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International Response Essay
Leadership for Social Justice: A Canadian Perspective

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In 1839 on New Year's Day, a new and young governor of New York State was elected, and in his inaugural address he proposed change that was dramatic. Governor William Seward presented a new vision, and encouraged individual and societal affective (i.e. values and beliefs) change that included embracing diversity. Doris Kearns Goodwin (2005) describes Steward's "ambitious" (p. 82) shift as:

> A vast expansion of the public school system (including better schools for the black population), the promotion of canals and railways, the creation of a more humane system for the treatment of the insane, and the abolition of imprisonment for debt. His vision of an ever-expanding economy, built of free labor, widespread public education, and technical progress, offered a categorical rejection of the economic and cultural malaise he had witnessed on his Southern trip in 1835. (p. 82)

Seward proposed school reform at the systems level. He also opposed an anti-Catholic curriculum because it was exclusive and caused marginalization and poverty, greatly affecting the economy. He also hoped to financially support both public and "parochial schools" (p. 83). These were radical statements for the time, so radical that Kearns Goodwin (2005) indicates that the "violent reaction" caused him the presidential nomination eleven years later.

In 1830, a few years before Seward's moment of glory, Chief Shingwaukonse from Eastern Canada stated the following desires for his people:

1. Obtain external aid for developing the range of First Nations technical skills.
2. Devise new ways of protecting the band's resource base.
3. Establish new linkages with what he perceived to be both spiritual and political sources of the 'white man's strength.' (Chute, 1998)

For his entire life, the Ojibwa chief worked tirelessly to make this vision a reality. Shingwaukonse repeatedly tried to negotiate with the federal government; however, at the end of his life these dreams were never realized. In his lifetime, Shingwaukonse observed the land base of his people diminish, the quality of education remain outside the reach of his people, and he observed First Nations people slip further and further into poverty and marginalization.

Both Seward and Shingwaukonse were visionary and they both anticipated a future that was essentially inclusive of all people. They daringly described the possibilities for humanity. Both these leaders, like many people during this time, were experiencing economic, societal (e.g. demographic change), and global pressures (e.g. increasing immigration); they sensed that they were at a crossroad. From these examples, it is apparent that the vision for change—a new social order that is based on democracy, equality, dignity, and respect—and the "sense of urgency" (Kotter, 2008) to respond to this call for social justice has been communicated by courageous leaders throughout history (e.g. Brown versus the Board of Education, and the Martin Luther King Jr. movement in the 1960s). With this in consideration, the questions become, "How much have we achieved since the early 1800s? What are the barriers and how can they be overcome?" It appears that the movement toward social justice and inclusion is somewhat illusive, that it is a moving target, one where we move 'one step forward and two steps back.'

Literature on leadership and change (e.g. Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991; Fullan, 2001; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2004) suggests that leaders help drive and sustain first- and second-order change and they help to motivate people towards a vision based on common values; therefore, leaders do need to be prepared for significant responsibility. Leaders should ask, what "grand narrative" are today's leaders, this including educational leaders, communicating—the status quo or a new vision? In moving toward a "new social order," how should emerging leaders be prepared, particularly in the areas of knowledge, skills, and attitude (the cognitive and affective domain) to be responsive to a movement away from irrelevant traditional models of leadership? Through a content analysis of literature, the authors Jean-Marie, Normore, and Brooks (2009) attempt to answer these questions. In the remainder of this response essay, I will provide insight into the Canadian context from a First Nations perspective and outline important concepts related to social justice programming, along with strengths and considerations pertaining to Jean-Marie, Normore and Brooks' paper.

Change demographic: Aboriginal population growth

As Jean-Marie et al. (2009, p. 14) identified in their literature search that educational leaders should understand the historical and current demographic trends and the local, provincial, national, and global impact of these shifts. For a portion of this response, I will provide

information about Canada's Aboriginal peoples, which includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, in order to meet the focus described for this response essay: "the preparation/education of school leaders to understand and work with social justice issues in your particular part of the world."

The history: Setting the stage for today

Particularly in the last 200 years, Aboriginal people in Canada have had to contend with and survive many challenges, including the systematic removal of the children from parents who were legally-bound and restricted to specific and limited tracts of land. The federal government did not only unilaterally legislate physical restrictions on Aboriginal people, but to generate assimilation, they attempted to systematically annihilate the culture, the language, the traditions, and, essentially, the identity of a people through legislated educational and institutional means. The consequences are generational trauma, generational poverty, a higher incidence of physical and emotional health issues, and significant educational challenges. Stiffarm (1998) reminds us:

> For many years, Aboriginal knowledge was invalidated by Western ways of knowing, this unconscious, subconscious, and conscious means of invalidating Aboriginal knowledge served to perpetuate a superior/inferior relationship around knowledge and how this knowledge is passed on. (p. xi)

Stiffarm explains that many Aboriginal people have internalized a negative sense of themselves. Aboriginal involvement and voice has been grossly negated and/or silenced as they became increasingly marginalized, restricted from circles that determined their destiny. The question is, how could this information be used by educational leaders? How can knowledge outside of Western culture enrich leadership programming?

