SUPPORTING EAST ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRANSITION INTO THE

BRITISH COLUMBIAN K-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM

LEADERSHIP INTEGRATION PROJECT REPORT

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Executive Summary

East Asian International Students (EAIS) who enter the British Columbian K-12 Education system often experience difficulty in their transition. The role of a school-based International Student Coordinator (ISC) is critical in aiding EAIS transition as he or she is often the first person the student has contact with. The literature review paper (see Appendix 1), written in LDRS 591 of the Trinity Western University's Master of Arts in Educational Leadership program, provides the theoretical basis for several evidence-based strategies which an ISC could implement in order to support EAIS transition.

This Leadership Integration Project (LIP) Report follows up the LDRS 591 literature review paper, employing action research methods and informal ethnography to investigate how an ISC can identify, implement and promote the proposed strategies to aid in EAIS transition. The author of this Report acted as a participant observer in gathering and analyzing qualitative data received from a variety of informers during the study.

This LIP Report discusses a number of specific strategies for aiding in EAIS transition, including (1) equipping members of an International Education Department for supporting EAIS who will transition into a Western education system, (2) creating a team of educators who will utilize the proposed strategies to aid in EAIS transition, and (3) serving the whole student population of the school by developing in them the leadership competencies gained by the author-researcher during this LIP study, rather than limiting this leadership development effort to the EAIS enrolled in the school.

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Chapter 1 - THE PRIMACY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Parolini (2012) describes servant leaders as those who have "the ability to cast a collaborative moral vision while actively caring for those participating in moving the vision to reality" (p. 13). Blanchard and Hodges (2001) remind us that leadership in the service of Jesus and His Kingdom begins with the transformation of the heart, head, hands and habits of the leader who seeks the betterment of others. Further, Spears (2010) purports that "servant leaders recognize that they have an opportunity to help those with whom they come in contact" (p. 27). Greenleaf (1977/2002) writes "There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the contact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share" (p. 50 as cited in Spears, 2010, p. 27).

My interest in the subject of transitioning into a new culture, or acculturation, began when I moved to Japan to teach English as a Foreign Language in October 2000. I experienced first-hand what it was like to live and to learn to function within a new set of cultural norms. Since returning to Canada a year later, I have continued to work with East Asian International Students as both an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher and an International Student Coordinator. Thus, I have worked with several hundred EAIS over my career, observing the phenomenon of acculturation firsthand. I am constantly amazed at the courage and resilience showed by my students every day.

Palmer (1999) proposes two ways of knowing, that of an *Objectionist Way of Knowing* whereby an amateur, on the path to knowing about the object, becomes an expert, and *The Community of Truth* where a subject is investigated in interaction with other knowers. While I initially thought I would become an expert in supporting EAIS in their transition process into my school, I have come to recognize that the acculturation process is understood by observing the

students interactions with me directly and working with the adults in their lives who support

them indirectly. Therefore, feedback from the entire school community, including the homestay

program participants, have been utilized to gather a deeper understanding of the EAIS

experience.

As investigated in the LDRS 591 literature review (see Appendix 1), EAIS typically

experience a series of stages in the acculturative process. My role as ISC is to practice "servant

leadership [which will] focus on the behavior leaders should exhibit to put followers first and to

support followers' personal development" (Northouse, 2016, p. 239). Strategies to minimize the

challenges of acculturation will be implemented, with self-reflection as a tool to determine their

effectiveness.

Developing others and creating teams to support EAIS in the process of acculturation will

be fostered by the casting of moral vision, as described by Parolini (2012). This TSL principle

will help me to create an empathetic response in others who are serving the EAIS in my school.

Group interviews and personal observations will be used to gauge the efficacy of the team

response.

Spears (2010) notes, "One of the great strengths of servant leadership is the potential for

healing one's self and one's relationships to others" (p. 27). Through the LIP, I also utilize a

participant observer approach for coming to terms with my feelings of helplessness during the

acculturation process when I lived abroad. This approach encourages me as a researcher to

become more aware of, and share, my personal biases, as Kluckhohn (1940) writes "The

investigator, forced to analyze his own roles, is, on the one hand, less misled by the myth of

complete objectivity in social research and, on the other, more consciously aware of his own

biases" (p. 343). While serving EAIS, I am learning to heal myself by providing the type of support I needed when I was a foreigner.

As a newly appointed school administrator who seeks to be transformational and servant led, I am currently learning to create conditions for all of the student population, including EAIS, to thrive. Transformational servant leadership skills developing within me are being modelled to my staff and students so they are then able to serve others in transformational ways.

Chapter 2 - SELECTED LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Personality assessment tests can be useful tools to inform professionals about their strengths and areas of required growth for them to become effective leaders. Before entering the Master of Arts in Educational Leadership program (MAEL) at Trinity Western University (TWU), I took the Birkman Method Assessment Test. The results from this assessment have provided data which I can reflect on. In this chapter, I will discuss what some of the results of the assessment measures mean to me as I practice leadership, what new insights I have gained from the assessment, and how these insights intersect with the nine leadership competencies as found in the program.

Personality Assessment

The results of my Birkman Method Assessment Test are as follows: a blue asterisk for 'Interests,' a blue diamond for 'Usual Behaviour," and a green circle for "Needs/Stress Behavior." While one could say that the Birkman Method assessment is just a snapshot of my responses on the day that I took it, I am surprised at the level of accuracy of information. As I reflect on the results, I can see more clearly the areas of strength that I have, such as planning and organizing, as well as the areas I am prone to avoid in my daily leadership, such as confronting others. Since I was considering the possibility of being appointed to a senior position in our school organization when the Birkman Assessment was conducted, this assessment becomes, for me, an opportunity to reflect on areas of strength and growth as a leader.

My Birkman assessment confirmed several previously held self-perceptions. I enjoy being creative and a part of a team; however, I am much more task-oriented than my Birkman analysis found. In consultation with Dr. Tina Wu, she was perplexed as to why I did not end up

with more yellow and red results in my analysis. After discussing this discrepancy, we teased

out the fact that, while I crave structure and measurable results, I also like to innovate new ways

for systems to become more efficient and streamlined. Thus, Dr. Wu advised me also to

consider how the measures of the red and yellow quadrants apply to me even though they did not

show up in my Birkman results.

The Birkman assessment results which confirmed my self-perceived strengths were in the

interests of being artistic, musical, and scientific. As a Biology major, I am intrigued by the

structure and function of God's creation. At the same time, I love being creative, whether with

dancing, singing, playing guitar, and taking pictures. I also enjoy motivating others to accept my

ideas, especially when I am innovative and strategic. It turns out these strengths indicate that I

am apt to be a school administrator and a high school teacher.

My Birkman assessment also revealed areas of growth. For example, while I need people

to be frank and forthright with me, I find it difficult to reciprocate. I like to know where I stand

with people, so I can become insecure if I get no feedback. I love positive feedback, but I also

want constructive criticism to be more effective. Birkman also suggests stress behaviours, which

negatively affect my leadership role. For example, I tend to seek out a solitary environment if

the group dynamics become uncomfortable (i.e. strong opinions, domineering personalities) or if

I feel pressure to make quick decisions. My Birkman results support this, saying that I need time

to make decisions and that I become more indecisive when I am stressed. I feel the immediate

call to action to implement awareness strategies so that I do not break trust with people or create

unsafe environments for them.

Leadership Competency Assessment

The Master of Arts in Leadership (MAL) program at TWU is built upon the foundation of transformational servant leadership (TSL) values and ethics within is first dimension (Trinity Western University, n.d.). Dimension two includes higher-ordered thinking and analysis, on which various leadership competencies are grounded. Students are asked to use the MAL program's 'Leadership Competency Focus Selection Worksheets' to self-assess areas of strengths and growth. The results can inform students about which dimensions to focus on.

Dimension 3.1: Visioning & Strategic Thinking

To aid in EAIS transition, the first step was for me to develop tools to implement and promote my proposed ISC strategies as outlined in my literature review from LDRS 591 (see Appendix 1). The MAL Leadership Competency in focus in Chapter 3 of this Report is *L.C. 3.1 Visioning & Strategic Thinking*. I decided to begin my research and reflect on my leadership practices with a focus on this competency because it is an area of strength for me. As I learned and practiced TSL skills, I expected that I would develop tools to help my vision and plan in ways that would aid my students' transition. Learning how to serve the EAIS students as an ISC fostered clarity about what their needs were. I was then able to implement and promote the proposed ISC strategies in the most effective way.

Dimension 3.5: People Development

The MAL Leadership Competency in focus in Chapter 4 of this Report is *L.C. 3.5 People Development*. I selected this leadership competency as the second focus of my research and reflection since my rating for skills in this competency was *adequate*. As I hired staff in the International Department who would work with me to implement the strategies to aid in EAIS transition, I worked on modelling the vision and mission of the department and school as well as

developing programs that implemented the proposed strategies. Focusing specifically on the

development of people ultimately resulted in a better transition for my EAIS.

Dimension 3.4: Team Leadership

The MAL Leadership Competency in focus in Chapter 5 of this Report is *L.C. 3.4 Team*

Leadership. I selected this leadership competency as the third focus of my research and

reflection since my rating for skills in this competency was *weak.* Several of the courses that I

took specifically dealt with building effective teams, conflict resolution, and effective

negotiation. Working on this leadership competency, I collaborated with a group of other ISCs

from the Society of Christian Schools of British Columbia (SCSBC) to brainstorm and

implement strategies for aiding EAIS transition. Individuals I am working with in MCS'

International department are developing the vision to implement the strategies to support EAIS

in our school. This is helping to create a useful model to share with our sister schools.

Chapter 3 - INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COORDINATOR STRATEGIES FOR

STUDENT TRANSITION

Introduction

Visioning & Strategic Thinking

To address how to aid EAIS in their transition into Western educational systems, I have used Leadership Competency 3.1: Visioning and Strategic Thinking as a lens to create activities for my improvement plan. The driving research questions for this endeavour are:

- How do I become a change agent in the International Education Department?

- How do I effectively implement new strategies?

The Context

Meadows Christian School (MCS) is a P-12, Group 1, B.C. Independent School with a current population of around three hundred fifty students and employs twenty-four teachers (seventeen full-time; seven part-time), nine educational assistants, three senior administrators, and six office staff. The school was founded in 1956 and recently celebrated its sixty-first anniversary. MCS is a member of the Society of Christian Schools of British Columbia and the Federation of Independent Schools Association in British Columbia (FISA BC). Its teachers are members of the Christian Educators of British Columbia (CEBC) and the administrators are members of the Christian Principals Association of British Columbia (CPABC).

At MCS, I serve as the International Student Coordinator, where I meet the needs of my students by working directly as a Homestay Coordinator (HC) and with ELL teachers in the high school and elementary school. I am directly responsible for thirty-two students and four staff members in the International Education Department (IED). Most of my students are EAIS from China, Japan, and South Korea. I liaise with senior administration, teachers, education agents,

parents, and homestay parents when issues arise concerning the students. An education agent (EA) is hired on behalf of the EAIS's family to find a suitable school for the student, speaks the student's first language, and is familiar with the school's admissions policies and procedures.

