

PRINCIPALS' ROLES IN LEADING COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

**PRINCIPALS' ROLES IN LEADING COLLECTIVE EFFICACY
AMONG TEACHERS OF REFUGEE STUDENTS IN CANADA**

by

Heather L. Moraal

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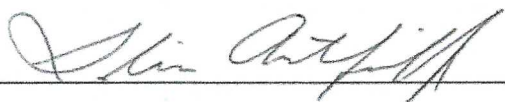
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**Principals' Roles in Leading Collective Efficacy
Among Teachers of Refugee Students in Canada**

APPROVED:


_____ Dr. Gloria Antifaiff,
Faculty Supervisor


_____ Dr. Heather Henderson,
Canadian Director, Master of Education in Leadership Program

Dedication

First, I would like to acknowledge my little family. The last two years have not been easy, and at times, my children, Kaia and Conan, and my husband, David, have borne the brunt of the long nights, short weekends, and what seemed like endless assignments. Their patience has been astounding! Despite all this, they have been my biggest cheerleaders. They have provided endless high-fives, hugs, and encouragement. We have *all* earned this degree!

My parents cheered for me along the sidelines, reminding me to keep my eye on the prize, and have been there for every phone call and text when I questioned my abilities and celebrated my victories. Because of them, I had the courage and tenacity to become a teacher and pursue a master's degree. Through their examples, they taught me the value of hard work and dedication to a cause. They have never doubted me, and I will be forever grateful to have them as parents.

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To my cohort, with whom I have spent hundreds of hours over Zoom, it is magical how connected we had become before ever meeting in person. We shared the common goal of learning and succeeding, and we accomplished it together by cheering each other on, supporting each other, and celebrating together both online and in person when we finally met. It was my honour to be surrounded by such bright, funny, enlightened humans throughout this journey.

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Abstract

Canada has a history of accepting thousands of refugees each year, so refugee students arrive in Canadian schools regularly. Thus, refugee students arrive in Canadian schools regularly, and these students often arrive with several unique challenges due to pre- and post-migration experiences, which cause struggles for students, teachers, and principals. Thus, this capstone study aims to determine how best to support refugee students in Canadian schools by answering questions concerning the challenges refugee students face, how principals can create a shared vision to support refugee students, and how principals can lead collective efficacy among teachers of refugee students. It first provides background and introductory information about refugees in Canada and describes the purpose of the study before moving on to the research questions and scope and sequence of the study. The capstone study then presents a thorough literature review that details the struggles that refugee students face in Canadian schools and describes aspects of creating a shared vision and strategies for implementing it. The findings show that principals can affect teacher collective efficacy in developing a shared vision to help refugee students succeed. Finally, the study indicates implications and recommendations for supporting the academic and social success of refugee students in Canadian schools.

Keywords: refugee students, challenges of refugee students, shared vision, collective efficacy, principal self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, SLIFE, SIFE

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Principals' Roles in Leading Collective Efficacy Among Teachers of Refugee Students in Canada

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The number of immigrant students in Canadian schools is significant. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2023) reported that “just over 1.3 million new immigrants settled permanently in Canada from 2016 to 2021” (para. 6). In addition, supplementary information for the *2023–2025 Immigration Levels Plan* indicated that the targeted admission totals for refugees and protected persons in 2023, 2024, and 2025 are 76,305, 76,115, and 72,750, respectively (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2022, Table). As a result, Canadian schools will continue to welcome refugee children into their classrooms, and the need to be prepared for the challenges that come with it.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (n.d.), Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.

They often have had to flee with little more than the clothes on their back, leaving behind homes, possessions, jobs and loved ones.

They are defined and protected in international law. (para. 1–3)

Upon entering another country as refugees, students often acculturate more quickly than their parents and learn English more quickly than their parents (Moinolmolki et al., 2020, p. 7). As a result, students take on more responsibilities, including becoming interpreters, service navigators, and caretakers for their families while also attending school (Shakya et al., 2012, p.

70). Student mental health is also a concern. According to Powell et al. (2020), “the global burden of mental health-related disorders has also emerged on the international stage” (p. 3), and “disaster exposed individuals ... are at a disproportionate risk of developing co-morbid post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS)” (p. 2).

This capstone study investigates the key role of principals when leading collective efficacy in teaching refugee students in Canada. Bandura (1997, as cited in Donohoo et al., 2018) defined collective efficacy as “a group’s shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment” (para. 2). Furthermore, Hattie (2016, as cited in Donohoo et al., 2018) indicated that “collective teacher efficacy is greater than three times more powerful and predictive of student achievement than socioeconomic status and three times more predictive than student motivation and concentration, persistence, and engagement” (para. 3). Collective efficacy is clearly beneficial to refugee students.

Principals play critical roles in developing the staff’s belief that they can effectively teach refugee students so that each student’s full potential is reached. As Gardiner and Enomoto (2006) suggested, “great principals ... believe in students, relate to them and their families, and are able to support teachers to educate students to be caring, lifelong learners who live meaningful and connected lives” (p. 566). It takes a school village to support immigrant children whose lives have changed quickly, but this support must be offered intentionally and meaningfully. Alberta Education (2023a) posited, “Quality leadership occurs when the leader’s ongoing analysis of the context, and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all school students” (p. 2). Collective efficacy can be meaningfully and constructively led by the principal.

Background

Newcomers to Canada often consist of families with children. According to Kalata (2021), more than 73,000 Syrian refugees have settled in Canada since 2015, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2019) reported that 46% of the Syrians who arrived were under 15 years of age. These statistics reveal that a great deal of school-aged children will be learning English and integrating into Canadian culture upon their arrival in the country. Families often arrive with varied traumatic backgrounds, which take time and effort to overcome. Walker and Zuberi (2020) found that “Syrian refugees arriving with psychological trauma symptoms can have greater difficulty with mental health and academic achievement” (p. 398). Schools play a vital role in assisting school-aged children in overcoming their familial, mental health, and academic adversities.

Immigration to Canada is continuing, and Alberta is seeing a growing number of newcomers. Alberta’s Office of Statistics and Information (n.d.) reported that the population growth rate in Alberta in 2022–2023 was 4.46% (1.22% in the first quarter), the second highest growth rate in Canada (“Population of Provinces” section). The Office of Statistics and Information also reported that, in the first quarter of 2023, 17,141 immigrants, 11.8% of the national immigration total, arrived in Alberta (“International Migration” section). Therefore, schools are expected to continue welcoming immigrant students, including refugees.

In my urban school in Alberta, there are refugee students from many countries, including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, with the majority from Syria. Since the summer of 2022, the school district where I am employed as a teacher has seen a significant increase in new arrival economic immigrants, refugees, sponsored immigrants, and displaced families. Most of these students have arrived from Ukraine, Syria, the Philippines, and

Afghanistan. Plenty of students have experienced or witnessed extreme violence and war. Due to their circumstances, many have limited or interrupted formal education and are not literate in their first language. In fact, many of their parents also cannot read or write in their first language.

I have observed that some of these students struggle to attend school regularly. Students tell me they are up late into the night playing video games, chatting online with friends, or scrolling through social media. Sometimes, they tell me that they stay home to help their families during the day. For example, some attend important medical appointments for family members to liaise and translate between the parents and medical professionals. Other times, students from large families, some with up to 14 children, stay home to assist in caring for younger siblings. I have also observed that, often, large families have only one vehicle and need to drive numerous children to different schools in the city. The parents drop their children off in order so as not to backtrack, but as a result, some students consistently miss the first class of the day or arrive with only minutes left until the second class.

In addition, I have witnessed students' struggling to understand Canadian culture and expectations for behaviour and causing mishaps at school. Students value relationships with teachers and enjoy shared smiles, praise for work well done, and playing games to learn the language, although they often struggle to interact positively with other students, despite being in classes with them. At times, their emotions get the best of them, and they resort to inappropriate behaviour, such as shouting across the classroom during instruction, wandering the school when they are supposed to be in class, cutting other students' hair, inviting physical altercations, ruining the clothing of others, participating in arguments, erupting into physical fights with one another, or engaging in racist behaviour. Through positive relationships and staunch support in school, however, students find engagement and learning.

