dimensions include creating opportunities for student involvement at school. There are multiple advantages of leadership capacity in student involvement including the opportunity to interact with a wide range of people, develop management skills, and enhance self-confidence (Bialek & Lloyd, 1998). In the process of engaging students more with others

around them in their student life, teachers are promoting higher level skills necessary for college. According to many university mission statements, institutions of higher education are trying to answer a call to deliver more leaders to society (Rost, 1993). Student leaders need to have the belief of self-efficacy to answer that call.

#### **2.4 Purpose, Hypothesis, and Prediction**

The purpose of this project is to determine effective strategies to build leadership capacity in students that may empower them to become competent and contributing members of their community and society. The role of the teacher is explored and determined to be pivotal for this training within their classrooms based on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes about leadership research. Provincial standards for teaching and leading are studied as well as the various professional and personal aspects of building leadership capacity in students.

My hypothesis is that teachers, in their unique and influential roles, may model leadership through their own professional development, their own love of lifelong learning, and their own beliefs. Teacher alignment of these three factors combined with compliance to provincial standards result in a formula for successful leadership development. When this teaching formula is added to a student's innate desire for learning and leadership, the result is a synergy that is formidable.

My prediction is that this formula for success may not be enough in some cases. It is valid to conclude that even a positive teacher-driven school experience is not necessarily enough incentive to promote lifelong learning in an individual if their own mindset is not fixed on volunteer learning. Rud's (2007) research summarized that a percentage of students felt apathetic in that there was nothing that could have been done to help them remain in school. Their minds were made up that school was not for them and no amount of educational

intervention would have served to change their minds. The statistics stated that 27% of students felt that way and the other 68% in Rud's study felt that there were things that could have been done to help them remain in school and they could have benefited from a positive teacher-driven school experience and had the potential to become lifelong learners. Rud's other studies demonstrated how school experiences can foster lifelong learning in students through an effective, passionate teacher who is highly motivated and has a growth mindset to adapt to the needs of students' learning. The research supports that the determining factor of leadership success is based on the mutual motives between teacher and student.

In the future, effective teachers will continue to create school experiences for students that naturally induce a love for lifelong learning in them as shown by example. Teachers will create this atmosphere by continually refreshing themselves with an attitude of love for children and learning, and by continuing positive behaviours that include professional development on the latest research of meeting students' needs (scholastic, academic, emotional, and social aspects). In the future, effective teachers will place more emphasis on meeting each learner's individual needs and the curriculum will reflect this thinking in response to contemporary research. Teacher-driven school experiences of the future will therefore be more positive and inclusive, and more students will have a desire for lifelong learning. Hopefully this will also mean the apathetic 27% of students from Rud's (2007) study will be reduced to a much lower statistic.

## **2.5 Strengths and Limitations, Possible Outcomes, and Future Implications**

Rud's (2007) research appeared to be very solid and forward-thinking based on its extensive research base. Booker's research (2011) was in the form of her dissertation which was approved in April of 2011 by the University of Phoenix; it was current and relevant. The Crooks

et al. (2013) study noted that unfortunately, despite the advantages of the *Fourth R* program, effective school-based prevention programming has not achieved either widespread or sustained implementation. Although the Zeid et al. (2017) research was based in Israel, the conclusions drawn are still relevant to Western-based schools. According to Jenkins (2013), relatively few studies have focused on the teaching methods, instructional approaches, or leadership studies of curriculum design and content, whereas a greater number have focused on leadership studies' programs. Jenkins also concluded that the literature is scant on exploration into the preferences of leadership educators. This finding is consistent with the literature being somewhat dated on the less-focused studies.

Possible outcomes of applying research-based principles may lower high-school dropout rates. This may result in promoting further post-secondary education for more students as well as more volunteer learning for pleasure. These outcomes being met will inevitably increase leadership capacity in students resulting in a higher-functioning community and society.

Future implications may mean professional development for teachers that is more focused on diversified teaching with differentiated instruction. This in turn, will provide more motivation and engagement for each student as an individual, unique learner to create more learning success for all leaders-in-training. Ideally then, the will and skill for each student to become a lifelong learner and leader should increase proportionately.