When I began my position as the ISC at MCS in July 2015, the IED was in its infancy. The program began with a few EAIS in 2013, and the ISC position was formalized when the number of EAIS grew to ten students in 2014. During my time at MCS, the IED has become established and has grown to include not only international students but also permanent resident students whose first language is not English, and therefore, require ELL support. With the program bringing in several hundred thousand dollars per year, the need for Board-Approved policies and procedures, as well as upgrading the program's facilities, has been the responsibility of the ISC. My role as ISC also involves maintaining legal documents and safety standards. As the program has grown, the responsibilities have also deepened, which has been the impetus for my desire to discover and implement best practices in all areas of the IED.

Strategies to Support Acculturation

EAIS are vulnerable to psychological stressors as they transition into Western education systems, as they must acculturate into different ways of learning within a new language and culture (see Appendix 1). The research suggests that there are four critical stages of acculturation: pre-departure, arrival, coping, and adjustment. From the literature, the suggested strategies in which an ISC could implement to support EAIS transition each stage are identified in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Suggested Strategies for an ISC to Support EAIS Transition at Each Stage of Acculturation

Stage	Description of Activity
Pre-Departure	Promote adequate time for EAIS to prepare emotionally for arrival
	Raise awareness of potential homesickness issues
	Support EAs in increasing awareness of arrival expectations
	Create documents/ pamphlets about what EAIS should expect upon arrival
Arrival	Provide orientation sessions
	Standardize English proficiency tests
	Recommend EA strategies to mediate when issues arise
	Advocate for EAIS concerns
Coping	Communicate regularly with EAIS
	Coordinate team-based meetings within the school
	Organize IED activities to promote community within the program
	Promote ELL professional learning community
	Promote understanding of cultural holidays
Adjustment	Continued communication with EAIS to problem-solve new issues
	Team-based meetings for any new issues arising
	Maintenance

Each student enters MCS with a different set of skills to help them to acculturate within the various stages. The role of the ISC, therefore, is to implement the necessary strategies required for the smooth transition of each EAIS into their given school community. Not all

strategies are implemented at one time or in one year, however there are a few specific strategies that will be undertaken in this project.

Literature Review

Becoming a Change Agent

Educational change often begins by asking, "Why?" For instance, educators may ask, "Why is the current situation ineffective?" or "Why do we need to improve our praxis?" Dufour and Fullan (2013) inform leaders that "Two things are true about cultural change: it is doable, but it is also undeniably difficult…it changes the way that just about everyone relates to each other" (p. 2). Change agents must be mindful that educators can be wary and resistant to the alteration of their regular practice. Reeves (2009) advises leaders, "any change will meet resistance because change is loss… even the most productive and essential changes represent the death of past practices" (p. 45). Therefore, the potential for strong pushback is likely, and thus, the change agent must equip themselves with tools for the process.

Change agents require a deliberate and unyielding focus for improved student learning. Elmore (2000) states "Schools are consequently almost always aboil with some kind of 'change,' but they are only rarely involved in any deliberate process of improvement, where progress is measured against a clearly specified instructional goal" (p. 7). There is also a moral mandate that effuses the change process. According to Fullan (2013), educational change needs to be viewed as a "'Whole-system reform' – the moral purpose of raising the bar and closing the gap for *all* students in the entire state, province, or country" (p. 3). Therefore, before the educational transformation is broached with staff, the leaders must supply beneficial reasons for it. Knight (2009) posits, "change leaders should propose new ways of teaching only if they're confident they will have a positive impact on student achievement" (p. 509).

Research also advises that teachers must be part of any educational change. Starratt (2011) states that educational leaders are "caretakers of the system of the unit which they lead" (p. x). Consequently, they must "ensure that any change efforts are generated by those *within* the system, rather than being imposed from outside" (Harris, 2014, p. 27). Therefore, when teachers are given a voice to be part of the solution to student learning, there is a subsequent realization that they too require additional skills. Thus, change agents should "[focus] on *learning* not *teaching*… it signals that teaching demands a high level of skill, knowledge, and expertise" (Harris, 2014, p. 31). Elmore (2000) asserts, "Leadership must create conditions that value learning as both an individual and collective good" (p. 20).

Change agents must be up-to-date in the practice of change literature. According to Knight (2009), "Change agents must have a thorough, deep understanding of the practices they share so they can effectively explain those practices to teachers" (p.510). Northouse (2016) notes that change agents "are implementation driven and very good at selecting talent to get the task done… they have the talent to align vision, strategy, and behaviour. They are both outcome and process orientated" (p. 320). Therefore, they must be excellent communicators. "Change agents, then, are likely to be more effective if they are masters of effective communication… they need to communicate recognition for the professionalism of teachers" (Knight, 2009, p. 511). He goes on to say, "For that reason, change leaders must understand the role of reflection and thought in professional practice."

Implementing and Sustaining Educational Success

Implementing change, as well as sustaining the success from the school improvement plan, must be tempered with realistic goals, support, follow-up, and consistency. Harris (2014) indicates, "The overarching and compulsive desire for immediate gains, often politically

motivated, results in changes being introduced at a sprinting pace" (p. 29). Sensible timelines and practical steps of action allow for educational leaders and their staff to implement the change items without losing momentum. Reeves (2009) warns, "in many change initiatives, implementation that was moderate or occasional was no better than implementation that was completely absent. Only deep implementation had the desired effect on student achievement (Reeves, 2009, p. 44).

Support is essential to this deep implementation. Hord and Roussin (2013) state that "Implementation has greater success when it is guided through social interaction [and that] many initiatives fail due to emotional and behaviour dimensions within the staff" (p. 3). Their Concerns-Based Adoption Model provides a system of data collection related to how individual staff members feel about the change process before, during, and after the implementation stage. Having "multiple and continuous feedback loops inform everyone on a daily basis how the innovation (new practice) is moving forward and having an impact on adult and student learning" (Hord & Roussin, 2013, p. 1). Implementation support can also be provided in the form of resources. Knight (2009) finds "teachers are more inclined to adopt new programs when all teaching materials (overheads, readings, handouts, or learning sheets) are created for them" (p. 510). They go on to say that:

> If professional learning has been truly professional, respected teachers' need for autonomy, offered powerful and easy practices, and been supported through coaching and other forms of job-embedded learning, then teachers will approach professional learning with positive, high expectations. When these elements are missing, however, history can become a major roadblock to implementation. (p. 512)

Therefore, deep implementation requires authentic support from educational leaders.

Sustaining the implemented changes is fostered by consistent follow-up on the part of change leaders. Sergiovanni (2007) notes that "successful implementation takes follow-up... detailed, careful, and continuous supervision that emphasizes learning, and this is accompanied by assessment" (p. 137). He also remarks:

> Responsibility for follow-up can be shared but not delegated. Unless leaders are in the midst of the implementation process and unless they play key roles in its management and assessment, implementation of any quality and for any length of time is likely to evaporate. (p. 138)

Consistency is crucial for sustaining improvement plans. Harris (2014) states that "The history of educational reform is littered with examples of failed initiatives that have suffered because of a lack of sufficient attention to the process of implementation" (p. 27). Therefore, the stable and constant support and follow-up of realistic goals provide a framework for implementation.

Reflection on Experience

My Role as a Change Agent

As the ISC at MCS, I can affect change in MCS' International Education Department to cultivate greater student success. As established in the literature, change agents require a deliberate and unyielding focus for improved student learning. When I commenced my ISC position, the IED was in its infancy. Through the implementation and promotion of transition strategies for the EAIS, I have brought their struggles to the foreground for the educators at MCS. By speaking at staff meetings about EAIS challenges and updating staff via email, I apprise the members of the teaching community of the issues facing our EAIS. Uniting all of the professionals who work together to facilitate EAIS transition with the vision of increasing student success is an example of binding and bonding, as described by Sergiovanni (2007).

Strategic Planning

The responsibilities of an ISC are often influenced by the school calendar and the time of year. The orientation of EAIS into MCS transpires at the beginning of the school year, which is late August to early September. As our intake of new students is only during this time, the implementation of orientation strategies will only occur at this limited time. Thus, the orientation strategies and necessary resources to carry the plans out must be prepared before this critical period. It is, therefore, essential for me to be prepared and think strategically to be ready to implement the proposed strategies. Further, I must also seek support for ideas and resources if I am not equipped to implement a strategy on my own. This collaborative mindset is required in order for me to effectively implement any new strategies.

InspireED

In October 2017, I attended the "InspireED Convention" that was hosted by SCSBC and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). During the mini-sessions, I attended a workshop on how to use "Google Suite," which was particularly valuable in ascertaining how to construct websites and share documents. Through this experience, I am now able to use google docs to generate the appendices links for this assignment, for example. I also attended a session by a fellow MAEL colleague who was displaying her LIP. It was heartening to behold the successful completion of a capstone project, considering that I was just commencing mine. This experience allowed me to exchange email addresses with a colleague as well as to obtain assistance when I grappled with the LIP process.

LDRS 620 and 625

The two courses I completed in the past six months have been inspiring and edifying to my leadership journey. LDRS 620 'Worldview Foundations of Education Leadership' educated

me about how different worldviews function in our Western culture, helped me to articulate my

worldview, and has equipped me to understand more effectively the worldview of my East Asian

students. I have become more sensitive to how EAIS transitioning into the Christian Theistic

culture of MCS might create conflict within them. LDRS 625 'Educational Leadership and

Change' assisted me in establishing strategic goals for my department, such as developing a

professional learning community that will work towards increasing EAIS English proficiency to

support student transition. Besides, the course promoted skills that will help me to manage

change, overcome resistance and build commitment to my strategic plan to support EAIS

transition. I accessed these learnings in Chapter 4, which focuses on creating collaborative

teams.

EAIS Orientation

To increase the success of EAIS transition in the 'Arrival' stage, I expanded the number

of activities of the student orientation process. First, I scheduled an orientation meeting with each

new student and their parent (or homestay parent) and their EA before the school year started. In

this appointment, I performed a school tour and introduced the EAIS to their teacher(s), the

facilities, and where to go on the first day of school. I distributed an 'International Student and

Homestay Handbook,' which I created in June 2017, that outlines the school schedule, staff

emails, and student expectations. In addition, a medical insurance card was filled out and

activated at the meeting, a list of school supplies was provided, and all legal forms such as study

permits and custodian forms were amassed. Further, I arranged a separate meeting for all EAIS

who were placed in homestay (HS), along with their homestay families. I familiarized all the

program participants with my newly produced 'Homestay Handbook.' This was the first time I

had arranged these orientation meetings, and I found them to be very beneficial to the student,

parent, homestay parent, EA, and me. I received positive feedback from the teachers as well, since they were able to become acquainted with students before the first day of school and provide school supply lists for them. I perceived the EAIS' stress levels were significantly decreased on the first day of school because they were acquainted with the building and where to find their first block class, as compared to years previously when I did not do an orientation session before the first day of school. As well, the homestay parents were given guidelines for expectations and procedures in writing, which reduced the number of emails during the first few weeks of school. Although preparing the handbooks wer energy-intensive, they proved to have a positive impact on the initial EAIS transition into school and the homestay program. I intend to have the handbooks translated into Mandarin for the next school year.