Each province or territory in Canada is responsible for its own school system, except schools on First Nations reserves, which are the federal government's responsibility. It is within each authority's scope to ensure that all students are welcomed, cared for, and taught in equitable ways so that each child feels a sense of belonging, and the provinces and territories take this role seriously. Fosslien and West Duffy (2021) stated, "Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard" (para. 13). Students' sense of inclusion and belonging is key. The Education Act (2012) in Alberta governs education in the province. It is comprehensive, stating that "students are entitled to welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self" (p. 13). To support this statute, Alberta Education (2023a) requires that a principal "nurtures and sustains a culture that supports evidence-informed teaching and learning" by "fostering in the school community equality and respect with regard to rights as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*" (p. 3). Therefore, schools strive to ensure quality teaching through inclusion while celebrating the diversity of the school community.

Statement of the Issue

This capstone study addresses the issue of providing meaningful educational opportunities to meet the needs of refugee students in Canadian schools. These students face many obstacles, including limited or interrupted formal education, mental health struggles, or challenges at home. Teachers strive to engage the students in meaningful learning and help them connect to the school. The principal has a vital role in supporting the teachers, which subsequently supports the students.

Refugee students struggle with their past, affecting their present and potentially their future. Arar et al. (2019) stated, “Most refugee children lack the basic resources for learning and even living. They endure loss, physical and emotional difficulty, and their culture and language usually differ from that of the majority” (p. 961), and Walker and Zuberi (2020) suggested that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) impacts their post-migration settlement (p. 399). As a result, adolescent students who are changing physically, emotionally, and sexually are also dealing with potential past trauma and adjusting to a new country, language, and culture, all while making decisions that will lead to a career path (Hos, 2020, p. 1023). None of these are easy adjustments on their own, but faced with multiple challenges, any student would have difficulty adjusting.

A school is a learning and community hub where students learn the language and learn about positive relationships and belonging. As Hos (2020) suggested, “schools have a major influence where refugee adolescents become acclimated to the culture and language of the new country” (p. 1023). Principals can lead collective efficacy to strengthen the school community and bolster student learning. To propose a path forward, one must first determine what is lacking or missing in education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the capstone study is to better understand the knowledge and skills principals need to lead collective efficacy to provide quality education for refugee students when they come to school. Teachers must build self-efficacy to best support students' academic, social, and mental health needs. Çoban et al. (2023) asserted, “Previous research has provided convincing evidence that the self-efficacy of teachers matters, both for their performance and for student learning outcomes” (p. 98).

Those who work with this population are well-intentioned but are often deficient in the skills that would benefit the students the most. As Tuters and Portelli (2017) noted, “unfortunately, educational leaders in Ontario, and many other jurisdictions are largely on their own with it comes to serving their diverse student populations” (p. 604). Feelings of confidence and adequacy in principals lead to teachers’ building their own sense of self-efficacy. Yada and Savolainen (2023) explained, “Researchers support a direct relationship between PSE [principal self-efficacy] and CTE [collective teacher efficacy] by claiming that a robust sense of PSE fosters leadership behaviour that provides teachers with learning opportunities, which improves their teaching, thereby developing CTE” (p. 210). Principal and teacher self-efficacy lead to student success, which is important for students to stay in school, where they learn the language and are part of a successful community.

Research Questions

As clearly stated in Alberta’s Education Act (2012), “programs of study and instructional materials ... must reflect the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta, promote understanding and respect for others and honour and respect the common values and beliefs of Albertans” (p. 31). Additionally, as specified by Alberta Education (2023a), leaders are responsible for “creating an inclusive learning environment in which diversity is embraced, a sense of belonging is emphasized, and all students and staff are welcomed, cared for, respected and safe” (p. 3) and “building the capacity of teachers to respond to the learning needs of all students” (p. 4). Together with the purpose of the study, these indicators guided the research for this capstone study to answer the following three questions:

1. What are some of the challenges that refugee students face when entering urban schools in Canada?

2. How do principals develop a shared vision to ensure the unique learning needs of refugee students are met?
3. How can principals build collective efficacy to support refugee students in school?

Through the lens of these questions, recommendations are made to guide school leaders in supporting refugee students' teachers, who, in turn, provide support to the students.

Significance of the Study

This study has significance for many stakeholders, such as students, the school community, and beyond. The students deserve a quality education and to learn how to be productive citizens in Canadian society. It is in the parents' best interest to have educated children because, culturally, many refugee children take care of their parents as they age. After resettlement, immigrant families who do not speak English struggle with the health care system. Even if interpreters are available to help, they may not speak the correct dialect (Kaplan et al., 2022, p. 7), so parents must rely on their children to act as liaisons between medical staff and them.

The school community benefits when families and students feel a sense of belonging. Ratković et al. (2017) stated, "Well-being of a child is an important focus in practice and policy. Schools can create safe spaces where refugee children can express their concerns, feelings, and silences, as well as discuss their shared experiences" (p. 18). Principals need to move forward by offering strategies for teachers to strengthen their knowledge base and pedagogical skills when working with refugee students to ensure safe spaces for these students.

The hope is that collective efficacy will be created as tangible recommendations are made and that students, families, and various community groups will see the advantages of new perspectives and diversified thought.

Scope of Study

There are many types of newcomers, including refugee students, in Canada's schools. Ratković et al. (2017) noted, "in 2015, more than half of the world's refugees were children" (p. 2), and refugee children attending schools need to be supported accordingly. This capstone study provides recommendations for principals to help them move forward in leading collective efficacy by identifying the challenges that refugee students face when entering urban schools in Canada and providing practical solutions for developing a shared vision to ensure learning needs are met. Yada and Savolainen (2023) expressed that "principals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to be determined to act when facing challenges to their school's improvement, thereby promoting CTE, which will be positively related to teaching and learning" (p. 213).

Summary

Canada has a strong history of welcoming many immigrant families, and the numbers continue to increase. As noted by du Plessis and Marais (2017), "the increasing diversity of the global society is reflected in school systems all over the world" (p. 723). Refugee students have varied mental health, academic, and domestic needs, and school staff need to understand how to meet those needs to ensure academic success. Principals must lead staff in supporting refugee students so that all students can be engaged in their learning.

Alberta Education (2023a) stated, "A leader engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to identify opportunities for improving leadership, teaching and learning" by "engaging with others such as teachers, principals and other leaders to build personal and collective professional capacities and expertise" (p. 3). Alberta Education (2023a) further supported "seeking, critically reviewing, and applying educational research to inform effective practice" (p. 3). Considering these requirements, principals should seize opportunities

to improve their self-efficacy to lead collective efficacy among staff to foster refugee students' learning.

Outline of the Remainder of the Paper

Chapter 1 details background information and the need to support refugee students in school to ensure mental health, family support, and academic success. Chapter 2 is an extensive literature review regarding refugee students' needs, the challenges they face when attending a Canadian school, and how the principal can lead the staff to a shared vision of student support and success. School leaders need to lead collective efficacy to reach each refugee student where they are. Chapter 3 includes a summary of the research and recommendations for a path forward for principals.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

According to Koyama and Chang (2019), “more than half of the world’s 21.3 million refugees are under the age of 18 years” (p. 136). Canadian schools will continue to receive students from various locations and situations as long as Canada continues its strong history as a welcoming host country. Arar et al. (2019) expressed that, although some refugees have attended school before arriving in their new host country, “most refugee children lack the basic resources for learning and even living. They endure loss, physical and emotional difficulty, and their culture and language usually differ from that of the majority” (p. 961). In speaking of Syrian refugees in particular, Walker and Zuberi (2019) found that students who have endured trauma before arriving in Canada may struggle more with mental health and achieving academic success.

Due to these sometimes-unforeseen circumstances, schools must be prepared to provide adequate support for refugee students. Alberta Education (2023a) indicated, “A leader nurtures and sustains a culture that supports evidence-informed teaching and learning” (p. 3) by “developing a shared responsibility for the success of all students” (p. 4). To effectively create a shared responsibility, principals must create a shared vision by encouraging others to see their goals. Kouzes and Posner (2016) wrote about five practices of exemplary leadership. The second of those practices is “Inspire a Shared Vision,” which can be accomplished by “envision[ing] the future” and “enlist[ing] others by appealing to shared aspirations” (Chapter 3). Ensuring the academic success of refugee students requires a collective vision among staff to ensure that all

staff are working toward the same goal, and principals can inspire a shared vision by leading collective efficacy among teachers of refugee students.