Today's context

Canada's demographic is dramatically changing as a result of, among other things, globalization, technology, and decreasing mortality rates. In January 2008, Statistics Canada released an online report announcing that Aboriginal people in Canada (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) had surpassed the one-million mark, reaching 1,172,790. The report indicated that "between 1996 and 2006, the Aboriginal population grew by 45%, compared with 8% for the non-Aboriginal population" (n.p.). Overall, Canada's First Nation population is continuing to grow at an annual rate of approximately 4%, whereas the national birth rate is 3% (Statistics Canada, 2005). With the substantial change in demographics comes the inevitable need for change on many levels, including cultural change at individual, organizational, and societal levels.

In terms of education, Burton and Point state, "The participation rate for Aboriginal adults in post-secondary education is significantly less than that for any other identifiable group in Canada, and the high school completion

rate for Aboriginal youth is 43%" (2006, pp. 46-47). Mendelson recommends educational programs that are inclusive of Aboriginal students and [faculty] be increased (p. 33). Likewise, Jean-Marie et al. (2009) support change where "school leaders … increase their awareness of various explicit and implicit forms of oppression, develop an intent to subvert the dominant paradigm, and, finally, act as a committed advocate for educational change that makes a meaningful and positive change in the education and lives of traditionally marginalized and oppressed students" (p. 7). Leadership does need to be prepared for significant shifts in demography and the opportunities for cultural learning and partnerships that exist within these contexts.

Conceptual Understanding

Jean-Marie et al. (2009) indicate that in order to understand the complexity of change related to societal and organizational change and learning, the context and specific concepts have to be explored, namely diversity, culture and social justice. Although complex under investigation, it is necessary to deconstruct and reconstruct concepts and history in order to foster clarity and deep understanding of the evolution of ideas, beliefs, and behaviours.

Diversity

Lumby with Coleman (2007) define diversity as "the range of characteristics which not only result in perceptions of difference between humans, but which can also meet a response in others which may advantage or disadvantage the individual in question" (p. 1). According to Lumby with Coleman, visible difference (e.g. race, gender, size, age) elicits stronger positive or negative responses from individuals on a conscious or subconscious level (with or without realization). They assert that, "the root of inequality is the way diversity is conceived and the fearful attitudes towards diversity which are profoundly embedded in human relations" (p. 11). Attitudes, like values and beliefs, influence behaviour that can invite or reject relationships between people. Ambe (2006) encourages lowering defensiveness, self-reflection, and acceptance of alternative thinking for individual and collective, organizational transformation. Leadership programs should include an inter- and intra-exploratory learning.

Moving Beyond Tolerance

For some time, multicultural education 'activists' have promoted cultural and racial tolerance; however, current diversity educational reformist encourage the shift from tolerance to acceptance because the 'knowing' of each other, the understanding of each other is not as superficial, but much deeper—one that fosters respect and authentic relationships. In this context, Dimmock and Walker (2005) challenge: "If, however, the aim is to go beyond tolerance of cultural differences and towards understanding of, and respect for, other races and cultures, then themes and ideas of a multicultural nature need to be embedded in subjects across the whole curriculum, in an integrated way" (p.103). The challenge

for acceptance of difference and systematic, integrated curriculum reform is significant; therefore, patience, time, and individual and organizational resolve are required.

Pfeifer and Polek (2007) recommend that educators identify examples of cultural destructiveness and cultural proficiency within their organization and then outline strategies for increasing cultural proficiency. Leaders are encouraged to have professional development revolve around the 'reflective practitioner,' the process of change and the 'value-behaviour' relationship. Leaders can encourage and facilitate educators to evaluate, consider, and adopt new strategies and attitudes to make reality a specific cause and organizational vision.

Organizational and Societal Pressures

From and organizational perspective, there are many factors that leaders and policymakers have to consider when making decisions. Today, globalization is creating additional pressure for organizations and societies to change and conform to world-wide movement. Dimmock and Walker (2005) state that it is easier to change organizational structures than it is to change societal structures. They cite Hofstede (1991): "organizational cultures are more reflective of practice than deep-seated values, and practices are more susceptible to change than values" (p. 11). Thus, it may take more time to change the overall value system of people within an organization than it is to change organizational structures (e.g. policies, rules, course availability). It is essential for leadership to have an in-depth understanding of their organizational culture—the values, the beliefs, the practices (Dimmock & Walker, 2005, p. 12). Understanding, at this level, can provide leaders with ideas that would contribute to the success for a change initiative.

Strategic Intent, Strategic Leadership

Dimmock and Walker (2005) promote strategic thinking and strategic leadership. They encourage a systematic change process that is learning-centered and focuses on curriculum, teaching, and learning, as well as an approach that is "responsive to the demographics, social and cultural composition of multi-ethnic societies" (p. 93). The key elements of strategic leadership, among other things, include whole-school (system) design approach and responsiveness to social-cultural compositions (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). These elements are also repeatedly suggested by Jean-Marie et al. (2009). Strategic leadership is mindful, intention-driven, and deliberate-action oriented; henceforth, leadership programming should be also. Collaboration and communication is critical to this process. A leadership development program should guide educational leadership through this process; mentors can also demonstrate strategic intent and ensure that overall leadership learning is a process that depends on lifelong learning.