Data Gathering Documentation System

During the first term at MCS, an issue arose with a new EAIS that was the impetus for me to design a new data-gathering documentation method. An elementary EAIS exhibited high levels of homesickness and was not acculturating into his new classroom within the first few weeks of school. After numerous exchanges between me, his teachers, his parent, and his homestay parent, it became evident the student had a learning disability which was not disclosed by the parent nor was perceptible during the preliminary Skype interview with me and the ELL teacher. Due to the overwhelming number of conversations and emails during this time, the timeline of events became confused, and the communication between parties broke down. As a result, I developed a data-gathering document to log new information that is brought to my attention, the date, what actions are required, and when the action is completed. I have now generated a data gathering document for most of my current EAIS as issues arise. I have discovered that, while the practice can sometimes feel cumbersome when many issues are going

on in a day, it has been an invaluable resource to see how trends develop with a student and what actions have been taken. Further, having a 'Date Completed' section of the table holds me accountable to finalize the actions. In the case of the elementary EAIS mentioned previously, my principal and I used the datasheet during a team-based meeting with the parent and homestay parent in order to advocate for the employing of an educational assistant, which the parent was contesting due to cost. However, the volume of data I had logged was convincing, and the student is now getting the help that he needs to learn and thrive at MCS.

Team-Based Meetings

I have learned the value of organizing team-based meetings to gather parents and/or homestay parents, teachers, EA's, administrators, and students (if appropriate). This leadership action provides parents and students with timely feedback to adjust behaviours or, when necessary, may lead to an acknowledgement from the parents that more support is required. In the past, I would have tried to contact each party separately, but I have come to realize that the EAIS transition more quickly if team meetings are implemented in a timely manner. This strategy, along with the data gathering sheets, are two of the most valuable activities that have aided my EAIS.

Support

Often during the implementation of the new strategies to support EAIS, I have sought out the support and insight of the lead SCSBC ISC as well as other fellow ISC's from local schools. In these collaborative sessions, I have been able to share my struggles honestly, which has provided me with the opportunity to learn from others' experiences and for them to share the necessary resources with me. I have also consulted directly with my school principal to talk through issues, which helped me to clarify my proposed strategies or problem-solve my issues.

The role of an ISC can be isolating at times, so it is imperative to seek out wise counsel and to collaborate with a like-minded group.

ISC Manual

In my first year as ISC at MCS, I was asked to produce an ISC Manual of procedures to document my practices as I developed the IED. Every year since I have updated this manual. With all of the newly implemented strategies that I have added to my practice during the LIP process, I plan to revise this manual shortly.

<div align="center">Improvement Plan</div>

Several strategies were implemented to support the EAIS transition into MCS' educational system. Appendix 2 outlines the activities within each stage of student acculturation. Moving forward, I will integrate these new strategies into the ISC Manual of Procedures. I will also have the Homestay Handbook translated into Mandarin for ease of use by the Chinese students in homestay.

Chapter 4 – DEVELOPING IN OTHERS VISION AND MISSION FOR SUPPORTING STUDENT TRANSITION

Introduction

Developing Others

A significant part of my leadership role this year has been creating vision and mission in the IED team members to address how to support EAIS in their transition into our Western education system. I have chosen to focus on using Leadership Competency 3.5: People Development for this assignment, as it was one of my lower scoring competencies. These driving questions will guide my research:

- How do I foster conditions for an effective learning environment?

- How do I develop a vision and mission in others?

The Context

Sergiovanni (2007) espouses, "When people are bound together by shared commitments, values, and visions they become bonded together in shared practice" (p. 68). A supportive team surrounds East Asian International Students, made up of their parents, homestay parents, teachers, administrators, educational agents, and coordinators, who strive to work together in partnership to ensure the student's success. In this shared practice, it is hoped the EAIS smoothly transition through the process of pre-departure, arrival, coping, and adjustment stages to life and education in a Western education system (see Appendix 1). Leadership is required to cultivate these commitments, values, and vision in all the parties involved. This chapter articulates how my role as the International Student Program Coordinator at Meadows Christian School has served to advance the vision of successful EAIS transition into the Western education system within my school community.

The International Education Department at MCS is a few years old. For several years, Ms. O served as the teacher who supported the handful of EAIS in learning English at MCS. When the school administrators recognized a steady increase in the EAIS enrolment in the 2013-2014 school year, the IED was officially established. In September 2014, with ten full-time EAIS, the MCS Board of Directors created an ISC position. When I was employed in July 2015, there were sixteen EAIS enrolled in the upcoming school year. For the next two years, I worked with Ms. O to support EAIS by working with parents, homestay parents, and education agents. I reported to the principal, receiving direction on student enrolment and placing students in homestays. Ms. O's teaching responsibilities were under the direction and supervision of the principal. While she kept me informed about the students and the curriculum, she did not report to me, nor did I take direction from her on the administrative duties. We worked together in collaboration for student success, but our responsibilities rarely overlapped.

International Department Governance Change

The IED governance model at MCS has evolved over the 2017-2018 school year for several reasons: staffing changes due to increased student enrolment and an increase in the number of homestay students. The outcome of the leadership I provided in these changes is the promotion from the ISC title to an 'International Student Program Coordinator,' or ISPC.

Staffing changes

For the 2017-2018 school year, Ms. O was asked by the senior administration to teach full-time Kindergarten; therefore, a new ELL teacher needed to be hired. The new teacher, Ms. W, was assigned to teach 0.5 FTE high school ELL and 0.5 FTE Art. However, Ms. W did not have much familiarity in teaching ELL or working with EAIS.

Increased Student Enrolment

In the 2017-2018 school year, the total number of EAIS increased to thirty students in K-12. This connotes that one 0.5 FTE ELL teacher could not feasibly teach all the students that needed support. The principal decided to have the newly hired ELL teacher focus on high school EAIS only, and another teacher would need to be hired to support the K-7 students. The principal chose to call upon the Director of Education Support Services (DESS), who also has a Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certification. The DESS coordinated support for the K-7 EAIS by accessing the educational assistants and directing the curricular scope and sequence.

Increase Number of Homestay Students

By the end of September 2017, I was overwhelmed by the need for new homestays. A few EAIS students had to be reassigned to new homestays, but I did not have many families left to call upon, nor did I have the time to recruit new families. I presented the conundrum to my principal, and I requested the funds to hire a Homestay Coordinator who would be responsible for recruiting new homestay families and then eventually take over the full duties of the HC role.

In each of these situations, I have taken on more leadership responsibilities, which has resulted in an upgraded job title. The ISC job description no longer applied, and thus, the senior administration has approved a new governance model for the IED, which includes my new role.

<div align="center">Literature Review</div>

Effective Learning Environments

Educational change requires that people be open to change. An educational leader might ask, "Whom do we want to include in this change? Who will be the beneficiary of the change? Who might not be served by a particular initiative?" For a learning community to be effective, it

must be open to examining their ways of doing things. They ask critical questions, build trust, and promote accountability.

Asking critical questions allows active learning communities to understand how the organization functions. Dufour and Fullan (2013) state, "To make PLCs [Professional Learning Communities] systemic, leaders at all levels must see the strategy as tantamount to changing the culture of a system" (p. 23). Educational leaders must ask "critical questions [that] help educators focus relentlessly on learning for all students [which allows communities to] focus on learning, capacity building, wise and thorough use of data, and identifying and spreading good practice" (Dufour & Fullan, p. 7). This then "drives an entire system, participants come to have a sense of identity that goes beyond just their own piece of the system" (Dufour & Fullan, p. 7).

Building trust is an essential practice to provide a safe learning environment for both teachers and students. Knight (2009) indicates that effective learning communities work to "Increase relational trust. Professional learning is most successful in settings that foster support and trust" (p. 513). Elmore (2000) suggests that when "experimentation and occasional failure are expected and acceptable in the process of teacher learning… seeking or giving collegial advice is not a gauge of relative competence, but rather a professional action" (p. 15). Also, Lunenburg (2011) advocates the use of 'no fault problem solving' to create "workable, effective solutions that serve the best interests of the students … to encourage people to come together to find a common solution that everyone is willing to support and implement" (p. 8). Further, Harris (2014) notes, "high performance leadership depends on trust and mutual respect ... they promote collaboration and teamwork… [which creates] a high degree of internal social cohesion" (p. 21).

Accountability is also a characteristic of an effective learning environment. Dufour and Fullan (2013) espouse educational leaders to "take steps to remediate a teacher or teachers who did not participate in the collaborative team or were disruptive to the team process" (p. 8). Further, they went on to challenge that "if all students are to learn at high levels, the adults in the organization must also be continually learning" (p. 14). Effective learning environments can also be characterized as communities that focus on people and process rather than control.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) state, "Successful schools recognize that 'staying at the top'… is fundamentally determined by social capital, that is, the way the organization functions as a cohesive, productive unit or team" (as cited in Harris, 2014, p. 3). This social capital recognizes that "teachers are not our best resource; they are in fact our *only* resource in securing better outcomes for young people" (Harris, 2014, p. xiii). When the staff, then, internalize expectations "largely through modeling commitment and focus using face to face relationships, not bureaucratic controls" (Elmore, 2000, p. 31), "this will necessitate a shift away from vertical, top-down, imposed change to lateral and collective capacity building where collaborative professional learning is an integral component of better performance" (Harris, 2014, p. 37).

Developing Vision and Mission in Others

Blanchard and Hodges (2001) reminded us that leadership in service of Jesus and His Kingdom begins with the transformation of the heart, head, hands and habits of the leader who seeks the betterment of others. When "Transformational leadership … focuses on higher-order, intrinsic, and moral motives and needs of followers ...it assumes that parents, teachers and students function as norm-referenced individuals who strongly identify … [and are] influenced by these groups" (p. 61). This motivation towards morality can move

truly mature leader[s] … from a mode of *being the leader* to a mode of *being led* by

‘reflecting on the painful and joyful realities of every day with the mind of Jesus and

thereby raising human consciousness to the knowledge of God’s gentle guidance.’

(Nouwen, 1989, as cited in R. Klapwyk, personal communication, June 30, 2018)

Therefore, the reflection of what drives us, as well as what falters us, is a vital strategy to share

with others so that they recognize in what direction they are being led. V. Sawka shared that

leaders must remember, especially when pressures mount, "love always wins. Love the Lord,

love your students and love yourself. From there everything else will work itself out" (personal

communication, June 1, 2018). Further, McGregor Burns (2001) reminds us that *both* leaders

and followers are transformed through leadership that aims to develop followers.

Resistance in others

The transformational servant leader must be equipped to face resistance in others in the

face of educational change. This change necessitates that teachers are willing and able to

implement new strategies, resources, and pedagogy. However, Reeves (2009) warns, “Deep and

sustainable change… requires changes in behavior among those who do not welcome change”

(p. 44). Harris (2014) also notes:

All change fosters resistance, but imposed change without an adequate implementation

strategy will inevitably encounter debilitating opposition, particularly if those on the

receiving end of the change are not clear about its purpose or the process of making it

happen. (p. 27)

With the daily demands of a professional educator, the prospect of change can feel

overwhelming. Knight (2009) states that "when trying to change behaviors, think of the only

two questions that matter. Is it worth it? . . . Can I do it?" (p. 510).

Fear can inhibit educators from trying new things, which includes being afraid of not having the ability, time, resources, or support. Educational leaders can help by creating non-threatening learning environments for teachers. Dufour and Fullan (2013) suggest leaders "[support] professional learning by facilitating nonthreatening data conversations with both teachers and administrators" (p. 9). "Perception is reality, and if teachers feel that their identity (their own sense of how good, competent, or talented they are) is under attack, their most frequent reaction is to resist" (Stone, Patton, and Heen, 2000, as cited in Knight, 2009, p. 511). Knight also states that "Trying to talk teachers into new ways of teaching without providing experiences can actually decrease implementation" (p. 37). He proposes, "A better tactic is to offer teachers opportunities to experiment with practices so that they can make up their own minds about their effectiveness" (p. 511). Resistance can also stem from not trusting that there will be support in the new demands. "Even proven, effective programs that are a good match for a school's needs still may not be powerful if teachers don't get sufficient support for high quality implementation" (Knight, p. 509). Educators can also feel offended by the need to change or modify their pedagogy. "Knowledge workers are paid for their education, experience, and expertise, so it is not surprising that they take offense when someone else rides roughshod over their intellectual territory" (Davenport, 2005, p. 15 as cited in Knight, 2009, p. 511).