Collective efficacy begins with developing principal self-efficacy to increase teacher self-efficacy. According to Yada and Savolainen (2023), “researchers support a direct relationship between PSE [principal self-efficacy] and CTE [collective teacher efficacy] by claiming that a robust sense of PSE fosters leadership behaviour that provides teachers with learning opportunities, which improves their teaching, thereby developing CTE” (p. 210). Considering learning opportunities, Farren (2016) suggested that much more is required in teacher education and professional development regarding meeting the needs of English language learners (ELLs). An effective practice to increase awareness and skills for school staff would be to focus professional development on “specialized, inclusive, culturally competent teaching strategies and techniques for classroom instruction with refugee children and youth” (Walker & Zuberi, 2020, p. 407). Building collective efficacy is an excellent tool to promote excellence in supporting staff and students, but principals and schools must first determine the challenges facing students and teachers to create a shared vision so that they may lead collective efficacy in supporting refugee students.

Definition of Terms

Collective Efficacy: “A group’s shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment” (Bandura, 1997, as cited in Donohoo et al., 2018, para. 2).

Economic Immigrant: “Immigrants who have been selected for their ability to contribute to Canada's economy” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, para. 1).

Immigrant: “A person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities” (Statistics Canada, 2022b, para. 1).

Leadership Quality Standard (LQS): “The professional expectations that principals and school jurisdiction leaders must demonstrate to create the conditions under which teachers can do their best work” (Government of Alberta, 2023, para. 3).

Principal: “A teacher designated as a principal or acting principal” (Education Act, 2012, p. 16); can be used interchangeably with *school leader*.

Principal Self-Efficacy (PSE): “A judgement of his or her [the principal’s] capabilities to structure a particular course of action in order to produce desired outcomes in the school he or she leads” (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, p. 573, as cited in Yada & Savolainen, 2023, p. 210).

Refugee: “Immigrants who were granted permanent resident status on the basis of a well-founded fear of returning to their home country” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, para. 3).

Restorative Justice: “A set of principles and practices that position harm as a violation of people and relationships rather than as a violation of rules or laws” (Zehr, 2002, as cited in Reimer, 2020, p. 410).

School Climate: “The quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students’, parents’ and school personnel’s experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (National School Climate Center, n.d., para. 3).

Self-Efficacy: “Psychologist Albert Bandura has defined self-efficacy as people’s belief in their ability to control their functioning and events that affect their lives” (Lopez-Garrido, 2023, “Key Takeaways” section).

Shared Vision: “Refers to a clear and common picture of a desired future state that members of an organization identify with themselves—essentially a vision that has been internalized by members of the organization” (Hoe, 2007, p. 12).

SIFE: “Students with interrupted formal education” (Hos, 2016, p. 480).

SLIFE: “Students with limited or interrupted formal education” (Hos, 2016, p. 480).

Social Justice: “Distributing resources fairly and treating all students equitably so that they feel safe and secure—physically and psychologically” (Álvarez, 2019, para. 1)

Teacher Self-Efficacy: “A judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated” (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001, as cited by Çoban et al., 2020, p. 98).

Teaching Quality Standard: “The professional practice of all Alberta teachers is guided by the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS). This standard is the basis for certification of all Alberta teachers and holds them accountable to the profession and to the Minister of Education” (Government of Alberta, 2023, para. 6).

Purpose of Leading Collective Efficacy When Teaching Refugee Students

Canada is a welcoming host country to immigrants, including refugees, who often encounter difficult situations, such as war or conflict, discrimination, and lack of schooling. Refugee students often struggle in their new schools: “Refugee students continue to experience socio-psychological challenges in Canadian schools because teachers, resettlement officers, and policy makers often lack cross-cultural competences, a social justice focus, and transformative

leadership skills” (Ratković et al., 2017, p. 1). To combat these challenges, districts and schools must be equipped to support, engage, and teach students with refugee backgrounds so that they can achieve personal and academic success.

However, teaching students with socio-psychological hardships can be difficult. Ayoub and Zhou (2016) stated, “Often, educators are uncomfortable and not ready to support refugee students in coping with frustration and stress” (p. 5). Refugee students frequently need more support than one teacher can offer, especially when that teacher is not trained or does not have support from a school leader who does have training. Principals and school staff must have “access to resources, agencies and experts within and outside the school community to enhance student learning and development” (Alberta Education, 2023a, p. 4).

To improve school experiences for refugee students in Canada, policies at the provincial, district, and school levels must be steadfast in their intentions to fully support refugee students and their unique challenges. Principals must be confident in their abilities to stand by teachers in their daily teaching endeavours. They can do so by establishing a shared vision and collective efficacy in guiding refugee students through the challenges they face in Canadian schools.

Review of Research Literature

Challenges Refugee Students Face at School

Arriving in a new host country is only one piece of a complicated puzzle. Various other pieces include settling into a new home and community, finding healthcare and access to other resources, adjusting to school, and learning a new language and a different culture. However, as Shayka et al. (2012) pointed out, “for refugees, it [resettlement] is usually an acutely conflicting process that can bring safety, security, freedom, legal rights, hope, and empowerment while at

the same time accentuate their sense of loss, separation, tragedy, displacement, and marginalization” (p. 73). As a result, refugee students often suffer from untreated trauma and stress. Combined with teachers’ lack of understanding of premigration experiences and with students’ current needs, these students are at a higher risk of academic underachievement than immigrant children (Ayoub & Zhou, 2016).

Refugee students face educational barriers leading to difficulty finding academic and social success in school. For example, Walker and Zuberi (2020) explained, “Anti-refugee discourses, racism, and discrimination currently harm the academic success of Syrian youth and exacerbate the negative consequences of trauma and stresses of resettlement” (p. 405).

Therefore, mental health is a significant concern for refugee students. Walker and Zuberi further stated, “In Canada, many children and youth do not have ready access to mental health services in their communities” (p. 406). At school, these challenges may be combated through the perseverance of principals and staff who liaise with outside support services. Challenges that refugee students face in school include (a) trauma and stress; (b) barriers to accessing quality education, such as family responsibilities, limited or interrupted formal education, and lack of teacher training; (c) discrimination and racism; and (d) mental health concerns.

Trauma and Stress

Refugee families with a history of living in refugee camps due to war and conflict in their home countries often arrive in their host countries with trauma and stress. Samara et al. (2020) found, “Psychological disturbances experienced by the children include posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD: ranging between 19 and 54%), anxiety disorders, depression, psychosomatic symptoms, and physical illnesses” (p. 302). As school staff are not trained professionals in

psychology, it can be arduous to ascertain when and if students suffer from psychological disturbances.

While teachers may be unable to assess and treat PTSD and other psychological disturbances, they can support the students in other ways at school. Alberta Education (2023a) noted the importance of “creating an inclusive learning environment in which diversity is embraced, a sense of belonging is emphasized, and all students and staff are welcomed, cared for, respected and safe” (p. 4). The classroom is an indispensable space in which students can find a sense of security and safety, and “teachers can begin to have a positive impact as soon as children and youth with refugee experience arrive by establishing and maintaining a positive, welcoming climate” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2022, p. 9).

Establishing a positive relationship with refugee students and their families upon arrival can contribute to building resiliency. Pieloch et al. (2016, as cited in Palaiologou & Prekate, 2023) “found that socialization, feeling accepted and welcomed by the host community, positive schooling, and family communication and connection promote the resiliency of refugee children” (p. 3). Furthermore, Palaiologou and Prekate (2023) determined that resiliency can be increased by providing opportunities to discuss hobbies, friends, and current reality, as doing so allows students to focus on the present (p. 4). Teachers can encourage these possibilities by arranging class time to allow for communication through students’ speaking or writing about their lives and experiences.

Barriers to Accessing Quality Education

The number of barriers that refugee children may face in school is staggering. They may have increased family responsibilities and/or limited or interrupted formal education, and some teachers may lack training in working with refugee students. Despite these barriers, refugee

families are optimistic about attaining an education. Hos (2020) shared the results of an ethnographic research study of SIFE in the United States:

Findings from this study indicate that refugee and immigrant ELL SIFE develop strong aspirations for higher education and see their presence in the United States as an opportunity. Although this is a great opportunity, systemic barriers and policy failures do not make this possible. (p. 1039)

Furthermore, Ayoub and Zhou (2016) claimed, “After resettlement, the risk of academic underachievement with refugee students is likely to be higher than with immigrant students” (p. 4). Therefore, schools have a considerable amount of work to do.