### **Chapter Three: Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusions**

#### **3.0 Summary**

Since school experiences play a vital role in determining a child's future leadership direction, it naturally follows that a teacher should encourage a student to be thoughtful about ethical issues and to have a "right" relationship with self, others, and the world in order to become an influential leader. This can largely be accomplished by using core values as a reference point. Teachers need to be intentional about making careful choices to support leadership attributes through the curriculum standards and their own instructional practices which can include teachable moments of the core values inherent in leadership. The organization of topics and themes in literature choices, for example, can create opportunities for students to discuss ethical issues through stories to understand values. Teachers may create opportunities to develop leadership skills through the introduction of role models or by participating in a caring community to better understand what the values look like. They may encourage students in ethical decision-making, positive relationship-building, and service to practice and apply a particular value (Alberta Education, 2005). Leadership is an intentional series of goal-based decisions and actions that are governed by core values, knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Connecting student and adult leaders within the community is mutually advantageous as they may learn from each other in ways that may serve to reduce or close the generation gap. Modelling positive behaviour and attitudes in the community helps students to build real-world connections and understand the merit of school-based assignments and outcomes. Engagement in the task at hand, along with a strong sense of citizenship and community ties, helps to build character attributes necessary in a leader. Borba (2001) suggested five steps for

the direct instruction of a particular core value: identify behaviour, identify core value, identify habit, weave it in, and track it. This strategy may be implemented by grade level, where specific virtues are targeted at developmentally-appropriate ages, such as a grade one student focusing on a basic character trait such as kindness, while a grade six student may deepen and enhance a more sophisticated value such as leadership (Alberta Education, 2005).

Teachers may choose to separate leadership traits into monthly school-wide themes with a weekly focus on related values such as helpfulness, patience, thankfulness, and tolerance. Or, they may weave citizenship attributes into student leaders by developing an annual theme such as the Year of Compassion or the Year of Courage (Alberta Education, 2005). For older students, such as at the junior-high or high-school level, teachers may encourage the student leaders themselves to select the theme and organize the activities and events that support the initiative.

According to Jenkins (2013), the available literature offers only a mix of research on various teaching and assessment strategies in leadership education and in order to provide relevant leadership education, it is important to carefully assess stakeholders responsible for delivering knowledge within the discipline. Likewise, the research of Berkowitz (n.d.) corroborated the need for stakeholders to be strategic, noting that educators need to know what works, and the value of paying closer attention to the effects of what we do, not only to help improve our work but also to answer questions asked by parents, administrators, and the broader community. Those that are entrusted to develop leadership capacity in students should be well versed in leadership attributes themselves, either through experience or education, or both. The format of leadership education for teachers lies largely in implementing the Alberta *Leadership Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018) and for students in their charge, the implementation of the provincial *Ministerial Order on Student Learning* (Alberta Education, 2015). Teachers

should also be consistently reviewing the latest research on developing student leadership and taking full advantage of professional development opportunities to sharpen their own leadership skills. Keeping current with research will ensure teachers are viable, accountable, and serving the best interests of students and all other stakeholders.

### **3.1 Recommendations**

Provincial standards require leadership attributes to be demonstrated in students through eight specific competencies. These are: critical thinking, problem solving, managing information, creativity and innovation, communication, collaboration, cultural and global citizenship, and personal growth and well-being. Competencies help students draw and build upon what they know, how they think, and what they can do (Alberta Education, 2016).

Authentic leaders already exhibit each of these eight characteristics which can be developed strategically in the school setting by way of thoughtful, carefully planned instructional strategies by competent teachers. The benefit to the individual learner and society in general is cyclical as evidenced by Alberta Education's (2016) stance in noting that students "develop competencies when they encounter unfamiliar or challenging situations," meaning that every time that particular competency is required and utilized in a novel situation, it becomes stronger. In other words, the more it is used, the more it is developed. Effective educational leaders create the stimulus for each competency development through their planning, teaching, and assessment, while the government provides the framework with the curriculum requirements.

Posey and Davidson (2002) suggested that three forms of assessment are required (needs assessment, process evaluation, and outcome evaluation) as useful tools throughout the planning and implementation of an initiative, such as developing leadership. An action plan including these three tools could foster leadership capacity for two reasons: by developing a deep practical

understanding of how an initiative impacts those involved, and ensuring upfront planning for assessment and evaluation (Townsend, 2001). An effective action plan could measure how students are affected by leadership training and assist teachers, as planners, to determine if the desired effects have actually taken place through empirical evidence.

### **3.2 Recommendations for Further Research**

Jenkins (2013) concluded that the quality or use of specific instructional strategies in leadership education such as reflection, service learning, team-building, research leadership, critical thinking, feedback, self-assessments, role-play, simulations, exams, and the case-in-point approach have been only sparsely reviewed. According to Alberta Education, a similar situation exists in citizenship education. Although studies cite improvement in student attitudes, behaviour, and participation and provide testimonials about increased student achievement, few studies directly link citizenship education initiatives to student learning, growth, and leadership. Even fewer studies assess the effectiveness of this type of instruction. In addition, Alberta Education noted that some measures of assessment indicate changes in attitude or behaviour (e.g., student self-reports), while others may even provide contradictory evidence (e.g., teacher/parent reports or school records). Collecting multiple measurements (e.g., surveys, school records, and testimonials) from multiple stakeholders (including students, parents, staff) on an ongoing basis is recommended (Alberta Education, 2005) for a more balanced and authentic measurement of leadership development.