Listening and effective communication are essential strategies for educational leaders to implement when attempting to overcome resistance in others. Hord and Roussin (2013) report "Communication is the lubricant that makes the implementation sustainable and successful" (p. 2). When creating a context conducive to change, "the role of educational leaders in the 21st century … [are] conveners of change rather than drivers" (Hord and Roussin, p. 3). Further, they went on to report that "successful implementation of a change will depend on the quality of

conversations that invite personal and social investment" (p. 3) and "conversations are not the end, but rather the means to gain action and envision new behaviors of the innovation" (p. 3).

Reflection on Experience

Personal Application

Throughout this year, I have been inspired to prepare the soil in the hearts of those that I work beside so that they can receive the seeds of my vision and mission for EAIS transition. Kohm and Nance (2009) describe this preparation as "Principals who … shift from being the person who sets the goals to being the person who *sets up the conditions* that allow others to establish goals" (p. 72). Social capital has been an important strategy I have used to implement such conditions. For example, training Ms. B to become the HC was a step-by-step process where I worked on scaffolding the duties and expectations and giving constructive, timely feedback after every task was completed. We made time to meet face-to-face every week during her office hours to go through what had been recently completed, what still needed to be done, and what was coming next. She often generated a list of questions throughout the week that she would ask in these meetings, as email was not always conducive for the deeper, "Why do we do what we do?" questions that often came up at the beginning of her training. In these ways, Ms. B was open to receive the vision and mission for the homestay program, which I intentionally cultivated through every task.

Providing accountability was a new skill for me to require of others as I became an ISPC. School culture is a place where common goals and shared values create a commitment, community understandings, and norms inform practice (Sergiovanni, 2007). In fact, "as practice becomes shared, a community of action begins to emerge" (Sergiovanni, p. 100). As an example, there was a critical issue brought to my attention by my EAIS regarding an interaction

that a few of them had with the ELL teacher when they felt their culture was being disrespected. When I scheduled a meeting with the students and the teacher, a sense of trust and respect resulted. The students were provided with an opportunity to express their feelings, to which the teacher was able to respond in a way that affirmed them and offered solutions to work together so the issue would not be repeated. This remedial action of accountability fostered respect and trust, which became evident for the rest of the school year. The students saw that as I worked to restore the relationships, it "signal[ed] that relationships matter in achieving better outcomes… significantly affect[ing] the culture of the organization. It reinforce[d] the idea that people come first and are central to future improvement, if they work productively together" (Harris, 2014, p. 81).

Training the ELL Teacher

When Ms. W began teaching in the IED in September 2017, she did not have much experience with teaching ELL or working with EAIS. Because I have a TESL certificate, as well as twenty years of experience teaching ELL to EAIS, I was able to provide support to Ms. W in the creation of a scope and sequence and to direct her to curriculum she could draw from. I came alongside Ms. W to guide in TESL teaching strategies and pedagogies, as well as give her background about the cultural transition the students would probably be experiencing (see Appendix 1). Each term, I checked in with Ms. W to go over her unit plans and summative assessment pieces. I also asked that she work with the students to create a "Cultural Day" to celebrate EAIS cultures with the MCS community. Further, I advocated with the principal for the school to support Ms. W in taking the TESL certification training so that she could effectively teach the EAIS in their reading and writing English. The shift where I became

responsible for the ELL curriculum and delivery was fully supported by the principal, which eventually was formalized when my job title changed to ISPC.

Hiring Staff

When I started my employment at MCS, I served as both the ISC and the HC, which worked well because the program was small, and the number of homestay students was a handful. However, the 2017-2018 school year was different because enrollment was at our highest, and the number of homestay students grew as well. With this need in mind, I was given support to hire someone to help me. This was a new experience for me because I had never been responsible for interviewing, hiring, and training someone before. In October 2017, I hired Ms. B.

I quickly found out the importance of communication. Having clear expectations with Ms. B helped in getting the results I was looking for. I learned that if I were not explicit enough, I would not get what I needed from her. Initially, we thought maybe Ms. B would work from her home, but we soon found that having an established day that she would come in to do office hours worked well for our relationship. Carving out time at the beginning of her office hours to discuss updates from her recruiting duties, to explain subsequent steps, or to redirect her, became imperative. Within a few months, the job naturally began to evolve where she became more confident in her role; thus, I was able to increase her responsibilities. Eventually, Ms. B took on the duties of the homestay visits as she became more comfortable with the HC responsibilities. Once Ms. B visited each home, summarized the visit, updated the homestay files and documents, she was ready to be the lead contact for the homestay parents. We still have our Monday meetings during her office hours, where we have recently been solidifying homestay placements for 2018-2019. I am thankful Ms. B has agreed to continue to work with me in the IED next year

and that she has started to develop a binder system to upgrade the basic but functional system I had created. While I initially thought it would be challenging to delegate responsibilities to others, I have found that working intentionally to share vision and mission with people has become natural. Delegating is now beginning to feel like an extension of what I had hoped to do but never had the time. I have recently quipped to Ms. B that she now feels like my "right hand!"

Staff Training

When I advocated for Ms. W to take a TESL course, the principal also decided to support two other staff members who were also interested in this professional development opportunity. This has provided the DESS with an ability to draw on more personnel with skills to meet the needs of the elementary EAIS. Practicum volunteer hours were set up with one of the TESL students, which has given an EAIS with lower English skills more access to one-on-one time with an ELL teacher-in-training. This has dramatically increased his English proficiency skills.

LDRS 623, 625, and 697

The leadership courses I have participated in this year have been inspiring and edifying to my leadership journey. The implementation strategies that were developed in LIP Assignment 2 (see Chapter 3) have naturally impacted the EAIS support team at MCS. A 'spillover' effect has occurred as I implemented and assessed the effectiveness of the new strategies, where my colleagues often asked why and how I was doing things. For example, I established procedures for how to put the student first, to meet their emotional needs in the first six weeks to lessen their stress, and to extend the orientation time by having the ELL teacher guide the new students in how the education system works at MCS and in Canada in general. This encouraged Ms. W to take time to intentionally teach technology skills, such as google doc sharing and the google

classroom platform that several of the teachers were using. These basic but necessary skills have helped the new students to acclimate more quickly and to focus more on the content than on how to get around.

Taking LDRS 623 'Developing Educational Programs' and LDRS 625 'Educational Leadership & Change' have equipped me to articulate my vision and mission for the IED at MCS as well as to create a strategic curriculum plan for the next few years in the department. Learning how to create professional learning communities and to obtain resources that can equip me to make these necessary changes will be the focus of the upcoming LDRS 697 Assignment 4 (see Chapter 5).

New Appointment

In March 2018, I was appointed to the position of High School Vice Principal (HSVP) at MCS, with duties to commence in August 2018. Since August 2018 I also continue to serve as the ISPC in the IED. While assuming all of the HC duties, Ms. B additionally takes on some of the IED administrative assistant duties to support me if needed.

Improvement Plan

With the new appointment to High School Vice Principal, I am on a trajectory to learn how to lead a larger high school teaching team as well as continue to develop the IED. The upcoming courses on team leadership and results-based leadership will be timely in developing new competencies in me. I am curious how this new role will impact my current one, in addition to learning to be on a senior administration team. Being open to new learning will be the most important indicator of my improvement plan.

Chapter 5 - CREATING TEAMS FOR SUPPORTING STUDENT TRANSITION

Introduction

Team Leadership

A significant part of my leadership role this year has been creating vision and mission in the International Education Department, High School Team (HST), and Senior Administrative Team (SAT) members to address how to support EAIS in their transition into our Western education system. I have chosen to focus on using Leadership Competency 3.4: Team Leadership. Through the lens of Dimension 1: Values and Ethics and Dimensions, as well as Dimension 2: Higher Order Thinking and Analysis (Leadership Integration Project Manual 2017-2018, p. 6), I will review the literature that pertains to my guiding research questions:

- How do I strategically lead teams?

- How do I distribute leadership in teams?

In chapters three and four, I pursued how to implement strategies within myself and in others for the successful transition of EAIS into the MCS Western education system. Through action research, I learned strategies then implemented them, thus improving the quality of the IED at MCS as well as creating a smoother transition process for the students. In this chapter, I develop competencies to create teams which will support in EAIS transition. This was intentionally placed as my third leadership competency because I scored the lowest in its criteria.

The Context

Creating teams requires leaders to generate commitment from followers to move in a unified direction. My new role of High School Vice Principal, in addition to the International Student Program Coordinator, demands that I have a vision for *both* programs as well as a deeper understanding of how the two intersect. This chapter articulates how my roles have served to

create a team to fulfill the vision of successful transition of East Asian International Students

within my school community.

      For the 2018-2019 school year, Meadows Christian School has increased in enrolment to

around four hundred students and employs twenty-seven teachers, ten educational assistants,

three senior administrators, and six office staff. In the International Education Department at

MCS, I serve as the ISPC where I meet the needs of my students by working directly with a

Homestay Coordinator and the ELL teacher in the high school and elementary school. I am

responsible for twenty-eight students and four staff members in the department. I liaise with

senior administration, teachers, educational agents, parents, and homestay parents when issues

concerning the EAIS students arise. I also work to recruit new students, assessing their language

skills to recommend them for acceptance.

      In MCS' high school, I also serve as the HSVP. The team is comprised of thirteen

teachers and three education assistants who serve one hundred and twenty-seven students. I am

responsible for schedules, timetables, discipline, leading collaboration meetings, team meeting

agendas, community building activities, parent meetings, strategic vision for a three-to-five-year

plan and working with the senior administrative team (SAT). Seventeen EAIS students from our

IED are in the high school program, so I also serve as their HSVP in addition to ISPC.

The Need

      International students from East Asia face several challenges when they transition into

Western education systems (Appendix 1). Psychological stressors can be found in each stage of

transition: pre-departure, arrival, coping, and adjustment. Intentional strategies to lessen these

psychological stressors can be implemented by the ISPC, such as creating resources for student

preparation before they arrive, setting up weekly private meetings with students to create safe

places to share their struggles, creating quality assurance standards between the school and the

EAs, and professional development opportunities for International Student Program

Coordinators.

New Appointment

As I have implemented the leadership competencies from the first two chapters at MCS,

opportunities for leadership have expanded. I am now not only leading the IED, but I have now

taken on the role of HSVP. While my initial tendency was to attempt to separate the roles

concerning reporting on the transition process of EAIS, I have come to realize my two roles are

not separate. The EAIS transition now has an increased platform of awareness as I sit on the

senior administrative team at MCS.

New Lead Principal

In July 2018, the Principal of MCS retired. The former HSVP was promoted to Lead

Principal (LP), and I was appointed the new HSVP. The Assistant Principal and the Director of

Educational Student Support remained in their positions. The governance structure at MCS has

also changed, where the society members voted for the LP to be an official board member as of

August 2018. The full operations of MCS are now under the LP instead of a model where the

Board of Directors was responsible for overseeing the school's operation.