Family Responsibilities. Family dynamics can affect students and their success at school. As Lambert et al. (2014) stated, “parental PTSD is associated with child distress and behavioral problems” (p. 14). For this reason, Elsayed et al. (2019) suggested weighing children’s and parents’ premigratory experiences and stressors with the emotion regulation skills of refugee children (p. 847). Students often are called to care for their families:

A lower level of education, lower official language fluency, and poor health among parents and other family members contribute to increased responsibilities for refugee youth, as youth often find themselves having to become interpreters, service navigators, and caretakers for their families. (Shayka et al., 2012, p. 70)

Students who experience frequent absences may have difficulty achieving a sense of belonging with children who regularly attend school.

Limited or Interrupted Formal Education. Due to limited or interrupted formal education, students may struggle with appropriate behaviour in school. Acceptable school behaviour does not always match the ways students previously behaved. The British Columbia

Ministry of Education (2022) created a list of items with which refugee students may not have experience, such as “waiting in line,” “waiting one’s turn,” “sitting still,” and “speaking one person at a time” (p. 12). It can be difficult for a teacher to juggle academics and behaviour in a class full of refugee students. They often speak over one another, wander the room during the lesson, and step in front of others rather than waiting for their turn.

In addition, a lack of education can impact the academics of refugee students. Ayoub and Zhou (2016) explained, “Before resettlement in Canada, these children may have received very little education as a result of living in conflict zones or refugee camps for years; their weak literacy and numeracy skills may cause academic underachievement in Canadian schools” (p. 3). Students may require adapted or modified work due to their lack of education, and they may qualify for individualized support plans that detail the exact strategies to guide the teacher in planning for the student. Shakya et al. (2012) noted, “Curriculum design and pedagogical approaches need to accommodate for learning barriers that refugees who have experienced educational disruptions and/or trauma may face” (p. 75). Training preservice teachers and providing professional development for veteran teachers is a way for schools to increase academic support for students who have interrupted or limited formal education.

Lack of Teacher Training. Schools attended by refugee students are often low-performing schools, as indicated by Hos (2020), who stated that students with limited formal education often attend low-performing schools. Furthermore, Gándara et al. (2003, as cited in Hos, 2020) explained that these schools are often staffed with unqualified or underqualified teachers (p. 1023). It would be beneficial if the teachers were suitably trained to work with refugee students. Farren (2016) asserted that “student teachers should be taught to make use of appropriate pedagogies that support students who have diverse linguistic, ethnic, and socio-

economic backgrounds, and particular learning needs” (p. 24). Where teachers are not entering the classroom with the skills required to teach refugees, it is essential for them to be supported in teaching refugee students.

Learning the language of the school is part of a student’s school experience, and the implications of learning are far-reaching. Students who struggle to learn English in a timely manner have difficulty navigating the education system and succeeding, thus causing a higher likelihood of failing or dropping out of school than other students (Warren, 1996, as cited in Hos, 2016, p. 481). Ratković et al. (2017) noted that, to mitigate challenges in school, “refugee children’s education and wellbeing require a holistic, cross-cultural, and multi-sector approach” (p. 4), while Loerke (2009, as cited in Ayoub & Zhou, 2016) added that “it is essential for teachers to receive mentoring and in-service training on the best education practices to ensure newcomers are integrated successfully into the schools” (p. 5). Coming together as a supportive school community would provide more opportunities for refugee students to succeed personally and academically.

Discrimination and Racism

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) outlined rights and freedoms in Canada:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (p. 50)

Despite this document and Canada’s stance on discrimination, “Black students in Canada are consistently negatively stereotyped as immigrants (meant in a derogatory sense), under-

achievers, fatherless, and trouble-makers” (James, 2012, as cited in Tuters & Portelli, 2017, p. 602). Tuters and Portelli (2017) stated, “Systemic discrimination and oppression has grave and long-lasting consequences for students who are racially and otherwise minoritized” (p. 602).

Schools should be safe and welcoming spaces for all students, and students should not fear discrimination or racism while attending school. Walker and Zuberi (2020) asserted, “Experiences of discrimination may further exacerbate existing trauma symptoms, while impacting these children and youth’s success within Canadian public schools” (p. 398). Refugee students have incredible burdens with premigratory trauma, limited or interrupted formal education, and increased family responsibilities. Adding discrimination is a burden they should not have to carry.

Mental Health Concerns

Mental health is an acute concern for many students. Migration, acculturative stress, and the stress of language acquisition may result in mental health problems in adolescent refugees (Hos, 2016, p. 482), and Walker and Zuberi (2020) contended, “Refugees tend to underutilize mental health services in western countries in part due to cultural differences (Miller and Rasco 2004). At the same time, there exists a lack of adequate resources and services to meet needs” (p. 406). Therefore, schools need creative solutions to address the mental health needs of their students.

Aside from advocating for increased funding, two potential solutions are community partnerships and specialized training for school counsellors. Alberta Education (2023a) emphasized the significance of “collaborating with community service agencies to provide wrap-around supports for all students who may require them, including those with mental health needs” (p. 4). Community partnerships with local resettlement agencies are vital to students and

families. Koyama and Chang (2019) performed a study on a newly created resettlement team in an Arizona school district that helped with various tasks to support newcomer families. They described this support as follows:

Social supports included, but were not limited to, translating school information for parents, transporting family members to medical appointments, securing mental health services for youth, and providing programs in citizenship and adult English as a Second Language (ESL). These bridged the voids created by disrupted family networks, poor mental and physical health services in resettlement camps, and ethnic cultural neighborhood segregation. (p. 142)

Community partnerships that support the families would take considerable strain off schools and staff with limited training or skills in working with students with mental health needs.

School counsellors and community liaison workers are often on call during the school day to help with student mental health struggles. Walker and Zuberi (2020) suggested, “Clinical training for school-based mental health professionals in trauma-informed and empirically based treatment interventions for children and youth who have experienced traumatic events and/or are experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder” (p. 407). Specialized training of school staff in working with students with mental health challenges would enhance the students’ overall social and academic achievement.

As discussed, refugee students experience several challenges when entering Canadian schools. They may have experienced conflict prior to their arrival in Canada, resulting in trauma and stress disorders, such as PTSD, anxiety, and depression. In addition, as a result of their migration, they may confront barriers in education, such as increased family responsibilities taking them or keeping them away from consistent schooling, and they may also have limited or

interrupted formal education due to fleeing their home country. Furthermore, teachers in Canada may be inexperienced in teaching refugee students, which makes the process more challenging. Discrimination is also an ugly reality that refugee students may face in school. All the aforementioned items can affect mental health, and schools may not be fully equipped to handle them. These challenges affect the principal's role in creating a shared vision and leading collective efficacy in supporting refugee students in schools.

Inspiring a Shared Vision to Support the Success of Refugee Students

It is crucial to have a shared vision to ensure the academic and social success of refugee students who experience challenges upon arrival in Canadian schools. This section defines shared vision and explores several areas for school leaders to consider when inspiring a shared vision to ensure the academic and social success of refugee students: (a) social and restorative justice, (b) community partnerships, (c) in-school collaboration, and (d) change management.

Definitions of Shared Vision

A shared vision is the cornerstone of an organization's foundation and a way to move forward with a goal in mind. It is vital to bring others on board to engage with a vision and goals that everyone collectively works toward. Hoe (2007) stated, "A shared vision is intended to generate a clear organizational purpose and promote the necessary changes in the organization so that it can achieve its desired future outcomes" (p. 12). A similar sentiment was shared by Alberta Education (2023a): "A leader collaborates with the school community to create and implement a shared vision for student success, engagement, learning and well-being" by "communicating the philosophy of education that is student-centred and based on sound principles of effective teaching and leadership" and "recognizing the school community's values and aspirations and demonstrating an appreciation for diversity" (p. 3). Schools must establish

strategic initiatives and then set a path forward to bring the shared vision to fruition. Kotter (2018) described “strategic initiatives as targeted and coordinated activities that, if designed and executed fast enough and well enough, will make your vision a reality” (p. 16). To decide on the vision and goals, principals must also consider the unique situation of educating refugee students, determine how best to foster success in that group of students, and inspire others on board with the change process.

Social and Restorative Justice

Considering the change process through social and restorative justice lenses would benefit refugee students. The benefits of instilling social and restorative justice within the shared vision would extend to the entire student body. Considering the advantages of community partnerships as part of a shared vision would also be wise. Alberta Education (2023a) established that “a leader builds positive working relationships with members of the school community and local community” by “creating opportunities for parents/guardians, as partners in education, to take an active role in their children’s education” (p. 3). Relationships can be built through intentional collaboration among the principal, staff, and families through community organizations.