The differing roles between teachers and administrators may create a leadership gap. While not every teacher may wish to enter into an administrative role (but instead may want to strengthen their own leadership practice and that of their students), the choice to do this may block opportunities for them to extend their influence beyond their classroom

walls. According to Danielson (2006), teacher leaders are more than teachers, yet different from administrators. She noted that such a concept of teacher leadership reflects an increasingly recognized hole in models of teacher professionalism that has not yet been fully explored in the professional literature.

The importance of teacher collaboration has been explored as an important element in developing leadership capacity in students. However, according to one author, this concept is not practiced in the majority of schools. Danielson (2006) noted that in most schools, traditional norms of autonomy and individuality work against the development of professional learning communities which are essential for meaningful school improvement. Danielson suggested a *deprivatizing* practice could improve teacher leadership and that a *collective endeavour* rather than a *collection of individual effort* would prove more beneficial for collective learning. This shift in thinking is consistent with the concept of educational leaders acting as change agents and leading new initiatives.

It is understood that principals play a key role in the integration of computer technology in their schools. However, there have been limited studies exploring the level of technology knowledge and technology leadership skills possessed by school principals and how these measures relate to each other (Depew, 2015). With the increasing demand of technology, and its fit in the classrooms of today, there is evidence that further exploration on this topic is required.

Depew's (2015) study also concluded that multiple barriers preventing effective integration of technology into the classroom environment have been extensively studied and reported in academic literature. While there are guidelines and practices in place and great strides have been made regarding the implementation of those technological standards into all Albertan schools, there remains six broad categories as defined by Hew and Brush (2006) that

require further investigation for full and successful technology implementation. Those categories are summarized as follows:

1. Lack of resources, including technology, time, and technical support,
2. Lack of specific technology knowledge and skills, including pedagogical knowledge, and classroom management skills,
3. Institutional barriers, including leadership, the school's time table, and planning,
4. Teacher attitudes and beliefs about technology, including personal, professional, and philosophical dimensions,
5. Assessment practices that cause technology to be viewed as an instrument for facilitating assessment practices rather than learning, and
6. Cultural components of academic subjects that support traditional notions of teaching and learning.

The research of Morrison (2010) noted that humour is vital for educators and that humour studies should be a core component of pre-service curriculum. However, Morrison noted that the study of humour as a fundamental skill is rarely even mentioned during pre-service studies and is certainly neglected as a topic for continuing professional development. Overall, she concluded, humour is neglected as a topic of significant study altogether, even though it is considered exceedingly important. Due to this lack of research about the benefits of humour, she noted that exploring this topic in education remains a "pioneering effort" (p. 15).

While humour is considered a benefit within the classroom, the work of Poirier and Wilhelm (2014) cautioned that humour as a pedagogical tool can be like walking on a tightrope. If done well, it could enhance learning or at the very least make learning more fun. However, if not done well, it can have disastrous consequences. Further research on how to use humour for

its positive benefits only and the avoidance of any negative effects, they suggested, would be welcome.

Studies concerning mentoring students in social skills, self-esteem, study habits, and scholastic achievement are abundant in research and “how to” literature. What is missing, however, is research on the effectiveness of mentoring students in leadership skills (Westlake, 2015). More investigation is necessary to further develop this outcome in building leadership capacity.

The work of Shertzer et al. (2005) confirmed that simply providing opportunities for leadership training may not be enough; while it may prepare students for careers, it may not necessarily instill in them a belief that leadership is truly important. They concluded that one challenge that leadership and student affairs practitioners face is providing leadership development without also providing an impression to students that a few workshops and experience in some organizations gives them all they need to know about leadership. The authors asserted that if students feel they have everything they need as leaders, they will be less likely to become lifelong learners of leadership.

### **3.3 Final Statements**

An effective educational leader will remember the advice “Think big. Start small. Move slowly” (Fullan, 2004). Developing leadership capacity in students takes time, patience, and perseverance. With broad involvement, careful planning, conscientious implementation, and purposeful reflection (Alberta Education, 2005), educational leaders can create environments for students that are leadership- and citizenship-focused. Laying the foundation of a character-building atmosphere that is continuously nurtured and honoured creates student leadership that is

meaningful, sustainable, and therefore successful for everyone involved (Alberta Education, 2005).