New Teams

The increased leadership authority I have been given has been conducive to creating

teams to serve the EAIS at MCS. The SAT now hears about EAIS concerns weekly at our

administrator team meetings. The increased access I now have with the various school leaders

makes decisions more efficient, and with my leadership in high school, the implementation

occurs more quickly than before.

Advocate for the program

Appendix 4 outlines the new leadership tasks I have implemented as I have taken on responsibilities over several programs.

Literature Review

Strategic Team Leadership

James 1:19 says, "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." Becoming a strategic leader requires the ability to see the long-term consequences of short-term decisions (Hughes, Colarelli Beatty, and Dinwoodie, 2014). While it would seem more natural to rely on one's understanding of a situation at the moment, without listening to others on the team, strategic thinking will be stifled. Leaders with vision are empowering because they can "look into the full reality of what stands before them, see it in its complexity and it in its human, existential, … moral[]… educational and organizational dimensions" (Starratt, 2011, p. 61).

Personal Vision

Creating teams requires strategic leaders to generate commitment from followers to move in one direction. A leader's vision must be clear enough for others to see and follow. Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2003) describes servant leaders whose "overriding focus … is upon service to their followers … an unconditional concern for the well-being of those who form the entity. This relational context is where the servant leader actually leads" (pp. 354-355). Barth (2006) states "The nature of relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishments than anything else" (p. 9). Consequently, the strategic leader must be willing to respond to behaviours outside of professional norms in the staff when they arise to establish accountability.

Harris (2014) says, "high performing schools… empower people to perform while holding them accountable for performance" (p. 28). She goes on to say, "there is no school improvement without teacher improvement" (p. 24). The use of encouragement and transformational servant leadership competencies by the strategic leader creates the right conditions to support his or her followers.

Organizational Vision

The strategic leader recognizes that an organization's vision must align to its mission and values (MVV) and that he/she are called to uplift the precious, unifying vision of the school community. Sergiovanni (2007) explains "Providing meaning and rallying people to a common cause constitute effectiveness in symbolic leadership… by working beneath the surface of events and activities and searching for deeper meaning and value" (p. 9). Being able to articulate plans for the school community is the rallying produced by a laid-out strategy.

Hughes et al. (2014) tell us "Conceiving of strategy as a learning process requires a specific mind-set – a way of thinking about how to craft and implement strategy – that views successful strategy as operating in an ongoing state of formulation, implementation, reassessment, and revision" (p. 23). Strategic leaders must prioritize time for strategic thinking, instead of trying to squeeze it in. The daily demands of team members can be overwhelming. Within teams, the limiting factors that prevent implementation often boil down to time: do we have time to meet when something important comes up? Do we have time to cover all the crucial issues in our once-a-week meetings? Do we have time to think of the bigger picture when we seem to be always putting out fires?

Having an MVV statement for the school is a tool for strategic leaders to focus and prioritize the unrelenting demands coming at them. "An effective vision statement is

inspirational and aspirational. It creates a mental image of the future state that the organization

wishes to achieve… [it] should challenge and inspire employees" (Society for Human Resource

Management, 2012). Linking organizational goals with the vision is essential in creating a

focused staff, and community. Hughes et al. suggest reflecting on project goals by considering

the overall vision of the organization (2014, p. 187). The streamlining of issues to be considered

is classified and prioritized by using the MVV as a lens, thus creating time for the strategic

leader and their team to be proactive instead of reactive.

Team Vision

Teamwork requires diverse perspectives under a unified vision. It is essential to evaluate

the experience and alignment of all members of a team before beginning a new plan (Hughes et

al., 2014, p. 193). Lunenburg (2011) explains, "Improvement is attained by building supportive

bonds among children, parents, and school staff to promote a positive school culture" (p. 1). The

dedication to strategic change must be long-term. Dufour and Fullan (2013) suggest, "If the

overall system is not the focus of ongoing improvement, it will be extremely difficult for schools

or districts to sustain continuous development" (p. 4). Elmore (2000) concludes "Improvement,

then, is change with direction, sustained over time, that moves entire systems, raising the average

level of quality and performance" (p. 13). Knight (2009) states that "Without support, a

powerful practice, poorly implemented, is no better than one that is ineffective" (p. 509). Hence,

one of the chief strategies for school improvement is to generate a culture of continuous

progress.

Equipping Others

Hughes et al. (2014) assert, "Strategic leadership is not about who knows best. Rather, it

involves ongoing, collaborative learning, and that means strategic leaders must create a climate

where they exert not only strategic leadership themselves but also encourage strategic leadership from others" (p. 154). Fostering conditions where the talents of team members are valued provides new ways for the MVV to be expressed. Ungerer, Ungerer, and Herholdt (2016) propose "Whether you come up with a brilliant strategy, a killer app, an astounding new product idea, plans for a slick new merger, or whatever strategy – it comes to nothing if you cannot implement it." Supporting professional development in leaders and team members is also imperative. Tomlinson (2015) states, "Effectively supporting success for diverse learners calls on teachers to be students of their students … teachers who teach up persistently seek to understand each student's culture, interests, strengths, needs, approaches to learning, perspectives, and contributions" (p. 205).

Distributed and Moral Leadership

Keeping attention on as many educational issues as possible at the same time is a daunting task for an education leader. Mills (2016) acknowledges:

> the current all-encompassing role and responsibilities of the average school principal leave very little time to reflect on the many day-to-day instructional and operational needs, much less time to review and implement scholarly research for long-term strategic planning necessary for system-wide change. (p. 9)

Distributed leadership is one way to accomplish this. The lens by which educators view students, along with their worldview and sense of calling, causes them to see aspects of the education system that others may not. Harris (2014) explains, "teachers are not our best resource; they are in fact our *only* resource in securing better outcomes for young people … we have everything we need to improve our schools and districts *within them* - the real challenge is to make more powerful and effective professional connections" (p. xiii).

O'Donoghue (2017) suggests, "education leaders should not see their role as simply perpetuating the status quo. Rather, they should constantly reflect on it" (p. 179). Further, Clarke (2015) states "because of the turbulence of the contemporary education environment, it is necessary to adopt more flexible approaches to leadership than has traditionally been the case" (as cited in O'Donoghue, 2017, p. 163). It behooves schools to develop as much distributed leadership in their teams as possible. One leader cannot single-handedly attend to all of the need around him/ her or every pressing issue that arises. As a unified team, however, the diversity of strengths, areas of expertise, passions, and callings all work together so that a sound, balanced, and proactive approach to leadership can be established for the good of the students. Just as the Apostle Paul speaks of each person being a member of a body that must work together to function as a single unit (1 Cor. 12), education teams must value the giftings in each other and trust in the collaborative process in order to meet the educational, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of their students.

Many new leaders are surprised at the level of needs among youth in our schools. Meeting the needs of our students does not just mean their academic pursuits. On any given day, team members may be busy focusing on the managerial aspects of the school, and another team member is comforting a student whose mother is ill, while another is running an intramural league. Ball, Joyce, and Anderson-Butcher (2016) suggest:

Developmental assets are another component of non-cognitive skills for youth. These assets refer to building blocks of healthy development and serve as protective factors for youth as they face adverse outcomes… Assets may be internal, such as self-esteem, decision-making skills, and responsibility, or external, such as support from others, safe environments, and positive interaction patterns with others. (p. 4)

Distributed leadership creates richer learning environments for students because someone on the team will notice the 'most pressing issue' for a particular student when a single leader might otherwise overlook them.

Moral Leadership Informs Distributed Leadership

In a school organization, there are different dimensions of leadership occurring concurrently, and they are usually found in the following order, especially when a school is first established: Organizational, Political, Professional, and Moral (Klapwyk, 2017, p. 24). The Professional Dimension is supported by the theory of Distributed Leadership, which proposes that members of a school community should hold leadership offices in areas of their expertise (Starratt, 2011). Elmore (2000) suggests that their areas of expertise should drive the actual duties and activities of a school's leaders. All members bring strengths (i.e. expertise) with them, as well as areas of required growth, and through working collaboratively to distribute these areas of leadership, a team effort is produced. This is a strength-based model (Starratt, 2011). For the Professional Dimension to work well, however, it is necessary that all areas of the organization move in the same direction, which can be fostered by providing opportunities for professional development, collaboration, 'open-doors' which allow the critique of others, and reciprocal accountability (Elmore, 2000). The vision of the school leaders can then "cultivat[e].. the learning [that] lies at the heart of the teacher's professional work… [that of] the *special good* that the practice of teaching promotes" (Starratt, 2011, p. 42).

The Moral Leadership Dimension ought to be a guide for decision-making in schools (Starratt, 2011). For decisions on hiring staff, for example, school leaders have the "specific responsibilities to hire competent teachers, and to monitor and cultivate the development of their practice of teaching" (Starratt, 2011, p. 101). For hiring decisions that have not gone well, the

school should be mandated to "show that it has done its part in providing generous remediation support to the [ineffective] teachers" (Starratt, 2011, p. 103). Moreover, school leaders who "refuse to risk changing the organizational structures and processes in schools might be accused of ethical laziness in the face of the evidence of how these arrangements discriminated against some or, indeed, most of the students" (Starratt, 2011, p. 103). In the case of a Christian school, the Moral Leadership Dimension is taken a step further in that the school's policies and procedures are based on the Holy Word of God. Loving as Jesus loved, and doing as Jesus did, ought to be at the heart of decisions made in such school communities. With their vision as a guide, school leaders can be empowered to "offer short-term responses that are aligned with longer-term strategies" (Starratt, 2011, p. 61).

The core ideas of the Moral Leadership Dimension revolve around three virtues: authenticity, presence, and responsibility (Starratt, 2011). Starratt (2011) explains, "authenticity implies being true to oneself, owning oneself in one's professional practice, and one's working relationships" (p. 91). Similarly, the Distributed Leadership Theory espouses "shared leadership… is very much about relationality" (Starratt, 2011, p. x) and when leaders are acting as "caretakers in the system of the unit which they lead… [they are] promot[ing] the growth, satisfaction, and fulfillment of the colleagues in that unit in the very enacting and producing the quality of work" (Starratt, 2011, p. x). Therefore, when every member of the school community is valued, supported, encouraged, challenged, held accountable, and allowed to flourish in their vision of the common good, then the distribution of leadership becomes based on moral decisions. This sharpening of vision will then have leaders asking questions such as, "What is best for the student? How can we support this teacher as he differentiates learning for the students on integrated education plans? Does the teacher need some professional development to

equip him as he shows interest in X?" In ways such as this, the Distributed Leadership Theory

informs the Moral Leadership Dimension. A leader's vision, therefore, is like a compass which

is used to find true north, ensuring that the "primary allegiance [of its community members] is

not to the organization of the school, but, rather, to the core work… which is done by the

learners" (Starratt, 2011, p. viii).