Diverse and multicultural schools require education through equity, and both social and restorative justice are based on equity, which is the point from which principals should lead or engage. Grissom et al. (2012) found, “Principals must develop an equity lens, particularly as they are called on to meet the needs of growing numbers of marginalized students” (p. 92). Doing so bolsters teacher requirements of “fostering equality and respect with regard to rights as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*” (Alberta Education, 2023b, p. 4). While social justice focuses on fairness and equity, restorative

justice focuses on restoring relationships after conflict. Each is an effective strategy on its own, but together, they are powerful tools to aid in implementing all-encompassing change at the school level.

Social Justice. In creating a shared vision for a school, social justice should be considered for all students, not only refugee populations. Farren (2016) stated,

For social justice to happen in schools, conditions need to be put in place that make it possible for all students to have an appropriate educational experience as well as a reasonable opportunity for educational achievement, and, by implication, for participating in society. (p. 24)

However, creating a shared vision that focuses on social justice is challenging. Tuters and Portelli (2017) stated, “Educational leaders who work for social justice often experience struggles associated with their work in the form of things such as unsupportive colleagues, policies, and superiors” (p. 603). Moreover, they contended that “the struggles educational leaders who are working for social justice experience require them to learn skills and behaviours for navigating the contested environments within which they work and help them achieve their social justice goals” (p. 604).

Social justice affects all levels of the education system, from the district and school to parents and community partnerships. Social justice in the classroom can be established through relationship-building with the students. According to Gerdin et al. (2020), “knowing the group and acting on this knowledge is essential to building relationships between student and teacher, and critical for creating a socially cohesive classroom” (p. 7). The same can be said of the school community at large. Building relationships with staff and students alike can positively influence social justice in schools. Gardiner and Enomoto (2006) stated, “As issues of equity, excellence

and social justice are addressed in schools, principals are more likely to be successful if they receive consistent reinforcement and support from their district-level administrators” (p. 580). The support principals require should come directly from policy, and “multiculturalism or social justice values must be clearly written in district and school mission statements and core values to serve students effectively” (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006, p. 580). Through carefully planned and consistent support, principals can create a shared vision through a social justice lens.

Restorative Justice. Poor behaviour in refugee students can result from psychological challenges (Samara et al., 2020). Behavioural challenges in the classroom can escalate to outside of the classroom if not rectified in a timely manner. Ogilvie and Fuller (2016) stated, “Restorative justice pedagogy ... offers the potential to transform the ESL classroom into a safe and caring environment to support learners through the resettlement process and in forging a future characterized by hope” (p. 87). Restorative justice can be achieved in the classroom through restorative circles, also known as taking circles, and encouraged at the school level by principals as part of the shared vision plan.

Talking circles are an effective method to teach and mentor students in listening and peacemaking strategies. They can be “used to teach and practise social, communication and relational skills—with the expectation that students were developing skills to eventually handle issues on their own” (Reimer, 2020, p. 416). Learners do not always realize how or why their actions affect others. By participating in restorative circles, the wronged students can respectfully share how the offender’s actions affected them. Ogilvie and Fuller (2016) shared that “students who have caused harm are not permitted to passively accept punishment without assuming responsibility, but rather must engage in understanding the repercussions of their actions and providing input on how to rectify the situation” (p. 89). Moreover, they claimed, “For refugee

students, the opportunity to discuss experiences in a supportive environment with peers who have gone through similar experiences can be therapeutic” (p. 91). Thus, talking circles can be an effective means of building positive relationships and creating trust by allowing students to express their thoughts and feelings and be understood by others (Reimer, 2020, p. 421).

Community Partnerships

Community is an important aspect of relocating, and the ties between the school community and the local community can foster relationships, understanding, and belonging. Ogilvie and Fuller (2017) affirmed that “the integration of students’ cultures by establishing bonds between the school and the wider community reinforces respect for students and helps to instill a sense of pride and belonging that can assist in developing new relationships and fostering growth” (p. 92). Community resettlement agencies can play a significant role in the successful settlement of refugee families and students. Hos (2016) asserted,

Although education is significant for all students, regardless of family background and minority status, it may be even more important for immigrant and refugee English language learners (ELL) specifically for Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) to adapt to their new location. (p. 480)

Resettlement agencies or resettlement departments in schools can help bridge communication and involvement with families and the school. As Ogilvie and Fuller (2016) stated, “establishing relationships between the school and community can also serve to enhance student comfort” (p. 92) and can be achieved by ensuring that school and community agency staff are equipped to work in a successful partnership. Ratković et al. (2017) suggested,

Providing teacher and cultural broker professional development opportunities, creating collaborative multi-level settlement programs for refugee families, and developing cross-

sector partnerships between education and government agencies serving refugees would help refugee students overcome socio-psychological challenges and thrive in the Canadian classroom. (p. 18)

Families are an integral part of their children's education, though a family's participation in their child's education may be hard for refugee parents. Although it is advantageous to a student's success for families to be involved in their schooling, "many refugee parents enter a country in which they have no prior knowledge of the host country's school system as well as normative parenting practices and rights" (Deng & Marlowe, 2013, as cited in Moinolmolki et al., 2020, p. 7). Ogilvie and Fuller (2016) suggested that "integrating families into the school community can enhance awareness about institutional norms and strengthen the support system provided for students" (p. 92). Therefore, it is in the best interest of refugee students to have the school community and local community collaborate to provide wrap-around supports to enhance student settlement, belonging, and success as part of a principal's or school's shared vision.

In-School Collaboration

Collaboration with all parties is an essential element in creating a shared vision. School leadership must agree on best practices for supporting refugee students. Kouzes and Posner (2007) stated,

Leaders foster collaboration and build trust. This sense of teamwork goes far beyond the few direct reports or close confidants. They engage all those who must make the project work—and in some way, all who must live with the results. (p. 20)

Education is a joint responsibility and collaborative process requiring the participation and encouragement of all involved parties for student success (Education Act, 2012). With respect to

in-school collaboration, those included would be principals, teachers, educational assistants, school counsellors, and community liaison workers.

Collaboration is a shared task and an effective strategy for principals to implement into planning. The principal “can share responsibility for improvement with teachers by providing a structure where collaboration is well-defined” (Azeem & Mataruna, 2019, p. 1320). Teachers working together for the good of individual or class learning also benefit the teachers in their day-to-day work: “Frequent communication between teachers creates opportunities for them to receive feedback, functionally handle the pressures they face, and pursue successful collaborations” (Yada & Savolainen, 2023, p. 212). Alberta Education (2023b) supported this, noting that “quality teaching occurs best when teachers work together ... in the common interest of helping all students succeed in diverse and complex learning environments” (p. 1). Collaboration between school staff increases their confidence and enhances their support for students; therefore, it is vital to create a shared vision when considering a change process.

Change Management (Leadership) in Education

Author and leadership expert Dr. John Kotter (2018) established eight steps, or accelerators, required to lead change within an organization: “create a sense of urgency,” “build a guiding coalition,” “form a strategic vision and initiatives,” “enlist a volunteer army,” “enable action by removing barriers,” “generate short-term wins,” “sustain acceleration,” and “institute change” (p. 9).

The first two accelerators are “creating a sense of urgency” and “building a guiding coalition” (Kotter, 2018, p. 9). Fullan (2020) claimed, “Traditional schooling is almost grinding to a halt when it comes to social mobility, equality, and satisfaction with learning” (p. 661). This point is paramount when speaking to supports that are required for refugee students in Canadian

schools. In schools with refugee students, common urgency could involve both academics, such as increased reading levels, or social goals, such as creating a sense of belonging upon the student's arrival in Canada and at the school. To achieve these goals, school employees must be on board. These steps are similar to Steps 2 and 3 of Fullan and Pinchot's (2018) "Eight Factors That Help Leaders Make Deep Transformation in Schools": (a) "Have a sense of focused urgency" and (b) "use the group to change the group" (p. 52). Together with teachers, principals can achieve more meaningful change.

Accelerators 3 and 4 involve creating a strategic vision and enlisting volunteers to help achieve the goal. Among other characteristics, Kotter (2018) mentioned that a strong strategic vision must be communicable, flexible, and simple (p. 16). Keeping the vision easy to follow and implement would benefit all involved, as many employees must be motivated to join the challenge of change. The change can play out in a timely manner.