Partnerships: authentic listening and meaningful learning

Establishing and sustaining partnerships with, in this case, Aboriginal peoples require authentic

listening and meaningful learning. Educational leaders need to ask: What have Aboriginal people been saying? For some time, Aboriginal leadership such as Canadian Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief Phil Fontaine (Fontaine, 2009) have been advocating for active involvement in the educational processes and for the creation of educational partnerships.

In this respect, Aboriginal representatives should be involved in the decision-making process from the initial stages rather than in the final stages, where directions for decisions and policies have essentially already been established. Cadwallader (2004) supports this position: "The process involved in changing the culture of an organization to become more receptive and aware of the needs of Aboriginal students [means] including Aboriginal people more fully in the decision-making process" (p. 92). Inclusion at all stages of decision and policy development (e.g. for the development of a leadership program) will encourage meaningful partnerships. It will also ensure that decisions and policies are owned by all the stakeholders, increasing the chances for success.

Leadership curriculum development and reform

The need for major curriculum reform is reflected in high drop-out rates for minority ethnic students, low performance on standardized test measures for those same students, and a lack of representation of minority ethnic groups in educational leadership. Much of the research in this area suggests that the prevailing curriculum fails to offer more than tokenism, making multiculturalism little more than a distraction to the everyday curriculum (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Lumby with Coleman, 2007; Walker et al., n.d.; Sandhu, 1994).

Banks (1994, cited in Dimmock & Walker, 2005, p.183) identified four levels of approach to curriculum reform: 1. The contributions approach (focuses on heroes, holidays and discrete cultural elements); 2. The additive approach (content, concepts, themes and perspectives are added to the curriculum with no change to structure); 3. The transformation approach (the structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts from diverse perspectives, and 4. The social Action approach (students not only understand and question social issues, but are encouraged to act on them). An organization can identify where they currently are in terms of leadership curriculum development by using Banks' guide. They can then determine where they would like to be; goals and objectives would then be created to reflect the desired outcomes and changes in the curriculum. Jean-Marie et al. (2009) identify three strategies and approaches for leadership programming (p. 24) that are at Banks' level 4.

Increasingly, educational leadership programs are being influenced by scholars and researchers who would have experienced marginalization. Valuable learning can be gained from literature from Aboriginal scholars (e.g. Cajete, White, Battiste, Tuhiwai Smith, King, Voyageur, Brant Castellano, Archibald, Williams, and St. Denis).

Considerations

The content analysis process for this study, from my perspective, was well very organized and orchestrated; however, I do have some suggestions. I realize choosing words and phrases that will sufficiently reflect the study can sometimes be challenging. In this respect, the identifiers and organizers could have included words and phrases that were more specific to a people group to gain literature from a different world view. For example: "minority education," "minority leadership," "educational, leadership, teacher perspective," and "indigenous/First Nations/Aboriginal/North American Indian education and leadership." Further, leadership literature from different perspectives (e.g. African and Asian) and outside Western societies could have deliberately been sought. In relation to the inferences that were generated, I questioned the perspective and worldview they were made from. Increasingly, studies that focus on culture should include researchers, consultants, and participants that are representative of the study. In this case, the inferences/findings could have been validated by an external source. Otherwise, I did not find significant fault in this process, the findings, or the conclusions that were derived and described in this paper.

There are some points to consider in the leadership education. If leadership development is perceived as a lifelong learning process, then leadership program developers should consider ways of converting event-oriented, short-term learning to more process-oriented, long-term learning. On-going professional development opportunities and mentorship programs would address this need. As Jean-Marie et al. (2009) noted, transformational learning that includes concepts such as social justice, globalization, ecological theory, and I will include the concepts of boundaryless organizations (Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick & Kerr, 2002), mindful leadership, and leadership learning from different worldviews and perspectives can also be included in educational leadership programming.

Conclusion

Baba Dioum (2008) posits, "In the end we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we have been taught" (n. p.). In the preparation of educational leaders, program developers should consider the meaning underlying this quote. Students leave educational leadership programs understanding concepts that have been prioritized and perceived to be valuable to that specific program—concepts and practices that reflect what is valued by the institution. If transformational learning is not emphasized and concepts such as social justice, equity, inclusion, democracy are not presented (perhaps in a Socratic, inquiry method), discussed, and explored, then chances are these emerging leaders will be left with learning gaps. Once they leave educational leadership programs, teaching and school administration can leave little time for in-depth exploration and learning unless it is intentional.

For some time, authentic Aboriginal content has been marginal or

completely left out of educational curriculums. Exclusion of this extent has generated action by some social change-agents because of the fear that knowledge and progress will be lost— "in the end we will conserve what we love" (Dioum, 2008, n. p.). As described in the beginning of this paper, from the beginning of time, there have been prophets of social change. With each era, the sense of urgency to heed the prophets' teachings, and warnings, about change – teachings that include fostering deeper understanding and meaningful relationships and partnerships between diverse people groups – increases with intensity. Like the prophets, educational leadership program developers have to be responsive and anticipate the future.

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