Reflections on Experience

My Vision

Parolini (2012) describes servant leaders as those who have "the ability to cast a

collaborative moral vision while actively caring for those participating in moving the vision to

reality" (p. 13). Through this LIP journey, I have developed my vision for the International

Education Department at Meadows Christian School. I like to use the metaphor of a candle as it

has three critical parts that must work together to create light: the waxy base, the wick, and the

oxygenated environment. While the waxy base of the candle supports and provides fuel to burn,

in the same way, the educational leader understands that the adults in the building, in whatever

role, are there to support the flame of student learning. Now and then, the wick must be trimmed

so that the flame can burn at an optimal rate. Consequently, the educational leader must be

willing to respond to behaviours and actions that are outside of professional norms in the staff to

establish accountability. Lastly, a candle will not burn if it is not in an oxygenated environment,

or it will burn too quickly if the environment is supersaturated in oxygen. The use of

encouragement and transformational servant leadership by an educational leader creates the right

conditions to support his or her followers. Not enough support and encouragement can create a

low burning flame, and yet too much can create an overdependence on the leader that is not

sustainable. When a candle-bearer holds up a burning candle, those around it are drawn together

to look in one direction. The educational leader knows that he or she is called to uplift the precious, unifying vision of the school community. When the school has a Christian worldview, the educational leader then can represent the candle's light to Jesus Christ, the "Light of the world" (John 8:12). By developing my vision for leadership as an ISPC and an HSVP, I can lead teams effectively for supporting the successful transition of EAIS, and also for promoting the success of all students at MCS.

Being Present

While assuming new leadership responsibilities, I am learning how to be present in my day. I no longer have large amounts of time to complete my duties and the items I prioritize sometimes do not even get looked at. This has been a source of frustration for me, as I am typically an organized person who feels accomplished when my 'To Do' list is complete. Within my first month of this school year, I learned when I put demands on my time, I was not able to meet the needs going on at that moment. Learning to let go of my needs, to trust that God will help me to finish my 'To Do' list in His timing and by His wisdom has afforded me rest in my hectic, unpredictable day.

Being Healthy

With the daily demands of my leadership responsibilities, as well as the Master of Arts of Leadership courses, I did not prioritize my self-care. In this school year, I have suffered from a back injury, a jaw sprain, and exhaustion. I am learning to advocate for rest time when I feel that it is all too much. I am also learning to make better food choices and to take time to stretch. I am already looking towards a fitness regime I plan to implement when my course work is finished. With one more course to complete by July 2019, I want to scaffold a healthier lifestyle

over the summer, so I have new habits in place for the 2019-2020 school year. This will ensure

my ability to be present in my continued ISPC and HSVP roles next school year.

EAIS Mentor Program

EAIS in their adjustment stage have learned a plethora of skills which they are ready to

articulate and pass on to new students. As most of the new EAIS applicants for the 2018-2019

program were female, I asked the current female high school students if they would like to be a

'buddy' in the upcoming school year. All the students I asked were interested. We had a few

lunch meetings together to discuss who was coming, which age/ grade they were in, where they

were from, who their EA was, and if they would be living in a homestay. The girls chose which

student they wanted to mentor, and some girls decided to work together in teams. We also

brainstormed information the student might need and what activities they could do with them.

The students also expressed their personal experience as a new EAIS student at MCS.

In general, the buddy system worked well in September 2018. The new students were

greeted by their buddy and were offered to have lunch with them. The mentoring students

reported their buddy did not seem to need them too much but that they also appreciated having

someone to approach when they had questions. I plan to continue the buddy system during the

2019-2020 school year.

Professional Development

China. In November 2018, I attended the 14th Jiangsu International Forum for School Principals

in Nantong, China. This six-day excursion was my first visit to China, and my EAIS at MCS

were very excited for me. A few of my students are from this province, so they took particular

interest in hearing about my experiences.

I lived in Tokyo, Japan a few decades ago, so I entered China with a lens of comparing

the two cultures. The Jiangsu Education Services for International Exchange (JESIE) hosted the

forum in the hopes of promoting educational exchanges with global partners. As the

representative for MCS, I was offered the opportunity to visit primary and middle schools in the

province, engage in breakout sessions with educators around the world on the best practices for

basic education, and hear keynote speakers from China, UK, and Finland about their current and

future educational strategies.

A key takeaway for me was discovering that public education in China only goes up to

grade 9. This creates a situation for Chinese parents where they must invest in private education

if they would like their child to graduate. Several areas of education, therefore, have been

impacted: low percentage of diploma rates, increased competition for private high schools and

universities, and decreased opportunities for children of families living in rural areas of the

country. From the Western education point of view, this explains why so many Chinese families

are open to sending their children abroad at the ages of grade 8+. The ideas of high tuition rates

and increased competition to get seats in Western schools are not foreign to them. I did not have

this perspective before this trip, and this helps me understand why parents want their children to

attend our school.

A second takeaway was discovering why Chinese parents would want their child to

attend private schools in Western countries. I have often wondered why the current trend in

international education has been Chinese students, as opposed to South Korean students last

decade, and why parents have sought out Christian private schools. With the new understanding

of the home country context from my trip, I now understand that typical Chinese parents are

drawn to the more traditional, conservative, and structure of the private school versus the

Western public system. This new revelation explains why I have been approached several times

by Educational Agents for MCS to build a dormitory and to create an international school.

The timing of my trip is also interesting because of the diplomatic changes that occurred

soon afterward. With the apprehension of Huawei Chief Financial Officer, Meng Wanzhou, and

the subsequent arrests of two Canadian diplomats and an Alberta teacher, tensions between

Canada and China have been unpredictable. It causes me to wonder how this will impact the

current Chinese students at MCS, as well as the students expected to apply in the new school

year. Anecdotally, I note that only a few EAIS travelled home for the winter break this year, as

opposed to most of them last year.

LDRS 501, 502, 503, and 626. The leadership courses I participated in have equipped me to take

on my new role as a team leader. In LDRS 502, I worked with a team of colleagues who were

international students. We worked to create resources for the EAIS at MCS, and they provided

me with the perspective of being in Canada for the first time. This was extremely helpful for me

to expand my view in the ethnographer role. The courses also exposed me to the skills and

resources to manage conflict and turn conflict into cooperation. I am in the process of

implementing several of those skills in my new HSVP role. The strategic leadership course has

taught me to use different strategic perspectives and to appreciate strategy-making process

factors, especially as the HST and SAT are currently ideating a new high school schedule for the

2019-2020 school year. The results-based leadership course prepared me for the new

performance review evaluative process at MCS this school year. The current practice is a

performance review every three to five years. With the new lead principal, a newly created

evaluation form was implemented in September 2018. I recommended that the principal publish

this document to the entire staff in September to make the process transparent.

Improvement Plan

In my leadership journey, the Lord has used every course, every reading, and every assignment to teach, grow, expand and equip me. As someone who can be very focused on details, it has been imperative for me to generate a more comprehensive view of the aspects of leadership. Schools are bustling places, and while I have become proficient in my ISPC role, it was limited in scope compared to the whole functioning of the school. My understanding of the various capacities of leadership responsibilities and roles has been expanded, and I feel more equipped than ever to lead. God's perfect timing in my personal and professional lives has made me ready to receive the scaffolded learnings in these various courses.

Chapter 6 - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Impact on the EAIS

The International Education Program at MCS has profoundly impacted the EAIS who have entered the school. EAIS graduation rate is at one hundred percent, the students have excelled in their courses, and they have been accepted into major universities of their choice across Canada. The ELL program has developed the English proficiency of each EAIS, and the Homestay Program has provided school-approved, Christian families who have supported the vision and mission of MCS. Both the elementary and high school teams have worked diligently to provide educational support in class and have brought acculturative issues to me in a timely manner so struggling students can receive team-based help. The Board of Directors has also sustained the vision of the IED, with maintaining funds for the program to grow and rejoicing in the impact of the EAIS receiving the good news of Jesus Christ.

Although there have been many positive aspects of the IED, there remain areas that still require attention. For instance, the IED team has struggled with the application interview process, where EAIS with undocumented special needs have not been recognized before the student arrives at MCS. This has put stress on the classroom teachers who have not been prepared to educate such students. The DESS and the ISC have had to determine if MCS has the capacity and resources to meet the students' needs. Other SCSBC schools send their IED teams to East Asian countries to do in-person interviews, but MCS has not yet taken this step. Advocating for a step such as this is imperative to provide the best educational situation for the student and the teachers at MCS.

Parents of EAIS also tend to be unaware and misinformed about the British Columbian graduation program requirements. Often, the ISC fields several parent concerns and questions

when course selection time occurs. Also, several parents have put undue stress on their children

to take American standardized test preparation, although they do not need it to graduate from

MCS. The high school EAIS have reported anxiety and physical effects of the stress from these

preparatory courses. It behooves the IED to create information sessions and translated

documents to aid in the EAIS as they prepare for post-secondary school.

Impact on MCS

With all the resources offered to the IED at MCS, there can be a monetary mindset that

drives support by the school community. For example, many community members queried early

on why the school was developing an IED, with tuition being the best guess as to the driver.

While it is true that International tuition yields large dividends for the school's finances, most of

the MCS community has offered to me that the EAIS have had an equally profound impact on

the general school community in the past few years. For example, several secondary EAIS have

served on Student Council alongside their domestic counterparts, bringing leadership in the

President and Vice-President positions recently. The IED has hosted an annual 'Culture Day,'

where EAIS have shared their culture with others, exposing the MCS student population to other

ways of living as well as developing a deeper understanding of their friends. The EAIS have

also encouraged the general community to appreciate the opportunities they may have taken for

granted. Being a Christian school, we have watched several EAIS come into a saving knowledge

of Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, and these students have gone on to witness to their

parents and circles of influence. This has impacted the overall school culture, as the MCS

students have appreciated their Christian worldview in a fresh way. Several EAIS have also

advocated for developing a Youth Alpha program in the high school in addition to a weekly

prayer group called 'Ember." Many of the HST members have recently noted that our high school would not be the same without the EAIS in it and that their impact has been immense.

Reaching Further

In the process of researching, implementing, and reflecting, I have come to understand the skills I have learned are not only for the International Education Program at MCS but also for all the school community. Ministering to the needs of students entering a new culture is not limited to just international students but the high school students in the general population. Learning to be an active listener, to be present, and to advocate on behalf of others needs are transformational servant leadership skills that I am now learning to use with all my interactions, no matter the role I am in. Modelling these skills and encouraging the staff around me then creates conditions for them to practice the TSL skills as well. Therefore, the most significant learning I have had during the LIP experience is that we all have needs, and we can serve each other if we are willing to listen and put others needs before ours.

<p style="text-align:center">**Scope & Limitations**</p>

The scope of the LIP was limited to the adults involved in the IED and the teachers of the EAIS at MCS. Several of the EAIS in the program were unaccompanied minors, meaning that obtaining informed consent from the biological parents to collect qualitative data would have been very difficult. The parents who accompanied the EAIS at MCS would have also had difficulties understanding the ramifications of giving consent for me to interview their children. Therefore, the qualitative data was obtained by personal observation and reflection, as well as informal conversations with colleagues. There is a future opportunity for me or others to do a formal qualitative study by hiring a translator who is versed in several East Asian languages and has the academic background to represent both the cultural worldviews of the home country and

Western country as well as the underpinnings of K-12 British Columbian education system and new curriculum.

Final Improvement Plan

Personally, I will continue to exercise transformational servant leadership skills as I serve as the High School Vice Principal and International Student Program Coordinator. As MCS seeks to create a succession plan, the opportunity for me to increase my leadership in the administrative team continues. Therefore, my strategic plan includes:

- Raise up new leaders for the International Education Department so that I serve more as a director than a coordinator,

- Pursue a Ph.D. degree to gather data to support EAIS transition into the newly redesigned curricular competencies of the British Columbian Education Plan,

- Present strategies for EAIS acculturation at an upcoming MOSAIC conference hosted by SCSBC for administrators to broaden the of what transition looks like in their students,

- Promote best practice for EAIS acculturation within the SCSBC community of practice

- Continue to learn how to meet the needs of others using reflection, active listening, and community building.