"Enable action by removing barriers" and "generate short-term wins" are Accelerators 5 and 6. Kotter (2018) recommended identifying the barriers to remove them and described some barriers as complacency, pressure to perform, and limiting access to leaders (p. 24). Fullan and Pinchot's (2018) fourth transformational factor is to "spread and deepen teacher leadership" (p. 52). Building the capacity of teachers allows them to become leaders, while the principal becomes the lead learner (Fullan & Pinchot, 2018, p. 54). Allowing teachers to lead and principals to learn allows complacency and pressure to perform to be minimized, while the small wins are celebrated along the way, leading to collaboration toward meeting the shared vision of helping refugee students succeed.

Step 7 is to "sustain acceleration" by revisiting urgency after significant wins and inspiring more people to get involved (Kotter, 2018, p. 29). Then, Step 8 is to "institute change"

by making clear connections between the new behaviours and the newfound success (Kotter, 2018, p. 30). Establishing that connection gives principals and teachers evidence of what worked effectively. According to Fullan and Pinchot (2018), “with good leadership, most schools can get initial buy-in that can be leveraged into in-depth change within two years” (p. 53).

A shared vision is crucial for an organization, including educational organizations, as it can be the force behind success. This shared vision “is an important foundation for proactive learning because it provides direction and focus for learning. This, in turn, fosters energy, commitment, and purpose among organizational members” (Hoe, 2007, p. 12). When creating a shared vision to drive the success of a diverse school, one must look at what they want to accomplish. By considering social and restorative justice, principals can work toward supporting equitable education for all. Community partnerships are another vital component to refugee student success, as they assist with academic, familial, and social support, and in-school collaboration efforts enhance and enforce the strategies used to advocate for refugee students. Kotter’s (2018) *8 Steps to Accelerate Change* is a reliable means of bringing about organizational change and educational reform. Moreover, having a shared vision is essential when leading collective efficacy when teaching refugee students to achieve their full academic and social potential.

Leading Collective Efficacy to Support Refugee Students

Collective efficacy among school staff is a communal belief that the group’s abilities can foster and instruct students in a way that allows all students to achieve academic and social success. This section explores the topics (a) leading diverse schools, (b) teacher self-efficacy, and (c) principal self-efficacy and how they impact the success of refugee students. Goddard et al. (2021) found, “Collective efficacy beliefs were more strongly related to student achievement

than all student and school demographic variables—including poverty and race—except for prior achievement” (p. 488). Collective teacher efficacy is established through the active participation of stakeholders in the school (Yada & Savolainen, 2023). Alberta Education (2023a) asserted the need for “building the capacity of teachers to respond to the learning needs of all students” (p. 4). Increasing self-efficacy and collective efficacy in teachers and school leaders is essential for quality teaching and student learning.

Schools are becoming more diverse and require collective efficacy to fully support each student to achieve success. According to du Plessis and Marais (2017), “although diversity enriches schools by broadening school leaders’, teachers’ and learners’ views, issues related to diversity often lead to conflict as well” (p. 731). This concern requires principals to know how to lead in diverse and multicultural schools. Principals who are open to cultural diversity and can see differences positively are teachable when it comes to distinct cultures and beliefs (du Plessis & Marais, 2017). Moreover, principals who lead by example may be more likely to have a positive following of staff with a similar mindset. According to Çoban et al. (2023), “the interaction among increased trust, emphasis on instruction, and collaboration in a school could enhance teachers’ beliefs regarding what they can do in the classroom” (p. 110). Self-efficacy is important for both teachers and school leaders. Yada and Savolainen (2023) noted, “Principals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to be determined to act when facing challenges to their school’s improvement, thereby promoting CTE, which will be positively related to teaching and learning” (p. 213). Teacher training and professional development are imperative in increasing teacher and principal self-efficacy in working with refugee students.

Leading in a Diverse School

Diverse, multicultural schools can be a challenge to lead. Tutters and Portelli (2017) claimed, “Ontario is the most ethnically diverse province in Canada” (p. 598), yet most teachers and principals in Ontario are White and middle class. Furthermore, a report from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada claims, “Teachers and policy-makers are more comfortable discussing multiculturalism than critically examining the inequities immigrants face in the Canadian education system” (Brewer & McCabe, 2014, as cited in Ratković et al., 2017, p. 18). Additionally, Grissom et al. (2021) found that “principal turnover is higher in schools serving larger proportions of low-income students, low-achieving students, and students of color, suggesting that principal turnover often may reinforce existing inequities among schools” (pp. xvi-xvii). Thus, principals in diverse schools must be willing to learn and lead in equitable ways that honour their multicultural students.

These challenges present opportunities for school leaders to lead with integrity and with staff’s and students’ best interests at the forefront. Du Plessis and Marais (2017) asserted, “Effective principals and their school management teams must prepare their teachers and learners to thrive in multicultural schools” (p. 730). This preparation can be executed in multiple ways. Du Plessis and Marais further posited,

An aim that should be pursued by leaders in multicultural schools subsists in promoting educational equality by developing learning content, such as life skills (different cultural holidays, and cultural songs and dancing) that is predicated on a just understanding of ethnic groups. (p. 731)

Teachers and principals must work together, though Grissom et al. (2017) suggested, “For a school as a whole, ... the effectiveness of the principal is more important than the effectiveness

of a single teacher” (p. xiv). To positively lead a diverse school in collective efficacy, teacher and principal self-efficacy must be nurtured.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief that an individual has in their own capabilities and abilities. Alberta Education (2023a) stressed the importance of teacher self-efficacy by stating that “a leader ensures that every student has access to quality teaching and optimum learning experiences” by “building the capacity of teachers to respond to the learning needs of all students” (p. 4). Increasing teacher efficacy benefits student learning, as indicated by Çoban et al. (2023):

Strengthening teachers’ TSE [self-efficacy] perceptions would enhance their capacity to cope with problems within the school and classroom, improve the quality of their teaching, and increase their satisfaction with the profession, which could eventually improve student learning outcomes in schools. (p. 98)

Collaboration between teachers is an important aspect of increasing teacher self-efficacy. Çoban et al. (2023) asserted, “Teacher collaboration creates an opportunity for each teacher to share ideas and materials, discuss the issues they face, and receive support from their colleagues to overcome challenging circumstances” (p. 99). This collaboration helps develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills to use when teachers face future challenges, thus increasing their self-efficacy. To ensure collaboration is possible, principals must ensure that teachers have time set aside to plan for instruction and lessons. Teachers who collaborate with colleagues grow their self-efficacy, thus promoting collective efficacy. Da’as et al. (2022) stated, “Teachers work alongside other educators to foster their students’ learning. Their belief in their ability to contribute meaningfully to this endeavor has a powerful influence on their motivation and

consequently, their collective results” (p. 167). An increased feeling of capacity will then allow teachers to support refugee students more effectively in their academic and social growth.

Principal Self-Efficacy

Principal self-efficacy is the principal’s belief that they can lead competently to ensure the school meets the defined goals. Goddard et al. (2021) defined principal self-efficacy, specific to instructional leadership, as “the degree to which principals believe themselves capable of organizing and executing the courses of action required to support teachers in improving instruction and student learning” (p. 476). Principal self-efficacy is essential for building teacher self-efficacy, subsequently resulting in the development of collective efficacy. Goddard et al. (2021) implied that “a robust sense of principal self-efficacy for instructional leadership can promote principal behaviors that are experienced by teachers in ways that enhance their sense of collective efficacy” (p. 488). When there is trust between teachers and principals, a positive school climate is created.

School climate is palpable and can affect teacher self-efficacy and may affect student outcomes. Grissom et al. (2021) defined the school climate as follows:

School climate refers to the behaviors and actions of people in the school who are members of its social system and is an outgrowth of the more stable school culture, which is the shared beliefs of people in the school community. (p. 64)

Creating a trusting environment increases teachers’ sense of self-efficacy; in turn, student learning increases. Çoban et al. (2020) noted, “More effective principals build trust and emphasize teaching to create a school climate conducive to increased collaboration, which in turn promotes the quality of teaching practices and student learning” (p. 110). In addition, Goddard et al. (2015, as cited in Grissom et al., 2021) explained that “principal leadership

supports teacher collaboration, which leads to larger collective efficacy within a school. In turn, these positive relationships are associated with improved student achievement” (p. 66).

School leaders likely do not have all the skills and knowledge beneficial to teacher efficacy and student success. They require training and development to hone their skills. Tuters and Portelli (2017) suggested that “changes be made to preparation and training for educational leaders. These changes could include mandatory inclusion of equity and social justice education in leadership preparation programmes” (p. 606). To lead collective efficacy in schools with high refugee student populations, leaders require specific training in working with those students. Training leaders in how to support refugee student populations would help this group of students feel more secure in their sense of belonging and their academic journey.