In the process of developing future leaders, it is important for teachers to remember that there will be challenges and pitfalls along the way. At these moments, it will be encouraging for teachers to understand that they too are leadership works-in-progress. One of the many characteristics needed during the growth phase is a sense of humour. The safe and caring environment that is created for students to encourage mistakes through their learning must also exist and be applicable to teachers. Knowing that adults make mistakes, just as youths do, helps to keep setbacks in perspective and may even motivate teachers to learn alternate ways to reach their goal of developing student leadership. This, in turn, may help advance their own professionalism. According to one study, a significant and positive relationship was found between a sense of humour and the teachers' performance improvement (Pourghaz et al., 2016). As reflective practitioners, teachers must realize the value of being able to laugh off mistakes, learn from them, and continue going forward with new ideas and research-based innovations, all while working together with their students with the same common vision in mind: to develop (and enjoy) leadership capacity that is enduring.

Educational leaders must be risk-takers in order to fulfill their mission of developing student leadership. Since improvement of a school's performance frequently involves doing things differently from how they have been done in the past, teacher leadership often requires a process of change (Danielson, 2006). Danielson noted that teachers may accomplish a change process through encouraging colleagues to not necessarily do things differently, but to do them *better* and that stages of improvement should be a *professional exploration of practice*. This means that teachers work with other teachers and their own students to undergo the change

process together, take the risks together, and reap the consequences together. Part of this risk, Danielson noted, is (teachers) inspiring others to join them on a journey without a specific destination. Risk-taking is having the courage to try something new with confidence and without a guaranteed outcome. One author concluded that the litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilizes people's commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things (Fullan, 2001). Leaders and risk-takers are oppositional, synonymous beings. Both are driven by goals and actions of a shared purpose to lead and the destination to "improve things" may take on many different shapes and forms, depending on the people (stakeholders) and circumstances (school climate and culture) involved. For one school, the creation of a Professional Learning Community may be an accomplishment, while in another school, producing one graduate with leadership skills may be a feat. It is important to celebrate every leadership success.

The authenticity and transparency of an effective teacher cannot be overemphasized. In order to produce highly skilled, qualified student leaders, a teacher must model and own leadership thinking and behaviour consistently. This is largely accomplished through metacognition, or contemplating one's own thought processes. Part of our responsibility as teachers working to create a professional identity must be self-examination (Reeves, 2008). Students are observers, and as such, absorb the intentions, attitudes, and actions of their educational leaders. If they do not perceive honesty in their teachers, they will not consider them credible people to emulate. Creating an atmosphere of trust and respect for students is a crucial component to developing their leadership capacity. This atmosphere is necessary not only in the classroom, but also in the school culture as well. As Danielson (2006) added, students are entitled to respect as individuals and deserve to be treated in a manner in which they can thrive.

Providing safety and encouragement together promotes student engagement; this in turn opens the door to “teaching students the skills and habits that will serve them well as adults” (p. 47). This responsibility to students, noted Danielson, lies beyond teachers to the entire staff in creating a respectful environment.

The ongoing and developing social and emotional needs of children must be nurtured as much as their academic growth. Teachers promote social and emotional learning through a variety of activities and practices, some purposeful and planned, some naturally occurring (Zinsser et al., 2018). These social and emotional behaviours are potentially emulated as much as professional skills, perhaps even more, as they take root in memories of the heart. As previously mentioned, educational advantages include *social* benefits to society in learning better ways to interact with one another (Behrman & Stacey, 2010). Future leaders must have an optimum level of people skills to be successful; part of that process is properly understanding the psychology of human emotions to create win-win situations, both emotionally and academically. Teachers' positive displays of warmth, joy, and excitement can positively impact children's emotional well-being and promote learning (Ahn & Stifter, 2006). As a leader, this means winning someone's heart in the sense of his *wanting* to follow you, rather than *having* to follow you. This strategy directly aligns with the practice of a reflective practitioner; an educational leader who listens, assesses, and guides the youth in her care to become lifelong learners in a safe and caring environment who in turn, repeat the cycle of leadership skills to the next generation, promoting a society that is beneficial to all stakeholders.

The leadership training for said society is strengthened in classrooms headed by influential educators. Teachers develop leadership capacity in students through continuing their own education as lifelong learners, bestowing patience and fairness in their classrooms while

having a heart for children, persevering through trials and tribulations of applying various credible research with a sense of purpose, optimism, and humour, and using instructional strategies that engage and support all learners within their sphere of influence. In addition to these practices, and as per the professional standard outlined by Alberta Education (2018), teachers will fulfill leadership requirements through behaviours that foster effective relationships, embody visionary leadership, lead a learning community, develop leadership capacity, and finally, understand and respond to the larger societal context. Adhering to and applying sound leadership practices allows teachers to develop future leaders that may repeat and ultimately improve the leadership cycle.

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