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Appendix 1

East Asian International Student Transition

Formal Literature Review

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Abstract

International students from East Asia face several challenges when they transition into Western education systems. Psychological stressors can be found in each stage of transition: pre-departure, arrival, coping, and adjustment. Intentional strategies to lessen these psychological stressors can be implemented by International Student Coordinators, such as creating resources for student preparation before they arrive, setting up weekly private meetings with students to create safe places to share their struggles, creating quality assurance standards between the school and the Education Agents, and professional development opportunities for International Student Coordinators.

Formal Literature Review

In a recent address to the Vancouver Board of Trade, the president of Simon Fraser University (SFU), Andrew Petter, announced that, "International education has become B.C.'s fifth-largest export sector, worth $2.6 billion annually" (Smith, 2016). With the popularity of the international student education programs and the enormous amount of money being funneled into public and private school systems in British Columbia, it is incumbent on our educators and school boards to examine their practices to ensure that international student challenges are being identified and met.

An International Student Coordinator (ISC) is commonly the first contact for an East Asian international student (EAIS) when he or she applies for enrollment into an Independent School in British Columbia. Upon enrollment, the ISC is the front-line for answering questions during the pre-departure stage, preparing legal documents for the student's study permit process, and searching for a suitable and available homestay placement. When a student arrives at the host school, the ISC orients him or her to the surroundings and then works to ease the transition into the student's classes. During the school year, the ISC will then provide on-going support to check-in with the student's progress and adjustment to the school and homestay situations. The literature regarding international students' transition into Western educational institutions suggests that an ISC's role is extremely important in all of the stages of the student transition. Kwon (2009) suggests that all levels of the school staff (i.e. teachers, office staff, and administration) need to coordinate their efforts in order to meet the needs of EAIS. He also specifically encourages ISCs to develop hospitality programs and regularly scheduled activities in order to relieve the students' stress (p. 11). Ling and Tran (2015) also note the value in having

more research into the coping mechanisms of EAIS in the all of the stages of their study, including pre-departure, arrival and during their studies abroad (p. 54).

The purpose of this literature review, then, is to examine the specific challenges that East Asian international students face as they transition into Western education schools and to identify strategies that International Student Coordinators can implement to lessen the negative effects of student transition.

Methods

A review of the literature was conducted to identify the challenges that EAIS face when they come to English-speaking countries and the common coping strategies used. The main key search terms that were used in every search tool were "International student" and "transition." From there, further search terms such as "Canada," "Asian," as well as "high school" and "health" were used. Boolean "AND" was used to combine the terms listed. Boolean "NOT" was used to eliminate studies on university level studies. Several library catalogues were used to locate information. The Trinity Western University (TWU) library catalogue had far fewer hits from the search terms than the SFU library catalogue, in the measure of eighteen hits on the TWU search to 99,246 hits on the SFU search, using the exact same terms.

A database search for peer-reviewed articles that were conducted within the time limit of 2007 to July 2017 was conducted mainly on EBSCOhost ERIC. Further databases such as JSTOR and PsychINFO were used to obtain available research in both the "Education" and the "Psychology" domains. Boolean "AND" was used to combine the terms listed. Boolean "NOT" was used to eliminate studies on university level students. Through these strategies, foundational sources for this literature review were found. The introduction and reference lists of these foundational sources lead the author to two seminal articles.

In order to achieve saturation of the literature, further terms were applied to all of the university catalogues, databases, and internet searches listed above. These terms included: engagement, acclimate, acculturate, Chinese, Japanese, South Korean, British Columbia, curriculum, early study abroad, and unaccompanied minors. When no new information was found in the sources generated from these extra terms, the literature review search was completed. This search resulted in eighteen articles and six books.

The articles were then manually screened for relevance and attainability. Searches of bibliographies from relevant articles and reviews were also performed, which identified two additional studies. The articles were either kept or eliminated due to inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria included the following components: East Asian participants, transition challenges, coping challenges, and written in the English language. The exclusion criteria included the following factors: West and South Asian participants, mental health, recruiting international students, and identity. Eleven studies met the inclusion criteria.

Results

The eleven reviewed studies included a total of 895 East Asian international student participants. This review evaluated 80 East Asian participants in seven qualitative studies and 815 East Asian participants in four quantitative studies. Several key words were extracted from the literature, including: international, discrimination, coping strategies, avoidance, transition, higher education, ethnic group, feelings, homesickness, agent, mental health, distress, barriers, services, study abroad, and acculturation, etc. The general themes from the literature seemed to fall under five general areas of student challenges: pre-departure, arrival, coping, adjustment, and suggested strategies for International Student Coordinators.

Based on the study by Lu, Dear, Johnston, Wootton, and Titov (2014), age did not

significantly affect the levels of psychological distress, therefore the author has made the

assumption that literature which includes university level students was relevant to this review. In

addition, foundational research by Kuo & Roysircar (2004) established a link between age of

student migration and English proficiency to the level of acculturative stress. A second study by

Kuo, Roysircar, and Newby-Clark (2006) studied the coping mechanisms of EAIS. Generally,

the author would not include these sources due to their date of publication (i.e. older than ten

years), but there have been several other newer research reports which have come directly from

these reports. Thus, these two articles will be considered as seminal references by the author.

Pre-Departure Challenges

East Asian international students often come to Western educational institutes at a young

age and unaccompanied. Kim and Okazaki's (2014) qualitative study interviewed ten Korean

students and found that there was a general attitude of ambivalence expressed in the students'

pre-departure experience (p. 247). The degree to which the student was given choice for

studying abroad was also a contributor to the pre-departure challenge (Kim et al., 2014). For

example, several students reported having no personal interest in studying abroad but were sent

by their parents (Kim et al., 2014). Others had little time to prepare because the study

arrangements were made very quickly, which did not allow for psychological or academic

adjustment (Kim et. al, 2014). In a study done by Poyrazli and Grahame (2007), students

reported needing much more explicit information about the country, community, and educational

institutional settings before they arrived. For example, information on the transportation in the

area, the supplies needed for school, and what to do to prepare for the weather were pieces of

information that they needed but did not receive before their departure (pp. 34-35). Popadiuk

(2009) found that students did not receive adequate information about the issues of coping and adjusting stages before they left for the host country or even at the orientation once they arrived (p. 238). In a second publication based on the same data set, Popadiuk (2010) reported on EAIS not having advance warning about what to expect of the arrival to the host school, and that these student expressed that there would have been a significant decrease in their stress and ease of transition had this information been made available to them (p. 1535).

Further research from Ling and Tran (2015) found that the role of Education Agents (EA) in China were the main source of information before the student arrived in their host country (p. 47). An EA is someone hired by the family to help them find an educational institute in the country of their choice, as well as to walk the family through all of the steps of the application process. Key information such as the reputation of the learning institute, the tuition and activity fees, as well as the entry requirements with supporting documentation were given on the advice of the EA. Lastly, Poyrazli et al. (2007) notes that,

From even before they arrive to their progress through the university, students need to be provided better quality information about the university… including campus location, transportation, and housing; the health care system and the services the university offers; cultural differences in teaching and learning; the community beyond the university; and the events within the university. Thus, the university should update its web pages and brochures… to make the information clearer. (p. 40)

Such admonitions from the voices of the EAIS highlights the need for improved "best practice" strategies on the part of the International Student Coordinators, as will be expounded upon in the Discussion section.

Arrival Challenges

Once the East Asian international student arrives in the host country, the reality set in and the lack of knowledge, as mentioned previously, created significant psychological distress on the student (Lu et al., 2014). Specific stressors reported by students in Kim et al.'s (2014) study of EAIS in the arrival stage were loneliness, self-doubt, and angst (p. 247). Popadiuk (2009) also reported that the EAIS participants gave clear evidence of negative emotions such as homesickness, loneliness, isolation upon their arrival to their host country, and that they felt unprepared for feeling that way (p.238). Popadiuk (2011) reported that, while there was a desire for EAIS to only socialize with students who speak their language, there was a reported epiphany that came later to students who saw that there would be a negative consequence to the behaviour – they would not learn English as quickly as their friends (p. 229). Popadiuk (2010) also noted that the complex experience of moving abroad added responsibilities to the EAIS that were not found in their counterparts in the host country. For example, EAIS had to figure out how to do "daily chores, transportation systems, banking, laundry," things that their domestic peers already knew how to do (p. 1541).

An interesting result of Ling and Tran's (2015) research is that the role of an Educational Agent was also found to be important for student's transition on arrival as well as the full duration of the program (p. 48). The EA is in the position to mediate between the ISC, the student, the student's parents, in the student's first language. Implications for the ISC and EA roles will be explored in the Discussion section.

Coping Stage

The period of time from the international student's arrival in the host country until they become acculturated into the Western mainstream culture will be referred to as the "Coping

Stage." Several research studies discuss the common strategies that EAIS use to cope to the new challenges that they face. In order to decrease the amount of psychological distress that students felt, Lu et al. (2014) found that the EAIS talked to friends (86%), talked to family (69%), relied on self-discipline or will power (51%) or obtained information from the Internet (41%) (p. 101). The gender effect was found to be significant in Kwon's (2009) research report with respect to level of homesickness. Regardless of the age or length of stay in the host country, the level of homesickness was found to be reported higher in females than in males (p. 8). Kwon (2009) also reports that the level of perceived English proficiency of East Asian students significantly affected the student's level of isolation and intimidation in speaking English in class (p. 7). Kuo et al. (2006) found that East Asian international students who scored higher on their Avoidance Coping subscale were ones who were less acculturated, and they scored higher than their African and White counterparts (p. 177). Popadiuk (2009) reported that students described helping or hindering incidents, which included "when others paid special attention to them and their culture, teachers who were laid back and used humor in class" to incidents where students were "denied special treatment and attention, unfairly punished" (p. 235). The study also stated that hindering incidents, such as not being able to make friends or have someone to have fun with, caused higher incidents of psychosomatic illnesses, loneliness, episodes of missing family and friends, and thoughts of suicide attempts (p. 237). Further coping strategies included seeking other international student peers due to a shared culture, language, trust (Ling and Tran, 2015, p. 52). Bonazzo and Wong (2007) studied four Japanese students who reported that they tended to cope with discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice through the use of avoidance strategies (p. 637). This study was so small though, which limits any extrapolations to apply to the general nationality of student or the gender.

Adjustment Stage

After time, the East Asian international student will typically begin to adjust to the host culture. One indicator of this adjustment from the research includes higher levels of reading ability in the EAIS (Kuo and Roysircar, 2004). This study found that the reading ability of an international student was strongly linked to a higher level of acculturation and a lower level of acculturative stress (p. 149). They suggest that once the English proficiency of a student becomes high enough, the day-to-day stresses of trying to understand the social and academic environments becomes easier, and hence results in a lower amount of psychological stress. However, they did not specify what level of English proficiency was needed for the lowering of stress. Their report also found that the higher level of acculturation in international students was found in male participants as well as early immigrants (students who were younger when they went abroad as well as being in the host country longer) (p. 149). Therefore, age of arrival ($p <$ .001) and length of stay ($p < .01$) were significant contributors of acculturation (p. 149). Another study on EAIS adjustment reported students feeling proud when they started to speak out more in class. Indicators for this were students feeling competent and socially capable, which resulted in the EAIS making more friends (Popadiuk, 2009, p. 235). Popadiuk (2011) found that events which EAIS reported to have facilitated their English proficiency were: they were forced to speak the host language, they lived with a host family who spoke English, they attended ESL classes, and they watched English-speaking programs on television (p. 228). Further indicators of student adjustment were outlined by Ling and Tran (2015), where EAIS accessed information and support from their Educational Agents when they were nearing their graduation and planning for their next step to post-secondary. The level of trust that was built with the EA, from the pre-departure stage through to the adjustment stage, was said to be very important (pp. 48-49). In

addition, they found out that EAIS sought out support and advice from the teachers and

coordinators in their host schools for further information on higher education decisions (p. 51).