Summary

As immigration continues and refugee students arrive in Canadian schools, principals have a significant role to fill in recognizing the challenges these students face. They need to consider the struggles of refugee children when creating a shared vision to lead collective efficacy when teaching them. This literature review was presented in three sections, which explored key areas of focus relative to principals’ leading collective efficacy.

The first section of this literature review examined the unique challenges that refugee students may face once entering Canadian schools. Many students arrive with premigratory trauma, which appears as stress in school. In addition, refugee students often face barriers in the Canadian school system. They frequently experience increased family responsibilities once they arrive in Canada due to the different speeds at which family members acculturate; children may learn the new language faster, making many children the interpreters between parents and community services. Another challenge is that refugee students commonly arrive with limited or

interrupted formal education. Samara et al. (2020) stated, “It has long been acknowledged that while facing ongoing challenges to settle in the new country, refugee children also struggle to adapt to their new school environment” (p. 302). Therefore, they are not always aware of how to function socially in school. Teachers who are not trained specifically to work with this group of students may struggle with instruction and student behaviour. Many times, these students are victims of discrimination and racism, and they often suffer poor mental health from pre- and post-migratory experiences.

The next section of this literature review analyzed how principals can inspire a shared vision in their schools. According to Hoe (2007), “a shared vision helps to create a sense of commonality within the organization and provide coherence to varied activities” (p. 12). In determining the elements of shared vision, principals would do well to consider social and restorative justice in their plans. Social justice is about equity for everyone. It can be created by building positive relationships with students and staff. Restorative justice works with behaviour. This mediated practice replaces punishment with guided conversation and actions to remedy the situation. In addition, community partnerships are integral to helping refugee families and students settle in a new community and school. Collaboration with out-of-school services is just as important as in-school collaborative practices, which increase staff functionality and student success. Kotter’s (2018) *8 Steps to Accelerating Change* is a change management method used in large organizations and in education, and it would be an effective model for schools and school districts to use in implementing a shared vision of how they would like to change schools for the better.

The third section of this literature review discussed leading collective efficacy. Leading in a diverse school can be challenging and requires strong leadership. Teacher self-efficacy is

important, and it can be supported by effective leaders who build trusting relationships with their staff: “Principals’ effects on students come largely through their effects on teachers, including how principals hire, retain, develop, and encourage teachers and create appropriate conditions for teaching and learning” (Grissom et al., 2021, p. xiv). Principal self-efficacy is related to teacher self-efficacy and can be strengthened with training particular to the student body in their schools.

In the last section of this literature review, collective efficacy was explored. Collective efficacy is developed by acknowledging the struggles that refugee students face when they arrive in Canadian schools. From there, school leaders can determine what strategies need to be included in a shared vision so that they can inspire school staff to engage and participate in the vision. Doing so establishes teacher self-efficacy, which is supported by principal self-efficacy. Principals can then lead collective efficacy when teaching refugee students in Canada.

Chapter 3: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions

Summary of Findings

The intent of this study was to investigate and provide principals with recommendations of strategies to implement to better support refugee students in Canadian schools. Chapter 1 explored how best to support refugee students by introducing refugees in Canada. It offered background information, a statement of the issue, and described the purpose of the study. Chapter 1 also presented the research questions which guided the research, its significance, and its scope.

Chapter 2 was an in-depth literature review that answered the research questions. It described the purpose of leading collective efficacy when teaching refugee students. In Canadian schools, refugee students face several challenges, including trauma and stress, barriers to education, discrimination and racism, and mental health challenges. Inspiring a shared vision for the support of and academic and social success of refugee students was examined by considering how social and restorative justice, community partnerships, in-school collaboration, and change management can impact shared vision. It detailed the importance of collective efficacy and some measures of how to attain it in a school setting. Leading in a diverse school was explored, as was encouraging self-efficacy in teachers and principals. Self-efficacy paves the way for collective efficacy, with the principal leading by example.

Now, Chapter 3 outlines the implications for stakeholders. Supporting refugee students has far-reaching impacts on the entire student body in a school, the teachers and greater school community, and the local community. This chapter provides five recommendations for strategies

that can be implemented to encourage a shared vision that leads to collective efficacy when teaching refugee students.

Implications

Regarding the implications of leading collective efficacy through a shared vision when teaching refugee students in Canada, attention must be paid to the various stakeholders. The student body, the teachers, and the local community have all been considered in this capstone study.

Student Body

Refugee Students. There are several challenges with which refugee students cope pre- and post-migration. According to Kia-Keating and Ellis (2007, as cited in Walker & Zuberi, 2016), “schools are one of the first and most significant service systems that school-aged refugees engage with and learn to navigate, something that is crucial but fraught with challenges” (p. 405).

Ayoub and Zhou (2016) stated that, to help mitigate the struggles, “it is imperative for educators to listen to the newcomers’ stories and challenges, and provide them with care, compassion, and support in solving problems and making social connections at school” (p. 15). Social connections are paramount in creating a sense of belonging in schools. Displaying interest in students’ lived experiences will help refugee students feel a sense of belonging and social connection, which are catalysts for growing confidence and relationships, and language acquisition will develop alongside friendships. Together, these elements will allow students to evolve within the school and local communities. Ogilvie and Fuller (2016) stated, “Schools are responsible for socializing young people and helping them to develop the skills needed to

become productive members of society” (p. 88). By feeling included in the classroom and the school as a whole, refugee students will have opportunities to advance academically and socially.

Canadian Students. With refugee students continuing to arrive in classrooms, Canadian students have avenues to explore global issues. Canada is a diverse country, and students are fortunate to benefit from attending multicultural schools. While learning about the world through the curriculum, the students also have optimal opportunities to see the world through their classmates’ eyes and experiences; however, effort must be made by both Canadian and refugee students. By developing friendly relationships with refugee students, Canadian students can grow their perceptions of global issues and diversity, potentially empowering them to become allies and advocates for newcomers.

Teachers are required to teach to the learning needs of each student. According to Alberta Education (2023b), “a teacher applies a current and comprehensive repertoire of effective planning, instruction and assessment practices to meet the learning needs of every student,” and they “incorporate a range of instructional strategies, including the appropriate use(s) of digital technology, according to context, content, desired outcomes and the learning needs of students” (p. 3). All students can benefit from the additional support teachers provide for differentiated learning in their classrooms.

Teachers

Teaching refugee students without professional development or preservice teacher training can be taxing. Teachers can better reach their students by collaborating with other teachers, support workers in schools, and community partners. By understanding student challenges and learning how to work with them, they can better aim to ensure that refugee students reach their academic and social potential.

With new knowledge and skills in working with diverse students, teachers can enhance classroom management by building positive rapport with students. Alberta Education (2023b) mandated that teachers show “empathy and a genuine caring for others” (p. 3). By offering a warm, caring, and respectful environment for students, teachers can build meaningful relationships, which can help mitigate poor student behaviour.

Broader School Community

Samara et al. (2020) suggested, “Schools should also play their part by building programmes to support refugees, as well as other vulnerable children, including protecting them from bullying and helping them to integrate better into the school community” (p. 322). School community is defined as “students, teachers and other school staff members, parents/guardians and school council members” (Alberta Education, 2023b, p. 2). Parents sometimes have children at more than one school in a district; therefore, when a parent sees or experiences support for students, they may share that information with their other child’s teacher or school. Furthermore, parents who are school council members at more than one school may offer ideas to other school councils. The local school community can facilitate the building of connections through social channels, which would encourage the support of refugee students across the district. Providing enhanced support for refugee students in one school can lead to positive change in other schools. Moreover, advocating for this sometimes-marginalized population calls attention to the need for equitable and inclusive education across all school districts, thus leading to enhanced support systems and, potentially, policy reform within the school district.

Local Community

A local community is defined by Alberta Education (2023a, 2023b) as “community members who have an interest in education and the school ... including members of the public”

(p. 2). Aiding refugee students at school can have profound impacts on the local community by fostering a sense of belonging for the students and families in the communities in which they live, leading to feelings of acceptance.