Finally, Popadiuk (2011) suggested the importance of "feedback loops in assisting students to

integrate new conceptions of self as they navigate the transition and adjustment of their stay" (p.

232). Feedback from the ISC, teachers, EA, and homestay parents informed the student during

their transition, resulting in successful acclimation and adjustment to their host experience.

Discussion

The results of these eleven research studies suggest that International Student

Coordinators play a pivotal role in how quickly an East Asian international student adjusts to life

in their schools and communities. Therefore, there are implications then that the intentional

creation of strategies by the ISC in the four areas of the student's adjustment challenges (pre-

departure, arrival, coping, and adjustment) can lessen the impacts of psychological distress. This

section will discuss a few important strategies which could be implemented by ISC to aide in

EAIS transition, as illuminated by the evidence provided in the Results section.

First, an ISC needs to be aware that EAIS and their families require a lot of information about

the school, the community, and the country before the departure date. For example, the research

from this literature review suggests that the creation of a "Student Guide of What to Expect"

would not only be a helpful resource for students before they arrive in the host community, but a

necessary one to help lessen the impact of the stressors that students experience once they arrive.

As well, having a guide translated into the student's native language could further increase the

effectiveness of this strategy. Information such as weather-appropriate clothing, toiletry

necessities, maps, and transportation guides would aide in the student's understanding of their

new environment before they arrive.

A second implication from this research is that, once the student arrives, the acculturation process begins immediately. The ISC could promote positive coping strategies in the student by scheduling personal meetings with students every week for the first month of school, in order to for the EAIS to "check-in". This would allow the student to discuss the things that they are stressed about, and an opportunity for the ISC to provide resources which could decrease the effects of the stressors. As well, an ISC could create English proficiency standards for students who are applying to the school. For example, a SKYPE interview that includes reading, writing, and conversational tasks could inform both the ISC and the EAIS of the student' level of English proficiency. In this way, schools could ensure that they accept students who are ready to learn in English upon their arrival, which will lessen the impact of isolation and intimidation in the long run.

Third, this research suggests that the development of good relationships with the student's Education Agent and the school will foster a better transition for the EAIS (Ling and Tran, 2015). There is room for an ISC and the EA to work together to create measures for quality assurance between agent and school. As ISC's work with new EA's, there is evidence that building these measures into agent and school agreements will surely benefit the student transition at all stages (p. 53).

A fourth implication from this research review is that ISC's need to advocate for the EAIS. Bonazzo and Wong (2007)'s study of Japanese females who were silent in the face of discrimination suggest the potential benefit of the ISC who can "provide a voice for international students and champion their needs" (p. 638). Thus, the ISC's role in creating effective communication strategies between them and their students is essential. Creating safe spaces for

students to voice their struggles, along with follow-through for these concerns, is absolutely critical for student's long-term success.

Finally, several articles in the study were written from the psychological point of view, instead of the educational. This highlights how important the role of the ISC is: they are managing psychological needs as well as educational needs. Since the current job requirements for this job require neither teaching nor psychological educational backgrounds, only administrative, there are implications for how schools are actually serving their international students when they hire staff in their International departments.

Limitations

The fact that there were only three articles that represented school-aged East Asian students in Canada illustrates the lack of research on this topic. It should also be noted that the three articles were from the same author and used the same data set, however reporting on different findings. Several articles were written from the psychological point of view, instead of the educational, which made fully understanding the implications of the research difficult as the author does not have a psychology background. It is highly possible that a psychologist would extrapolate different findings from the review of the given literature. Due to the lack of school-age students represented in the research, the author had to extrapolate the data from university level students, which may or may not have skewed the findings. Further study is needed to compare pre-college and college aged student experiences. The author also used sources of information from EAIS in Australia, with the assumption that the experiences of the students would be similar to that of Canada, due to similar commonwealth cultures of the countries. However, there needs to be further research to compare the two countries and the EAIS experiences to discover how close the education system and cultures really are.

Conclusion

There is a lack of relevant research on the transition of East Asian international students into English-speaking education systems. International Student Coordinators are the front-line contact for the student, which means that there needs to be clear understanding of the challenges that the students are likely to face, before and after they arrive in the host schools. More research into these challenges needs to take place in order to lessen the psychological stressors that EAIS go through, and schools need to create strategies that are based on the evidence. In addition, with the recent redesign of the BC curriculum, there is a critical need for research to examine how the shift of educational strategies will further impact the EAIS entering our school systems.

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Appendix 2

Implementation of New EAIS Support Strategies

The following table includes activities that were implemented or will be implemented, as based on the recommended strategies found in Appendix 1.

Implementation of New EAIS Support Strategies: Past, Present, and Future Activities

Date	Stage	Description of Activity and Participants
Aug. 29/17	Pre-Departure	Staff meeting: Update staff on my EAIS literature review and the strategies that I would use to support the transition.
Aug. 30/17	Pre-Departure	Staff meeting: Update staff regarding new and returning EAIS by presenting a powerpoint of students' names, country of origin, parent/homestay parent names and contact information.
Sept. 1/17	Arrival	Orientation for each new EAIS: Greet, give a school tour, introduce to their teacher(s), register them in medical insurance, make copies of legal documents, give school supply lists, present a "Welcome gift" of MCS water bottles and Bibles.
Sept. 5/17	Arrival	Meet and Greet: Meet with all the new and returning EAIS high school students to welcome back and introduce them to each other; reveal the newly renovated ELL room and offices; answer any questions that arose.
Sept. 5/17	Arrival	ELL Teacher meeting: Recommend the ELL teachers do an English proficiency assessment during the first week; request the Individualized Education Plan to be in by the second week.

Sept. 5/17	Arrival	Athletic Director meeting: Give the new EAIS information to AD to register EAIS into school sports teams.
Sept. 8/17	Arrival	EAIS Squamish rafting trip: Organize with the school office to ensure the details of food and waiver forms for their upcoming trip on Sept. 18, 2017.
Sept. 12/17	Arrival	'Meet the Teacher' night: Greet and usher EAIS and their families/ homestay families to meet the teachers.
Sept. 14/17	Arrival	Homestay Meeting: Organize a dinner meeting with the EAIS in the homestay program, many of whom were new to MCS this year.
Sept. 25/17	All stages	SCSBC ISC Meeting: Meet with other ISC's to discuss new Medical Service Plan requirements of the Ministry of Education; update them about my EAIS support strategies LIP; confer about the benefits of short-term EAIS programs.
Sept. 27/17	Arrival	Contact parent, EA and HS; student not coping with homework demands.
Sept. 27/17	Arrival	EA and I arrange a surprise meeting with the new Japanese students' teacher from their home school at MCS; debrief on student adjustment to MCS and HS; areas of student strengths and growth, ways to combat homesickness, and the terminal illness of one of the student's parent.
Sept. 29/17	Arrival	Contact principal: student not coping with homework, safety issues, and possible special needs.

Oct. 2/17	Coping	Lunch with EA: Meet with RD to discuss the progress of his EAIS at MCS, their adjustment issues with HS, teachers, and friends.
Oct. 2/17	Adjustment	Team-based meeting about EC: Call a meeting with EC's parent, teacher, ELL teacher, the Special Education Coordinator to discuss why student is not adjusting to his new grade; discuss support strategies.
Oct. 4/17	Coping	ELL Elementary Teachers Thanksgiving: the ELL teachers provide a gathering of K-7 EAIS to learn about why we celebrate Thanksgiving, to try pumpkin pie, and to talk about the symbolism of the holiday. ISC attends and organizes payment of supplies.
Oct. 5-6/17	All stages	InspirED Convention
Oct. 11/17	All stages	ISC interviews and hires a new Homestay Coordinator to recruit new homestay families.
Oct. 16/17	Coping	Staff meeting: Staff discuss students of concern, including EAIS. Data is gathered for me to follow through with struggling students. I follow up with the ELL teacher to discuss strategies to support students, as well as the EA's and parents/homestay parents.
Oct. 19/17	Coping	Team-based meeting regarding EAIS transition into Kindergarten.
Oct. 23/17	Coping	Team-based meeting with EA and EAIS about homestay issues.
Oct. 25/17	Adjustment	Grade 12 Breakfast: EAIS in grade 12 celebrate with their peers

their upcoming graduation. I cook, serve, and liaise so that

the grad's parents could participate with a card of congratulations

Nov. 8/17	All stages	Complete and submit the ISC Manual of procedures to the MCS principal.
Nov. 13/17	Adjustment	Missions trip: conference with principal, EA, EAIS, and parents regarding a non-MCS trip. Write waiver forms and a warning letter. Organize EA to translate the letters.
Nov. 20/17	Coping	Christmas event: Help organize EAIS event for Dec. 11/17.
Nov. 22/17	Coping	Team-based meeting about EAIS student.
Nov. 27-30/17	Coping	Individual EAIS meetings: Term 1 progress &Term 2 goals
Nov. 28/17	Coping	Staff meeting: Updates on EAIS and students of concern.
Ongoing	Coping	Staff meetings and SCSBC ISC meetings
Spring 2018	All stages	ISC Manual of procedures to be updated with new strategies.
Spring 2018	Arrival	Contact translator regarding the translation of the handbook.

Appendix 3

New Leadership Roles (2018-2019)

New Leadership Roles during the 2018-19 School Year

Responsibility	Description of Activity
Lead high school camp	Organize and oversee camp for grades 8-12 of the high school, which includes all high school aged EAIS. Work with the HST to create activities and promote community building.
Restructure IED program	Solicit funds from the LP to expand the responsibilities of the HC to include administrative assistant duties; support HC to plan and run the homestay parent and student meeting.
Train ELL teacher	Guide ELL class scope and sequence, provide ELL curriculum guidance and teaching standards, share EAIS support strategies for each stage of acculturation, guide reporting process, and conduct a formal evaluation process.
EAIS support strategies	Promote research-based strategies to support EAIS transition at each stage of acculturation (see Appendix 1) with the HST members.
Staff evaluations	Conduct formal staff evaluations on two high school staff members. Conduct several informal observations, providing formative feedback and scaffolding classroom management strategies.

New application package	In conjunction with the DESS, create a new EAIS application package for reporting of learning, social, and emotional disabilities.
Senior administrative team	Participate in weekly administrative meetings; strategize for future growth at MCS; contribute to high school schedule ideation; problem solves staffing issues and conflicts; create policies for field trips, course equivalencies, and facility use; enact discipline process.
Students of concern	With the SAT and HST, identify students of concern for intellectual, social, and emotional issues. Meet with parents to report and support outside counsel.
Advocate for students	The IED financially supports an EAIS requiring psychoeducational testing. Liaised with DESS and parent during the process.