Having students participate in the community in constructive and meaningful ways could minimize prejudices and stereotypes within local communities. The students may feel a sense of pride and confidence and become positive role models for younger children in their community. This sense of community would lead to a strong, diverse workforce in which refugees and Canadians would gain valuable skills and perceptions about working together in a unified manner.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Increase Communication With Refugee Families

Settling in a new country can be difficult. Samara et al. (2020) suggested, “It has long been acknowledged that while facing ongoing challenges to settle in a new country, refugee children also struggle to adapt to their new school environment” (p. 302). As refugee students adapt to their new schools and begin to establish connections and a level of comfort over time, parents can be left wondering how schools in Canada work and how their children are doing.

Therefore, it is recommended that schools increase communication with refugee families. Families with school-aged children would benefit from communication with their children’s teachers and school(s). Teachers can communicate directly with parents by using a text messaging app that allows teachers to enter student and family contact information and specify the home language. Then, when a teacher sends a text in English, the family receives it in their home language. The family can also send a text in their home language to the teacher, which the teacher would receive in English. Teachers can send information the parents need to know,

including important days at school, invitations to school events, and report card comments. Using the messaging app would open lines of communication in which parents feel more comfortable asking questions and providing information to their children's teachers.

Hosting a parent information meeting is important to do before the beginning of each school year, with a second meeting halfway through the year, to allow parents to visit the school and meet the teachers. Alberta Education (2023a) suggested "establishing opportunities and expectations for the positive involvement of parents/guardians in supporting student learning" (p. 4). Parent meetings are an excellent opportunity and expectation for involvement. At these meetings, it is recommended to share information on how schools function in Canada, the expectations of students and parents, and informative pieces, such as core and option classes, school clubs, and educational functions throughout the year.

Recommendation 2: Provide Training and Development

Preservice Teacher Training. Teachers do not automatically enter the workforce with the skills and knowledge to work effectively with refugee students, yet new teachers should have basic knowledge of working with diverse students. This information may include students with learning disabilities, behaviour challenges, and working with refugee students. It is recommended that teacher training programs offer specialized training in working with refugee students.

Refugee students enter Canadian schools where they learn a great deal, from culture and social norms to language. Regarding language development in English language learners, Farren (2016) claimed,

Teachers should be able to set tasks for ELLs with awareness about what is expected of learners in terms of language use in the context of prototypical types of text (e.g.,

scientific, geographical explanation of phenomena, historical narrative) and for particular communicative purposes (e.g., reporting, describing, instructing, explaining). (p. 27)

Preservice teachers are trained in the basics of providing differentiation in the classroom but often lack the necessary skills to work with refugee students experiencing pre- and post-migratory challenges. Therefore, it would be advantageous for teacher training programs to consider supplying future teachers with information that would aid in their teaching of refugee students.

Professional Development. While veteran teachers are knowledgeable in the content and subject areas and groups of students with which they have the most experience, they may lack the expertise and competencies required to work with refugee students. Thus, professional development becomes necessary to enhance the capacity of veteran teachers who teach refugee students in their classrooms.

A shared vision should guide professional development. Grissom et al. (2021) stated, “Student achievement is higher in schools in which principals ensure that professional learning opportunities for teachers align with school goals” (p. 62). If a shared vision includes providing improved support for refugee students, teacher learning should be guided toward that collective goal. This objective can be accomplished, in part, by assigning trained mentors to teachers. As noted by Farren (2016), “a formal mentoring system, in which mentor teachers would offer systematic support to student teachers in addressing ELLs’ needs, should be the norm” (p. 34). This concept would work well not only for preservice or new teachers but also for veteran teachers who wish or are required to improve their practice to expand their proficiency in fostering refugee students’ academic and social growth.

Recommendation 3: Collaborate for Self-Efficacy and Collective Efficacy

Collaboration is necessary for schools, teachers, and students to succeed. According to the Education Act (2012), “education is a shared responsibility and requires collaboration, engagement and empowerment of all partners in the education system to ensure that all students achieve their potential” (p. 13). Principals play a key role in engaging and empowering teachers in a school. As discussed by Çoban et al. (2023), “supported by principals’ instructional leadership, a trust-based school environment builds a collaborative school culture that enhances teachers’ beliefs in their skills to tackle educational issues and promote student learning” (p. 110). Principals need to lead by example in their own learning and guide teachers to collaborative efforts to develop their expertise in supporting refugee students.

Principals can increase their capacity to lead the teaching of refugee students by reaching out and collaborating with other leaders who are experienced in working with refugee populations. They can guide their learning through professional development practices to enhance teacher self-efficacy. Yada and Savolainen (2023) explained, “Researchers support a direct relationship between PSE [principal self-efficacy] and CTE [collective teacher efficacy] by claiming that a robust sense of PSE fosters leadership behaviour that provides teachers with learning opportunities, which improves their teaching, thereby developing CTE” (p. 210). Like teachers who benefit from the support of principals, principals benefit from the support of their leaders. Yada and Savolainen further asserted that “policymakers should provide not only leadership action and strategies but also opportunities to enhance principals’ confidence in their practice” (p. 219). Working together from the district level down to the teachers and other educational staff would increase principal self-efficacy, benefiting teachers in their self-efficacy and, in turn, developing collective efficacy in teaching refugee students.

Recommendation 4: Incorporate Restorative Justice Practices

Teachers have a great responsibility in managing classroom behaviours, as schools have a great responsibility in managing a large number of students and their associated behaviours.

Regarding refugee students, the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2022) noted,

The role of the educator does not include the provision of therapy; however, school staff will likely need to support some of the behaviours and associated feeling related to trauma and PTSD in students.

Trauma may lie hidden or may manifest in seemingly unrelated behaviours. These behaviours may be emotional, cognitive, physical and/or interpersonal. (p. 17)

Therefore, teachers are expected to manage classroom behaviour, and a positive way to approach this task is through restorative justice practices.

Restorative justice involves teaching accountability and responsibility. Ogilvie and Fuller (2016) described restorative justice as follows: “Offenders are held accountable to understand the repercussions of their actions on victims and the wider community and to take responsibility to make things right as much as possible” (p. 88). For refugee and Canadian students alike, restorative justice in the classroom would have positive effects on student relationships and behaviour. These favourable outcomes could then lead to refugee students’ having more successful academic and social lives as they understand the effects of their behaviours.

Recommendation 5: Incorporate Change Management to Implement a Shared Vision

Kotter’s (2018) eight-step method to accelerate change is a sound approach to creating and implementing a shared vision for lasting change. To fully support refugee students in achieving their full academic and social potential, there must be a common goal among staff.

Fullan (2020) stated,

Whether there will be greater cooperation and better leaders in the next few years (and I have a feeling there could be), it is time for education to go out on a limb and become a change maker for the individual and the social good. (p. 661)

Schools are opportune settings where change can be made for the greater good while also supporting individual students, teachers, and leaders. Therefore, it is recommended that Kotter's (2018) eight-accelerator method be used to apply strategies to create a shared vision leading to collective efficacy in supporting refugee students.

Further Study to Address Gaps in Research

Further research is recommended to address the apparent lack of research on leading collective efficacy in teaching refugee students and fill the gap in training for principals and teachers regarding how to best serve this population of students. Future research is necessary to learn the methods that schools, policymakers, families, and communities use to help refugees in Canadian schools adapt (Ratković et al., 2017, p. 1). There also seems to be a lack of resources for implementing policy to better support schools, teachers, and their diverse student population. As Ratković et al. (2017) stated, "gaps ... exist in Canadian educational policy; the references used in Canadian educational policy often come from other countries" (p. 1).

Conclusions

Refugee students continue to arrive in Canada. As Ayoub and Zhou (2016), "by sponsoring and protecting thousands of refugees every year, Canada maintains its well-respected humanitarian tradition on the international stage" (p. 1). While that may be true, the Canadian education system has a long way to go to support and build the confidence to ensure the academic and social success of refugee students in Canadian schools.

Principals require support from their school district(s) in the journey to develop principal self-efficacy, which is needed to support teachers who work with refugee students in the classroom. Teachers, in turn, would increase their sense of capacity in working with these students, especially once they see that the principal is on board as a willing learner as well. To achieve this goal, principals must work with teachers to create a shared vision for the future. By creating a shared vision that supports the unique challenges that refugee students face in Canadian schools, principals and teachers can collaborate on how best to increase their knowledge and skillsets in working with refugee students. Using change management, principals can encourage staff to participate in the change process to better support refugee students.

Principals' roles in leading collective efficacy when teaching refugee students in Canada begin with understanding refugee student needs and ends when all students achieve academic and social success. This work is ongoing.

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